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Assistive Technology and Academics

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Writing really matters. Writing is an important skill for academic success across the curriculum in the United States. For students with special needs with physical and educational disabilities, strong writing and reading skills offer a variety of benefits. One of the challenges in higher education is helping students with special needs write, read and spell correctly to achieve academic success while ensuring that these skills will transfer to the public school classroom so that our teacher education graduates can help students with special needs when they take over classrooms. In most recent past, special needs education has received greater emphasis in the schools. However, instruction in the corollary skills of writing has received considerably less attention over the years. Many students with special needs experience difficulties in the areas of writing and spelling, which lead to difficulty in achieving academic success, especially in the social science classrooms that are heavily focused on reading and writing. These deficits should be addressed by the student’s Individualized Education Program (IEP) team to determine whether the student needs assistive technology (AT), intervention, or a combination of both to become successful. This article notes that through the use of assistive technology, special needs with a variety of physical and educational disabilities can learn and write effectively, and AT can provide a better quality of life and education for person with special needs. AT can be used as supplemental aids as well as related services for students with special needs.

Successful writers have proficient skills in gaining all types of information. Students with special needs with physical and educational disabilities may lack many of the skills needed to gain information to be a successful learner. These skills require the student to be an active listener and a reader, to follow written directions, and to interpret textbooks and other media. Students who experience difficulty with reading have difficulty gaining information, and without accommodations and modifications, they are unable to access the general education curriculum.

Writing is the process of encoding through into graphemes, or phonograms, so that communication can occur across time and space (Raymond, 2004; Beard, Carpenter & Johnston, 2011; Akpan & Beard, 2013). Students with mild disabilities exhibit problems with writing expression. To be an effective writer, students must have skills in three areas: handwriting, spelling, and composition (Beard, et al., 2011). Students with mild disabilities usually have difficulty in all three of these areas.

Students who experience difficulty with handwriting may need additional assistance with motor development. Sometimes simply adapting the writing surface, for example, by stabilizing the paper with a clipboard or providing an angle to the writing surface with a slanted board, will lead to improve handwriting. Providing tactual boundaries with raised lines, puffy painted lines, or wax lines on paper provides additional support for handwriting. Adding pencil grips to the writing tool or using other adaptations may become necessary for those students who need additional support. For students who have dysgraphia-severe disabilities in writing expression and in performing the motor functions associated with handwriting-alternate types of keyboards and portable word processing might substitute for handwriting. In addition, AT software such as Bank Street Writer™, ClarisWorks™, or WordPerfect® provide students with the ability to generate ideas and put them on paper without the barriers imposed by working with paper and pencil (Behramnn, 1994; Peterson-Karlan, 2011). AT has significant potential
to support all students in their writing and teaching of writing (National Commission on Writing, 2003; National Writing Project & Nagin, 2006).

**Spelling**

There is also evidence of poor progress in spelling with students with special needs who have physical and academic disabilities. For students with special needs a major residual effect of having learning disabilities is poor spelling. After reviewing 18 follow-up studies, Schonhaut and Satz (2010) concluded that even successful adults who were diagnosed as having a reading disability during childhood have life-long problem with using language, particularly evident from their difficulty with spelling. Underlying language deficits were often evident from analysis of spelling errors, which revealed problems with sound discrimination, memory, and understanding of linguistic patterns. This is not uncommon for many students with academic disabilities. Known how to spell is an important link to writing composition. If a writer is bogged down with spelling, the writing progress becomes a struggle. Numerous light-tech as well as high-tech devices can help students be a better speller. Light-tech devices include highlighting tape, colored acetate overlays, and personal dictionaries. For example, the use of highlighting tapes to focus on important words. Student can write word on the tape and then transfer the tap to his or her personal dictionary. Spellchecks, dictionaries, and thesaurus programs present in most word-processing programs assist in the mechanics of writing and spelling. Franklin Language Master, which has a dictionary, thesaurus, phonetic speller, and calculator, can help in spelling. This device also has voice synthesis capability (Behramnn, 1994).

Special needs may benefit from high-tech AT spelling devices. Examples range from personal computers with spell-check features to portable word processors. These portable or mobile computers feature text to speech, word prediction, spell checkers, and connectivity to other technologies. In addition to features that assist with spelling, the student would have access to additional writing tools that support successful writing. Pairing AT spelling devices with research-based spelling strategies can be effective in assisting students in overcoming deficits in spelling. The IEP team must remember that students, as well as teachers and caregivers, must have instruction in how to use the devices. Failure to provide instruction may lead to AT abandonment.

Concept-mapping software allows students who have problems with written expression to develop ideas and organize thoughts into an outline or an idea web prior to beginning to write. This tool allows students to see the connections among related concepts and ideas before translating them into coherent text.

**Reading**

The most consisting finding in the research literature concerning academic achievement of special needs is continued difficulty in reading performance (Beard, et al., 2011; Adelman & Vogel, 1990; Rogan & Hartman, 1990; Johnson, 1987b). Johnson reported on the varied reading problems of a group of 83 adults evaluated at the Learning Disabilities Center of Northwestern University who were classified as poor readers. Poor decoding and oral reading were noted including problems with phoneme segmentation and structural analysis, retrieval, and pronunciation. Johnson attributed these problems to difficulties with auditory analysis, linguistic awareness, and decoding. Reading is an essential part of life. It is a receptive language process that uses visual and auditory abilities to derive meaning from the language symbols found in written text.
It is also an interactive process between the reader and the text for the purpose of deriving meaning (Raymond, 2004). Individuals must have a mastery of basic reading skills to succeed at the most fundamental level. Reading is an important skill for academic success across the curriculum in the United States. Clearly the process of learning to read involves various methods, materials, and strategies that reflect the student’s individual learning style. Developmentally appropriate practices to enhance literacy skills are a must in any reading program. Students with mild learning disabilities often struggle with reading, and difficulty with reading affects nearly all areas of academics.

**Funding AT**

Funding is an issue when it comes to AT use to help students with special needs. One free resource for IEP teams is open source software. Open source refers to a set of principles that guide the development of software. It means that the source code enables users to use the applications for free and to modify the applications for their own purposes. Open source AT software installs and runs on a standard flash drive, thus providing a portable option for the user (Jacobs, 2007). Service providers can use open source code for free AT devices trials. If the AT devices does not meet the needs of the students, then it can be discarded in favor of another device.

Funding for AT is often fraught with contention because families find themselves at odds with the school in the provision of needed AT. While this may happen, more can be achieved by a spirit of collaboration. A proactive strategy that promotes collaboration is one in which the team develops a funding strategy. Devices vary in cost from inexpensive for light-tech devices (such as pencil grips or special paper) to very expensive for high-tech devices.

**Conclusion**

Writing, reading, and spelling require complex skills. Many students with special needs with learning and academic disabilities have deficits in all three areas due to lack of instruction, cognitive difficulties, or developmental issues. Understanding the complexity of the writing process will help teachers and caregivers understand the variety of AT devices available to assist the student with mild disabilities in accessing the general education curriculum. More research is needed in this area. Such research will systematically expand knowledge and establish effective AT-supported instructional best practices for students with academic disabilities who struggle to write, read, and spell in a digital world. By incorporating these readily available ATs into writing instruction for students with physical and academic disabilities, educators can enhance the success of their students with physical and academic disabilities.
References
Food and Identity: How Food Practices, Family, Gender, Ethnicity, and Nationality Contribute to Personal Identity.

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Introduction

The author's interest in the study of food and identity manifested as a result of being awarded an international studies grant from her institution’s Office of International Programs to study food habits in Naples, Italy. As a professor in the Education Department, she had recently been assigned to teach the social studies methods class for undergraduate elementary education majors. This class is offered to students in the first semester of their senior year with the focus being an investigation of effective instructional techniques and strategies to engage children in learning the social studies. In 2010, the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) published National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies: A Framework for Teaching, Learning, and Assessment. NCSS standards ensure an integrated social science, behavioral science, and humanities approach for achieving academic and civic competence that can be used by social studies decision makers in K-12 schools. These standards have had a significant impact on the teaching of social studies to children. Of the 10 strands in the NCSS standards, Strand 1, Culture and Strand 3, Individual Development and Identity, are devoted to concepts related to the International Faculty Development Seminar in which the author participated in Italy focusing on Food and Identity. The two strands related to food and identity as defined by the NCSS are as follows:

Culture – This theme, with a strong relationship to anthropology, focuses on the fact that humans create culture as a way of making sense of their social and physical worlds.

Individual Development and Identity – This theme focuses on the importance of individual development and the relationship of individuals to others that inhabit their social world. This theme helps individuals consider how their own identity was formed and how it influences their attitudes and beliefs. This theme is drawn from social psychology, sociology, and anthropology.

Food Studies as it relates to the NCSS Strands of culture and individual development and identity will be explored in this paper. In addition to the NCSS strands, several questions which emerged as a result of the trip to Italy will be contemplated in this paper:

- What does the food on my plate signify?
- How do food practices contribute to personal identity?
- What are examples of how food and food habits contribute to the development and transmission of culture?

What is Food Studies?

Food Studies is an emerging interdisciplinary field of study that examines the complex relationships among food, culture, and society from numerous disciplines in the humanities, social sciences, and sciences. Food studies is not the study of food itself; it is different from more traditional food-related areas of study such as agricultural science, nutrition, culinary arts, and gastronomy in that it deals with more than the simple production, consumption, and aesthetic appreciation of food. It is the study of food and its relationship to the human experience. This relationship is examined from a variety of perspectives lending a multidisciplinary aspect to this field encompassing areas such as, art, sociology, education, economics, health, social justice, literature, anthropology, and history. Several institutions in the United States and abroad are now offering programs in this field.
Why Food Studies?

Food studies looks at people’s relationships with food and reveals an abundance of information about them. Food choices expose a group or a person’s beliefs, passions, background knowledge, assumptions and personalities. Hauck-Lawson (2004) introduced the concept of food voice. She suggested that what one eats or chooses not to eat communicates aspects of a person’s identity or emotion in a manner that words alone cannot. Food choices tell stories of families, migrations, assimilation, resistance, changes over times, and personal as well as group identity. So why do we need to study food in a non-epicurean manner? Food studies can challenge us to look deeply into the common daily occurrence of eating and find deeper meaning in this ordinary practice. It can help us understand ourselves and others better. It can help debunk stereotypes and promote acceptance across individuals and groups. In essence, food studies, why not?

Eating Versus Feeding

Food provides animals the nutrients needed to maintain life and growth when ingested. When most animals feed, they consume foods needed for their well-being and do so in a similar way at each feeding. Humans, however, do not feed, they eat. This trait distinguished humans from other animals. Humans gather, hunt, cultivate plants, and raise livestock for food consumption. Humans also cook, use utensils to eat and institute a complex set of rules following a code of etiquette to govern how to eat appropriately. The human trait of sharing food is exclusive to its species. Humans relate to food in a way they is unique to mankind. We do not simply feed.

Food and Identity

Kittler, Sucher, and Nelms (2012) coined the term food habits (also known as food culture or foodways) to describe the manner in which humans use food, including everything from how it is chosen, acquired, and distributed to who prepares, serves, and eats it. They stated that the significance of the food habits process is that it is unique to human beings. They pondered why people spend so much time, energy, money, and creativity on eating.

A familiar saying that epitomizes the idea of food and identity is, “You are what you eat.” This expression addresses two of the questions considered in the research: What does the food on my plate signify? and How do food practices contribute to personal identity? These questions address the concept of food as a cultural signifier and encompass fields as diverse as literature, anthropology, sociology, and history. Research shows that the relationship between the foods people eat and how others perceive them and how they see themselves is remarkable. Sadella and Burroughs (1981) surveyed individuals about their perceptions of themselves as consumers of food and how they viewed others based on their dietary habits. The researchers listed foods which were distinctive to five different diets: fast food (pizza, hamburgers, and fired chicken), synthetic food (Carnation Instant Breakfast, Cheez Whiz), health food (yogurt, protein shake, and wheat germ), vegetarian (bean sprout sandwich, broccoli quiche, avocado, and brown rice), and gourmet food (French roast coffee, caviar, oysters). They learned participants in the study associated different personality types with the food choices made for each of the five diets. People who eat fast food and synthetic food were classified as religious conservatives who often wore polyester clothing. Health food personalities were characterized as antinuclear activists and Democrats.
Vegetarians were likely to be perceived as pacifists who drive foreign cars. Gourmet food eaters were seen as individuals who were liberal and sophisticated. These stereotypes were established through self-descriptions and personality tests which were completed by individuals whose diets fell into the five categories.

Another study examined people's perceptions of similar looking individuals based on the foods they consumed. Stein and Nemeroff (1995) asked university students to rate profiles of individuals based on their diets. The students were shown pictures of sets of two nearly identical looking people. One person in each pair was classified as the "good" food eater and the other was the "bad" food eater. Physically, all else was similar. Students judged the people who ate "good" foods in a more favorable light. They found the "good" food eaters to be thinner, active, and more fit than persons with the same physical characteristics and exercise habits who ate "bad" foods. In addition, the persons who ate "good" foods were rated as more attractive, likable, quiet, practical, methodical, and analytical that those who ate "bad" foods.

Social and psychological factors have an influence on people's food habits and choices. Larson and Story (2009) examined these influences on the choices people make in food consumption. They learned that children tend to choose foods eaten by admired adults, like their teachers but not their parents. Children also chose food similar to that eaten by favorite fictional characters, peers, and especially their older brothers and sisters. Social conscience and peer pressure impact food choices (Brown, 2011). It was found that group approval or disapproval of a given food had an impact on food choices. If the group favored the food choice, a person is more likely to accept that food as part of his or her diet. On the other hand, when the group disapproves of a food choice, the person making the selection generally rejects the food in question. This may explain why some relatively unpalatable food items such as unsweetened espresso coffee were enjoyed by the author and her colleagues at numerous coffee bars in Naples, Italy. The culture in which she and her cohorts were immersed strongly approved of coffee breaks with espresso being the coffee of choice.

Food as an expression of identity is apparent in the experience of going out to eat. McComber and Postel (1992) suggested that restaurants serve more than food. They strive to satisfy nutritional and emotional needs in their clientele. When deciding where to dine out, consumers may consider a variety of factors, such as, the menu, atmosphere, service, location, and cost or value of the meal. It was found most restaurants cater to specific types of customers and that the same diner may choose a venue based on current needs. For instance, in the parent role, a quick, inexpensive restaurant with a playground is a good choice. That same diner may choose a business club which features a conservative setting for a work-related meeting. A candle-lit bistro with soft music and bottles of wine would be appropriate for a romantic evening out with a significant other. Ethnic restaurants hold an allure to clients as well. They appeal to natives of the homeland represented by offering familiarity and authenticity in foods served. For those who do not share the ethnicity of a dining establishment, the experience allows them to explore the novelty of a different and maybe even unfamiliar culinary adventure.

Psychological needs intertwine with social factors when foods are used more for the meaning they represent more than the nourishment they offer or provide (Brown, 2011).
Food and Symbolism

Food has symbolic meanings based on association with other meaningful experiences. An example of the symbolic meanings including food references can be found in many of our common expressions. Bread is a good example of the symbolism found in foods. When people sit together with friends at a meal they are said to break bread with one another. This expression symbolizes a setting where friends come together in a warm, inviting and jovial manner to eat. Bread has been called the staff of life. The type of bread consumed by a person has been known to indicate social standing. For instance, white bread has traditionally been eaten by the upper class (also known as the upper crust – a bread reference) while dark bread is consumed by the poor. Whole wheat bread is the bread of choice in today’s society by persons concerned more with their health than their status. An affluent person has “a lot of bread.” In some cultures, bread is shared by couples as part of their wedding ceremony. In the Christian religion it represents the body of Christ in the sacrament of communion. Superstitions about bread have also been documented. Greek soldiers take a piece of bread from home into battle to ensure their safe and triumphant return home. Sailors traditionally bring a bun on their journeys to prevent shipwrecks. English midwives would place a loaf of bread at the foot of a new mother’s bed to prevent the woman and her child from being kidnapped by evil spirits.

Cultural Identity

Culturally speaking, in essence, what one eats defines who one is and is not. This statement addresses the third question asked in the research, what are examples of how food and food habits contribute to the development and transmission of culture? Culture is defined as the beliefs, values, and attitudes practiced and accepted by members of a group or community. Culture is not inherited; it is learned. The food choices of different cultural groups are often connected to ethnic behaviors and religious beliefs. Kittler, P.G., Sucher, K.P., & Nelms (2012) addressed the influence of food habits on an individual’s self-identity by stating, "Eating is a daily reaffirmation of [one’s] cultural identity". Many people affiliate the foods from their culture, their childhood with warm, good feelings and memories. The food is part of who we are and become. It ties us to our families and holds a special worth to a person. Foods from our culture, from our family often become the comfort foods we seek as adults in times of frustration and stress.

As an Italian American, the author began to consider how her heritage, handed down through the food on her plate, signified who she has become today. During the seminar held in Naples, Italy, a focus of the lectures was an examination of how “Italian” food and the “Mediterranean diet” are marketed and have affected the socioeconomic reality of the region. During a lecture, the author asked about food traditions in Italian families. She learned a custom was the Sunday dinner. Every Sunday, the matriarch of the family prepared a large pot of spaghetti. The entire family then gathers together to eat pasta and enjoy each other’s company at Nana’s (Grandmother’s) house. The author is a second generation Italian American. As a child, every Sunday morning her father (first generation Italian) and sometimes her mother (non-Italian) made spaghetti. It was a family tradition. Dear old Aunt Julia would come by precisely at dinner time with a hot loaf of bread (another Italian tradition is bring bread as a gift when invited for dinner) and the family ate and laughed and shared stories with one another. The warm buttered
bread and a big salad were always served with the spaghetti. The memory as well as the spaghetti was delicious. This memory, connected to family’s heritage and culture, confirmed to the author that food is much more than nutrients. There were emotional connections, a sense of belonging, and ethnic pride found in the food on the author’s Italian plate.

Cultural identity, however, is not restricted by the specific foods one associates with a given ethnic or racial group. One’s social class, standing in the community, and profession are signifiers of culture as well. For instance, in American society there are norms and standards which are followed in social settings when dining. The proper use of food and behaviors connected with civilized eating habits, also known as manners or etiquette is an expression of group membership. In the United States a certain set of appropriate dining expectations exist for a variety of dining occasions. One does not speak with a mouth full of food, especially during formal dining occasions. Certain conversational topics would be inappropriate to share at the dinner table. Sharing a meal with another person connotes equality and is a way to show acceptance of one another professionally and personally.

**What is Learned?**

We have discovered that food has a powerful impact on people and groups in our society. One can be perceived as likeable, attractive, more practical and analytic if the choices on the plate are “good”. In the US, thin is in, and those who are perceived to eat better are seen as more active and fit than those who do not. We have learned that people want to eat what those they admire eat. We are swayed by the need to be accepted for our food choices. We have learned that people will eat or drink something they find unpleasant or distasteful to be part of the crowd.

We have learned food symbolism permeates our social psyche. We use familiar expressions related to food to express joy, sorrow, significance, stature, etc. Sayings like, he’s the big cheese, she’s rolling in the dough, easy as pie, a bone to pick, and he’s a good egg. A person’s social status can determined based on food and restaurant selections. A diet of rice and beans connotes poverty, whereas steak tartare connotes wealth. A five star restaurant is where one of abundance dines, where a chain restaurant is where one of middle class eats. The author remembered once having dinner with a gentleman who owned chain restaurants in London. During the conversation, she asked about the type of food his chain prepared. His comment was, “oh – it is just fare for the commoners”. He made a definite distinction between what he and the commoners expected in a dining experience. We were eating at an exclusive golf club when the conversation occurred. We were obviously not dining on food for the commoners.

As an emerging field of inquiry, food studies is intriguing in that it examines food as it relates to the human experience. Close inspection of food practices reveals an abundance of information about individuals and groups including the economic, political, social, and cultural significance of food in society.
References
Single-Sex Education: Solution of Dilemma?

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Abstract

Schools throughout the United States serve the nation’s children through a variety of learning environment configurations typically designated as elementary, middle, and secondary. In the quest to improve academic performance and better prepare students for college and careers, regardless of the grade levels in the schoolhouse, educators are feverishly searching for strategies to meet the diverse needs of today’s students. Among these strategies is the implementation of single gender schools and classrooms. This paper will highlight some major benefits offered in single-gender learning environments and pinpoint some concerns associated with single-gender schools. The overriding intention is to promote an awareness of the positive impact single-sex schools and classrooms are having on student achievement.

Introduction

Amidst the scramble to race to the top in the nation’s schools today is the underlying urgency to better prepare students to be well-informed and responsible citizens, competent consumers, positive contributors in the workforce, and creative problem solvers. Administrators and teachers call this a daunting task in the day-to-day world of educating youth. It is a task plagued by different goals, different stakeholders’ opinions, and the implementation of different strategies to bolster student performance and increase achievement. The learning environments delivering these promises are either coeducational or single-sex schools. While coeducational schools are widely accepted as a means to provide all of the above, realizing the same benefits within a single-sex environment, schools with all males or all females or classrooms within a school with all males or all females, has been the focus of much debate.

A closer look at the development of education in America verifies its roots in single-sex schools. While religious orders continued to open more schools, public education found its way into the nation’s heartland during the 17th century. As new settlers arrived and the country’s population grew, society’s needs were changing, a phenomenon reflected in schools throughout all times. The family, church, community, and apprenticeship were the traditional ingredients of the first schools in the original thirteen colonies (Cremin, 1970). Public schools were set up at first to educate males. However, as society changed, so did the role of public education. Likewise, the peaceful coexistence of both single-gender religious based schools and public schools of early America would also change. In more recent decades, the growing debate over equal opportunity for both sexes has awakened new discussions in the configuration of public education in America. For some, single-sex education is the solution; for others, coeducational environments work best. For policymakers, parents, and some educators, it is a real dilemma.

In investigating what work’s best, researchers and practitioners have arrived at some answers. On the other hand, both are left with some concerns and questions. It is anticipated that this discussion will continue; however, it is also time to look deeply into where we are and what has worked in our nation’s schools.

Early History of Education in the United States

Educating boys and girls in America can be traced back to the Spanish Franciscan missionaries in 1606. St. Augustine School in Florida was established to teach children the doctrine of the Catholic faith and how to read and write. Other religious orders and congregations, including Jesuits, Ursuline and Dominican nuns, soon followed in
establishing schools and program of studies catering to single gender populations: religious orders of men established schools for boys and the nuns opened schools for boys. The focus of these schools was usually centered on Christian formation, literacy, service, and life skills (Bracey, 2007)

For much of the 17th and 18th centuries, educating boys and girls separately was the norm in North America. Education was left in the hands of the local community and commonly relegated to the wealthy. With the efforts of Horace Mann and other reformers who believed that an education would benefit all children, free public education became available to all American children by the end of the 19th century. In the early 20th century, states adopted laws requiring children to attend school (Crémin, 1970).

Shifts in Goals for Public Education in the United States

Historically in America, schools attempt to deliver what society needs. In an essay on American Education, Patricia Graham (1998) addresses four goals that were set for education of children during the 20th century: Assimilation, Adjustment, Access, and Achievement. Graham describes the goal, assimilation, as helping immigrant children adjust to American life and what it means to be an American citizen. This goal was prevalent from 1900-1925. From 1925-54, the goal was adjustment, attending to the needs of the whole child. Access, the principal goal from 1954-1983, ensured that no student be denied educational opportunities in America. From 1983 to the present, the goal of America’s schools is to improve student achievement. Inherent in this goal is the need to better prepare today’s students for meeting the demands of college and the work force.

Single-sex Schools: Achievement Alternative

Although in public education the norm has been co-educational schooling with boys and girls sharing a common learning environment and a common curriculum, single sex schools in the public sector have increased during the past decade. In 2001, in pursuit of gender equity, an amendment to an education bill co-authored by Hillary Clinton ushered in the green-light that would provide funding for public schools and districts to offer the choice of single-sex schools or classrooms to its students. The amendment stipulated that equal opportunities for attending single-sex schools must be available to boys and girls and is rooted in research supporting that students learn in different ways. The legislation supports single-sex schools and classrooms as another means to improving education efforts in public schools (Bigler & Signorella, 2011). This goal of improving education can be more concretely described as one of bolstering achievement, the same goal that has been at the core of education since the publication of A Nation at Risk in 1983.

The unprecedented effort in the U.S. to improve student achievement has prompted a resurgence in investigating strategies that could have a significant positive impact on improving student performance and achievement. The ongoing debate is to determine the effectiveness of single-gender schools on student achievement and to provide evidence of favorable outcomes for students attending all females or all males schools or classes.

Few issues in education are as contentious as the efficacy of certain school types—public vs. private schools, parochial vs. non-affiliated private schools, single-sex vs. mixed-sex schools. The last of these has created very spirited discussion in recent
years, with institutions as influential as the American Psychological Association (Novotney, 2011) and the Supreme Court of the United States weighing in (U.S. Supreme Court, 1996). While data is limited and mixed, there is sufficient evidence to suggest that single-sex schools confer educational advantages to both sexes that do not similarly occur in mixed-sex environments.

Recent research about gender-based learning styles has revealed that there are distinctive differences between the sexes, particularly in the areas of language processing and visuo-spatial reasoning (Bonanno & Kommers, 2005). With the ability to create lessons that accommodate the predominant learning styles in their classrooms, teachers have a unique opportunity to reach students they might not otherwise reach. Following best practices for differentiated instruction requires that teachers understand brain-based research and tailor their classroom strategies accordingly (Subban, 2006).

Adapting to learning styles does not mean emphasizing “soft subjects” for girls or STEM classes for boys, as it once did. In fact, the majority of studies of STEM-subject achievement among both boys and girls support single-sex education. Importantly, the many studies also conclude that achievement in all subjects is greater for students in single-sex schools (Yu & Rodriguez-Hejazi, 2013).

In a study comparing the performance of single-gender and mixed-gender classes on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test, positive benefits in achievement for students attending single-sex classes were found (NASSPE, 2011). Similar improvements in graduation rates of students who moved from coeducational programs to single-sex programs can be found in the research.

Others argue that gender equity and academic achievement is not about separation of the sexes; it is about providing equal learning opportunities and choices for both males and females. The task is to remove the barriers and gender stereotypes that typically characterize mixed-learning environments and employ strategies which promote and support meaningful coeducational learning for all students. Lise Eliot (2010) confirms that the overall learning environment plays a critical role in contributing to individual achievement and student performance. Establishing an environment in which all students achieve maximal success takes into account the social and developmental needs of all students. Meaningful cooperative learning experiences provide both boys and girls leadership opportunities as they collaborate and practice social and team-building skills.

In his book, *Girls and Boys in School: Together or Separate*, Riordan (1990) discusses the social, psychological, and intellectual consequences of single-sex schools. Sociologist Riordan, argues that single-sex schooling improves achievement for both males and females. His discussions convey his belief that all students should have access to single-sex schooling.

An avid proponent of single-gender schools, psychologist and physician, Dr. Leonard Sax, believes that males and females will learn best in environments that teach to their different learning styles (Sax, 2009). He believes that the biological differences in males and females necessitate establishing separate educational institutions aligned with how males and females approach and process information. Dr. Sax’s research and books offer convincing support for educating boys and girls in separate environments.

Research findings of Goff and Johnson (2008) propose that gender is a significant factor in the learning environment. Grounded in brain-based research, they articulate
that certain activities and strategies work best for males, while other strategies will have a greater impact on learning in females. Using activities that appeal to the male psyche are more likely to garner interest and maintain the attention of males; the lasting benefit is greater attentiveness in learning concepts. On the other hand, when working with girls in an all-female environment, taking a practical approach to studying mathematics using real-life scenarios lessens the fear of studying complex mathematical concepts. Establishing equality of the sexes in support of single-sex schools remains controversial. A criticism of single-sex schools is that of reinforcing negative stereotyping (Berger, 2012). Berger believes that single-sex schools are unconstitutional. Halpern et al. propose that students who were educated in single-sex environments during their formative years may later view their experience in a negative light as they work side by side with the opposite sex in the workforce. Additionally, the authors of The Pseudoscience of Single-Sex Schooling, do not believe that the evidence in brain-research is substantial enough to warrant segregation of the sexes in the school environment (Halpern, et al., 2011).

Though opponents of single-sex schools contend that, in principle, gender-based distinctions are tantamount to gender-based discrimination, in practice, they need not be so (Kimmel, 2013). The definitive arbiter of student achievement is quality of instruction. As the battle over school choice rages, policy makers, parents, and school administrators should focus their efforts on improving teacher efficacy, regardless of whether those teachers are in mixed or single-sex schools. These issues and concerns will naturally enter into the discussion as teachers, educators, parents, and students work together to improve student learning and achievement.

**Summary**

While private and parochial schools have a long history of operating single-sex schools throughout the United States, public single-sex schools and classrooms have garnered increased attention in more recent time, particularly since 2002. When the National Association for Single-sex Public Education (NASSPE) was founded in 2002, only about a dozen schools offered single-sex classrooms. The organization reports that in 2011-2012, more than 500 public schools offered single-sex educational opportunities (NASSPE, 2011). It is important to take into account that these numbers do not reflect the large number of private and parochial schools throughout the country which continue to serve hundreds of thousands of students in single-gender environments.

Indeed, issues related to single-sex schools raise provocative questions for policy makers, parents, school leaders, and classroom teachers. In seeking ways to ensure maximal performance and achievement by all students, common themes related to the benefits and limitations continue to emerge. Research in gender development over several decades supports that overall social, psychological, emotional, physical, and mental needs of each child must be considered in determining the best-fit environment for optimal growth both personally and academically.

As educational standards continue to fuel school reform and accountability, improving achievement for all students remains the goal. To understand the multiple perspectives on single-sex education, it is imperative that educators and policy makers continue to examine the effectiveness of these schools to promote high achievement and future college and career success.
References
# Shifts in American Education

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Encouraging a Commitment to Our UN *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* Via Argumentative Writing:
Challenges and Opportunities within the Middle Grades

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Clemson University
Over fifty years ago, Americans agreed to uphold the United Nations’ *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. We agreed as a people to use avenues within our power to ensure the human rights of others near and far:

Whereas the peoples of the United Nations have in the Charter reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women and have determined to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom, and whereas a common understanding of these rights and freedoms is of the greatest importance for the full realization of the pledge, now, therefore, the General Assembly, proclaims this Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations, to the end that **every individual and every organ of society in keeping this declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance, both among the peoples of Member States themselves and among the peoples of territories under their jurisdiction.** (2013)

Public school educators and perhaps social studies teachers in particular since they address civic education most directly, are charged by this Declaration to promote respect for universal human rights and freedoms. Yet, with federal grant initiatives such as *Race to the Top* that emphasize science, technology, engineering and mathematics education (or STEM), this human rights educational emphasis may not get the focused attention it deserves (2009). Regardless, social studies educators who take the UN challenge seriously could consider ways within their immediate contexts to put before their students opportunities to reflect upon and take action in accord with this human rights focus and directive.

The focus of this case study was to document the initial challenges and possibilities related to an educational intervention that was designed to help middle grades students think about the nature of past human rights leadership within their own state as they also began to take informed action to work toward bringing greater recognition to these efforts. Specifically, this study focused on the implementation process of a pilot, statewide historical essay contest that invited middle grades students who were studying state history to develop publishable arguments about historical figures within their state’s history who had in some way enlarged the freedoms of others as they went about their vocational and/or avocational endeavors. How did these secular saints contribute to the larger common good by extending the freedoms of others within their own communities or beyond? Who were some of these state citizens who had helped others in their quests to be free? How did they go about their work? Did they use unusual or more orthodox channels? Did they generate media attention or a paper trail or were their efforts largely unnoticed yet felt nonetheless? Were there individuals or groups of people who upon their arrival on the continent made way for the liberties of others? Or, did human rights efforts emerge only in the sixties? Have there been women and men, young and old, citizens from various heritages throughout the state’s history who have worked toward such aims? Why are their stories missing in their state’s history? The primary purpose of the essay contest was to help middle grades social studies teachers and students think about these questions as they worked toward addressing the need to include more human rights activists within their state’s ongoing historical story. Of secondary importance, but of importance nonetheless, was to
provide support for teachers as they helped students engage in authentic historical inquiry, build arguments, and use motivational digital technologies—aims currently supported within recent reform efforts.

**Context of the Problem and Review of the Literature**

In recent years the widely adopted *Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Mathematics* have driven recent reform efforts in public schools. These standards are designed to prepare American students for “college and career.” There is less mention in the overall message of these standards that American schooling should be about the task of a civic mission let alone one that encourages a specific focus on respect for universal human rights as advocated by *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights* that our country has already agreed to encourage (back in 1948). In addition, the current *Race to the Top* federal grants program that was spearheaded by the current Secretary of Education, Arnie Duncan, encourages states to provide curricula and instruction that will produce demonstrable results such as increases in test scores in math, science and language arts so that our students will be internationally competitive. The emphasis on the race to the top explicitly encourages a competitive stance toward other countries versus a more supportive message or aim that might denote building strengthening partnerships or encouraging human rights efforts. Within this current policy context, the discipline of social studies is not given much emphasis within the larger school curriculum. Furthermore, few national or state social studies assessments address civic responsibility. Instead, they assess content knowledge related to history, civics, economics and geography.

Within individual states, departments of education work with social studies leaders and curriculum specialists to fashion social studies standards that meet guidelines stipulated by their state representatives that are then issued in the form of specific state laws. School districts and their social studies teachers are then required to help students perform in accord with these standards. Increasingly, both the teachers and students are evaluated based on student performance on these state tests. Again, because of the nature of these state tests, little attention is given to civic outreach or cultivation of civic identity within social studies or any other discipline.

In contrast to these efforts, The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) is a professional organization of educators that does emphasize the civic aim of schooling. Leaders within this field have had a major influence in encouraging the creation and adoption of the 2013 *College, Career and Civic Life C3 Framework for Social Studies State Standards: Guidance for Enhancing the Rigor of K-12 Civics, Economics, Geography, and History* (2013). The lead writer of the *C3 Framework* standards, Kathy Swan, has recently shared in a NCSS interview, that she and her committee were concerned about the exclusion of the civics component of schooling within the CCSS’s aims (2013). To address this problem, NCSS colleagues worked with state superintendents and other groups to roll out in record time the *C3 Framework* that will be a focus of the 2013 annual convention in St. Louis in November. State departments will then be encouraged to review the proposal and consider its adoption in a way similar to the CCSS adoption process that transpired throughout the country in the last few years.

These progressive social studies standards are based on current research and recognized promising practices. The standards, themselves, are inquiry process oriented and are presented within what is being called an “Inquiry Arc.” Schools and teachers are encouraged to develop units of instruction that enable students in grades
k-12 to engage in historical inquiry practices to develop insights and understandings that are then presented to various audiences and used as needed or desired to take informed action within their immediate communities and beyond. The four over-arching components of the Inquiry Arc include

- Developing questions and planning inquiries
- Applying disciplinary concepts and tools
- Evaluating sources and using evidence; and
- Communicating conclusions and taking informed action (2013, p. 12).

If this curricular agenda is implemented, teachers will have far more support for developing units of instruction that will support students as they use insights from their investigations to take informed civic action.

Leaders within NCSS who are included as authors within the C3 Framework publish articles in major peer-reviewed articles that relate to teaching for social justice. Individual NCSS social studies teachers also take on this mantle as suggested by program session titles within NCSS’ state affiliate conferences. Still, these teachers represent a small fraction of professionals who out of personal conviction or perhaps through professional support groups teach in ways that the United Nations’ Declaration has suggested. Little contextual support exists for social studies teachers or K-12 teachers in any content area to encourage this human rights educational agenda that Americans have already endorsed through our adoption of the UN’s Declaration.

In contrast, more support is evolving within the field of social studies to support the development of disciplinary ways of thinking and acting. (Levstik & Barton, 2011; Wineburg & Monte-Sano, 2011; & Wineburg, 2001). Increasingly, teachers are being encouraged to develop instructional units that enable students to play at being historians within the supportive framework of the learning community. The C3 Framework draws directly upon this current research within its entire Inquiry Arc itself and more specifically within the Arc’s second component related to “Evaluating sources and using evidence.” Each social studies discipline is addressed within this second section, offering appropriate disciplinary tools that should be encouraged at each developmental stage.

Likewise, the social studies literacy standards within the current CCSS are now more oriented toward the development of literacy practices that can enable students to take informed action. For example, CCSS supports a civic aim in its emphasis on the reading of foundational, nonfiction historical texts within our country’s history and even more specifically within its emphasis on encouraging argumentative writing in the early grades all the way through high school (2010). This current curricular emphasis suggests that the ability to develop well-wrought arguments is at the heart of what we do as we work within a democratic civic society. We should be able to use argumentative writing to aid in the co-construction of a more civil society. Research-based practices for developing arguments are evolving (Beech, 2013; Hillocks, 2013; Samagorinsky, et al, 2012; Smagorinsky, 2010).

In addition, the appropriate use of multimedia technologies is being encouraged within the CCSS and to a lesser degree within the proposed C3 Framework. Students can employ, for example, the use of digital technologies throughout the inquiry process as they use them to collect online resources, manage multiple sources, and present their findings and insights to various audiences.

Given this curricular policy context, any optional or voluntary program intervention related to emphasizing our country’s UN commitment to human rights efforts should
strive to incorporate or encourage these viable civic components that are already somewhat institutionalized within these curricular frameworks. Teachers should be able to help students perform in accord with the standards that are already a part of what they do on a daily basis as they also work toward helping students think about and take action with regard to preserving or enlarging human rights within their own communities and beyond.

**Statement of the Problem**

Given America’s educational focus on STEM and English language arts literacy, there seems to be little room or financial support for a human rights educational agenda that the country has already professed to honor within the *UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. What can social studies educators who are aware of America’s responsibility for human rights education do within the existing policy climate to help students embrace a human rights ethos and commitment and still be in tune with and even on the forefront of the CCSS movement and the evolving and highly complimentary *C3 Framework*?

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study, then, was to document the effects of an educational intervention that was purposefully designed to address this human rights educational challenge while also aligning with current reform standards. Specifically, the study was conducted to determine what happened as middle grades students responded to what was called a *Palmetto Patriots Project* or multimedia essay contest that was designed, in part, to help students think about human rights efforts within their own state. Middle grades students were invited to develop carefully researched and supported multimedia arguments to justify why a person (or group of people) within their state’s history had contributed to the common good in some significant way as understood within the UN *Declaration*.

**Research Question**

Since this research study addressed the first stage of what will become a much larger longitudinal study, the research question for this pilot study at this early stage is as follows:

In what ways, if any, did middle grades students develop an understanding of America’s human rights commitment as they participated within an educational intervention designed to help them contribute to their state’s ongoing historical story by developing and then seeking to publish multimedia arguments about the efforts of human rights leaders within their state’s history?

It was not known whether this kind of intervention would help students think about or take action toward enhancing human rights efforts in any significant way; but it was anticipated that the in-depth analysis and nature of the particular essay construction process would help students appreciate human rights efforts within their own vicinity and perhaps help them reflect on how they could embrace an American identity that included a focus on this human rights commitment.

**Research Method**

The research method used to document and assess the impact of this pilot program was a qualitative case study approach since the intended purpose was to see how an educational intervention was working in the early stages of research and development (Elliott, et. al, 1999; Schensul, et. al, 1999). In essence, the study was a program evaluation of a new intervention. I had worked with a committee of historians, a social scientist and community leaders who developed the contest guidelines and who had
provided, in part, the financial support for the endeavor. This group, The Ben Robertson Society, was interested in honoring the human rights efforts of a South Carolinian, Ben Robertson, Jr., who had helped fight fascism as an international correspondent in the interwar years. They wanted to bring attention to other human rights activists within the state as a tribute to Robertson’s legacy.

As a participant observer, I also helped design the nature of the contest guidelines and the unit of study in which the program was introduced. I also collected qualitative data within the middle school classroom pilot site, and collaborated with the teacher in charge in terms of gathering student artifacts and then in verifying the analysis and assertions within the study. As a university researcher on sabbatical leave for a semester, I was able to witness as a participant observer the unfolding of the units of instruction within two classes for about 60% of their duration (about 6 of the 10 weeks of instruction) as I employed qualitative research methods such as participant observations, collection and analysis of teacher and student artifacts, and construction of a thick description of what evolved within the project (Schensul, et. al, 1999). I then developed lists of challenges and opportunities (the two domains of investigation) that such an intervention might pose.

As a professor of social studies education and a researcher, I had roots within the school culture I was observing. I settled in the rural area in my late thirties and have lived within it for about twenty-two years. I have had an abiding interest in a secular professional calling with a social justice thrust and have conducted and published several qualitative research studies over a twenty-five year career that have focused on educational programs and initiatives within humanities-oriented educational settings.

As required by law, the study did earn university IRB approval. Guardians of participating students were notified about it and agreed to let their children participate as long as their names and other identifiers were not used.

Definition of Terms within the Intervention

For this study several terms related to the intervention need further clarifications and elaboration:

Multimedia Essay Contest

The study focused on the impact of an educational intervention, called the Palmetto Patriots Project that offered a statewide multimedia essay contest. For purposes of this study “multimedia essay” meant that students were required to develop three to five minute stand alone digital essays that included images, text and voice overs in a self-propelling PowerPoint text that could be submitted via CDs to the sponsoring group, The Ben Robertson Society. The intention of the multimedia component was to motivate Y generation youth who have expressed interest in the construction of multimedia. In addition, it had the potential to motivate students who may have come to see essay writing as punishment versus a motivational educational endeavor. It also tapped into the existing curricular policy emphasis on using multimedia in authentic project-based learning. The guidelines for the contest (that are included in the Appendix) explain more fully the nature of the multimedia essay.

The “statewide contest” was also designed to motivate middle grades students. A $150.00 award was to be given to the best submission. Specific guidelines related to the contest were shared (see contest guidelines in appendix). Although the guidelines gave some credit to the multimedia component, the majority of credit was related to developing a sound argument (see appendix) that explained why an historical figure
within the state had contributed to the larger common good as understood within the UN Declaration.

Teachers would eventually learn about the Palmetto Patriots Project through mass mailings to school districts and schools and through presentations at state social studies and middle grades conferences. Any middle grades teacher in English or social studies could participate or they could work together. Students could also choose to work independently within the contest, without the support of a class.

**Palmetto Patriots Project**

In addition, this multimedia essay was part of what was called the Palmetto Patriots Project. The term “Palmetto” is a reference to the state of South Carolina in which the study unfolded since the image of a Palmetto tree appears on the state flag and since it was instrumental in early Revolutionary battles in helping the colonials fend off the British. The term “Patriots” was chosen as a direct reference to American patriots who had fought for or encouraged freedoms throughout history but not necessarily or primarily through guns and wars. Yet, the term has come to connote within the state the Revolutionary War heroes because of a popular film *The Patriots* that featured South Carolinians who helped turn the tide in the Revolutionary War. The creators of the contest hoped that students would begin to re-interpret the nature of “patriots” as they thought about people within their state’s history who had worked toward enlarging the freedoms of self and others, or in other words, those who had contributed to the common good in some way through politics, educational efforts, nonviolent protest, community service, public health service or economic relief. Furthermore, the state curriculum guidelines for South Carolina social studies state specifically that students should study South Carolina history within the context of American history, that South Carolina should be seen as one state out of many within the country. Adding the term “patriot” to “Palmetto” was intended to encourage this United States emphasis since the word “patriot” denotes loyalty to country.

**Research Site and Participants**

The middle school site chosen for this study was a small rural school in the northwest region of South Carolina. It was a Blue Ribbon School and was recently listed as a School to Watch. About 27% of the student body was on free and reduced lunch. The two community education classes that were involved in the study included about forty students with an equal mix of males and females. Most students were Euro-American. Four were Hispanic. Both classes contained students of mixed-age and mixed-ability levels. None of the students had developed argumentative essays before. All had taken a computer literacy class in the sixth grade and knew the basics related to keyboarding, PowerPoint design and Internet research. The two classes met Mondays through Fridays for fifty minutes.

The classroom site and teacher were selected because the South Carolina social studies teachers within the selected school site were ultimately unwilling to experiment with the intervention until the state social studies assessment called PASS had passed. In addition, the community education teacher was not under testing constraints since she was primarily responsible for helping students explore their local community’s history using experiential learning. As she shared, special needs students were often steered toward her class because of this experiential emphasis. Since the school site had been approved months in advance and since the study could only be conducted during the spring semester of 2013 because of the researcher’s sabbatical limitations, the decision was made to work with this willing teacher and her students who did focus
on South Carolina history within their community education courses. The teacher also appreciated the opportunity to collaborate and to earn a modest stipend for school supplies.

The teacher, unknown to the researcher prior to the study, agreed to experiment with the contest. She was enthusiastic about the whole venture because her curriculum was designed to help students delve into the life, times and contributions of a local community figure, General Andrew Pickens, however, best known as an American revolutionary war hero from the area. She was concerned that the students did not have full access to a computer lab. She also felt that it would make sense for her students to work together in small groups of their own choosing (to enhance motivation) as they developed their arguments. She seemed confident that the multimedia component, the cash award, the certificates for all, and the final celebration would prove motivational.

The community educator had family who had been in the rural area and county seat for generations. She returned to the area after college, raised a family within her family’s home place and taught within the school for many years. She was working on an advanced degree in education while involved in the study and had background in biology and special education. As a devout U.S.A. Presbyterian, she was committed to teaching as a calling and was supportive of the project’s humanitarian aims. Her family had been involved in such efforts for centuries.

Even though there were many possible benefits associated with this site selection, the teacher’s need to focus on Andrew Pickens posed several challenges. First, he is rarely at the top of the state’s list of human rights activists. Although he did help win the Revolutionary War, which led to the extended freedoms of many colonials, he still had issues. He owned slaves and had fought against the Cherokee in ways that were considered unmerciful by some. Despite all of this, I decided to use this site and work with this teacher. I would wait and see how the students weighed in balance Andrew Pickens’ work as a U.S. Commissioner for Indian Affairs, his other leadership efforts after the war, as well as his final acts toward those he had enslaved.

**What Unfolded: The Results**

Slowly, the project began to take shape. By February of 2013 the teacher and students were ready to roll. Students were introduced to the project and to the incentives such as the cash prizes and the Internet publishing venue. In addition, they knew they would have the opportunity to address The Ben Robertson Society if they won and that all would receive certificates at the final celebration event. These incentives gave most of the students additional reasons to buy into the project as their other resistances began to fade.

The community educator, Ms. Peace, had a class set of Idella Bodie’s biography *Andrew Pickens: The Wizard Owl*. A teacher within the state for many years, Bodie had written several young adult biographies and stories about South Carolinians. This short, readable text would pave the way for the content preparation stage of the unit.

As the unit began, students read *Wizard Owl* out loud together as their teacher aided them with her own “think aloud,” trying to help them imagine the historical period as they also began to note insights about Andrew Pickens’ character and actions. In addition, they read several encyclopedic pieces about the man Bodie considered the Cherokees’ friend. They also read excerpts about him from state histories. Slowly, they began to get a feel for this upstate icon as they listened and read with interest.

They then spent the day with a local re-enactor who had an impressive historical gun collection that he was allowed to bring into the school as well as a few rare artifacts and
reproductions from the Revolutionary period that helped him explain how Andrew Pickens would have lived and fought. He came dressed in period attire. Students asked questions, took notes, and played with some of the period artifacts.

Beginning to get a feel for the period and Andrew Pickens, the students then developed a list of questions they wanted to pose for a historian at the local university who was completing a biography on Andrew Pickens. The teacher collected their questions and prepared a list of the best ones for the historian to review prior to his visit. When the historian arrived, he was quite eager to share his work and was impressed with the caliber of the questions as well as “the way [the teacher] managed her class.” He had some tough questions to answer since they really wanted to know if Pickens was a man who cared about his state and the rights of various people within it:

“Did General Andrew Pickens care about his soldiers?”
“Why did the Cherokee Indians like him even though he fought against them in the Revolutionary War?”
“How did he ever come back home from the war to care for his family?”
“How did he treat his slaves?”
“Didn’t he fight the British? Was this a good thing? They are people too.”

Excited, the students photographed the historian and took copious notes while the teacher videotaped his presentation for later review.

With all this background, the students were then ready for a field trip to Andrew Pickens’ Hopewell Farm that is on the National Register of Historic Sites and within their school’s vicinity. There they learned about Pickens’ life within the sturdy post-Revolutionary 1787-clapboard dwelling. They then toured the site upon the estate where Pickens staged some of the first American peace treaties between the Cherokee, Choctaw and Chickasaw as the newly tapped U.S. Commissioner for Indian Affairs. While at this historic site, the curator read passages from the treaty and reminded students that the Americans and natives agreed, “The hatchet shall be forever buried.” The students were looking around as if they had discovered something new. Andrew Pickens was a peacemaker. He offered his home as a place for peace negotiations. He spent days working with various tribal leaders to negotiate a meaningful peace. “Why didn’t we get this part of his story?” some asked.

The eager young historians then made a trip to the historic Old Stone Meeting House. Here they were greeted by another historian who helped them appreciate how Pickens helped build and support this frontier church. They checked out his gravesite and noted that a Native American was buried in the churchyard as well. They also sat in the slave balcony of the church and thought again about Pickens’ relationships with his slaves.

After lunch, the students, who were chaperoned by supportive parents and teachers, traveled to Oconee Station, another historic site, that boasts an early frontier trading post that Andrew Pickens and the Cherokee used as they developed a peaceful deer skin trade for many years. They began to realize that Pickens worked with Native Americans on a regular basis and even moved closer to Oconee Station to be among them. When the students returned from the adventures, they downloaded their JPEGs and became more interested in shaping their arguments. They became engrossed in seeking out additional images and support for their budding position statements. “This guy was doing business with the Cherokee. They had a thriving trade going on!”

With all of this background from their historical investigations, the young historians were ready to begin shaping their arguments. They worked in groups of two or three for
several days, but they could have used many more. They simply had not had enough experience with creating formal arguments since the CCSS standards for crafting arguments are very new and teachers had rarely been encouraged to lead students at this age toward such a rigorous genre. Still, Ms. Peace helped the students outline their arguments that included not only supportive reasons but also warrants for those reasons. They struggled to explain why their supportive reasons were warranted or apt. For example, one group offered the supporting claim that Andrew Pickens was a good family man, but they had trouble explaining why this contributed to their argument that he was a fine Palmetto Patriot, that this showed that he worked toward enlarging the freedoms of his family members. They could offer details about why he was a good family man, but those details did not necessarily demonstrate why this would make him a Palmetto Patriot. To do this, they would have needed to explain, for example, that because Andrew Pickens was a good family man, he developed a stable and secure home for his family out on the frontier so that his children could learn to read and write and perhaps make plans for college so that they could become future leaders within the state or have choices in terms of their desired pursuits.

Finally, the day came when the mobile computer lab arrived. Students were eager to get their computers and begin working on their presentations. Even though they still needed to work on refining their arguments, they began tinkering with the technology. They worked tirelessly to develop backgrounds and transitions and exotic fonts and first draft slides that had some semblance of structure and order, but they needed so much more time and structure, even though they had a written draft outline of their main claim, supporting claims, warrants and counterarguments. They needed a few lessons on visual literacy and much more supportive structure in terms of making their slides meaningful for their intended audience.

Since the computers were available for only a few days, they had to move toward developing their voice-overs for the slides and work at making the slides self-propelling. This, too, became a major challenge although the students were highly motivated. One female student dragged me to a quiet corner in an adjacent room to see if I liked her “counter argument.” It was music to my ears. She knew that she needed to anticipate why listeners would object to her positive portrayal of Andrew Pickens so she would be prepared to defend him despite what she anticipated to be their concerns.

Committed to the project, the teacher and students agreed to come back to the project at the end of the semester so that students could work on their arguments and their slide shows for 5 more days near the end of the semester. The students and teacher were engaged. They wanted to give this project more time.

Yet, the students and teacher struggled in several significant ways. Some of the groups wanted to revert to a mini-biography genre that resembled a cradle-to-grave approach sometimes encouraged in schools. Another challenge was their inability in many cases to use textual transitions to help their listeners and viewers appreciate the direction of their arguments. Their leads and conclusions needed work as well. They needed more strategies for building arguments and more time to develop ways to hook their audiences and help them appreciate their overall messages.

Another startling revelation was that this Y Generation that was supposed to be so steeped in multimedia fluency still needed plenty of support with using the technology. A graduate student from the local university as well as a professor of instructional technology came to their (and our) aid as the students learned to add voice-overs to their Power Points and make them move forward as desired without manual triggers.
They also had to rehearse many times before their voices were loud and clear enough to be captured on the computers’ microphones. They struggled as well with giving appropriate emphases to words and their meanings through careful intonation. They even had difficulties integrating appropriate images with the textual content on their slides. They had developed image banks based on their various field trips and during their time with Internet searches, but they just did not realize how much careful judgment was involved in choosing appropriate images. Still, they persisted.

The students continued to move toward DRAFTS of multimedia arguments and in the process learned much about the historical process and more about Andrew Pickens, the Revolutionary War, and the years following as more and more Cherokee and Euro-Americans made contact on the ever-evolving frontier. They continued to refine their arguments until the very last days of school. Each group was given the opportunity to share their multimedia arguments with the whole class and get feedback on their positions. Again, the students revised their work in light of what they discovered from audience feedback.

After plenty of focused activity, the celebration day came. The winners were excited to hear about the results, while some seemed visibly hurt that their submissions were not selected. Still, all of the student groups worked on the task and 90% of them completed it.

All of the groups thought that Andrew Pickens was a Palmetto Patriot for various reasons that they could support with evidence. He helped the colonists in their struggles to be free. He supported his troops and even used his own funds to clothe and feed them at times. He cared for his family in his absence, making sure they were safe and sound. He also gave service to the state after the war. Most importantly, they tended to emphasize that he helped with nation-to-nation negotiations that did lead to peaceful working relationships among the Cherokee and upcountry settlers. As expected, since they studied the same sources and focused on the same person, they had similar counter-arguments. They noted that Pickens owned slaves but that he treated them as family and paved the way for their freedom upon his passing. Or, they noted that he had fought with Native Americans but that they still respected him—despite that—after the battles were over since they worked with him to develop a workable peace. Even though they lacked the technical capacity to represent their ideas as thoughtfully as they might, they still had developed arguments that showed they were thinking about the virtues and actions needed to work toward helping others in their struggles to be free. They did seem to re-interpret the nature of a “patriot” as someone who worked toward the common good.

The winners arranged with their guardians to attend The Ben Robertson Society meeting in mid-June to present their argument. They projected their multimedia show upon the screen, but the comments from the audience were that the students needed to spend more time developing argumentative speeches that they could share with them live.

**Assertions**

In light of this unfolding, it appears that struggling middle grades students can develop meaningful arguments about human rights leaders within their state if given enough structure and support. In fact, they seem to find the task meaningful. Much more research, of course, is needed that could include student surveys and interviews to get at the students’ personal understandings of the process and the insights they
developed of not only their chosen historical activist or leader but about their thoughts on America’s human rights commitment and what they could possibly do to address it.

In terms of the project’s challenges, it now seems best to refrain from the full-scale multimedia component of the project for several years until the students develop the necessary expertise or the technologies evolve. Even though the multimedia component proved motivational, it became highly distracting at times and took too much valuable instructional time. The next call for the Palmetto Patriots Project will focus on the production of argumentative speeches that students can read within their own classes, schools or during The Ben Robertson Society meeting. The written versions of these speeches can still be posted within the online museum. The award winning speeches could even be read aloud and perhaps recorded so that the museum visitors could still hear the students’ voices. A representative image of the activist could also be included along with an apt caption. Still, the focus needs to be on developing a well-wrought argument that has coherence and substance and that offers evidence that the student is thinking about all the struggles and issues that are involved in human rights initiatives.

Another challenge will be to support teachers as they work with this project. More resources will be needed to help teachers begin thinking about the many ways that people can work toward enlarging the everyday freedoms of others. The online museum can provide a clearing-house of resources that could include a list of possible overlooked human rights activists and leaders within the state’s history. Teachers also need support with helping students develop arguments. Digital video clips of best practice and tools for thought could be offered as well as current publications that relate to helping students construct arguments. The published, online sample student essays will also be of help to teachers who want to participate.

Implications

The opportunities for a human rights project and focus such as this are rife. There are many teachers within South Carolina and beyond who would like to help students begin thinking about America’s human rights commitment. Many social studies teachers, in fact, are waiting for the final draft of the next call. Ms. Peace is but one fine example of what a teacher can do despite varied constraints. She remained committed to the project through all the challenges and is re-introducing it again this year—but with modifications to the multimedia component.

Other states could develop comparable projects to help students think about human rights leaders and efforts close to home. Older students in world history or American history courses could focus on human rights leaders and efforts throughout the world as they begin to think about taking on the mantle themselves within their vocational and avocational pursuits. Teacher candidates can begin working toward developing such units within history, English or combined humanities courses. Summer institutes could help teachers brainstorm about and develop units for their classes. On-line courses or free modules of instruction could help teachers move in this direction.

As suggested in this study, it also helps to have outside support from community leaders and historians. Educators will need to think of creative ways to get the community on board with such an initiative. Students are motivated when they know their work might be considered and actually be used to make a difference. The historian who visited the middle grades classroom in this study was influenced, in part, by the questions the students posed. His biography on Andrew Pickens will have within its title a reference to the transformed warrior as ultimate peacemaker.
Finally, the proposed C3 Framework holds quite a bit of promise in terms of encouraging such an inquiry project that encourages informed action. It encourages teachers to develop units of instructions in which students formulate questions, pursue them with passion, organize and then present their responses to the questions and take informed action in light of them. If South Carolina and other states adopt the C3 Framework, social studies teachers will have far more support for a human rights unit such as this.

Regardless, much more research is needed to document and assess the ways in which students can respond to such an intervention. The next immediate pilot study, prior to a statewide launch of the intervention, will be to work closely with one social studies teacher and one highly gifted 8th grade student to see how they work together to address the challenges of the essay contest. This will enable the researcher to document specific cognitive processes and academic steps that the student uses to align with the contest standards.

The contest standards are in need of major revision as well. To date, about four versions of them have evolved to make the rubric more student friendly and to better suggest the aims of the project and its connection to U.S.A.’s responsibility to take seriously our UN Declaration commitment. Working closely with one student outside of the school context will enable the researcher to develop, with the help of The Ben Robertson Society, a more sensitive intervention tool through the essay contest guidelines. Despite considerable barriers, teachers and students can carve out a niche within the existing curricular policy environment to think about and act upon their responsibilities as Americans to respect and encourage the human rights of peoples near and far.

References
Appendix A
The Palmetto Profiles Project (PPP)
$150.00 Award for Best Submission
Other Exciting Awards for Students Who Meet the Project’s Standards
Sponsored, in part, by The Ben Robertson Society

Overview
Students in South Carolina’s middle schools are invited to participate in the second annual Palmetto Profiles Project (PPP) sponsored by The Ben Robertson Society. The contest is designed to help South Carolina youth engage in authentic historical thinking as they produce stand-alone three-to-five minute multimedia digital speeches that honor South Carolinians who have throughout their state’s history contributed to the common good in exemplary ways as understood by the United Nations Declaration of Universal Human Rights. These profiles will be published within the Ben Robertson Society’s online museum and may be used as part of our state’s ongoing historical story. The deadline for submissions is on or before May 15th of every academic year. Details for submission and suggestions for teachers and participants are detailed below.

Procedures and Evaluation Standards for the Palmetto Profiles Project
Students may work independently or in a group of not more than four to produce a multimedia Palmetto Profile that contains a recorded speech with PowerPoint slides (images of individual students are NOT allowed). They may create these profiles as part of a class focus, or they may submit them independently without the support of a school or teacher. The profiles must be submitted to the co-directors of the Ben Robertson Society via a CD on or before May 15th. Historians, social studies educators, and members of The Ben Robertson Society Advisory Board will evaluate these stand-alone multimedia audio profiles using the following standards:

• (5 Points) Has a provocative lead or opening that introduces the Palmetto person
• (50 Points) Offers a strong argument that explains why the selected Palmetto person has made a significant contribution to South Carolina or beyond. At a minimum, the multimedia argument must have
  o A clear thesis that summarizes or suggests the merits of the profiled Palmetto person (10 points)
  o At least 3 good reasons for why the selected individual has contributed in a substantial way to our Palmetto state; these reasons or claims should each be supported with good examples as well as explanations for why these examples are indeed relevant to the argument (30 points)
  o At least one counterargument and a rebuttal of it that calls into question the eligibility of the selected Palmetto person (10 points)
• (5 points) Has a meaningful and summative conclusion
• (5 points) Uses thoughtful transitions in the oral presentation and in the visual presentation and is free of excessive spelling or grammatical errors
• (5 Points) Includes relevant images that support the verbal narration of the argument
• (5 Points) Includes at least 3 references to primary sources
• (5 Points) Is engaging for the intended public audience (the audience is South Carolina citizens who like to use the internet for educational purposes); Has a personable but scholarly tone; conveys commitment to the argument
• (5 Points) Includes a bibliography at the end that uses Chicago Manual of Style, 16th edition
• (5 Points) Uses multimedia software that works and that can be submitted via a mailed CD to the Ben Robertson Society website (may use PowerPoint, Photo Story, Movie Maker or other media production programs as long as NO STUDENT IMAGES are used)
• (5 Points) Avoids inclusion of any images of specific students
• (5 Points) Includes the electronic submission form that grants permission for the product to be shared within The Ben Robertson Society online museum and that gives the names and contact information for the students, teacher, school and district (see website)

For more information, please contact the contest coordinator or visit our Ben Robertson Society website at www.benrobertsonsoociety.org.

Teachers who are interested in the contest or project may want to consider forthcoming summer institutes that will support teachers who want to develop their own profiles that can be used as instructional models as well as units of instruction that support this authentic assessment of student achievement. The standards for this contest are in accord with the literacy standards within the nation’s Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for social studies. Useful instructional tools will also be available on our Ben Robertson website at www.benrobertsonsoociety.org.
Diffused Impacts of Electoral Systems: Proportional Representation as the Best of All Options for the American Presidency

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Although I consider my area of expertise to be public policy, as a political scientist I inevitably get pulled into electoral politics. The American news media and the public seem to have a fascination with electoral politics, more than any other subfield of political science. They have no greater interest than the one in presidential elections. Since the passage of the United States Constitution, the president has been “indirectly” elected through the Electoral College. Polls consistently show that modern Americans are increasingly unhappy with that process. There is the perception that the Electoral College is somehow unfair and inaccurate and that the “direct” election of the president through the popular vote would better serve the nation.

In public policy, much time is spent in studying the evaluation of policy. An earnest evaluation must not only measure policy results but also take into account the “diffused impacts” of the policy. In other words, when judging the effectiveness of a public policy, one must not overlook the unintended consequences. This is can be quite pertinent for electoral policy. The intended consequence for any electoral system is to translate voter preference into political power. All democratic electoral systems do this if the elections are free, fair, open and competitive. That is, those who win the elections do indeed win the power.

Critics of the Electoral College like to point to the rare occasion when a presidential candidate does not receive the most popular votes but still wins in the Electoral College. This happened as recently as 2000 when Democrat Al Gore won the popular vote yet Republican George W. Bush won the electoral vote and won the presidency. What the critics fail to recognize is that the Electoral College still did translate voter preference into political power at the state-by-state level, which is exactly what the system is currently designed to do. The United States does not have a single national election for its presidency but 51 coinciding state (including Washington, DC) elections. And it is important to remember that the candidates were campaigning for electoral votes, not popular votes. That was their strategy. Those were the rules they were playing by. If the popular vote was going to determine the election, then they would have used different strategy and the outcome would have been altered. Complaining about this is like complaining that a baseball team that had the most hits still lost the game. Hits (popular votes) are important and lead to runs (electoral votes), but in the end runs are what count and runs are what each team played for. Also, voters might have voted differently if they knew they were voting in a single national election versus voting for electors in their own state.

What usually are not scrutinized are the unintended consequences of an electoral policy. This essay will look at all the applicable options for the election of the American presidency and will evaluate them based on two critical diffused impacts – third party viability and competitiveness. Third party viability is concerned with what is the genuine chance that a third party candidate has to win the election, or at least to win electoral votes. The number one complaint I hear as a political scientist is that there is only, at most, two actual choices in American elections since third party candidates are rarely able to win anything. The rise of independent voters over the past few decades has exacerbated this complaint. Competitiveness refers to keeping as many states and localities in play throughout the electoral cycle. When a state or locality stays in play, candidates are compelled to campaign vigorously in those areas which in turn gives a voice to those constituents. Competitiveness is essential to good democracy. It changes
how both candidates and voters behave, especially encouraging more participation. The alternatives to be examined are the current winner-take-all, state-by-state Electoral College system; the favored, national popular vote, winner-take-all design; the GOP favorite, winner-take-all by congressional districts Electoral College plan; and the superior proportional representation, state-by-state Electoral College system. The last one will be deemed the best of all options for the American presidency.

The current American electoral system for the presidency is predominately a winner-take-all, state-by-state system. This means that, in all but a couple of states, whichever presidential candidate wins a plurality of the popular vote within a state wins all of that state’s electoral votes. The rest of the candidates, even if they garner a significant portion of the vote, win nothing. While this system has served the United States in accurately translating voter preference on a state-by-state basis into political power, it does not bode well for the two diffused impacts. Third party viability is very weak with this electoral plan. Winner-take-all inevitably creates a two-party or, at best, a two and a half-party system. Since only the candidate that wins a state actually wins electoral votes, only a candidate from one of the two major political parties is likely to secure any electoral votes. In turn, only a candidate from those two parties will have the chance of winning enough electoral votes to win the presidency. This clearly was demonstrated in 1992 when third party candidate H. Ross Perot received a significant 19 percent of the popular vote yet won no electoral votes. A few third party candidates have managed to win a trickle of electoral votes over the past century. However, none has been even remotely competitive in the Electoral College since ex-president Theodore Roosevelt ran and lost under the Bull Moose Party in 1912.

The winner-take-all, state-by-state Electoral College system is also deficient when it comes to competitiveness. In fact, it creates a swing state phenomenon in which the presidential election and the candidates’ campaigns are focused only in a handful of undecided states. Because most states are one-party dominant, it is easy to project which candidates will win these states’ electoral votes, so there is basically no reason for heavily campaigning there. They are won before the race begins. This usually leaves only a dozen or fewer states that are considered competitive. These states are given an out-of-proportion prominence in the election with an enormous amount of campaign dollars spent and candidate visits leaving the rest of the country out of play. In the end, the voters in a small number of competitive states have an oversized voice in the outcome of presidential elections.

As mentioned earlier, Americans now prefer the highly centralized option of electing the president simply through the popular vote count. This would eliminate the Electoral College and create one national election for the presidency. Whoever wins the most popular votes becomes president making this is yet another form of winner-take-all. This plan, in its purest form, would require an amendment to the Constitution. Although, there is a current movement attempting to get states to agree to always grant their electoral votes to the winner of the popular vote which would achieve the national popular vote effect without an amendment. Either way, this electoral system would have dire consequences for the two diffused impacts. As with any winner-take-all situation, it would be highly unlikely that a third party candidate could assemble enough resources and infrastructure to run a competitive race. It would most likely take an extremely wealthy and/or well-known personality to even attempt such a national run
(and that itself would not necessarily make him/her best qualified to become president). Even the well-established third-party figure and billionaire H. Ross Perot only earned just over 8 percent of the popular vote in his 1996 attempt at the presidency.

In regards to competitiveness, it would be even more disastrous. Since the presidential election would simply become all about achieving the most popular votes, the candidates would be compelled to primarily campaign in highly populated centers mostly on the coasts. In fact, a candidate could win big in a few major metropolitan areas and with that win the entire election. There would be a potential that vast amounts of the country, especially middle America, would be seen as insignificant and ignored, putting them out of play. Rural interests could especially be overlooked in national politics. Of course, the Democrat Party would garner a major advantage from this option with its solid urban demographic support. Another negative diffused impact would be that individual votes will seem even more inconsequential in such a vast election.

The third alternative for electing the president has more recently gained some traction through Republican Party support in states such as Pennsylvania, Virginia and Wisconsin. They have advocated for the highly decentralized Electoral College plan with winner-take-all by congressional districts. This will essentially create 435 coinciding presidential elections. The candidates will run against each other in each congressional district with the winner gaining one electoral vote. The popular vote winner of a state will win the state’s two additional electoral votes from its United States Senate representation. At present, Nebraska and Maine use this option. As with the first two alternatives, this electoral plan will also have negative diffused impacts. In each state, congressional districts are generally drawn by the political party in power (after each census) for its own advantage, known as gerrymandering. These gerrymandered districts give one of the major parties a built-in advantage and compound the already natural disadvantage for third parties in any winner-take-all system. Third party presidential candidates would become even less viable under this plan.

Competitiveness, as a diffused impact, will also suffer even more than with the other options. Gerrymandered districts are designed to make races less competitive. In an overwhelming majority of cases, the winner of a presidential contest in a congressional district would be a forgone conclusion since districts have been primarily calculated to be one-party dominant. Therefore, this option would limit presidential campaigning to very small areas of the country, basically to those relatively few congressional districts that remain competitive. With such a decentralized system, rural areas would be given disproportionate clout, benefitting Republicans, which explains their support. Moreover, there would be other detrimental diffused impacts. Gerrymandering would become even more political since it would directly impact presidential elections as well. This plan also could all but guarantee one-party rule in the federal government with the likelihood that the winner of the presidency would be of the same party as the majority of congressional winners. It is interesting to note that Republican support has waned since congressional delegations have realized the possibility of their races becoming too closely tied to the whims of presidential campaigns and issues, putting their incumbencies at risk.

The fourth and final alternative for electing the president mitigates the adverse consequences found with the others. It is a good compromise between the highly
centralized national popular vote and the highly decentralized congressional district plan. It also rectifies the winner-take-all issues that plague all three, especially the current state-by-state approach. It is the proportional representation, state-by-state Electoral College system. This plan is not unique to American politics. In fact, both the Democrat and Republican Parties use it to some extent in their primary processes. Proportional representation is used in democracies throughout the world, including by some of the United States’ closest allies.

The proportional representation, state-by-state Electoral College system would mean that candidates will receive the same percentage of electoral votes as they received of the popular vote in each state. For example, if a candidate wins 60 percent of the popular vote in a state, he/she will win 60 percent of that state’s electoral votes. With this plan, the losing candidates can also gain electoral votes. That is, candidates that receive at least some support from voters will not just walk away with nothing. They will get their share of electoral votes and their voters’ preferences will be represented in the tally. This electoral plan would not only more closely transfer voter preference into political power in a fair and accurate fashion, it would have very positive diffused impacts. Proportional representation would mean that even third party candidates will finally have a real chance of earning significant electoral votes which is all but impossible in winner-take-all systems. The voter complaint that there are only ever two actual choices in American elections will be rectified. Third and perhaps even fourth and fifth parties will become quite viable in presidential elections.

This option would also ensure the greatest level of competitiveness. Proportional representation will keep most states in play. Since it guarantees that even the losers can win some electoral votes, it will encourage all candidates to campaign robustly in almost every state to increase their percentage of each state’s popular vote and hence their share of electoral votes. Even one-party dominant states with many electoral votes, such as New York and California, will finally be in play. Only in one-party dominant states with few electoral votes, such as Wyoming, will campaigning not be vigorous. The competing presidential campaigns will become truly national campaigns with candidates spending money and giving attention to citizens throughout most of the country. More states and localities will be given a voice in the process and participation will increase. In addition, there would be other positive diffused impacts with this approach. Since more candidates will earn electoral votes, voters will more likely feel that their votes count. When one votes for a losing candidate and that candidate still earns electoral votes, he/she will feel his/her choice is represented. The incentive to campaign all across the nation will force candidates to moderate their policy stances to become responsive to broader groups of Americans. This would be in stark contrast to the recent proliferation of fringe politicians able to gain power and cause gridlock in governing.

All four electoral options for the American presidency would translate voter preference into political power. That is not the issue (although it is argued that proportional representation does do this more closely). What are at issue are the diffused impacts, the unintended consequences. As shown, only the proportional representation, state-by-state Electoral College system creates positive diffused impacts. Admittedly, this plan would need all states to participate in order to realize its full benefits, and an amendment to the Constitution would be necessary. The now
required majority of electoral votes in order to win the presidency would have to be changed to a plurality. With more candidates receiving electoral votes, a majority would be highly unlikely. Presidential elections could then be subject to the not ideal situation of being decided by the House of Representatives. However, with those changes, the proportional representation, state-by-state Electoral College system would indeed be the most beneficial way to elect the president. And for those critics of the Electoral College who worry about the rare occasion that the electoral vote winner does not win the popular vote, this plan, which more closely links electoral votes to popular votes, would virtually eliminate that undesired possibility.
New Teacher Accountability:
Challenges for Higher Education Faculty

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Abstract

A pilot study was designed to assess College of Education (COE) faculty readiness for preparing upcoming teachers to meet new teacher performance requirements. The Higher Education Assessment of Teacher Effectiveness (HEATE) survey was created based on Danielson’s (2011) Framework for Teaching and Evaluation, which served as the cornerstone for this study. Interview and survey results will inform professional learning needs by assessing what COE faculty currently know and do within their methodology courses to prepare teachers for new accountability standards.

Importance of the Topic

Federal mandates focusing on the belief that all children can and should realize high achievement standards have been supported throughout the United States. Public school student performance and teacher accountability is a highly discussed and publicized issue in the U.S. All states are currently required to establish assessment programs to measure student progress towards meeting designated state and national standards. In response to the press as to what needs to be done to improve U.S. schools to remain competitive in our global society, states across the nation are looking to a variety of ways to ensure our students are prepared to be successful in post-secondary education or career opportunities after leaving the K-12 setting. This prompts the question what is happening in classrooms during instructional time and why are our students not performing as well compared to other countries (Linek, Fleener, Fazio, Raine, & Klakamp, 2003)? The discrepancy in U.S. student performance as compared to other countries raises another question: how can we better prepare our K-12 students to be globally competitive (Kress, Zechmann, & Schmitten, 2011)? It is this question has led states to look at instructional practices currently in place in public schools and consider new ways to measure and evaluate teacher instructional performance in the classroom.

Student achievement and teacher accountability is a nation-wide topic in the quest to prepare K-12 students for the requirements of college and careers. The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) are becoming the national measure of students’ ability to meaningfully grapple with rigor, relevance, and relationships within and across content disciplines. Pre-service preparation must change to meet new performance and evaluation mandates, including student growth as measured by standardized tests and administrator observations. With new learner expectations, teacher preparation, performance, and evaluation must also change. Colleges of Education (COE) faculty are compelled to reflect on current practices and move toward innovative methods by teaching, modeling and requiring candidates to demonstrate this paradigm shift in effective instruction.

In order to better ensure all students are prepared, the adoption of Common Core State Standards (CCSS) is scheduled for the state of Louisiana starting in some grades in fall 2012. The CCSS require K-12 students to analyze, synthesize, evaluate, and create responses using the knowledge and skills within a content discipline and across disciplines. With this change in how students must demonstrate learning, teacher performance evaluation is also changing. The current system of teacher performance evaluation provides educators with little information of how to improve their performance, fails to recognize their success, and consequently is not good for Louisiana’s educators or our children. To address these shortcomings, in 2010
Louisiana lawmakers enacted Act 54. In December 2011, the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) revised BESE Bulletin 130 to align state regulations for the Evaluation and Assessment of School Personnel with the new statute:

Act 54 calls for measures of student growth to comprise at least 50 percent of all educator evaluations, thus the new statute establishes a student-based method to assess success and incorporates other measures of professional practice in the remaining 50 percent. To provide educators with consistent feedback, the new law also requires this process to be administered annually, instead of every three years. Likewise, Act 54 requires intensive support for teachers who are identified as struggling. Although thousands of educators have participated in pilot programs utilizing each of the components of the new evaluation system, the full model will be officially implemented in the 2012-2013 school year. (LADOE, http://www.louisianaschools.net/compass)

The new teacher evaluation process contains two major components each contributing 50% of the assessment weight. The first component is attained through student test scores to demonstrate whether or not they attained the projected growth as identified by previous test results or learning target goals. The second component is a teaching rubric, COMPASS, based on The Framework for Teaching and Evaluation Instrument (Danielson, 2011) that is being used by administrators to document each teacher's performance in the following selected domains.

Domain 1, Planning and Preparation, emphasizes teachers' responsibility to possess content mastery and expertise in instructional design and assessments, Domain 2, Classroom Environment, emphasizes that effective application of instructional skills is not possible without an environment conducive to learning, Domain 3, Instruction, requires the teacher to become the facilitator and student the engaged learner to increase intellectual involvement, Domain 4, Professional Responsibility, documents individual and collaborative activities that enhance student learning and extend beyond the school building to all stakeholders including parents and community.

Administrators will use two components, student test performance and the teaching rubric (COMPASS), to identify teachers as effective or ineffective, which will impact teacher tenure and keeping their job. This prompts a need for reflection and change within Colleges of Education to better prepare pre-service candidates for the new expectations for teacher performance evaluation. Faculty preparing pre-service candidates must identify the changes in teacher expectations and learn/refine the pedagogical strategies used as examples of good teaching. This article will describe how one college of education used the changes in public school teacher accountability to start the redesign process of how pre-service university faculty are working to prepare future teachers to be ready to face this new world of accountability in teaching.

One College of Education’s Experience

The adoption of an adapted version of the Danielson Framework prompted universal conversations in the local schools and at a College of Education with the big question being, what is this framework and how will it impact classroom instruction and teacher preparation? In effort to address the pre-service needs question, one College of Education faculty decided they needed to consider their current practice and perhaps
start the process of altering how pre service teacher candidates are prepared as outlined in Danielson’s framework Instrument.

**Purpose of the Study**

In order to support faculty in the College of Education at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, the position of Director of Pedagogy: Teaching and Learning Alliance was created. One of the main goals of this position is to support faculty in adjusting how and what we require of pre-service candidates within pedagogical courses. This goal is accomplished through Faculty Professional Development offerings and seminars for faculty throughout academic year. The study instruments included in this paper were developed in order to gain an initial understanding of what professional learning is needed to successfully promote candidate preparation practices that prepare our graduates to teach according to the levels established by COMPASS.

As such, the purpose of this pilot study was to gather data that would establish what faculty currently know, understand, and do within their courses, identify what needs to change based on the new teacher evaluation process to guide future professional development for faculty. The outcomes of this survey were used to select and design professional development as well as to create future seminar groups based on topics in need.

**Research Questions**

The questionnaires were constructed using the key ideas found in the new teacher evaluation tool, COMPASS, and consisted of Likert scale items, open-ended questions, and a Professional Development Needs survey. The following overarching research questions guided the inquiry.

1. What level of understanding do current teacher preparation faculties have of teacher performance requirements of COMPASS?
2. What are the needs of COE faculty to adjust teacher preparation classes to best prepare candidates for these new accountability requirements?

**Literature Review**

The concept of accountability in higher education has existed as early as medieval times when the universities were under the auspices of the Catholic Church (Marchand & Stoner, 2012). Throughout subsequent centuries, accountability shifted to any authority financially supporting a given institution. In our current times, State Departments of Education are beginning to hold Colleges of Education teacher preparation programs accountable for the teachers they produce as measured by student achievement on state assessments. This new expectation requires reflection on what is effective teaching, what is meaningful learning and what is evidence of good teaching.

**Developing Effective Teachers**

Teachers who impact student learning must have the required teaching qualifications, know their content, understand effective classroom management, grasp the importance of student engagement, use student data to drive instructional decisions, and differentiate instruction to meet the needs of the learners in the classroom (Chesley & Jordan, 2010; Stronge, Ward, & Grant, 2011). These concepts are complex in nature and pose a demand on faculty in teacher preparation programs to reflect on what and how they prepare pre service teacher candidates to make sure these concepts are passed from one generation of teachers to the next. This act of reflection may require
an examination of instructional structure at the college level in order to provide learning experiences that model and support pre service teacher candidates’ internalization and use of these concepts in their future classrooms (Kalchman, 2011). The big question needing to be considered changes the question from, what is best for me to what is best for the children in my classroom (Linek et. al., 2003)? The emphasis on these effective teacher concepts suggests that pre service teacher candidates need to receive performance feedback to continue to improve their teaching craft. This feedback needs to be task based rather than person based (Cavanaugh, 2013). It is this “personal experience” that constitutes deep learning as opposed to surface learning (Bain, 2004; Dewey, 2010). Performance feedback helps make the shift from what candidates’ mental models, as experienced in as K-12 students, to the construction of knowledge rather than transmission of knowledge (Bain, 2004). It is when a paradigm shift from experience to best practices that effective teaching and meaningful learning become real and relevant to candidates.

**Meaningful Learning**

In order for meaningful learning to take place, teachers need to reach students intellectually and educationally, leaving students wanting more (Bain, 2004). The reaching of students in this manner is a complex human process which requires breaking from tradition to place value on creativity, curiosity, consideration of ethical issues, depth and breath of knowledge, and methodologies of the field in order to create knowledge as real world participants (2004). It is when we take our cues from the child including their interests, readiness, and learning profiles that true student success can occur (Dewey, 2010; Renzulli, 1996; Tomlinson, 2004).

Tasks used to support meaningful learning must be authentic, present challenges so students struggle with concepts, rethink assumptions about a topic or idea, and consider previous experiences that shape one’s current understanding (Bain, 2004; Renzulli, Leppien, & Hayes, 2000). To be a teacher who provides meaningful learning for students, the child must be the starting point and the ending point (Dewey, 2010). It is the use of these meaningful learning practices that move students from being multiple choice test takers to doing real intellectual work (Carpenter & Pease, 2012).

**Evidence of good teaching**

Student achievement and learning is not the same thing (Wallace, 2012). If students participate in quality learning experiences, they will achieve. High quality learning experiences requires the educator to shift the responsibility of learning to the student, students as active participants in their own learning (Carpenter & Pease, 2012). This is not a release of responsibility but rather a shift in how the learning is designed. Students need to have support and scaffolding to be successful when they take responsibility for learning and it is the teacher’s planning and lesson design that give students what they need to be independent learners. Good teaching means the teacher crafts lessons that have intellectual rigor. Using critical thinking, developing personal learning goals, collaborating with peers, and using self-assessment must be included in the lesson design to guide and support students to take responsibility for their learning (2012).

Defining what tools might be used to promote and assess the success of a teacher in guiding students to learn effectively, independently and gain a competitive intellectual edge needs to be determined. Many Departments of Education are working to move to a “good teaching” model through the adoption or adaptive use of The Framework for
Teaching Evaluation Instrument (Danielson, 2011). This framework includes the use of students working in groups, discussing ideas, asking questions rather than only responding to questions, and reflecting on learning. Many states are selecting this framework, in whole or in part, to identify the qualities of good teaching and have a method to evaluate teacher effectiveness.

**Theoretical Framework**

The following section describes Danielson’s entire framework, which served as the cornerstone for the development of the Higher Education Assessment of Teacher Effectiveness (HEATE) survey.

Planning and Preparation is the first domain described in Danielson’s Framework and arguably the most crucial (King, Williams, & Warren, 2011). Planning is the behind-the-scenes work of organizing, preparing, and designing classroom instruction. Domain 1 emphasizes the teachers’ responsibility to possess mastery of their content area together with expertise in instructional design and assessments (Danielson, 2007; Pasley, 2011). It is important that schools retain highly qualified teachers who apply current strategies, techniques, and resources for promoting improved student achievement (Staub & Stern, 2002). Domain 1 includes the following six components: (1) Demonstrating Knowledge of Content and Pedagogy, (2) Demonstrating Knowledge of Students, (3) Setting Instructional Outcomes, (4) Demonstrating Knowledge of Resources, (5) Designing Coherent Instruction, and (6) Designing Student Assessments (Danielson, 2007).

Domain 2 of Danielson’s framework for teaching centers on the ability of teachers to create a classroom environment that is conducive to learning maintaining that effective application of instructional skills is not possible without such an environment (Danielson, 2007). Domain 2 includes five components that, “set the stage for all learning…and establish a comfortable and respectful classroom environment that cultivates a culture for learning and creates a safe place for risk taking” (p. 28): (1) Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport, (2) Establishing a Culture for Learning, (3) Managing Classroom Procedures, (4) Managing Student Behavior, and (5) Organizing Physical Space.

Domain 3, consisting of five components, captures the core of instruction: (1) Communicating with students, (2) Using questioning and discussion techniques, (3) Engaging students in learning, (4) Using assessment in instruction, and (5) Demonstrating flexibility and responsiveness. Instruction, therefore, can be defined as the act of clear communication during intellectual involvement that fosters instructional evolution with ongoing reflection by the teacher and student. In a teacher-centered environment, instruction "is defined as the teacher telling the students what to learn and the students learning. Today, the teacher has become the facilitator and the student the engaged learner that is key to increased student intellectual involvement.

Domain 4: Professional Responsibility documents individual and collaborative activities that ultimately enhance student learning. Four major themes characterize this domain: (1) Collaboration; (2) Professionalism; (3) Reflection; and (4) Involvement. Professional educators are moving toward an era of substantial transformation as they enter the portal of Professional Practice. Increased conversation on the importance of professionalism is changing the educational culture resulting in a significant impact on teacher practice (Cheng, 1996). Professional responsibility extends beyond individuals
in the school building to all stakeholders including parents and community. Ultimately, professionalism is rooted in two basic principles, which are professional integrity and ideals of service to the society (Jayamma & Prakasha, 2011). Teachers must possess the characteristics required by professionalism, such as reflection, collaboration, and involvement, in order to have a positive impact on student achievement and the community.

Research Methodology

Research Design

The exploratory nature of this research is suited to understanding a specific initiative along with the underlying policies and procedures of a project; or in this case, state mandates. A concurrent mixed methods research design was used to discern how faculty makes sense of pedagogical strategies, skills, and curriculum concepts. Responses to open-ended questions provided greater insights and understanding of real-life everyday teaching and learning experiences centered on these new mandates.

Participants

The participants in this study were faculty at a university in the southern United States who teach pedagogy classes in the areas of early childhood education, elementary education, middle school education, secondary education, and special education. Other College of Education faculty in the departments of Educational Leadership and Kinesiology were also invited to participate in the study. Participants were informed on the open-ended questions document and orally by the researcher that the information gained from the responses to the five questions would help guide the professional development offerings provided for College of Education faculty. COE faculty was informed that the goal of the professional development offerings is to support the preparation of teacher candidates for success under the new teacher assessment system. By responding to the questions, faculty acknowledged their consent to participate in this component of the study.

Data Collection Procedures

The Higher Education Assessment of Teacher Effectiveness (HEATE) survey created for this study mirrors teacher competencies as defined by Danielson (2011). Using HEATE, COE faculty self-reported on their perceived readiness to prepare upcoming teachers. The HEATE survey and the Professional Development (PD) Needs assessment questionnaires were administered during the sessions resulting in a response rate of approximately 77% or 23 completed surveys. A smaller response rate of 8 qualitative open-ended questionnaires were returned the second day of the workshops most likely because faculty were asked to complete these as for homework rather than given the opportunity to work on the items during the sessions. These sample sizes were deemed sufficient for the exploratory nature of the pilot study goals.

Data Analysis Procedures

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics procedures including frequencies and measures of central tendency for the HEATE survey and the Needs Assessment. Qualitative data was thematically analyzed and categorized using constant comparative methods with open coding of text to quantify the frequency of responses. Thematic labels were chosen to represent recurring patterns that emerged from the data. Triangulation strategies were used to promote overall study validity and to
Pilot Study Results
Quantitative Results: HEATE Survey

Detailed descriptive statistics including means, standard deviations, and skew values as well as frequency distributions of all survey items included in the HEATE survey can be found in Appendix A. Participants were asked to respond to force choice categories reflecting their current practices: Never (1); Seldom (2); Occasionally (3); Regularly (4); Always (5). Overall, the results suggest that faculty perceptions were overwhelmingly positive ranging from mean scores of 3.04 to a high of 4.57 throughout the scale. Standard deviation (SD) values indicate consistent variation in responses ranging within ± 1 SD in most cases. All items were negatively skewed meaning that the scores fell within the upper series of choices. The corresponding frequencies also indicate that the majority of faculty either Regularly or Always demonstrate practices and activities represented in each of the four Domains. In contrast, the study shows that some activities were either Never or Seldom practiced indicating a need for further professional development. A more comprehensive examination of the individual domain items is presented below.

Domain 1 - Planning and Preparation: Overall, 70% or more faculty believed they modeled the majority of strategies relating to organization, instructional design, and assessment techniques covered by this domain (M = 3.60-4.32) However, results revealed a need for further professional for 1E – designing coherent instruction: using grouping techniques for instructional design. Means ranged from 3.09-3.22 (SD 0.30 to -0.60) and 56% faculty reported only occasionally, seldom, or never using these strategies.

Domain 2 – Classroom Environment: The majority of faculty (82%-90%) self-reported they covered topics related to establishing a culture of learning and respect that supports learning. Alternately, 78% asked for greater understanding of collaborative and cooperative learning strategies and organizing alternative classroom physical spaces for cooperative learning (components 2C and 2 E). Mean scores of 2.91-3.70 validated the frequencies of occasionally, seldom, or never.

Domain 3 – Instruction: The components for this domain primarily focus on communication and student engagement strategies that promote high-level questioning, discussion, and higher order thinking. Using assessment in instruction (3D), formative and summative assessment and alignment to objectives, is also included in this domain. Mean scores and frequency distributions suggest that faculty generally use and model the instructional strategies captured under this domain. Nevertheless, some faculty (25%) identified limited use of strategies to demonstrate active student engagement (M = 3.29-3.86). An additional 23% of faculty indicated a need for increased emphasis of formative assessment and sharing of assessment criteria with teacher candidates. Approximately 45% of faculty reported limited use of one item, I guide candidates how to identify and use facial expressions and body language of students to determine understanding.

Domain 4: Professional Responsibility. Individual and collaborative activities that ultimately enhance student learning are characterized in this domain. Professional responsibility extends beyond individuals in the school building to all stakeholders...
including parents and community. The strongest use of professional strategies was indicated for reflecting on teaching. Nearly 90% of faculty reported regularly to always model the importance of monitoring both student and self-understanding for improved teaching and learning outcomes (M = 4.23-4.36). Item 4B maintaining accurate records, however had two factors with a significant number of faculty ranking these occasionally or below. Forty percent reported low use of the strategy, “I model for students how to ‘know where a student is’ in his/her learning as evidenced in record keeping.” Additionally, 52% of faculty negatively ranked the item, “I demonstrate ways to organize non-instructional records.

The last area needing improvement was in 4C: Communicating with families. Between 36% - 54% of faculty reported only occasionally, seldom, or never sharing ways to communicate individual student progress and academic achievement with families or how to develop materials that inform families about classroom activities and student progress.

Quantitative Results: Professional Development Needs Assessment

Faculties attending the three-day professional development were given a survey at the end of the third day session to express the desire for additional information in self-selected areas to better support pre-service candidate preparation. The survey included all areas identified in the COMPASS evaluation tool and asked each faculty member to rank each topic as level 1 (greatest need); level 2 (moderate need); and level 3 (some need). Trends were identified as a number of areas emerged with greater levels of interest. Faculty identified high areas of interest for additional PD to support candidates in the following areas:

Designing student assessments. 19 or 86% of the faculty expressed high and moderate interest in further professional development offerings in this area. This need was mirrored in the HEATE survey as 31% responded that only occasionally modeled using assessment as part of the instructional planning process.

Establishing a culture for learning. 20 or 86% of the faculty expressed high and moderate interest in further professional development offerings in this area. The item indicated this need, that shows they create a classroom culture that promotes student generated questionning to support depth and understanding of content.

Managing student behaviors. 16 or 69% of the faculty expressed a high or moderate interest in further professional development in encouraging and promoting self-directed learning.

Questioning and discussion techniques. 18 or 78% of the faculty expressed a high or moderate interest in further professional development offerings in this area. The responses to the open ended question, how one knows if a teacher is supporting students in the use of questioning and discussion techniques, were of definitional nature, sharing knowledge of what the asking of questions and facilitating discussion might look like in a classroom.

Engaging students in learning. 16 or 65% of the faculty expressed a high or moderate interest in further PD in this area. Responses to the open ended question, understanding what an intellectually active classroom looks like, were of definitional nature, sharing of knowledge of what behaviors might be present in an active classroom rather than actually using these practices.

Using assessment in instruction. 15 or 69% of the faculty expressed a high or moderate interest in further professional development offerings in this area. The
responses to the question of, what is your understanding of formative and summative assessments in teaching and learning were of definitional nature, sharing knowledge of what the use of formative and summative assessments in the classroom might look.

Reflecting on teaching. 15 or 69% of the faculty expressed a high or moderate interest in further professional development in strategies for incorporating the use of student self-reflection and goal setting.

Based on the survey results, additional professional development will be planned and all faculty will be invited. In addition, each faculty member who identified a particular area will be sent an additional invitation reminding them of their request. These professional development opportunities may be delivered in various ways including workshops, seminars, book talks, and question and response sessions. The format for each professional development opportunity will be determined based on the topic and how information could best be shared.

Qualitative Results: Holistic Interpretation of Open-ended Questions

The COE faculty were given the opportunity to respond to the five qualitative open-ended questions designed by the researchers. The first four questions reflect essential components of 21st century learning in the classroom: critical thinking and problem solving skills, collaboration and team-building skills, engaging students in the learning process, developing social skills and building team skills, and providing and using feedback for improving learning (Partnership for 21st Century Skills).

The purpose of the open-ended questions were to determine the level of the faculty’s understanding of 21st century learning skills, document what teachers are currently doing to align classroom practices with new expectations required of candidates, align professional learning opportunities with faculty needs, and gain insight into the types of behaviors demonstrated in teacher candidates committed to continuous learning in the profession.

Responses were analyzed to determine themes across all questions. Four themes emerged from participants’ responses to the five open-ended questions:

Higher-order thinking. Higher order thinking and reasoning involves information processing, making connections between key concepts, thinking creatively, and problem solving. This requires deep thought and self-reflection as indicated by 30% of faculty: as demonstrated by students using higher order questioning strategies to support critical thinking and reasoning skills. In addition, 20% of faculty believe the teacher facilitates the learning process and moves students to deep thinking through the use of use of probing questions, effective classroom structuring and pacing, and grouping strategies which promote collaboration and problem solving.

Environment. The classroom environment is characterized by positive and supportive teacher-student and student-student interactions. The majority of faculty, 63%, indicated that students are completing tasks using HOTS, students are engaged in learning through conversations, discussions, questioning, probing, seeking clarity, and making connections. Twenty-five percent report using a variety of assignments are used to appeal to different learners” was described as characterizing an intellectually active classroom. Third, 20% indicted that students are working in small team settings, making presentations in class with students talking more and teachers talking less. Sixty-three percent of faculty also identified a classroom environment in which students are exploring, discussing, comparing and contrasting, and asking questions as an example
of connecting positive classroom behavior and content engagement. Finally, 25% of faculty shared the importance of teachers showing enthusiasm for content, serving as a facilitator, and incorporating a variety of instructional strategies to accommodate different learning styles and learner needs.

**Assessment.** Twenty percent of faculty shared formative assessment is part of the instructional process and dual purpose: providing feedback to students and collecting, analyzing, as well as using data to improve learning. This is indicated by 33% of faculty reporting formative assessment “occurs frequently, daily, throughout learning,” “ongoing feedback to student,” “provides data about student learning,” and “the student is involved in assessing one’s own learning.”

Faculty identified summative assessment as comprehensive and occurring at the end of instruction. Its focus is assigning grades and reporting student progress. One common phrases used by 60% respondents was, “to measure knowledge at the end of a unit, chapter, or course.” Another 30% responded that it is formal and used to make judgments about what students have learned.

**Professional growth.** The motivated teacher candidate demonstrates enthusiasm in teaching. The teacher is open to new ideas and committed to on-going personal learning as evidenced by 80% of respondents indicating candidates manifest this characteristic when they “seek professional learning opportunities” on their own. Other evidence includes, “they pursue advanced degrees,” and “enjoy challenges” as noted by 30% of respondents. Another twenty percent noted that candidates “take initiative” and are “passionate” about their work.

**Triangulation of Data:**

The quantitative survey results suggest areas of perceived use on the part of faculty members. Some of the important areas had a significant number of reported use at the lower end of the scale, occasionally, seldom, and never used.

**3C Engaging students in learning** has four factors in the domain with three receiving occasionally or below, thirty one percent reported that, “I model for candidates what active students engagement looks like” and “I provide opportunities for candidates to make choices related to tasks and product outcomes” 45% percent indicated using the following with a frequency of occasionally or below; “I initiate class activities for candidates to experience a variety of grouping arrangements.”

The factors in 3C are also addressed in the open-ended questions (qualitative). Faculty responded to the question, “What does an intellectually active classroom environment look like” including statements such as, short lectures, whole group, small groups, turn and talk discussions, student to student/ student to teacher interactions, students are completing tasks using HOTS, a variety of assignments are used to appeal to different learners, and teacher focuses on students’ strengths and interests

**4E Growing and developing professionally:** Only 31% of faculty required candidates to participate in PD. However, as reported in the open ended questions, faculty suggest that an intrinsically motivated candidate, seeks out learning opportunities/professional development on their own, pursues advanced degree/certifications, goes beyond what is expected of them, takes the initiative, is open to new ideas, passionate about their work, and enjoys challenges.
Conclusions and Educational Significance

A common national educational goal is to provide all students with a world-class education where teachers, principals, and schools are held accountable for meeting high expectations and globally benchmarked standards. This study focused on examining whether College of Education faculties are ready and able to align their teaching and preparation programs to the new teacher evaluation model.

Exceptional leadership is required in every school. Innovation must be encouraged and replicated regardless of the challenges of accountability mandates imposed by state reform efforts. All educators must be committed to continuous improvement of pedagogical skills and knowledge that cultivates maximum student learning and achievement. Traditional ways of thinking about how to educate children today and assess educator effectiveness has been transformed. College of Education faculty must continue to reflect, study, problem-solve, and search for best models to guide future teachers and school leaders to prepare students for a meaningful life beyond K-12. Delivering this promise of a better-prepared adult citizenry begins by critically evaluating how our teacher preparation programs are equipping teacher candidates to respond to this challenge. Higher Education faculty must be in the forefront of leading change in preparing future teachers to respond to 21st century learner needs and the demands and challenges of tomorrow.
References
Common Core State Standards: Opportunities, Challenges, and the Professional Disposition

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Abstract

The evolution of the on-going movement to delineate the core of what students must know and be able to do has morphed into the Common Core State Standards Initiative. The authors of this article propose a deliberate approach to the exploration and analysis of this initiative which includes the opportunities that the Common Core State Standards Initiative presents, the challenges that exist with this initiative, and the unique aspect of the role that professional disposition plays in this attempt at reforming education as a pivotal step in the standards movement.

The center, or core, of teaching and learning is the important consideration of what a student must know and be able to do. Grounded in this emphasis, in the spring of 2009 an effort began to develop a set of shared national standards ensuring that students in every state are held to the same level of expectations that students in the world’s highest-performing countries are, and that they gain the knowledge and skills that will prepare them for success in postsecondary education and in the global arena (Kendall, 2011). Since that time, Common Core State Standards for history/social sciences, science, English/language arts and literacy have been developed and were released in the 2010-2011 school year, and forty-six states have adopted the Common Core State Standards. Alaska, Nebraska, Texas, and Virginia have yet to adopt this national framework of core shared state standards that place an emphasis on what is considered to be the essential core of what students should know and be able to do.

Initially, educators’ response to the Common Core State Standards . . . “been there and done that.” So as the Common Core State Standards evolved, teachers’ reacted with some skepticism related to the CCSS’s movement as yet another educational “fad” that would come and then go like all other educational “movements” consistent with efforts to reform the current state of education.

The evolution of the implementation of standards related to English, math, science and social studies has morphed itself into a movement that has gained momentum where there is common agreement on a shared set of standards for each grade level and the expectations and responsibilities for all stakeholders are made clear. According to Kendall (2011), “The Common Core provides an established set of standards whose mastery will provide each student with the skills and knowledge to advance in study whether as a master craftsman, a biochemist, or a pioneer in a field that has yet to emerge” (p. 10).

Amid the growing movement instigated by the Common Core to implement a universal set of standards for public schools in the United States, Nebraska is among the four states mentioned that have not adopted the CCSS. Many Nebraska teachers, education officials, and community members are proud of the state’s legacy of standing up for states’ rights and not buying into popular movements in education that are often viewed as fads. According to Dejka (2013), “Tempted by an Obama administration offer of federal Race to the Top grants, Nebraska officials promised to adopt a set of standards purported to be so tough and revolutionary, they would help us restore the nation’s standing as an international education leader, catching up to perennial powerhouses Finland and Japan. The standards were called the Common Core...The grants went elsewhere, and so did the standards.” Because Nebraska refused to implement measures dictated by Race to the Top requirements, the grant money was
not provided and rather than Nebraska adopting the CCSS, it is now in the process of aligning its own standards to the CCSS.

If Nebraska is aligning its standards to the Common Core, it may seem that adopting would be an easier and less costly choice. In contrast, there are several reasons why the Nebraska Board of Education decided that adopting was the wrong choice for the state’s schools and students. When a Nebraska Department of Education official was asked if not adopting because of the “Nebraska Way” would result in a lot of pain, hard work, and anxiety, the reply was, “The CCSS began as an initiative that was a state led effort. There were three goals of this initiative, regarding standards, which included: fewer in number, higher in rigor, and internationally benchmarked. It is important to remember that schooling is a state function, not a federal function. When you look at the standards Nebraska uses, there is minimal language. This gives maximum flexibility to the teachers so genuine and meaningful learning can occur” (Nebraska Department of Education Official, personal communication, July 2013).

Furthermore, when implementing new standards, new assessment measures must also be implemented which is a pricy process for states. According to an America Achieves Nebraska official, “Nebraska is known for local control. The State Board of Education just sunk millions of dollars into the Nebraska State Accountability system (NeSA); and if they adopted, they would have to redo the statewide assessment” (America Achieves Nebraska Official, personal communication, September 2013). Even if economic implications could be easily absorbed and teachers could find flexibility within the standards to teach in a meaningful way, there is still a great lack of understanding of the standards by education officials and the public. The wait and see approach is conservative, but is perhaps the best option for Nebraska while the kinks of the standards and their implementation processes are worked out by other states.

Throughout previous education reform efforts such as No Child Left Behind, teachers’ opinions and expertise were not prioritized. Teachers will be the ones implementing the standards into their classrooms and are experts on what does and does not work in education. Consequently, teachers and education professionals are a critical element to an effective rollout of the new standards. The method in which the CCSS are implemented will ultimately determine the movement’s success or failure. Teacher leaders in Nebraska education were surveyed to discover their insights on current access to professional development, knowledge of the standards, and if Nebraska’s standards stack up to the Common Core.

The results were tremendous in compiling information to predict if Nebraska teachers would have access to adequate amounts of professional development to facilitate an effective support system throughout a hypothetical rollout of the CCSS. Forty-two percent of respondents indicated that their school district provides monthly professional development opportunities. Our respondents take advantage of these opportunities with 38.5% indicating that they participate in professional development on a monthly basis. The Nebraska teacher leaders surveyed are actively engaged in professional development not only through their school district, but also 69.2% of the respondents sought out supplemental professional development from sources outside of their school district. This indicates that to advance in the profession as a high quality teacher leader, respondents felt it necessary to gain additional resources and learning besides what was provided to them by their employer. This set of data becomes very important when
discussing implementation of new standards in Nebraska whether they be revised Nebraska standards or Common Core. Teachers are actively participating in provided learning and growth opportunities and a large number of teachers independently access additional support outside of their school districts. If school districts are currently not able to provide adequate professional development, the strain of additionally required resources for teachers to ensure a successful rollout of new standards would prove problematic. If effective implementation of standards is the goal, underserving educators is not an option. High quality teacher professional development is an absolute necessity for successful standards. It is still unclear, however, what high quality teacher professional development looks like and how often teachers need to engage in these opportunities to be adequately prepared for a Common Core classroom. According to Dietz and Brooks (2013), “Meaningful education reform is not something you can mandate, standardize, or easily measure. It requires a collegial culture in which teachers are continually advancing their practice and making adjustments on the basis of their students’ current levels of understanding, readiness, and responses to inquiry-based instruction.” If meaningful education reform requires a holistic approach centered on teacher preparation, collaboration, and professional development, then serious analysis of current resources available to teachers needs to occur. Having competitive and rigorous expectations for all of our nation’s students to meet is important, however, the new standards need to be viewed as a new tool for teachers to help their students achieve academic success rather than the sole solution whose success is independent from teacher quality and preparation. According to Shanahan (2013), “This is not old wine in new bottles. Administrators and teachers are going to have to make some real changes in their practices. Changes will happen and they will happen quickly. It is important for teachers to have professional development opportunities for successful implementation.” The notion that any reform effort in education can be successful without identifying teacher engagement and training as a key component is doomed to fail in its initial stages of conception. According to Kendall (2011), “Transition support documents and collaborative support among administrators, teachers, and staff will be crucial for the success of unpacking the new standards.”

The data also demonstrated that teachers who regularly engage in opportunities to learn and grow within the profession are more likely to be equipped with knowledge regarding trends in education, even reform efforts that do not directly affect them, their classrooms, or their students. 84.6% of respondents who are all Nebraskan educators were aware of arguments for and against the CCSS even though Nebraska has not adopted. Because issues in education often transcend state boundaries, having highly educated teachers who are aware of problems that their colleagues face across the nation is incredibly beneficial. According to a Nebraska Department of Education official, “It is unlikely that the state board will turn its back on its standards. The language arts standards will be reviewed and unpacked. During this process teachers will engage in professional development to revise curriculum in alignment to the new standards. By maintaining state standards this unpacking process will remain much less intrusive than if Nebraska were to adopt the CCSS” (Nebraska Department of Education Official, personal communication, July 2013). Although Nebraska teachers will not be experiencing the unpacking of national standards, their expertise guides them to predict hurdles for other states. When survey respondents were asked what they think is the
most difficult aspect of the implementation process of the CCSS responses ranged from, “Teachers, schools, school districts, parents and especially the students won’t be ready for CCSS.”, to “I believe inadequate training is always the biggest hurdle” (Survey Respondent, personal communication, October 2013). Even though Nebraska teachers will not be implementing CCSS, they are becoming highly aware of not only the impact the new standards will have on their colleagues from other states, but they are also feeling the impact as the Common Core reaches into their classroom. With 46 states having adopted, publishing companies are aligning all of their products to the CCSS. Consequently, Nebraska teachers are having to go through the extra steps of aligning CCSS material with the Nebraska standards. Teachers are also feeling the pressure to implement more inquiry-based and project-based learning experiences into the classroom. Teachers are being pushed to expect students to create inferences and back up their findings with research. Also, inclusion of more informational text, especially for younger grades is a key component of the Common Core that is finding its way into Nebraska classrooms.

Rather than experiencing the indirect impact of the Common Core, some Nebraskan teachers instead think that Nebraska should adopt. Several advocates for the national standards welcome the Common Core State Standards with open arms and are actively implementing philosophical practices addressed in the standards into their classroom. According to an America Achieves Nebraska official, “The difference between current Nebraska standards and the CCSS is that the Common Core has fewer standards and clearer, more in depth language. This results in higher expectations and more time can be dedicated to teaching students how to analyze and synthesize information rather than just memorizing facts to get through the extensive amount of standards. Nebraska State Standards, particularly math, are less rigorous which will result in less prepared students when compared to their peers from other states. It’s wrong. It’s a disservice to Nebraska students to not adopt” (America Achieves Nebraska Official, personal communication, September 2013). There are very strong voices that range on the spectrum of for and against adoption of the Common Core State Standards. The language arts standards were found to be just as rigorous as the Common Core in an alignment study done by the Nebraska Department of Education, and although the math standards are not as rigorous, they will be aligned to the Common Core as they are revised. Rigorous standards are synonymous with students' college and career readiness. Through alignment studies conducted by the Nebraska Department of Education, whether or not the standards are rigorous will not be an issue. Instead, the tension and controversy will remain in the language differences between the sets of standards. Nebraska’s standards are less restrictive and provide more concise language with the premise that providing teachers with high expectations but ample flexibility to be innovative and artful in their teaching results in higher student engagement and consequentially higher student achievement. Proponents for Nebraska’s adoption of the CCSS argue that the lack of language in the Nebraska State Standards does not provide enough direction for teachers resulting in lower expectations and the intended rigor is lost in interpretation of the standards. They instead offer the CCSS as an alternative that has fewer but higher quality standards that explain expectations in their entirety. The two sets of standards are very different in language not because of their connection to rigor but instead philosophical ideas of how
teachers should be directed to teach and what to teach. The differing rationales for the two sets of standards' language are essentially the center of disagreement. Until there is definitive proof that one the Common Core's approach to standards' language results in higher student success, it is doubtful that Nebraska will budge on remaining with its own standards.

Although Nebraska refuses to adopt because of the standards' language, there are several benefits to adopting the CCSS according to Kendall (2011), "The standards are fewer, higher, and clearer to best drive effective policy and practice. They are aligned with college and work expectations. They are internationally benchmarked, research based, and evidence based. The standards describe what students should know and be able to do. There are four strands and within each strand, standards are organized under a set of topics, which apply across all grades." A clear presentation of the CCSS makes them especially user friendly for teachers. It is also notable that the format and standards’ language may be especially attractive to young teachers. The new generation of teachers emerging in the profession grew up during the standards movement, No Child Left Behind, and the overwhelming implementation of rubrics. Seemingly almost every task throughout these new teachers' primary, secondary, and collegiate educations were assessed based on a thorough set of expectations dictated in a corresponding rubric. New teachers are used to, expect, and often require thorough expectations. The Common Core State Standards’ specific language does not impede the artful and creative teaching process for these young teachers, instead it provides the solid foundation that they expect and desire so they can teach in a meaningful way.

The nature of the national movement, however, does have some stakeholders in education concerned. According to Brooks and Dietz (2013), "Classroom curriculum, instructional practices, and assessments are becoming standardized, identical, and ineffective. CCSS lay the foundation to tie teacher quality to student assessment results on a national basis." For many, the idea of a nationally standardized movement is equated with setting teachers up to be vulnerable to malicious political attacks that aim to advance merit pay and other unwanted national efforts. Education is traditionally a state’s issue but according to Ornstein, Levine, and Gutek (2011), "With the passage of NCLB, the federal government has become more involved with the state and local education agencies in taking an active role in implementing education policy" (p. 249). The federal government controls the purse strings for federal aid dollars and has learned quickly that they can incentivize states into compliance by attaching specific requirements to grant funding. This new demonstration of federal authority over states in recent decades is what gives cause for concern to those concerned with states' rights. By states adopting the CCSS, they are laying the foundation for other national movements that may not be positive policies for the public education system.

If the CCSS are to be effective, they need to be not only comprised of high quality expectations but also the language needs to be equitable for all learners. According to Schmidt & Burroughs (2013), "There has been a ton of focus on the CCSS's ability to improve the overall quality of education. However, learning must be equitable as well. There is a great inequality in instructional content. If a child is never exposed to a concept, they will never be able to learn or understand it in the future." One of the great benefits of standards is that they provide an overarching level of high expectations for all learners. This ensures that all students have access to rigorous content and have the
exposure to the same concepts as their peers regardless of race, socio-economic status, gender, or learning level. The challenge for teachers is to be able to teach in a differentiated way these high level concepts to students that may struggle to attain mastery. With functioning working memory and motivation, all students can learn, however, it will be a challenge for teachers to meet the needs of all their students and motivate them to take on higher level tasks that were not expected of them prior to implementation of the Common Core. According to Schmidt & Burroughs (2013), “Extensive evidence points to the inadequacy of mathematics education in the United States. Only 26% of 12th graders reach the threshold of proficiency in math on the National Assessment of Educational Progress. New research indicates that new standards may be the answer to math deficiencies.” Throughout the implementation process and alignment process for states that did not adopt the CCSS, expectations of students via math standards were subpar. This has had a direct and negative impact on student achievement especially when compared to international peers. The quality of the CCSS will provide rigorous expectations to put our nations’ students on a level playing field with their global counterparts. If the CCSS are implemented properly, their quality and rigor will ensure that our students graduate with the ability, achievement, skills, and competencies need to be competitive in the global workforce.

The Common Core State Standards Initiative claims that the standards will demand higher expectations of students resulting in greater student achievement and success. The mantra for CCSS supporters is that the standards will prepare our students across the nation to be college and career ready. College and career readiness has been equated with high levels of student achievement. According to Kendall (2011), “Businesses have complained about high school graduate’s lack of preparedness of the work world. A measure of success in the implementation of the CCSS should be a reduction in the number of students who need additional help once they enter college or career training.” Remedial math, science, and language arts classes are rampant on college campuses. Clearly, there are inadequate expectations and a disconnect between what is being taught in high school to prepare students for college and what content, skills, and concepts students need to have mastered to truly be prepared for college. Some researchers think that the CCSS will not truly address this problem. According to Brooks and Dietz (2013), “The crucial 21st century learning skills are being replaced by test preparation curriculum. The CCSS threaten to implement more of the same and will exacerbate the problem.” In contrast, there are great supporters of the Common Core State Standards Initiative who believe that they will meet the growing need to boost student achievement. According to Schmidt and Burroughs (2013), “They will provide a widespread standard for students to be exposed to rigorous content across the country. This will enable teachers to deepen their teaching and engage students in content that will get them ready for college.” Furthermore, an America Achieves Nebraska official claims, “It’s not just a set of standards, it is a framework. The CCSS offer a rigorous foundation for instruction. There needs to be an instructional shift to get our students college and career ready.”

It takes educators an incredible amount of time to teach current state standards. According to Marzano and Haystead (2008), “When researchers compared the estimated amount of time it would take to teach the content in the standards documents with the amount of time that is available for classroom instruction, they found that
addressing the mandated content would require 71 percent more instructional time than is now available. Schooling, as currently configured, would have to be extended from kindergarten to grade 21 or 22 to accommodate all the standards and benchmarks in the national documents. The CCSS have been reduced to meet the needs of an exacerbated standards based instruction system. An incredibly common complaint among educators is that they are speeding through standards in their classroom to cover them for the test, and when they try to teach standards in a meaningful way, they do not have enough time to teach them all. According to a Nebraska Department of Education official, “Standards based instruction is a yin/yang process. The greatest variation is not what you teach but who you teach it to. The teacher adapts to meet student needs. There is a fear of universality; however, until moms and dads start sending identical kids into the classroom, there is no fear that the art of teaching will not be relevant or needed for meaningful student learning” (Nebraska Department of Education Official, personal communication, July 2013). As teachers across the country are introduced to new standards, many worry that they will not have the ability to teach in an artful and creative way that promotes meaningful learning. However, each child that comes into the classroom presents their own special talents, challenges, and quirks. The CCSS provide new expectations, however, the art of teaching is preserved in the daily innovative lessons and interactions with students that exceptional teachers facilitate in the classroom.

The positive benefits that the CCSS have to offer are numerous. The reasons for Nebraska to adopt may someday soon outweigh the reasons not to take on the CCSS. 81.8% of Nebraska teacher survey respondents anticipate that they would have the necessary knowledge, skills, and professional development opportunities from their school district and independently sought out opportunities to effectively transition to and implement the new standards into their classrooms if Nebraska were to adopt the CCSS. Some Nebraska school districts are already implementing the CCSS framework despite the state’s refusal to adopt. According to a Nebraska Department of Education official, “If federal dollars begin to be tied to the CCSS, it will be difficult to not adopt” (Nebraska Department of Education Official, personal communication, July 2013). For many stakeholders in the Nebraska public education system, the decision comes down to finances.

Although Nebraska has decided not to adopt the CCSS, the movement has permeated the education profession and is directly impacting this state’s classrooms. The debate between the Nebraska State Standards and the Common Core is an extremely important piece in this education reform movement. There are both valid reasons for and against the CCSS and Nebraska’s refusal to adopt. In education, especially among veteran teachers, there is an expectation that education reforms tend to come and go. According to a Nebraska teacher survey respondent, “I think it like any other educational movement, it will also pass. Nothing seems to stay in education long and we throw it out for something new” (Survey Respondent, personal communication, October 2013).

Rigorous and high quality standards have been proven to be key to student success and achievement. However, when Nebraska teacher survey respondents put items that impact student achievement in order on a scale of 5 being most impactful and 1 being least impactful, respondents rated educators as most impactful to student achievement
as a 4.64 and rigorous standards and least impactful to student achievement with a
1.36. Although the merits of the Common Core State Standards should be scrutinized,
analyzed, and praised or repealed based on their success at fulfilling their promise to
get our students ready for their college and career journeys, it is crucial to understand
and remember that educators are the ones in the classroom implementing the
standards. Teachers, their access to professional development, and the support that
they receive from administrators and the community will be indicative as to whether or
not the standards fail or flourish.

Resources
  Educational Leadership. Baltimore: ASCD.
  Classroom. Educational Leadership. Baltimore: ASCD.
  Wadsworth. Belmont, CA.
Schmidt, W.H. & Burroughs, N.A. (2013). How the common core boosts quality and 
  Baltimore: ASCD.

According to Kendall (2011), under the Common Core, six considerations frame an
educator’s approach to implementation of the CCSS in the classroom:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appropriateness of expectations to instructional time available</th>
<th>Under the Common Core</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Standards are designed to require 85 percent of instructional time available</td>
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</table>

Curriculum Support | Standards publication is followed quickly by curriculum development |

Methods of describing student outcomes | Cross-state standards; consortia of states |

Source of expectations for students | The knowledge and skills required to college and career-ready; international benchmarks; state standards |

Primary assessment purposes | Accountability; to inform and improve teaching and learning |

Systemic nature of reform | Standards, curriculum, and assessment are shared among participating states and territories |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Respondent &amp; Professional Development Data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest Level of Education</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| School Environment Indicators  | 76.9% Large-Sized District  
23.1% Small-Sized District  
69.2% Significant Low Socio-Economic Status Student Population  
61.5% Significant Racial/Ethnic Diversity Student Population  
46.2% Significant Special Needs Student Population |
| Amount of professional development opportunities offered **by respondents’ school districts**  | 46.2% Once a month |
| Amount of professional development opportunities **in which respondents participate**  | 38.5% Once a month |
| Respondents that seek professional development opportunities **outside of their school district**  | 69.2% |
| Respondents that are aware of the current arguments for and against the Common Core State Standards  | 84.6% |
The Impact of Teaching with Technology on Higher Order Thinking Skills

Barbara R. Buckner
Triangle Coalition
The Impact of Teaching with Technology on Higher Order Thinking Skills is part of a quasi-experimental research study. The effect of higher order thinking skills between classrooms with and without advanced technology while using multiple representations was explored. The purpose of the overall study was to determine the effect of new technology on student achievement and on teacher behavior variables of planning, teaching, and assessing while implementing the TI-Nspire graphing calculator on the learning of functions.

This study also researched the impact on the higher order thinking skills between classrooms with and without the advanced technology of the TI-Nspire while using multiple representations. A pre-test, a post-test, and a post post-test were used to measure student achievement using Repeated Measures with ANOVA. The effect of the teaching strategy on teacher behavior variables including teacher planning, teacher teaching, and assessments used were measured by classroom observations, document analyses and thick description.

Vignettes were developed around the framework and key constructs of representations, Depth of Knowledge and TPACK. The TI-Inspire uses numeric, geometric, symbolic, analytical and writing as forms of representations. The Depth of Knowledge category was used to code the use of higher order thinking as described by Webb (2006). The Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) ranking category was used to describe levels at which each teacher integrated the technology in their instruction (Niess et al., 2009).

Sample and Research Design

This study was situated in a Southern State School District. The school is located within a rural county with a population around 90,000 and is one of three 9-12 high schools in the county. It is a four year comprehensive high school serving about 1650 students. Ten percent of the students receive special services and 46 percent were of low socio-economic status qualifying for free or reduced meals. All students used in the study were in ninth grade. Students were randomly assigned to the classes by the school computer scheduling system. Class size was an average of thirty.

The study was limited to the four teachers (Alpha, Gamma, Epsilon, Zeta) within eight classrooms of the Ninth Grade Academy. Since each teacher taught two classes, random assignment was used to assign one as treatment and the other as control. To control for the time of day that the class was offered, each period of the day had both a treatment class and a control class. Additionally, the random assignment resulted in two of the teachers teaching their control class first during the day, while the other two taught their treatment class first.

The treatment occurred over a two-week period when all teachers were planning on teaching the function concept. The pre-test was given at the beginning of the function concept study. The post-test was given at the end of the two weeks when the teachers had completed their instruction on the function concept. The post-post test was given two weeks later. At this time, teachers had already moved on to the next concept within their curriculum. During the two-week treatment period, observations of each class occurred using the design from figure 1.

Teachers participated in professional development during the summer and the professional development was sustained throughout the study. Teachers provided copies of all lesson plans, assignments, and assessments used during the two weeks of
treatment. Document analysis compared lesson plans, assignments, and assessments to observations. The types of representations planned, assigned, and assessed were also analyzed as well as the knowledge depth of each component. State standards being covered were also assigned a level in accordance to Webb’s Depth of Knowledge (2006).

Teachers also completed weekly questionnaires that contained components as shown in Figure 2 for both their treatment and their control class. Items on the questionnaire inquired about representations, teaching tools, goals, issues, and benefits. When asking about the use of representations, teachers were asked to specify ways that the representations were used and how they were linked to teaching functions. When asking about the teaching tools, teachers identified which tools were used and how often the tools were used. Teachers were asked about specific goals with respect to how students were learning functions. Issues and benefits provided information regarding the teaching tools, goals, and treatment in general.

**Teacher Training**

The TI-Nspire was new technology for all of the teachers, and they first needed to understand how it worked before they could be expected to teach and assess with it. A two-day summer professional development session, which was taught by a National Texas Instruments Instructor, helped the teachers learn how to use the TI-Nspire from scratch. Teachers were then given a TI-Nspire, the TI-Nspire emulator software, and access to online Atomic learning, and video training to continue their exploration of the TI-Nspire.

The week prior to the study, teachers attended another day (6 hours) of professional development taught by a Texas Instruments Trained Cadre member that reviewed the TI-Nspire, provided specific training about teaching the function concept with the TI-Nspire, and allowed time to create lesson plans and activities for this study. During the four weeks of this study, teachers met once a week for 90 minutes after school to complete a weekly questionnaire, turn-in lesson plans, assessments, and receive further professional development on the TI-Nspire. During this time, the Texas Instruments Instructor answered questions, provided direction for the following week and allowed time for the teachers to complete questionnaires.

**Achievement**

Overall, the student scores were significantly different between treatment and control groups when controlling for teacher effect on the pre-test and the post post-test as shown in figure 3. The student scores were also significantly different when considering teacher and type on the post post-test. The control group’s scores were significantly higher than the treatment group’s scores on the pre-test, indicating that the control class started out at a significantly higher level of achievement than the treatment group. While there was not a significant difference between the group’s post-test scores, the treatment group reached the same level of achievement as the control group. The treatment group’s scores were significantly higher than the control group’s scores on the post post-test, indicating that the treatment group had a significantly higher level of achievement than the control group. This result was supported by other research findings that showed improved test scores when using a calculator (Ellington, 2003; Hembree & Dessart, 1986; Hollar & Norwood, 1999; Mittag & Taylor, 2000; O’Callaghan, 1998; and Ruthven, 1990). This finding was also supported by classroom
observations, and lesson plan analyses showed that treatment classes on average had experienced more representations and a higher Depth of Knowledge per activity between the pre-test and post post-test.

When controlling for the pre-test, students' post post-test scores were significantly higher, which implies that the teacher likely had some effect on the student scores. Teacher Zeta’s class scores on the post-test and post-post test were significantly lower than Teacher Epsilon’s class and Teacher Gamma’s class. This finding implies that being placed in Teacher Zeta’s class had a negative impact on student achievement when compared directly to being placed in the classes of Teacher Epsilon or Teacher Gamma. While the mean scores the classes of Teacher Zeta appeared to be lower than those of Teacher Alpha, the differences were not significant.

Teacher Zeta’s class patterns were also different from those of Teacher Alpha’s class, Teacher Epsilon’s class, and Teacher Gamma’s class. Teacher Zeta was the only teacher during the observations covering the same material in both classes. On the lesson plans, Teacher Zeta was the only teacher to use the same state competencies in both classes. Teacher Zeta was also the only teacher who modified the worksheets for the TI-Nspire treatment class and gave them to the control class to work. These differences within the qualitative analysis seem to support the differences found with the post hoc tests, which showed significant differences in the scores of the post post-test of Teacher Zeta’s classes and both Teacher Epsilon’s classes and Teacher Gamma’s classes.

TPACK
All teachers demonstrated the TPACK Accepting level during the course of this study. During the control class observation, Teacher Epsilon demonstrated a Recognizing TPACK level. Teacher Zeta demonstrated more of an Adapting TPACK level. All teachers allowed and encouraged the use of calculators on assessments, and all teachers were willing to participate in professional development on the TI-Nspire, a new technology tool.

Depth of Knowledge
All classes used, on average, higher Depth of Knowledge activities in their treatment class compared to their control class as shown in figure 4. Teacher Alpha, Teacher Gamma and Teacher Zeta all used Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3 Depth of Knowledge activities within their treatment class and their control class. Teacher Epsilon only used Level 1 and Level 2 Depth of Knowledge activities within the treatment class and control class. In the lesson plan analysis, the average Depth of Knowledge used for activities was higher for Teacher Alpha’s control class than for the treatment class. The opposite was true for Teacher Epsilon and Teacher Gamma in that their treatment class had, on average, higher Depth of Knowledge activities than their control class. Teacher Zeta had the same Depth of Knowledge levels for both classes because all activities for the two classes were the same. The treatment lesson plans also had a higher average Depth of Knowledge level for the activities as shown in figure 5. The Depth of Knowledge level for the state competencies listed within the lesson plan was higher for treatment classes than it was for control classes.

The TI-Nspire has changed how teachers are able to teach because it allows for multiple ways to represent mathematics such as numeric, geometric, symbolic, and analytic representations that were webbed together by the teachers. Research shows
that students can effectively use technology to make and understand connections between graphical and algebraic concepts (Drijvers & Doorman, 1996; & Choi-Koh, 2003) and using one algebraic system to extend and acquire an understanding of another (Colgan, 1993).

The ability to foster a deeper understanding or higher Depth of Knowledge is supported by this webbing effect of the TI-Nspire. This webbing, which shows the direct effect of moving a line, changing the slope or choosing different values within a table, not only provides multiple representations, but also allows for teachers to ask more probing questions about cause and relationships. The higher level thinking skills promoted using graphing calculators is also supported by other studies (Choi-Koh, 2003; Graham & Thomas, 1998; Keller & Hirsch, 1998; Dessart, DeRidder, & Ellington, 1999; Huntley, Rasmussen, Villarubi, Sangtong, & Fey, 2000; & Ronau et al., 2008).

Representations
During the observations, all teachers used multiple representations in all classes. Teacher Alpha, Teacher Epsilon and Teacher Gamma used, on average, more representations per activity in their treatment class than their control class as shown in figure 6. Teacher Zeta was the only teacher who used, on average, more representations per activity in the control class than in the treatment class. The use of multiple representations was also supported by questionnaire responses regarding methods of representations that were used to teach function concepts. During the lesson plan analysis, all treatment classes used, on average, more representations per activity in the treatment class versus the control as shown in figure 7. Multiple representations also were confirmed to be used by all teachers and all classes on the homework, quizzes and tests.

Based upon multiple comments by the teachers, the TI-Nspire made their teaching of the function concept both easier and more effective. Teachers liked the multiple ways to represent the same problem while having all the representations connected together within the TI-Nspire. As previously quoted, Teacher Gamma spoke about how this study brought to light the need to provide students multiple ways of looking at the same problem. The ability of the TI-Nspire to allow students to see the immediate and direct effect of data changes in a graph, an equation and a data table provided a way to web together the function concepts and show students the bigger picture instead of piece-by-piece. Research studies support the findings that students using graphing technology perform better on visual and graphing tasks (Hollar & Norwood, 1999).

Findings
The differences regarding the key constructs of representations, Depth of Knowledge and TPACK provide for the reject the null hypothesis that stated there was no difference in the way teachers taught function concepts in Algebra I classrooms that used TI-Nspire graphing calculators versus Algebra I classrooms that did not use this device. The differences found during the lesson plan and questionnaire analysis regarding state standards, activities, representations, and Depth of Knowledge allow us to reject the null hypothesis that no difference in the way teachers planned lessons for function concepts in Algebra I classrooms that use TI-Nspire graphing calculators versus Algebra I classrooms that did not use this device existed.
Conclusion

Having sustained professional development throughout the study helped teachers expressing the need for adequate time and assistance for the new technology. Providing the Function Focus Session the week prior to the study greatly assisted the teachers in planning how to teach their treatment class. Providing a trained Texas Instruments Instructor on a weekly basis to answer questions, assist in providing direction for the following week, and meet weekly with the teachers to complete questionnaires were vital strategies necessary to support teachers with this new technology tool and to assure their fidelity in treatment implementation and control maintenance.

Teachers modified their teaching when using the TI-Nspire to include higher Depth of Knowledge activities as well as more representations per activity. Teachers also made adjustments within their lesson plans to incorporate the Texas Instruments website activities into their daily activities for their treatment class. Additional adjustments within the teacher lesson plans included using higher Depth of Knowledge state standards and activities as well as more representations per activity when using the TI-Nspire. Teachers did not appear to significantly modify their assessments such as tests and quizzes for their treatment class.

No differences in TPACK levels among the treatment or control classes were found. This finding was in part to the lack of technology within the classrooms. Prior to this study, teachers had access only to the Casio non-graphing scientific calculators. During this study, teachers had the TI-Nspire graphing calculators to use with their treatment class. Given the teacher’s limited access to technology prior to this study, it would be difficult to determine the degree of effective pedagogical practice to which the teachers could have demonstrated with the increased technology afforded by TI-Nspire.

This study supported the use of TI-Nspire graphing calculators into first-year Algebra classrooms while studying the concept of functions. This study showed that while using the TI-Nspire graphing calculator, the use of multiple representations and higher Depth of Knowledge activities can be used to increase student achievement and impact classroom teaching, and lesson planning. Although further research is needed to establish the impact of the TI-Nspire across various mathematics topics, this study demonstrated the impact of the TI-Nspire graphing calculator for the concept of functions with respect to increasing teacher’s use of representations and of more complex tasks. Finally, and perhaps more importantly, the results also indicated a significant increase in student achievement for the treatment group.

References


Figure 1: Observation Categories. Categories for analysis of activities observed during classroom observations.

Figure 2: Questionnaire categories. Categories of the weekly teacher questionnaire.
Figure 3: Original scores by type for each test. This figure illustrates the mean score out of a possible 13 point score for control group and treatment group on the pre-test, post-test and post post-test using the original data.

Figure 4: Average Depth of Knowledge during observations. This figure illustrates the average Depth of Knowledge that problems were asked within a classroom observation.
Figure 5: Average Depth of Knowledge Level from Lesson Plan Analysis. This figure illustrates the average Depth of Knowledge that problems were planned for a classroom lesson.

Figure 6: Average ways of representing an activity during observation. This figure illustrates the average number of representations for each activity during a classroom observation.
Figure 7: Average ways of representing an activity within lesson plans. This figure illustrates the average number of representations for each activity within the lesson plan analysis.
My Administration, My Choice:
The Constitutionality of Recess Appointments

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James Madison, in The Federalist No. 51, said, “In republican government, the legislative authority necessarily predominates” (Madison, 1788). This may have been true back in the latter 1700’s, but the times and people’s expectations for government have changed. Executive power has grown. Often this growth has come from presidents responding to domestic or international times of crisis. However, executive power has sometimes grown through different interpretations of the Constitution. Most people would agree our form of government is not secure if this country cannot respond to a crisis. Unlike congressmen, the presidents are the only elected officials who face nationwide election. The president may be the very person who should ultimately be called upon to exercise extraordinary powers. However, sometimes “crisis” is nothing more than interparty wrangling. This paper questions whether presidents should exercise extraordinary and, very possibly, unconstitutional powers simply because elected leaders cannot compromise.

On January 4, 2012, President Obama made three “recess” appointments to fill preexisting vacancies on the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB). The Senate convened the day before to begin the Second Session of the 112th Congress. The Senate also convened again two days later for a session on January 6. The “recess” appeared to be a three-day break during the Senate’s session. This prompted several legal challenges including *Noel Canning v. NLRB*. A Pepsi bottler challenged the validity of an NLRB order entered at the time the board included those recess appointees. On January 23, 2013, a panel from the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit held that the appointments were invalid, as they did not follow the recess appointments power in the Constitution. The judges unanimously concluded recess appointments could only be made between sessions of Congress (intersessions). Two of the three judges would go even further and also interpret the recess appointments power as applying only to positions that become vacant between sessions of Congress (Noel, 2013). This decision calls into question the legality many actions of federal officials since the Reagan era. Over 300 federal officials since 1981 have received such appointments during congressional sessions (Shane, 2013). The executive branch sought certiorari from the decision. The US Supreme Court accepted the Noel Canning case on June 24, 2013.

The President and the Senate hold the constitutional appointment power jointly. Alexander Hamilton, in The Federalist No. 67, wrote, “The ordinary power of appointment is confined to the President and Senate jointly, and can therefore only be exercised during the session of the Senate” (Hamilton, 1788). The appointment power was a reaction to what many considered to be the monarch’s widespread abuse of appointments. Requiring both branches of government to appoint people to public office would serve as a check on favoritism and prevent unfit people from holding high public office (Wolf, 2013). The recess appointment power was a necessity. It was needed to keep the government operating during the Senate’s lengthy annual intersession break. Throughout the early years of the country, short sessions and long recesses of six to nine months were common. Congressional sessions often lasted less than half the year. Methods of transportation and communication did not allow the Senate to conveniently come back into session or for senators to communicate with each other quickly (Schwartzberg, 2013). The recess appointment power was never intended to give presidents an absolute power of appointment. The Constitution authorizes the President
“to fill up Vacancies that may happen during the Recess of the Senate, by granting Commissions which shall expire at the End of their next Session” (Constitution 1, 1787). There are “intersession” recesses, which occur between two sessions of Congress. Some would also argue there also are “intrasession” recesses that occur within one session of Congress. People who assume office through a recess appointment have the same standing and authority as people who take office as a result of Senate confirmation. The only difference is that the person’s term is temporary because it expires at the end of the next session of Congress. The Adjournment Clause states that “neither [chamber] during the Session of Congress, shall, without consent of the other, adjourn for more than three days . . .” (Constitution 2, 1787). For one chamber to adjourn, both chambers must agree and pass a concurrent resolution. If one chamber wishes to adjourn, but the other chamber does not agree, the chamber wishing to adjourn can hold brief pro forma sessions every three days in order to meet the three day rule in the Adjournment Clause.

The Senate and the executive branch have long fought over recess appointments. In 1863 the Senate attempted to end recess appointments by passing legislation that prohibited the payment of salaries to certain recess appointees until the Senate confirmed them. This legislation was amended in 1940 to provide some exceptions. Some argue this change shows that the Congress has agreed that intrasession appointments by the President are Constitutional since Congress is now willing to pay these people.

More recently pro forma sessions have been used to limit the use of recess appointments (VanDam, 2012). In a pro forma session, one Senator gavels in the session and then promptly ends the session. The session satisfies the requirement of not adjourning without the other chamber’s consent. Since 1985 the Senate has used pro forma sessions for the specific purpose of preventing recess appointments. Senator Robert Byrd even got President Reagan to promise in writing that he would not make intrasession recess appointments. Implicit in this compromise is the premise that the Senate could have prevented him from making recess appointments by convening pro forma. Current Senate Majority Leader Harry Reed (Dem. Nev.) was the first to use these sessions in 2007 to keep President George W. Bush from using breaks longer than three days to make recess appointments. President Bush respected the Senate’s power to prevent recess appointments and did not make any when the Senate was in regular session (Wolf, 2013). On July 9, 2009, President Obama nominated labor attorney Craig Becker to the NLRB. Senate Republicans filibustered the confirmation vote. On March 28, 2010, Becker got a recess appointment to the board. Becker’s nomination was resubmitted to the Senate on Jan. 26, 2011. The Republicans continued to filibuster. A second nominee, Terrence F. Flynn’s nomination, was also filibustered.

As a result of these filibusters, the NLRB faced a problem. The Supreme Court’s decision in the 2010 case of New Process Steel v. NLRB held that the Board could not act unless at least three lawfully participating members were present (New, 2010). The expiration of the 2010 Becker recess appointment left the Board with only two members. Obama withdrew the Becker nomination and forwarded the Senate the nominations of Sharon Block and Richard F. Griffin Jr. The Senate did not act on these nominations by the end of the first session of 112th Congress. Between Dec. 17, 2011 and Jan. 23,
2012, the Senate met only during ten pro forma sessions. House Republicans would not agree to an adjournment in order to block recess appointments. Majority Leader Reid now became a supporter of recess appointments during pro forma sessions. Obama then gave recess appointments to Block, Griffin, and Flynn on Jan. 4, 2012 (Wolf, 2013).

Noel Canning is a Pepsi bottling company in Yakima, Washington. The company asked the D.C. Circuit to overturn the NLRB’s order finding that the company’s management unlawfully refused to enter into a collective bargaining agreement with the Teamsters, who represented their employees. The three-judge panel held that the NLRB’s finding may have been legally supportable, but the finding was not enforceable. The recess appointments were invalid. Without the recess appointments, the NLRB lacked the quorum necessary to conduct business. The panel determined that the phrase, “the recess” in the Recess Appointment Clause in the 18th century would have only meant the period of adjournment between two sessions of Congress. The second session of the 112th Congress convened on Jan. 3, 2012. The Jan. 4, appointments were impermissible “intrasession” appointments. Two judges went further and argued that the original meaning of “happen” in the Recess Appointment Clause meant, “to occur”. Thus the only vacancies presidents can fill during times of recess are ones that open up while the Senate is in recess, not vacancies that occurred while the Senate was in session, but not yet filled at the time of a recess. The three-judge panel concluded a strict reading of the Recess Appointment Clause was necessary to preserve the Senate’s role in the confirmation process (Noel, 2013).

Three main arguments have been raised as to why the recess appointments are invalid and the appellate court decided the case correctly (Shane, 2013). First, the Senate was not in recess on January 4, 2012 when the NLRB appointments were made. This will be analyzed in depth. Since the founding of the Constitution, no President has ever attempted to make a recess appointment during a break of less than three days (Francisco, 2013). Such breaks do not constitute “the recess” within the meaning of the Constitution. Under the Constitution, neither house can adjourn for more than three days without the consent of the other. The recess appointment power has to have some limits. Attorney General Harry Daugherty first articulated this limit in an opinion seeking to expand the power. He argued that no one . . . would for a moment contend that the Senate is not in session “unless it adjourns for more than three days” (Francisco, 2013).

The Obama executive branch tried to justify the January 4, 2012 appointments by arguing that the Senate’s sessions did not count. The sessions were only “pro forma”. Historically pro forma sessions were used to keep a House of Congress in session and comply with the Adjournment Clause. Since at least 1985 they have been used by the Senate specifically to prevent recess appointments. The Senate was meeting regularly and the Senate was available to do business. Short breaks do not count as “the recess” or every weekend could count as “the recess.” Opponents of the appellate court’s opinion argue that the ability to make intrasession appointments has been asserted by presidents since 1921. Since the first Reagan administration, intrasession appointments have been as common as intersession appointments (Shane, 2013). This interpretation, however, looses persuasiveness when one realizes this interpretation could change the recess appointment process into the primary method of appointment.
Supporters of intrasession appointments sometimes call for the adoption of a more functional approach as first suggested by Attorney General Harry M. Daugherty. The Senate is in recess when “its members have no duty of attendance; when the Chamber is empty; when it cannot receive communications from the president or participate as a body to make appointments” (Wolf, 2013). This argument is not persuasive in this situation because on December 23, 2011, during the same series of pro forma session in which the Noel Canning appointments occurred, the Senate passed the Temporary Payroll Tax Cut Commission Act of 2011 by unanimous consent and the president signed it into law. This implies that the Senate also could have acted on the confirmation of nominees if it chose to do so. In this era of accessible communication and travel, the old “functional” definition of when a body is available would not seem to settle the question if adopted.

Second, the President may only make recess appointments during intersession breaks, not intrasession breaks (Shane, 2013). The text of the Recess Clause states that appointments can only be made during “the Recess” of the senate. The clause’s history and text interpret this as being the break between sessions, not breaks during sessions. The Obama executive branch has attempted to interpret this as meaning appointments can be made during any break at any time. The Obama administration would also like these appointments to last through the Senate’s current session as well as the end of the Senate’s “next Session.” This would mean intrasession appointments would last twice as long as those made during intersession breaks. Also, if “the Recess” means any break, then “their next Session” would have to mean any morning session or any afternoon session. It could not mean the Senate’s single, annual session. The two phrases have to be read together and they have to be consistent in meaning.

Third, the President may make recess appointments only to fill vacancies that “happen” during the Senate’s recess. This means only openings that become available during a recess, not openings that have been available before the recess. Happen means to “come unexpectedly or by chance.” Ongoing vacancies do not continue to exist by chance. If the phrase “happen during” means, as argued, “happen to exist,” then the phrase adds nothing and just creates ambiguity (Shane, 2013). President Washington’s Attorney General Edmund Randolph wrote an opinion that stated Presidents do have the authority to fill existing positions that arise during a session of the Senate through The Recess Clause. Despite being a supporter of executive power, Alexander Hamilton rejected the ability to fill preexisting vacancies through recess appointments (Wolf, 2013). Two of President Obama’s appointments filled vacancies that had existed for several years. The other position had been filled by an intrasessional appointment that expired prior to the January 2012 “recess.”

Additional arguments against the lower court’s opinion are, first, that the opinion is too broad. It does not follow principles of judicial restraint. The lower court could have decided Noel Canning on narrower grounds. If the panel of judges wished to strike down the appointments, they could have simply concluded that an adjournment of three days is too short to count as a “recess.” The 2012 pro forma sessions divided the 20-day period into a series of three-day breaks. It would have left the broader constitutional question of intersession and intrasession appointments for another day and case when the resolution of the issue may be absolutely necessary for the resolution of the case. Judicial restraint may be important in bringing the country along in times of deep
polarization. The courts should not be seen as rushing into political positions that take
sides, especially when lower courts are likely to disagree on the issue (Shane, 2013).

A second argument that can be used in favor of the appointments is that the
President must faithfully execute the laws of the country. If the President is denied
the people necessary to work in the executive branch, this duty cannot be fulfilled. There is
a simple practical argument in support of this position. The relationship between
Congress and the executive branch has changed over time. At the time of the drafting of
the Constitution, the Founding Fathers did not anticipate political parties like
Republicans and Democrats. They could not have anticipated fights between these
parties so great that the party that did not hold the presidency would use its Senate
power to keep the President from doing the job the people elected him to do. Some now
argue the President should have the leading role in staffing the executive branch. The
Senate’s role should be to guard against political corruption, not to impede the
President’s policy agenda. Supporters of this position would argue that too literal an
interpretation of the Constitution would cause the spirit of the document to be achieved
(Wolf, 2013). For example, no one would read the Constitution and assume the House
should have any role in choosing candidates for appointments. Yet the House can affect
the use of the Appointment Clause today by refusing to allow the Senate to adjourn. If
the Senate cannot adjourn formally, the Senate is forced to use pro forma sessions to
take a break longer than three days as happened in 2011. The House could refuse to
allow the Senate to go on a longer recess to avoid the possibility of recess
appointments in the Senate’s absence. Yet the Constitution does not give the House a
role in this process and certainly not the role of blocking the executive in carrying out
the duties the people elected him to perform. As times have changed, maybe the
interpretation of the clauses involved in appointment also needs to change to bring
current practices closer to the Founding Fathers intentions when they wrote the
Constitution. This could be a persuasive argument if the Founding Fathers did not
believe in checks and balances or they did not see the branches overlapping and
interacting. To this writer, the Founding Fathers expected the power of appointment to
be held jointly. Neither branch of government was seen to be in the lead. The Senate
may prevent appointments. They may insist that all appointments receive their advice
and consent. The Constitution should not be rewritten through judicial opinions. The
appellate court did not do this. They interpreted the document the way it would have
been interpreted when written. If times have changed and the document needs to be
changed, it should be done through constitutional amendments. It should not be done
through unelected judges. If some version of the appellate court’s opinion stands, what
message is being sent? This writer believes the Founding Fathers intended for the
people in the different branches of government to compromise in order to work out
differences. Things that are achieved by the use of sneaky technical maneuvers looked
too much like Great Britain in colonial times. Open debate where all could express their
ideas and have their vote on matters was how things were supposed to work. Coming to
consensus and compromise for the higher good seems to be a lost art, but an art that
needs to be revived for this government to be successful.

Since the Supreme Court accepted this case, some limited compromise has
occurred. To preserve existing filibuster rules and not have the “nuclear option” used,
Senate Republicans agreed to allow a vote on nominees to the NLRB (and the
Consumer Financial Protection Bureau) provided Richard Griffin and Sharon Block’s nominations were withdrawn. The new members to the NLRB confirmed in August of 2013 were Nancy Schiffer, an associate general counsel at the AFL-CIO; Kent Hirozawa, chief counsel to NLRB Chairman Mark Gaston Pearce; Chairman Pearce; and Harry Johnson and Philip Miscimarra, both labor lawyers. The Board now has five members and the filibuster rules are intact. Despite falling into a shutdown over the budget, a compromise was also reached to resolve this issue.

Is the case now over? No it is not. The Supreme Court heard oral arguments for this case in October 2013. Some commentators thought the case possibly would be moot and dismissed after the two parties reached a compromise. The NLRB lost jurisdiction over the Noel Canning case when the case was appealed to the D.C. Circuit (Elwood, 2013). During the October 2009 term of the Supreme Court the question was raised (in New Process Steel v. NLRB) as to whether two members of the board could exercise the Board’s authority when three members of the Board were required for a quorum. Shortly after argument to the Court, the President made two appointments to the Board. Then solicitor General Elena Kagan was asked by the Court to brief the effect, if any, on the disposition of the case. She argued that the two new appointments to the Board should have no effect on the disposition of the case. The Board had decided nearly 600 additional cases with only two members and those decisions were still in question. She did not believe the new board members could ratify what the prior two members did without reviewing all of these cases individually. Also she argued that the Board no longer had jurisdiction over the case once the case was appealed to the courts (Elwood, 2013).

What might the Supreme Court do in the Noel Canning case? The Court may not adopt the D.C. Circuit court’s reasoning in the case. The interpretation of the Constitution concerning intersession and intrasession appointments might not have been necessary at this time. The Court also might not have to decide whether a vacancy has to actually become vacant during a recess to be filled, or whether a vacancy simply can be ongoing to be filled. The Court, if it wished to reject the recess appointments, could simply rely on history and past practice and conclude that three-day breaks are not long enough to be recesses, and the Recess Appointment Clause does not apply during this period. The January 3-23 period was a series of three-day breaks. If the Court wished to uphold the recess appointments, the Court could conclude a three-day break is a recess or it could conclude pro forma sessions do not affect the fact that a 20-day recess is one recess and longer than three days. The Court could also do something unexpected such as decide not to give an opinion on the merits. The court could conclude the meaning of a “recess” is more a political question and thus left to the President and Congress to resolve. The court could also decide the case is now moot as the Board now has five members. This approach would leave unresolved the legitimacy of the prior Boards decisions in other cases.

The D.C. Circuit used textualist methodology to decide the case. This approach may appeal to Justices Scalia and Thomas. Chief Justice Roberts as well as Justices Alito, Kennedy, Scalia, and Thomas will all be very aware that the decision in the case will have broad consequences in many cases and across many agencies. This is not the only agency or case by the Board where there was only a quorum for business because of agency members who came to the agency through recess appointments. Justice
Breyer could surprise people and come to some decision agreeing with the above justices. He is a veteran of the Senate who served as Special Counsel and later Chief Counsel to the Senate Judiciary Committee. While using a more pragmatic form of constitutional interpretation, he may desire to preserve a joint role for the Senate in appointments through the confirmation process. Justice Kagan has recused herself. It will be interesting to see how Justices Stotmayor and Ginsberg analyze the case and whether they will stand-alone or persuade others to join them in an alternative position. Of course, this writer could be wildly off in predictions on the outcome of this case and the reasoning of this Court.

How this case is resolved will have consequences beyond this case. It will affect many other past cases the NLRB decided in which the recess appointments needed to be included to form a quorum, as well other agencies with boards in similar positions which decided cases. The decision will also affect the future relationship between the Senate and the President for years to come. The Constitution is the framework of the land, but that framework needs informal norms and customs to fully operate. The use of recess appointments is a method for presidents to respond to a Senate trying to stop a President from carrying out the law of the land as he sees fit. Presidents do need to be judicious in making recess appointments for fear of antagonizing Senators, as the President may need support from on other issues. Governmental officials on both sides of the political isle need to relearn the fine art of compromise and deal making. The party in power now will again be out of power in the future. Clever tricks to get around constitutional requirements would be available to the opposition party in the future. Compromise within the framework of the Constitution is what is needed for this government to work properly and be a blessing to people of this country and the world.
References
Vampires, Werewolves, and Zombies:
Building a Classroom Community Based on Louisiana Folklore

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Results of longitudinal reading interest inventories demonstrate a decline in middle school students’ general reading attitude, intrinsic motivation for reading, and frequency of voluntary reading (Ley, Schaer, & Dismukes, 1994). Like spinach and Brussels sprouts, adolescents may know that reading is good for them, but they often report negative attitudes toward reading (Ivey & Broaddus, 2001).

Greenberg, Gilbert, and Fredrick (2006) suggested that middle school teachers should focus on improving the curriculum by incorporating high-interest reading materials and integrating student choice as an instructional strategy. While still addressing rigid national and state standards, teachers can immerse adolescents in different genres that capture their attention as well as increase reading achievement while changing attitudes. Giving students opportunities to choose what they read in a classroom environment that values reading is a research-based best practice beneficial for all students (Stairs & Burgos, 2010).

What are adolescent interested in today? Check out their chosen books, movies, video games, and television shows, and the answer is clear: werewolves, zombies, and vampires! Sharing information about the traditional folklore (oral and written) associated with these three topics is a hook few adolescent can resist, leading to increased reading and writing. In this paper the authors share what they have learned about these three creatures of the night.

Teachers can employ the strategies employed to document folklore to engage adolescents in communication arts skills (reading, writing, speaking, and listening). After collecting background information based on a review of the literature, students go out into their communities to document folklore using anthropological fieldwork techniques, and they analyze their findings in the written portion of the project. This basic model is used in folklore classes across the country where students focus mainly on collecting and classifying various examples of folklore, including superstitions about monsters, in order to “understand origins, distribution, dissemination, and variation in oral tradition” (Georges and Jones, 1995). Since students document what interests them, sending students out into the field virtually guarantees that they will be engaged in their subject matter since they document what interests them (Gabbert, 2010). Students’ stories can be bound in a book that can be donated to the school library for everyone to read, and they can present their findings to classmates and parents using props and costumes.

Contemporary American pop culture focuses on three creatures of the night: vampires, werewolves, and zombies. But these creatures have populated psychoanalytic literature for almost 100 years, while folklore predates written stories. The Psychoanalytic Electronic Publishing (PEP) database lists 439 psychoanalytic references to the undead: 99 on zombies; 288 on vampires; 52 on werewolves (Szajnberg, 2012). Tapping students’ interest in these creatures of the night can engage students in research, communication arts, and social studies topics.

New Orleans – In Another Vein

Ancient History and the Value of Blood Thirst

Ancient cultures recognized the importance of human blood in preserving life. Though not cognizant of the intricate physiology of hematopoiesis, several cultures honored this elixir of life as a powerful force. Egyptians in the time of the Pharaohs bathed in blood to revive their mental powers, while the early Romans drank the blood of gladiators to increase their potency and power. In the Americas, the Aztecs offered
blood sacrifices to the gods. Fascination with this vital life force combined with superstition, misfortune and unexplained phenomena produced a unique creature in the folklore of the macabre, the vampire.

First appearing in early Eastern European legends, this revenant required human blood to sustain the creature’s existence and maintain its exceptional powers. Citizens blamed vampires for widespread outbreaks of disease and death, particularly in urban settings, and pictured these creatures as ugly, putrid beasts with long sharp fangs and vicious talons.

Medical Conditions

Superstition regarding blood-sucking beasts persisted in Eastern Europe in the 1700s resulting in mass hysteria in the Balkans and Serbia. Crazed mobs exhumed many corpses, drove stakes through the hearts of the deceased, buried them facing downward, or decapitated them. Various actual medical conditions as described in *Taber’s Cyclopedic Medical Dictionary* (1962) may have led people to suspect the existence of vampires:

1. *Porphyrias* – This group of diseases are rare blood disorders that are due to the inability of the liver and bone marrow to produce *heme*, the oxygen-bonding component of hemoglobin. With exposure to sunlight, toxins build up in the victim’s epidermis and produce extremely painful and disfiguring lesions that produce severe scarring and possible partial or complete loss of nose and ear tissue as well as retraction of the flesh that surrounds the teeth (p. P-87).

2. *Tuberculosis* – *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* causes this highly-contagious disease, also known as the white plague or consumption, that generally infects the respiratory system. Each droplet of fluid from a sneeze or cough can infect others. Patients become very pale, lethargic, avoid sunlight, and cough up blood from infected sputum in their lungs (p. T 55-56).

3. *Catalepsy* – This psychosomatic state produces muscular rigidity, shallow breathing, and a markedly low pulse rate. This can be a result of Parkinson’s disease, epilepsy, or even extreme psychological shock. The afflicted may appear to be clinically dead (p. C-22).

4. *Rabies* – This virus, often transmitted by the bite of an animal, does not present until several weeks after exposure. The patient exhibits flu-like symptoms, anxiety, and aggressive behavior. Pain upon swallowing results in hydrophobia, foaming at the mouth, and bleeding gums (p. R-1).

A History of New Orleans

In 1718 Canadian-born French trappers named their settlement, located on the trade route between the Mississippi River and Lake Pontchartrain, Nouvelle Orleans. In 1763, the French king gave the new colony to the Spanish in the Treaty of Paris. The Spanish returned the colony to the French in 1800. Three years later, Napoleon sold all 828,000 square miles of French-controlled land to America in the Louisiana Purchase, doubling the size if the United States for three cents per acre and assuring permanent usage of the port of New Orleans for American trade and transportation. Refugees arrived from the French Revolution and West Indian slave rebellion. Irish immigrants, fleeing the potato famine in the 1800s, arrived on sailing ships that departed from Liverpool and made their first port in New Orleans.
During this constant state of flux and mingling of nationalities, languages, cultures, and lifestyles, a new receptivity and openness to others emerged regardless of their taste in clothing, the color of their skin, the rhythm of their language, their religious practices, or their ethnic superstitions. New Orleans was the perfect place to use as a setting for the introduction of fictional tales of the bizarre, the surreal, and the otherworldly.

There are many vampire legends about historical sites in the city of New Orleans. One of the most famous is that of the casket girls of the Ursuline Convent on Chartres Street. In *Spirits of New Orleans*, noted psychic and medium Kala Ambrose (2012) recounts the tale of the oldest school for girls in America, founded in 1727 as an orphanage, school, and hospital (p. 96-107). When control of Louisiana returned to the French, many of the Spanish nuns fled to Cuba in fear for their safety. One of the remaining nuns wrote to her cousin in France, who was also a nun, requesting help in conducting the Ursulines’ mission in New Orleans.

Mother St. Michel soon arrived to take charge of the charitable institution, bringing with her a statue of Our Lady of Prompt Succor. Early residents appreciated the charitable work of the nuns and attributed several miracles to their prayers addressed to the Blessed Virgin Mary, including the last minute change of direction of a devastating fire in 1812 that spared the convent complex and the victory of Andrew Jackson over the British army in 1815. Jackson reputedly visited the convent to thank the sisters for their prayers for his outnumbered troops.

This statue of Our Lady now resides in the Ursuline Academy on State Street. Both the city of New Orleans and the state of Louisiana honor Our Lady of Prompt Succor as their patron and celebrate her feast day on January 8 each year.

In an effort to repopulate Louisiana, the French sent large numbers of poor young girls and female orphans to complete their education at the Ursuline convent and subsequently be available for marriage, thereby enticing men to move into the cities. These young women arrived by ship with all of their belongings packed in small wooden boxes resembling coffins, hence the sobriquet, “casket girls.”

Reputedly, one day a strange group of young women arrived with heavy, full-sized, locked coffins. The women refused to open the boxes, which they said contained their dowries, and stored them on the third floor of the convent. Late one evening one of the nuns went up and opened the boxes only to discover that they were completely empty. She immediately suspected that the new girls’ casket boxes were the resting places of imported female European vampires. The sisters sought to solve the problem by using screws to secure the third floor windows to prevent the return of the vampires to their temporary crypts. Unfortunately, each morning the windows were open. Eventually, the imported vampires found new domiciles supposedly working with Voodoo priestesses and witches, though they possibly revisit the area even now.

People who have yet to visit New Orleans may find it difficult to understand the unique atmosphere of this city that accepts paranormal ideas with such proclivity. The geographic location below sea level, astride the Mississippi River, combines with subtropical humidity to produce a climate of awareness. Also known as “The Big Easy”, New Orleans has a reputation for tolerance and openness. It is a city of celebration and exuberance, of freedom to choose, of brilliance, and a complicated past. This is fertile ground for folktales of werewolves, zombies, and especially vampires.
Vampires in Literature

In 1816 Lord Byron accompanied by his personal physician, John William Polidori, met with Percy Bysshe Shelley and his fiancé, Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin, on holiday at a small villa near Lake Geneva in Switzerland. During a period of stormy weather, the friends amused themselves by reading and sharing frightening stories. Challenged to produce their own tales, Lord Byron wrote The Burial: A Fragment which was published in 1819; Mary Godwin composed what later became Frankenstein; while Polidori created a story titled “The Vampyre” about a gentleman of nobility, Lord Rothuen, who dies yet promises to return from the dead. In 1819 New Monthly Magazine published this progenitor of vampire fiction and incorrectly listed the author as Lord Byron.

Polidori’s suave character became the archetype for future literary works that featured the familiar habiliments of an aristocrat. The following year Charles Nodier wrote the play Le Vampire based on the popular tale which James Planche rewrote as The Vampire or The Bride of the Isles in 1820. This play featured a trap door in the floor of the stage to allow the vampire to rise from and return to his grave. Stagehands and actors to this day call this innovative device the “vampire trap.”

In 1897 Irish theater critic and author Bram Stoker penned his fifth novel, Dracula. This epistolary tale is well–known as the basis for most of the modern, romantic, gothic, horror literature. Stoker patterned the main character of his novel on Vlad the Impaler, the 17-year-old who inherited the throne of Wallachia in 1448. His small territory bordered both the Turkish-Ottoman Empire and Austro-Hungarian Empire. He is renowned as the cruelest Romania ruler who impaled his enemies on wooden stakes driven in the ground. The ruler’s last name “Dracul” means dragon. After Stoker’s death, Hungarian-born Bela Lugosi appeared as Count Dracula in the 1931 classic film (Regan, 2009, p. 68).

The Allure of Vampires in Popular Fiction

Modern authors of gothic fiction exhibit a particular fascination with vampires. New Orleans-born Anne Rice introduced her Vampire Chronicles with Interview with a Vampire in 1976. In addition to her written work she can also claim credit for several films, television adaptations, theatrical productions, and a comic book miniseries. Creole Catholicism, Voodoo and both Irish and Spanish immigrant tales apparently influenced her prolific creative writing. University of Melbourne professor Ken Gelder (1994) states in Reading the Vampire that Rice is the first author to allow her vampires to change from a human narrative voice to first person, thus allowing the vampires to express their own point of view (p. 109). Far from the horrible beasts of early literature, Rice’s vampires are sensitive, highly intelligent, passionate, and capable of making choices.

Rice’s success encouraged others to produce similar works. L. J. Smith (1991) wrote the Vampire Diaries that were the basis for the 2009 CW television series. Best-selling mystery author Charlaine Harris (2004) created her Sookie Stackhouse Southern Vampire Mysteries in 2001. Like Rice, Harris also chose Louisiana as her setting in a fictional small town near Shreveport she called Bon Temps. In Dead to the World her vampires openly profess their proclivity in order to obtain access to a ready supply of Japanese synthetic blood (p.12). Harris’ characters stock supplies of therapeutic blood substitutes, much like humans purchase energy drinks. Her deviants live comfortably in human society and have romantic relationships with humans as well as other vampires.

Possibly due to her Latter Day Saints heritage, Meyer’s stories focus on romance rather than the explicit sexual themes in the plethora of modern vampire novels. In an interview, Meyer explains that she based all of her *Twilight* series on well-known classics. *Twilight* reflects Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice* while Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet* inspired *New Moon*. Emily Bronte’s *Wuthering Heights* motivated her to write *Eclipse*, and *Breaking Dawn* was an amalgamation of Shakespeare’s *Merchant of Venice* and *Midsummer Night’s Dream*.

Though literary critics and many readers may question the quality of the writing in Meyer’s novels, few could argue with her appeal to young adults, particularly females, when her series topped best-seller lists worldwide and all of her novels were extremely successful feature films.

Wonder at the power of the life-giving force of blood intrigued human beings in ancient times and continues to amaze the scientific community in the digital age. Through it all, the mystique of the vampire that requires human blood to maintain its life force persists. Misunderstanding of genuine medical conditions undoubtedly contributed to the creation of this myth. Nineteenth century literati could not resist the opportunity to apply their imagination to this unusual and frightening creature. In time, the vampire experienced a marked evolution from a hideous, murderous beast to a handsome, perceptive, and even productive member of society. Modern popular fiction includes a prodigious amount of works devoted to vampires, and one of the more popular settings for these novels is New Orleans, Louisiana. This city is a gumbo of histories, cultures, religions, and peoples. They mix together to form a unique populace that fosters freedom of creativity, acceptance of ideas, and the fascinating folklore of werewolves, vampires, and zombies.

**In Laudem Lupis: In Praise of Wolves**

*Fear makes the wolf bigger than he is.* – German Proverb

The old gray wolves of college faculties spend most of their time snarling at the Dean. Occasionally they take a bite out of a tender young graduate student. They demand, “Is that what you call a thesis?” Old wolves save their most sardonic comments for the biased treatment of *Canis lupus* and related species by hominids.

Humans proudly name their athletic teams after wolves. Western Oregon and Western Georgia refer to themselves as Wolves. North Carolina State is the Wolf Pack. Minnesotans proudly call their NBA team the Timberwolves. New Orleans’ NBA franchise, the Hornets, trademarked the name *Rougarou* as a possible new name for their team. Yet human beings fill everyday culture with derogatory sayings such as, “Who’s afraid of the big bad wolf?” A. Wolf (1989) declared emphatically, “I don’t know how this whole big bad wolf thing got started, but it’s all wrong” (p. 1).

These and adages like, “The wolf is at the door,” demonstrate the fear that dominates human understanding of wolves. No one should fear wolves. Wolves are
cunning but never wear sheep’s clothing. They do what nature intended: follow the pack and survive—nothing else. To paraphrase President Franklin D. Roosevelt, the only thing to fear about wolves is fear itself.

**On Wolves and Werewolves**

*If you live with wolves you learn to howl* – Spanish Proverb

Two views correct the more pernicious notions about werewolves. Nature blessed the species *homo sapiens* with a fertile imagination. Humans have long admired and respected wolves. Ancient Greek pottery depicted warriors clothed in wolf skins. Some humans obsess about wolves to the extent that they become wolves. Humans and wolves are both animals. If humans give in to that which is wild within themselves, they become one with the wolf. A human mother, under certain circumstances, will growl and snap at predators to defend her child, just as a mother wolf protects her cubs. Werewolves remind us of our primordial origins and primal fears.

Barry J. Ancelet, a professor of folklore at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, observed that a number of human/animal combinations exist in Louisiana folklore, but the most common was the werewolf called Loup Garou or Rougarou. He continued, “Some people claim to have seen these things” (Ancelet in McKnight, 2006, p.1). He added, “Whether [people] believe seriously that there is a character who roams the night or not is unimportant. They believe in the stories. And they believe in the ability to scare people through the stories. It becomes a way of connecting one generation to the next” (Ancelet in Lugibihl, 2002, April 26, p. 1).

**History of Werewolves**

*How do I love to hear the wolves howl* - Joseph Smith

The word *werewolf* combines the old English words for *man* and *wolf*. A werewolf is a human who becomes a wolf or a wolf-like creature. Folklorists reported that the simplest way to transform into a werewolf was to take off your clothes and put on a wolf skin. Cajun legend claimed that voodoo grease or drinking water from the footprint of a werewolf turned humans into werewolves (Saxon, Dreyer, & Tallant, 2012, p. 191). Many cultures associated this transformation with the full moon.

Wolves played a part in the imagination of humans from the time of Ancient Egypt. Anubis, the guardian of the underworld, is a jackal, a subspecies of gray wolf. The Greeks and the Romans related tales of lycanthropy. Virgil wrote that special herbs turned people into wolves. People in the sixteenth century associated wolf-like creatures with witches. Reports of wolf attacks occurred as late as the 20th century. References to wolves and werewolves pervade the various types of media that characterize 21st century popular culture.

**The Loup Garou**

*He Creeps, He Crawls, He Conquers: the Rougarou* - Lugibihl

The Rougarou or Loup Garou is a werewolf that prowls the swamps of Louisiana. One Cajun described a Rougarou as a creature with a human body and the head of a wolf that runs on two legs and prowls on four. Nothing keeps him away. When you think you are safe, he is right behind you. Society used folklore to control people through fear. Mothers warned their children not to go into the forest at night, or the Rougarou would get them. The deeply Catholic Cajuns admonished people to keep their Lenten practice lest evil spirits turn them into werewolves.

Saxon, Dreyer, & Tallant (2012) quoted this depiction of a werewolf: “They have red eyes, pointed nose, and everything just like a wolf has” (p. 190). They dine on oysters and go to parties. Men and wolves dance together at a fancy ball in the bayou. Giant bats swoop down and take them where they want to go. Silver bullets will not kill them, but frogs will scare them away. Werewolves exhibit compulsive tendencies. If you put a sieve or a colander outside your door, they will stop to count all the holes. Then you can sprinkle them with salt, and they will burn up.

New Orleans folklorist Alyne Pustanio (2013) reported that recent hurricanes altered the balance of nature. Once again the vengeance of the dreaded Rougarou is upon the land” (p. 70). Specific costumes and masks honor the Rougarou at Mardi Gras. The Loup Garou Krew designs masks for the Captain Morgan contest held during this pre-Lenten festival. Jason Elstrott (2013) in his delightful children’s tale, *The Loup Garou Goes to Mardi Gras*, tells the story of a lonely Rougarou who paddled his pirogue to New Orleans when he heard that it was a fun place to visit.

*Man is a wolf to man. Man is his own wolf.* - Plautus

Wolf supporters see positive descriptions of wolves/wolf-men in modern literature and film. Lon Chaney, Jr. gave an unforgettable performance in his portrayal of *Wolf Man* (1941). Michael Landon’s *I Was a Teenage Werewolf* (1975) remains a camp classic. Werewolves served as a vehicle for J. K. Rowling to discuss prejudice and racism in her Harry Potter series. She described Remus Lupin, Harry Potter’s Defense of the Dark Arts Teacher, as an understanding teacher and mentor.

Stephanie Meyer, young adult author, popularized wolves as objects of romance in her best-selling series, *The Twilight Saga*. Her character, Bella Swan, insisted that, in matters of amour, she did not “care who’s a vampire and who’s a wolf. That’s irrelevant” (*Eclipse*, 2007, p. 130). Steamy romance novels like *Once Bitten, Forever Burned*, picture werewolves as objects of desire. One woman wrote on the “I Love Werewolves” website, “A werewolf’s kiss is less constrained and more fiercely honest than a human’s kiss, and as a result it’s often full of deep emotions” (p. 1).

Popular films like *The Howling* series and the *Underworld* series depicted werewolves as handsome young men. There exist a number of music videos that glorify wolves like ArrowXsky’s Werewolves. The future looks bright, if one ignores the commodification and objectification of wolves in popular culture. Perhaps humans have finally evolved to a more accurate and balanced view of wolves and werewolves.

**The Living Dead: Zombies**

One portrayal of humans most universally cherished ideal—life after death—takes a cautionary form—zombies! Rotting creatures that stumble, mumble, and dress in decomposed rags, they lack the sophisticated demeanor of Count Dracula and his peers and the powerful, often romanticized bad boy persona of the werewolf. Until recently, zombies were characters in Saturday afternoon B movies like *White Zombie*, a 1932 movie that starred Bela Lugosi and type cast the zombie as a movie monster.
Thanks to larger roles in better scripts, and to *The Zombie Movie Encyclopedia* (Dendle, 2010), zombies have been lifted from obscurity. Peter Dendle, an assistant professor of English at Pennsylvania State University—Mont Alton, exhumed over 200 movies, television series, and short features from 16 countries created during a 65-year period beginning with the early 1930s. His critique of each film highlights interesting and innovative features of the zombies portrayed in each movie. Zombies have become one of the three creatures of the night celebrated in popular culture today.

What if a ninth-grade science teacher assigned alliterate students the article entitled “Parasite Causes Zombie Ants to Die in an Ideal Spot”? Awesome! This is not science fiction; it is science fact, carefully researched and documented. “Zombie makers, which may be a fungus, parasite, insect, or worm, take control of animals by injecting them either through the bloodstream or brain and making them their zombie ‘slaves’” (Parasite, 2009). For over 100 years scientists have studied a fungus that infects carpenter ants. The victims remain alive for a short time, but the fungus controls each infected ant, compelling it to climb down from its nest high in the rainforest canopy down into small plants and saplings in the understory vegetation. The ant then climbs out onto the underside of a low-hanging leaf where it clamps down with its mandibles just before it dies. There it remains, stuck fast for weeks. After the ant dies, the fungus continues to grow inside the body. After a few days, a stroma—the fungus's fruiting body—sprouts from the back of the ant's head. After a week or two, the stroma starts raining down spores to the forest floor below. Each spore has the potential to infect another unfortunate passerby.

**History of Zombies in the Western World**

The word *zombie* refers to the “living dead” and originally derives from Central Africa. In Kongo the cadaver, or spirit of a deceased person, is called *nzambi*, meaning “spirit of a dead person.” In the West Indies zombies are referred to as *jumbies* (ghosts).

Davis (1983) proposed an ethnopharmacological basis for the living dead, the zombies he studied in Haiti, suggesting that poisons obtained from puffer fish found in a zombie drug are responsible for creating the walking dead. Zombification has been a subject of continued popular research by Westerners since the United States occupied Haiti between 1915 and 1934. Most Haitians regard zombification as a real-life phenomena that can be verified; belief in the “walking dead” is widespread (Littlewood & Douyon, 1997). Haitian physicians regard zombification as the consequence of poisoning, while clergymen regard it as the product of sorcery. Zombies are recognized by the locals; estimates of zombification range up to 1,000 new cases each year.

Zombification is real enough in Haiti that it is classified as a crime under the Haitian Penal Code (Article 246). It is considered murder, though the zombie still lives. Locals describe the following steps in zombification:

- Either through poisoning or sorcery, a young person, for some inexplicable reason, suddenly becomes ill.
- Family members identify the young person as dead (Note: rarely do coroners or medical examiners pronounce someone dead in Haiti).
- The young person is buried in a family tomb (a painted concrete crypt above the ground in Haiti).
The young person is stolen by a **bokor** (a Haitian sorcerer) within the next few days. In the voodoo religion (body of magical practice), the bokor, a sorcerer who uses evil forces to control others, can change a human being into a zombie (Littlewood & Douyon, 1997). According to voodoo lore, each person’s body houses a little angel (**petit angel**) and a big angel (**grand angel**). When a person dies, his/her grand angel goes to heaven, while the petit angel remains in the body for three days or until the person finishes rotting. If a bokor traps the petit angel within three days, the person may turn into a zombie. This is why, in Haiti, relatives might sit on a loved one’s grave for three days (The *Dallas Morning News* Inc., 2013).

The bokor returns the young person to life as a zombie; however, the zombie does not have the same memories or physical skills as he/she did before death. He/she no longer has free will; the bokor has a new slave who either works secretly on the bokor’s land or is sold to another bokor for the same purpose. The zombie remains a slave through chaining and beating or further poisoning and sorcery. There are several ways a zombie can gain his/her freedom:

- The bottle holding the petit angel breaks.
- The bokor feeds the zombie salt by accident.
- The bokor dies.
- The family liberates the zombie relative.
- The zombie is released through divine intervention (this is rare).

Unfortunately, even if freed from the bokor, a zombie cannot be fully restored to his/her original state (International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, 2008). They are often recaptured.

Identification of zombies, according to Littlewood and Douyon (1997) is based on the following characteristics:

- fixed stare,
- limited and repetitive speech mumbled with a nasal intonation, and
- locomotion that is repeated, purposeless, and clumsy
- recognition of the zombie by relatives.

Believers in zombification fear being turned into zombies themselves, so much so that families often decapitate the corpses of their dead relatives and place poison and charms in the coffins.

Researchers have investigated the possibility that zombification is a medical condition induced by neurotoxins followed by retrieval and removal of the “dead” person from the tomb. The poison *tetrodotoxin* is thought to be involved; this poison has been studied by researchers in Japan, where the puffer fish is regarded as a delicacy whose consumption may result in what is believed to be death (International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, 2008).

Tracy Wilson (2013) reported that zombies appeared in movies as early as 1919; however, George A. Romero is credited with setting the standard for modern zombies. In *Night of the Living Dead* zombies were portrayed as “slow-moving, flesh-eating corpses, reanimated by radiation from a satellite returning from Venus” (Wilson, 2013, p. 4). Romero conceptualized zombies as

- newly dead corpses reanimated by radiation, chemicals, viruses, sorcery or acts of God
- human, although some depictions include zombie animals
very strong, but not very fast or agile
impervious to pain and able to function after sustaining extreme physical damage
invulnerable to injury, except for decapitation or destruction of the brain
relentlessly driven to kill and eat
afraid of fire and bright lights (Wilson, 2013, p. 4).

Do zombies actually exist? The United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention posted a blog on their website gruesomely entitled *Preparedness 101: Zombie Apocalypse* (Miller, 2011). The CDC recognizes the popularity of zombies and capitalized on the topic to engage people in emergency preparation (Khan, 2011). Khan instructs readers on how to survive flesh-eating zombies much like those in *Night of the Living Dead*. The steps he describes to survive zombies are, surprisingly, similar to those suggested in advance of a hurricane or pandemic.

### Zombies in New Orleans

When the trans-Atlantic slave trade mixed peoples from all over the African Atlantic Coast, the zombie found a new home in voodoo in New Orleans, a rich site for folklore about vampires, werewolves, and zombies. One of the best-known tales about zombies is the story of “The Real Reverend's Zombie” (Garrets, 2013, p. 1).

### Conclusion

Leading adolescent students in investigating folklore related to vampires, werewolves, and zombies is an exciting way to engage them in social studies and communication arts. Incorporating high-interest reading materials and integrating student choice are supported by research as best practice instructional strategies. Addressing national and local standards can be accomplished by tapping students’ reading interests in these three creatures of the night.

### References


Using Technology to Fix Higher Education:
Enhancing Engagement and Performance

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Tahnja Wilson
Gina Woodall
Arizona State University
Abstract:
This paper reports results of the effects of faculty research videos and games on performance in a required upper division empirical methods course. We find that the amount of time students spend viewing the videos has a positive impact on the course grade regardless of GPA. The finding holds in online and face-to-face classes. Preliminary evidence on the use of games suggests a positive impact in online courses.

Introduction:
Responsibility for teaching undergraduate research methods courses often rotates among faculty with strong backgrounds in research methods, but sub-field specialties supply more examples of some research techniques than others. This limitation applies regardless of sub-field specialty. For example, international relations may offer relatively many longitudinal studies but few surveys, while comparative politics may offer relatively many case studies but few experiments. Textbooks often provide abbreviated examples, or links to published research demonstrating a technique. Abbreviated examples may generate questions from students, especially in traditional classroom settings, and these questions provide an opportunity for expanding an example. But providing a proper theoretical framework for that example may be more difficult, especially when it is outside an individual's subfield. And the alternative approach, providing links to published work demonstrating techniques, is useful only when students actually follow the link and read through and understand the example. Add to this material that many regard as "dry" and increasing online enrollments, there is growing concern with student learning and engagement.

We posited that increasing student exposure through video of faculty discussing their research interests would (a) make research methods more interesting, (b) increase student engagement, (c) increase (and perhaps improve the quality of) student interactions with faculty, (d) provide online students with exposure to a wider range of faculty than their coursework might typically offer, thus providing them with some of the intangible benefits we believe accrue to traditional students, and (e) raise course grades. We also thought that giving students additional practice opportunities through games would likely increase engagement and performance.

Theory:
The media-integration model dominates the theoretic literature and research (Bailey and Cotlar, 1994; Greco, 1999; Kim, et. al., 2011; King and Sen, 2013; Mayer, 2003). Research indicates that streaming video and audio explanations of complex concepts and formulas are more effective than textbooks (Klass, 2003; Reed, 2003), and that video adds an interactive dimension to textbooks (Michelich, 2002). Video streaming delivers content "interactively" to all students, even those who are not campus-based (Hartsell and Yuen, 2006). Video may offer upper division instructional faculty an additional tool as they search for ways to encourage students to stay through graduation, and it may help faculty address problems associated with the online environment (e.g., Dickey, 2004; Doherty, 2006; Rovai and Wighting, 2005; Russo and Benson, 2005; Simpson, 2004).

Video is only one tool available to faculty, however. Given our interest in improving performance, we also considered games. The data regarding their use in online environments is unequivocal. Yip and Kwan (2006), studying drill and practice with online vocabulary games, found that students who played retained and recalled
vocabulary longer than those who did not play. Investigations into the use of Quizlet report that grades increase as time spent with online drill and practice increases (Kolitsky, 2013), and students using Quizlet achieve higher scores than students using a more traditional classroom approach, e.g., graphic organizer (Vargas, 2011).

There are differences across instructional modes. Social-presence theory leads us to expect differences in the experience of traditional and online students, at least for novice online learners (e.g., Short, Williams and Christie, 1976; Gunawardena, 1995; Kim et. al., 2011; Rice, 1993; Walther, 1992). Courses delivered online may lack the cueing system available in traditional settings; at a minimum we expect that the online environment requires attention be paid to establishing cues. There are no hard and fast rules for creating, or improving, social presence (e.g., Tu and McIsaac, 2002). We know that in the most limited online setting, that of text-only interactions, people develop impressions of others (Gunawardena and Zittle, 1997). Nonetheless, it did seem that improving social presence would move us closer to our goals with online students.

In general, we expect a media-rich environment will increase student engagement, and that engaged students will learn more and have higher satisfaction levels than less engaged students. Some may opt for “brick-and-mortar” experiences because they are seeking a sense of community (Boling, et.al. 2012), but it is possible that a sense of community is important for those for whom traditional face-to-face enrollment is not an option. Neumann (1998), for example, reports that distance learning can result in social isolation. Delivering the same types of educational experiences to the growing online student population is important, though it may require innovation. We examined both learning environments.

**Method:**

Our online sections merge traditional campus-based students with students pursuing degrees through the online college; interactions between the latter group and the university are all (or nearly all) mediated by computer systems. All students meet the same admissions requirements. Yet, with fewer opportunities for interaction, online-only students may take the same courses from the same faculty but receive a slightly different education than traditional students. Adding to the complexity of the situation, online courses follow a 7.5-week format while face-to-face courses follow the more traditional 15-week semester format.

We know of face-to-face instructional settings (particularly in large introductory courses) in which faculty contribute lectures or weeks to a course; this situation provides students with exposure to a range of faculty and permits faculty to teach to their strengths, rather than asking that they appear to be experts across an entire field. We adapted the idea to meet our needs of an advanced course with a growing online student population.

Working with the online college, we invited Political Science faculty to create 10-20 minute videos in which they presented a research project, described their method, explained the reason they chose this question, and summarized their findings. Faculty participation was strictly voluntary. Videos would be kept in a repository, and although the impetus for the project was the growing demand for research methods online, it was clear to all participants that the videos would be made available for use at the discretion of the instructor in online, face-to-face, and blended sections of the course.
Faculty developed a dozen research videos. The videos supplement textbook material; they give students access to different applications of the same method and to cases in which a single question is asked in different environments. Videos served as a basis for classroom discussion, online using Discussion Board, and quiz questions. The amount of time that students spent watching the videos was tracked and is used here as an independent variable.

The video repository does not dictate material; it does not require specific texts or topics. Rather, it provides instructional faculty a 'mini-net' with material that has been screened and organized and is ready for export. (See classifications in Table 1)

A set of games was developed as well. These games typically meet the Kay and Knaack definition of "... web-based tools that support the learning of specific concepts by enhancing, amplifying, and guiding the cognitive process of learners" (2007). Our games fell into the category of drill and practice in which the learning objectives emphasize memory, repetition and retention (Dondi and Moretti, 2007). The games were created to help students practice vocabulary; terms and phrases such as "intervening variable, ecological inference, cross-sectional design over time, and discriminate validity" can be intimidating to undergraduate students. The games give students access to many variations on the drill and practice theme with each game taking approximately five to 10 minutes.

The full data set uses three sections of research methods; two sections were taught online in a 7.5-week format, while the other section was taught in the traditional face-to-face format over the course of a 15-week semester. All sections used the same text; all were taught by full-time faculty; all required written assignments, quizzes and participation. Enrollments were uneven, but no section was small; the fall 2012 semester face-to-face class enrolled 174 students, while its online counterpart enrolled 87, and the spring 2013 semester online class had 107 students.

When possible, we treat these three courses as a single dataset. The two online sections are nearly identical. The one potentially significant difference was the inclusion of games as study guides in one of these sections. In order to capture the similarities and allow for the differences in the data subsets, we opted for two primary models in our analysis. The first model uses data from the online sections only; the second model merges data from all three classes. Missing data reduced each cohort by a handful of observations.

We identified two control variables and two independent variables for the online sections. The controls are 'type of student' (online or e-college student vs. regularly-registered student taking an online course) and past performance (measured by GPA). The variable "online" takes the value of 0 when the student is a regular student taking an online class, and the value of 1 for online-only (or e-college) students. GPA is taken from students' records at the end of the semester in which they took research methods. The independent variables are (a) time spent watching the videos (video, available for the online sections only), and (b) time spent in discussion boards (Discussion Board). In the face-to-face section our only control variable is GPA and our only predictor variable is time spent watching faculty videos. Our dependent variable is course grade.

Data Analysis:

Online students spent just over a fifth (21 percent) of their online time viewing faculty research videos. The correlation between video viewing time and course grade was 49
percent, the same as the correlation between course grade and GPA (50 percent). We expected the relationship between GPA and course grade to be strong, but were surprised to find the relationship between video viewing and course grade equally strong. The correlation between viewing the research videos and GPA was .24 percent. The more important question is, ‘What is the effect of video viewing on course grade, when the effect of GPA is controlled?’ The partial correlation coefficient between faculty video viewing and course grade is 0.73, considerably higher than the zero order correlation between course grade and video viewing. It appears that both GPA and the faculty research videos have independent effects on course grade; they do not substitute for each other. Moreover, within “GPA groups” video viewing has a strong, positive influence on course grades.

We tried three statistical techniques to ensure that violations of assumptions were not driving the results. A comparison of OLS, beta regression analysis, and a Bayesian generalized linear model is presented in the Appendix. Each model has benefits; beta regression is useful given that our dependent variable is a proportion (Cribari-Neto and Zeileis, 2010), and the Bayesian model satisfies those who argue that the data represent the ‘universe’ of students in each of three sections of a course (Berk, Western and Weiss, 1995). Regardless of the method used, tests of statistical significance and the signs associated with the correlations are consistent. We discuss the OLS data because the model is familiar to a large audience.

As Table 2 indicates, the amount of time students spend viewing the faculty research videos is positively associated with course grade. Video viewing time remains statistically significant even after GPA is added to model. Not surprisingly, GPA is the single strongest predictor of course grade. In the full model, Model 3, one unit of increase of GPA is associated with approximately 17 percent increase in final grade. One minute of increase in video time is associated with 0.03 percent increase in final grade. At first sight, the effects of GPA and faculty videos on course grade appear vastly disparate, but this is largely a measurement artifact. GPA is measured on an interval scale that varies from 0 to 4 – and clearly some numbers are unlikely to occur. Alternately, viewing time is a continuous variable measured in minutes. So unit of GPA has far greater weight by definition than unit of time. (See the diagnostic charts in the Appendix.)

The time students spend viewing faculty videos is positively correlated with the amount of time they spend in discussion boards (55 percent). This high correlation is likely attributable in part to the fact that some discussion boards were dedicated to the faculty research videos. Creating a single variable (online time) merging the faculty video and discussion board variables did not alter our findings.

There is anecdotal evidence indicating that students found the videos useful and enjoyable. They wrote, “the videos were fantastic and ….fun to watch. …as an online student the videos are essential to making me feel a connection to the faculty”; “(the videos) were indeed informative”. Other students wrote that the videos “were extremely helpful” and “keep you engaged”. One student wrote, “I found the faculty videos to be helpful in learning and processing course material. Frequently, the faculty members mentioned some aspect of their research that tied well into the fundamentals of political science research methods that we were reviewing throughout the course. This helped to make the abstract concepts a bit more concrete and easier to grasp. I think the videos
were .....a good addition to the course.” Another student identified a benefit beyond the scope of the project when he wrote, “I quite enjoyed the videos and found them useful not only as a tool to explain course concepts and research examples but also, and probably more importantly, as an opportunity to sort of ‘sample’ other professors. The videos provided a kind of mini course from a few professors which helped in selecting classes for the following semesters.” One enthusiastic student posted a note referencing a video that he wanted to share. His note read, “I just wanted to share a fantastic video of a social experiment on diversity.” Still another wrote, “I thought the videos were great! They provided different views from people and give real-world issues and approaches. You should keep them in upcoming (sic) classes.” Some online students reported that the exposure to faculty and research made them feel more a part of the community.

Our project has one more element. The spring 2013 online section of the course had all the elements of the fall 2012 online course, and it had games associated with the course material for each week. The inclusion of “mini-games” or “learning objects” into the course, while not measured, appeared to, at least anecdotally, increase student satisfaction. On anonymous course evaluations students wrote, “I liked the different learning games, the use of available technology for course content and the links to outside sources and videos;” “this instructor went out of her way to make it easy for distance-learning students. She .....tied the different elements of the course together in a manner that made learning much easier (textbook, homework quizzes, discussions, and games.);” and “the many sources of media that were used brought diversity to the course material.”

Conclusions:

The data indicate the project was successful. Many of the faculty who made videos reported that students made reference to the videos in conversation; this was an unanticipated consequence, but one entirely consistent with the project goal of making students more comfortable with research. Videos are being integrated into nearly every section of the course. We have only positive student comments regarding the videos. Course grades improved.

The use of video and games in online instruction engages students with the material, connects students with the “brick-and-mortar” world, and improves understanding of course content. Faculty research videos guide students as they become reviewers and evaluators of research instead of passive consumers. Students respond positively to the range and richness of content. As students come to appreciate the material, teaching becomes easier and more rewarding. Course material that students often viewed as dry becomes engaging.

The online environment requires that faculty quickly engage students. Our videos support that effort. Moreover, they appear to work in face-to-face settings as well. This project provided material suitable to both online and traditional environments. We see the face-to-face environment as one that can provide clues about online environments, but here we actually found that material created for online students helped in traditional settings as well. We make note of this because we agree with those who believe that, in comparisons of online and face-to-face settings, face-to-face learning is typically viewed as the “benchmark” (see Kim and Bonk, 2006). We sympathize with Kim and Bonk, who ask, “What if institutions took the opposite stance and measured face-to-face
courses based on whether they could accomplish all that online instruction can?” (28). We suggest that it may be possible to go further and ask how technology can improve instruction in all settings.

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## Table 1

<table>
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<th>Model 3</th>
<th>Model 4</th>
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* Indicates statistical significance no greater than α = .001

### Table 2

**The Effects of Faculty Videos**

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* Indicates statistical significance no greater than α = .01

### Table 1

**Comparison of OLS and Beta Regression Models**

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</tbody>
</table>

* Indicates statistical significance no less than α = .01

Signs and statistical significance are consistent regardless of the model used. Beta regression is often used for a ratio level dependent variable where there are restrictions on the unit interval, i.e. 0 < y < 1. Percentages, proportions, fractions and rates are all suitable for beta regression estimation. Although an option for these data, there is no improvement over OLS.
Table 2
Comparison of OLS and Bayesian Models

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* Indicates statistical significance no less than α = .01

Another option for our analysis was a Bayesian generalized linear model. Some would argue that our data is not a sample (or even a set of samples), but rather that our data represent the population (or populations). To see if the assumption would matter, we reviewed a Bayesian model which, if the sample vs. population debate were relevant here, should have provided more reliable estimates than OLS. In fact, Bayesian and OLS regression provided nearly identical results.

Chart 1
Studentized Residual Distribution for the Dependent Variable

The display in Chart 1 shows that the dependent variable is not normally distributed. It is single peaked, and the majority of the cases lie closer to the center than to either tail, so we treat the variable as though it were normal and continuous. From a purely measurement perspective, we note that there is no reason to expect final course grades at a major research university to be normally distributed; these students have achieved all of their lives, and the data indicate that their performance is still strong. We were, however, interested to see the negative tail. In an effort to explain its existence, we examined the kernel density plot in Chart 2 below.
The vast majority of course grades fall between 0.07 and 0.95; the vast majority of students passed the course. In fact, most of them did quite well. That said, our dependent variable could not be normally distributed. We are, however, satisfied with its behavior; we consider our dependent variable “close enough”.
Tools to Empower: Integrating “Other” Knowledge(s) Through Mother-Tongue Education in Africa

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Through the colonial past in Africa and its focus on imposing European languages and Western education on the African mind, the voices and visions of Africans have been suppressed as well as a whole body of invaluable indigenous knowledge(s). Postcolonial theorists and writers such as Frantz Fanon, Albert Memmi, and Ngugi Wa Thiongo have pointed to the colonized and ex/colonized fractured self-identity, denial and disdain of African cultural values and knowledge systems. In this paper, I will examine how the use of African languages as medium of instruction is instrumental in the revitalization of indigenous knowledge(s) and constitutes an important step in the decolonization of education in Africa. In the context of dual-language programs, suggestions for content-rich curricula will be given to reflect a culturally-sensitive approach with the integration of African-centered topics in language arts and science as well as community engagement.

Education throughout the world is changing and the main question that families, educators, and policy-makers have on their mind is “What is quality education?” What kind of education do we want for our children in order to prepare them to be productive citizens locally, but also to be able to function in the modern, globalized world? The answer to that question is very different from country to country, from community to community. In the case of education in Africa, in a context of multilingualism and in the context of a continent that has been scared by colonial and postcolonial processes, the main task is to create an educational system and curricula that address the needs of the African child. It is not one size fits all! Through visits on the field, through research, through exchanges with policy-makers, teachers and families, it is clear that quality education in Africa starts with remaining grounded in its own languages and cultures.

Much research and international collaborations have stressed in recent years the importance of the use of a mother-tongue as medium of instruction in basic education and beyond. As they begin the first day of school, millions of young African children hurry into the classroom with a spark in their eye and high hopes for the future only to find that their teachers speak a European language they cannot understand. Research and evidence-based studies have shown that students who receive mother-tongue education in elementary school make a smoother transition into the new school culture, develop a stronger educational background, and develop literacy skills that are transferrable to a second language (often the language of the former colonial power: English, French, or Portuguese for instance in sub-Saharan Africa). Thomas & Collier’s study of school effectiveness for language minority students shows better performance long term on assessments when students receive instruction in their mother tongue in the early grades. In the African context, Brock-Utne demonstrates from her studies in Tanzania and in South Africa that when students are given the opportunity to use their own language, they express themselves and write with more confidence, they are more expressive, and display critical thinking. Also, when taught content such as science and mathematics in the mother-tongue, students can understand and grasp the concepts introduced without a language barrier. But most of the research and reports from educational and development organizations as well as national governments advocate for the use of African languages (first language/mother tongue) as a pre-requisite, a support for literacy in the second language which will eventually become the only language of instruction by the middle years, high school and beyond. Maintaining mother-tongue based education in the primary as well as throughout students'
educational voyage in addition to English, French, or Portuguese must be viewed in terms of cultural and community capital to be gained through the use of African perspectives and modes of thought carried through language itself. What does the use of African languages in education bring to the table?

**Mother tongue education as the opportunity to see and express the world through an African perspective**

Language carries our world-views. World view is “the fundamental cognitive orientation of a society, a subgroup, or even an individual” (Palmer, 1996). Cultural linguists such as Pinxten, Van Dooren, and Harvey go on to say that it “encompasses natural philosophy, fundamental existential and normative postulates or themes, values, emotions, and ethics (Palmer, 1996). Complicated enough? World view contains all the complexities of life itself. In language, world view is contained in its repertoire of imagery, its semantics and grammar, its symbols, and other elements verbal and non-verbal alike. Language and culture are intertwined and as Bada reminds us, “we perceive the world in terms of categories and distinctions found in our native language….and what is found in one language may not be found in another language due to cultural differences” (Genc & Bada, 2005). The use of African languages in school, allows the participants to view and express the world using their own schemata. To give a concrete example, if a teacher talks about family to young children in Wolof (the majority language in Senegal), there is no direct equivalent for daughter or son or sister or brother (in the way the gender is automatically differentiated in English or even in French). But rather, the words used are generic “doom” (for son/daughter), “mag” (if it is an older sibling) and “rakk” if it is a younger sibling. Traditionally, gender distinction seems less important than seniority. In African culture in general, age and seniority are the valued marks in society. Young children learn to respect their elders and this reminder is carved in everyday language. Telling culturally relevant stories using an African language with all its subtleties and expressive idioms brings children into a familiar and safe learning space, makes children feel rooted and ready to absorb the lessons and values contained within their culture. Proverbs often integrated within African stories are important expressions of an authentic philosophical system. When we use African languages in education, it also allows different perspectives in subjects such as science and mathematics.

Science, mathematics, and technology have somehow become synonymous with the Western world. Traditional African knowledge in those fields has been pushed aside and often suppressed under the rapid and overwhelming advances in the West. A whole body of African indigenous knowledge(s) is carried through language, culture, and centuries of practical experiences and interactions with the environment. Numerous examples exist as to how African knowledge thrives in medicine (traditional use of plants), community development, agriculture and farming practices, energy production, and food technology (preservation), just to name a few. These skills, specialized knowledge, and attitudes can only be shared in their “authenticity” through language itself. When children talk about plants, how can the expressive Wolof word “sap sap” be conveyed in another language? It is an edible leaf, grown in hedges commonly seen around villages throughout the Sahel. The delicious sauce “mboum” contains such nutritious elements that organizations such as Church World Service (CWS) and Educational Concerns for Hunger (ECHO) have called it a “miracle food,” something the
locals had known for centuries. Math systems are different from one culture to the other. The number system in Wolof is based on 5. The system can be taught side by side with the decimal system to make comparisons and foster critical thinking. But through the process, the participants would get a sense that their language and ways of thinking are also valuable in the world. African languages have often been devalued under the argument that they did not carry “scientific” and “technological” concepts. Most languages continue to evolve. They are by no means static. Words disappear and words are added every day in dictionaries across the world. There is a strong push by African governments to bring African languages also into the 21st century. This implies creating alphabets for many languages that were predominantly oral for centuries, fixing orthographies, transcribing, and creating a rich repertoire of vocabularies for the modern world. Such efforts have led to books such as “Medical Swahili dictionaries,” “Technical Akan,” or “Business Wolof” manuals. After all, prominent African anthropologist, linguist, and physicist Cheikh Anta Diop set out to translate parts of Einstein’s theory of relativity in Wolof (his native African tongue) to prove that his language could also carry scientific and abstract concepts. But these scientific and technical concepts viewed through the African prism of language, take on once again the bend of the culture and the African mind. And that is precisely what language does: it projects a particular view of the world. The word for “medicine/drugs” in Wolof is “garab” which means “tree” or “root”. Such imagery lays out a whole history of healing traditions of the region using leaves, bark, and fruit from trees (the Baobab tree in particular).

**Mother tongue education as bridge between home and school**

For parents whose first language is not English, the use of African languages, materials, and curriculum in school would allow them to engage in conversations with their child, participate more fully in the educational process, and strengthen the bond between school and home, school and the community. One of the unfortunate consequences resulting from the adoption of English-only (or French/Portuguese-only) in African schools has been the marginalization of parents and community from the educational environment of the child (Dutcher, 2004). The underlying message is that the home language, culture and traditions, and the different knowledge(s) embodied therein are insignificant. Dual language/multilingual story books based on familiar regional tales or other creative narratives in both African languages and English side-by-side constitute wonderful collections for use in and out of the classroom. Collaboration with the community to collect stories (through recordings and interviews) and transcribe them constitutes a valuable task for celebrating and preserving language and oral history of the region. Such a gesture repeated throughout Africa will have a positive impact, particularly on less commonly spoken minority languages on the verge of disappearance. The Ndengeleko language, for example, spoken in Tanzania is most likely to disappear within a few generations, says Eva-Marie Ström. Even though it is still spoken by over 70,000 people in the country, it is being progressively swallowed by other dominant languages such as Swahili and English. Ström’s initiative to record Ndengeleko stories and other narratives is an important act in the preservation of a culture, its language and ways of life. Her recordings were conducted on-site with speakers of the language who are “interested in preserving their knowledge for future generations.” In a wider context, the maintenance and use of the mother-tongue in and
outside the classroom in addition to English demonstrate pride and confidence in the cultural background of the children and the communities the schools serve.

Creating that bridge between home, family, and community, mother tongue education also connects “formal” and “non-formal education”. Through a familiar language for all, local expertise and local knowledge is made possible to enrich experiences and the curriculum. Children are able to go on a field trip to a nearby farm, to see a blacksmith or a weaver and ask questions about their work and their craft. Many individuals in such occupations may not speak a European language and would not be able to share their knowledge and expertise in English or in French. When we use our languages and value our cultural expressions and technologies, we are shifting our educational outlook from an outward-oriented strategy to an inward-oriented strategy which roots us first in our soil before extending out. That is what every child in the world must be offered. With the loss of certain minority languages across the globe, we are bitterly reminded that when we do not teach our children our language, we have to recognize that how we think is also not passed on” (Genc & Barda, 2005).

Other bridges to success are also created in terms of gender equity. Mother-tongue education has also been demonstrated to be beneficial to girls. When the bridge between home and school is maintained, parents may feel more comfortable to send their girls to school and school does not seem like a place totally cut off from the home environment. When using African languages and learning basic skills in literacy and numeracy, girls acquire the practical knowledge to function in the traditional economy where their presence is usually predominant (the marketplace, small business, and commerce in particular). The link between language and gender has been made by a number of researchers. Carol Benson in particular looked at differences between boys and girls in multilingual programs in Africa and Latin America and argues for mother-tongue based education as an effective strategy for addressing girls’ school participation (Benson, 2005).

The Integration of African-Centered Units in the Curriculum: Models and Reflections

In addition to length of mother-tongue use as medium of instruction, the other key factor for school success is “the way the treatment is implemented through the curriculum process” (Alidou, Brock, & al., 2006). Curriculum organizes the learning experiences of the children. It is the blueprint for their learning voyage and forges, as UNESCO’s quality framework notes, “life-long learning competencies, as well as social attitudes and skills, such as tolerance and respect, constructive management of diversity, peaceful conflict management, promotion and respect of Human Rights, gender equality, justice and inclusiveness” (UNESCO, 2011). Also, the curriculum contributes to the “development of thinking skills and the acquisition of relevant knowledge that learners need to apply in the context of their studies, daily life and careers” and, most importantly, it supports “the learner’s personal development by contributing to enhancing their self-respect and confidence, motivation and aspirations” (UNESCO, 2011). In this vein, an African-centered curriculum is one that would be grounded in African people’s lives. It is not a rejection of modern education and global progress, but rather it is a curriculum that starts with the African child, her world, her history, her needs. It then, branches out, once that strong basis is given, and provides all of the competencies needed to function in the modern world too. Such an education
would produce individuals who are rooted in their cultures, but also equipped for the modern global world. A total re-vamping of educational systems and curricula in African schools from one day to the next is unrealistic, but efforts to integrate African-centered units & lessons in the various subjects taught (language arts, arts& crafts, math, and environmental sciences) can lead to other major changes down the line and long-term.

Several models for culturally relevant curricula have been well developed in other places in the world and can be used as models for Africa. The “Aboriginal Perspectives Across the Curriculum” initiative in Australia is one of such. In an environmental unit entitled “Caring for Wetlands-the Noongar Way,” the perspectives and particular local “knowledge” of the land and how to preserve it by the Noongar people form the basis of the unit which integrates 5 lessons. The topic information page which gives the purpose, student outcomes, key background points, and cultural & protocol considerations reflects a conscious design to value centuries old local knowledge in environmental science (conservation and care), to respect beliefs and approach the world the “Noongar way.” Here are a few excerpts below:

Caring for Wetlands-the Noongar Way”

Purpose
- To create an awareness of the importance of protecting natural resources and to provide an opportunity for students to learn how Noongar people do this.
- To guide students to discover how Noongar people of the local area have always understood the importance of frogs in the eco-system.
- To show indigenous peoples’ understanding of the importance of water and their belief on the power of water to heal.

Student Outcomes
The student:
- moves towards understanding the Aboriginal people and in particular local people, the Noongars;
- moves towards respecting particular aspects of Aboriginal culture, namely how the people took care of wetlands and lived in harmony with their environment;
- learns the Noongar words “kooya” which means frog, and “boodja” meaning land;
- learns the Noongar words for the life cycle of kooya;
- watches in nature what they have learned about the frog’s life-cycle;
- develops a frog-friendly garden within the school grounds.

(from Caring for Wetlands the Noongar Way, Department of Education, Australia. APAC initiative).

Cultural attitudes toward the environment and balance in nature vary from culture to culture. Too often the Western approach to the “environment” is to “conquer” and bend it to individual use (and profit) regardless of the long-term consequences. The Noongar lessons are a reminder of a different perspective and belief vis-à-vis nature that should not be forgotten and discarded. African-centered units developed in a similar spirit for the various subjects in the curriculum would create for African children a culturally inclusive environment and enhance educational outcomes for them as both language and content that are relevant to their lives are introduced.
In conclusion, big strides have been made to re-conceptualize African education in many regions. The challenges of multilingualism, inadequate resources and poor infrastructure continue to plague the continent. But one thing is sure: offering basic education in one’s mother-tongue is the right way. Discussions about length of time and amount, the question of dual mode (education in an African language alongside a European language) and best pedagogical practices are currently on the table in more and more countries in Africa and elsewhere because it is commonly understood that: “When you speak your language, it takes its place in the world concert of languages, your voice and your vision survive and matter” (Bassey & Ansa, 2012).

References
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Increasing Learning and Motivation Through the Use of the Social Studies Fair

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Abstract
This study involves both qualitative and quantitative research collected from a social studies fair put on by pre-service teachers from the College of Education of Florida Gulf Coast University. A class of fifty elementary education majors in their junior year designed stations to teach about the state of Florida. The stations served three hundred students in the 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade from a Title I school in Southwest Florida. The elementary students were assessed about their knowledge of these Florida topics both before and after they took part in a station approach to social studies using visuals and interactive games. Both the results of the pre and post assessments and the comments gathered from the elementary students and the pre-service teachers point to higher motivation and achievement when the social studies fair is used as a method of social studies instruction.

Keywords: Social Studies instruction, motivation, teaching and learning, centers, stations, title I, service learning

Increasing Learning and Motivation Through the Use of the Social Studies Fair

Literature Review
Dr. Fred Newmann, director of the National Center on Effective Secondary Schools, questions whether “American schools are destined to follow the familiar path of passing on fragmented bits of information, that students memorize, but soon forget” (Newmann, 2006, p.41 ) He calls for the teaching of social studies to address higher order thinking skills and motivating instruction. Wolters and Pintrich (1998) found the relationship between motivation and the use of strategies has a high impact on student learning. Thus, to be meaningful, instruction should involve motivational strategies that address higher level thinking skills and actually engage students in meaningful interaction with the subject matter. The goal of a strategy practiced in this study, the social studies fair, is to have students immersed in many forms of multiple intelligences. It is a kinesthetic experience in a hands-on learning environment. Students have visual and auditory interactions with the content by rotating to various themed stations and have immediate feedback through games which assess their retention of the material.

The National Council for the Social Studies also supports the idea that teachers should “build a repertoire of teaching strategies that will have students thinking, exploring, and discussing.” (Yell, 2013) All too often social studies is put on the back burner in schools where high stakes testing has taken up teachers’ time with drill and review. Teachers who are convinced teaching elementary social studies is key to students’ education know that social studies can be at the center of all subjects, and they can also use the “physical environment in a strategic way to promote social studies learning.” (O’Mahony & Siegel, 2008, p. 20) The content and the theme of the social studies fair integrate all subject areas. Students get out of their classrooms for the fair to an arena setting where they interact with many different teachers and teaching styles. The fair is a memorable learning experience.

“Motivating children is easy when they perceive a genuine purpose for their activities.” (Bloom, 1984, p.4) Benjamin Bloom’s (1984) research into uncovering the key to the most effective form of instruction compared Conventional whole group instruction, to Mastery learning using both formative and summative instruction, to Tutoring individual students and small groups of students. His findings showed students’ attitudes, interests, and achievements were all higher with tutoring. The social
studies fair, using station instruction for small groups of students working closely with
teachers, has the potential for high interest, motivation, and retention of material.

Background Information

SSE 4343, *Social Science and Humanities*, is a required methods course in the
Elementary Education program in the College of Education at Florida Gulf Coast
University. The course seeks to prepare future teachers with review of social studies
content while teaching methods of effective social studies instruction. The course is
organized into units based on the Ten Themes of Social Studies: 1) Culture, 2) Time,
Continuity and Change, 3) People, Places and Environments, 4) Individual
Development and Identity, 5) Individual Groups and Institutions, 6) Power, Authority
and Governance, 7) Production, Distribution, and Consumption, 8) Science, Technology
and Society, 9) Global Connections and 10) Civic Ideals and Practices.

The critical task or key assessment for the course is the integrative unit. Students
plan a ten lesson, integrative unit around the NCSS themes. Each unit contains
resources, websites, assessments, and related literature for teaching elementary social
science. The course also includes strategies for engaged instruction, reading and
writing activities matched to the Common Core, and the use of integrative technology.
Some typical assignments in *Social Science and Humanities* include the use of
biography, designing a web quest, writing a social studies book for children, participating
in a trade fair and finding effective ways to use primary documents.

The FGCU professor for Social *Science and Humanities* has been using the social
studies fair as a regular assignment for the course. A social studies fair is a centers
approach to teaching. For this project, which is a combination of teaching methods and
service learning, a local Title I school is selected to participate each semester. (Finley,
2013) Likewise, each semester, a new social studies topic is chosen. Some of the past
topics have been: 1) Multicultural Fair, 2) American History and Biography Fair, 3) U.S.
Regions Fair, 4) Civics Fair, 5) Famous Events in History Fair, and the 6) Florida Fair
described in the study. The pre-service teachers work in small groups to design
teaching stations based on the Ten Themes of Social Studies. They use PowerPoint for
designing large, colorful posters to be used on trifold displays.

The process for designing the fair begins with the pre-service teachers in SSE 4343
planning their posters along with a shared lesson plan for a fifteen minute presentation
for students. Included in the presentation is an overview of the facts they have
incorporated into their poster as well as a game to test the students' retention of the
information. The teaching groups are set up arena style and the elementary students
rotate in small groups to experience the short presentations and games. Typically, the
pre-service teachers will teach their lesson between nine and twelve times during the
three hour fair. As many as three hundred elementary-age students rotate through the
stations. It has proven to be an excellent way to practice teaching skills, interact with
students from a variety of grade levels, and also to see how their posters actually
contain a unit's worth of information condensed to fifteen minutes.

The Title I school that is the focus of this study was Pinecrest Elementary School,
located in Immokalee, Florida within the Collier County School District. It is classified as
a Title I school with a total enrollment of 782 students (Collier County Public Schools,
2013). Of the entire 782 students 81.59% are of Hispanic descent, 17.65% are African
American, 0.38% are white, and the remaining 0.38% are of mixed descent (See graph
1.1). Also at Pinecrest Elementary 98.85% of the students are economically disadvantaged. A high ESOL population exists with 47.70% of the student body classified limited English proficiency (LEP), while 72.76% of the total population’s home language is Spanish.

Title I was enacted, “To ensure that all children have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and reach proficiency on challenging State academic achievement standards and state academic assessments” (U.S Department of Education (USDOE), 2004). According to the USDOE the purpose of Title I can be accomplished by making sure the assessments given to students are high-quality, as are the teachers in these academic subjects. Also Title I ensures the educational needs of low-achieving children be met, and this is done by closing achievement gaps between high- and low- performing children. Finally, Title I asks that the quality of instruction provided in schools be significantly elevated. For this reason, the FGCU College of Education chooses to work with Title I schools specifically. Students from high risk schools are the target audiences for the educational benefits of the Social Studies Fair.

Method
In this study there were fourteen stations covering different topics related to Florida. Each Florida Fair station was designed with the ten themes of social studies as the focus.

1. Famous Floridians – This station taught about Florida’s famous people and the contributions and accomplishments they made. They talked about actresses, athletes, authors, and more.

2. City of Fort Myers – This station covered the culture, history, government, society, education, people, places, and changes in the city of Fort Myers.

3. Everglades – The Everglades station taught the students about the people and wildlife in the Everglades, problems the Everglades are facing, causes of those problems, and what conservation groups are trying to do to help.

4. Early Settlers of Florida – This rotation covered the groups of people who were first to settle in the Sunshine State.

5. Culture and Immigration to Florida – This station taught about Florida as a “cultural mosaic”. The students learned the history and characteristics of the people whom immigrated to the state of Florida.

6. Native American Tribes of Florida – The topic of this station was the Native American tribes in Florida, their ways of life, and their interactions with the European explorers.

7. Exploring Florida – This station taught the students about the European explorers who came to Florida, the reasons for their journey to Florida, and what they did when they reached Florida.

8. What Grows in Florida – This rotation taught students about the plant species native to the state and things related to these plants such as culture, production, consumption and more.

9. Florida Colleges – This station featured University of Central Florida, Florida Gulf Coast University, Florida State University, University of Florida, University of Miami, and University of South Florida.
10. Florida Tourism – This rotation taught where the tourist attractions are and how it helps Florida.
11. Florida Major Cities – It covered information about Miami, Tallahassee, Daytona Beach, St. Augustine, Orlando, and Fort Myers.
12. Science and Technology – This station discussed the science achievements and technological advances made in Florida.
13. Florida Wildlife – This station taught students about the animals native to our state and about some endangered species.
14. Audubon Society Wildlife – This station was run by a representative from a Lee County Florida local wildlife association affiliated with Audubon International. There the students saw video and pictures of Florida wildlife taken very close to their own homes.

Data Collection from Elementary Students
The pre- and post-test survey was written by the SSE 4343 students. The members of each of the Florida stations wrote three questions stemming from important ideas or themes in their presentation. The questions also had to be related to a topic they knew they would discuss and teach at their station. From the pool of questions they submitted, eighteen were chosen. The questions were the basis for the pretest over the questions. The same questions were also given as the post test at the completion of the fair.

The Pinecrest 4th, 5th, and 6th grade students who took part in the fair were given a Welcome to Florida brochure with a graphic organizer for each of the stations on which to take notes. Those notes were to be shared with other classmates at the conclusion of the fair and before the post test.

All of the answers to the questions were provided throughout the rotations. The main goals of the research were to determine if the students were able to learn the topics from the fair and if the fair motivated them. The survey of questions from the stations (see Appendix) was given before and after the fair to see if number correct for each question and for the total test scores increased, remained the same, or decreased. The test was given to 4th, 5th, and 6th graders.

The data from the 4th graders could not be analyzed question by question. The 4th grade teachers had their students complete the pre-test and post-test in groups of four, recording answers on one sheet per group. The data could not be broken down in the same way for 4th grade for that reason; however, there was an overall increase in achievement. The 5th grade increased overall by 10%. The 6th grade increased overall by 16%. Although the researchers did not have control over the classroom administration of the pre and post-tests or how much review might have been conducted in classrooms, a measurable improvement in content knowledge is shown. However, the qualitative data from oral and written feedback was most significant. The thank you letters and responses students provided at the bottom of their post-tests to the questions, "What did you like about the Florida Fair?" and "What did you learn?". The students were grateful to have us there and they were very excited about what they learned.

The Pinecrest students were very excited to have learned new information in a unique way. They were appreciative of the efforts of the FGCU students. For some of the students from this Title I school, it was their first connection with people from a
college. In a letter to us one student wrote, "I want to be like you because I want to learn more and maybe I could be a teacher like you will be." The letters we received from the students were extremely inspiring. Many of the Pinecrest students wrote about their excitement for the games and prizes, but nearly every single one of them wrote about the topics they learned. Another quote from a student read, "Thank you for coming to our school it was great learning about Florida...I learn about the kinds of Indians, and about interesting animals native to Florida..."

The students were not only excited about their knowledge and prizes; they also appreciated the efforts from the FGCU students. The following quotes from students are exactly as written, including some errors in grammar and spelling. One student wrote, "Dear FGCU, I thank you for bring your students because I like all their work that they work just for us it was super pretty and I had the best time ever..." A second student wrote, "Thank you for coming and sharing your work to the whole school and how much work you done." Some of the students wrote their letters in Spanish. The letters were filled with gratitude and an appreciation for new information. The students wanted to communicate their thanks whether it be in English, Spanish, or somewhere in between.

**Data Collection from Pre-Service Teachers**

After the social studies fair, a questionnaire was sent to the fifty pre-service teachers who participated in the Florida Fair at Pinecrest Elementary School. They were asked to respond with a Yes or No to the following questions and add any suggestions for future fairs to the last question.

1. The fair taught me more about social studies content.
2. The fair gave me valuable teaching experience.
3. The fair provided me with experience with a diverse population.
4. I learned strategies for future teaching of elementary social studies.
5. I learned more about lesson planning from doing the fair.
6. I learned more about creating games and interactive teaching.
7. The project helped me to experience a positive and collaborative group effort.
8. I will plan a similar project when I have my own classroom.
9. I felt the fair was a positive experience for the elementary students who attended.
10. I have additional suggestions for future social studies fairs.

The twenty one students who responded were unanimous with Yes responses for questions one through nine. Additional suggestions were also made for future fair themes, games, and locations for future fairs. From the pre-service teacher’s point of view, the Pinecrest students were very receptive to being taught by college students. The 4th, 5th, and 6th graders seemed to want to learn the material and to have the special attention from a group from the university. Language barriers existed and were often problematic, but some pre-service teachers were able to give key points in the native language to help get the points across. The teaching experience was definitely beneficial; however, the fifteen minute time limit was too short for most.

**Conclusions**

The findings show the social studies fair method of teaching is effective for increasing student learning and motivation. Future studies may involve fewer students and an indoor arena setting. For the testing process more reliable data could be gathered if students were given these tests before entering the fair and directly after.
Then students could be tested again a month after to clearly check if they had retained the information.

To further this research, the survey could be conducted again using a different social studies topic. The survey would still remain multiple choice and contain key points from each station’s presentation. The other way to further research is to repeat this same fair with a different demographic and then compare it to similar surveys from fairs of different subjects such as English, Math, or Science.

Using a hands-on, centers approach to teaching social studies, whether in an arena format or in the classroom, has potential for increasing motivation and achievement. The strategy combines some best practices of tutoring in small groups, higher level thinking, and combining a variety of multiple intelligences along with a clear purpose for learning.

References


Yell, M. (2013, April 08). *What are some strategies to increase student interest and motivation in middle school history?*.

Appendix A

Pretest

1) **What is a conquistador?**
   a) a tailor
   b) a blacksmith
   c) a pirate
   d) an adventurer

2) **Why did Ponce De Leon explore Florida?**
   a) gold
   b) power

3) **From which countries did settlers to Florida come?**
   a) India
   b) Mexico
   c) Canada
   d) Cuba

   c) spices
   d) fountain of youth
4) Name one environmental danger to the Everglades.
   a) Fires
   b) Invasive species
   c) Tornados
   d) Tsunamis

5) What is another name for the city of Fort Myers?
   a) City of Pines
   b) City of Palms
   c) City of Citrus
   d) City of Pineapples

6) What is the capital of Florida?
   a) Tallahassee
   b) Jacksonville
   c) Daytona
   d) Miami

7) Which animal is native to Florida?
   a) Panther
   b) Kangaroo Rat
   c) Koala bear
   d) Musk Ox

8) What is Florida Gulf Coast University known for?
   a) It is President Obama’s college.
   b) It has a great football team.
   c) It is an environmental school.
   d) It is located on the beaches of Miami.

9) What did Ford and Edison in Southwest Florida?
   a) sewing machine
   b) first computer
   c) printing press
   d) artificial rubber

10) What is an endangered animal?
    a) an extinct animal
    b) a dangerous animal
    c) an animal that needs protection
    d) an animal that is overpopulated

11) Which of these people is a famous Floridian?
    a) George W. Bush
    b) Johnny Depp
    c) Taylor Swift
    d) Salvadore Dali

12) Which of these Native American Tribes are from Florida?
    a) Cherokee
    b) Sioux
    c) Seminole
    d) Cheyenne

13) What was Florida’s first major city?
    a) Miami
    b) St. Augustine
    c) Tallahassee
    d) Daytona

14) A gardening system that is like an ecosystem is called what?
    a) a nursery
    b) a farm
    c) a food forest
    d) a plant machine

15) What is the name of the NASA location in Florida?
    a) Cape Canaveral
    b) The Space Station
    c) Rocket Central
    d) Kennedy Space Center

16) How many colleges and universities are there in Florida?
    a) 500
    b) 25
    c) 132
    d) 5

17) What are some reasons that visitors come to Florida?
    a) skiing and snowmobiling
    b) beaches and amusement parks
    c) ancient ruins
    d) camping in the wilderness

18) Florida is an example of what kind of landform?
    a) peninsula
    b) island
    c) strait
    d) continent
### Graphs and Tables
**6th Grade Pre- and Post- Test**

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### 5th Grade Pre- and Post-Test

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5th Grade Test Comparison

6th Grade Test Comparison
A Qualitative Sociological Analysis of MSMW with an Identity Conundrum

Deymon X. Fleming
James A. Johnson
Central Michigan University

Le’Roy E. Reese
Morehouse School of Medicine

Daniel E. Walker
University of Southern California
ABSTRACT

Conundrum: Why don't young African American men who have sex with men and women (MSMW), and who engage in risky sexual behavior that puts them and others at risk of contracting HIV, identify with behavior labels such as “MSMW” and “bisexual?”

This study revealed that these young men’s rejection of sexual identity labeling might be an important factor that influences increasing HIV infections rates especially among African American females, thus sustaining and extending the deadly AIDS epidemic. The struggle with identity ambiguity may have multiple motivations and influences such as teenage immaturity, short-term sexual experimentation and exploration, drug addiction, incarceration, and/or prostitution. Moreover, some public health researchers suspect that this identity conundrum may lead to secretive sexual behavior, described in the popular press as the down-low, in which men who have sex with women don’t disclose to these women their high-risk affairs with men that may in turn expose these women to HIV infection.

Better understanding of the complex relationship between sexual identity and sexual behavior may help public health researchers and practitioners effectively reach this population.

Introduction

“Gays are gays, and straights are straights, but what’s a bisexual? There’s nobody here who’s a bisexual!”(D. Fleming, personal communication, February 26, 2013)

“Ah, would you mind repeating that?” (D. Fleming, personal communication, February 26, 2013)

My research interview participant repeated it, this time with even more emphasis on the word “nobody”. Unfortunately, I was just as dumbfounded the second time he repeated the identical proclamation, as I was the first time I heard him say it. Why? Well, here was a young, adult, African American man in his mid-twenties who just shared with me that he has had sex with both men and women (MSMW) and was continuing to do so - telling me that he is not a bisexual. How should I interpret this apparent contradiction?

My mind kept asking questions. Was the young man serious? Did he not understand what the term bisexual meant? Was he new to being an MSMW – too inexperienced to self-identify with the practice? Was he influenced by some bisexual conception that didn’t fit with his self-identity? Was he rejecting a stigmatized cultural identity as undesirable, perhaps dangerous? Was the situation so far beyond my personal and professional experience and awareness that it was too nuanced for me to appreciate? The tone in his voice told me that there was conviction behind his statement, even though it was far from clear to me exactly what the implications of his statement were for understanding sexual identity in this population and how that influenced sexual behavior. What was evident in his statement was that he wanted no part of bisexuality or at least how bisexuality is commonly understood, not now and perhaps not ever.

The Study Context

The young man said this to me as a participant completing a semi-structured interview for a qualitative study on journeys that MSMW African American males travel on the way to their first HIV testing experience. I wanted to explore how a targeted sample of young men came to be tested in their preteen and teenage years in a large southeastern U.S. city while they were developing their sexual identities, and in so
doing, identify and examine what barriers and catalysts to testing they experienced. My underlying concern was why HIV infections were still growing rapidly in some areas of the United States after 30 years of intensive research and efforts to combat it including what appeared to be an accelerating trend of infections among African American women (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2012). Recent data have revealed that African American women are overwhelmingly becoming infected through sexual contact with HIV-positive males, who are also often infected by sexual contact with other males. In particular, I was puzzled why apparently nearly 20% of HIV-positive individuals or approximately 1.2 million people with HIV in the United States do not know their HIV status (CDC, 2012); and why these uninformed people are responsible for spreading infection on average to 2 1/2 other people and accounting for approximately 50% of new HIV infections every year (Marks, Crepaz, & Janssen, 2006). Here the analysis centered on self-identified African American bisexual young men between 20-29 years of age. What they were describing to me, on the other hand, were the experiences they had 10 to 20 years prior to the time of my interviews with them, mixed in with what was going on in their lives in the present day.

At the time the young man who refused to be identified as a bisexual and I had this verbal exchange, he may have been on the defensive, anticipating some deeply personal questions from me about sex and perhaps feeling uneasy about who I was and what I wanted to know. Because the study was exploratory about a topic that is still in relatively uncharted waters, I didn’t quite know how or where his response would fit into the rest of the study at that moment. His reactive response made a deep impression on me, though, and my instincts were to take him seriously and check into the wording of my advertising flyers that up until that point I had not scrutinized to the same extent that I had all the other aspects of the study. Clearly, I may have inadvertently stumbled over an aspect of this topic I had not considered before.

Bisexual is Not What I Do

The word bisexual seemed to me to be neutral, scientific, un-stigmatized, politically correct, and non-threatening when I was considering placing it in the advertisement. Initially, I did not consider that this word could be misinterpreted. I thought of the word as purely descriptive, beyond reproach. As the question of sexual identity ambiguity began to work its way through my thought processes, however, I would occasionally feel that maybe I should reconsider the term and possibly change the advertisement just to be safe. When I found that the advertisement was not getting as good a response as I expected and I heard from one of the participants that the term bisexual was confusing, that gave me the impetus to substitute a better word or description for the term. Confusing, I asked? What was confusing about the word bisexual? Was it possible that these young men who were having sex with both men and women didn’t consider it bisexual behavior because it was unintentional, an anomaly or perhaps experimental? Eventually, I decided that the word bisexual might be too “clinical” for those who I was trying to attract as study participants, so I changed the wording to a description that was less open to misinterpretation, but at the same time perhaps even too explicit and raw for some. I decided upon the following description worded as a question, “Have you participated in vaginal, anal and/or oral sex with at least one man and one woman within the past 5 years?”
Once I put the change in, the response rate to the new advertisement rose upwards to closer to what I had hoped it would be. Simultaneously, I also began wondering why this should be so? I puzzled, what was it about the word bisexual that was so problematic? My mind raced on. What does the word bisexual actually mean? What was the derivation of the word bisexual? I looked it up. The word bisexual was first used in 1824 to be what we now know as hermaphrodites – biological individuals having both male and female reproductive organs such as worms, snails, many fish, and marine invertebrates (Stephens, 2013). Ninety-eight years later in 1922, bisexual was described in dictionaries as having a sexual orientation to both sexes (bisexual, 2010) — a definition that was significantly changed from its previous meaning and what we have known bisexual to be up to now, the present situation notwithstanding. Could the term be evolving again into something altogether different in 2013 than it had been 91 years ago? As I was to discover later, indeed it had and it had undergone a good deal more evolution than I could imagine. What I discovered was that at least on one level, these men were making a clear distinction between bisexual behavior and bisexual identity. They admitted to bisexual behavior when it was judged to be safe to do so, but did not admit or rarely admitted to bisexual identity under any circumstances, even to each other.

**Denial of Identity**

In the meantime, back at my study, it wasn’t until the middle of one of the participant interviews almost three-quarters of the way through the study that this enigmatic conundrum began to reveal itself a bit. In response to something the participant said, I described to this young man my astonishment about the general negative response I had received to the term bisexual in the recruiting advertisement. Then, when I asked him what he felt about the term bisexual, and in particular his concerns about bisexual identity, this is what he said:

PARTICIPANT R13: I think that’d make people not want to get tested. You know, if I was around somebody who, you know, just said, “Oh, I can’t stand” or “I wouldn’t want to be around somebody” — I know if there could be a possibility that I could be HIV— positive or I’m having sex with this person or that person, then I’m not going to go get tested because I’m not going to want to know.

INTERVIEWER: Right. And so — and how do you think it would impact bisexuals in gen — specifically?

PARTICIPANT R13: I mean, I just think that, uh — I mean it do. It just makes you not want to get tested. And then more people have the virus and they’re not taking care of themselves. And you know, it’s just being spread more. Like, you know, so I think it’s a path in the wrong way, you know. But I mean it’s just — just some people, I guess — you know, a lot of people — peer pressure, you know, they — I guess they just don’t want to know because they don’t want other people to single them out or make them feel, you know, uncomfortable or — you know, a lot of bisexual people like to have threesomes and stuff like that. And, you know, a lot of that go on. So, you know, they just do what they want to do, I guess. So, I mean, that’s the best way I can — that’s all I have to say (Fleming, unpublished data)
This provided some insight that that stigma may be playing an important role governing the hiding of bisexual identity. Later in the study, on the subject of MSMW behavior, I asked another young man where and how he would go to find other MSMW to connect with and he responded that he found them in local social clubs in the following way:

PARTICIPANT R19: [laughs] Oh, no. This was a — it was a down-low club. Well, it wasn't even a down-low club. It was a straight-up gay club with down-low people. Hide in the dark. That's what I do — hide in the dark, drink my drink. And then you just go about your target (p. 83). (D. Fleming, personal communication, February 25, 2013)

That response provided some perception that disguise, deception, and to my way of thinking, denial may be going on with him. I thought it was telling about the confusion between identity and behavior he might be feeling (what I'm calling a conundrum), that he used both the third person plural and the first person singular in describing and admitting to being a down-low person. My impression was that while the behavior of the people was what attracted him to the club, the down-low label was not an identity he, nor anyone in the club, accepted. I was so struck by all of it that I launched into another literature search to see what other researchers may have encountered as compared to what I was looking at. It also struck me that what was contained within these two expressions may be contributing in some way to the spread of the HIV virus. Did the gays who were exclusively gay in this club realize, for example, that others in the club at the time who were calling themselves gay, but in fact were not strictly gays, but actually MSMW (bisexuals) who were potentially exposing exclusively gay men to a much higher risk of becoming infected with HIV than they bargained for? Further, did they realize that the MSMW denial of identity as bisexuals may be at the heart of the issue, driving the risks upward? My guess is that they all knew but chose to deny it, as PARTICIPANT R13 said. They may have decided this, perhaps, because the stigmatized social rejection by the African American community-at-large was judged to be a higher price to pay.

Conflated Sexual Identity and Behavior Orientation

If it is accurate that the coining of the behavioral acronym MSM for men who have sex with men by epidemiologists Glick, Muzyka, Salkin, and Lurie (2004) began the “crystallization of a new concept” (Young & Meyer, 2005), it may also be true that this may very well be the catalyst that led to the use of the related terms MSW and MSMW. A number of researchers have found it useful to assume that there are clear, discreet, principally behavioral and salient boundaries separating the three male sexual identities and orientations: MSW — men who have sex with women; MSM — men who have sex with men; and MSMW— men who have sex with men and women. This is clearly apparent in reviewing the HIV literature of the past three decades. In the beginning of my study on young adult African American MSMW, I also found it useful to make a similar assumption on the grounds of simplicity and clarity of communications with my research participants and other researchers. In my own extended literature review pursued after an initial deep exploration, however, I learned from Young and Meyer (2005) that there is a great deal of overlap and fluidity between the boundaries; an insight that the exploratory data I collected supports. I found that what I thought was a clear MSMW subcategory, distinct from the MSW and MSM categories was actually
overlapping and fluid in multiple dimensions. Temporally, I found that sexual experiences were quite complex and changed over time. A number of these young men began in what may be described behaviorally as the MSW or MSM categories when they were adolescents, then changed over time as they explored and experienced different relationships. When a substantial number had behaviorally become MSMW, they did not identify with that category as far as I could tell, if indeed they ever heard of it. Instead, they continued with the MSW or MSM identities with their friends and family or didn’t identify at all with any grouping. It was unclear to me whether this was intentional, irrelevant, or simply did not occur to them. In any case, Ford, Whetten, Hall, Kaufman, and Thrasher (2007) made a similar observation about African Americans. Operario, Smith, and Kegeles (2008) noted that behavioral MSMW reject the bisexual identity because sexual identity in men forms from beliefs and images about masculinity that, “shape men’s identities, sexual behaviors, and attitudes toward women” (p. 347). This conception muddies the waters or conflates behavior and identity in a way others may mean when they describe the situation as “fluid”. For example, The San Francisco Human Rights Commission (2010) reported that various groups describe bisexuals as pansexual, omnisexual, and ambisexual. Pansexual derives from the Greek term pan meaning “all” as in panacea, or panoply (pan, 2013). Omnisexual derives from the Latin term omnis meaning “all” as in omnibus (omni, 2013). Ambisexual derives from the Latin term meaning “both” as in ambidextrous (ambi, 2013).

Few people identify as bisexuals. Herbenick et al. (2010) reported that both male and female bisexuals made up just 3.1% of the total Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) community and men made up just slightly more than one percent of the total population in 2008. The San Francisco Human Rights Commission (2010) expressed that these numbers are probably underestimates as claiming bisexual identity can be hidden, distorted, denied, or misreported for a variety of reasons including: assumptions by others, historical revisionism, exclusion, biphobia, eclipsed and conflated sexual orientation, economic discrimination, lack of institutional support, generational differences, and hidden diversity. Mosher, Chandra, and Jones (2005) provided confirmation of this assertion and especially the lack of congruency of bisexual behavior and identity when they reported that nearly six percent of men admitted to having sex with both men and women, as compared with only one percent who claimed a bisexual identity.


The Fluidity of Identity in Other Dimensions

Time is not the only dimension of behavior and identity fluidity. Young and Meyer (2005) described poverty as another key dimension of the African American community.
They cited Farmer (2003) who speculated, “males involved in prostitution are almost universally poor, and it may be their poverty, rather than their sexual preference, that puts them at risk of HIV infection. Many men involved in homosexual prostitution, particularly minority adolescents, do not necessarily identify as gay” (p. 47). Young and Meyer (2005) added that Farmer (2003) seemed to be suggesting, “the same-gender behavior among poor men of color (especially youth) is sex work rather than sex for pleasure and is devoid of identity and community” (p. 1145). If true, this may very well explain some identity ambiguity. Although none of the men I interviewed admitted to prostitution, it was clear that a large percentage or all of them had experienced poverty and many or all were poor when I interviewed them. Additionally, there were a few participants in the study that made it clear that they were very aware of what was happening and may be happening among their peers including the potential, if not the reality, of a very high frequency of sexual activity, sexual obsession, and perhaps even prostitution. Two MSMW participants told me that all they needed to do was to call a few phone numbers to be able to produce a roomful of eager sexual participants. I interpreted these statements as the very epitome of fluidity, which is to say that categorical identity descriptors may have been irrelevant to this group of non-gay identified men who have sex with men and women.

In a group of adolescent males, other dimensions of fluidity may also obscure rigid sexual categories such as MSW, MSM, and MSMW. Interviews with my study participants revealed that experimentation, for example, was prevalent in early adolescence. This is not unexpected and defies categorization. One male participant in the study described being seduced by an uncle while being drugged. Other participants described having principally heterosexual experiences with rare exceptions or principally homosexual experiences with rare exceptions. Any or all of these descriptions strain the meaning of the MSMW categorization because what these labels imply is predominance instead of rare occurrences. The truth may be that among youths, there hasn’t been enough life experience to sufficiently form a sexual identity. In addition to this, Young and Meyer (2005) went further in stating their concern about the “ubiquitous” use of labeling saying that it,

(1) undermines the self-determined sexual identity of members of sexual-minority groups, in particular people of color; (2) deflects attention from social dimensions of sexuality that are critical in understanding sexual health; and (3) obscures elements of sexual behavior that are important for public health research and intervention (p. 1144).

**Conundrum**

This brings us to the heart of the matter. This presentation posed the question: Why don’t young African American MSMW, who engage in risky sexual behavior puts them and others at risk of contracting HIV, identify with behavior labels given to them by researchers such as “MSMW” and bisexuals that are technically accurate?

The most basic answer to this question may reside within the definition of MSMW and the definitions and distinctions made between MSMW, MSW and MSM. The question is, are they valid — that is, actually accomplishing what they were created to do which was to simplify behavioral descriptions? Young and Meyer (2005) asserted they are not, arguing instead that, “they are problematic because they obscure social
dimensions of sexuality; undermine the self-labeling of lesbian, gay, and bisexual people; and do not sufficiently describe variations in sexual behavior” (p. 1144). Young and Meyer argued further that sexuality and identity are far more complex and nuanced and the overuse of these kinds of terms by public health professionals is fundamentally biased in that it, “adds to a history of scientific labeling that reflects, and inadvertently advances, heterosexual notions in discussing members of sexual-minority groups” (p. 1144).

Young and Meyer (2005) built their case by arguing that the creation of the MSMW, MSW, and MSM distinctions were driven by the concurrence of two perspectives: 1) epidemiological perspectives, and 2) social construction. Terms such as MSM, MSW, and MSMW were invented beginning in the early 1990s in connection with the HIV literature and have become established in research and health programming since then because, “the terms held the promise of reducing AIDS stigma” (p. 1144). Young and Meyer (2005) asserted that epidemiological perspective was introduced principally to create terms that “sought to avoid complex social and cultural connotations that, according to a strict biomedical view, have little to do with epidemiological investigation of diseases” (p. 1144). The terms focused on behavior instead of identity “that place individuals at risk for HIV infection, a particularly important distinction given that scientific and medical experts had initially identified gay identity as a risk for HIV/AIDS” (p. 1144). This identity, according to researchers such as Treichler (1999), and Herek and Giunt (1988), resulted in the stigmatization of lesbians, gays, and bisexuals, stymying actions taken to prevent HIV infection. Young and Meyer (2005) asserted that social construction theory originated with gay and lesbian, feminist and queer studies and sought “more textured understandings of sexuality that do not assume alignments among identity, behavior, and desire” (p. 1144). This is a theory that suggests that, “sexualities (like other social categories) are products of social processes. A central tenant of social construction is that particular sexual practices cannot be interpreted as though they carry fixed meanings” (p. 1144). Young and Meyer argued that the labels “have accomplished few if any of the aims that prompted them” (p. 1144).

In my study, I would have to side with these researchers in concluding that in the case of analyzing developing male African American teenagers, very little in the way of labeling helped to shed light in explaining why many participants delayed seeking HIV testing for years after engaging in high-risk behaviors.. Actually, the fact that these labels existed may have prevented them from testing sooner than they did in that the stigma attached to the labels MSMW, MSM, and MSW created an atmosphere of fear of social ostracism from their families, friends and community. In the words of one of the participants:

PARTICIPANT R13: You know, and, um, I think it’s going to take a long while or maybe never for the bisexual people to really feel comfortable with it because so many people hate. I think bisexual people are more hated than gays, you know. (D. Fleming, personal communication, February 19, 2013)

What was published in my dissertation was the following statement using the MSMW identity:

Young African American MSMW are especially vulnerable not only to contracting HIV, but also to unknowingly spreading the infection to others. A recent surveillance study of over 2,000 sexually active African American
men, many within the 20-29 age group, revealed that MSMW engaged in more high-risk unprotected sex with male and female partners of negative and unknown HIV serostatus than did MSW and MSM (Spikes et al., 2009). MSMW not only infect others in high-risk demographic groups, they provide a “bridge” for HIV to infect otherwise low-risk populations (Gorbach, Murphy, Weiss, Hucks-Ortiz & Shoptaw, 2009). This is especially dangerous because low-risk populations do not consider HIV testing. Due to the continued spread of HIV via young African American MSMW, in-depth investigation into a particular population’s thoughts and behaviors surrounding HIV testing is necessary to battle the HIV epidemic. (Fleming, 2013, p. 40)

In retrospect, I’m not so sure the identity mattered as much as I implied in that statement, in other words, that the differences ascribed to the different categories MSW, MSM, and MSMW are as clear cut as they may seem to be. There were many nuances that were uncovered in the study that were not able to be studied in more depth and called for a finer breakdown in the understanding of sexuality, including such phenomenon as sexual obsession, sexual addiction, prostitution, sexual stigma, and sexual disclosure.

In consideration of the question, “Why don’t young African American MSMW, whose sexual behavior puts others at very high risk of contracting HIV, identify with behavior labels given to them by researchers such as “MSMW” and bisexuals that are technically accurate?” the answer to this conundrum has so far been difficult, if not impossible, to resolve because of the complicating existence of the category MSMW. I can’t help wondering whether the elimination of this label and a clearer focus on social processes that lead to certain kinds of sexual behavior are necessary to reduce personal disclosure secrecy that may be the source of so many HIV infections.

**Summary**

Some public health researchers may not understand why young bisexual (MSMW) African American men do not identify with that part of their behavior that puts others, and especially women and children, at very high risk of contracting HIV. These young men where they are engage in high risk sexual behavior may be suspected of being the single most important factor in driving HIV infections upwards every year (and increasingly among women, children, and by extension, other innocent and unknowing men). What some public health researchers may suspect is that identity denial may lead to secretive sexual behavior such as being described in the popular press as the down-low in which men who have sex with women don’t disclose to these women their high-risk affairs with men that may in turn expose these women to HIV infection.

The conundrum facing young MSMW African American men is that they may have no identification with the behaviorally bisexual part of them that puts women and their unborn children at very high risk of contracting HIV because: a) they are too young, immature and inexperienced to have an identity; b) their behavior is not predominantly MSMW or bisexual so the identity does not fit the behavioral facts; c) they are too afraid to have a public identity even if they were clearly bisexual or MSMW because of the fear of stigma and social ostracism that the bisexual identity carries with it; d) the social life, cultural situation, and relationships they are managing are far more complex than public health researchers may appreciate and the bisexual/MSMW identity implies; and e) they
are engaged in drug addiction (and frequently the mental illness comorbidity that often accompanies drug addiction), down-low activity, sexual obsession, prostitution, incarceration, and sexual slavery under the threat of violence, or being desperately poor – any or all of which can lead to involuntary or perhaps even desperate behavior that they refuse to identify with. In such a state they may not even realize who they really are and the implications of what they are doing. Therefore, because they may not have an identity with the bisexual/MSMW part of themselves (or who they supposedly are) that puts women and their unborn children at very high risk of contracting HIV, they have no understanding, self-responsibility, personal pride, ethical standards or impetus for action to change their behavior. Researchers unaware of this situation would be well advised to be ready to confront this conundrum early on in their work.

References
Marks, G., Crepaz, N., & Janssen, R. S. (2006). Estimating sexual transmission of HIV from persons aware and unaware that they are infected with the virus in the USA.


Footnotes

1 Men who have sex with men and women not only suffer the highest rates of HIV infection, but also can transmit HIV to the wider population outside of those engaging in homosexual activity. African American women accounted for nearly two-thirds of the HIV diagnoses in 2010 even though they comprise only 12% of the total American female population (CDC, 2012).

2 For example, one recent study of 2,099 African American women presented findings that African American women living in six “hot spot” geographic areas—Atlanta, GA, Raleigh-Durham, NC, Washington, DC, Baltimore, MD, Newark NJ, and New York City, NY—have HIV infection rates five times higher than the overall rate of HIV infection among African American women estimated by the CDC (Hodder et al., 2010).

3 Put another way, if the 20% of all HIV-positive people in the United States who do not know their HIV status were to become aware of their status, it has been estimated that there could be a reduction of up to 50% in the total HIV population the following year, equal to 20,000-25,000 people. This means that each HIV-positive person who does not know their HIV status spreads their infection to 2.5 other people every year on average—a ratio that might be called the “2.5 x unknown HIV infection multiplier effect” (Marks, Crepaz, & Janssen, 2006).
Responsive Approaches to Supporting Professional Learning Communities in Pursuit of Master Teacher Certification

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Abstract

The Master Teachers Academies (MTA) program at the University of Texas at El Paso provided a supportive and responsive context within which local teachers pursued the academic and testing requirements for Science, Technology, or Mathematics (STEM) Master Teacher certification. Through the MTA, professional learning communities (PLCs) emerged and became a key component in the successful development and targeting of strategies to produce Master Teachers. An important way in which the MTA PLCs proved useful was in inspiring and implementing divergent analytical techniques and responses thereto in order to help participants prepare for the master teacher certification exam. Using divergent analyses of practice exam results as one of several responsive approaches to supporting the pursuits of the PLCs ultimately produced a cohort certification exam pass rate of 87.5%, improving the program wide pass rate by 21.5%, and helping to facilitate 38.9% of total program-sponsored certifications. The present report adds to existing research asserting that the efficacy and sustainability of PLCs is dependent upon supportive environments; it also indicates that PLCs predicated upon established conditions and functional definitions can elicit powerful outcomes for teacher preparation and education programs.

The Master Teacher Academies at the University of Texas at El Paso

The Master Teacher Academies (MTA) Science, Technology, and Mathematics (STEM) program at the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) was established as part of the Mathematics, Science, and Technology Teacher Preparation (MTTSP) program; this initiative by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) helped fund the development of several related programs throughout the state. The MTA at UTEP was a collaborative initiative between the UTEP Department of Education and local Independent School Districts (ISDs).

Amidst broader goals related to STEM teacher professional development, the immediate outcome objective of the MTTSP initiative was to increase the numbers of Master Teachers and Masters of Education in the fields of mathematics, science, and technology (THECB, 2009). Thus, the primary focus of the MTA was to support local teachers in obtaining Master Teacher credentials; secondary foci included encouraging and supporting participants’ progression towards graduate degrees in STEM education and overall professional development.

Brown, Alford, Rollins, Stillisano, and Waxman (2013) report on the mid-program success with which MTTSP programs implemented and achieved seven secondary goals related to professional development in STEM teacher readiness. Comparatively, the West Texas MTTSP programs encompassed within the MTA were among the most comprehensively-implemented initiatives; although not necessarily finished with their master teacher courses of study, participants from among these MTA programs also reported higher-than-average self-perceptions of content knowledge and average to above average self-perceptions of pedagogical learning (Brown et al., 2013). Brown et al., (2013) also found that many participants noted the development of professional learning communities (PLCs) in connection to positive perceptions of the MTTSP programs.

Brown et al. (2013) do not report any results related to master teacher certification outcomes, perhaps because the MTTSP grant programs were in mid-swing at the time these authors conducted their evaluation. The present paper uses more recent data and
program experiences to describe and explore the relationship between the MTA strategies, PLCs, and master teacher certification outcomes.

The master teacher credentialing process coincides with the secondary goals of the MTTSP initiatives evaluated by Brown et al. (2013). According to the THECB (2009), MTs are individuals who possess advanced professional content knowledge and faculty-to-faculty mentoring skills. In order to become a MT, Texas requires experienced teachers to complete a certain amount of relevant course and preparatory hours (Texas Administrative Code Title 19, Part 7, Rule §228.35; Texas Education Agency [TEA], 2013) and to pass the Texas Examinations for Master Teachers (TExMaT) for a given STEM discipline and/or grade level range (TEA, 2013). The TExMaT includes a multiple choice and an essay section (TEA, 2013). The multiple choice questions pertain to STEM area and grade level range content knowledge as well as to broad pedagogical content knowledge; the essay section uses a case study to evaluate examinees’ skills and readiness to be a teacher-to-teacher mentor (TEA, 2013).

The MTA focused on master teacher certification in Mathematics (MMT), grades 4-8 and grades 8-12; master teacher certification in Science (MST), grades 4-8 and grades 8-12; and master teacher certification in Technology (MTT). The MTA sought to prepare participants to meet content knowledge, pedagogical, and professional expectations as gauged by the TExMaT for each of these areas. To this end, the MTA provided financial, academic, and professional development support to teachers through coursework and other training deemed to be supportive and relevant to successfully passing the TExMaT. The MTA strategies were informed by the development, evolution, and responsive support of PLCs.

Development and Responses to Professional Learning Communities

The definition of a “Professional Learning Community” (PLC) remains in flux (Jones, Stall, & Yarbrough, 2013), but there is some consensus on certain features that distinguish PLCs. Although definitions and descriptions of PLCs may expound on them, many (e.g. Jones, Stall, & Yarbrough, 2013; Hipp & Huffman, 2010; Dufour, Dufour, Eaker, & Many, 2006; Blankstien, 2012; Cranston, 2009; Jacobs & Yendol-Hoppey, 2010; la Velle, 2013) include the following characteristics, which were first outlined as criteria for PLCs by Hord (1997):

- Supportive and shared leadership
- Collective creativity
- Shared values and vision
- Supportive conditions
- Shared personal practice

The PLCs that evolved within the UTEP MTA, and the responsive MTA strategies thereto, align with these common definitional criteria.

Shared Values, Vision, Leadership, and Personal Practice

Initially, the MTA anticipated close collaboration with multiple local ISDs. However, early into the implementation of the program, external events and transitions within the region negated the active involvement of several ISD administrations from which teacher-participants were recruited for the MTA. In response, so as to accommodate teacher-participants from all target ISDs, the MTA positioned itself as the central point of contact and facilitator of support for all programmatic elements. As a consequence of the MTA’s position of prominence over delineations of participant groups by school or district, teacher-
participants utilized the MTA as the platform around which they developed inter-district, inter-school PLCs. These PLCs were predicated upon participation in MTA and by strand, i.e. inter-district, inter-school PLCs formed among participants seeking MTT, MMT, or MST certification. The MMT and MST PLCs included teachers seeking certification for grades 4-8 as well as teachers seeking certification for grades 8-12.

**Supportive and Shared Leadership and Conditions**

The MTA PLCs served as a vehicle by which to solicit and facilitate peer and program support. These features were bidirectional, with participants first identifying themselves as a group and voicing questions and needs collectively. In response to the recognition of these emerging PLCs, the MTA not only responded to what was voiced by the groups but also solicited the groups in kind for certain communication, feedback, and organizational purposes. Overall, support of the PLCs proved to be fruitful in a number of ways. Collaborating and communicating with PLCs helped MTA informed the design of professional development and academic support activities and was identified by participants as being especially important in the recruitment and long-term retention and program completion of participant-teachers from all target ISDs, regardless of whether their administrations were actively involved with MTA.

**Collective Creativity**

Many of the most illustrative examples of responsive approaches to supporting the PLCs that emerged within the MTA pertain to directly to test preparation efforts. Through working with the PLCs, the MTA was able to successfully overcome potential obstacles to master teacher certification.

Per its contract and grant parameters with the state of Texas, the MTA was provided with and allowed to administer a practice exam for the TExMaT. Initially, master teacher qualifying coursework was assumed to provide the foundation for passing both the practice exam and the actual TexMaT. However, after the MTA teacher-participants began taking the practice and actual TexMaT exams, it became clear that more targeted preparation was necessary. Participants reported, and their practice exam and TexMaT score reports concurred with them, that additional content area instruction was needed specific to various aspects of the master teacher strand areas, i.e. in mathematics, science, and technology. Participants also expressed and demonstrated a need for targeted preparation in mentoring, a key aspect of the TexMaT assessment and a defining purpose behind master teacher certification.

In response to these needs, the MTA developed and implemented a number of test preparation workshops to support and further foster strand-specific PLCs. The nature and scope of these workshops quickly came to be informed by and designed in response to feedback from the PLCs. Components of these workshops included content-area instruction salient to the various domain areas of the TexMaT, mentoring workshops, specially-designed courses, and additional exam practice and exam feedback sessions. The MTA contracted with a number of individuals who were already master teacher certified to develop and deliver workshop materials, designed based on surveys of teacher-participants’ domain area interests and study needs. Following these workshops, participants provided immediate and post-testing feedback on the usefulness of the materials and instruction. Workshops informed and developed via this process were held throughout the course of the MTA, and thus became more responsive as time progressed.
These materials, workshops, and collaborative and responsive approaches to supporting participants and PLCs became significant factors in MTA participation and success. This became especially clear as the practice exam came to pose a limitation to participant preparation. Only one official practice exam was provided for each certification strand, subdivided for MMT and MST by grade levels 4-8 and 8-12. Official practice exams are comprised of retired TExMaT multiple choice questions and a case study. The multiple choice questions reflect the domain area competencies identified by the Texas State Board for Educator Certification (TSBEC) (2004; 2002a; 2002b) Master Teacher standards for a given content area and/or grade level range. Domain area competencies for Master Teachers of all STEM strands are very extensive (TSBEC, 2004; TSBEC, 2002a; TSBEC, 2002b). The STEM TExMaT also includes an essay section that focuses on mentoring responses to a case study (TEA, 2013). The results from both the practice exam and the TExMaT are phrased in technical language drawn from these official descriptions of domain areas and competencies.

Thus, not long into the MTA program, responses to preparation workshops indicated in direct and indirect ways that repetition of the practice test and the results the accompanying analytical software generated was not adequate enough to produce passing results on the actual TExMaT. Responsive strategies to this issue focused on developing additional practice materials and innovative approaches to using existing materials. A series of strategies developed to counter the constraints posed by a single practice test and the single, official mode of analysis used to articulate practice test and TExMaT results. The culmination of these strategies was dramatic, and is reviewed henceforth as an innovative, successful example of responsive support and collaboration with PLCs.

**Inter-PLC Creativity, Collaboration, and Support**

Like other MTTSP programs (Brown et al., 2013), fostering professional communities in support of MT-related learning was among the general goals of the MTA; however, due to the shift in administrative and MTA positioning, MTA PLCs developed and evolved in a generally organic manner. Thus, rather than following premeditated plans, program strategies to sustain, support, and respond to the MTA PLCs evolved in tandem. Strand-specific PLCs within the MTA eventually collaborated with one another, as well as with external PLCs. This inter-PLC cooperation fostered creative and allowed for new support opportunities by the MTA leadership.

Concurrent with the evolution of MTA-PLC interactions, at least one other MTTSP program collaborated with its own PLC (located in Nacogdoches, Texas) to develop a supplemented, experientially-informed TExMaT preparation guide (Kent & Splann, 2012). In 2013, the MTA was offered use of this resource. This document was incorporated into test preparation and practice exam sessions for the MTA MST and MMT PLCs. MTT was not excluded but extraneous factors resulted in a lack of active participation from MTT strand teachers for these sessions, so no MTT results from this activity are available for this analysis and discussion.

Introducing the Kent and Splann (2012) guide to the MTA PLCs was important for several reasons. It offered a new way of articulating and clarifying approach to preparing for the TExMaT. As a peer-informed test strategy guide, it held credence with the MTA participants. As a peer-produced artifact, it served to emphasize the importance of PLCs within Master Teacher certification programs, by demonstrating their potential to provide concrete, supportive advice for achieving the program goals. As such, the guide seemed to
resonate with the teacher-participants at UTEP. The new test preparation guide generated renewed interest in preparing for and taking the TexMaT among teacher-participants who previously felt they had exhausted the preparatory and instructional usefulness of the official practice tests and materials.

The MTA implementation of the Kent and Splann (2012) guide immediately preceded the administration of two practice exam sessions, which were offered in anticipation of the June 2013 TExMaT. The results from the first practice exam showed minor improvement in exam performances. Individual-matched essay responses showed some improvement from previous practice exams. Specifically, the guide had emphasized constructing a strong essay, such as through the use of collaborative, active language, as a critical step to successful examination. It was evident that participants had attempted to apply this advice to the practice exam, but not all had done so successfully. Essays often lacked or lagged in usage of mentoring verbiage associated with high essay scores. In addition, domain-specific analyses of the multiple-choice questions reflected continuing need for improvement.

**Supportive Leadership through Use of a Divergent Analytical Methodology**

Based on these initial experiences and findings, the MTA saw an opportunity to build on the positive responses expressed towards the unique and student-centered nature of Kent and Splann (2012) guide. In order to provide meaningful feedback and study guidance to its own PLCs and individual participants, the MTA decided it was necessary to complement the innovative Kent and Splann (2012) study materials with equally innovative exam performance analyses. The hope was that by using a novel approach to analyzing and phrasing feedback about participants’ practice exam performances, test preparation efforts would be further reinvigorated and bolstered. The innovative performance analyses were predicated upon a conscious effort to diverge in analytical terminology from official TExMaT frames of reference. Divergent analysis involved two steps, both of which looked at patterns of error in participants’ practice tests and sought to explicitly explain these patterns in language that disregarded the official analytical focus on language of the domain area competencies.

**Step One: Patterns in Questions**

The first step involved reviewing the practice questions participants answered incorrectly. For each individual’s practice exam, a brief, free-form description of the topic of each erroneously-answered question was noted. These notations were then analyzed for patterns, which were summarized into two to three broad sentences based on the free-form descriptions. Patterns became evident in all exams; examples of patterns identified in the first stage of analysis include having several erroneously-answered questions related to “physics of motion” or “earth and environmental sciences.” These patterns were found among several practice exams. However, in some cases, patterns were more unexpected and did not be comprehensible and useful until the second stage of analysis was conducted.

**Step Two: Patterns in Answers**

The second stage of divergent analysis involved noting and then analyzing patterns in the ways in which participants answered each question incorrectly. Thus, the second stage of analysis built upon and helped explicate the patterns of error documented in the first stage of analysis. This second stage of analysis took into consideration the language of the erroneously-answered question, the chosen answer that was incorrect, and the answer that
was identified as correct. For each erroneously-answered question, short, free-form notations were made. These were framed in terms of the question topics and pertained to relationships between correct answers and participants’ incorrect answers. As with the first stage of analysis, these notations were then looked at for commonalities, this time between question topic and patterns of error in answers, then summarized these patterns using non-official language. Indeed, patterns in how questions of certain topics were answered incorrectly became evident in each practice exam. For some participants, this second stage clarified the type of errors being made for questions of certain topics; these results were often very unique. For example, one pattern of error that emerged following the second stage of analysis was that “questions with fractions in the denominator” tended to be answered incorrectly; another example was that “questions related to hazmat procedures” were answered incorrectly because of a tendency to choose “clean-up over evacuation.” A third example of a pattern identified through the second stage of analysis pertained specifically to the mentoring aspect of the TExMaT, in terms of both the multiple-choice and essay portions of the test. With the application of the second stage of analysis, it became clear that many participants were failing to differentiate between pedagogical mentoring strategies applicable to teacher-student interactions, and those more efficacious to teacher-teacher interactions.

Results and Utilization of Divergent Analyses

The various examples given for the first and second stages of evaluation indicate the powerful new insights into learning and study needs that were indicated by the divergent analyses of practice exams; patterns such as these would not in any way be identified by the standard analytical tools and feedback provided for the practice test or TExMaT. Moreover, the insights gained from a divergent analysis of practice tests provided the means for utilizing the MTA PLCs and PLC support strategies to dramatically improve TExMaT outcomes.

The results from the divergent analyses of each individual practice test were provided to the respective participants, along with feedback on their essays. Participants who took a practice exam following the introduction of the Kent and Splann (2012) guide were provided with a standard (domain area) analysis of their results as well as with feedback on their essays, framed in terms of a focus on language and ideas related to mentoring strategies. Each participant also received the results from the divergent analyses of their practice test as well as information about common themes found among practice exams overall or within the MST or MMT strand exams. The divergent analyses were enthusiastically received and elicited several responses that reinforced the importance of responsively supporting the MTA PLCs.

After receiving their personalized feedback, the participants began making requests as a single PLC, embodying people from both the MST and MMT strands of the program, as well as both grade level ranges 4-8 and 8-12. The MTA responded to and encouraged this unification of the strand-specific PLCs. In immediate response to the divergent analyses and essay critiques was a request by the PLC for instruction and resources about differentiating between pedagogical approaches for mentoring teachers versus students in regards to the multiple choice section of the test. Also, the PLC voiced the need for additional preparation materials, so as to practice using the new information and revised strategies.
The MTA responded to these requests and used them as an opportunity to provide additional support to participants via the PLCs. The MTA suggested that strategies for answering multiple choice questions about mentoring might inform strategies for writing the essay: by attending to language details, test-takers might better answer questions in the domain-area portion of the test and then apply the ideas and verbiage from the questions to their essay response. To assist learners in achieving these overlapping strategies, The MTA provided participants with a list of action verbs used for resume writing.

**Sustaining and Fostering PLC Creativity**

In tandem with this advice and word list, the MTA collected and distributed to the unified PLC various study materials developed by contractors for specific strands, including an unofficial, additional case study from which to practice the essay portion of the exam. Participants were encouraged and advised as to how they might utilize the materials, including those not from their particular strand, to focus on the language aspect of questions, errors, and essay responses. The opportunity for participants to function as one PLC and share content-specific study materials provided context for the use of these language-based strategies for the essay and multiple choice questions. Participants also reported sharing resources about pedagogy from MTA and non-MTA courses with their peers in the PLC. The MTA also made content area study materials available based on the themes identified in the divergent analyses, and facilitated participants in pursuing the organization of digital study groups wherein they developed their own practice questions and helped one another with studying.

Since the implementation of the divergent analyses and inter-PLC support materials and strategies, there has been one opportunity for MTA participants to take the TExMaT (STEM TExMaT dates are biannual). Prior to this most recent TExMaT opportunity, the MTA made it a requirement that individuals earn passing scores on both the multiple choice and essay portions of the practice exam in order to register for the TExMaT. The combined implementation of this requirement along with unique study strategies and makes for a group of TExMaT-takers who are well suited for consideration and analysis as a “PLC” cohort that can be contrasted with previous MTA TExMaT-takers, who were not availed of such support and requirements.

**TExMaT Outcomes**

All but one participant for whom divergent analyses were conducted picked up these as well as their standard results; this individual is not included in all analyses of the PLC cohort for several reasons. This individual did not pass the practice exam and normally would not have been allowed to register for the TExMaT prior to doing so; however, this individual registered for the TExMaT just prior to the implementation of the passing practice exam scores stipulation. Because of these contingencies, this outlier is included in the comparative analyses of MTA participants as a whole, but is not included in the analyses of TExMaT results, outcomes, and impacts for the PLC cohort.

**PLC Cohort Results**

Ten participants took and passed one or more practice exams using the aforementioned tools and techniques; several participants took two practice exams, although the second exam was not always necessary as some of these individuals had passed the first practice test following the implementation of the aforementioned strategies. According to procedure, all ten of these individuals were authorized to take the TExMaT; of these 10 individuals, eight registered for and took the exam, forming the PLC TExMaT cohort.
The TExMaT pass rate for the PLC cohort was 87.5%, the highest rate documented for any MTA TExMaT cohort. Members of the PLC cohort account for 38.9% of all MTA Master Teacher certifications. Prior to the PLC cohort, the overall TExMaT pass rate for MTA participants was 47.8%; when the PLC cohort is included with past MTA TExMaT-takers, the overall pass rate is increased to 58.1%. This represents a 21.5% increase in the TExMaT pass rate.

**Perceived Impact of Divergent Analyses and Responsive Strategies**

Post-exam feedback from participants indicated a high degree of perceived correlation between the unique combination of analytical and responsive strategies and positive test results. Participants identified the divergent analyses as a distinctively helpful approach, especially when paired with the Nacogdoches PLC perspectives as presented by Kent and Splann (2012). Participants stated that the strategies outlined by Kent and Splann (2012) were made more applicable by the provision of the verb list and the suggestion that the domain area questions be used for stimulating ideas for additional strategies and terminology. Moreover, participants expressed their perceptions that the support strategies amounted from their combination; together, the new test preparation guide, support materials and ideas, and divergent form of practice test performance analysis provided participants with fresh insight that made it possible to study productively, despite the redundant practice examination materials.

**Conclusion**

The results from the PLC cohort of TexMaT examinees suggest that responsive and supportive strategies within professional development programs, particularly those that center and make use of PLCs, can be an important component in achieving program outcomes and objectives. This finding is not entirely novel; other literature has established and continues to support the importance of PLCs, especially in the field of education (Jacobs & Yendol-Hoppey, 2010; la Velle, 2013; Jones, Stall, & Yarbrough, 2013; Hipp & Huffman, 2010; Dufour, 2004; Dufour, Dufour, Eaker, & Many, 2006; Blankstien, 2012; Cranston, 2009; Hord, 1997). However, the same body of literature also indicates that in practice, PLCs often fail to develop or endure to fruition; frequently, core components necessary for PLCs to flourish and facilitate educator professional development are neglected (Jones, Stall, & Yarbrough, 2013; la Velle, 2013; Dufour, 2004; Hipp & Huffman, 2010; Blankstien, Houston, & Cole, 2007; Dufour, Dufour, Eaker, & Many, 2006). However, the MTA appears to be an exception, as this program responded in tandem to the evolution of its PLCs, providing and enabling Hord’s (1997) fundamental criteria for PLC success. This may be why MTA PLCs assume a notable, rather superfluous role in moving the MTA towards successfully achieving its primary outcome objective.

The long-term goals of the MTA emphasize training and education that prepares teachers to be masters in their subject matter and mentors to their coworkers. These long-term goals based upon a series of precursor endeavors such as coursework and intermediate training activities, with the final intent that they culminate in professional certifications. The impressive uptick in successful certification exam outcomes following the concordant introduction of new materials, strategies, and analyses suggest that responsive support of PLCs can have intrinsic positive effects, fostering collaboration among participants hailing from different schools, districts, and disciplines. These results also indicate that responsive and supportive program strategies that evolve in tandem with PLCs can elicit quantifiable results, while observably expanding and extending the
usefulness of program-sponsored trainings and materials. In planning for and implementing
future programs with similar overall strategies for facilitating professional development,
anticipating and encouraging PLCs for the benefit of the overall program is a path of action
that is well supported by the present, as well as existing, literature. However, it is important
to note that the MTA outcomes and strategies described here must be interpreted with the
perspective that some of the MTA PLCs' strengths and appeal may be rooted in its
naturalistic development and programmatic responsive thereto. Therefore, a highly
structured and deliberate approach to fostering the PLCs in similar or other contexts may
not elicit the same results in terms of participation or impact. Further research should seek
to explicate the most effective ways of responding to and nurturing naturally developing
PLCs, and whether there are any advantages or particular strategies to creating conditions
in which such PLCs occur. Pursuing these avenues of inquiry could open new pathways to
effectively incorporating PLCs into educator professional development.

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Polemic of Hate: How Mainstream Political Discourse Fueled the Growth in White Supremacy 2007-2012

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Abstract
The U.S. Presidential campaign of 2012 saw an upsurge in politically conservative stances and heated discourse with pundits debating issues pertaining to immigration, women’s reproductive rights, gay marriage, and unemployment. Woven into this mesh of political diatribe were concerns regarding the growth of hate and extremist groups within the United States. This paper will examine the political discourse on issues underlying the 2008 and 2012 Presidential campaigns as concerns regarding traditional family structure, immigration, and a host of other hotly debated social issues could be argued to be an instigating factor in the growth of the white supremacy and extremist movements across the country. It is hypothesized that increasingly mean spirited political rhetoric combined with an escalation of conspiracy theories and right-wing paranoia has resulted in an environment conducive to the growth of hate and extremist groups. Results will indicate a surge in extremist and hate group membership from 2007 to 2012.

Introduction
The U.S. presidential election of 2008 was one of precedent and history. Never before had a bi-racial person been selected to represent one of the major political parties in the presidential election. This radical diversion from standard form was not without controversy. Rumor, innuendo, and speculation fueled the widespread growth of politically conservative groups such as the Tea Party, Birther movement, Patriot Movement, Council of Concerned Citizens, Family Research Council, and the American Family Association, amid a host of other right-wing political action groups and committees.

Amid escalating concerns over the state of the economy, immigration, women’s reproductive health issues, and increased civil rights for homosexuals, the conservative right, most notably the Tea Party, became a spearhead through which further right-wing reactionary political agenda items began to appear. Growing speculation about Barak Hussein Obama’s place of birth gave rise to disquiet that the President was actually born in Kenya, and birth records obtained from the State of Hawai’i had been falsified in a large scale government conspiracy. Concerns over the President’s place of birth fueled anxiety that the more socially liberal policies emanating from the White House were the result of a socialist conspiracy to force the U.S. into a conglomerate political entity comprised of a Canada-U.S.-Mexico union.

This theater of impassioned political debate would soon result in a turmoil of name calling, finger pointing, and histrionics. Augmenting this volatile mixture was a fervor among the religious right that the moral perpetuity of America was in extreme danger due to such frank discussion of topics that by all rights should be taboo. Soon mainstream political candidates such as Rick Santorum, Ron Paul, Kris Kobach, Michelle Bachman, Newt Gingrich, and Sarah Palin among others became enmeshed in the discord flowing from the far right.

Eventually radio political commentators such as Rush Limbaugh, Glen Beck, Lou Dobbs, and Bill O’Reilly used the air waves to further inflame the increasingly hate filled polemic. Mash-ups often included women’s reproductive rights, rape, immigration, gay rights, economic policy, and the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan.

With the start of the 2012 presidential campaign individuals and organizations already enmeshed in the white supremacy movement had a prime opportunity to
influence mainstream American politics. Campaign donations for political candidates were soon to be traced to those with connections to various white supremacist organizations while personal connections between mainstream politicians and individuals within the white supremacy movement provided the American populace a darker, edgier, blatantly meaner 2012 campaign.

It is the position of this paper that the hate filled political rhetoric, so common during the presidential election campaign of 2012, coupled with changing U.S. demographics, poor economy, immigration controversies, and increasingly liberal policies of the Obama administration are fueling the growth in white supremacy, extremism, and hate groups. In addition, the perceived increased legitimacy of previously veiled organizations have made them more audacious with respect to campaign donations and membership expansion.

Supremacy, Hate, and Social Capital

It is an unfortunate reality that hate is still very much alive in 21st century society. Worldwide various groups and organizations proclaim superiority based on factors such as gender, race, religion, ethnicity, or national origin. According to Franklin (2004), “The Hate Directory: Racial, Religious, Ethnic, Gender, and Sexual Orientation Based Hatred” on the Internet contains no less than 118 pages of links to web sites, news groups, listservs, and chat rooms espousing a hate-based agenda. Hate is a learned thought process that all too often results in anti-social or criminal behavior. The internet and web-based technologies have proven tremendously useful teaching and recruitment tools for individuals, groups, and organizations involved in the world of supremacy and hate.

Due to the broad spectrum of groups and organizations devoted to propagating hate and hate rhetoric there is no single definition of what constitutes a “hate group”. However, there are several working definitions in use by legal organizations and law enforcement to help properly identify groups aligned around hate, hate speech, extremism, or biased criminal behavior.

According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) a hate group is defined as an organization whose "primary purpose is to promote animosity, hostility, and malice against persons belonging to a race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or ethnicity/national origin which differs from that of the members of the organization" (FBI Uniform Crime Reports, 1999, p. 3). Woolf and Hulsizer (2004) rely upon a slightly modified version of the Southern Poverty Law Center’s (SPLC) definition as they define a hate group as “any organized group whose beliefs and actions are rooted in enmity towards an entire class of people based on ethnicity, perceived race, sexual orientation, religion, or other inherent characteristics” (p. 43).

A casual scan of the two definitions highlights the existence of two primary components necessary before a hate group can really begin to flourish: Organization and a target group. If any specific group is to sprout and grow to fruition it must first achieve a certain measure of organization. A simple hodgepodge of assorted individuals with loosely defined but common goals cannot sustain the effort required to create or maintain a true group. According to Blee (2002), organization is so vital a concern in the identification of a hate group that many researchers have come to rely upon the term “organized racism” to properly define groups with an overtly racist or biased agenda.
A second major component included in the definitions of a hate group is enmity directed at a specific group of individuals. Hate, malevolence, or resentment is a key factor in the creation and perpetuation of a hate group. It is the primary motivation to use all available resources to advance an agenda by promoting hate and animosity toward an identified group.

In what could only be described as one of the most comprehensive directories of hate and extremist groups the Southern Poverty Law Center classifies groups according to 15 categories: Radical Traditional Catholicism, Patriot Movement, Nativist Extremist, neo-Nazi, anti-gay, neo-Confederate, anti-Muslim, racist Skinhead, anti-immigrant, White nationalist, Christian Identity, Holocaust Denial, Ku Klux Klan, Black Separatist, and general hate (www.splcenter.org). According to the SPLC, groups included within the category of ‘general hate’ “espouse a variety of rather unique hateful doctrines and beliefs that are not easily categorized” (www.splcenter.org/get-informed/intelligence-files/ideology/general-hate). These groups circulate within the larger white supremacy movement as vendors selling a litany of materials espousing a more generalized and encompassing hate rhetoric.

Hate, Extremism, and Social Capital

When attempting to analyze the attraction of hate and extremist groups, it becomes evident that many varied factors must be examined. No discussion of human interaction can be complete without examining social capital. A term first employed by Alexis de Tocqueville in the latter half of the 19th century, social capital refers to “the norms and values of the civic community”, which are “embodied in, and reinforced by, distinctive social structures and practices” (Putnam, 1993, p. 89). Social capital results from the communal activity and community sharing of individuals within a cohesive group such as a town or city.

The effects of social capital have been identified as highly significant in affecting human behavior and interaction, including the growth of hate and extremist groups (Putnam, 1995). As hypothesized by Putnam (1995, 2000), declining social capital results in a reduced level of civic engagement. Areas with higher levels of social capital enjoy a more varied economic environment with more personalized, intimate individual interactions. Locales suffering from a lack of social capital are typified by a depersonalized environment, with more individual anonymity. An individual with higher levels of social capital is thought to be happier and may benefit economically with more success in the job market and in other varied economic transactions (Robinson & Ritchie, 2010). Social capital has been positively associated with economic growth and lowered rates of poverty (Rupasingha & Goetz, 2007; Rupasingha, Goetz, & Freshwater, 2002).

In addition, higher per capita income taxes, unemployment rates, and divorce rates have been associated with an increased presence of hate groups (Jefferson & Pryor, 1999; Goetz, Rupasingha, & Loveridge, 2012). The subtle nuances involved in the effects of social capital on individuals and society make it a vital part of the overall discourse on hate and extremism.

Social capital can have subtle affects far removed from the economic structure of an area. As stated by Berlet (2004), “Organized hate groups defend unfair power and privilege by promoting collective actions frames and constructing narratives that use dualism and apocalypticism to demonize scapegoats and allege sinister conspiracies”
Berlet goes further by maintaining that the dynamics of scapegoating and conspiracy development are built and modeled upon larger, pre-existing prejudices and bigotry that exist in subdued forms in the larger society in which we all live and work.

Politics of Hate

Even within an established democracy such as that of the United States nationalistic, ethnic, and religious dissension can have widespread influence on political policy. Ignatieff (1993) contends that political and economic oppression tend to be fundamental sources of conflict. Efforts to recruit group members based on a nationalistic fervor is often effective due to the fact that prospective members are provided a ready identity and sense of belonging (Davison, 2006). Leaders of groups with a nationalistic leaning create the idea of an “us-them” mentality in their group members, attracting potential new members through a creation of an ideology rooted in nationalistic pride. Technology such as television, the internet, and cell phones are often utilized as means of communication by leaders of hate groups due to the ease and speed with which members can be mobilized, information conveyed, and potential new recruits contacted (Appleby, 2000; Juergensmeyer, 2003).

Nationalistic arguments have often been the tools of politicians and extremist leaders in appeals to people or groups who feel oppressed by political or economic forces over which they have little, if any control (Michnik, 1996). Nationalistic arguments offered by politicians and leaders of extremist groups offer a sense of identity to those who feel lost or held back by perceived politically unjust policies.

Politics of Paranoia

During the election of 2008 the matter of Obama’s birth came under strong scrutiny by some in the conservative movement. Believing that Obama had in fact been born in Kenya, the home of his father, and not in the state of Hawaii as had been reported, these “Birthers” as they became known, proposed that the election had in fact been a fraud and Obama was not a valid candidate for the office of President of the United States.

On June 13, 2008 Obama released the short form of his birth certificate to unequivocally answer the question yet critics demanded the long form birth certificate be released for further scrutiny. The fact that any attention was brought to Obama’s eligibility for office based upon his birth was interesting since similar questions did not arise in regards to Senator McCain, a man born at Coco Solo Naval Air Station located in the Panama Canal Zone on August 29, 1936.

Even after the long form of Obama’s birth certificate was released on April 27, 2011 some continued to question it’s legitimacy. It would be easy to dismiss these Birthers as a paranoid sub-section of the Republican Party, but a 2011 poll conducted by CBS and the New York Times found that 47% of Republican voters questioned the U.S. birth of President Obama. Presidential candidate Mitt Romney stated at a Michigan rally in 2012, “No one’s ever asked to see my birth certificate; they know this is the place that we were born and raised.” (Sonmez, 2012).

The Birther movement was not the only conservative group that viewed Obama as an undesirable president. A populist group known as the Tea Party emerged during the 2008 election. Tea Party supporters questioned Presidential policies and asserted the Obama’s vision of America was not the same as that of the founding fathers. With
patriotic rhetoric amid images of a golden age of the American Dream, the Tea Party rallied people across the country to vote against Obama.

It is difficult, if not impossible, to fully separate those in the Birther movement from those in the Tea Party. Both are populist movements and both have members who identify with the other’s ideology. They are, however, both paranoid groups who share similar goals and utilize similar methods. Their shared goal is the defeat of Obama’s policies and the election of a President who represents their views more accurately than the current administration.

Racial Rhetoric & Right-Wing Politics

The fundamental theme of the Tea Party is that the America under Obama does not represent what the Founding Fathers envisioned. By painting the government as a separate entity not reflective of the values of most Americans, the Tea Party creates a sense of “Us” vs “Them”. The government, and Obama in particular, ceases to be a body elected by the citizenry but rather a dark, sinister force that must be stopped.

Ron Paul & Stormfront

In the 2012 Presidential primary former Congressman Ron Paul emerged as an early frontrunner and possible nominee for the Republican candidate for the general election. In the first primary held in Iowa on January 3, 2012 he came in second tied with Mitt Romney. In the New Hampshire primary, Ron Paul finished second behind Mitt Romney who would go on to become the republican nominee (Gabriel, 2012). Paul’s momentum would shift in February and March with the Texan placing third and fourth as many states held their caucuses.

As Paul gained momentum in many states such as Washington, Minnesota, and Maine the press began reporting on Paul’s connection to various white supremacist groups and publications that were attributed to him written in the 1980’s and 1990’s. During this time his newsletter entitled the “Ron Paul Political Report” published several articles that many deemed hate speech. When asked about these newsletters Paul responded by saying that he had neither written them personally nor had he read them.

In June, 1992, in a special issue on “racial terrorism” the newsletter says when discussing the Los Angeles riots of that year, “Order was only restored in L.A. when it came time for blacks to pick up their welfare checks three days after rioting began.” Order was, in fact, restored on May 4 after Governor Pete Wilson sent 4,000 National Guard troops to patrol the streets of Los Angeles (Baldassare, 1994).

In January, 1994, the Ron Paul Political Report had a section on AIDS and the homosexual community in San Francisco. In the article the newsletter listed several reasons it believed another AIDS epidemic was coming. Among these reasons was, “...they enjoy the attention and pity that comes with being sick” (Ron Paul Survival Report, 1994, p. 5). In fact, according the Center for Disease Control Surveillance report, “AIDS cases reported in 1994 (80,691) declined from the number reported in 1993 (106,618)” (CDC HIV/AIDS Surveillance Report, 1994, Vol. 6, No.2).

Ron Paul was also featured as a guest speaker at the Ludwig von Mises Institute as part of a panel on the topic of secession. According the the Southern Poverty Law Center, the Mises Institute is a neo-confederate organization that aims to “undermine statism in all its form” and states the Institute believes desegregation during the civil rights era resulted in the “involuntary servitude” of business owners (www.splcenter.org).
Paul Ryan

During the 2012 presidential campaign Mitt Romney selected Wisconsin senator Paul Ryan as his running mate. Ryan has consistently voted against many bills that support equal rights for homosexuals and the transgendered. Among these was Ryan’s vote against the Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act on April 29, 2009, also known as the Matthew Shepard Act (paulryan.house.gov/voterecord/; www.house.gov; votesmart.org). This bill amended the Hate Crimes Statistics Act to include “gender” and “gender identity”, in addition to allowing the Department of Justice to investigate crimes where the perpetrator has selected the victim due to sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability as well as race and other factors such as religion and national origin (H.R. 1913, 2009; www.govtrack.us; house.gov). He also voted against the repeal of Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell in 2010.

In September of 2012 Paul Ryan spoke in front of the Family Research Council (FRC) where he said of his running mate Mitt Romney, “Not only a defender of marriage, he offers an example of marriage at its best.” The Family Research Council is listed by the Southern Poverty Law Center a hate group based on their anti-gay ideology (www.splcenter.org). This view is based on a number of publications published by the FRC in addition to homophobic comments from its leaders, most notably Robert Knight, the director of cultural studies for the FRC after it was stated in 1999, “Gaining access to children has been a long-term goal of the homosexual movement.” (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2012). While Mitt Romney did not attended the Values Voter Summit with Ryan he did deliver a video statement stating he would “defend marriage, not try to redefine it”.

Ryan co-sponsored a bill in 2011 that would have granted a fetus personhood at the moment of conception (H.R. 212, 2011). This bill provides no situation under which an abortion would be acceptable such as an ectopic pregnancy, nor any considerations where the mother’s life could be in danger. In 2000, when a similar bill was introduced, Ryan said on the floor of the House of Representatives, “the health exception would render this ban virtually meaningless.” Ryan cosponsored a bill that would redefine the ability for a woman to get an abortion in cases of rape. The bill would only allow abortions if “forcible rape” was the cause of the pregnancy (H.R. 3. P.C.S., 2011). This language was eventually removed from H.R. 3. In a 2012 interview with Tennessee TV station WJHL when he was asked to clarify his position on rape and pregnancy Ryan stated, “I’m very proud of my pro-life record, and I’ve always adopted the idea that, in the position that the method of conception doesn’t change the definition of life.” (WJHL, 2012)

Rick Perry

In December, 2011, Texas Governor Rick Perry disseminated an advertisement in preparation for the Iowa caucuses to be held on January 3, 2012. In the ad Governor Perry affirms his Christianity and accuses President Obama of a war on the nation’s religious heritage. In the ad he says, “As president, I’ll end Obama’s war on religion and I’ll fight against liberal attacks on our religious heritage.” (Perry “Strong” ad, 2011). He also denounced the fact that the military policy of Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell had come to an end. In the ad it is stated, “But you don’t need to be in the pew every Sunday to know there’s something wrong in this country when gays can serve openly in the military but our kids can’t openly celebrate Christmas or pray in school.” (Perry “Strong” ad, 2011).
Perry also criticized the president that same month when the Obama administration announced they would use diplomacy as well as enticement of foreign aid to promote gay rights on the global stage. In the announcement president Obama said, “I am deeply concerned by the violence and discrimination targeting L.G.B.T. persons around the world.” (Myers & Cooper, 2011). Governor Perry said, “President Obama has again mistaken America’s tolerance for different lifestyles with an endorsement of those lifestyles. I will not make that mistake.” (Myers & Cooper, 2011).

In August, 2011, Perry held a prayer meeting in Houston called “The Response”. Among the various Christian leaders invited to this prayer meeting was San Antonio preacher John Hagee. Reverend Hagee has come under scrutiny for statements he has issued in the past including a sermon in 2008 where he states the holocaust was God’s work and Hitler was sent by God to attacks the jews: “Then God sent a hunter. A hunter is someone with a gun and he forces you. Hitler was a hunter.” (Wilson, 2008). He went on to quote a bible passage from the writing of Jeremiah to support his claim. He concluded, “And that might be offensive to some people but don’t let your heart be offended...It was the truth and it is the truth.” (Wilson, 2008). In 2008 then presidential candidate John McCain disavowed the pastor who had endorsed him for president in February 2008 after this sermon saying, “I just think that the statement is crazy and unacceptable.” (Wilson, 2008).

Conservative Commentators

Various conservative commenters spoke during the 2012 presidential election espousing viewpoints many deemed extreme, mean spirited, and hateful. Among these are the statements of Ann Coulter, a conservative commenter not unfamiliar with controversies resulting from her statements. Among them were a repetition of previous quotes, “We should invade their countries, kill their leaders and convert them to Christianity.” (Coulter, 2001) and “I think there should be a literacy test and a poll tax for people to vote.” (Hannity & Colmes, 8/17/1999). Historically such devices have been used to prevent minorities from voting in the south via a series of regulations known as Jim Crow Laws (Perman, 2001). She continued to state, “it would be a much better country if women did not vote. That is a simple fact” (The Guardian, 2003).

Statements of this sort could be discounted, but a New York Times best selling author, Coulter has the clout and the media attention to disseminate a highly tinged, opinionated rhetoric often containing little fact. It is clear that her message resonates with a number of readers throughout the nation.

Political commenter Rush Limbaugh is another conservative pundit that has had his share of controversy over the years. Comments such as “Obama is a clown.” and “The nags...national association of gals, that’s our pet name for the NOW gang...the nags are a bunch of whores to liberalism” (Corn, 2009; Limbaugh, 2010).

In 2012 a Georgetown law student named Sandra Fluke spoke before congress on the Conscience Clause exemptions in health care that would have allowed certain groups exemption from birth control provisions based on religious or moral objections. On his radio show Limbaugh said, “what does that make her? It makes her a slut, right? It makes her a prostitute. She wants to be paid to have sex.” (Limbaugh, 2012a). Limbaugh later apologized for his comments saying, ”my choice of words was not the best...” (Limbaugh, 2012b).
Once again comments such as these could be discounted as the opinions of a single individual, but Limbaugh is a media personality carried by over 600 domestic radio stations (Farhi, 2009). His books, radio show, and television appearances generated $64 million in income for the 2011 year making him #37 on Forbes’ 100 list of top earning celebrities. (Forbes, 2013). Premiere Radio Network signed a $400 million dollar contract with Mr Limbaugh and he has claimed to have received a $100 million dollar signing bonus (Forbes, 2013).

Results

Growth of Supremacy Groups 2007-2012

Taking into account the increased reliance on speech laden with hate and extremist rhetoric within the political campaigns of 2012, the many and varied conspiracy theories pertaining to the attacks of September 11, 2001, President Obama’s birth place, economic woes, increased globalization, and immigration it requires little to postulate a linkage between these phenomena and increases in membership and number of hate and extremist groups. Add to that volatile mix an increase in the legitimacy of many extremist groups through association with mainstream political figureheads and it is not difficult to assume that as financial donations from these groups increase so does their potential influence on official national policy.

For the purposes of this research hate and extremist groups were both included in the total number of active groups within the United States. The inclusion of hate groups alongside extremist organizations is based on the fact that often the two categories of groups have similar, at times nearly indistinguishable, agendas. Membership numbers continue to rise in those groups traditionally espousing a rhetoric of hate as they do for groups aligned along a more extremist/nationalistic agenda.

The system of categorization used by the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) was incorporated into the current study. The categorization system and number of groups devoted to any specific political agenda can be seen in Table 1. According to the SPLC there are currently 2444 total hate or extremist groups operating within the United States (SPLC, 2012).

In 2012 there were a total of 2444 hate or extremist groups operating within the United States. However, in 2000 there were only 602 groups active nationally. This number grew at a rather alarming rate with 888 groups operating in 2007, 926 active in 2008, 932 in 2009, continuing to grow with 1018 active hate/extremist groups existing in 2011 and 2444 in operation in 2012.

The largest hate or extremist groups operating are the Ku Klux Klan, neo-Nazis, Skinheads, and Patriot Movement. In 2006, 165 active chapters of the Klan was operating nation wide. This number actually decreased in 2007 to 155 chapters. However, after the 2008 Presidential campaign numbers within the Klan ranks grew to 186 chapters. By 2011 Klan numbers decreased again, due in part to members flocking to more extreme hate groups as the Klan began to attempt to appear as a legitimate political entity, distancing itself from much of its former extreme hate rhetoric.

Membership in neo-Nazi groups followed the increases observed in other hate and extremist groups. In 2007 there were 207 active neo-Nazi groups operating nation wide. In 2008 membership numbers in these groups dwindled to 194. By 2011 active neo-Nazi groups totaled 172. As with the Klan, the decrease in membership was due primarily to members moving between groups. While growth in one hate or extremist
group was observed a corresponding decrease in another group could be seen. Despite a fair amount of parallel movement between groups, the total number of people joining such organizations continued to increase after the 2008 Presidential election.

The Skinhead Nation has been on the forefront of the white supremacist movement for many years. The Skinhead Nation is known as an extremely violent group directing much of its recruitment efforts at young people. While the overall number of Skinhead groups is relatively small when compared to groups such as the Patriot Movement or Klan, their effects on crime and violence cannot be denied. In 2006 there were 78 active Skinhead groups in existence. In 2007, Skinhead numbers grew to 90 active organizations. By 2008 Skinhead numbers had grown to 98 active chapters. By 2011 there were 133 active Skinhead groups operating throughout the country.

The largest growth occurred in the Patriot Movement and Nativist Extremist organizations; groups previously considered little more than fringe elements in the extremist or hate sector. In 2008 the Patriot Movement had 149 active groups operating nation wide. Membership grew rapidly in 2009 after the election of Barack Obama as US President, the first biracial leader of the country. In 2009 the number of Patriot Movement groups grew to 512. In 2010 there were 824 Patriot Movement groups operating within the US. In 2011 the growth continued with 1274 groups devoted to the political ideology of the Patriot Movement active nation wide.

The growth in Patriot Movement groups can be compared to the parallel increase in Nativist Extremist groups existing within the US. In 2007 there were 144 Nativist Extremist groups active nation wide. This movement began to grow with an increase in 2008 with 173 active groups. In 2009, 209 Nativist Extremist groups existed, followed by an increase to 319 groups in 2010. However, in 2011 an interesting event occurred within the ranks of Nativist Extremist groups; their numbers began to decrease for the first time since the 2008 presidential election. In 2011 there were only 185 active Nativist Extremist groups in operation. While on the surface this drop might be considered a positive, the decrease was due principally to members within the Nativist Extremist groups drifting over into the Patriot Movement. The ideologies of the two groups became so similar, the larger Patriot Movement began to absorb the membership of the smaller Nativist Extremist organizations as anti-immigrant sentiment grew nationwide.

It can be observed in Table 2 that membership in active hate and extremist groups began to increase since 2008 and has seen steady growth during the Presidency of Obama. Table 2 outlines the growth in the respective hate and extremist organizations since 2006.
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Table 1: Number of active groups operating within the United States, 2012.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Philosophical Orientation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Patriot Movement</td>
<td>1274</td>
<td>nationalistic/anti-government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>neo-Nazi</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>anti-Semitic, anti-Catholic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nativist Extremist [Minutemen Project &amp; Federal Immigration Reform &amp; Enforcement Coalition]</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>anti-immigrant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>anti-Gay</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>anti-homosexual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>neo-Confederate</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>pro-Confederate sentiment, anti-immigrant, anti-gay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>anti-Muslim</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>anti-Muslim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skinhead</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>anti-immigrant, anti-Semitic, racist, anti-homosexual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>anti-Immigrant</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>anti-immigrant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Nationalist</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>white supremacist, anti-immigrant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Christian Identity</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>anti-Semitic, racist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Hate</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>hate organized around various religious or ethnic origins</td>
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<tr>
<td>Holocaust Denial</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>anti-Semitic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ku Klux Klan</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>anti-gay, anti-Semitic, anti-Catholic, racist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Separatist</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>separatist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N = 2444</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2: Growth of hate and extremist groups, 2006-2011.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Number of Active Groups</td>
<td>602*</td>
<td>844</td>
<td>888</td>
<td>926</td>
<td>932</td>
<td>1002</td>
<td>1018</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ku Klux Klan</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>152</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>neo-Nazi</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>170</td>
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<tr>
<td>Skinhead</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>133</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patriot Movement</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>512</td>
<td>824</td>
<td>1274</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nativist Extremist</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>309</td>
<td>319</td>
<td>185</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Data supplied to demonstrate growth in hate and extremism this century.
The Deep Fried South: A Literary Analysis of Nutrition Knowledge of Students and Adults in Alabama

Shelley L. Holden
Phillip M. Norrell
University of South Alabama
Obesity is a major concern in the United States because of its rapid rate of increase. In 2000, there was no state that had a prevalence of obesity of less than 10% and by 2010 there was no state that had a prevalence of obesity of less than 20%. Moreover, 12 states had a prevalence of equal to or greater than 30% (National Center for Health Statistics, 2010). This was most prevalent in the South (Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Tennessee) and this concern is further magnified by the increase in the obesity rate among children aged 6-11 with the rate increasing 147% from 1971 to 1994. When the quality of the children’s diets was analyzed it was found that more than 8 out of 10 children consume too much saturated fat and fewer than 10% consume the recommended five servings of fruits and vegetables each day (Cancer Research Foundation of America, 2002).

Obesity poses an economic as well as a health problem in that costs associated with chronic diseases related to obesity are on the rise. According to Edwards (2005), the average cost to the United States health care system is $117 billion per year in direct medical costs. However, this number does not include the indirect expenses associated with obesity such as loss of wages and decreased productivity (Edwards, 2005).

Alabama residents have been particularly affected by the rising obesity rates. In 2010, more than 30% of Alabama adult residents were classified as obese compared to less than 10% in 1986 (National Center for Health Statistics, 2010). Also, in 2010, 17.5% of adolescents were labeled as overweight and 13.5% were considered obese (CDC, 2012). According the CDC (2012) body mass index (BMI) is expressed as weight in kilograms divided by height in meters squared (kg/m^2). This is commonly used to classify obesity among adults (≥ 30 kg/m2) and is also recommended for use with children and adolescents. The cutoff criteria are based on the 2000 CDC BMI-for-age-growth charts for the United States and based on current recommendations of expert committees, children with BMI values at or above the 95th percentile of the sex-specific BMI growth charts are categorized as obese Further, BMI values between the 85th and 95th percentile of BMI for age are designated as “overweight” (CDC, 2012).

Therefore, the purpose of the current study was to review the literature of studies conducted on Alabama residents in the areas of obesity rate, socioeconomic factors, nutrition education, consumer behavior, and the potential connection of these factors to resident’s nutritional knowledge to determine if this could be a significant factor in the rapid increase in the obesity rate in the state.

A study evaluating Alabama’s elementary aged students was conducted in Birmingham, Alabama. This study did not directly measure the nutritional knowledge of the students, rather it looked at student’s risk of being overweight and actual students who were considered overweight, which, could have resulted due to the student’s lack of nutritional knowledge. Geiger, Sims, Evans, Roy, Werner, Prier, Cochrane, Fulmore, Dawson, Kirkpatrick, and Brown (2009) collected data from 15,560 children in kindergarten through fifth grade, who participated in a mobile health education program in Alabama from 1999-2004. Students in this study were from 41 public and private schools in the Birmingham Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) (Geiger et al., 2009). Based on the CDC’s definitions of overweight and obese, the results of the study revealed that 16% of the participants were classified as at overweight and 16% as obese. The researchers suggested that there is a need for early primary prevention within families.
Another area of study is socioeconomic factors and their connection to the obesity rate in the state. Akil and Ahmad (2011) examined the association between the increase in body mass index (BMI) and socioeconomic factors such as income level, percent below poverty line, unemployment rates, and persons receiving food stamps in Mississippi, Alabama, Louisiana, Tennessee and Colorado. These states were selected based upon CDC reported obesity rates. At the time of the study, the highest rate of obesity was found in Mississippi followed by Alabama and lowest rate of obesity in the United States was Colorado. Researchers obtained data from the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, United States Department of Agriculture and the United States Department of Labor/Bureau of Labor from the years of 1995-2005. Results of the study showed an association between obesity and several the variables tested. Income below poverty level, receipt of food stamps, unemployment, and general income level showed the strongest association. Researchers also found a significant effect of food consumption of low –quality food due to economic factors, increased BMI. Moreover, they noted the quality and quantity of food are important factors that contribute to obesity. The relationship could also reflect a lack of sufficient nutritional knowledge to make healthy food choices.

Bradford, Pugh, Norrell, and Keshock (2013), studied the nutritional knowledge of Alabama undergraduate students at a 4 year college. Researchers administered Parmenter and Wardle’s, Nutritional Knowledge Questionnaire (NKQ). The NKQ meets the criteria for psychometric criteria for reliability (Cronbach’s alpa=.70-.97 and construct validity, P=.001) (Parmenter & Wardle, 1999). Results of the study indicated that students lack nutritional knowledge in all sections of the NKQ. More specifically, the mean score in the Dietary Recommendations (DR) was 63.4%, and 51.1% in the Sources of Food (SOF) section which measures sources of nutrients in food. Further, the mean score in the Choosing Everyday Food Sections (COF) was 41% and the mean score in the Diet-Disease Relationship (DDR) section was 25.5%. The overall mean score on all sections of the NKQ was 46.8%, thus indicating that collegiate undergraduate students in Alabama lack the sufficient knowledge to make sound dietary choices which could be a potential reason for the alarming obesity rate in Alabama. The researchers did note that more research must be conducted in this area, but also, suggested that nutritional educational guidelines as set by the State Course of Study in elementary, middle, and high school need to be examined to ensure that enough education is given to students in the area of nutrition if the rate of obesity is be impacted (Bradford et al., 2013).

Another study compared the nutritional knowledge of Alabama undergraduate college students and Alabama high school coaches. The survey was administered to the undergraduate students by investigators on the first day of class before any nutrition instruction was given. Alabama high school coaches were recruited from schools within a 50 mile radius of the university (Bradford, Phelps, Baghurst, Keshock, Pugh, & Heitman, 2012). The sample included 62 (M age=22.45 yrs.±4.78) students and 71 (M age =28.78yrs.±5.23) active high school coaches. Nutritional knowledge was assessed by the Parmenter and Wardle’s NKQ. Data were analyzed using an independent T-Test for each of the dependent variables (DR, SOF, CEF, DDR, and TS). Analysis found a significant mean difference between students (M=5.01±2.09) and coaches (M=6.15±2.59) at the .05 level (t(131)=2.756,p=.007) for the DDR subscale. No other
significant differences ($p > .05$) between college students and coaches were found. The results infer that high school coaches' nutritional knowledge surpasses that of college students in only one of the four areas of the sub-groups while as a whole neither the coaches nor the students scored at or above an acceptable level of nutritional knowledge (Bradford et al., 2012). The authors concluded that the results are concerning because research has shown adolescents are most likely to seek out nutritional advice from high school coaches (Douglas & Douglas, 1994; Dunn, Eddy, Wang, Nagy, Perko, & Bartee, 2001; Krowchuk, Agnlin, Goodfellow, Stancin, Williams, & Zinet, 1989; Scofield & Unrich, 2006). Further the authors suggested, “Acceptable level of nutritional knowledge for a high school coach should be established by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS), or the American Dietetic Association (ADA)” (Bradford et al., 2012). But even if more nutritional education was made available to Alabama residents, would this ensure a change in behavior?

Alonso, O'Neil, and Zizzi (2012) examined Alabama consumers in the areas of eating out, nutrition, and education. Results indicated that educational strategies and nutritional awareness do not seem to be reaching the groups that are more prone to making unhealthy food consumption choices on a daily basis. Researchers also noted that as a whole, consumers in Alabama do not seem interested in nutrition education and healthier consumption.

Pace, Dawkins, Wang, Person, and Shikany (2008) made a similar discovery in their study of the African American community in the rural Black Belt counties (Macon and Bullock) of Alabama where the death rate from cardiovascular disease exceeds state and national averages. They found that men and younger male and female respondents (21-35 years) indicated that they had appropriate knowledge concerning food intake and heart disease (i.e. sodium intake related to hypertension and saturated fat intake in relationship to cardiovascular disease). However, the researchers found that this population had a lack of concern regarding their knowledge and their own eating habits.

Alabama is beginning to make some strides in addressing the obesity issue in public schools. A study conducted in 2011 evaluated the Alabama Public Schools Wellness Policies and State School Mandate Implementation (Gaines, Lonis-Shumate & Gropper). The federal government recognized the role of schools in obesity prevention with the Child Nutrition and Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Reauthorization Act of 2004. This act required local education agencies participate in United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) meal programs to develop written school wellness policies before the start of the 2006-2007 school year. The act requires that the wellness policies address 5 broad areas: (a) goals for nutrition education and physical activity; (b) nutrition guidelines for foods provided at school; (c) assurances that requirements for school meals meet USDA guidelines; (d) a plan for measuring implementation including designation of a party responsible for ensuring that the policy is met; and (e) involvement of parents, students, representatives of the school lunch room or Child Nutrition Program, the school board, school administrators, and the public in policy development. Although “there are no known repercussions that exist for failure to create a wellness policy or failure to comply with ALSDE food and nutrition mandates” (Gaines et al., 2011, p. 3), the majority of school districts (71%) in Alabama were in compliance with all federal wellness policy requirements.
The Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) issued more stringent mandates for food, nutrition, and physical activity policies for Alabama school districts in 2005. These mandates address availability of all foods on school campuses and include vending machine policies, restrictions regarding food offered via fundraiser and classroom parties, and goals for lunchroom offerings. Mean implementation of Alabama State Department of Education mandates was 79%, with only 7% of districts indicating they implemented all of the mandates. In regard to the federal wellness policies compliance was particularly high on physical activity goals and nutrition education goals. However, while most districts addressed policy evaluation and designated a party responsible for evaluation, this was the least addressed wellness policy component. This is significant because without formal evaluation it is virtually impossible to correlate changes in children’s health with the changes in school nutrition or physical activity programs. One of the least completed ALSDE mandates in this study was providing nutrition and physical activity training for staff members, especially teachers. This is a concern because students spend the majority of the school day with this staff group. In the final implications for school health the authors concluded that even though Alabama school districts created wellness policies with appropriate content and the majority of districts were in full compliance with federal guidelines, this does not guarantee good quality or effective policy (Gaines et al., 2011). A need for state level evaluations of wellness policy content and quality exists.

The fact remains that residents of Alabama are very prone to being overweight and obese and there are many factors that contribute to this such as nutritional knowledge, genetics, physiology, mindfulness and physical activity. The current literature review did reveal that many Alabama residents lack sufficient nutritional knowledge. There are currently programs in schools to help reduce the incidence of obesity (Public School Wellness Policy and State School Mandate), but there is no real system in place to monitor adherence to the Alabama State Department of Education mandates or evaluate the effectiveness of wellness policies when there is compliance (Gaines et al., 2011). At the collegiate level, the majority of students are not required to study nutrition unless it is a course within their academic major (i.e. health education, physical education, exercise science, dietetics, etc.). Further, research would suggest nutritional knowledge does not always equate to healthy food decisions (Alonso et al., 2011).

It would appear that impacting obesity in Alabama will require an active approach:

A passive approach to treat obesity as health condition is anticipating further innovation in surgery and pharmacology. An active approach is preferred, promoting comprehensive changes at home, school and community. This will require a coordinated effort of parents, teachers, students, clinicians and state and local agency professionals to facilitate healthy nutrition and physical activity behaviors. (Geiger et al., 2009, pp. 117)

Research findings suggest that efforts to prevent child obesity should begin in early childhood and include the multiple contexts from which children construct knowledge including the family, childcare/pre-school and media (Lanigan, 2011). However, research shows that children in the preschool age group are unable to grasp abstract concepts of food groups and portion sizes, and in any case, that such rote learning is ineffective in developing healthy behaviors (Lynch, 2012). Innovative methods for teaching nutritional education to children such as play based described by Lynch (2012)
and the use of online games (Banos, Cebolla, Oliver, Alcaniz, & Botella, 2012) need to be further researched and developed.

Research would suggest that nutritional education messages should be demographically and culturally appropriate and must be procedural as well as declarative. Declarative knowledge is defined as knowledge about facts and things (i.e. the knowledge of the fiber content of fruit and the number of calories in full fat milk). Procedural knowledge is knowledge about the way actions are performed (i.e. knowing how to choose the healthier of two snacks or how to compose a balanced menu). Procedural knowledge is closer to behavior than declarative knowledge (Dickson-Spillmann & Siegrist, 2010).

The Transtheoretical Model (Prochaska, DiClemente, & Norcross, 1992) has been applied to dietary behaviors and outcomes. This model has become one of the most popular and enduring theories in the field of health promotion and health education. The theory contends that individuals are most likely to experience success in changing behavior when they engage in strategies that are appropriate to their stage of readiness to change (Spencer, Wharton, Moyle, & Adams, 2007) There are 5 stages in this model: (a) Stage 1: Precontemplation; (b) Stage 2: Contemplation; (c) Stage 3: Preparation; (d) Stage 4: Action; and (e) Stage 5: Maintenance (Prochaska et al., 1992).

The precontemplation stage (Stage 1) characterizes people as not ready. That is, people in this stage do not intend to start the healthy behavior in the near future (within 6 months), and may be unaware of the need to change. The contemplation stage (Stage 2) suggests people are “getting ready” which is defined as participants intending to start the healthy behavior within the next 6 months. While the people in this stage are usually more aware of the pros of changing, their cons are about equal to their pros. This ambivalence about changing can cause them to keep putting off taking action. People in the preparation stage (Stage 3) are ready to start taking action within the next 30 days. They take small steps that they believe can help them make the healthy behavior a part of their lives. In the action stage (Stage 4) people have changed their behavior within the last 6 months and need to work hard to keep moving forward. These participants need to learn how to strengthen their commitments to change and to fight urges to revert back to their former patterns of behavior. The final stage is maintenance (Stage 5) and people in this stage changed their behavior more than 6 months ago. It is important for people in this stage to be aware of situations that may tempt them to slip back into their former unhealthy behavior—particularly in stressful situations.

The Transtheoretical Model would argue that different interventions and information needs to be tailored to match the particular stage an individual is in at the time (Weinberg & Gould, 2011). For example, general nutrition education and media campaigns might move an individual from pre-contemplation to contemplation, but other interventions such as decisional balance sheets addressing the pros and cons of making changes to diet behaviors, and procedural education as to what constitutes a healthy diet might be required move the individual from contemplation to preparation. The development of goals, diet plans, and behavioral contracts might prove effective in moving the person into action and relapse prevention would be important in the action and maintenance stages. Spencer et al. (2007) concluded in their literature review that using stage-based interventions is effective in the areas of fruit and vegetable
consumption and dietary fat intake, and are being developed for other dietary behaviors which should stimulate further research.

This literature analysis would suggest Alabama residents do lack adequate nutritional knowledge, but it would also appear that even when they do they often don’t change their behavior. Future research is essential in not only developing strategies and programs to increase nutritional knowledge of Alabama residents, but to change their behavior.

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Geiger, B. F., Sims, S. K., Evans, R., Roy, J., Werner, K. A., Prier, M., Cochrane, K.,


Location, Location, Location: Response and Resilience to Disaster in a Remote Region

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Purdue University Fort Wayne
Purpose
To investigate the roles geographic location, social structure and social norms make in response and recovery from disaster.

Background
Throughout history people have experienced environmental disasters including floods, droughts, earthquakes, tornadoes, hurricanes, and tsunamis. During the decade beginning in 2000, there were over 1 million deaths and nearly 2 1/2 billion people recovering from the effects of human-made and natural disasters. These numbers translate to an annual average of 400 disasters causing approximately 100,000 deaths and affecting 240 million people (CRED, 2011).

With the Gulf of Mexico oil spill, and Hurricane Katrina, the United States has recently experienced two major disasters that received wide news coverage and publicity. The pressure for leaders to respond to these disasters was enhanced by media coverage. During the period between these major disasters, a small community in Alaska underwent an environmental disaster that went largely unnoticed beyond Alaska and did not receive widespread news coverage.

The remote location and small size of remote communities limit the type of media coverage and may thereby reduce social pressures to respond to people experiencing disasters. This lack of coverage suggests that resilience and recovery vary by type of location. Much of the information we know about disasters comes from research in urban and rural areas. The disasters in urban areas are most often targeted for research into resilience and recovery of communities and people (example: Cutter, Mitchell, & Scott, 2000; Elliott & Pais, 2006; Mitchell, J., 1999; Peacock, Morrow, & Gladwin, 2000; Puente, 1999). We also find Research on rural community disaster and recovery. (see for example, Cutter, Mitchell, & Scott, 2000; Mitchell, 1999).

Difference in Rural and Urban Communities
In order to better understand the situation, let us consider some of the basic elements of urban and rural and remote communities. Usually urban communities have greater financial resources, more public services including emergency management, more financially sound business, stronger commerce, many more job options, and greater news media presence including newspaper, radio, and television. Rural areas may have some of these same items, but fewer of them in the community and may have to reach out to nearby communities for services and assistance. Remote communities actually might have a radio station, but otherwise the options available for emergency management, healthcare, and other social services and financial resources are scarce. These resources are important in the experience and recovery from disaster.

Because of this isolation little is known about how remote communities in the U.S. and their residents experience and respond to or how recovery takes place after disasters. It is not clear how similar or different disaster response and recovery is in remote areas of the US compared to urban and rural areas.

Economics and Women
We know that Social structure and social norms play a role in disaster response and recovery in urban and rural areas by way of social standing and gender, among others. Social/Economic Class and Occupations make a difference in overall response and recovery from disasters (see, for example, Agarwal, 1994; Enarson, 2000; PAHO, 2010) .
Those victims who are most socially and economically oppressed bear the brunt of the burden during the recovery process. In many societies, this translates into a disproportionate negative effect on women (Enarson, 2000).

Those occupations ordinarily held by women, are low-paying, have little security, and are, therefore, more likely to be eliminated in times of disaster, consequently thrusting women into unemployment (PAHO, 2010). Furthermore, when women no longer contribute to the family financially, their value in the household is diminished (PAHO, 2010). Research further shows that women in rural areas experience limited work options, have fewer and less control over resources (Agarwal, 1994).

**Remote Communities**

We have some reasons to believe that disaster in remote communities might be distinguishable from urban and rural disaster experiences. Remote communities are unique from rural and urban communities and thus how they experience and recover from disaster may also differ. Remote communities are set apart from rural communities in that they (a) are challenging to access (either by air, water, or limited road access); (b) are generally isolated from other communities, with some being hundreds of miles from the nearest town; (c) have limited emergency response capabilities, with many having no medical facilities or search and rescue provisions; and (d) maintain cultures of independence and privacy. These characteristics imply that the experience of environmental disaster may differ from urban and rural dwellers’ experiences. Thus, it is imperative to explore disasters among remote communities and further provide for a comparative analysis of remote areas of the world with urban and rural areas.

**Methods**

To go about answering this question I traveled to a small community of about 150 people in its highest population time of the year. The community is accessible by one gravel mountainous road about five months out of the year, by water about six months out of the year, and by air as the weather permits. It lies 350 miles from the nearest city with over fifty-thousand people, and about 170 miles (over 5 hours) from the nearest town with about one-thousand people. There are 87 people per square mile (very low population density). The community experienced a flood in May 2009. The river was frozen and there was an ice jam down river, there was a rapid rise in air temperature and the result was that the river backed up. When the jam broke apart, flood waters and massive amounts of ice invaded the community. Three years later, in summer of 2012, I conducted 36 semi-structured interviews. The interviews varied in length with a couple being less than one hour and most being several hours long. Participants were interviewed either in a private home setting, or a very public place that allowed for privacy. Given the complex nature of the study, topics covered include: livelihood strategies—sources of income, food self-sufficiency, degree of subsistence living, the role of location in the disaster experience and recovery, the role of social placement and structure played in response and recovery. The data were analyzed using content analysis techniques.

**Results**

Results reveal that disaster response and recovery is unique in remote regions compared to rural and urban areas. Logistics explains most of these differences, but not all. The accessing the community is limited: by road. One respondent described it this way, “One of the toughest roads in the United States... Some of these guys they’d make
one trip in and say ‘no more’ they’re not doing it again.” During the recovery the road served as a challenge. One respondent said, “So anyway these guys had a lot of incidents you know, running off the road, almost tipping over you know, going into ditches, and this and that...you had to have a pilot car to get the job done, and even then, it was really tough with a lot of accidents and incidents.”

Another responded addressed it this way, “Um, we’re fortunate that we had the highway. If we had been a community that was air access only, or barge, it would have been- the recovery effort would have been much, much longer. So the remoteness in (in the community) is a challenge, but in other areas of the state, it’s even more of a challenge.” and another said, “well the remoteness is always a challenge”. Water access is for limited number of months; the FEMA default trailers were mentioned but clearly not an option. The Agency could not get them there and they would be inadequate for winter temperatures. In addition, getting supplies in takes a great deal more time due to distance and limited options.

The unique nature of housing required for living in the region and the resources needed to survive the winters and other factors required unique responses to the disaster. Locals had to “train” FEMA and other disaster responders about the housing required. Water lines must be run inside of the house, water storage tanks also inside of the house (most do not have wells and have to transport water to their homes), “normal” insulation is not adequate for the sometimes 30 below zero frigid temperatures. One respondent said, “they’ve never had to deal with permafrost...with temperatures like 30 below zero and things like that.”

Another respondent said, “trying to move something three hundred miles when there’s no road. You know they don’t know how to deal with full-time daylight which is usually an advantage. So for Alaska and I’d say every geographic region in Alaska there needs to be someone that knows. And who can do work and who can’t do work and move equipment and who can’t move equipment right. And who can make the rules work for communities instead of against them. And the small size of (the community) worked against them.”

Alternative housing is also very limited in a remote area compared to urban and rural areas. One respondent indicated, “We only had some tents brought in, I had three families in my small cabin.” There was no shelter to go to, and eventually the school was made into a shelter.

The skill set of community residents were overlooked in some regards. Residents had to prove they were the ones who should be hired to run the heavy equipment as they had the skill set to do it. Yet, the state agencies allowed some who rebuilt their own homes to use back-hoes, bull dozers and other heavy equipment themselves, something of which is very unlikely to happen in a rural or urban environment.

The mental outlook and philosophy of life may have made a difference too. People tend to be very independent minded, maybe that is why they elect to live in such a remote location, they tend not to want people in the town if they cannot make it on their own. One person told me the town motto, “If you can’t make it on your own here, then leave.” So, imagine then having government workers from FEMA and other agencies basically invade the town and take over by telling people who can rebuild and how they are going to do it. It was very rough times in the town meetings.
Weather also impacted response and recovery. Given that the flood took place in May and the ice was not removed until June, recovery was immensely slow given that the weather turns cold in October and it has been known to get cold and snow earlier than October. This left the community with about 4 months to rebuild houses, replenish food supplies and fire wood and relocate people in a very short amount of time, while having town meetings, and dealing with FEMA guidelines and applications, etc.

Respondents made many recommendations to improve response and recovery from disaster in remote regions and provided key characteristics that highlight the unique nature of disaster in remote regions compared to non-remote disaster areas.

**Gender Differences**

The key findings reveal that gender differences are similar to gender differences in non-remote regions. There was evidence of PTSD characteristics that appeared to be more prevalent among women than men, note though, that it was also apparent among men too. The research on the disaster related event suggests that PTSD characteristics vary by time nearer to the anniversary of the disaster event. The research findings indicate great need for continued mental health services in the area, especially around the time of the anniversary of the disaster event. But here is where there were some differences in the remote area: there is only one option for mental health counseling and it is over the telephone or internet mostly. The limited options available likely minimize utilization of mental health services when there is clear and convincing evidence that mental health support is needed. Urban and even rural areas usually have numerous options for mental health services. Given that more women than men had PTSD characteristics, it is likely that long-term recovery might be more challenging than it is for men and be even more pronounced differences in remote regions compared to non-remote regions.

Future research must monitor the PTSD characteristics on a regular basis to verify that PTSD characteristics do indeed vary in relation to the disaster event anniversary.

Here are some respondents’ comments:

- “But like we said, some of those emotional and long term needs were more on an individual basis.”
- “You can get [mental health] services, but you have to make a real effort to get them.”
- “They don’t like to feel the hurt. They don’t like to feel the pain. They don’t like to relive incident.”

All signs that emotional trauma still exists.

**Comparison**

Similar to urban and rural research, social/economic class and occupations made a difference in overall response and recovery from the disaster. Women tended to fair the worst, even three years following the flood. The poor were more likely to have lost everything, and some were displaced from the area. People with higher social statuses and incomes were swifter to rebuild and recover.

Some differences were that some of the worst off citizens had much improved housing and living conditions following the disaster. Respondents were disinclined to openly say that people were better off following the disaster than they were before the flood though they could quickly give examples of how some people were better off. One respondent said there were issues urban and rural communities had to handle that
this remote community did not: the respondent said, “And uh, they try to pack these people out of nursing home and hospitals and what not. We didn’t have any issues like that”.

There were clearly some unique experiences in the remote region.

**Additional Findings**

Another very noteworthy finding involves “The strength of weak ties” as suggested in social network theories by scholars such as Mark Granovetter (1973) and Cross et al., (2001) As in Granovetter’s research, work, information, help, and other resources were obtained by individuals many time through “weak ties” rather than strong ones. With the number of volunteer workers that entered the very small communities, these findings indicate that “absent ties” also played a key role in recovery from the disaster. The strength of the “weak tie” differs significantly from Granovetter’s research. The social circumstance of disaster plays a key role in social networks and may turn our understanding upside down as implied by the greater strength of the “weak ties” in a disaster event and thusly has huge implications in understanding social dynamics in disaster zones. So, there was evidence supporting the strength of weak ties, but there was a great amount of support by the strength of absent ties via the volunteers.

**Conclusion**

Remote areas have *unique* needs in disaster response, recovery resulting largely from location but also from social structures and societal norms. Remote areas have needs *similar* to urban and rural areas mostly stemming from social structure and societal norms.
References
Changing College Student Development and Learning Styles: Campus Implications

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Those working in colleges and universities recognize the stress being experienced by contemporary colleges and universities. Our institutions are struggling to adapt and advance in an often chaotic and certainly rapidly changing environment. Indeed, the financial challenges and organizational ‘refinement’ occurring in higher learning today are unprecedented (Christiansen and Eyring, 2011). In the midst of these curriculum and operational adjustments, student learning and ideas of academic quality are being reassessed. Many of the student services traditionally provided to support student development and community life are being minimized or eliminated. Unquestionably, society continues to advance in amazing areas like technology, healthcare, social and ethnic de-stratification, environmental sustainability, and globalization. However, many of these advances create a perplexing myriad of challenges that confound the maturation process for traditional aged college students. College students are not maturing at the same rate as past generations (Newman and Newman, 2003). Consequently, the guidance of student affairs programs and professionals are more essential now than ever in higher learning to aid student development and academic success.

College and university settings reflect conditions of the larger community. The rapid evolution of society has created a conundrum for higher education leadership. The breadth of information, modern technological resources, and emotional turmoil of life today has stressed college students in a variety of ways. The never ending onslaught of modern life and looming adult responsibility appears to be a significant deterrent to maturation for traditional college-aged students. Many American college students struggle with a resource rich and simultaneously emotionally distant existence:

- Only 52% of incoming college students report their emotional health to be in the top 10 percent or above average (Higher Education Research Institute, 2010, p. 1).
- There is an increasing occurrence of major acts of campus violence, most notably Virginia Tech (Newman, 2007, April 4).
- 42% of college students who visit college counseling centers cite anxiety and 36% report depression as the reason for seeking help (Sander, 2013, p. A18).
- The average teen processes 3,700 texts a month (Dokoupil, 2012, July 16, p. 27).
- 61% of Americans admit to being addicted to the internet (Vadegaran, 2012, January 14, p. 1).
- 8.4% of college students report suffering major depressive episodes in recent years (CBHSQ, 2012, para. 7).
- 40 websites is the average number checked each day by internet users (The Virginian Pilot-Daily Break, 2012, January 14, p. 1).
- Two-thirds of teens report feeling their cell phones vibrate when in fact nothing is happening...resulting in ‘phantom vibration syndrome’ (Dokoupil, 2012, July 16, p. 27).
- Internet users switch activities, windows or programs, 37 times an hour (Vadegaran, 2012, January 14, p. 1).

At this point, conclusive evidence does not demonstrate a firm causal relationship between student stress, use of technology, lack of close interpersonal relationships, and student maturity. However, college students are clearly struggling to develop and
demonstrate the character traits, critical thinking skills, and responsibility levels necessary to easily conform to societal expectations for adult decision-making. Students are under significant duress and angst as they seek to grow into healthy adults (Showalter, 2013). The safeguards provided by Student Affairs in providing a guiding hand and a watchful eye to aid students in the healthy transition from adolescent into adulthood is more critical than ever.

**Changes in Student Maturation**

Academia is experiencing a tremendous transition on college campuses. On one hand, our resources have never been brighter – technology advances, social media connections facilitating historical changes, and multi-media educational formats for enhanced learning all provide rich student resources. On the other hand, some of these advances have prompted challenges for the modern student – difficulty in regulating information access, issues with healthy interpersonal relationships, campus safety, and ambiguous role expectations –consumer vs. learner. Usually these areas are navigated with few adverse consequences due to safeguards and insight. However, for some, poor judgment can stem from a developing maturity and lead to dire outcomes that have long standing impact. Student Affairs professionals have long utilized great models to coordinate student support initiatives. In the past, stage models of development provided efficient frameworks for structuring programs designed to enhance student growth while building strong campus communities.

Ideally, campus programming efforts serve as a guide to cultivate that sense of good judgment in students. Through residential exchanges, classroom discussions, and extra-curricular activities, students are encouraged to explore their identities and define who they are as emerging adults. It is helpful to examine the changes students experience as they are positioned in the ecosystem of knowledge acquisition, also known as college. Modern students have more resources to secure and retain friends, learn information, submit academic work, and stay connected with family, but fewer avenues to promote character development, values clarification, and critical thinking skill development. Historically, this training could be found in the home, at school, in the church, and civic organizations (i.e., Boy or Girl Scouts, Altrusa International, YWCA/YMCA groups, and other rites of passage programs). With this flood of technology, there needs to be an equally-balanced flow of self-examination, belief exploration, and personal discovery to assist in positive identity development. Student Affairs’ staff members are in a pivotal position to help with this need, but how students engage in communities has changed and so should we.

The traditional age student is 18-24 years old, which is considered a *later adolescence stage of development* (Newman and Newman, 2003). Key tasks that tend to be associated with this stage are achieving autonomy from parents/caregivers, exploring one’s sexual identity, and defining vocational goals. In essence, these areas are all linked to identity development. By reflecting on each task in context with the campus’ environment and societal influences, one can easily see the level of complexity rise in the process.

Autonomy, by definition, is an ability to regulate one’s own behavior and implement personal decisions without dependence on one’s parents/caregivers (Steinberg, 1990). Skills acquired in the previous developmental stages (i.e., financial budgeting, learning how to drive, maintaining one’s personal space, writing papers, forming and relaying
ideas, cooking, image-sensitive dressing, etc.) serve as a foundation for advanced functioning. Adolescents have watched elders and/or older siblings to learn how to navigate dealings within the home, school/work, or community. This modeling process allows for success mapping and learning from mistakes for improved life choices. The process of achieving autonomy is a multidimensional task that takes into account one’s gender, cultural/racial/ethnic, ability status, and sexual orientation.

Current research suggests that achieving autonomy takes place gradually and doesn’t fully take form until early adulthood for normal progression. The launch into independence is occurring later than in previous years. Before about 1960, marriage was the primary reason for leaving the parental household, other than leaving for college or the military (Newman and Newman, 2003). Since the 1960’s, the median age for marriage extends beyond age 24. Fields and Casper (2001) indicate that 56% of men and 43% of women between the ages of 20-24 live at home with one or both parents. The Pew Research Center reports that in 2012, 36% of 18 – 31 year old adults were living in the homes of their parents (Fry, 2013, p. 1). Given the recent economic trends and the rising cost of college, the perception that college attendance is a privilege more than a routine opportunity is growing. This shift can also add a layer of performance pressure to the traditional age college student. This delay in transitioning to complete self-sufficiency can impact one’s decision-making abilities based on mere exposure (or the lack thereof) and expectation to handle things on one’s own.

In addition to autonomy development being impacted by one’s maturation level, gender identity is also a factor. The socialization process is infused with messages about what it means to be a man or a woman. These messages can affirm or challenge one’s maturation process depending on identity factors and the community in which he or she resides (Valsiner, 2000). For later adolescence, family scripts have been solidified and provide a clear benchmark for gender consistent or inconsistent living. Understandably, those with gender inconsistent inclinations have more challenges which can retard or propel certain lifestyle choices. Exposure to a variety of sexual and gender identity options has grown in the media, as well as our campus communities. Yet, the ability to sort through this data may not be as clear cut. With a person's cognitive abilities not fully forming until the mid-late 20’s, it can be confusing to address beliefs in this area.

Similarly, career choices are anticipated at about this time. Academic requirements seek to assist with skill development in given areas. Ethical and moral dilemmas presented in undergraduate courses allow for rational training to occur for gray areas. Students are presented with new information, alternatives to established thinking frameworks, and difficult questions that can create a degree of cognitive disequilibrium. Movement from this phase tends to rely on past experience meaning-making, consultation with others, and a level of risk taking (to adopt new ideas). Career selections may shift a bit at this time. As one matures and incorporates the influence of societal information, familial data, exposure to various options, and psychosocial-emotional processes, career choices can be made from an informed perspective. Thus, it is important to encourage students not to foreclose too early in the process. The interesting paradox is that this stage is noted for adolescents believing they know it all (which can push away Student Affairs professionals, family, and elders), yet needing guidance and support (without the cognitive skills to see this or the language to ask for
it). The result is a need for the Student Affairs professional to look past this approach-avoidance posture and provide developmentally-appropriate life training opportunities to support the academic mission.

**Changing Needs of Students**

The societal induced juxtaposition of college student as learner and consumer creates significant stress and anxiety for students. This generation of students has different needs. With the right tools, college students’ character, intellect, and emotional-intelligence can be developed for a well-rounded education. Higher education must address the needs of students in more intense and individualized ways than we have in the past. If we truly want to help students successfully make the transformation from adolescence to adulthood, higher education professionals must be willing to change first. While we have solid theories and great student development experience, we should intentionally use our accumulated knowledge as we adapt our strategies to more effectively reach and support contemporary students. They are tuned into social media and likely far too attuned to the wants and needs of self. “The university community must recognize students as primary constituents and the job of mentoring them as equally or more important than any other…” (Christensen and Eyring, 2011, p. 350).

Professionals must find new more relational approaches in implementing developmentally-sensitive programming to help students’ bridge the gap between the overwhelming volume of information at their fingertips, the poor interpersonal skills exhibited by many, and acquiring fundamental skills for living successfully. In many ways contemporary students may act like consumers, but they will not readily accept being treated as such. A student cannot “be considered as a customer; as with the doctor’s patient or the lawyer’s client, the wise student trusts the professor to know his or her best interest” (Christensen and Eyring, 2011, p. 351). Tending to student needs in the classroom and in assisting them to grow personally, relationally, and in decision-making skills is the heart of the higher education mission. Ensuring that we appropriately and fully meet student needs is a significant and critically important challenge that we cannot overlook for the ongoing welfare of society, higher education and especially students.

**Parental Influence – Sometimes a Help, Many Times a Hindrance**

Unfortunately, kindergarten through high school education has proven itself unable to support holistic student development. The need for remedial instruction in reading, writing, and mathematics for entering college students evidences the difficulty that K-12 education has in meeting basic academic development standards. The realities and expectations for life have drastically changed in recent decades. Consequently, family dynamics, economic needs, and family structure are far different than the traditional two parent home that many grew up idealizing several decades ago. Today, many parents are ill equipped to provide the time, emotional support, and role modeling their children need to more easily grow into healthy adults. Nonetheless, parents of traditional aged college students are a force in their students’ development and maturation – facilitative or inhibitory. With parents’ own life struggles to make a living, attain or maintain meaningful relationships, and provide for their children, they are often cheerleaders at best. This disconnect renders the student with limited guidance resources, parent’s feeling inadequate, and college professionals needing to be more responsive. Parents
can play a positive role in their child/student’s life by encouraging their offspring to think intentionally, act responsibly, and plan for the future. However, parents often find consistently providing good parenting skills a hard balancing act and experience trauma (and create some trauma for their children), by simultaneously trying to be a supportive older friend and a stern Mom or Dad. Indeed, in view of the virtual world in which many students live (Facebook, Twitter, etc.); parents are often unable or less than capable of engaging in their offspring’s virtual world. Technology creates a great divide separating previously supportive parents/grandparents from these older adolescents at a time when parental support is desperately needed.

Positive role model parents can be quickly sidetracked by a messy divorce, extra-marital affair, or poorly handled job loss. In these situations, students are often devastated by being placed in very adult situations, which they are unprepared for and incapable of navigating. Because of the close family ties and emotional turmoil typically experienced by young adults in the developmental process, problems for parents can and often do contribute to student anxiety, depression, and extreme stress as students somehow feel responsible for the family’s circumstance, even if they no longer live at home. The helicopter parents of which so much has been written in recent years are a paradox in that they seem to be, if anything, overly involved in their children’s lives, but often do not have the real relationship and communication which they believe to be present. Healthy self-esteem and positive life attitudes are essential for college aged students in order to cope with adult life challenges. Unfortunately, many students come to college unprepared and ill-equipped to deal with basic adult responsibilities, much less the complex, traumatic, and all too frequent circumstances mentioned.

**Student Affairs Essential Role in Student Development**

Unquestionably college students need academic knowledge and training. In addition, younger college students need the example, support, and intentional development efforts of trained professionals. Faculty members are experts in their disciplines, but few are prepared to address the needs of students in emotional difficulty or crisis. Those in Student Affairs are equipped to support the curricular and co-curricular development needs of individuals. In a number of ways these two often disparate areas can be meshed to provide the best of both worlds – knowledge acquisition and personal development. The blending of academic and personal development is a strategy that needs to be further developed and explored (Cook and Lewis, 2007). The very nature of students as people first necessitates firm, but empathetic guidance as they face challenging life situations. Student Affairs as a discipline and as an arena of professionals has the people, skills, and student awareness to address student needs.

Student affairs practice is equipped with professionals to support student maturation effectively through its history, development as a discipline, and ongoing day-to-day experience with college students of all types (Blimling, Whitt, and Associates, 1999). Three specific attributes or roles consistently filled by practitioners permit professionals in this field to superbly support student growth – empathy, structure, and an entrepreneurial spirit.

Through their own training and experience, those in Student Affairs become adept at providing a magnificent blend to students of an expectation for quality performance and a listening ear. Professionals offer students no nonsense guidance concerning
institutional policies and acceptable interpersonal practices that should be followed. Simultaneously, students recognize that they can go to Student Affairs staff to talk through issues and obtain wise counsel to more appropriately address life situations and many of the adult nuances that occur in the process of growing up. Students will often seek out staff members, rather than parents or other authority figures, to obtain advice and human empathy when faced with challenges or dealing with matters where they have little or no experience.

A second attribute of student-focused staff is the provision of structure. As an area supporting co-curricular activities and attuned to human development issues, Student Affairs routinely develops and implements a multi-dimensional array of programs to address a myriad of student needs. These programs run the gamut to explore relational issues, academic success, leadership skills, career opportunities, decision-making development, financial management, and character formation using workshops and other training resources. Such programming provides students with basic, but clearly foundational learning opportunities that address life skill development, rather than building knowledge in a specific academic discipline. These programs and the foundational structure thus made available provide students with a non-threatening framework in which to learn, build skills, and acquire information essential for maturation and life success. It is not quite rocket science, but student services programming offers students the tools they need to grow in a healthy manner and enhances their ability to transform themselves into everything they aspire to become.

The third specific attribute or attitude possessed by most Student Affairs professionals is an entrepreneurial spirit. This perspective is a necessity when dealing with and/or contemplating change. Change is the order of the day in modern life, as we consider almost every area of our existence. The successful maturation of younger college students can greatly benefit from the willingness of Student Affairs staff to adapt their outlook and strategies. The growth of service learning in which students go out into the community and work to support a community or social needs – food banks, homeless shelters, etc. – is a prime demonstration of the noted entrepreneurial outlook. The use of service learning initiatives typically provides students a blend of practical skill development along with additional academic and social skill acquisition. In many ways service learning participation provides students a taste of real adult life within a nurturing, non-threatening framework. As such, service learning can be an ideal life laboratory to support maturation.

Empathy, structure, and entrepreneurial spirit form the basis for student development and healthy maturation. As we see younger college students struggling to become adults, colleges and universities should devise more developmentally-sensitive campus programming to support student growth and maturation.

**Recommendations for Campus Programming Strategies: Fostering Character and Critical Thinking Skill Development**

Central to campus programming is the desire to support the academic mission and personal development of the student. Given that modern students have an increasingly exceptional talent for technology application and social media creativity, these strengths should be utilized as such in campus event planning. It almost seems essential to have graphically-appealing Power Point or Prezi slides with animation components in order to keep a students’ attention. Education professionals cannot lose sight of the content,
even if bells and whistles heighten the appeal. Competency-based instruction is important. It always has been. So, what's different about this generation? The answer is twofold. Society has changed. We live in an instant gratification generation where an immediate response to needs is granted on a regular basis. This process can have a de-personalization effect as one interacts in his or her environment. Instead of a discussion about the days’ events with family over a meal, it is normal for many to pull up to a drive-thru restaurant and order a number 2 from the menu for dinner. Relationship with the food, those who prepared it, and the engagement that comes with dining has been de-personalized. However, the product of efficiency is achieved. What is lost is the sub-text of caring for the person who prepared the meal, mutual respect for all to be present, and the expectation that it was a valued event. These unspoken aspects contribute to empathy development, appreciation for others, and self-in-relation to other construct development. In essence, my actions impact others or I have an important role in this process are acquired in the first scenario, but not the second. Over time, simple encounters like these can contribute to self-centeredness and expectation shifts.

The second component to the answer is the student has changed. As noted earlier, students are being given material items more and at earlier ages (i.e., cell phones, laptops, cars, etc.) without the mature understanding of the cost associated with ownership or the resulting impact on personal development factors (i.e., brain changes, social skill shifts, etc.). The trend is for students to overestimate their knowledge, competency, and self-importance (Quarrel et al., 1993). There are ways to continue supporting this privileged lifestyle with the benefits of character-forming principles for well-rounded development.

1. Present Campus Events from an Exploratory Perspective

Developmentally, attending workshops or programs that appear instructive is a dis-incentive. Inviting forums for discussion where opinions (informed or not) can be shared allows for engagement and learning. Educational information can be infused throughout to promote knowledge acquisition. The outcome is increased exposure to differing concepts and establishing the foundation for critical thinking

In addition, creating venues for student engagement is key to supporting education ownership. One key example is the Paradigm Shift Initiative (PSI). PSI is a dialogue-based forum for addressing contemporary issues from a Socratic, critical thinking perspective. Participants come expecting to ask questions and engage from a personal perspective. Lessons learned translate well into the academic mission of colleges and universities. Social advocacy options that target campus safety, valuing differences, ethical-decision making, or altruism benefit the student’s character development, as well as the community. Events such as the Red Flag Campaign (domestic violence awareness), Take Back The Night (crime prevention), or similar programs challenge students to transition from an inward focus and become contributors versus consumers. Valuable life lessons are learned through community engagement.

2. Information Should be Categorized and Organized into Bite-Sized Pieces
Late adolescence is noted for bursting energy, processing significant amount of data, and a blossoming creative flow. It is helpful for the Student Affairs professional to come alongside this cognitive process by limiting items to themed groups and in briefer components for linking with prior learned material. Piaget, noted human development researcher, shared the concepts of assimilation and accommodation. Assimilation is the process of acquiring new information and accommodation in the body of knowledge that incorporates that new knowledge for long term retention – learning (Piaget, 1972). Referencing previously learned material as one offers new words-of-wisdom helps to shape the process.

3. Blend Teaching Objectives with the Subtext of Why it is Important

Further, the misconception of why it’s important to know something is often overlooked. Modern educators may not always provide those links for the late adolescence learner. Younger children often receive more exact instruction. If parental patience wears out, the response may echo because I said so. As college professionals educate, this stance may not yield the desired results either. What used to be called common sense years ago, is just as important, but may not be so common. The collective experience of an average group of college students in 2013 reflects a wider array of cultural, socioeconomic, belief, levels of tolerance, and attitude differences than 25 years ago. The mere definitions of what constitutes marriage and defines citizenship are key examples of challenges for our time. These were common understanding points for past generations. Not for this generation. So, taking a Socratic approach and asking the origin of certain beliefs, as you instruct on the objectives at hand, allows for linkages to form and rational development to take root.

4. Facilitating Cross-Communication is Helpful to Enhanced Learning

Identifying ideas that are similar for participants in group settings is a great strategy to promote engagement, learning, and growth. Webbing entails asking for input from members in a group and matching those that have some overlap. Once an invitation to explore the perspective is extended, the result is a sense of connection. This alliance promotes a feeling of I am not alone as well as validation for expressing ones' thoughts. The character component addressed is learning to value other’s opinion, skill in judging based on merit vs. personal reaction, and understanding purpose.

5. Explicitly State Values for Integrity, Honesty, and Justice

Program examples are great narrative tools for character education. Christians frame these teaching stories as parables. Psychologists call them narratives. They are excellent resources for conveying a life lesson for learners who are mature enough to capture the point. For those who may not possess such intuitive insights, presenters can openly discuss character principles with students. These are often gray areas that can be clarified by examining multiple frameworks. College is one of the best places to foster critical thinking skills because after a student leaves he or she is expected to demonstrate some expertise as a graduate. Utilizing this educational venue is ideal to test personal theories and beliefs from a value-inclusive perspective.
Strategies for Measuring Benefit/Growth/Goal Attainment

Student Affairs professionals and staff are in a great position to create and model climates of assessment. From a personal perspective, modeling self-reflective practices through language in discussions and valuing growth time is a powerful strategy to impact other’s development. Professionally, incorporating evaluations that are construct-based helps to provide the appropriate information for planning purposes. First, one should clarify the program objective. Second, assess the degree to which the objective was achieved. This can be accomplished through qualitative or quantitative means. Both formative and summative approaches can be helpful to gauging growth changes. Third, differentiate between knowledge, skills, and attitude shifts in evaluations. And lastly, determine what the participant will take with him or her for application to daily living. Establishing evaluation criteria that are specific to these areas allow for improved follow up program planning and better measurement of growth changes in program participants.

Revised Student Development Strategies: An Imperative, Not a Luxury

The suggested developmentally-sensitive programming strategies and recommendations for measuring growth and goal attainment are excellent support measures for higher education institutions and our students. In view of the rapidly changing higher learning environment prevalent today and the challenge of delayed maturation of younger college students, these perspectives are timely and necessary. Moreover, the concepts presented herein are essential based on the frequency of student access and institutional accountability issues increasingly raised by society, the U.S. Department of Education, and accrediting agencies.

Undoubtedly, organizational realignment and restructuring may be required to meet the financial and resource realities higher education faces today. However, eliminating or reducing student support services is not the solution, not if we are going to continue to fulfill higher education’s mission. Institutional leaders should take a position of using the creative skills of Student Affairs professionals to further integrate student affairs activities into the mainstream academic student learning process. By the intentional and careful melding of traditional student affairs functions into the broader academic experience of students multiple benefits accrue for students, faculty, and staff. With this approach students can develop discipline knowledge and life skills simultaneously enhancing the learning experience dramatically while acquiring the training, skills, and life awareness needed to become fully functioning adults.
References
APParatus: Assistive Technology or UDL?

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Introduction

Students with special needs are increasing in our schools’ populations. As educators, we must strive to help them be successful in many ways, pedagogically and also physically and cognitively. Assistive technology is bridging the gap in tasks with which these students struggle.

What is assistive technology (AT) and how is it utilized and integrated? The authors chose to explore this topic as it influenced their course content. As a special educator, Jacobsen has had extensive background in using and even developing assistive technology, while Waters, an early childhood specialist, has had somewhat limited experience in utilizing AT in the classroom. Together, as they collaborate in teaching preservice educators, they have explored the use of iPad apps as an avenue of providing assistive technology. The perspective taken by the authors is that AT is not just for special education; all students can benefit; essentially, their contention is this is indeed, linked to Universal Design for Learning (UDL). This paper will address the tenets of AT and how it can be integrated and expressed in instruction through the use of the iPad and its apps.

Assistive Technology

Assistive technologies are defined in the federal law that provides the foundation for all special education services: the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA 2004). This law’s definition of assistive technology consists of two parts: assistive technology devices and assistive technology services. IDEA 2004 defines an assistive technology device as any item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially off the shelf, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve function capabilities of a child with disability‖ (IDEA 2004, Sec. 1401(1)(a)). The 1997 reauthorization of IDEA was the first law to require assistive technology to be considered for every student who receives special education services.

Assistive technology can include high or low-tech devices, products or software to help individuals with disabilities in many different facets of their lives. Often, one thinks of AT as a high tech physical adaptation, when it can be something quite simple to assist a student do a better and/or more efficient job, i.e. to be successful. There is a range of AT; the types include “low” technology: Visual support strategies which do not involve any type of electronic or battery operated device—typically low cost, and easy to use equipment. Example: dry erase boards, clipboards, 3-ring binders, manila file folders, and photo albums, laminated PCS/photographs, highlight tape, etc.; “mid” technology: Battery operated devices or "simple" electronic devices requiring limited advancements in technology. Example: tape recorder, Language Master, overhead projector, timers, calculators, and simple voice output devices; and “high” technology: Complex technological support strategies - typically "high" cost equipment. Example: video cameras, computers and adaptive hardware, complex voice output devices (Fan, 2012.)

Approximately 13% of children have a developmental disability, ranging from mild disabilities such as speech and language impairments to serious developmental disabilities, such as intellectual disabilities, cerebral palsy, and autism. Assistive technology (AT) is used by these individuals to help them with daily living skills or communication. Assistive technology can be essential in working with various disabilities or impairments. AT is used by individuals with disabilities in order to perform
functions that might otherwise be difficult or impossible (Assistive Technology Act of 1998 "AT Act"). It can encourage and support independent functioning skills, self-help skills, overall understanding of the environment, social skills, expressive communication and language skills, and sensory processing. When children have developmental challenges, technology can provide them with opportunities to more fully participate in group activities, increase communication, and be more independent in their daily lives (Mondak, 2000).

**Universal Design for Learning**

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a set of principles and techniques for creating inclusive classroom instruction and accessible course materials (CAST). The goal of UDL is to make learning, and the materials of instruction, accessible to all students. This flexible approach can allow customized instruction, adjusted to individual needs. Based on this, the authors contend that AT and UDL are not limited to students with special needs and that these strategies will, indeed, help all students gain more success.

Individuals bring a huge variety of skills, needs, and interests to learning. Neuroscience reveals that these differences are as varied and unique as our DNA or fingerprints. The three brain networks comprise the keys to the framework for UDL and include:

1. Information and concepts are represented in multiple ways and in a variety of formats.
2. Students are given multiple ways to express their comprehension and mastery of a topic.
3. Students engage with new ideas and information in multiple ways.

**Representation** indicates that learning is impossible if the information is not represented in a way that is useful to the learner (CAST). It also suggests that ideas and information are represented in multiple ways and in a variety of formats. If a student cannot gather the information in the manner presented, what are the alternative methods of presentation? Some delivery approaches may include group activities, hands-on exercises, recorded lectures, text plus graphics, audio, and video, and usable electronic formats (e.g., Word, PDF, HTML.) When these strategies are used, student interaction and engagement are increased and, hence, learning is improved.

Communication is critical to success in school and beyond. Understanding others’ communication is equally as important. For those who cannot speak or hear others speak, a wide array of solutions is presented through AT. The student who is hesitant to speak out in front of the entire class may be more comfortable speaking within a group, demonstrating a concept, and/or creating an electronic project, exhibiting the needed knowledge or concept, but in a different manner.

Representation may be accomplished through the use of *Wikipedia Simple English* (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cat). When “Simple English” is selected in the side menu while on the Wikipedia site, the passage is written in simple terms, which may be much more understandable to a student who struggles with comprehension and reading. *VOZME* (http://vozme.com/index.php?lang=en) is a text-to-voice site; the student highlights a segment of text and the voice reads it. This is not exceptionally clear, but it is understandable, and for the student who may have difficulty with pronunciation and reading, it is quite effective.
Expression of a student’s knowledge of a concept is too often limited to a standardized or paper/pencil exam. When the student score is substandard, the assumption is that he/she doesn’t know the material. In fact, the student may be very competent in this content, but has not been given the opportunity to express him/herself in a manner that is parallel to his/her capabilities. Multiple measures of assessment are helpful in assisting students in demonstrating mastery and comprehension. Expression of comprehensions deals with the “how” of learning with different ways that learners can navigate a learning environment and demonstrate their mastery. Students express learning in multiple ways:

- Oral presentation
- Digital presentations
- Projects/Portfolios/Journals
- Performance
- Multimedia (text/graphics/audio/)

Assistive Technology can help with expression with the use of a number of sites.

VOKI (http://www.voki.com/create.php) is a free tool to create customized avatars, add voice to the Voki avatars, and post the Voki to any blog, website, or profile. By creating an avatar, a student may be able to speak or give a book report through the use of the keyboard.

Livebinders (http://www.livebinders.com/shelf/featured) allows the teacher to post content to a virtual binder for the student to access. Articles, links, assignments may all be kept there for student access. Similarly, students may create a binder of their materials as well to submit for evaluation.

When the student can demonstrate his/her comprehension and mastery of a subject through these alternative methods means, it often can lead to more imaginative, in-depth, and creative projects. This can be said of a student in the regular education curriculum as well as one with special needs or who struggles with testing.

Engagement is the “why” of learning with the many ways that students can be engaged in their learning and how they are motivated to learn. This motivation to learn and encouragement to engage may come easily for some students, but for those that need an extra push, the teacher is the impetus of change. An educator may help students engage in multiple ways, such as expressing his/her own enthusiasm, challenging students with a variety of meaningful assignments, providing prompt and instructive feedback on assignments, and being available to students. When the students see the teacher excited about content and delivery, tuning in to the students’ needs by providing valid and meaningful assignments that interest is conveyed to students and leads to higher interest as well.

Examples of engaging students through AT include the use of Primary Pad (http://primarypad.com/) Primary pad is similar to sharing a Google document. You and a partner can collaborate via the keyboard creating one document.

UDL Strategies (http://www.udlcenter.org/aboutudl) is a site that provides resources to educators regarding the framework and strategies for implementing UDL in the schools.

Jing (http://www.techsmith.com/jing.html) is a tool to create short videos. These videos can be created by the teacher or student to explain a concept. One of the advantages of Jing is students can access the information at a time when the teacher is
not available. Students can also create reports via Jing if their physical disabilities hamper their keyboarding skills. Voice Thread (http://voicethread.com/) is a tool to enhance interaction during a discussion. Students are able to post questions and respond to other questions.

These are just a few examples of engaging students through AT. Technology on any level seems to peak students’ interests; these sites and the apps all add another dimension to the students’ learning. These tools and others may motivate students toward increased engagement and success.

**UDL and IT using iPad APPS**

One of the fastest growing technological devices used for AT and UDL is the Apple iPad. The iPad can be very engaging, motivational and portable and can help encourage students to learn and overcome challenges and has become an effective teaching tool for children with special needs. It is an easy tool to navigate, is cost efficient, and can be used as a tool for everything including web, communicating, math, reading, writing and learning.

There is broad based research on using iPads with children with special needs. An iPad’s place in a special needs class is apparent from the hundreds of positive testimonials regarding its beneficial applications (Fan, 2012.) The inspiration as an assistive technology tool is beyond measure for the development of necessary skills. Social implications of the technology, motivation, and behavioral management provide evidence on its success for students. Educators who align curriculum with the iPad can alter the entire framework of special education. Students with an array of strengths and skills from a widely diverse background can all benefit (McDermott, 2011.) The iPad for special education classes brings simple accessibility and flexibility to the inclusive community to improve the quality of life for all students.

Apple believes that the iPad can be used as an assistive device for those with disabilities, so strongly that it has created a “Special Education” section in its iTunes store. There, users can download apps for communication, literacy, and language development, assisted seeing and hearing, and life skills and emotional development (Schultz, 2012)

From preschoolers to college students, the use of the IPad as an instructional tool has skyrocketed; the number of applications in education is mind-boggling. As an independent leaning tool, a collaborative device, and an instrument to teach and supplement content, the possibilities are limited only to imagination. The iPad appears to be worth the investment for most students with special needs.

There are thousands of apps to choose from; a teacher needs to only choose developmental level and subject to peruse the numerous possibilities to suit the student and learning situation. Some educators may be hesitant to try an app without a recommendation. It would be beneficial for teachers to have a list of successful and relevant apps for students’ learning. A rubric for apps would also be useful and provide insight into how they may help students. Research into new and emerging technologies will help professionals and parents understand what would be worth the investment for their students. Many apps are without cost, and many are quite good, but when a district, teacher, or parent is paying for the app, one wants to know more about its actual success.

Some no-cost, useful, and valid apps that are applicable to AT and UDL include:
Typ-O is a word prediction tool for students to write. Typ-O also has a text to speech component that enables a user to click the play icon next to any word to hear the word.

Going Places is an app that can be used as a social story for children with anxieties of new places. The app displays a picture of a typical location and tells a short story about the experience of going to this place. The free app has six built in choices that students would frequently visit.

Count down This is simply a timer; students who need some structure in keeping focus often will stay on task when a timer is present and running. They can see the timer counting down and use that visual reminder to work efficiently and, perhaps, quickly.

Button blast and Wooo! These are simply for fun apps; each provides a reinforcing sound upon pressing the appropriate button. This is a stimulus for some students and they will look forward to the praise from this; a good motivator.

Summary
The fundamental concepts of UDL of representation, expression, and engagement are often presented as parameters of teaching students in the special education realm. Representation allows limitless possibilities and looks at all students’ needs. To assist students in expressing their comprehension of a concept, allow for experimentation and innovative ways to assess students. By trying those out, a teacher will discover the creativity and content mastery the students have and he/she may not have realized. None of the presentation or assessment strategies are worthwhile without the students’ interest. The use of the suggested websites and apps add fun, are helpful for both the students and the teacher, and leads to increased engagement of students.

While we were promoting assistive technology to enhance learning for children with special needs, we are realizing that these strategies, in reality, reach many mainstream students. What was once pointed out as helpful only for students with special needs now is considered to be best practice for all students. All students respond positively to varied delivery methods, multiple measures of assessment, and motivational techniques. These should not be reserved for a limited population if we choose to encourage all students to succeed.
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Trapped in Amber: The Russian Minority in the Baltic States

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Introduction
Sail from the North Sea, through the narrow, congested Skagerrak straits, past Hamlet’s castle at Helsingor, Denmark, continue on to the calm, dark waters of the Baltic Sea, and discover the somber coast of the Baltics. Germans and Russians once occupied the republics of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia. Today, all three countries belong to the European Economic Union (EU) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Information technology drives their economies toward full recovery from recession. Latvia enjoys the fastest broadband in Europe. Software engineers from Estonia, sometimes referred to as “E-stonia,” developed SKYPE.

Native language speakers and Russian speakers share the same geographic and everyday space in each of the three Baltic republics. For the most part, they have achieved a pragmatic working relationship. However, they speak different languages, promote diverse goals, and embrace dissimilar value systems. Low-level friction is constant, and on certain traditional occasions, disruptions occur.

“Shameful,” admonished Vladimir Putin, the President of Russia, criticizing the treatment of the Russian-speaking minority in the Baltics (Jegelevicius, 2012, p. 1). He reproached the governments of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania for denying ethnic Russians the use of their language by failing to make Russian an official second language. The status of Russian speakers presents problems for the Baltics, the EU, and the world at large. In addition, leaders of these entities must also consider the continued remonstrations of the Russian government.

This paper describes the causes and effects of the conflict between Russian language speakers and native language speakers in the Baltic nations. It argues that the key component in solving this problem lies in breaking down the walls of distrust created by language and history.

Statement of the Problem
Native language speakers control the governments of all three Baltic countries. They promote policies that maintain their power to the detriment of Russian speakers. According to Marko Somer (2011), a research assistant at Tallinn University, the governing groups in each state value achievement and an exciting life (p. 145). They emphasize the horrors of the Soviet occupation of their countries after WWII and regard Russian speakers as poor underachieving remnants of the past.

Russian speakers lost their dominance when the Baltic states gained their independence in 1991. Somer (2012) noted that they have not yet “re-established their self-concept, and sense of identity” (p. 65). They value equality and support from the state. Their ideals, especially among the young, are changing to those of a capitalistic society (Tart, 2011, p. 194). In 1991, half of the Russian speakers in each country were stateless. Russian speakers focus on the Nazi occupation of the Baltics, the Holocaust, and liberation by the Soviet Union. They trace their ancestry to Russia, a country that takes their complaints seriously.

Members of the Russian minority can, and do, learn the language of the country in which they reside. Yet, preserving their own language and culture is vital to them. Sociologist James Henslin (2003) explained that language plays an important part in shaping identity. It provides a shared past and vision of the future (p. 70). Joshua Fishman (2007), an expert in sociolinguistics, described the significance of language in expressing “most easily, most exactly, most richly, with more appropriate over-tones,
the concerns, artifacts, values, and interests of that culture” (p. 68).

Review of the Literature

The Historiography of the Baltics falls into four phases:

1. Nationalist historians provided a framework for three new republics.
2. Marxist historians depicted history as a struggle against the capitalists by the proletariat after the Soviet Union absorbed these countries.
3. All three republics established commissions to investigate events ignored by previous historians.
4. Post-independence historians sought a more balanced history of the Baltics.

National commissions sponsored historians during the third phase. Historians wrote detailed multi-volume works that relied heavily on original sources, but also reflected the viewpoint of those who funded them. One such work, *The Hidden and Forbidden History of Latvia Under the Soviet and Nazi Occupations, 1940-1991* (2005) noted the, “Commission's history experts established that both occupying regimes inflicted unspeakable suffering and willfully killed a number of innocent people” (p. 8). The governments of the Baltic countries funded museums and historical sites based on the evidence gathered by these historical commissions.

Historians in the fourth phase like Anrejs Plakans (2011), a history professor at Iowa State, warned “celebratory national history would not pass muster with Western colleagues” (p. 437). Baltic historian Aldin Purs (2013) discussed the bravery displayed in the “singing revolution,” as well as, the problems of the Russian-speaking minority. He maintained that the Baltic states “are bound together by unhappy experiences and little else” (p. 12). Each republic represents a different ethnic group and speaks a different language. Lithuania is predominantly Roman Catholic. Estonia and Latvia are Lutheran. Lithuanians and Latvians are a Baltic people. Estonians are of Finnish origin.

The History of the Conflict

Both sides developed an interpretation of the past that bolsters their claims of legitimacy. Anyone who attempts to describe the history of events in the Baltics, especially the World War II era, realizes that the every argument, statement, and word has different connotations for the parties in dispute.

The First Soviet Occupation (1940-1941)

National governments in the Baltics established sovereignty by defeating German and Bolshevik forces that remained in their countries after World War I. The western powers believed these new countries would provide a “cordon sanitaire” against Communism and accordingly they recognized the states of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia.

The Baltic countries maintained their independence until 1940 when Vyacheslav Molotov and Joachim Ribbentrop signed the Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact of 1939. This agreement cleared the way for Soviet expansion into the Baltic countries and German occupation of Poland, an act that precipitated World War II. In June of 1940, the Soviet Union issued an ultimatum to the Baltic nations: allow the Red Army to establish military bases in the Baltics or face invasion. Soviet Armed Forces marched into the countries of the Baltic region on 15 June 1940.

Russian controlled parliaments passed legislation that mandated Sovietization. This entailed the collectivization of agriculture, industrialization, and indoctrination of the people. These parliaments asked for and received inclusion in the Union of Soviet
Socialistic Republics (USSR). The Soviets sent political and economic advisors to the Baltics and deported thousands of people who opposed them.

**The National Socialist German (Nazi) Occupation (1941-1944/5)**

Germany repudiated the Soviet-Nazi pact in 1941 and Hitler’s armies occupied the Baltics. The Nazis deported 10 percent of the population to concentration camps. They exterminated 90% of the Jews in the Baltics: 190,000 in Lithuania, 65,000 in Latvia, and 125,000 in Estonia. Only 35,000 survived. Plakans (2011) stated, the Germans supplied the executioners, but, “in many cases, the native populations acted on their own without any special organization” (p. 352). The Nazi’s found enough collaborators to staff a third of a 140,000-member Waffen SS unit. An exhibit in the Latvian Occupation museum in Riga charged that the Nazis deliberately tried to make the Holocaust look like a Latvian operation (“The Three,” 2012, p. 24).

**Second Soviet Occupation after WWII (1944/45 -1991)**

The Soviets deported hundreds of thousands of people after their re-occupation of the Baltics. Plakans (2011) stated that the Soviets sent three million Russians to the Baltics (p. 385). These Russians labored in the manufacturing plants that the Soviets built to industrialize the agrarian economies of the region. Some of these Russians returned to the Soviet Union, but many stayed.

**Independence (1991)**

The last head of state of the Soviet Union, Mikail Gorbachev, advocated a policy of glasnost or openness. This allowed the people of the Baltic region to demonstrate on a number of environmental issues. This led to a series of rallies advocating freedom from Soviet control. The most spectacular of these protests involved the formation of a human chain by two million people on 23 August 1989, the anniversary of the Hitler-Stalin pact. This 600 kilometer-long chain connected Tallinn in Estonia, to Riga in Latvia, and Vilnius in Lithuania.

**Estonia.** James Tusty and Maureen Tusty, directors of the film, *The Singing Revolution* (2008), reported that Estonians embraced the motto, “patience is a weapon, caution is a virtue.” They organized environmental groups, heritage clubs, and a political front. These organizations sponsored a song festival in September 1988. Over 300,000 people attended, sang patriotic songs, and listened to fiery speeches. Heinz Valk, an artist promised “One day, no matter what, we will win” (Tusty & Tusty 2008).

Members of the Russian minority who wanted the country to remain a part of the Soviet Union forced their way onto the grounds of the legislature (the Riigikogu) in May 1990. A crowd espousing independence surrounded them, but parted ranks to allow the Russians to file out peaceably. The Soviet government threatened to use force, but the non-violent actions of the Estonians, and the coup in Russia, resolved the crisis. The Supreme Council of Estonia and the Congress of Estonia opted for independence on 20 August 1991.

**Lithuania.** Russia imposed economic sanctions on 11 March 1990. Lithuanians responded by engaging in acts of civil disobedience. Soviet troops killed twelve civilians when they occupied government buildings and a TV tower in Vilnius on January 11, 1991. An amateur radio operator contacted a ham radio enthusiast in the United States who informed the world of these events. This adverse publicity convinced the Soviets to withdraw their troops and the Lithuanians voted for independence.

**Latvia.** Soviet soldiers killed four civilians during mass demonstrations in Riga. In
November 1989, 500,000 people protested Soviet occupation in front of Riga Castle where the black ribbon of the Daugava River starts its curve around the city. The Latvian Supreme Council voted for independence in January 1991. Pro-communist forces attempted to restore Soviet power through force. A crowd of 100,000 Latvian demonstrators prevented Soviet troops from occupying strategic positions in Riga. The Soviet government withdrew the troops and recognized Latvian independence.

**The Challenges of Independence**

The new governments of the Baltic region faced a number of challenges. They had to decide the level of services the state ought to provide and budget for it. They faced economic difficulties converting command economies aligned with Russia to capitalistic systems oriented toward Europe. These fledgling states had to create foreign ministries. The three republics also confronted a serious internal problem. There were 1,725,943 ethnic Russians living in the Baltics. In 1990, Russians made up 20% of the population in Lithuania, 40% of Estonia, and 50% of Latvia (Plakans, 2011, p. 401). The size of the Russian-speaking minority presented difficulties in terms of citizenship, statelessness, and education.

**Citizenship**

Parliamentarians in the Baltics, trapped in the unhappy memories of history, chose a long established model of citizenship in 1991. However, after they joined the EU in 2004, they conformed to a newer model. (See Appendix A for statistics on citizenship and statelessness.)

Johann Gottfried von Herder (1744-1803), a German philosopher who lectured in Riga, taught that language was a “treasure when kinship groups grow into tribes and nation” in his work *On the Origin of Language* (1772). He believed that language and culture reinforced the identity of the people of a state. The state, in turn, should support the language of the dominant ethnic group. He insisted that there was no Favoritvolk. His contemporaries added an element of racism to his nationalistic theories.

The autochthonous peoples of the Baltics believed that Russia occupied the area illegally and should pay reparations. They argued that the Russian-speaking minority should enjoy few individual rights. Some broached the idea of reparations and forced repatriation. *The Truth about Russians in Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia* (2008), a YouTube video, charged that “lazy and negligent” Russians wanted to get citizenship doing nothing and encouraged them to go home if they did not like this arrangement.

Graduate student Mariana Best (2013) expressed a different view of history in her article, “The Ethnic Russian Minority, A Problematic Issue in the Baltic States.” She argued that Russians moved legally within the USSR only to find themselves “trapped within independent republics that were trying to rid their past of Soviet control” (p. 1). She cited a 2008 survey that indicated 25% of the Latvians and 53% of the Estonians harbored feelings of discrimination (p. 38).

The EU developed the notion of multi-ethnic, multi-national, and multi-lingual states with active or participatory citizenship along the lines advocated by American political scientists, Robert Putnam, Sidney Verba, and Norman Nie. The concept of European citizenship emphasized a common identity among citizens of different countries in Europe. EU membership conferred on the citizens of member countries, including, but not limited to, the right of free movement, the right to work in any position, the right to apply to EU institutions in one of the official languages, receive a reply in that same
language, and freedom from discrimination on the basis of language.

**Lithuania.** The country with the fewest ethnic Russians, Lithuania, granted citizenship to everyone living in the country at the time of independence. They offered citizenship even to former Soviet military personnel. Best (2013) described this as “the right path.” (p. 39). Lithuania still struggles with a Russian minority in the larger towns and with Polish communities, south and east of Vilnius.

**Latvia.** Annelies Lottmann (2008), a law student at the University of Texas described Latvia’s policy on citizenship as, “Using an old model to address a new challenge” (p. 503). The Latvian government required those who applied for citizenship to prove their knowledge of the language and culture of the country, take a loyalty oath, show they had some means of support, and meet a quota. They denied citizenship for former Soviet military personnel. They offered permanent resident non-citizen status to those who chose not to apply for citizenship and issued them a grey alien passport.

Many Russians chose statelessness because, if they became citizens of the Baltic republics, they needed a visa to visit Russia and their status exempted them from military service. In addition, the initial language tests proved difficult for many older ethnic Russians. The government of Russia, the Council of Europe, and several human rights organizations protested.

However, a large proportion of ethnic Russians still met the definition of stateless persons (See Appendix A). Representatives of the Russian minority claimed discrimination. The leaders of Latvia and Estonia charged that the Russians used this issue as a wedge in their campaign to re-assert their power in their former sphere of influence. Purs (2012) advocated a pragmatic approach insisting that “the creation of a political system that effectively denies governing participation to more than a third of the population” had serious consequences (p. 182).

**Estonia.** The parliament of Estonia set strict conditions for citizenship, including proficiency in the Estonian language, knowledge of the Constitution, and a pledge of loyalty. They established free courses to prepare people who wished to take the tests. Between 1992 and 2007, 147,000 aliens acquired citizenship.

**Statelessness**

The UN and the EU both emphasize that persons without citizenship possess fewer rights and lack the protection of any state. University of Washington graduate student Justin Paulsen (2012) offered a contrasting opinion. His research indicated that the Russian-speaking minority in Latvia who held citizenship did not enjoy an economic advantage over those classified as stateless. He concluded that the principle advantages to citizenship were social and psychological.

**Lithuania.** Parliament changed citizenship laws to conform to a United Nations resolution on statelessness. A person need only reside in the country for 5 years to gain citizenship. There are 4,130 stateless people living in Lithuania, .03% of the population.

**Latvia.** Stateless persons in Latvia numbered 280,759 in 2013. The government relaxed citizenship laws, but must do more to alleviate the plight of these people. Members of the Russian minority collected 12,000 signatures to put forth a referendum that would grant Latvian citizenship to ethnic Russians. However, the state election commission declined to launch the second phase of signature collection. A spokesman for the Russian foreign ministry charged such inaction “proves there is a serious deficit of democracy in the country” (Russian Foreign Ministry, 2012, p. 1).
Estonia. In 2011, the government proudly announced the number of stateless persons declined to fewer than 100,000. Nearly all the stateless persons were long time residents. They can vote in local, but not in parliamentary elections. The legal chancellor of Estonia recommended that the government grant citizenship to all children born in their county, unless their parents object. Authorities funded language and citizenship classes to facilitate the naturalization process.

There is some truth in charges of language discrimination. However, Russian accusations would bear far more weight if they applied the same standards to problem areas around the world, including those within their own borders. Sebastian Kohn (2012, October 25), a reporter for the European Network on Statelessness, noted in an article, “Russia and the Baltics: The great statelessness game” that “Russia and the EU are playing a political game and stateless people in the Baltics have unfortunately become nothing but a brick” (p. 1).

Demographics will eventually solve problems of citizenship and statelessness. All babies born in the Baltic republics are automatically citizens. More Russian-speaking young people speak the language and accept the values of the countries in which they reside. However, the Baltic countries should solve the problem now and the EU must insist upon it. The countries of the Baltic littoral can then move on to the problem of how to preserve the heritages of both the majority and the minority.

Education

Russian speakers who wished to preserve their culture and heritage enrolled their children in Russian language schools. Nationalists argued that without a knowledge of the language of the state in which they lived, that Russians would be at a disadvantage in applying for work and benefits from the state. They insisted that the existence of state supported Russian language schools indicated a higher level of minority rights than in other European countries (Tsybulenko, 2012, p. 1).

Lithuania. The Seimas (parliament) funded bilingual and minority language education from the onset of independence. They provided instruction in the following languages: Polish, Russian, Belarusian, German, and Hebrew. In 2012, the Ministry of Education encouraged minority language institutions to engage in joint projects with Lithuanian language schools (“Guidelines,” 2012). Best (2013) observed that gentle integration works (p. 37). Many Russian-speaking parents send their children to Lithuanian language schools.

Latvia. The government believes that state financed education in minority languages is a precondition for maintaining the cultural identity of minorities. They offer eight national minority language programs: Russian, Polish, Ukrainian, Belarusian, Lithuanian, Estonian, Hebrew, and Romani. In 1989, the government mandated Latvian for 60% of the instruction in state supported schools. (“Minority Education in Latvia,” 2013, p. 1). The Latvian government encouraged instruction in the Latvian language because they were concerned that more Latvians spoke Russian (81%) than spoke the native language of the country (79%). It reaffirmed its intention to continue educational reform “toward a society where all can participate on an equal basis” (“From Segregation to Integration,” 2006, p. 2).

Estonia. The Ringikogu (parliament) supports 586 schools that offer instruction in Estonian, 104 in Russian, and 16 in both languages. The Estonian government required students in Russian medium high schools (grades 10-12) to pay tuition in 1997. This
affects from 1500 to 1700 students. State policy mandates a gradual transition to Estonian for at least 60% of the instruction in all state-supported institutions. The first required courses in Estonian were music courses. This comes as no surprise in the country of the Singing Revolution. The government stressed an integrated program that supported the teaching of the Estonian language to the non-Estonian population and recognized the culture of both Estonia and Russia (Hernad n.d.).

Persistent Problems

Tensions between language groups obfuscate significant economic and demographic problems in the Baltics. Conflicts arise like a dormant illness that manifests itself under certain conditions. Friction between Russian speakers and native language speakers erupts when parades, ceremonies, and anniversaries remind people of their bitter and divisive history. This occurs on September 25th, the anniversary of the signing of the Hitler-Stalin pact; May 9th, Red Army Victory Day; and March 16th, Latvian SS Legion Day.

Conflict between Language Groups

The frustration of the Russian minority in Tallinn, Estonia, erupted in 2007. The government’s removal of a Soviet war memorial led to four days of riots. Russian foreign minister Sergey Lavrov observed, “The Estonians have spat on our values” (“Removal Sparks Riots,” 2008, p. 2). He could not understand how people could blame historical events on one group or compare Communism with Nazism. The Russians considered economic sanctions and authorized the first cyber war in retaliation. The Prime Ministers of the Baltic Republics pledged solidarity against these provocations.

Ill will resurfaced in 2010. Modest Kolerov, editor of the Russian news portal Regnum, accused the Estonian government of basing its identity and legitimacy on the mistaken view that Russians who live in Estonia are “a fifth column and a threat to national security” (“Russia’s Baltic Policy,” p. 1).

Reporter John Natham (2011, March 24) of JC.com, the United Kingdom’s oldest and widely read Jewish newspaper, described unofficial ceremonies next to the largest medieval cathedral in the Baltics, the Dom in Riga, Latvia. A small crowd gathered to lay wreaths and sing folk songs. Some young men dressed in the fashion of fascism, quasi-storm trooper outfits. Others wore native costumes. One bystander commented, “The Russian occupation is not over. There is still Russian influence from Moscow, and Jewish influence too” (Natham, 2011, p. 2). An even smaller group of Russian counter-protestors jeered in the background.

Alexander Weischer (2012, September 24, p. 1), a reporter for the Deutsche Press, reported the reaction of the Russian Foreign ministry to the unveiling of a monument to Waffen SS troops in the Latvian town of Bauska. Weischer (2012) quoted Efraim Zurof, head of the Simon Wisenthal Center, who charged that Latvia disguised its role in the Holocaust and had not punished a single collaborator because of a lack of political will (p. 2).

In September 2012, the Latvian parliament authorized dual citizenship, loosened naturalization requirements, and eased the path to citizenship (Latvijas Republikas Saeima, 2012, p. 1). Despite these advances, the Latvian Russian-speaking minority lacks political power. They organized political parties that support language rights. The Harmony Centre controls the largest faction in the Saeima and the political party “For Human Rights in Latvia” has one seat in the European parliament. However, the other
political parties in Latvia have united to keep the Russian speakers out of power.

Sergei Lavrov, the Russian Foreign Minister, labeled the treatment of the Russian minority in the Baltics a “disgrace” (“Existence of non-citizens,” 2012, p. 1). Lithuanian President, Dalia Grybauskaite, retorted that Putin would “continue to tell the world that the Baltic states and Lithuania are nationalistic, disobedient, don’t like Russians, and are trying to damage Russia” (“Lithuanian President,” 2012, p. 1).

Paulsen (2012) reported that the Latvian Secretary to the Ministry of Defense said that “in the event of a violent conflict, the government would consider the internment and imprisonment in a defined place of non-citizens” (p. 1). A member of the Human Rights Party replied, “Hitler’s ideas are living and winning in Latvia today” (Paulsen, 2012, p. 1).

ITAR-TASS, the official Russian News Agency (“Russia to raise problem of language discrimination,” 2013, April 11, p. 1), reported that Dr. Alexi Pushkov, head of the Russian delegation to the Council of Europe, protested the actions of inspectors from the Estonian education ministry who tested the Estonian speaking ability of teachers in Russian schools. He noted that a lack of proficiency could result in dismissal and called for an inquiry into language discrimination in Estonia.

On August 23, 2013, the three prime ministers of the Baltic republics announced the European Day of Remembrance for the victims of Stalinism and Nazism on the anniversary of the signing of the Nazi-Soviet non-aggression pact. They recalled that authoritarian regimes left no families untouched and "Our peaceful aspiration for freedom was stronger than Soviet might, because justice was on our side ("Baltic Prime Ministers", 2013, p. 1).

Demographics

Population is declining in the three Baltic republics at an alarming rate. The total population of these small countries deteriorated by 15% from 1990 to 2013. Though these numbers are shocking, the fact that people are living longer provides a small measure of stability. Life expectancy for Estonia is 77, and in Lithuania and Latvia it is 74. The two primary reasons for this regression in population are: a low birth rate and emigration. These small countries suffered severe economic difficulties during the recent global recession and it is difficult to encourage young couples to have children in such financial instability. In an effort to increase the birth rate, Estonia recently authorized 20 weeks of paid maternity leave to young mothers.

Vast numbers of young people are leaving the Baltic republics. The poor look for jobs and the educated seek opportunity. The number of Russians who leave (38%) is double that of ethnic language speakers. They don’t immigrate to Russia because the standard of living is much lower than in the Baltics. They move to EU countries like the UK and Ireland. Latvian President Andris Berzins said, “If massive emigration does not stop, its (Latvia’s) independence will be in doubt 10 years from now” (Cited by Managing Editor, 2013, p. 1).

In 2011 there were 556,422 ethnic Russians living in Latvia, 240,750 in Estonia, and 174,900 in Lithuania (See Appendix A). Most Russians live in the major cities and in the provinces adjoining Russia and Belarus. Russians make up 14.43% of the population of Vilnius, 50% of the population of Riga, and 38.5% of the population of Tallinn. The total number of Russian speakers and the fact that they tend to live in enclaves present challenges for the Baltic republics. While the indigenous native citizens control the
governments of these countries, the Russian speakers often control the major cities and pose considerable economic influence.

**Conclusion**

This paper described the causes and effects of the conflict between Russian speakers and native language speakers in the Baltic nations. It argued that the key component in solving this problem lies in understanding the power of history and language. The last part of this process is, after due deliberation, to render judgments on decisions made by the governments of the Baltic countries. Experts on the topic provide guidance.

Purs (2012) reminded us that reality set in soon after the Baltic states gained independence. “The principled absolutes of songs in the face of tanks descended into the more pedestrian, complicated, and relativistic merits of citizenship and language laws (p. 174). Estonia and Latvia erred in enacting strict requirements. Lithuania made a better choice, but the smaller number of Russian speakers did not pose a threat. All three countries, to their credit, eventually enacted humane citizenship laws and the number of stateless people dropped dramatically. All reached out to the Russian minority to achieve educational reform.

Purs also stated that as Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania move in different directions, they will begin to think of themselves more as unique countries than Baltic countries, with regional similarities and European commonalities. Other countries facing the problem of utilizing the talents of all the members of their society, will notice what happens in the Baltic Republics.

Plakans (2011) argued that the Baltic countries met stringent criteria from the EU, NATO, and the European Council. The world now considers them as “normal” with the challenges of any other European country (p. 441). The lessons any country can learn from them is the importance of preserving the language of different ethnic groups, and building an integrated society that values the contributions of all its members.

Edgar Savissar, former prime minister of Estonia, had a message for the future of all three Baltic republics. He urged them to become a bridge between the EU and Russia for the movement for goods, services, knowledge, and labor (Galojan, 2011, p. 1). He argued that they held a unique economic advantage because of their geographic location and the knowledge provided by the Russian minority.

The people of the Baltic republics are intelligent and engaging, but they are trapped by their language and history. Refighting the battles of history is pointless. Stigmatizing people because of the language they speak is counter-productive. Eliminating statelessness, and capitalizing on positive strengths like location, language skills, and entrepreneurship has a greater likelihood of success in the 21st century.

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Indigenous Languages. Edited by Cantoni, G. Flagstaff AZ: A Center for Excellence Monograph.


Russian Foreign Ministry says decision of Latvian election authority is discriminating.
Retrieved from <www.youtube.com/watch?v=FzPi-vVGLCg>

Appendix A
1. Population of the Baltic States (Millions)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1990</th>
<th>2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Estonia</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.34 (-11%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latvia</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.2 (-15%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lithuania</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.0 (-17%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>6.54 (15.1%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Number and Percent of Russian Speakers (Thousands)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1990</th>
<th>2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Estonia</td>
<td>474,843 (40%)</td>
<td>340,750 (25%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latvia</td>
<td>906,600 (50%)</td>
<td>556,422 (27%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lithuania</td>
<td>344,500 (20%)</td>
<td>174,900 (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,725,943</td>
<td>1,072,072</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Statelessness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Estonia</td>
<td>94,235 (7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latvia</td>
<td>280,759 (13%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lithuania</td>
<td>4,130 (0.06%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cyberbullying

Charles Notar
Joseph Akpan
Lawrence A. Beard
Jacksonville State University

Linda B. Johnston
University of Tennessee-Chattanooga
What is bullying

According to Stopbullying.gov (2013), bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior among people that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. Bullying includes actions such as making threats, spreading rumors, attacking someone physically or verbally, and excluding someone from a group on purpose.

What is cyberbullying

Cyberbullying, according to Stopbullying.gov (2013) is bullying that takes place using electronic technology such as devices and equipment which includes cell phones, computers, tablets social media sites, text messages, chat, and websites. Examples of cyberbullying include malicious text messages or emails, phoney rumors sent by email or posted on social networking sites, or embarrassing pictures, videos, websites, or fake profiles.

Why cyberbullying is different from bullying

According to Stopbullying.gov (2013) and Teachtoday (2013), students who are being cyberbullied often experience bullying in person as well. Additionally, students who are cyberbullied have a harder time getting away from the behavior because it can happen 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and reach students even when they are alone, thus effectively invading your home and personal space as well as the school environment. Further, Cyberbullying messages and images can be posted anonymously and distributed quickly to a very wide audience and it is sometimes impossible to trace the source. Bystanders can become perpetrators when they pass on emails or text/picture messages or take part in an online discussion. Also, once the messages have been sent, deleting inappropriate or harassing messages, texts, and pictures is extremely difficult.

Effects of cyberbullying

Students who suffer the effects of cyberbullying tend to have pervasive risks of depression and anxiety, experience increased feelings of sadness and loneliness, changes in sleep and eating patterns, loss of interest in activities, increased thoughts about suicide that may persist into adulthood. In one study, adults who recalled being bullied in youth were 3 times more likely to have suicidal thoughts or inclinations. Also, decreased academic achievement (GPA and standardized test scores) and school participation. As these students are more likely to miss, skip, or drop out of school (Afterschool Alliance, 2011). Approximately 10 percent of children report being bullied on a consistent basis in school (Pepler, Craig, Jiang & Conneley, 2008: Roberts, 2010). Further, Students who are bullied are more likely to retaliate through extremely violent measures. In 12 of 15 school shooting cases in the 1990s, the shooters had a history of being bullied.

School responsibilities in cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is on the rise (Wolak, Mitchell & Finkledor, 2007). The number of adolescent victims of online harassment increased by 50 percent between 2000 and 2005. The report estimated that from 9 to 34 percent of adolescents nationwide were cyberbullying victims within the previous two months.

At present, there seems to be no uniform consensus on how to best address the problem of cyberbullying. Since cyberbullying is a relatively new issue, courts have not
had the opportunity to establish legal precedent that could serve as a benchmark for states and school administrators.

Agatston, Kowalski and Limber (2007) recommend bullying prevention programs as a means of controlling cyberbullying. Schools should adapt bullying prevention programs that include lessons on cyberbullying which include ways that ensure that students understand that targeting classmates through negative messaging or images online is a form of bullying. Lessons should include steps that bystanders can take to report and respond to cyberbullying.

Schools have a responsibility to protect victims of cyberbullying. There must be, in place, punishment that is on the books in the school regulations. Parents as well as students must be made aware of these policies and there needs to be documentation that both parents and students have been made aware of these policies.

When the schools provide the device for student use and retain ownership rights, schools open themselves to some interesting legal problems. If the school retains ownership of the device, they have an advanced ability to monitor those devices. Searching a tablet that the student owns is a sticky situation. It is paramount to rifling through the student’s purse without cause. However, if the school retains ownership, the school has more latitude to search. Rather than going through a student’s purse (which the student owns), it is now like going through a student locker (that the school retains ownership). The law views both events differently due to the principle of ownership.

However, since the school retains ownership of the device, this ownership encompasses certain responsibilities. For example, what are the school’s responsibilities in monitoring illegal activity when the device is not on school property? If a student is bullied by another student and the bully is using a school-owned device, can the bullied student bring charges against the owner of the device? According to the Children’s Internet Protection Act (2012), schools must filter internet usage, even when the device is not physically on school property, including student interaction with other individuals on social networking websites and in chat rooms, and cyberbullying awareness and response.

**Social media as an educational tool**

Schools must shift to the use of interactive technology environments to effectively educate and train students for future success. There are many social media sites that could be used for educational purposes. For example, Facebook, in its current version, may not be perfectly suited for certain uses by educators, but it is a resource that many teachers are finding effective as a way of communicating with students both inside and outside the classroom. For example, Facebook is a good resource for community outreach by schools or extracurricular organizations and is an appropriate way to disseminate information. In addition, there may be times that students may need to access Facebook for educational purposes such as assignment reminders, due dates or interactions between students for help with homework. However, the potential problems, including liability for both the schools and the teachers could very easily outweigh the benefits.

**Considerations before using social media:**

Some teachers may require students to post their work to a social media site, making the student work open and accessible to everyone who is a member of that group. Since the privacy of student work products are protected under the Federal Educational
Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, having students publicly post their work on could very well violate this federal statute. (FERPA, 2013)

Anyone who has access to student Facebook profiles could review the profiles for evidence of abuse. This may make it easier for cyberbullies to find victims to bully. Also, in the event that a teacher has access to the student profiles and pages and discovers evidence of cyberbullying, the teacher is then obligated to report such abuse to the proper authorities. If a teacher fails to detect and report such abuse, the teacher might be in violation of federal state mandatory reporting laws.

Students deserve privacy in their personal and social communications. Being required to use Facebook for their instructional activities disrespects this privacy for some. Also, some students and their parents might prefer not to have an account on Facebook. Also, teachers who may want to “friend” students on social media are possibly setting themselves up for difficulties. Whereas teachers should maintain friendly and supportive relationships with students, do teachers really want to become students “friends” on social media or should they maintain a distinction in the status of their relationship? If the teachers ‘friend’ their students, what is the school’s liability in the issue? Are teachers putting their school systems at risk for lawsuits, especially in the area of cyberbullying?

It is generally accepted that schools are responsible for establishing use of internet policies, especially policies to restrict social media use and to prevent cyberbullying. But schools alone cannot solve these problems. Unfortunately, to date, despite their best efforts, school-based anti-bullying programs alone have not shown evidence of strong results (Bauer, Lozano & Rivara, 2007). It will take community efforts. Therefore, it is integral that community partners come together to offer innovative anti-bullying programs in which children can take part before school, after school and during the summer so they have a chance to develop healthy behaviors and learn how to deal with bullies.
References
Big Easy Easily

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Northeastern Missouri University
Welcome to “The Big Easy,” as New Orleans is commonly known by its residents and others! Weren’t we all very lucky to be back in the Big Easy! For you who already knew and appreciated the sights and sounds and pleasures of New Orleans, we were extremely happy to speak you all again! For those of you who had journeyed to this great historic, engaging, friendly, intriguing, and amazing city for the first time, WELCOME! Particularly for you all, the “new-comers,” we had prepared this sketch of a commentary for you. Of course, if those who were/are already experts on the city can find a good use of our labor, we urge you to please feel free to do so.

New Orleans holds a metaphoric sack of diamonds, and we have not been able to examine all of them. In point of fact, in spite of numerous trips to this great oasis in the past, we have only “touched the surface” of the many, many, many possibilities of music, cuisines, folkways, folklores, and languages and dialects. However, of those we have touched, the following were/are highly recommended for your close examination. Either one or two or three or four or all five of us have visited each of the sights listed below: from those enormously enjoyable visits, we highly recommend that you visit AT LEAST the following.

[WARNING: ATTEMPTING TO VISIT ALL OF THE FOLLOWING SITES ON THE SAME DAY MAY BE HAZARDOUS TO YOUR HEALTH!!!!]

Part One. Extremely Brief Overview of the History of New Orleans

The historic City of New Orleans is Louisiana’s largest metropolitan area with 350.2 square miles, a population in 2011 of 360,740, and an unemployment rate of 7.3%. Situated directly on the Mississippi River, the City is one of the largest ports in the United States.

Straddling the Mississippi River, the City has been labeled, over time, as the “Crescent City,” the “Gateway to the Mississippi Valley,” the “Paris of America,” the “most unique city in America,” and other terms. The most popular one seems to be “The Big Easy.” According to one notion, the term originated from the City’s historic rich musical history. In the latter 19th Century and in the 20th Century, musicians could earn a living by performing in the streets, parks, private parties, and nightclubs. Musicians found open acceptance and support in the City that was found nowhere else because “a struggling musician could find work and study music at the same time,” As the birthing ground and nurturing environment of folks like Louis Armstrong, Jelly Roll Morton, “King” Oliver, and other “hot jazz” musicians, the “Big Easy” tag for the City seems to fit.1 A supporting notion is that, in comparison to other metropolitan areas in the United States, life in the City is much “slower, simpler, and easy-going.”2 Mardi Gras and other festivals and celebrations underscore the City’s uniqueness.

Founded in 1718 by the French and named after the French town of Orleans, the City welcomed the large influx of French colonials. Commerce related to agriculture and the sea trade flourished. Forced capture and transportation from 1756 to 1763 by British forces of French colonials from Nova Scotia and other sections of modern Canada to French Louisiana brought another large influx of settlers. These new arrivals embraced the new environment with tenacity and invention to evolve into the “Cajun” culture with it own “folkways, music, and cuisine.”3 According to the Treaty of Paris in 1763, the City was ceded to Spain. Spanish colonists flocked to the City. In 1801, the City was returned to French rule. In 1803, the American President Thomas Jefferson concluded the Louisiana Purchase with Napoleon. New settlers from the United States arrived. The
Haitian Revolution ended in 1804. “Thousands of refugees from the revolution, both whites and free people of color (affranchise or gens de couleur libres) arrived in New Orleans, off bringing African slaves with them.” Most of them settled in the City. Then, in 1815, General Andrew Jackson defeated the invading British forces in “The Battle of New Orleans.” Under U.S. Rule, the whole Mississippi River Valley flourished with giant plantations. Produce from these were “floated” by barge/boat or transported by wagon overland to the City. The City soon grew into a major U.S. port, metropolitan area, and giant “tossed salad” of cultures, folkways, musics, cuisines, arts, and international innovations.

During World War II, factories of the City quickly transformed into a major producer of many vehicular tools and other devices used by the U.S. military.

“The New Orleans-Metarie-Kenner Metropolitan Statistical Area...had a 2010 population of 1,214,932.”

Part Two. Places to Experience

**Antoine’s Restaurant.** Established in 1840, this world famous restaurant at 713 Saint Louis Street serves French-Creole cuisine in its 14 dining rooms. Created at Antoine’s, Oysters Rockefeller became a famous classic. (Because the sauce was so very rich, it was assigned the name of the richest baron of the day.)

Great food needs great time to prepare. So, while waiting for your food, ask your waiter for “the tour”—a giant wine cellar under the street, the place where “the Pope” sat, the seat that JFK used, the walls of photographs, et al.

**Audubon Aquarium of the Americas.** At 1 Canal Street, next to the great Mississippi River, this majestic museum holds “15,000 sea life creatures, representing nearly 600 species, living happily in a state-of-the-art facility.” Its Caribbean Reef tunnel—30 feet—allows visitors to walk under and by the creatures in their natural habitant: in doing so, the visitors get the same kinds of views that a deep sea diver would get. When Lem walked through the Seahorses Gallery, he heard that only the male seahorses give birth. To this day, Lem has not figured that one out.

**Beignets.** Situated at “the lower end of the French Market’ close to the Mississippi River, the Café Du Monde’s beignets “window” adjoins the Café. The Du Monde is “the original French Market Coffee Stand since 1862.” Since 1862, chicory coffee and square fried fritters covered with powdered sugar—“beignets”—were brought to the City by the Arcadians from Nova Scotia. In fact, coffee was introduced into the U.S. via the City.

In the “old days”—about four decades ago--Lem used to show up at the window to order beignets and dark, strong chicory coffee, and then sit at the outdoor table and drink and chew until sober. On the last trip, about two years ago, he walked over to the spot in the late afternoon, but he could not find the outdoor table and chair or, even, the window. Then, he finally realized that this massive restaurant called Café Du Monde must have been there all along. Apparently, all that he had been able to see, back in those days and that early in the morning was the window with the chair and table to the side.

**Deanies Seafood.** At 841 Iberville Street, in the French Quarter, this cafe serves a wide variety of sea-foods and other specialties. Many locals eat here for reasonable prices. The city of Metairie, Louisiana, also has a Deanies Seafood at 1713 Lake Avenue.
Brad Pitt’s “Make It Right” Project in the Devastated “Lower 9th Ward”. While the murderous Hurricane Katrina severely assaulted New Orleans, 50+ levee failures caused 80% of New Orleans to be flooded. The Lower 9th Ward, the largest of the City’s 17 wards and bounded on one side by the Mississippi River, was devastated by 10+ feet of water rushing through a major break in the bordering levee: dozens of working-class and aged residents died. To assist the poor, working-class residents who, even though their previous homes had been destroyed, wanted to return to live in the 9th Ward, Brad Pitt’s Project began in 2007. Building with reusable materials, renewable energy systems, safe drinking water, and continuous “green” improvements, the Project had completed 90 of the targeted 150 innovative homes by April 1913. “Fats Domino, rappers Brian ‘Baby’ Williams and Magic, NBA basketball player Eldridge Recasner, NFL Player Marshall Faulk, authors Kalamu ye Salaam and Poppy Z. Brite, actor Johny Larroquette, trumpeter Kermit Ruffins, and the prominent Batiste musical family” are among the Ward’s most famous natives/residents. (Probably, a reasonable fee can be negotiated with one of the vans that include the 9th Ward on a tour of the City.) French Quarter Haunted History Tours. From 723 St. Peter Street, tours begin at 8:00 P.M. For those who believe and for those who don’t, these tours can be very eye-opening, educational, and fun. (Warning: Leave all of the pistols, shotguns, and/or knives at home. The good spirits have been enlisted to protect you. Pretty much.) Garden District. Similar to the Heights Neighborhood of Laredo, Texas—which, like the City, had trolley streetcars in the early 1900’s, the Garden District is the old, rich neighborhood of the City. Great old mansions and giant trees offer a glimpse of a fabled past. Years and years ago, Lem stayed in an international student hostel inside one of those grand mansions with a giant glass front on the living room on the first floor. When he asked why such a large glass front was needed, he was told that the home had been build back in mid-1800’s. After the owners died, a new special business began, and the large glass front was installed. This visibility allowed the City’s “gentlemen” to pass by in their horse-drawn buggies and view the lush unadorned offerings without getting out of their vehicles. Jackson Square. Just a few blocks back from the banks of the Mississippi River and bounded by Decatur Street, St. Peter Street, Ann Street, and Chartes Street, this landmark used to be the center of the French outdoor social life. The original City was situated around this city-block-long square known as the Place d’ Armes. After the Battle of New Orleans, the square was renamed after Andrew Jackson. Situated in the French Quarter, next to this colorful historic site lies the Cabildo and the Cathedral-Basilica of St. Louis King of France—i.e., in today’s terms, “The St. Louis Cathedral.” Well-maintained greenery throughout the Park surrounds the statue of the military hero of the City, Andrew Jackson on a horse. New Orleans City Park. With 1,300+ acres at 1 Palm Drive, this magnificent “green-space) is about 50% larger than the famous Central Park of New York City. Established in 1853, this luscious site holds the largest collection of Live Oak trees in the world; some of them are over 600 years old! Several athletic fields, golf courses, tennis courts, boating facilities and a stream, a Botanical Garden, children’s designated
play areas, and, even, a casino offer the artists, athletes, golfers, naturalists, campers, picnickers, and regular citizens an amazing cornucopia of delights. (Warning: If you have little children with you, watch out for the nude statues at strategic spots in the Park. Second Warning: If you still do not have young children with you, watch out for the nude statues in the Park. Some of them are breathtakingly beautiful! And the models were, reportedly, locals! Maybe one or more of them may be visiting the beautiful Park on the same day as you are.)

In the fairly good old days, Lem spent many hours on the benches in this park. It is a beautiful manicured green-space; it was a nice and relatively quiet place on early Sunday morning to just sit and be still while getting over Saturday night; and from time to time, a beautiful spirit would walk by and smile.

**New Orleans Museum of Art.** One Collins C. Diboil Circle, City Park. This versatile wonder to behold displays photography, basketry, painting, statues, and other media. Visiting shows amaze the interested audience. As its mission, the Museum intends “to inspire the love the art, to collect, preserve, exhibit and present excellence in the visual arts; to educate, challenge and engage a diverse public.”

**John J. Audubon Insectarium.** Situated in the old United States Customs Building at 423 Canal Street, this site displays preserved and living insects. The cookies with meal-worms are good and tasty and reasonable in price. (Warning: On the day after eating those cookies, check with the mirror for any antennae around the eyes and/or ears!)

**John J. Audubon Park.** The first mayor of New Orleans gave his huge plantation to the City. At different times, both the Confederate and Union forces used the site. The historic “Buffalo Soldiers,” of Seminole-Negro and of Negro descent, were inducted, quartered, and trained on this site before they were sent to defend American forts in the West against raiding Native Americans.

Situated about 6 miles west of downtown, the Park is bounded by St. Charles Avenue on one side and by the Mississippi River on the other. (Stay on the St. Charles Trolley until the large gate for the Park appears on your left side.)

**John J. Audubon Zoo.** This was part of the huge plantation that the first mayor of New Orleans gave to the City. After viewing and moving across the Park, cross Magazine Street to enter this wonderful Zoo. Its 58 acres provide homes for 2,000+ animals, including but not limited to gorillas, orangutans, “one rare white tiger and two rare white alligators with blue eyes.” A swamp exhibit with a houseboat floating on the water provides an interesting note on how some of the oldsters lived, literally, in the bayous.

After one views all of the animals, animal statues, birds, trees, shrubs, bushes, trails, and displays, one can walk to the end of the Zoo to catch a paddlewheel that can paddle one “around the bend” to debark at the French Quarter.

Be careful to leave before dusk: in the falling light, the life-sized anima statues look like real animals. Make sure that what you see is a statue and not a recently escaped animal. (Lem did.)

(Lem is a Sustaining Member of the Honolulu Zoo. According to Lem, this Audobon Zoo is comparable. Visits to both have been educational and inspirational.)
Louisiana’s Civil War Museum. Formerly “Confederate Museum,” this cathedral-like structure at 929 Camp Street was built in 1891. After the Museum of the Confederacy at Richmond, Virginia, this site “houses the second largest collection of Confederate Civil War items in the world.”

Walk across the street from the National World War II Museum and look for the big cannon.

Loyola University. At 6363 St. Charles Avenue, this facility was established as Loyola College, a Jesuit school, in 1904 and chartered as an university in 1912, this University offers bachelor degrees, master’s degrees, and law degrees.

As you ride the St. Charles Avenue trolley toward the John J. Audubon Park and the John J. Audubon Zoo, you will pass right by Loyola.

National World War II Museum. Although established at 945 Magazine Street, this museum’s entrance is on Andrew Higgins Drive,. With at least two airplanes on the ceiling and a Jeep, a Medical Corps “wagon,” and another vehicle on the floor of the first giant room, along with photographs, WWII posters, and other tools, the visitor is immediately awakened to the authenticity and expanse of the collections that are about to unfold. WWII movie clips, video, and photographs adorn the screens of the theaters and the walls of the “halls.” An LST may be available. Certainly, the role that the City of New Orleans played in WWII as industrial producers of many of the vehicles and weapons that our troops used in the effort are explained and examined. If the visitor is lucky, the visitor may “drop in” on one of the many lectures given to local and regional and guest students. (One “drops in” by quietly sitting in one of the empty chairs of the lecture area.)

Tom Hanks did an honorable and very worthy job in assisting this facility to come forth and prosper. Lem is a Charter Member, and his “Uncle J.C.” is listed on the Honor Role of World War II Veterans.

New Orleans Museum of Art. One Collins C. Diboil Circle, City Park. This versatile wonder to behold displays photography, basketry, painting, statues, and other media. Visiting shows amaze the interested audience. As its mission, the Museum intends “to inspire the love the art, to collect, preserve, exhibit and present excellence in the visual arts; to educate, challenge and engage a diverse public.”

Ogden Museum of Southern Art. This structure holds 4,000+ works donated by individuals in the United States. Originating with 1,100+ works from Roger H. Ogden’s private collection in New Orleans, this comprehensive collection is the largest of Southern art, 1733 through the present. It lies just across the street from the World War II Museum and just a ways down from the old Confederate Museum.

Old Coffee Pot Restaurant. Established in 1894 at 714 St. Peter Street, this utility claims to serve “the best breakfast in the French Quarter.” It offers seafood, creole, Cajun, and plainfolk cooking from early morning till late evening. Famous for its jambulaya and blackened red fish.

Pete Fountain Night Club. In his club at 2 Poydras Street, the legend, 77 years old with a pace-maker, is still alive, talented, and famous. He still plays Dixieland, jazz, and creole on his LeBlanc clarinet.

“Hurricane Katrina obliterated his beloved 10-acre waterfront estate in Bay St. Louis, Mississippi." His “three-story, 10,000 square feet main house, guest cottages and bus
barn" were reduced to “120 truckloads of debris. Decades of memorabilia, the record of a life lived large in the name of New Orleanes” was lost.29

Since this is classy place, a customer needs to dress-up. Telephone ahead to see when/if Pete will be playing and if place is still open. (In the grand old days, Pete’s place and Al Hirt’s place were the musical face of the City.

**Police Museum, 8th Ward.** 30 A narrow downtown ward that stretches from the Mississippi River to Lake Pontchartrain in the north. This neighborhood, primarily creole, lies between Franklin Avenue and Elysian Fields Avenue.

Several years ago, Lem visited the 8th Ward Police Museum and inspected vehicles, weapons, uniforms, and historic photographs. Two friendly and very knowledgeable retired policemen provided great hospitality and historic knowledge of the neighborhood and the origin and development of the New Orleans Police Department. Lem still owns the police jacket that he purchased there.

**Preservation Hall.** 31 Located at 726 St. Peter Street in the French Quarter just a few blocks from the Mississippi River, this edifice was built in 1750. Over time, it served as a home, tavern, inn, photo studio, and art gallery. In the 1950’s, Larry Borenstein opened the Associated Arts Art Gallery on the site. He like to attend jazz concerns around the city. Because those jazz took so much of his time, Larry began to invite the musicians to gather and perform in his Gallery. While on their extended honeymoon, Allan and Sandra Jaffee met a group of musicians who were on their way to visit and jam at “Mr. Larry’s Gallery.” Over time, Allan and Sandra grew inspired over the music: Larry moved his Gallery next door to let Allan manage the jam hall. In the 1960’s, Allan and Sandra founded the Hall officially in 1961 to honor, preserve and promote the continuation of the City’s old style music. Allan organized the The Preservation Hall Jazz Band, sent it on tours, and enlisted national media to popularize the “old jazz music.” Currently, the Center is a famous recreation center that recalls, plays, and glorifies live New Orleans jazz. Louis Armstrong recommended its music and its musicians, some of whom are now in their 70’s and 80’s. Nightly shows begin at about 8:00 P.M. and feature the Preservation Hall Jazz Band. Sitting in with the Band at any time may be younger musicians who are learning to play the old music. For less than $20.00, the participant is entitled to receive a $ 50,000.00 personal revisit by the old saints and their tunes.. Upon Invitation, the participant may participate by singing, clapping, and/or orderly swaying. Newcomers to New Orleans should really be there for at least one evening.

**Saint Louis Cathedral.** 32 The City is often identified in printed and moving media by this Cathedral and its surroundings—i.e., Jackson Square in front and The Cabildo to the side. Saint Louis is the oldest Roman Catholic cathedral in continual use in the United States.

**Saint Louis Cemetery No. 1.** 33 Of the three Saint Louis cemeteries constructed in the 18th and 19th Centuries in the City, this is the oldest one. According to the French and Spanish traditions, vaults above the ground hold the remains. “8 blocks from the Mississippi River, on the north side of Basin Street, one block beyond the inland border of the French Quarter,” this final resting place “spans just one square block but is the resting place of many thousands. (Yep, you got it. Several bodies may be interred in a single vault, especially the ones that hold the remains of departed priests.)
(Warning: Tradition holds that a Voodoo priestess is buried here. So, just to be safe, don’t curse aloud, be completely aware of your surroundings, and be very wary of approaching strangers who are dressed like a Voodoo priestess and carrying dolls with pins stuck in them.)

**Saint Charles Streetcar.** As “the oldest continuously operating streetcar in the world,” the St. Charles Line has symbolized the City’s charm and romance for 150+ years. The mahogany seats, brass fittings and exposed ceiling light bulbs are from a day when plastic seats and aluminum rails were not even a thought.

This wonderful streetcar follows Saint Charles Avenue, perpendicular to Canal Street, to pass by hundreds of very old mansions and giant old trees.

Except for the National World War II Museum and its across-the-street neighbors, the Civil War Museum and the Ogden Museum and for the Voodoo site, this wonderful Streetcar and/or a few blocks of walking can get you to all of the places indicated here.

**Storyville.** The Iberville Housing Projects in area now bounded by Iberville, Basin, St. Louis, and N. Robertson Streets sit on the grounds of the former “red-light district” of New Orleans. In those days, it was named in honor of the city alderman named Sidney Story. After all, he had authored the legislation that established the “District” as a health measure that could be monitored and regulated by proper authorities. In the good old days, in their youth and early manhoods, “King” Oliver, Jelly Roll Morton, and Louis Armstrong worked there as musicians.

New Orleans jazz did not originate in Storyville; that grand old music was originated and played all over the City. However, because a major railway station was close by, many of the travelers walked over to Storyville, heard jazz for the first time, and went home with glorious reports of their musical experiences. Since most of them had never ventured out beyond Storyville into the City, they mistakenly determined that jazz had originated in Storyville. The limited experiences of those out-of-town visitors, many of whom were from the North, apparently gave rise to the old myth.

(Warning: Today, the only red lights in the old Storyville/New Iberville Housing Projects are those enclosed in the several traffic lights.)

**The Cabildo.** Situated at 701 Chartres Street next to St. Louis Cathedral and facing Jackson Square, this grand old building served as the seat of government under the French. In this building, the papers for the Louisiana Purchase were signed. Over time, the building has served as the City’s city hall, then as its courthouse, and later as a prison. Today, it houses a very fine museum.

**Tulane University.** Founded at a public medical college in 1834, it serves today at 6823 St. Charles Avenue as a private research university devoted to special research initiatives and public service.

Part Three. Paths of Enlightenment

**Bourbon Street.** Running through the heart of the City’s oldest neighborhood—i.e., the French Quarter—and lined with bars for every taste, it is one of the City’s oldest streets and named “Rue Bourbon” after the ruling French family in 1721.

After the Seven Years War, the Spanish took over; After the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, the Yankees took over. As a result of the different owners, the architectures along the street reflect the French, the Spanish, and the Yankee influences. So do the foods and the drinks.
Canal Street. A major thoroughfare of the City, this very wide street forms the upper boundary of the City’s oldest neighborhood, the French Quarter. After the Louisiana Purchase, this street acted as a “neutral ground” or boundary between the French and Spanish residents of the older French Quarter and the newcomers in the newer neighborhoods who had migrated in from the U.S. Great shops abound.

Magazine Street. A major thoroughfare that begins northward from Canal Street and winds in a crescent path, reflecting the path of the close-by Mississippi River, and ends in the north with the John J. Audubon Zoo on the left and the John J. Audubon Park on the right. Over 184 merchants do business on this street. This street borders the Garden District on the south.

New Orleans Central Business District. Bounded by the Canal, the Decatur, and the Iberville Streets on the north, by the Mississippi River on the east, by Magazine Street, the Pontchartrain Expressway, the Julia Street, and the New Orleans Moprial Convention Center on the south, and the South Claiborne Avenue, and the Cleveland and the South and North Derbigny Streets to the west, this “downtown” district is one of the largest commercial districts in the U.S. Clothes, tools, cameras, jewelries, arts, furniture, automobiles, trucks, special vehicles, crafts, live entertainment, and foods for all tastes contribute to the New Orleans style of living known as the “Big Easy.”

(Warning: Always be aware of your surroundings. Periodically check on your wallet and the prices you are bargaining. Do not get hypnotized by the beauty of the jewels, the fur coats, the dresses, the shoes, the hats, the cars, or the smiling beautiful beings walking by.)

Royal Street. One of the City’s oldest streets, it starts at Canal Street, runs through the French Quarter and lies one block south of Bourbon Street with stately hotels, antique shops, and art galleries galore.

St. Charles Avenue. A major thoroughfare of the City, it runs through the historic Garden District with the beautiful old mansions and giant trees, though the Uptown District, through the Central Business District, to Canal Street and the French Quarter. It is one of the main routes for the “carnival season”—i.e., Mardi Gras.

SOURCES
“Audubon Park, New Orleans,” Wikipedia.


5 Ibid., p. 1.
30 Because I found nothing on the internet for this site, I suspect that the very educational site may no longer be open..
Revolutionaries Off The Street - Sequel No. 5: The 1980’s

Lem Londos Railsback
Independent Scholar
By the end of the 1980’s, the American population had swelled to 226,546,000. The national debt in 1980 was $914,000,000,000, however, because of several forces and events, it had swelled to $2,000,000,000,000 by 1986. The average salary for American workers was $15,757.00, and the minimum wage was $3.10. For males, life expectancy was 69.9 years; for females, it was 77.6 years. An estimated average of twenty million Americans attended movies each week of the decade. In that decade, the cost of a BMW rose to $12,000 while the cost of a Mercedes 280E rose to $14,800.00. Double-digit inflation from the late 1970’s flowed into the ‘80’s decade, unemployment increased, and prices continued to rise. In spite of the rising “harder times,” Americans began to splurge in buying fancy products like video games, minivans, camcorders, aerobics training, and recreational vehicles. Enjoying various talk shows and following televised aerobics training coaches became daily exercises.1

ME! ME!! ME!!!

Fanned by multiple “hostile takeovers, leveraged buyouts, and mega-mergers” and arrogant behaviors by well-known characters like “Donald Trump, Leona Helmsley, and Ivan Boesky” American status seekers adopted an attitude of “Shop Till You Drop” with credit card abuse and binge buying. They grew committed to the fantasy of “If you’ve got it, flaunt it and You can have it all!” The novelist Tom Wolfe, had noted in the 1970’s that the new “youngsters” had ceased working in tandem with other youngsters to achieve common goals—e.g., “communitarianism,” the multiple public protests by the hippies and others in the 1960’s. Instead, he maintained, the 1970’s youth had adopted a narcissistic stance toward atomized individualism, resulting in the “ME! Generation. In the 1980’s this psychological position grew into gigantic proportions which Wolfe termed as the “splurge generation” or the “ME! ME! ME! generation.2 After the Depository Institutions Deregulation and Monetary Control Act of 1980 was rolled into action, many restrictions on banks were discarded. Lending powers of banks were increased, and the deposit insurance—backed by the federal government—was raised from $40,000.00 to $100,000.00. Banks rushed to cash in on loans on real estate, to speculate on lending, and other risky ventures just as the American economy turned down. By 1982, 42 banks had failed; in the next year, another 50 had failed, and another 540 “problem banks” had been listed by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation. “In 1984, the Continental Illinois National Bank and Trust Company, the nation’s seventh largest bank (with $45 billion in assets) failed.”3 The severe recession at the beginning of the decade, excessive deregulation, and high-risk lending knocked the banking industry on its ear, so to speak, or, perhaps, some other part of the anatomy. A bail-out of more than $4.5 billion rescued the banks, but no reexamination and realigning of the banks ever occurred. In time, the same recession, similar deregulation, a smaller enforcement staff, and extraordinarily high –risk lending summoned the same kind of fate to the savings and loan institutions across the land.4

Americans’ customs adjusted to fit the times, and some freckles economic practices of the 1960’s and the 1970’s continued throughout the 1980’s. Consequently, cohabitation between two consenting adults, more divorces, and more two-wage-earner families lost the stigma of immorality and respectability.

A lingering malaise over the loss of communitarian efforts by the general society, but particularly among the young, bothered the observing intellectuals. As President Carter suggested,
In a nation that was proud of hard work, strong families, close-knit communities, and our faith in God, too many of us now tend to worship self-indulgence and consumption. Human dignity is no longer defined by what one does, but by what one owns. But we’ve discovered that owning things and consuming things does not satisfy our longing for meaning. We’ve learned that piling up material goods cannot fill the emptiness of lives which have no confidence or purpose.5

Dark clouds approached at the onset of the decade of the 1980’s.

Even Black Clouds Can Have Pieces of Silver Lining

Even amidst the widespread hysteria that “Everyone can be a capitalist!” there were a few bright spots. Americans celebrated the 200th anniversary of its Constitution. Remembered on its fiftieth birthday was the famous movie Gone With the Wind. In general, art museums, and artists themselves enjoyed much greater support than in previous times. At auctions, Picasso’s “Yo” brought in $5.4 million; Van Gogh’s “Sunflowers” brought in $39.9 million, and his “Irises” brought in $53.9 million. The authors Stephen King, Tom Clancy, and Danielle Steele sold over a million copies of their respective books. Larry McMurtry, James Michener, Alice Walker, John Irving, Toni Morrison, and Tom Wolfe enjoyed great success. John le Carre, Ken Follett, Frederick Forsyth, Martin Cruz Smith, Robert Ludlum, and Tom Clancy elevated the espionage novel as a reading staple for an affluent public. In non-fiction, Donald Trump’s Trump: Surviving At the Top and Lee Iacocca’s An Autobiography became best-sellers. Bill Cosby’s Fatherhood, E.D. Hirsch, Jr.’s Cultural Literacy, and Allan Bloom’s The Closing of the American Mind enjoyed wide fame and wide discussion. Similarly, Thomas Wolfe’s The Bonfire of the Vanities, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.’s The Cycles of American History, and Carl Sagan’s Cosmos attracted great discussion and influence. Although originally published in 1949, George Orwell’s 1984 was reexamined and discussed repeatedly, especially in terms of determining whether or not in the 1980’s decade, the predictions made in the novel had come true. New monies were set aside for research into studies which led to new treatments for heart disease, cancer, and other diseases. In 1988, the Human Genome Project was funded. For the first time in American history, a female ran for the presidency; her name was Geraldine Ferraro. For the first time in American history, a black man ran for the presidency: his name was Jesse Jackson. For the first time in American history, a female was nominated and approved by the U.S. Senate to sit on the Supreme Court; she was the first to do so. Her name was Sandra Day O’Connor. More females earned degrees and did graduate work, got married, and had fewer children than ever before. America launched its first reusable spacecraft (1981). The Vietnam Veterans Memorial was completed in Washington, D.C. In 1983, Columbia University began accepting female students.6

Fun! Fun!! Fun!!!

Team sports after school and on weekends—baseball, football, soccer, cheerleading, gym, jazz, dance, and other group activities—with mothers using carpool after work became the style. Nerds were in style. Collectibles—e.g., cabbage patch dolls, camcorders, Mutant Ninja Turtles, Barbies, smurf and E.T. paraphernalia—were in demand. Power dressing—that of Nancy Reagan and of Princess Di—ruled the stage for formal gatherings. For kids from the middle class and the lower-socio-economic class, and rebels from the higher-socio-economic class, Madonna’s fishnet stockings
and leather and chains, Michael Jackson’s glove set the tone. Tight-fitting and/or torn jeans, tank tops, sneakers, wild hairdos, and Nike “tennis shoes” were the uniform of the day. The Flashdance look was in vogue.

Television for the 1980’s included sitcoms—e.g., Three’s Company, One Day at a Time, Taxi, Different Strokes, Growing Pains, Newhart, The Golden Girls, Cheers, Who’s the Boss?, Family Ties, Roseanne, Alf, and Night Court—entertained American families. However, the most popular of all was The Cosby Show, which “almost singlehandedly revived the fortunes of its network, NBC.” Soaps like Dallas and M.A.S.H. ruled. Shows such as The Love Boat and Fantasy Island provided extended fantasy. The A-Team, The Dukes of Hazard, The Fall Guy, The Greatest American Hero, Knight Rider, and Airwolf provided action galore. Police/Detective shows featured Hill Street Blues, In the Heat of the Night, Matlock, Miami Vice, Cagney & Lacey Scarecrow and Mrs. King, Murder She Wrote, Riptide, Simon & Simon, Hart to Hart, Moonlighting, Magnum, P.I. reassured Americans that they were safe and under protection of the uncorrupt law-enforcement cadre of the U.S.

Over 11,000 surveyed listeners in 2010 favored the 1980’s as “the most favored music decade of the last 50 years.” As disco music slowly dropped, the new genres post-disco, Italo disco, Euro disco, and dance-pop arose. Rock begot New Wave, soft rock, glam metal, and other offshoots. As more musicians began to use electronic instruments, the new electronic genres electro, techno, house, freestyle, and Eurodance thrived. R&B, hip hop, and urban music held their own. Toward the end of the decade, hip hop and rap began to rise. Michael Jackson was the biggest selling male artist of the decade. With her music videos on MTV, Madonna was the biggest selling female artist of the decade. Also very successful were Prince, Whitney Houston, Janet Jackson, Tina Turner, Lionel Richie, Cyndi Lauper, Bruce Springsteen, Stevie Nicks, Bon Jovi, Cher, and others. The bands Def Leppard, Motley Crue, Guns N’ Roses, Van Halen, Aerosmith, the Eagles, Duran Duran, The Grateful Dead, The Who, and other similar dominated the charts. Hip hop, electronic music, New Romantic Music, and heavy metal music were favored, particularly by the young and the minorities. Country music was brought back as “traditional country style” and as “honky tonk” by Kenny Rodgers, Garth Brooks, Mary Chapin Carpenter, Ricky Van Shelton, Loretta Lynn, Holly Dunn, Eddy Arnold, Johnny Cash, Conway Twitty, Tammy Wynette, Merle Haggard, Rickie Skaggs, Kathy Mattea, Dolly Parton, Willie Nelson, Waylon Jennings, Dwight Yoakam, Keith Whitley, Reba McEntire, Ray Price, George Jones, George Strait, Hank Williams, Jr., Randy Travis, and the groups Alabama, The Oak Ridge Boys, The Statler Brothers, led the charts. Of course, MTV, Billboard Magazine, Rolling Stone Magazine, and other printed and electronic media outlets helped these performers gain stardom.

The 800 Pound Gorilla

Ronald Reagan dominated national politics and policy and the national economy throughout the decade. As candidate and President, he publicly professed his desire to reduce government “interference” in Americans’ lives, but he actually increased such “interferences.” His ‘voodoo economics”—as labeled by his former competitor George Bush—pushed “supply-side economics which provided extremely valuable tax cuts for the already wealthy. Through his policies, he increased economic disparity among Americans. During his administrations, several periods of economic uncertainty triggered significant growth in the national debt.
In his extended movie career, Reagan had played in fifty-three films and had actively served in the Screen Actors Guild. As President, "friendly but disciplined," he gave "hundreds of interviews," "held many press conferences," and, with his "photographic memory," energetically pursued his agendas. Reagan's skills for summarizing a large body of information on a particular issue into a few simple "points and for negotiating were fine-honed by his serving as president of the Screen Actors Guild and in serving as the host for General Electric's Death Valley Days television series. As part of his contract to General Electric, Reagan was required "to spend a quarter of his eight years (1954—1962) with the company touring the forty states and 139 plants of GE's far-flung decentralized corporate domain, addressing 250,000 employees and their neighbors." Reagan's skills in conveying simplified versions of complex issues, in negotiating, and in interacting with individuals and with crowds held him in good stead in his political moves. They allowed him to project an image of a down-to-earth, next-door neighborly, "bumbling, likable lightweight blessed with golluck and clever aides." Regular citizens across the U.S. thought of him as "a nice man."

Reagan had friends, especially those with anti-communist convictions. As early as 1946, Reagan and his first wife Jane Wyman met numerous times with FBI agents. They, along with other collaborators, "turned in" many actors, actresses, writers, directors, and other media figures as communists or, at least, communist sympathizers labeled "fellow travelers." On the basis of information provided by such "snitches," many, many artists were "black-listed" and lost their careers and livelihoods. During Reagan's tenure as president of the Screen Actors Guild, the SGA's personnel files were open to the FBI. When Reagan ran for governor of California, his friend J. Edgar Hoover and UC Regent Edwin Pauley—who, like Reagan, received regular FBI updates—provided extensive help. Upon seizing the governorship, Reagan attended the next meeting of the Board of Regents of the University System of California to secure the firing of Clark Kerr, the first chancellor of the System. Kerr's defense of UCS professors who had refused to sign loyalty oath (although he had signed one himself) had angered Reagan. During the Free Speech Movement at Berkeley, Hoover assigned agents to investigate, mislead, and perform various "dirty tricks" against the demonstrating students. When he ran for President, Reagan, Reagan's associates Michael Keith Deaver and Peter Hannaford registered as foreign agents and, reportedly, collected funds from the three respective dictatorships in Taiwan, Guatemala, and Argentina. For Reagan's re-election campaign, "a top Filipino” bragged that he had delivered ten million dollars that Marcos, the leader of the Philippines, had donated. As President, Reagan introduced his "trickle down" notion of economics which his budget director David Stockman eventually admitted was a “Trojan Horse” by which the wealthy would be favored. As articulated by William Kleinknecht, . .

Reagan propelled the transition to hypercapitalism, an epoch in the the forces of self-interest and profit seek to make a final rout of traditional human values. His legacy—mergers, deregulation, tax cuts for the wealthy, privatization, globalization—helped weaken the family and eradicate small-town life and the sense of community.

In light of "the investigation, indictment, or conviction of over 138 administration officials, the largest number for any U.S. president." The Iran-Contra scandal, the scandal over the rigging of Housing and Urban Development bids to campaign
contributors and Republican lobbyists, scandals in the Environmental Protection Agency—e.g., “Sewergate,” the Savings and Loan scandal involving the Vice-President and two of his sons, and other tragedies apparently contributed to the Liberals Like Christ to declare that “Reagan’s was the most corrupt administration in the lifetime of most Americans.”22 (The administrations of Grant and of Harding occurred way BEFORE both the Reagan reign. Nixon’s, of course, may have achieved the second place.)

Gradually government, and the broader realm of public service, has been dragged down even further by the behavior of politicians, who, imbued with the same exaltation of self-interest that is the essence of Reaganism, increasingly treat public office as a vehicle for their own enrichment.23

Although the Reagan administration did not actually invent political corruption, certain members of it apparently mastered its techniques and benefits.

Reagan’s “war” on drugs was famous, and the American public applauded him for it. Through the drug war legislation, monies were secured to enable trained assistance and provide equipment (weapons) for the governments of certain foreign countries so that they could “put down” their local drug lords. Actually, the local drug-lord-revolutionaries who were attempting to rid their respective countries of interferences by foreign entities (like the U.S.) had been forced to sell dope in order to buy weapons.

Reagan policies effectively albeit virtually eliminated the corporate income tax, thereby enhancing the profit-taking by holders of oil leases, real-estate barons, and other Reagan-type entrepreneurs. Of course, Reagan’s “revenue-enhancers” and “user fees” fell on the shoulders of the middle income class and the lower income class.

Reagan’s brand of conservatism rippled across our society...He disenfranchised the average citizen by inventing the soft-money machine that made large corporations the real power in Washington. He weakened the enforcement of labor laws and inspired union busters across the country by firing the move than eleven thousand striking air-traffic controllers and breaking their union in 1981. He empowered corporate executives to abandon the concept of loyalty to employees, shareholders, and communities and weakened the bargaining power of labor. He presided over the slow creep of commercial values into virtually every sphere of American life. Commercialism has invaded realms where it was once verboten: the non-profit sector, law, health care, politics, public schools, public radio, and public television. Instead of public policy’s influencing the corporation to fit the needs of society, society is shaped to fit the needs of the corporation.24

Dramatic change in Americans’ standard of living—within the exception of the wealthy—prompted one critic to later issue a dramatic charge:

The incomes of the wealthiest Americans these past 30 years has been flat-out unearned and undeserved. It is the largest case of redistribution of wealth in this nation’s history with the exception of the original redistribution of land from the Native Americans and the wealth gained through the use of slavery. It is a redistribution of wealth from the middle-class and working poor to the super-rich. Value created by working Americans, and indeed by workers around the world, has been taxed away from the working class, not by the government but by capital owners.25
Most certainly, George W. Bush, Richard Bruce “Dick” Cheney, and all of those Reagan-enabled entrepreneurs contributed immensely to the American-and-world economic quagmire of the first decade of the 21st Century. However, the mythological and actual framework, laws, protocols, and practices were “set in stone,” so to speak over three decades ago and have been sprouting and growing ever since. The foundation for the economic disparity between the “1 per cent and the 99 per cent,” the metaphor that was so prominent in the recent Romney—Obama contest, was laid long ago by Reagan.

Revolutionaries Off the Street of the 1980’s

In the midst and in spite of the societal loss of communitarian kindnesses and helpfulness, in spite of the economic uncertainties and panics, in spite of the dominating style of ME! ME!! ME!!!, and in spite of the pervasive political corruption, certain individuals and groups worked hard to make their respective special contributions to us all.

First Artificial Human Heart: Obviously, an artificial heart was designed and intended to replace the human heart. Usually, the artificial device was intended to serve the recipient until a donor heart could be secured; then, the artificial heart would be removed and replaced with the donor heart. Dr. William DeVries performed the first implant of an artificial heart into Dr. Barney ‘Bailey, a retired dentist. With his artificial heart, Dr. Bailey gained an additional 112 days of life. Mr. Bill Schroeder was the second recipient of an artificial heart, and he lasted 620 days after the operation. The heart device used in both these implants had been designed by Dr. Robert Jarvik. To design and produce a “synthetic replacement for the heart” would constitute “one of the long-sought holy grails of modern medicine.” After all, the demand for donor hearts is always greater than the ready supply. By 1982, for his “Jarvik 7,” Dr. Jarvik combined an ovoid shape to fit inside the human chest, a ore blood-compatible polyurethane developed by biomedical engineer Dr. Donald Lyman, and a fabrication method by Kwan-Gett that made the inside of the ventricles smooth and seamless to reduce dangerous stroke-causing blood clots.

Prior to Dr. Jarvik’s invention, other medical scientists had pursued similar routes. Yale’s Dr. William Sewell and Dr. William Glenn used rather common items to construct an external pump that kept a dog alive for a hour after bypassing the dog’s heart. Inventor/ventriloquist Dr. Paul Winchell and Dr. Henry Heimlich (inventor of the “Heinlich Maneuver) designed and developed a device similar to Jarvik’s. Dr. William Johan Kolff, inventor of many artificial organs, implanted a similar device into a dog which stayed alive for 90 minutes. Domingo Liotta pursued similar work in Argentina and, later, in France and presented his findings in 1961 at Atlantic City to the American Society for Artificial Internal Organs. In 1964, an Artificial Heart Program was begun by the National Institutes of Health. In 1966, the “first permanent implantation of a partial mechanical heart” was performed by Dr. Adrian Kantrowitz. During the next year, Dr. Willem Johan Kolff left the Cleveland Clinic to establish at the University of Utah the Division of Artificial Organs.
More than 200 physicians, engineers, students and faculty developed, tested, and improved Dr. Kolff’s artificial heart. To help manage his many endeavors, Dr. Kolff assigned project managers. Each project was named after it manager. Graduate student Robert Jarvik was the project manager for the artificial heart, which was subsequently renamed the Jarvik 7.30

Over the next several decades and into the present, other physicians, engineers, and specialists from France, Canada, Australia, Germany, Argentina, Republic of China, and other countries continued to research and develop an artificial heart that can be inserted and left indefinitely inside the human body.31

**CD-“ROM:** The “Compact Disc read-only memory” was originally designed to simply store and playback music. The version developed 1985 by Sony and Phillips set a new standard by which a disc was adapted “to hold any form of binary data.”32 The compressed disk with read-only memory was designed to hold and playback computer software like multimedia applications and games. Some advanced models, called “Enhanced CD’s,” can playback videos. A small disc that contains read-only digital information can be played on regular computers, but the computers cannot change the originally stored data.

The video disc technology that flowered in the 1960’s and the 1970’s, before the home VCR’s, aimed to record movies onto discs. Many companies competed, and several approaches appeared. Finally, the “laser vision” technology set a new standard, and videodiscs hit the market. Within a short time, the different companies realized that the new technology offered many possibilities. Different from the usual analog recording, Sony and Phillips used a digital format so that music, data, and visuals could be recorded. In view of the monies that they had spent in competing with each other, the different companies began working together to agree on a standard. “The first commercially available CD-ROM drives appeared in 1985.”33 “In a rare display of cooperation, the different firms, large and small, worked out the main feature of a file system standard by early summer of 1986: that work has become an official international standard for organizing files on CD-ROM.”34 Sales of CD-ROM’s and CD-ROM drives have soared: research and development have continued. In time, the DVD—“digital video disc”—has appeared. Originally developed by Sony for the video market, the DVD can also store files. Enormous expansion of storages and new applications of the new technologies continued over the next several decades.35

**The Apple Mcintosh Computer:** Steve Wozniak,36 a high school classmate of Steve Jobs,37 invented the Apple I and Apple II computers and various games and monitors in the 1970’s. Wozniak and Jobs and Ronald Wayne formed the Apple Computer Company on April 1, 1976. Within a short while, Wayne left the enterprise.38 Apple Computer’s McIntosh computer project began in the late 1970’s with Jef Raskin, an employee of Apple. Jef wanted to design and produce an affordable and easy-to-use computer for the computer non-experts. After being authorized to hire for the project, Jef hired Bill Atkinson away from Apple’s “Lisa” project, an attempt to develop a much more sophisticated and much more expensive computer. Then, Jef hired Burrell Smith; in time, Jef also hired Daniel Kottke, Chris Espinosa, Andy Hertzfeld, Bud Tribble, Joanna Hoffman, Brian Howard, Marc LeBrun, Susan Kare, Bruce Horn, Guy Kawasaki, George Crow, and Jerry Manock. By 1983, Jobs had persuaded John Sculley to leave the presidency of Pepsi-Cola to serve as the CEO of Apple. After finding that he could not
get along with Jobs, Scullery fired Jobs from supervising the Lisa project, put the Lisa project on the back burner, and relegated Jobs to supervising the "lesser" project. Jobs devoted his attention to the more affordable model—the Macintosh. Jef left the project in 1981 after a dispute with Jobs. Jobs commissioned industrial designer Hartmut Esslinger to provide additional features in an integrated format. Eventually, the team produced the Macintosh 128K and released it on January 24, 1984. The "Mac" had been designed, developed, and marketed by Apple Inc. ...(and) targeted mainly at the home, education, and creative professional markets. The line includes the first commercially successful personal computer that was sold without a programming language package and instead introduced a desktop publishing package, a mouse and a graphical user interface, all three novelties for the time. 

Several later versions of the Macintosh eventually emerged so that the modern Macintosh is a competitor to the Windows line.

**MS Windows:** The miracle system called “Microsoft Windows” gained fame throughout the free world during the 1980’s. Microsoft presented to the American market the first independent version of Microsoft Windows, version 1.0..on November 20, 1985…It was originally going to be called Interface Manager, but Rowland Hanson, the head of marketing at Microsoft, convinced the company tha the name Windows would be more appealing to consumers.

This first version gained a bit of popularity. On December 2, 1987, the second version appeared and caught a bit more popularity than the first version. But gaining all sorts of experience with all sorts of formats, the Microsoft team eventually presented the third version in 1990 and caught much more attention. Then came Version 3.1 with Multimedia Extensions. The ten million copies sold in the next two years pushed Microsoft Windows into the leadership for computer software.

Bill Gates, a child prodigy—e.e., his score of 1590 out of a possible 1600 on the S.A.T.—and his partner Paul Allen established their Micro-Soft company and opened their office in Albuquerque, New Mexico, in November 1975. On January 1, 1979, the company moved to Bellevue, Washington. Through many transactions with other companies, Gates and his group developed the PC DOS system. In time, In 1981, Microsoft was restructured, and Gates was named President and Chairman of the Board. “Microsoft launched its first retail version of Microsoft Windows on November 20, 1985.” Gates’s chief “stroke of genius” was in offering to lease the Windows, rather than sell it. Such savy prompted “the Blloomberg Billionaires List” to name Gates as “the world’s richest person” in 2007 and, again, in 2013.


because the new easy-to-use devices enabled children and older folks to quickly and easily take photographs. Konica, Cannon, and Nikon produced their own versions. Several new features—e.g., flashes and manual zoom capability appeared. By 2005, disposable cameras “were a staple of the consumer film camera market.”

In the late 1940’s, “H.M. Stiles had invented a way to enclose 35 mm film in an inexpensive enclosure without the expensive precision film transport mechanism” which allowed the Photo-Pac company to produce in 1949 “a cardboard camera...which shot 8 exposures and which was mailed-in for processing.” However, although the new device was inexpensive to operate and to secure suitable photographs, the Photo-Pac never achieve wide popularity. Later, in the 1960’s, the French FEX company’s Photo-Pac Matic with an improved capacity for producing 12 photographs was deemed “the first disposable camera,” but it also failed to secure a permanent slot in the market. Over time, other competitors appeared: Fujifilm’s Utsurun-Desu (“It takes pictures”) or Quick Snap appeared in 1986. Eastman Kodak’s Fling, which used 110 film was rolled out to the market in 1987. Then, Eastman Kodak produced an improved 35 mm version in 1988. In 1989, the 35 mm version was renamed as the Funsaver, and the Fling was discontinued. In 1986, the Japanese Utsurun was introduced and grew rapidly in popularity. To keep up, Konica, Nikon, and Canon rallied with their own versions, and Fuji added advanced features to its original model. “By 2005 Disposable cameras were a staple of the consumer film market and flash-equipped disposables were the norm.”

The respective contributions of Dr. William DeVries, Dr. Barney Bailey, Dr. Donald Lyman, Kwan-Gett, Dr. William Sewell, Dr. William Glenn, Paul Winchell, Dr. Henry Heinlich, Dr. William Johan Kolff, Domingo Liotta, Dr. Adrian Kantrowitz, the “more than 200 physicians, engineers, students, and faculty” and other internationals who helped test and develop and improve the artificial heart, the Sony Corporation and the Phillips Corporation, Steve Wozniak, Steve Jobs, Jef RaskinBill AtkinsonBurrel Smith, Daniel Kottke, Chris Espinosa, Andy Hertzfeld, Bud Tribble, Joanna Hoffman, Brian Howard, Marc LeBrun, Susan Kare, Bruce Horn, Guy Kawasaki, George Crow, Jerry Manock, John Sculley, Hartmut Esslinger, Bill Gates, Paul Allen, the Microsoft Corporation, the Fujifilm Corporation, the Konica Corporation, the Cannon Corporation the Nikon Corporation, H.M. Stuiles, the Photo-Pac Company, and the French FEX company have enhanced the quality of life of us all.

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Two Texans’ Recollection of The Great Depression
and Several of Its Heroes, Sung and Unsung

Lem Londos Railsback
Mary Esther Armistead
Independent Scholars
This brief glance back at The Great Depression in Texas focuses on several of that state's/era's unsung heroes whom the authors knew personally and on several of that state's/era's sung heroes. The authors knew personally the relatives of one of these sung heroes and knew a great deal about the others. The sacrifices, the integrity, the tenacity, and the “true grit” of all of these heroes should never be forgot.

Of course, many, many heroes lived in Texas during The Great Depression. Those whom have selected below simply stand out more strongly in the memories and researches devoted to this project.

**Unsung Heroes**

**First Things First:** When he was eleven years old, Lem Railsback and his parents and two brothers and two sisters moved from Abilene, Texas, to Menard, Texas in a Conestoga Wagon, pulled by oxen. In the 1920's, Lem's father, George Wesley Railsback, had owned the Green Frog Café, a regular “working man’s place” with good food and low prices. George Wesley also owned another much fancier café called the White Lilly Restaurant with good elaborated food and higher prices. Two large rooms separated by large French doors made up the “front” of the café: on one side sat the more affluent Negroes while the more affluent Whites sat on the side. The large French doors stayed locked in order to keep the two groups separated. However, at “closing time,” the front doors were locked to keep “the public” out; special curtains were brought down over the windows to keep the lights from creeping to the outside; the tables and chairs were moved over to the front part of each of the large rooms; the French doors were unlocked; and a small bandstand was raised on which a band would begin playing. As the music and special beverages flowed, the patrons and patronesses could mingle at will, dancing with whoever was willing. Around two o’clock in the morning, the While Lillie would literally close, and the patrons and patronesses and band members and waiters and waitresses walked through the back door to return to their respective homes.

George Wesley also owned sizable plots of farm land (on which part of today’s Abilene’s central business district sits). On different plots, he raised cotton, wheat, and vegetables for the cafes. He bought a blind donkey for his son Lem: with the harness, his voice, and his knees prodding the sides of the donkey, Lem rode the little animal to and from and all around the fields to “check on things” and to gather vegetables for the home. George Wesley and his family lived in a large brick home and owned another brick house that he rented. He got along with his neighbors, with the local officials, and with the local law enforcement officers. He and his family enjoyed a splendid life style in Abilene. Then, on a particular day, George Wesley made a life-changing mistake.

In the 1920’s the Ku Klux Klan, with an estimated membership of between 4 and 5 million, enjoyed enormous popularity and power, particularly in the apartheid South. However, even “far-away” states as Maine and Washington had their chapters. Originally begun in order to “control” Blacks and Irish, over time, it targeted Jews, Catholics, Orientals, and immigrants from anywhere. The KKK’s toolbox included physical violence including but not limited to lynchings, rapes, large gang rapes, floggings, pistol-whippings, shootings, bombings, and other tactics. At its peak in 1924, the Klan “claimed to control 24 of the nation’s 48 state legislatures”; it had already helped elect 16 U.S. Senators and many Representatives and local officials. “Texas was the first chartered self-governing realm of the Ku Klux Klan.”
was Ku Klux Klan Day at the State Fair of Texas...Dallas Klan No. 66...was the nation’s largest chapter. The Klan...controlled the city governments of Dallas, Fort Worth, and Wichita Falls, along with many of the small towns and villages across the state. In those times, the KKK was so powerful and pervasive that it blocked “the nomination of Al Smith, a New York Catholic, at the Democratic National Convention.” George Wesley’s reverberating mistake was in verbalizing at his regular barber shop with several acquaintance sitting around that he saw nothing wrong with having a Catholic for President of the United States. Within months, George Wesley had lost both his cafes, his brick home, his brick rent house, all of his land and crops. According to a wag boasting to one of George’s neighbors, George Wesley and his family were “lucky to get out of Abilene alive” in the Conestoga wagon pulled by oxen. Lem had to leave his blind donkey behind.

Upon arriving in Menard, Texas, Lem stopped attending school and began working with his father to clean up vacant lots, paint houses, repair gates, and other odd jobs. When he was thirteen years old, he and his father traveled with a friend and his son in the friend’s truck. They were on the way to orchards in New Mexico to fill the truck bed with fresh vegetables and fruits. Upon their return, they intended to park downtown at Menard’s “City Square” to see their produce. Unfortunately, on the way to New Mexico, the four in the truck began the long descent down Sheffield Hill. Suddenly, the driver yelled that the brakes had failed and hollered back to his son in the bed of the truck to jump off the truck! His son jumped out of the back just as the driver jumped from the cab. But, as the driver’s son jumped out, he had held on to a tarp which covered and tangled Lem. Seeing that his son was tangled in the tarp, George got out of the cap, stepped on the running board, and crawled into the truck bed to free Lem from the tarp, and told Lem to “Jump!” Lem jumped off onto the side of the highway and rolled. By then, the truck had left the road and careened into giant rocks at the side of the mountain. The crash broke George Wesley’s pelvis. With much difficulty and pain, the four finally got back to Menard. From then on, George Wesley spent his days and nights on an old army cot. He could walk only for only a short distance with another’s help or with a cane. He never worked again.

At the age of fifteen, Lem secured the job of washing dishes on the night shift at the local hotel restaurant. He was so short that he had to put down two wooden Coca Cola crates in order to reach over the edge of the tub to get to the dishes. He proved to be a good worker, and Blackie Parker, the chef trained in Germany, offered Lem a chance to learn to cook: fry cooking, entre cooking, butchering, salad preparation, desert preparation, ice carving. The only catch was that Lem would have to come in early in the morning during Blackie’s shift to watch, ask questions, and help prepare the orders, but he would not get paid. After the morning shift ended, Lem would then begin his dishwashing during the evening shift for which he received a weekly check. At that time, Lem was the only individual in a family of seven who had a job. He felt thankful for that job and for Blackie’s willingness to train him. He stayed at the hotel restaurant kitchen under Blackie’s mentoring for several years. After all, The Great Depression was devouring America! Rural Texas, with no industry and only limited retail was particularly hard hit.

After about a year, George Wesley figured out a new way to increase the family income. By this time, he was able to walk with two canes down to the local firehouse,
close to his home. When he arrived, with Lem’s help, he would take a piece of chalk from his shirt pocket and bend down to draw a wide circle on the floor of the firehouse. He would then loudly announce that his son could whip anyone else’s son in a bareknuckle fight. And he would put up some money for bets. Throughout these brawls, Lem knew that if he lost, the family would not eat much for the next week.

One of Lem’s brothers, J.C., caught scarlet fever with complications when he was twelve years old. Upon recovery, he had to learn to talk again and how to walk again. J.C. and his wife Doris had a daughter Georgia. “Staff Sergeant J.C. Railsback” is inscribed on the Honor Roll of the National World War II Museum in New Orleans, Louisiana. Lem’s other brother L.D. was on his way home one night when an assassin stepped out of an alley and shot him. He shot the assassin. That was the last recorded “gun fight in the streets” recorded in Menard County records.

Second Things Second: Pete Baker married Alberta Crabtree from the Cherokee Reservation at Fort Sill and moved to Mason, Texas, where they reared their daughter Mary Edna. The young Mary Edna was courted and married by Jim Deer, another former resident of the Fort Sill Reservation. After Pete and Alberta died, Mary Edna and Jim had a daughter Esther Edna. Jim, a “redskin” living in KKK-dominated rural Texas was harassed continually and beaten several times. Only a few brave souls would offer him sporadic work. He wanted to return to the Reservation and take his young wife and child with him. Then, he disappeared. Not a single word was ever heard from him or about him again, and the Reservation could offer no information or assistance. Because she had an aunt and uncle living in Menard, just a day’s ride away, Mary Edna travelled to Menard with her young daughter Esther Edna. Mary Edna and Esther Edna moved in with “Uncle Jim” and his blind wife. Jim was a Confederate Army veteran, and his wife, Pete’s sister, was Mary Josephine Baker Gage. Since she had accidentally fallen into an uncovered, unused water well in her early teens, Mary Josephine had suffered damage that would keep her from ever growing much taller or developing a fuller body. The accident had also affected her optic nerve so that she remained blind for the rest of her life. She and Jim had married and moved to Menard, which was on one of the main cattle trails from South Texas. Among different types of work over the years, “Dad Gage,” as Jim was called, began to carry in a horse-drawn surrey many dozens of tamales to sell to businesses downtown. On every night except Saturday, Mary Edna and Esther Edna prepared the tamales. Mary Edna also took in washing. Additionally, Mary Edna also served as a curandera⁷ to help sick people heal themselves naturally. For these services, Mary Edna would accept fresh vegetables, live chickens, and the like, but she never accepted money.

Esther Edna wore a “Dutch Boy” haircut just like the other Indian children at Fort Sill; Mary Edna cut her daughter’s hair “straight all around” to fall about two inches below the ears. When Mary Edna took her daughter to enroll in the public schools, admission was denied because “Your daughter is an Indian!” So Mary Edna enrolled her daughter in the local Roman Catholic School where Esther Edna stayed for the first two years. After following several avenues of possibilities and finding no success on the matter, Uncle Jim decided to adopt Esther Edna. Realizing how badly it would look to the public to be denying admission to the adopted daughter of a combat veteran of the Confederacy, the school board relented, and Esther Edna entered the public schools at the third grade level.
As Mary Josephina grew infirm, Mary Edna took good care of her. After living a long and useful life, Dad Gage died. Mary Edna continued to take in washing, to serve as healer to the sick, and to continue taking good care of Mary Josephine. Mary Edna and her daughter continued to make tamales, although not in the previously large quantities, and sell them from the porch. As the different batches of washing were finished and folded, Mary Edna would place them on paper in a line on the porch: on the paper, the price for the service would be written. Then, she would tell Mary Josephine whose batch was placed in the first spot, whose was in the second spot, and so. In all of the years that the customers came to pick up and pay for their laundry by placing the money in the open hands of Josephine, who would sit on the porch until all of the customers had picked up their clean belongings, not a single instance of attempted cheating or refusing to pay ever occurred. (What a very different time from today!) Tamales were sold by the dozen upon request and taken hot directly from the kitchen to the customer's hands.

Esther Edna studied regularly and well. When she got to high school, she began working part-time for Ms Kitty Sue Menzies, the local County Extension Officer. Mr. Menzies owned and managed a large ranch. With Ms Menzies’s mentoring, Esther Edna learned to saddle and ride a horse, to shear sheep and goats of their wool and mohair, to can vegetables and fruits, to prepare special dishes, and to bake. Of course, along with the school work and the ranch work, Esther Edna kept up with her duties at home, particularly in helping Mary Edna take care of Josephine, in helping to make the tamales and in doing the washing. Upon graduation, Esther Edna continued to work with the County Extension Officer. She also worked as a volunteer, alongside Kitty Sue with several of the local projects offered and funded by Franklin D. Roosevelt’s National Recovery Act. Esther Edna and Mary Edna also participated in a local project that allowed participating females to gather weekly to cooperatively weave quilts to be given to the poor. Finally, Esther Edna graduated from high school. She was the first in her family, from both sides, who had ever done so.

*Three's A Crowd, But It's A Small One, And Then, There's A Fourth:*

As Esther Edna was shopping downtown one day, one of the local “macho” ranchers who “broke” his own horses came to town on the back of a horse that he had just broke.8 Seeing Esther Edna, whom he knew as a part-time “rider” on the Menzies Ranch, rode up to her, called her by “Missus Gage,” got off the horse, and offered her the reins. As she took the reins, he stepped back and elbowed the buddy next to him and told him with a grin to “Watch This.” Esther Edna whispered to the horse and patted the long nose for several minutes. In the meantime, one of the other “machos” had run into the hotel kitchen and motioned Blackie to the window, explaining how funny it was about to be to see a girl getting pitched off by the “wild horse.” Lem went over, too.

After calming and patting the horse, Esther Edna slowly got into the saddle and rode off in a trot down the street. She rode around the whole City Square three times. The horse never pitched a single time. The macho on the street and his buddies were all downcast when Esther Edna rode back to him, got off the horse, patted and whispered to the horse, and handed him the reins. She then continued her shopping.

The macho inside the hotel kitchen was put off, too. He was disappointed that the horse hadn’t thrown the lady down, and he was expressing several colorful exclamations. Blackie laughed at him and walked back over to his stove. Lem continued to watch. He determined at that moment that he wanted to know that brave young lady.
Within a short time, Lem met and began to court Esther Edna. After quite a while, they married. For a short while, they lived with Lem’s family in a wooden “stilt house.” Then, they moved into a rock house where a son was born. Shortly thereafter, the couple took their baby to live with Esther Edna’s mother Mary Edna and great aunt Mary Josephina. When Blackie left the hotel restaurant for another job in a different city, Lem quit his job at the hotel, too. For a while, Lem worked in a boot and saddle shop, learning to do several different jobs on/with leather. Then, he worked on construction jobs. As opportunity came, he would travel to ranches to cook for the cowboys during the round-ups. In the meantime, Mary Edna, Mary Josephina, and Esther Edna continued the clothes-washing business and the tamale business. Mary Josephina began to grow infirm. Because Esther Edna’s little son could not say “Mary Josephina” and because he thought that Mary Josephina was “Granny’s Mama,” he called Mary Josephina “Grannymama.” In time, Mary Josephina died and was buried next to Dad Gage.

As World War II broke out, several of the “bravest boys” in Menard began to through rocks, beer bottles, and unmentionables at the tiny trailer house in which Mr. Shultz lived. Mr. Shultz, a Jew, had left Germany as the NAZI’s began to take over. He had been a naturalized American citizen for decades. However, the general ignorance of those “bravest boys” prevented them from making such distinctions between “Jews,” “Germans,” “NAZI,” and other abstract concepts in their lives. As soon as Mary Edna heard about the abuse, she sent word to Mr. Shultz to come over for a visit. During the visit, Mr. Shultz explained his dilemma in detain. Mary Edna told him move his trailer over to the north side of her property to live. The only consideration that she asked for was that he keep the weeds cut. So, after moving his home over to Mary Edna’s, he got up every day—including Sundays—and used his little “butterfly hoe” to clear the weeds. He lived there until he died.

Eventually, Mary Edna met and, after a long courtship, married Felix Sanderson Castleman. Born in Sanderson, Texas, Felix had been a close friend of the old “Law West of the Pecos,” Judge Roy Bean. Felix worked as a teamster carrying booze in big wooden casks and other goods from San Antonio to Fort Stockton and back. On one of his trips, he had just finished unloading the large barrels of liquor at a bar in Fort Stockton when a gun fight broke out. Quickly ducking behind one of his giant barrels of liquor, he thought that he was safe. But when a bullet went through one side of the barrel, through all that liquor, and through the other side of the barrel to come out just a few inches from his face, he found The Lord, and The Lord found him. He took his wagon and team back to San Antonio, quit his job, and became a “born-again” preacher. He grew famous in Menard as “Singing Bill” and “Whistling Bill.” Everywhere that he went and regardless of whom he met, he was constantly singing or whistling “Cheer up, My. Brother, live in the sunshine” or some other hymn. He really was constantly glad to be alive. He worked on carpenter jobs, he sold produce from nearby farms, he sold a variety of patent medicines, and he always went to church on Sundays and to any other service during the week. His congregation build their church just across the street from Mary Edna’s home. Felix came over and invited Mary Edna to come to his church. Directly after church on Sunday, members of the congregation would bring a wide variety of foods for sharing during the Sunday Meal. Such gracious feeds were greatly appreciated during those Depression days. In time, Felix and Mary
Edna married and Felix moved in. On the right side of the old wood home, Felix build Mary Edna a new home of river rock and concrete.

When Lem got a chef’s job in Ozona and, later, a higher-paying chef’s job in Sonora, he and Esther Edna and son moved to Ozona and then to Sonora. While Lem and Esther lived in Sonora, a daughter was born. When a very good chef’s job opened up in Brady, they moved to Brady, just thirty miles from Menard. Living in rented rooms and apartments for a while, the family bought a lot three miles north of Brady. Felix helped Lem build a small house on which the family lived for several years. To get to his job, Lem would ride a bicycle three miles to town and the three miles back to home after work. To go to church on Sundays, Esther Edna and her two children would walk the three miles to town. Usually, but not always, someone from the church would give them a ride home after services. Often, Esther Edna would take the son and daughter out into an adjoining open grazing field for picnics. As they stayed until nighttime, Esther Edna would have the children gaze at the clear sky as she pointed out, named, and explained the story of each of the major constellations. Every month or so, Esther Edna would take her son and daughter to the railway station to ride the “Doddle Bug,” a short train to Menard to visit Mary Edna and Felix.

As the son was getting old enough to attend school, the family moved to the north part of Brady, just three blocks from the school. To the right of the family’s new home lived Mr. and Mrs. Lehmann. They had left Germany because of the NAZI’s and migrated to the United States. In front of the new home lived and elderly couple Mr. and Mrs. Harris. Mr. Harris still drove a two-door Model A Ford and kept it in prime condition. To the left of the new home lived Mrs. Ake. These three families and Lem and Esther Edna’s family helped each other as an extended family. Mrs. Roddy, who lived many blocks across the North Brady neighborhood, persuaded and supported Esther Edna to serve as Scoutmaster for the son’s Cub Scout unit. If Mary Railsback, the son and daughter’s grandmother, had lived four more days, the President of the United States would have sent her a congratulatory letter on her 100th birthday. George Wesley’s younger brother Vernon Railsback came to visit several times. He inspired the son immensely. As a cook, “Uncle Vernie” had worked on ships and passed through the Panama Canal twice; he also had followed for several years the annual “wheat harvest” as it began in North Texas and travelled through Oklahoma, Kansas, Nebraska, South Dakota, North Dakota, and parts of Canada.

The son started school. In three more years, the daughter started at the same school. Both proved to be excellent students. Even though the “whole word” method was the prescribed way to teach reading in those days, Mrs. Funk taught the son to read by teaching him phonics first. Later, she also taught the daughter to read in the same manner. As the daughter and son attended North Side Elementary School, they were taught well and mentored by Mr. and Mrs. Pearson. In Brady Junior School, Mr. Crump mentored the son in playing the trumpet. While the son was in the junior high, one of the history teachers called the son in for a private session. She asked him if he had a “Teacher’s Edition” for the course. The son indicated that he didn’t know what a “Teacher’s Edition” was. The teacher explained that a “Teacher’s Edition” was a special volume that was sent only to teachers to help them plan the course and that that volume had all of the test questions, along with all of the answers to the many test questions. The son indicated again that he didn’t not have such a book. Then, that teacher asked
him is he had been cheating on the tests. A negative replay brought the next question, “Then, how do you explain how you make a grade of 100 on every test this year.” The son indicated that he had always paid attention in class, had taken notes, had read all of the assigned readings, and had thought a lot about what he was learning. He really liked history, he said. She thanked him for meeting with her and dismissed him.

During those junior high years, Mary Edna’s brother Alfred Baker visited and taught the son how to play checkers. Lem and a partner opened up a new restaurant named the Club Café. During the lunch break at the junior high Lem and Esther Edna’s son would run down the hill from the school to the Club to “bus” dirty dishes left by departing customers and move the dishes into the kitchen to be washed. Then, he would run back up the hill to school. Later, in Brady High School, Mrs. St. Claire taught history very well to both the son and daughter. English for both the son and daughter were excellently taught by Miss Barfoot. Miss Shaver, the roommate of Miss Barfoot, did an excellent job of teaching “Homemaking.” The son participated in the University Interscholastic League competition for “Ready ‘Riting,” football, basketball, and track. The son stayed in the band all through high school. By the time that he graduate, he could play eight different brass instruments. Mr. Hunt was an excellent band director, and he helped the son secure a music scholarship to Sul Ross State College. At Sul Ross, the son learned to play the bass drum while marching in the Florida A&M University Band style of 120 beats/steps per minute. When the son took the national college entrance exam at that college, he scored in the 98%ile on the English proficiency section: the son wrote a letter of thanks to Miss Barfoot. At that college, Dr. F. Allen Briggs became the son’s intellectual father. Bevington Reed, the first Commissioner of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, served the college as dean: he gave the son the son’s first I.Q. test. When the test score was known, Dr. Reed enthusiastically encouraged the son to complete college. He assured the son that if finances became a problem, the dean would help the son secure the necessary funds. Dr. Brian Wildenthal, president of the college, offered the son the room in the second story of the president’s home that the president’s two sons had previously lived in before they had graduated and left Alpine for graduate schools. Throughout a teaching career of 50 years, the son never made a professional choice—e.g., which graduate school to attend, which job offers were best, and the like—without conferring with Dr. Briggs. Throughout all those years, Dr. Briggs never gave the son advice; instead, Dr. Briggs would simply ask a series of questions like “Well, have you thought of this?” After the first 35 years of teaching, the son finally recognized the Socratic Method that Dr. Briggs had used so many times so well.

An article on “A Butterfly Effect of Good Parenting Over Generations,” published in 2011, used the old metaphor from physics on the power of a butterfly’s wings. The old metaphor asserted that, under the right physical conditions, a butterfly could flip his wings fast enough against the ocean waves on the Western side of the world to, eventually, cause the reverberating waves to push a tsunami against the coasts of China. Applying the same metaphor to the effects that all of those good parents, neighbors, friends, and teachers eventually affected Lem and Esther Edna’s son and daughter, some very interesting calculations can be made. In a teaching career of 50 years, the son directly taught about 14,538 students; in a teaching career of 24 years, the daughter 1,134 students; en toto, then both taught a total of 15,672 students. If each
of those students interacted closely with 8 other individuals—father, mother, grandmother, grandfather, brother, sister, aunt and uncle—then 125,376 individuals were influenced by the son and daughter in, hopefully, positive ways. And all of those parents, grandparents, other relatives, neighbors, and teachers identified above contributed directly to the development of the son and daughter and, indirectly, to the development of those 125,376 individuals. The magnitude of all of their positive, supportive, intelligent influences and modeling of tenacity, honesty, trustworthiness, loyalty, courage, and love underscored the power of communitarianism and good citizenship.

Sung Heroes

Dan Moody, Jr.: Back in the 1920's when the American public believed that the quickest-- and maybe the only way—to get rich was to invest in the stock market. Even many, many banks risked their depositors' funds to "play the market." Such foolishness ushered in The Great Depression. Also, at that same time, the Ku Klux Klan effectively held the nation in awe. Dan Moody, a lieutenant in the U.S. Army during World War I, returned to his law practice in Williamson County, Texas. In 1922, he was elected district attorney of the 26th Judicial District which covered both Travis and Williamson Counties. While serving in that post, Moody successfully prosecuted and convicted several KKK members and sent four of them to prison for beating and tarring a white traveling salesman. "Dan Moody was the first district attorney in the nation to successfully prosecute members of the 1920's Klan." In view of the Texas KKK's power in those days, Moody's courageous and skillful actions mobilized attention and applause across the state and across the nation. In 1925, despite strong opposition from the KKK, Moody was elected to the post of Attorney General of Texas. During his tenure there, he uncovered many irregularities in Ma Ferguson's administration.

Miriam A. Ferguson's husband James E. Ferguson had been impeached, convicted, and removed from the governor's office. So he ran his wife for governor and, using the first initials of her first and middle names, offered "MA Ferguson," with the notion that if one voted for her, the voter would be getting "two governors for the price of one." As Moody delved into both Ma's and her husband's respective administrations, he "recovered $1 million for the taxpayers of Texas." Further investigations revealed kickbacks for state contracts, particularly in the highway department, and monies received, apparently, for Ma's pardons of convicts at the rate of 100 per month. Moody's cleanup of corruption in the state catapulted him, at the age of 33, into the governor's office—"the youngest ever elected to that office." As governor, Moody achieved several structural changes in state government, particularly in civil service law, governmental reorganization, reform of the highway department, and reformation of the prison system. When his term ended in 1931, he stayed in Austin and resumed his legal practice. At F.D.R.'s request, Moody "served as special assistant to the United Staes attorney general, in charge of prosecuting income-tax-evasion cases in Louisiana," Huey Long's territory. "He represented former Governor Coke R. Stevenson in his unsuccessful legal challenge to Lyndon B. Johnson's narrow victory over Stevenson in the controversial 1948 United States Senate election." Later, Moody was a "I Like Ike" Democrat.

Ralph W. Yarborough: Growing up in Chandler and Tyler, Texas, Ralph served as the state's attorney general during the James V. Allred governorship and "won millions
of dollars for public education in disputed West Texas oil suits.” An avowed populist, strong supporter of F.D.R.’s New Deal, and a U.S. Army colonel during World War II, Yarborough was a tenacious campaigner and promoter of laws that favored “the working man.” He, more than any other, brought electricity to rural Texas. He favored “federal involvement in schools, integration, environmentalism, affirmative action, and social security.” As a genuine senator for the people, Yarborough was the only Southern senator to vote for every piece of modern civil rights legislation, and he co-sponsored the Voting Rights Act of 1965, the crown jewel of them all...During his 13 years in that body he authored or sponsored every educational reform of the era—the Higher Education Act, the Cold War G.I. Bill,, the Bilingual Education Act, Head-Start...He co-authored the Endangered Species Act [Padre Island, the Guadalupe Mountains, and Big Thicket]...He co-sponsored the bill that created Medicare...He supported the Civil Rights legislation...And he was an early opponent of the Vietnam War.

Few Americans have deserved the title of “genuine liberal” as much as Senator Yarborough.

Audie Murphy: The seventh of twelve children , Audie grew up in Farmersville, Greenville, and Celeste, Texas. When he heard of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, he tried to enlist in three services: the Marines, the Navy, and the Army. He was rejected because he was too young and underweight. The 5 feet, 5.5 inches lad drastically changed his diet to add weight, and his sister signed a sworn affidavit attesting that he was a year older than he really was. He was enlisted in Dallas. He was trained at Camp Wolters, Texas, Fort Meade, Maryland, and Arzew, Algeria. He participated in the invasions of Sicily, Anzio, and southern France. He saw further action as Montelimar, Cleurie, and the Colmar Pocket. Receiving the Medal of Honor for his actions at the Colmar Pocket, the 19-year-old asserted that his medals really belonged to his comrades in his military unit. During World War II, Audie “was awarded every U.S. military combat award for valor available from the U.S. Army.” France and Belgium decorated him. He “was one of the most famous and decorated American combat soldiers of World War II.”

Chester W. Nimitz: Growing up in Fredericksburg, Texas, where the German language was spoken daily, Chester was mentored by his German-born paternal grandfather, a former seaman in the German Merchant Marine. Chester graduated from the United States Naval Academy in 1905. Serving on many different types of ships, he specialized in submarine technology. For several summer months in 1913, he “studied engines at the diesel engine plants in Nuremberg, Germany, and Ghent, Belgium.” Chester served in World War I. Between the wars, he continued to serve on and/or command a variety of ships. In World War II, Chester “held the dual command of Commander in Chief, United States Pacific Fleet ...for U.S. naval forces and Commander in Chef, Pacific Ocean Areas...for U.S. and Allied air, land, and sea forces.” In spite of the severe losses at Pearl Harbor and significantly limited supplies, planes, and ships, Admiral Nimitz defeated the Japanese at the Battle of the Coral Sea, the Battle of Midway, and the Solomon Islands Campaign. Through his victory in the Battle of the Philippine Sea and through his isolation of particular island bastions of enemy strength, his forces captured Saipan, Guam, Tinian, Peleliu, Angaur, and Ulithi. In the Battle for Leyte Gulf, he successfully launched amphibious assaults on Iwo Jima
and Okinawa. On the very next day after Congress had created the Fleet Admiral grade, President Roosevelt appointed Nimitz to that rank. On 2 September 1945 Nimitz signed for the United States when Japan formally surrendered on board the Missouri in Tokyo Bay.  

To honor Admiral Nimitz, many sites and efforts have been named after him. The Nimitz State Historic Site in Fredericksburg, Texas, is but one of these.

James Earl Rudder: Born in Eden, Texas, Rudder attended Tarleton Agricultural College and then transferred to Texas A&M College and earned an industrial education degree and a commission as a second lieutenant of infantry in the Army Reserve. He then worked as a football coach and teacher at Brady High school in Brady, Texas, 30 miles from Eden. Then, he worked as a football coach and teacher at his old alma mater Tarleton Agricultural College. Called into service in 1941, Rudder took part in the D-Day landings as Commanding Officer of the United States Army's 2nd Ranger Battalion. His U.S. Army Rangers stormed the beach at Pointe du Hoc, scaling 100-foot (30 meter) cliffs under enemy fire to reach and destroy German gun batteries. The battalion's causally rate for this perilous mission was greater than 50 percent. Rudder himself was wounded twice during the course of the fighting. In spite of this, they dug in and fought off German counter-attacks for two days until relieved. He and his men help to successfully establish a beachhead for the Allied forces.

Upon his return to Texas, Major General Rudder served as Mayor of Brady, as Texas Land Commissioner, as the 16th President of Texas A&M University, and as the 3rd president of the Texas A&M University System. He transformed Texas A&M College "from a small land-grant college to a renowned university" by integrating the campus for minorities and women, by making "membership in the Corps of Cadets optional," and by aggressively recruiting students from all stations of life and geography.

Lem and Esther Edna's son and daughter attended Brady High School with Earl's son and Earl's niece.

Heroes All

Each of the heroes identified above, both unsung and sung, personified in their lives the old virtues that made "family," "community," and "nation" meaningful terms and concepts. Perhaps they could serve as models for the new generations.

SOURCES


1 The later KKK even targeted members of unions and members of the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960’s.
6 In the “old days,” this steep hill was famous for many fatal accidents. Finally, several decades later, the Texas Highway Department reconfigured the highway by winding it “around the hill” to the left on the way down and lengthening it so that the degree of “steepness” was significantly decreased.
7 A curandera is a Native American healer using natural therapies.
8 In those times, a rider would, if he could, rope one of the wild horses inside his corral, put a saddle on the horse, mount it, and ride it until it quit trying to pitch him off. If the horse quit pitching and would simply walk around the corral, the horse was considered “broke.” To get an idea of how dangerous such taming of the horse could be, one should watch some of the televised rodeos. Obviously, the taming could be very dangerous.
9 Quite popular during the era, this type of small wooden house rode about three feet above the ground on 2”X4” wooden stilts driven into the ground. In winter months, the cold wind flew under, above; around, and into the house.
10 In the old museum at Langtry, Texas, a photograph on the north wall shows Felix and the Judge arm-in-arm in front of an old-time tricycle with the giant wheel in front.
11 Sul Ross State University now has a “Brian Wildenthal Memorial Library” in his honor.
13 Of course, that number does not include the friends, cousins, or neighbors of all those students. Neither does it include the number of positive influences on the students of however many of the listed students became teachers themselves.
20 Ibid.
22 Ibid.
24 Ibid.
26 Ibid., p. 1.
27 Ibid., p. 5.
29 Ibid., p. 2.
Pedagogy and Practicum in Law Enforcement

Raymond Shearer
Lamar University
I. Introduction

I will never forget the day that I raised my hand and was sworn in as a police officer. It was a combination of pride for what I had done and apprehension because of the challenges that I faced in my future. The preceding weeks had been spent in, what sometimes seemed like, a never-ending series of semi-related courses called the police academy.

The police academy, at that time, could best be described as weeks of boredom. That boredom was punctuated by the terror of knowing that failure to adequately perform on any of the test would mean termination from the academy, and from the police department. Not everyone that started police academy finished the police academy. Like basic training in the military, the police academy is a rite of passage that once completed elevates the individual in the eyes of their new peers, other police officers.

For me, the police academy was the beginning of a career. That career is in a field no one can say they know what it is like, unless they had firsthand experience. I served twenty seven years with the Beaumont Police Department in Beaumont, Texas. During that time I saw many chiefs and programs come and go. I saw some good ideas implemented and I also so some very bad ideas attempted. One of the good ideas was the Citizen's Police Academy.

The Citizen's Police Academy is a training opportunity for the average citizen to go on evenings and see what police officers learn and how they are trained. It has severed several functions. The most important function of the Citizen's Police Academy was to educate the average person to the requirements placed on police officers in the line of work. This was done in an effort to open up the community to the job police play in our society. This opening up was two ways. It also opened up a career that many see as a closed society. The hope was some of the walls that have been built between citizens and the force that is sworn to protect them would be torn down. These citizen police academies have been successful in opening up the community to the police and vice versa. They have also created a group of citizens that are willing volunteers to assist the police in the planning and carrying out other events that the police use to create good will in the community. Graduates of the Citizen's Police Academy go on to assist with subsequent Citizen's Police Academies and any other community / police functions as they arise. This relationship builds a strong tie with the citizens and the police. Police are always in the news. It is important for the police to make the news about themselves positive as much as possible.(Nation Citizens Police Academy information: http://www.nationalcpaa.org/faq.html

Police departments around the country have also hosted youth police academies. Such academies are designed to reach out to teens in a community and expose them to the practices and training of police officers. It is a potential tool to spark an interest in youth to consider law enforcement as a career choice. The focus is on high school students. These are typically done in the summer time and last for a couple of weeks. In some cases they may be in conjunction with local Police Explorer Posts. (Texas Law Enforcement Explorer Advisory Association: http://www.tleeaa.org/) The Beaumont Police Department hosted the Youth and Law Enforcement Academy (Y.A.L.E. Academy).
The YALE Academy is a very good opportunity to reach out to youth that are interested in police work. A problem with the YALE Academy is these students are realistically five to ten years away from being able to work in a law enforcement capacity. (YALE Academy: http://www.beaumontpd.com/pdf/Yale%20Brochure_2013.pdf)

II. Participants

It was with these thoughts in mind that the Lamar University Criminal Justice Department in Beaumont, Texas was approached by the Chief of the Beaumont Police Department. In an effort to build on the successes of the Citizen's Police Academy and the YALE Academy, the proposition was made that the Beaumont Police Department, in conjunction with Lamar University, would host a mini-police academy for college students. There were multiple goals in this proposal.

III. Goals

The first goal was to create good will between the college students and the police department. The same way that the Citizen's Police Academy creates good will between the police and citizens, it was hoped that this proposed mini-academy would cause college students to take a different view of the police.

Another goal was that this opportunity would allow the students to see into the field of police work. Unlike the ride along in an internship, in this setting the students would be learning and would be expected to make decisions based on what they know. For some students it might mean that they would walk away never wanting to pursue a career in police work. Other students, that originally may have been non-committal, may be bit by the bug and realize that police work is what they were born for. If either of the above occurred then it would be considered successful. I have known persons that have been years in police work only to realize that it was never what they really wanted to do. Much time and money is wasted, hiring, training and equipping the officer only to have it wasted when the officer realizes that this job is not for them. By the same token there are people that never really considered being a police officer. Sometimes all it takes is a little nudge and encouragement. All of a sudden they are involved in a career that they never envisioned themselves in and now that they are in it cannot imagine doing anything else. So whether the student goes into police work, or decides to not go into police work, it is a win-win situation. There are many good college graduates that never give a second look at police work. Persons that may attend the mini-academy merely out of curiosity realize it is a good career choice.

There is no way to adequately describe what the field of police work is like to college students that have an interest in a career of police work. Some students may intern at a police department. Depending on the department the students may do anything from file papers, to ride with patrol officers, to go out on homicide scenes. Those agencies that allow interns to go into the field cause students to return with a much greater understanding of what the job entails. If done properly the student is merely an observer. The student can observe, but the student has no authority to take action. In fact, for liability reasons, the students should not be allowed to take any type of action. Great care must be taken to protect the student from harm. The student learns about the job and conditions in the field, but what does the department or agency learn about the student? How would this person/student react under stress? Can this person apply what they have learned in the classroom to what takes place in the field? The student in
an intern position is not placed in a situation where they must display critical thinking skills.

The mini-academy gives the police department the opportunity to meet college students. After receiving classroom training the students are placed in practical problem training exercises and are allowed to make decisions of a critical nature, albeit in a controlled environment. Some students may falter, and some students may shine. These shining students may be encouraged to apply for openings within the department. So although the department is creating good will with the mini-academy, there is also the selfish motive of expanding the applicant pool. As the mini-academy progresses the officers in the department have an opportunity to see how each college student acts and reacts. Inevitably the cream rises to the surface and some students are actively recruited.

The initial proposal of having a "mini-police academy" had inherent problems in name alone. Texas regulates police officer training and education through the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement Officer Standards and Education (TECLEOSE). This commission regulates police academies in their content and duration. To call anything a "police academy" would invite the scrutiny of TECLEOSE and the goal of the proposal was not to "be" a police academy, but merely present the students with a police academy experience.

Another problem is that Lamar University is adjacent to, and very closely mingled with, Lamar Institute of Technology (LIT). LIT runs the regional police academy. This is a full blown TECLEOSE regulated police academy. The graduates of this academy are given a state test and become licensed peace officers in Texas. A course offering appearing at Lamar University's that contained the word "academy" would draw the scrutiny and ire of officials at both Lamar University and LIT. There would rightly be concerns of duplication and the crossing of educational boundaries between Lamar University and LIT. This would have caused for some unnecessary explaining. Hence the course was offered as "Practicum in Policing". Of course when students were presented with the course name the obvious question would be, "What is that?" I would explain to the students that it was like a mini police academy. The next information given to the students would be the course content. For those attending and those administering the course it became known as the PIP Academy. This course would be a three credit hour course and could count for undergraduate or post graduate work. This course could also be used as an internship towards graduation from Lamar University.

IV. Preparations

Once the offer form the Beaumont Police Department was accepted then the next problem was when to have it. A real police academy is a Monday thru Friday all day classroom and field exercises. That is fine and necessary for a real police academy. However for our PIP academy it would have been impossible to do during a regular Fall or Spring semester. The students have other classes that they must attend to carry a full time course load. The possibility did exist of having the course during the Summer. Lamar University divides it summer semester into three sessions. Session I is the first half of the summer semester. Summer II is the second half of the summer semester. Summer III is the entire summer semester. The length of the session dictates the length of the classroom time and the days that it meets. The decision was made that the Practicum in Policing would be conducted during the Summer II session. Although it
would not run the full length of days that Summer II runs, it would actually take more time than standard classes because the student would go from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm. The course was planned for three weeks in duration.

V. Who actually participated?

One of the many considerations that had to be addressed was who was going to be allowed to attend. I knew from my experience the training and education that the students would receive would be some of the best in the state. The department had concerns about who the students were. As such every student had to pass a criminal background check. This was precedent for Lamar University, but it was necessary for the department to insure that no information about tactics and practices would be given to persons that had already run afoul of the law. I also had concerns about who would attend the class. This was, after all, the department I had retired form and I left there with a very good reputation. I did not want some student that had a bad attitude to ruin the ability to do something we had never done before. I also wanted to make sure that Lamar University would be represented in the best light possible. If the students attending this course left a good impression with the police department, then the students not only would help their chances for future employment, but could also affect how the police department viewed other Lamar University students. I had the final word on who would be allowed to attend. All students that wished to take this course had to fill out an application and submit it to me. Part of that application was their biographical information, including their driver's license number. The applications were signed by the students and included a statement that they knew and consented to a driver's license and criminal background check. I knew in some situations training a large number of people becomes more difficult. There is a need for more instructors when hands on training is done. Taking this into consideration I knew that I needed to limit to the class size to about 20 or 25. In light of the goal of these students being police applicants, I wanted to restrict the students to upper classmen. If these students were interested in law enforcement then I wanted them to be to the point in their education and age that they were viable candidates for the Beaumont Police Department. Beaumont P.D. requires that their applicants be at least 20 years old and must have their 21st birthday while in the academy. This is in place because the State of Texas, (through TECLEOSE) requires that licensed peace officer in Texas be at least 21 years of age. Quite frankly I have met very few 21 year olds that had the required maturity to be a peace officer. There is also the federal law that says a person has to be at least 21 years of age to buy a handgun. During the PIP academy the students would have firearms training.

Once the students were selected they had to sign liability waivers. Lamar University and the Beaumont Police Department/ City of Beaumont had to have liability waivers holding each party harmless incase of accident. The police department also required a separate and specific waiver that allowed the students to use the shooting range.

VI. Where was it done?

It would have been no problem at all to have held the class at Lamar University; however that was not even given serious consideration because of the uniqueness of the course. The Beaumont Police Department hosted the course primarily at their classroom located with the police department's main building. This location made the course special for the students and also allowed the department to showcase their
facilities and assets. Of course there was the necessary paperwork for the university to allow an off campus course. In addition to the classroom at the police station there were also classes held in a classroom at the department's firearms range, and other facilities as the course materials dictated. Once again this provided something special for the students.

When the course got underway the main part of the instruction was done by officers of the Beaumont Police Department. These officers all had been through a TECLEOSE Certified Instructors course so they were qualified to teach police officers. I was there to monitor the course and make sure all aspects of the curriculum were covered. Parts of the course were also taught by other law enforcement agencies, civilian dispatchers, and civilian crime lab personnel.

VII. What was actually covered?

The PIP academy covered the usual things students would expect to cover in an academy setting. The students were exposed to the Penal Code, Code of Criminal Procedure, Traffic Code, Police Liability, Officer Survival and the Winning Mindset, Alcoholic Beverage Code, dispatcher practices and requirements, emergency operations procedure and history of policing. All of these were taught in the classroom setting. At the firearms range the students were shown demonstrations by the SWAT team and actually received firearms training. Each student was responsible for providing 100 rounds of .38 Special ammunition and the department provided the handguns. The students received training in decision making with a Firearms Training Simulator (FATS) machine, and with actors in practical problem scenarios. The students did live fire exercises on the range, and Simunition (trademarked training ammunition http://simunition.com/en/) work in a active shoot house. The students were also taught some defensive tactics and handcuffing techniques. By far the student's favorite activity was being trained by certified National Academy for Professional Drivers (NAPD, http://www.napd.com/) instructors and getting to drive police cars on a timed cone course, with lights and sirens.

At the conclusion of the course there was a final written exam that covered the material the students were exposed to. This was the basis of the grade given to the students. As an added touch at the end of the course the students were presented with a certificate of graduation during a ceremony. The Chief of Police was present to deliver a few words and hand out the certificates. There was even a contingent of media. The media were told of the students accomplishments and it was an opportunity for good press for both the Beaumont Police Department and Lamar University.

A lot was crammed into three weeks. This kept the course moving along and although there is only so much you can do to make Penal Code and Code of Criminal Procedure exciting, the overall reaction from the students was positive. It was certainly something different from anything they had taken in school. In some cases the information was overwhelming. Some students realized that a police officer has to have the ability to engage suspects in physical conflict at a moment's notice all the while keep straight in the back of their mind exactly what is their legal standing.

IIIX. How was the end result viewed by the participants?

There was the usual praise that was given by the students to the department and the instructors. There were several students that have gone on to be hired by both the City
of Beaumont and the Beaumont Police Department. There have been students that have been hired by other police departments. There were some students that said "That's great, but not for me." There were other students that started out thinking that they did not want to work for a local police department, but in the end were filling out their application for the Beaumont Police Department. All of these results were to be expected.

Other results that were expected but probably not to the degree that they occurred were a better understanding by the students of the complexities of police work. Students, especially college students, have an tendency to have a "know it all" attitude. Having the exposure to the training that police officers receive, the students were amazed at the complexity of the job. It was an experience that would cause the participants to give pause on second guessing the actions of an officer that appears in the news.

From the officers/ instructors point of view; they were amazed at the receptiveness of the students. The officers/ instructors were accustomed to teaching police officers. Police officers are usually cynical and are there just because they have to fulfill a certain number of training hours. As such they tend to lack the enthusiasm that keeps an instructor motivated. The instructors in the PIP Academy made comments about how they could not believe that after hours of a topic the students would still ask questions and want to continue the discussion.

IX. Unintended Consequences

Some of the unexpected results were very positive. There were several of the instructors that were very pleased with the quality, maturity and eagerness to learn of the students from Lamar University. One of the comments was that they were easier to teach than the regular cops. I think the most surprising result was my observation that the students in this course began to bond with each other. There began to emerge as a team. They began to support each other and when it came to the tactical exercises they worked together as a team. Even now students that attended this course together have a special recognition for each other on campus at Lamar University. In some cases it caused the students to realize who they are as an individual. These students realize that they are the part of society that cannot pass a person that is hurt without stopping to see if they can help. Some of these students realized that they have something in themselves that makes them want to disregard their own safety to go to the aid of someone else.

X. Keys to Success

There are many factors that play into this course being a success. The largest one is not having a fear of failure. Both the leadership at the Beaumont Police Department and Lamar University had to open up two traditionally closed societies and allow the free flow of information. Both had to be willing to go outside of what would be considered the normal bounds of their profession. In the case of the police department the chief had to be willing to face the critics that were saying “That’s not police work.” The chief even had to deal with those that scoffed at the thought of overtime being paid to some officers so that they could teach and help instruct. It was very personnel hour intensive. The Beaumont Police department has a full time Police Community Relations Unit. One of the officers from that unit was tasked with planning and running the PIP Academy and as such was there all the time. Most of the time the PCR officer was not the
instructor, so there was another officer or individual was dedicated to the job. If the
course material involved hands on teaching then it would require more personnel.
During the practical exercises there were as many as 6 instructors at one time. The
Beaumont Police department is an agency with over 250 sworn officers. The size of the
department gave the department the ability to have the necessary number of people
that could assist in teaching. (http://www.beaumontpd.com/)

As a professor at Lamar University, I had to take a “hand off” approach to the course.
This was necessary for two reasons. First of all most all of the students were familiar
with me. Many had taken classes from me. Had I been front and center in this course
then the students would have looked at the course as just another course from Lamar
University. The PIP Academy would not have had the uniqueness needed to make it
special. It would have been easy for my ego to have gotten in the way and I be very
prominent during the course. Doing so would have been detrimental to the course and
defeated the purpose of allowing the students to see what the job was really like. I also
had to accept that some of the material being taught would be off color, crude, or
graphic. Police work is done in an environment that is not very clean. As much as police
officers try to be professional, there will be some foul language mixed in. There were
things said and shown in the PIP Academy that I would have not allowed in a normal
classroom setting.

There was a great deal of support from the university by allowing off campus classes
that would be called by most people “outside the box”. Police work, like many other
professions, is one that is taught in the classroom and learned in the field. Sometimes
persons from academic backgrounds feel that there is no relevancy to what is learned
outside the classroom. Particularly in the criminal justice field there are some who only
want to go by the books, studies, surveys and such. By not recognizing that the field
experiences can help validate or invalidate what is being taught in the classroom,
universities miss out on a great tool in helping to establish their teaching goals. By
allowing students to learn from those in the field that do the job on a day to day basis,
the university has the opportunity to validate their curriculum in the eyes of the students
that go through the PIP Academy. Those students in turn tell others about what is going
on. If the university is accurate in their courses then the students feel the time spent in
the classroom is not wasted. Those students that attended the PIP Academy came back
on campus with renewed vigor towards their classes. (http://www.lamar.edu/)

Lamar University, being a university of over 14,000 students and a Criminal Justice
Department of around 500 students, had a pool of students to draw upon that
adequately filled the course. A course of this nature would not have been viable had
there not been a respectable number of students that showed an interest and could
attend. For most of the history of Lamar it has been known as a commuter campus. The
majority of the students do not live on campus. For this reason many of the students
have off campus jobs. To require the students to spend Monday through Friday, 8 am to
5 pm in a classroom was to ask many of the students to forego work. Some students
absolutely could not do this. Other students had to make arrangements with their job to
adjust their schedule and work an evening shift. I knew of at least one student working
at a full time job that took vacation to attend the PIP Academy. The demands put on the
students time was a factor that eliminated some students from even applying. Although
criminal background was not a factor with any of the students that applied, it was a
factor in whether or not some students applied in the first place. So the fact that Lamar
had the number of students that it does aided in the success of the course. There were
enough qualified students to meet the course size requirement for the university. At the
same time the number of students in the course was not allowed to be so big as to bring
on a whole new set of problems such as instructor to student ratio in area requiring
hands on training.

XI. Considerations for the Future.

There are several things under consideration to enhance the PIP Academy in the
future. One of the problems was regulating the content of different segments. If a
person were to come into the course and teach a block on auto theft, then it is assumed
that they will cover auto theft only. However we had officers that came to teach one
segment and then became involved in what I would call self indulgence. The officers
deviate from what you would expect them to cover into areas that are more personal to
them. As a result in the Summer of 2013 PIP Academy the students were subjected to
three police officers funerals. I respect that the officers were trying to drive home the
potential sacrifice that the job sometimes takes, but one would have been plenty. I have
lost several co-workers in the line of duty. I have a hard time with police officer funerals.

An effort will be made to make sure the officers teaching stick to their assigned material.
One of the original purposes of the course was to allow the Beaumont Police
Department to recruit the students in the class. Although there were a limited number of
instructors from agencies outside of the Beaumont Police Department, it would be more
effective for the course to have more agencies participating. There are some students
that will not be physically suitable for consideration from the Beaumont Police
Department. Having other agencies involved may open up opportunities for these
students with those agencies. This would also be a means for students to see
alternative careers in the criminal justice system.

The issue of time constrains was mentioned earlier. Some students could not
participate in the PIP Academy because of employment. In an effort to address this
problem we paired back the hours each day and extended the length of the overall
course. The course started at 8 am and was finished by 3 pm instead of 5 pm. Students
that worked an evening shift could attend the PIP Academy prior to going to work. Many
college students work in the food service business so evening shifts are the norm.
Some employers are willing to work with students to accommodate a modification in
their schedule if it is only an hour or so. Just cutting off the two hours at the end of the
day helped the students get into the course by not costing them time at work.

Everyone involved in the course was pleased with the overall outcome. This type of
course could be modified or adjusted to fit into whatever format would best suit the
parties involved. The most important aspect is that the classroom is moved from just
being in the book to merging the academic with the real world experience.
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From Fiction to Reality: Cultural Issues in Stella Pope Duarte’s *If I Die in Juárez*

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Since the first report of the violent deaths of women in 1993, the outbreak of female homicide in Ciudad Juárez, a border city across the Rio Grande from the U.S. city of El Paso, Texas, has received international attention. The mass femicide in question is the rape and murder of over five hundred women as of this day. Evidence suggests that a specific group of women is being targeted in Ciudad Juárez. The victims share common characteristics and there are similarities in the violent crimes committed against them. Most of the victims are young women who worked at maquiladoras - U.S. owned factories opened along the border after the signing of the NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement) in 1993-. Most of the victims came from impoverished backgrounds, and many shared common physical attributes, including dark skin, dark hair, and a physique. In terms of crimes, similarities between these cases include rape, torture, mutilation, and murder of the victims. (Livingston 2004)

The Juárez femicide has impacted the global community and has been portrayed by facts of the murders as told by mothers, family members, and those currently investigating these heinous crimes. Numerous documents, newspaper articles, academic studies, internet web sites, etc., have reported this unique story. The TV series The Bridge (2013) is based loosely on the disappeared girls of Juárez. The film Bordertown (2006), starring Jennifer Lopez and Antonio Banderas, allude to the Juárez murders. The film Backyard: El Traspatio (2009), directed by Carlos Carrera, is also based on these crimes. In Roberto Bolaño’s novel, 2666 (2004), these murders serve as material for a major section entitled “The Part about the Crimes”. The first anthology to focus exclusively on the Juárez femicides edited by Alicia Gaspar de Alba and Georgina Guzmán entitled, Making a Killing: Femicide, Free Trade, and La Frontera (2010), discusses the issue from a multidisciplinary analytical framework considering the interconnections between gender, violence, and the U.S.- Mexico border. The twelve academic and personal essays on the subject examine the social, political, economic, and cultural conditions that led to the heinous victimization of women on the border.

Despite the media exposure of the Juárez’s femicide, not a single novel had been written to tell the story of the young women in Juárez in an intimate and passionate manner until the publication of If I Die in Juarez (2008) by Stella Pope Duarte. The novel offers the opportunity to experience the streets of Juárez, portraying characters - all members of the poor working class - by telling their story and reflecting on a distinct perspective of the murders. Duarte’s work depicts what it means to live in “the capital city of murdered women,” as Juárez is now described.

Following communal efforts and investigative journalism, Stella Pope Duarte, a freelance writer residing in Arizona, was intrigued by the incidents. Duarte took several trips to Ciudad Juárez to write her novel, visiting actual sites in the city where women’s bodies have been discovered, walking down the streets of the red-light districts of the city, touring “las colonias” where the impoverished reside, interviewing mothers whose daughters have been murdered, and meeting with activists, investigators, and those who work with women’s organizations in Juárez and El Paso. In order to secure a more in depth understanding of the situation, Duarte also visited a maquiladora and interviewed a young woman who worked there. Additional information was gained through Amnesty International, newspapers, magazines, and through Internet reports, which included hundreds of reports documenting the Juárez murders. Duarte’s
commitment to this project has paved the way leading to the involvement of Amnesty International, Casa Amiga in Juárez, and the Women Writer’s Collective of El Paso. Her work also connected with numerous human rights groups in many cities. (http://www.stellapopeduarte.com/Juarez.htm)

Duarte’s 2008 novel illustrates the feasibility of using fiction as a vessel to explore critical social issues. A familiarity of the subject matter and events dealt with in the novel is not necessary as Duarte creates a self-sufficient realm to enable the reader to uninhibitedly comprehend the material. Duarte sets the frame of her novel in 1995, interweaving the lives of three women two years after the first discovery of young women being assassinated in Juárez. Leaning towards a style of magical realism, Duarte crafts her characters in great detail. Evita, a 13-year-old girl who lives in a red-light district where prostitution runs rampant, runs away from an alcoholic mother, takes to the streets, and falls for the wrong men while struggling to survive. Petra, Evita’s 19-year-old cousin, comes from a small village near the mountains and moves with her family to Juárez in search of a doctor for her ailing father. Petra ends up working as a maquiladora worker to raise money to relieve her family’s dire situation. Mayela, a 12-year-old Tarahumara Indian girl with artistic talent from the same village as Petra, lives in an orphanage in Juárez where her artistic talent is discovered. Over the course of the novel, these young girls are stripped of their childhoods and are forced to face the grotesque realities that stalk the streets. The tales tell of how these girls are affected by the femicide in Juárez.

Duarte’s writing is laced with anguish and desperation, bringing to life the grit and grime of Juarez. The author skillfully tells a stunning, heart-rending and scandalous story through the horrific and graphic details of what is expected of young maquiladora working women. Duarte tells the story of young girls growing up in the red light districts trying to survive, and how these young women are exploited for money. Duarte’s female characters try to survive everyday life while living in fear: fear of the murderous women-haters, and fear of the police who often take bribes, mordidas, while turning their eyes from the crimes. In vivid detail Duarte depicts the strengths, weaknesses, beliefs, hopes, and disappointments of the young women in Juárez who dream of a better life, but are often expected to pay for these dreams with their lives. At the same time, the novel examines the social-cultural conditions that have led to the victimization of women on the boundary between issues of gender, violence, and the U.S.-Mexico border. The novel is partly framed in a small rural village in the mountains, where life resisted change over hundreds of years as people are deeply bound to ancient beliefs and traditions. As the story unfolds, the frame becomes increasingly realistic in the dirty, industrial, and chaotic border town of Juárez, overflowing with corruption, greed, drugs, prostitution, power, and perversion. The story begins slowly in a classroom in Juarez, where neglected grade-schooler Evita Reynosa yearns to be a butterfly with wings so immense that they would grant the youngster escape into the sky. Since the beginning of the novel Duarte sets the tone for an unrested mind and tumultuous life of a young girl living in a lost city:

“Evita dreamed of peace, once as a child. It appeared to her as a huge gust of wind, rushing in through an open door, surprising her with its urgency and power. Peace was a miracle compared to her real life, and in her dream it touched her and made her feel as if she was a speck of dust protected by God’s almighty
hand. Within a few days, the dream of peace had faded for Evita, and she resumed her real life—troubled and uncertain—on the streets of Juárez. Yet she kept a little space hidden in her memory for the hope of peace. (Duarte 2008, 1)

As the novel progresses, tension builds and the pace increases substantially. The story attempts to examine the femicides of Juárez through a cultural lens—one that includes Mexican history and culture, border politics, drug cartels, and the effects of NAFTA on the impoverished population of rural Mexico. Much of the literature on the issue has purported that patriarchal backlash against women may be a potential motive in the killings; as more women are entering the workforce, traditional constructions of gender dynamics have been altered and a tense situation has arisen between the genders. On the other hand, Mexico’s structural crises such as the increase of poverty and unemployment, the disintegration of the peasant economy, migration, and a dysfunctional justice system may also contribute substantially to the femicides.

Duarte’s novel critically examined socio-economic and cultural issues. The implementation of NAFTA in 1994 resulted in the expansion of the maquiladoras industry and created new opportunities for employment for females outside of the home and in the factories. The availability of cheap labor attracted business owners to open factories in Mexico and the availability of employment attracted many, especially females, to border towns such as Ciudad Juárez. In Duarte’s novel, Petra went to Juárez from Montenegro in search of medical attention for her father. To alleviate the dire financial situation of her family, Petra found work at Western Technology, one of the maquiladoras in Juárez, which are widely known for their cheap labor and their exploitative conditions. Petra’s story embodies that of the innumerous women and girls who often migrate from villages or rural areas in search of work in the maquiladoras. In spite of the expanding maquiladora industry, Juárez has remained a relatively poor and underdeveloped city, lacking infrastructure in certain areas such as electricity and paved roads. As a part of their daily commute, many women maquiladora workers walk to and from company buses, leaving themselves vulnerable to victimization. In addition, the increased involvement of women in the labor force may also be a contributing factor to the victimization of women because of the competition for economic resources in decades where male unemployment has been high. In the novel, Prospero, a relative of Petra commented,

“Too bad it’s all for the American foreigners and others who own las maquiladoras. The money paid out for wages to our people is nothing compared to what the companies make. In fact, it’s crumbs. Just like always, nothing for Mexico unless it’s all going to the government, which doesn’t care if the poor live or die. Some people say our problems will end when las maquiladoras leave Juarez, but then what will the people do? They’ve come to depend on wages from las maquilas- and if there’s no work, the people will starve and more disaster will fall upon us. I tell you, there are no answers for the poor, only more problems.” (148).

Duarte points out that the 340 American owned factories in Juárez in 2008 employed over 220,000 people. Approximately 98% of the maquiladoras in Juárez are American owned factories, such as Ford, Motorola, Honeywell, Alcoa, General Motors, Dupont, and Contico. This multi-billion dollar industry reaps the benefits of low tariffs and taxes, little to no environmental sanctions or safety provisions for employees, and an endless
supply of cheap labor. Women who have moved to Juárez from rural villages in Mexico, affected by changes brought by NAFTA, make up 70% of the maquiladora industry. In comparison to autoworkers in U.S. plants, who average $16.75 per hour, Mexican women take home the equivalent of $4.50 per day. This accounts for 1/10 to 1/15 of American wages. (http://www.stellapopeduarte.com/juarez.htm)

Of the hundreds of young women between the ages of 11 and 22 who have been murdered since 1993, many show signs of violent torture, and sexual abuse. Women have been abducted while coming or going to work in las maquiladoras, walking down lonely roads early in the mornings or late in the evenings. A smaller number have been taken on their way to school or other locations in broad daylight. The Reforma, Mexico’s leading newspaper, has dubbed the Juárez murders “the crime of the century.” The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights has voiced its outrage at the endless murders and at the ineffective and lax investigation of the Mexican police force. Victims' families have claimed over and over again that the police are being paid to cover up the crimes. Poverty in Duarte’s novel is clearly depicted and proves to be a constant struggle for the main characters. (http://prezi.com/ffeqst2c4ytw/if_i_die_in_juarez/)

Another focal point in Duarte’s work is the author’s intentional exploration of the ancient beliefs embedded in Mexican culture. As the villager Chavela was ingratiated to Abuela Teodora and Flor for saving her life and the life of her baby Mayela during delivery, she gave Flor an ojo de Dios (an eye of God) for her to hang in the house. The weaving of an Ojo de Dios is an ancient contemplative and spiritual practice for many indigenous peoples in the Americas. Ojos de Dios have traditionally been created for celebration or blessing, presented as gifts or designed to bless homes. The spiritual eye is believed to have the power to see and understand things unknown to the physical eye. During the Spanish colonial period in New Mexico, from the 1500s to the 1800s, Ojos de Dios were placed where people worked and along trails frequently traveled on foot.

Another traditional belief is alluded to as Petra and Antonio look upon the dark night sky, and a comet streaks across the sky. This is believed to be a bad omen. In ancient times, comets were believed to be harbingers of disaster. Petra made the sign of the cross over herself as quickly as she could at the sight of the falling comet, and said to Antonio, “Villagers said that if you made the sign of the cross over yourself before the comet’s tail disappeared, you would cancel any unknown disaster.” (55) Unfortunately, the sighting of the comet was indeed a bad omen as Petra abandoned the tranquil village life for the agitated city life to work at the maquiladora. She would subsequently become another victim of femicide.

Before Petra and her parents’ departure for Juarez, Abuela Theodora looked first to the east, lifting her face to greet the rising sun. She had taught Petra to toss to the four directions to give each cardinal direction its due. They sang in Rarámuri, mimicking the sounds of the chirping birds. “As they sang they became the keys spoken about by the ancients, the key that opened the doors to heaven, which were many. According to legend, each man and woman is a key that fits perfectly into one of heaven’s doors.” (56)

To further enhance cultural exploration in the novel, Stella Pope Duarte associates real life crime scenes with the ritual of the ancient Aztec human sacrifice by creating a maniac murderer, Agustín Cortés, the rich owner of several American maquiladoras in Juárez who takes pleasure in forcing women to repeatedly submit to him. Agustín referred to himself as the descendent of Hernán Cortés, the Spanish conqueror of the
Aztec empire during the sixteenth century, claiming that he was destined to follow the footsteps of his European ancestor in exploiting the Mexican indigenous. Through graphic and grotesque descriptions of torture scenes, the author details how Agustín “violated women whom he brought to his mansion, violated them as often as he liked, cursed them, relieved himself on them, and forced electrical wires deep into their bodies, sending electrical currents to destroy their wombs, where he said were conceived the most despicable forms of life, clots of blood that must be destroyed.” (307). The amputation of female bodies was performed by El Cucuy, the leader of the Los Rebeldes gang who found excitement in cutting up the women’s bodies; holding their hearts, still pumping, in his hand; and, lifting them over his head to simulate the religious ritual of human sacrifice by the Aztecs in honor of their God Huitzilopochtli.

Invoking the same vividness with which she captures the sense of life in Juárez, descriptions of the life of sex-trade workers comes across quite convincingly in this work. Duarte gives us glimpse of the motives of various girls in entering and participating in the sex-trade; these range from poverty to drug addiction. R. Borneman (2009) observes that in Duarte's vision, men are nearly uniformly interested in engaging in sexual acts with women, as in the cases of Ricardo, Chano, Sebastián, and most of the men in the streets. Some men are portrayed as purely murderous sadists, such as Agustín, Zocotl, Cucuy, and Hilo. The more decent are either too old to have sex, such as Petra’s ailed father Estevan and her elderly uncle Propsero, or are given no explanations as to their sexual activities in the case of the philanthropic American soldier, Harry.

Regarding gender issues, research has suggested that sociocultural factors, in relation to traditional gender roles, have impacted violence against women in Mexico. According to Pantaleo (2010), in analyzing patriarchal society, two expressions are commonly used in Mexico to show the status difference between males and females; these expressions are machismo and marianismo. Machismo is characterized by male power and aggression, while marianismo is characterized by subordination and domestic gender roles. As part of the marianismo ideology, women are expected to fulfill domestic roles as wives and mothers and to refrain from paid labor outside of the home. Women who leave their homes to seek employment in the maquil industry directly challenge the marianismo ideal of womanhood. Olivera (2006) further suggests that this altered situation challenged hypermasculinity, in which aggressive aspects of male identity are exaggerated in order to preserve their identity. According to Livingston (2004), gender-directed violence in Ciudad Juárez may be a negative reaction as women gain great personal autonomy and independence while men lose ground.

In the novel, even the machista Prospero, himself, makes a cultural commentary on his own counterpart, as he said,

“Now, there are women from all over Mexico working here, and with them come more men. Some of the men are worthless, to tell you the truth, and more than this, they're mad at their wives for making money. You know, el machismo rules their lives. They feel worthless because their wives support the family, and so they take it out on them, beating them up and making their lives miserable. Then there’s women who get big heads and think they can wear the pants in the family.” (143)
There also exist many commentaries against machismo in Duarte’s novel. Ricardo (Evita’s mother’s boyfriend, a married man), Julio (Evita’s brother-in-law), Sebastián (Petra’s brother-in-law), Gustavo (a man Petra knows from Montenegro and who works at the Maquiladora), and Chano (a worker in the Orphanage where Mayela was discovered for her artistic talent), were depicted as violent, opportunistic, machistas that abuse and take advantage of women at will. Prospero throws a clothes iron at his wife Ofelia simply because she did not have his clothes ironed and ready for him. Evita’s mother Brisa constantly tries to please Bruno, her new love, with money, sex, and gifts. When Bruno moved in with Brisa, her sister Lety moves out to marry Julio, even though he has a reputation for beating women to get his way. Isidora, a drug dealer who takes Evita under her wings when she runs away from home, advises, “Listen to me, Evita. If this is over a man, don’t ever do it again! A man takes and takes and takes from a woman, and when he’s done he goes to another woman and starts all over again. Love doesn’t exist, only need.” (82) Cristal, a prostitute who lives in Isidora’s house, tells Evita that the most demanding customers she would ever encounter were los “mexicanos” (Mexicans). “They’re used to being served by us and know what a woman can give. So they demand and demand, and there’s no end to their demands.” (131) As for the policemen, Evita tells Cristal, “They threatened me once when my mother sent them out to look for me.” (131) Commented Cristal, “Oh, they’ll do more than threaten you. You must never assume anything from them. They are more dangerous than all the men you will ever meet.” (131)

Duarte also seems to concur with the press’ speculation that government inaction in preventing violence against females and bringing perpetrators to justice may have contributed to the continuous femicide in Juárez. When Evita tells Isidora that she has heard about the capture of the murderers, Isidora comments, “That’s only a lie the police tell to make themselves feel better for not doing anything about the murders.” (14) Two female passersby echo, “Believe me, somebody’s being paid to keep silent about who’s murdering these girls. The first body was found two years ago, and now it’s 1995 and still nobody’s been charged. Ay, te digo if people weren’t afraid to tell the truth, we’d know who the murderers are.” “It’s la mordida,” her companion says. “People are being silenced with money, and la policía are the worst. They’d sell out their own mothers for a few pesos. Any nobody talks, or it’s certain they’ll be killed.” (23)

In contrast to the traditional negative macho image of the Mexican male, Duarte creates a reversed male character, one who will not only save Evita and become her husband at the end, but would also reveal the femicides of Juárez to American presses in an act which would press Mexican authorities to take action to investigate the crimes. Through the philanthropic image of Harry Hughes, Duarte intends to enhance the cultural value of Juárez, and Mexico to a great extent, in spite of all these horrific incidents. An American cadet from St. Louis, Missouri, stationed at Fort Bliss in El Paso, Harry had an idealistic perception of Mexico and could not get over the beautiful architecture of the buildings in the center of Juárez, her elegant churches, marketplaces, and hundreds of shops filled with colorful curios and souvenirs. He loved the gaiety of the Mexican people, their humility, warmth, and their music. As child abuser Ricardo was about to teach Evita a lesson so that she would stay away from his son who is, like Ricardo, fond of Evita, Harry’s friendship with Evita intimidated Ricardo who thought the price of getting involved with an American soldier would be too great to pay. Even el
Cucuy, as deadly as he was, would not want to be involved with the American military. The good-natured and heroic image of Harry acutely contrasts that of the traditionally macho, pejorative male image of the Mexican male who would grant women an inferior and submissive status as prescribed by tradition.

In 1999, a group of feminist activists founded Casa Amiga, Juárez’s first rape crisis and sexual assault center. The center works to provide females in Juárez with a sanctuary against violence, therapy, legal counseling, and medical attention. Casa Amiga also works to raise public awareness both locally and internationally regarding the exploitation and dehumanization of females in Juárez. Duarte creates a journalist, Rita Canchola, who despite the previous assassination of a reporter, has decided to write up Petra’s story - the story of a girl who survived the brutal treatment of Agustín, Hilo, and El Cucuy, and miraculously survived. In the Epilogue Rita joins the women’s demonstration ten years after the abduction of Petra de la Rosa. The comment Rita makes to her husband who tries to dissuade her from reporting the Juárez femicide reflects the message of the author “if we stand together, we’ll become stronger; if we do nothing, we become weaker. I want her (daughter) to be as Petra de la Rosa. Just like that. Facing a firing squad if she has to and not running, and best of all, living to tell about it!” (324-325). In the end, Petra’s father dies and is buried in Montenegro as he requested, “If I die in Juárez, bury me in Montenegro.” (87). It is also that the title of novel finds its origins.

Despite an uneven mix of fact and fiction, the author’s intentional focus on sexual motivations behind the murders, *If I die in Juárez* is a brilliantly crafted fictional representation of the ways people live in the “capital city of murdered women”. Duarte’s adoption of the novel also seems to be an appropriate means to explore a social concern, which has not been addressed adequately by journalistic, academic, or judicial enquiry. Duarte’s is a message of hope; in the end, the victims are triumphant through good luck over their victimizers, and justice is restored. It is greatly unfortunate that the Juárez femicide murders continue to this day. Hundreds of women continue to be found tortured and murdered in the desert area outside Juárez. Women’s groups from Juárez, Mexico City, and El Paso continue to work hard to protest the lack of interest and lack of investigation of Mexican federal and judicial officials. Recent drug cartel war and assassinations in and around Juárez have caused the media to switch their reporting focus, but they will never overshadow the maquiladora murders. Femicide must come to an end, and in this respect, Duarte’s novel in essence, constitutes a call for solidarity and justice in human rights.
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Cancer Prevalence Among Immigrants in the United States: Does Age Group Matter?

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Introduction

The population of immigrants in the United States has significantly increased in the past few decades. In fact, the percent of foreign-born population has almost doubled from 6.9% in 1950 to 12.9% in 2010 (Camarota, 2012). Immigrants come from all parts of the world. However, as a group, American immigrants have better health profiles compared to native-born Americans (Antecol and Bedard, 2006; Singh and Hiatt, 2006; Singh and Siahpush, 2001; Singh and Siahpush, 2002, Cho and Hummer, 2001, Read and Emerson, 2005). Nevertheless, the health advantage deteriorates the longer these immigrants reside in the United States. Studies have also indicated that for immigrants of Hispanic origin, in particular, there is what is called a ‘Hispanic paradox’ whereby despite low socioeconomic conditions and discrimination, the health and mortality experiences of these immigrants are far better than that of white non-Hispanic Americans (Acevedo-Garcia, Barbeau, Bishop, et al., 2004; Markides and Eschbach, 2005; Vega and Amaro, 1994; Osypuk, Bates, and Acevedo-Garcia, 2010).

While these studies significantly contribute to the understanding of immigrant health, they did not consider age group, especially younger immigrant population compared to the older population. As health is affected by biological, cultural, socioeconomic, and environmental factors and as these factors may change over time, it is important to examine whether or not factors that affect health among younger immigrant population differ among those that affect their older counterparts. By so doing, appropriate targeted intervention may be applied to specific groups. This study examines factors that correlate with cancer prevalence between younger and older immigrant groups.

From a life-course perspective, health in old age is dependent on individual living conditions throughout one’s life. As found by Kahn and Pearlin (2006), people who experienced economic challenges in their younger years were more likely to have, later in life, functional limitations, serious medical issues, clinical depression, and poorer health in general, compared to those who did not experienced such challenges. Also, adult risk factors for some chronic diseases such as cancer depend on lifestyle activities such as smoking, being involved in regular physical activity and dietary practices among others (Lynch and Smith, 2005). Knowing that these lifetime activities for older people may not be similar for that of their younger counterparts, it is important to separate the age groups when examining correlates of cancer prevalence among immigrants.

Cancer, a major public health challenge in this modern time, is caused by genetic, environmental, and lifestyle factors (American Cancer Society, 2013). Also, cancer burden is tremendous worldwide. In the United States, for example, the overall costs of cancer were estimated at $201.5 billion in 2008 (American Cancer Society, 2013). Additionally, the National Cancer Institute estimated that about 13.7 million Americans with a history of cancer were alive on January 1, 2012 (American Cancer Society, 2013: 1). Also, cancer is the second most common cause of death in U.S. However, among immigrants, cancer prevalence rates vary by type of cancer and pre and post-migration factors. Immigrants from countries with higher rates of certain cancers tend to have higher incidence and mortality rates of these cancers in the United States. For instance, stomach, liver, and cervical cancers which are frequently present in low-income countries are also more common among immigrants from Central and South American countries (Thomas and Karagas, 1987; Canto and Chu, 2000; Schleicher, 2007). In the same vein, certain cancers that are less prevalent among people in
certain countries become common when people from these countries immigrate to the United States. For example, Asian women who originally have low breast cancer rates in their homeland have increased breast cancer rates after migrating to the United States (Deapeni, Liu, Perkins, et al., 2002). While the increased rate of cancer may be explained by improved ability to detect the disease, some scholars believe that changes in lifestyle and environment may explain the rate variation in different populations (Deapen, Liu, Perkins, et. Al., 2002; Ziegler, Hoover, Pike, 1993). Hence it is important to separate older people from their younger group while one ascertains factors that correlate with cancer prevalence among immigrants.

Furthermore, while the literature is replete with negative health effects of acculturation, there are some positive health impacts of assimilation of U.S. immigrants (Lara, Gamboa, Kahramanian, et. al, 2005). For instance, Garcia and Solis (1990), Borrayo and Guarnaccia (2000), Espino and Maldonado (1990) have all reported increased use of preventive health services among immigrants, especially chronic diseases like cancer and hypertension. Hence immigrants with longer time of US residence may have a different preventive health behavior, perhaps healthy behaviors, compared to those with shorter time of residence.

There are other important factors that affect the health of immigrants. American immigrants come from different countries with different socio-economic and cultural living situations. However, since the significant changes in immigration law of 1965, there has been greater diversity among immigrants. In fact, most of American immigrants come from Mexico, Latin America, and Asia contrary to pre-1965 where the majority of immigrants were from Europe. With such diverse background and life situations, it is also important to consider place of birth when examining the health outcomes of immigrants. Additionally, according to the American Cancer Society (2013) men have about a 1 in 2 lifetime risk of developing cancer, while women have about a 1 in 3 in the United States. Also, with regard to health in general and cancer in particular, studies have reported that couples tend to have better health than people living alone (Verbrugge, 1979; Johnson, Backlund, Sorlie, 2000); and for cancer in particular, married people are more likely to survive from it compared to their unmarried counterparts (Kravdal and Syse, 2011; Tannenbaum, Zhao, Koru-Sengul, et al (2013); Pinquart and Duberstein, 2009). Hence, gender and marital status are important factors to consider in the analysis of factors that correlate with cancer prevalence. Finally, studies have indicated a change in benefits of marriage between men and women. In the past, when most women did not work for pay, marriage then guaranteed economic stability for women in general. However, today, as more and more women are outnumbering men in education and earnings attainment, the institution of marriage enhances the economic status of men than for women (Taylor, Fry, Cohn, et al., 2010). Also, marriage has a greater positive effect on men’s health and mortality compared to women’s (Gradner and Oswald, 2004).

This study examines whether correlates of cancer among US immigrants vary by age group controlling for socio-economic factors. We believe that it is important to understand the correlates of cancer prevalence among older immigrants (aged 50 years and beyond) relative to their younger counterparts (less than 50 years of age) as correlates of cancer may not be uniform among the two groups. By so doing, appropriate intervention and preventive efforts will target each group instead of a one
size fits all approach. We used data from the National Health Interview Survey (NHIS) to test the following hypotheses:

1. Factors that affect prevalence of cancer among immigrants will be different for older immigrants compared to their younger counterparts.
2. The likelihood of having been diagnosed with cancer will increase with time of U.S. residence among immigrants regardless of age group.
3. Married people will be less likely to have been diagnosed with cancer compared to unmarried people.
4. Females in general will be less likely to have cancer compared to their male counterparts.
5. Married men will be less likely to have been told they had cancer compared to women.

Methods
Data and Sample
This study uses secondary pooled data drawn from the National Health Interview Survey (NHIS), over the years 2001 to 2010. The NHIS is a multi-stage cluster sample that oversamples some populations and weighted to the U.S. adult population aged 18 years and over. Data were collected by the U.S. Census bureau. The survey asked non-institutionalized individuals different types of questions. Analysis for this study focused only on respondents who were born outside the United States. Table 1 reports descriptive statistics of the sample. The sample size for the study was 51,589. This sample was further broken down by age group. While nearly 32% (16,323) of the sample aged 50 years and above, only 7.5% (3,855), 17.6% (9,057), and 16.7% (8,618) were black, Asian, and white respectively compared to 58.3% (30,059) who were Hispanic. The majority of immigrants had been in the United States 15 years or longer. However, only about 44% of the younger population and almost 90% of the older population had been in the United States for at least 15 years. Forty six percent of the immigrants are male. However, only about 42% of older immigrants are male. This may be explained by the fact that females outlive men. About one-fourth of the immigrants had a college degree.

Analysis
The analysis focused on people born outside the United States and broke them down by age groups: less than 50 years old and 50 years and above. The survey asked respondents whether they had ever been diagnosed with cancer. The answer options were yes=those who had cancer in remission as well as those who had cancer at the time of each yearly survey. Predictors of cancer were age group, years of age (in decades), gender, marital status (married or not), race/ethnicity (Black, Hispanic, Asian, and White). Four categories of education (analyzed ordinally) and year of survey (a quadratic equation for time in the sample period) were included in the analysis. Multivariate analysis that employed logistic regression in SAS-Callable SUDAAN, adjusting standard errors for weighting scheme was use. The first logistic regression model includes all immigrants. Then, we separate the immigrants by age group: 50 years and above and less than 50. A separate logistic regression was employed for each age group in order to gauge the correlates of cancer prevalence. Then to check
the effect of gender and marital status on correlates of cancer prevalence among our sample, interaction terms were included.

**Results**

The first model for all immigrants shows the following results. Immigrants with at least 15 years of U.S. residence had much higher likelihood of having had cancer. In fact, as a group, they were 73% more likely to have been diagnosed with cancer compared to immigrants who had been in the United States for less than 15 years. However, the odds were a bit higher for immigrants who were less than 50 years old (69%) and those 50 years old and over (57%). The likelihood of cancer was much higher with older age. In fact, the effect was 85% higher for each decade of age for all immigrants, and was also significantly higher in the younger age group than the older age group. Males showed lower likelihood of cancer than females in the overall population, but, this effect is totally concentrated in the younger age group. Males were about 1/3 as likely to have cancer in the younger population. However, there is no difference in the likelihood of having cancer between males and females in the older age group. Marital status did not significantly relate to the odds of having cancer in the overall population. However, younger married people were about ¾ as likely to have cancer compared to their unmarried counterparts. The effect of marriage was not significant in the older age group.

Hispanic, Black, and Asian respondents had much lower cancer rates than did Whites and others and that effect is consistent regardless of age group. However, the advantage in cancer rates of Black immigrants was much greater among younger than among older immigrants, although present in both age groups. Higher educational attainment short of a college degree was associated with higher cancer rates. Additionally, having a college degree was associated with lower cancer rates among younger immigrants, but insignificant among older immigrants. Overall, cancer rates increased among immigrants over the 2001-2010 periods. The increase in cancer rates over the years of the survey may be concentrated among older immigrants.

To examine the hypothesis of male advantage and female disadvantage in marriage and interaction of gender and marital status was introduced in the analysis. Table 3 reports only coefficients for gender, marriage, and their interaction, not for other factors in the equations. For all immigrants as a group, married females showed higher likelihood of cancer than did unmarried females. Married females were about ¼ more likely to have been told to have cancer compared their unmarried counterparts. No male/female difference was shown among the unmarried. Among the married, males showed lower likelihood of cancer than did females. These results strongly support the hypotheses of male advantage and female disadvantage with marriage. The results of gender and marital interaction nesting by age show that in the younger group, the unmarried males had an advantage relative to females but not at all in the older age group. Support for the hypotheses of male advantage and female disadvantage with marriage were supported in the separate analysis by age group, but the relationships are shown to be much more complicated: the female disadvantage with marriage was concentrated among the older immigrants, but not at all among the younger immigrants. Also, the male advantage relative to females was concentrated among younger immigrants, again but not among older immigrants.
Discussion

This study examined correlates of cancer among younger and older immigrants. Black, Hispanic, and Asian immigrants all show much lower likelihood of having had cancer than do White immigrants. This is true among both younger and older immigrants. As expected, cancer rates were much higher with longer residence in the U.S., and this was consistent in both younger and older immigrants. Thus, there does appear to be a negative effect of longer residence in the U.S. with regard to cancer rates.

Overall, the findings show spectacularly the need to differentiate analysis by age group. Varied associations of factors with cancer risk differ greatly between the younger and older age groups. For example, likelihood of cancer shows an increase over the years of the survey for the older but not the younger respondents. A similar pattern emerges regarding the effect of years of age itself. Likewise, education shows a complex pattern of effects, differentiated by age group. In the younger age group, those with some college are more likely to report having had cancer than those with only a high school degree, while those with a college degree are less likely than those with only some college to so report. By contrast, in the older age group, those with a high school degree are more likely to report cancer than those with less education, while there are no differences for higher levels of educational achievement.

Most importantly, there is evidence of a male advantage and female disadvantage with marriage, with married males about 30 percent less likely to have had cancer than unmarried males, while married females were about one-fourth more likely to have had cancer than unmarried females. However, these effects resolve themselves differently by age group. In the younger age group, the male advantage with marriage shows, as well as a male/female advantage among the unmarried. By contrast, in the older age group, only the female disadvantage shows.

Conclusions

The findings strongly demonstrate the need to consider age group when analyzing cancer risk among U.S. immigrants. Some of these differences by age group might be in part attributed to the way the cancer question was asked of respondents (see below), when effects are nonexistent or smaller in the older age group, but this would not be true where effects are stronger in the older age group. The differential effect of age may also relate to a survivor effect in the older age group, where those more prone to cancer were less likely to have survived to the time of a given year’s survey.

Gender and marital status show definite patterns of advantage and disadvantage in cancer risk among U.S. immigrants. However this differs radically by age group. In the younger respondents, male advantage is dominant: married males showing lower cancer rates than unmarried males, and male showing an advantage over females among the unmarried. In the older age group, female disadvantage comes to the fore. The latter may relate to the tendency of women to serve as caregivers, to the great risk of their health, especially when caring for older spouses. Further, the lack of male advantage with marriage could be a survivor effect, with those at greatest disadvantage less likely to have survived to the year of each survey.

Overall, there is clear evidence that age-group differences should be considered when evaluating cancer and other health measures among U.S. immigrants. Even
though the effects of some factors (e.g., ethnicity) do not show major changes with age group, other differences in effects, and patterns of effects, emerge strongly by age group.

**Limitations**

The major limitation in the analysis is the nature of the basic cancer item, asking whether the respondent had ever been told of having cancer, thus raising the possibility of the cancer diagnosis, and perhaps resolution, having occurred long before the survey. This means that the "cancer rate" found in the study cannot be taken as cancer prevalence, and certainly not incidence. It also casts doubt on interpretations of causality, some “predictors” (i.e., educational attainment and marital status) possibly being in part results of an earlier cancer diagnosis rather than risk factors for such diagnosis. Further, the possibility of cancer diagnosis far preceding date of interview is heightened among older respondents, possibly conflating effects evaluated by age group.

The analysis also suffers the defects of cross-sectional analysis. Although covering a ten-year period, the surveys convey repeated yearly snapshots, rather than a longitudinal moving picture. In particular, the question of male-advantage/female-disadvantage with marriage could be fruitfully considered in a longitudinal study.

Finally, the male-advantage/female-disadvantage with marriage findings are specific to immigrants to the U.S. Separate analysis (not shown here) failed to find such a pattern among native-born Americans.

**References**


**TABLE 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables:</th>
<th>Total Foreign Born</th>
<th>Those Under Age 50</th>
<th>AgeD 50 and Over</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Samp #</td>
<td>Samp %</td>
<td>Pop. %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ever Had Cancer</td>
<td>1,615</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Years + in U.S.</td>
<td>28,42</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>56.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aged 50+ Years</td>
<td>16,32</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>31.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>23,66</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>45.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>28,47</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>55.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>30,05</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>58.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>3,855</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>9,057</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>20.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White and Other</td>
<td>8,618</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>21.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less Than Hi Sch</td>
<td>19,07</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>37.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>H. School Degree</td>
<td>10,61</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>21.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some College</td>
<td>9,486</td>
<td>18.7</td>
<td>19.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>College Degree</td>
<td>11,49</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>22.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Number</td>
<td>51,58</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>35.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total Foreign Born</td>
<td>Those Under Age 50</td>
<td>Those Age 50 and Over</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ratio</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Years + in U.S.</td>
<td>1.73</td>
<td>1.41</td>
<td>2.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age (in decades)</td>
<td>1.85</td>
<td>1.73</td>
<td>1.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aged 50+ Years</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>1.22</td>
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<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>0.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td>1.25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hispanic&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>0.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>0.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>0.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H. School Deg.&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>1.41</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>1.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some College&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>1.35</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>1.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Degree&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time Rebased</td>
<td>1.39</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>1.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time Squared</td>
<td>1.31</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>3.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DF</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>49,370</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wald F</td>
<td>122.2</td>
<td>31.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SOURCE:** NCHS, 2001-2010.

**NOTES:**
- <sup>a</sup> White, non-Hispanic is the reference category.
- <sup>b</sup> Each lower category is the reference for each higher category – e.g., "some college" for "college degree.".
## TABLE 3
SUDAAN LOGISTIC REGRESSION ANALYSIS:
EVER HAD CANCER: INTERACTION OF GENDER AND MARITAL STATUS

### Odds Ratios & 5% Confidence Limits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Foreign Born</th>
<th>Under Age 50</th>
<th>Age 50 or Over</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ratio</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Years + in U.S.</td>
<td>1.72</td>
<td>1.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age (in decades)</td>
<td>1.87</td>
<td>1.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aged 50+ Years</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>0.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male (unmarried)</td>
<td>0.90</td>
<td>0.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married (females)</td>
<td>1.24</td>
<td>1.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male by Married</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td>0.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic^a</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>0.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black^a</td>
<td>0.51</td>
<td>0.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian^a</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>0.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H. School Deg.(b)</td>
<td>1.41</td>
<td>1.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some College(b)</td>
<td>1.35</td>
<td>1.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Degree(b)</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>0.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time Rebased</td>
<td>1.38</td>
<td>1.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time Squared</td>
<td>1.32</td>
<td>0.57</td>
</tr>
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</table>

### DF = 14, 13, 13
### N = 49,370, 33,828, 15,542
### Wald F = 113.4, 28.3, 41.1

**SOURCE:** NCHS, 2001-2010.

**NOTES:**
- a White, non-Hispanic is the reference category.
- b Each lower category is the reference for each higher category – e.g., “some college” for “college degree.”

**LEGEND:**
- Odds ratios in bold are significant at the .05 level, 2-tailed test.
- Odds ratios in bold and underlined are significant at the .01 level, 2-tailed test.
- Odds ratios for those aged 50 and over in italics are significantly different from those under age 50 at .05 level, 2-tailed test.
Beyond Technology: Revisiting Diffusion of Innovation Theory Application to Other Disciplines

Mitzi P. Trahan
University of Louisiana at Lafayette
Diffusion of Innovations

Diffusion of Innovations (DOI) theory offers a framework for studying the processes of adoption of an innovation through the lens of change; it tells the story of why and how quickly change occurs. Everett Rogers’ 1962 seminal book, *Diffusion of Innovation*, defines Innovations as ideas, practices, or objects perceived as new by an individual or culture. Diffusion is the process whereby an innovation is communicated over time among the members of a social system resulting in individual or social change. Diffusion of Innovations applies primarily to technology integration and paves the way to study adoption in other disciplines.

Diffusion is akin to social change. When new ideas are invented, diffused, and are subsequently adopted or rejected, leading to certain consequences, social change occurs. The rate of adoption is the relative speed with which members of a social system (i.e. computer assisted classroom) adopt an innovation and includes such variables as: the type of innovation-decision, the nature of communication channels, the extent of change agent’s efforts in diffusing the innovation, and the nature of the social systems.

**Overview**

Rogers (2003) describes adoption as a decision of “full use of an innovation as the best course of action available” and rejection is a decision “not to adopt an innovation” (p. 177). Four elements of DOI theory include Innovation, Time, Communication Channels, and Social Systems. The acceptance of an Innovation is influenced by uncertainty. Change can often be a slow uncomfortable process and takes Time before diffusion has been accomplished. Specialized interpersonal Communication Channels are necessary for diffusion. Social Systems ultimately decide to modify an innovation to fit their culture. Moore and Benbasat (1991) extended the work of Rogers to further define perceived characteristics that were thought to effect diffusion rates. The scholarship of Compeau and Higgins (1996) has also provided researchers the framework for researching and predicting behavior and actual technology performance. In general terms, change can often be a slow, uncomfortable process rather than an event, and as such, requires extended time for changes in attitude and acceptance of differing perspectives to take place (Horsley & Loucks-Housley, 1998). Rogers & Schoot (1997) mention that, when an innovation reaches the point of critical mass, it is no longer an innovation and the diffusion of innovation has been accomplished.

Rogers proposes that the rate of adoption is influenced by multiple perceptions of relative advantage over a previous technology, compatibility with existing needs, complexity and perceived difficulty of use, and available triability and observability to experiment and see the results of the innovation. The rate of adoption has been found to be positively correlated to these characteristics. During the adoption process, *relative advantage* and *compatibility* are the two most significant attributes. This claim may not be entirely accurate as the degree of importance of each respective attribute is based on the context of an innovation. An innovation must also have high degree of *relative advantage and compatibility*. It could be extremely complicated to comprehend by members of a social system and thus impact perceived difficulty of use. It would be difficult for people to adopt an innovation if they do not understand its relative advantage and compatibility. An important sub-dimension, *trialability*, affects the adoption rate of an innovation; it is a process where people in a social system decide to change or modify
the original aspects of an innovation to fit their needs and culture. If people were able to
modify an innovation, its adoption rate would increase. Generally, agencies and change
agents have not encouraged potential adopters to modify the innovation from the
original features. Rogers had encouraged diffusion researchers and change agents to
allow re-invention to occur.

Other variables such as (1) the type of innovation-decision, (2) the nature of
communication channels diffusing the innovation at various stages in the innovation
decision process, (3) the nature of the social system in which the innovation is diffusing,
and (4) the extent of change agents' promotion efforts in diffusing the innovation, affect
an innovation's adoption rate.

Diffusion of an innovation occurs in stages beginning with Knowledge followed by
Persuasion, Decision, Implementation, and finally Confirmation. Knowledge
relates to
upfront understanding of the new technology. Persuasion is a positive attitudinal
disposition. Decision is closely aligned to commitment followed by Implementation.
Confirmation is determined by the positive outcomes that reinforce use.

Innovation Adopters

A final component offered by the DOI theory is a classification structure of
technology adopters based on the relative speed an individual accepts an innovation
rounds out the defining personal characteristics that potentially impact technology
adoption. Innovators tend to rapidly embrace a technology followed closely by Early
Adopters who readily accept change. On the other end of the scale, Early Majority
adopters typically need more time but can be influenced by the previous group of Early
Adopters. Late Majority adopters openly express skepticism but will eventually buy-in to
the innovation once the majority has accepted the change. Those individual more
comfortable with the status quo are termed Laggards.

Technology Instruments

Adoption research has kindled the development of two popular instruments designed
to measure change. In 1973, Hall, et al. developed the Concerns-based Adoption Model
(CBAM) that measures change along the continuum of skill development. A second
dimension of CBAM identifies Stages of Concern (SoC) in which Concern is
counted as the intensity of motivations, thoughts, and feelings moving an
individual past internal acceptance toward a more global perspective. The Technology
Acceptance Model (TAM) by Davis (1989) identifies specific determinants involved in
the acceptance of computer technology. The Concern-based Adoption Model includes
several important dimensions that can be used to understand the processes of change
in institutions and in individuals. In particular, CBAM’s Stages of Concern (SoC)
dimension can be used to examine the perceptions and feelings an individual has
toward an innovation; it defines seven stages of acceptance that form a continuum
during which an individual’s focus shifts from personal to global. After being introduced
to an innovation, termed awareness (Stage 0), an individual proceeds through seven
specific stages as fears, knowledge, and effects of the innovation are internalized. The
first two stages are grouped together and identified as self concerns; they include
information (Stage 1), in which the individual examines an innovation for its properties
and begins acquiring skills, and personal (Stage 2), in which the individual questions
how this innovation can be helpful in his or her own practice. After an individual’s
primary concerns are addressed, he or she can move to task concerns, which include
the management stage (Stage 3); during this stage, an individual is focused on the processes of actually using and mastering the innovation. Once use of the innovation has been undertaken, the final level, identified as impact concerns, can be reached; individuals evaluate the innovation and collaborate with others regarding how the innovation compares with other tasks or products.

Rogers’ theoretical framework remains the most widely used theory leading to a deeper understanding of the process and rate of adoption of an innovation. The characteristics and classifications described are the pivotal factors influencing individual change and acceptance of an innovation into a social system.

References


PLATO: An Integrated Learning Environment

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Martha Bryant
ULL Picard Center

Pamela Lemoine
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The necessity to keep up with new technologies as they emerge is critical for school districts (Barrow, Markman, & Rouse, 2009; Windschitl & Sahl, 2002). For instance, computers are no longer stand-alone tools with individual software applications (Davis, & Roblyer, 2005). Instead, multiple technology issues such as connectivity, streaming video, web-based tools must be considered as well as infrastructures which are flexible enough to meet evolving technical requirements (President’s Council of Advisors on Science & Technology, 2010; U.S. Department of Education, 2010). Challenges increase as districts must make decisions about which expenditures should be made and which types of computer based software programs best meet student needs (Sandholtz, Ringstaff, & Dwyer, 1997). Educators are finding that computer software use for drill-and-practice or other lower order skills does not promote higher student achievement (Johnson, 2002; Page, 2002). Use of computer technology for research, reference, spreadsheets and databases, multimedia applications, and web browsing allows student-centered, meaningful, real-life applications thus increasing cognitive skills in construction, interaction, and problem-solving abilities (Ringstaff & Kelley, 2002).

National organizations such as the Partnership for 21st Century Skills have voiced concerns about American students’ abilities to perform in global economic competition and launched reform measures to ensure that students can compete with other industrialized nations (Page, 2002; Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2007, 2009; Richardson, 2006, 2012). Becker and Ravitz (2001), and Hew and Brush (2007) suggest technology is a solution to “help transform education and improve student learning” (p. 224). Technology provides the potential to improve standardized test scores, problem-solving abilities, and to prepare American children to compete globally (CEO Forum on Education and Technology, 2001; Cheek, 1997; Edutopia, 2008; Ferdig, 2006; Fullan, 2011).

This paper stems from a technology evaluation project of a southern state school district. PLATO, a computer assisted instruction program, was initially implemented as a supplemental instructional program for students with special needs but later the district expanded its use to include credit recovery, enrichment for gifted-talented students, general education district tool for benchmark assessments, and online progress monitoring of all students. Students completed end of course proficiency tests and ‘re-earned’ course credit if successful. Occasionally, PLATO was also used for enrichment and for other students that were just excelling in the class, i.e. early finishers. For remediation purposes, PLATO includes grade-level resources beginning with second grade; limited Kindergarten library resources are also available.

The interview data revealed a wide variety of use. For instance, principals had the authority to choose individual levels and types of technology at their campus and how best to match the programs to their individual students’ needs. While this flexibility had its benefits, a district-wide technology plan was needed to meet expanding mandates. Probably the most major concern was that PLATO administrators did not adequately update their programs to meet changing curriculum standards. In July 2010, Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in English Language Arts and mathematics were set to take place in the 2014-2015 school years. Additionally, common assessments as part of the PARCC initiative will be used to assess 3rd-12th grade student performance in. There is an obvious need to secure computer assisted software companies that stay
abreast with educational changes and respond promptly by updating and aligning their programs to the current standards.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this mixed method study was to examine evidenced-based research and evaluation findings on computer mediated learning software and educational technology best practices; specifically PLATO. A conceptual framework to address effective school technology use including historical perspectives, perceptions of PLATO usage, professional development and support, and barriers was created to ground the study.

**Research Questions**

Two research questions guided the study.

1. What were district-wide usage patterns of PLATO?
2. What were the school faculty perceptions of the educational value of PLATO in relation to teaching and learning effectiveness

**PLATO Instructional Design**

Educational technology can be defined as a variety of electronic tools and applications that help deliver learning materials and support learning processes in K-12 classrooms to improve academic learning goals (as opposed to learning to use the technology itself). Examples include computer-assisted instruction (CAI), integrated learning systems (ILS) and interactive whiteboards (Cheung & Slavin 2011). The PLATO software system, Programmed Logic for Automated Teaching Operations, falls under the umbrella of CAI systems and was developed in the 1960’s at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. The software, funded through a grant from The National Science Foundation, was designed to offer a tool to assist educators in providing high quality education to children and young adults through the medium of technology.

The PLATO system platform is reflective of several key elements in software design: graphics and animation; social learning technology as a support for teacher/student interaction; curriculum and assessment components; and, individualized learning strategies for successful learning opportunities (PLATO 2010). As PLATO continued to evolve, data features and course management options were included which allowed teachers and students opportunities for individualized learning and identification of student learning needs. Data features also provided for more reliable data to support instructional decisions. Learning modules included core content areas for elementary (K-6), middle school (6-9), high school (9-12), as well as post-secondary instruction.

**Mastery-based instructional modules.** A mastery-based instructional module is an integral part of each PLATO learning module. Lessons are structured based on proven pedagogical practices found to be successful for students in an educational technology setting. Each lesson is based on discrete learning objectives structured to include an introduction to the new course content or material, guided practice, independent practice and assessment. Embedded within the assessment structure are opportunities for the student to demonstrate skill mastery of the objective before progressing to the next module such as pretests, posttests and end of semester tests. Tutorials and additional activities are embedded within the module structure to help learners acquire and build knowledge in a particular skill or to meet specific learning needs.

**Curriculum solutions.** Examples of additional curriculum support included Extended Learning, Enrichment, Online Learning, Advanced Placement, Test
Preparation, Credit Recovery and Remediation components. Other adult learning solutions created to provide learning opportunities for the completion of high school course requirements include: Transition and Workforce Readiness, Developmental Education, Educator Preparation, Adult Basic Education, Response to Intervention, and/or Credit Recovery programs.

**Alignment with National Standards in English and Mathematics.** In the late 1970’s and early 1980’s, standards for quality, rigor and relevance in curriculum structure and design began at the national level in all core content areas including technology. PLATO software allowed teachers the option to add, remove or re-sequence course content to meet the particular needs of the students and district requirements.

**Diagnostic Assessments.** The measurement of student progress is an important part of the teaching-learning process. PLATO assessments are designed to measure student screening for placement, progress monitoring, and core skill mastery as well as measuring student progress that will assist educators in making accurate data driven decisions. PLATO included Test Packs, for content areas in grades 2-12 and end of course exams in ELA, Math, Science, Social Studies, Algebra I and English II. Specifically, the system provides (1) Curriculum Reports that can be accessed by class and individual student; (2) Assessment reports that allow educators to access a single variable to monitor student progress; and (3) System Reports providing educators the opportunity to track and monitor usage.

**Literature Review**

**Definition of Technology**

Technology is referenced loosely in terms of computers, software, and digital devices (International Society for Technology in Education [ISTE], 2010). Educational technology is also referenced in terms of student achievement, availability to students, and how the technology is used (ISTE, 2010; Keengwe, Onchwari, & Onchwari, 2009). New models of learning through technology require “new and better ways to measure what matters, diagnose strengths and weaknesses in the course of learning when there is still time to improve student performance” (U.S. Department of Education, 2010, p. xi). The National Technology Plan *Transforming American Education: Learning Powered by Technology* (U.S. Department of Education, 2010b) suggests, “technology-based assessments can provide data to make decisions about student performance on the basis of what is best for each and every student” (p. xi).

**Professional Learning and Support**

Professional development is an important element of the teaching-learning process. With advances in technology, the field of education field is increasingly using innovative forms of technology as a tool for delivery of professional development. The technological delivery systems can include one or a combination of session types such as face to face, virtual, also known as hybrid or blended learning encompassing a delicate blend of face to face with virtual learning. The ease and flexibility of use in incorporating technology into professional learning has had increased success over the past several years.

The young field of e-learning provides K-12 educators with significant professional development and instructional resources (NSDC, 2001b). Sustained, online discussion can provide virtual opportunities for teachers to learn about and share effective
instructional practices and discuss student work in an effort to form a consensus about successes in student learning. Through the virtual library, student and teachers can access high quality learning materials to enhance student learning and instructional practice. Online seminars provide an opportunity, especially for those in rural and distressed regions, access to high quality professional development that may otherwise remain inaccessible to them. It is important to remember that professional growth for teachers should continuously improve their professional practice, model lifelong learning, and exhibit leadership in their school and professional community by promoting and demonstrating the effective use of digital tools and resources (ISTE 2010).

**Evaluation and Research Methodology**

The overarching goal of the evaluation project was to provide knowledge and relevant findings regarding the use and effectiveness of PLATO. Faculty, PLATO administrators, and school level principals participated in focus groups designed to capture aspects of use and effectiveness of PLATO throughout the district. The research design follows a phenomenological multi case study qualitative approach which seeks to uncover how individuals make sense of everyday experiences and provide insights into real-life situations. Specifically, the research design for case studies considers the types of questions to be asked. Interview questions were designed to expand on specific activities; however, the goal of the qualitative data collection phase was deeper and included garnering a richer understanding of participants' experiences. Semi-structured interviews protocol allowed the evaluators to gain a deeper understanding of the complexities of PLATO. Internal reliability was enhanced by a review of the instruments and systematic and consistent interrater procedures during both the data collection and analysis steps. Careful recording of participant responses and probing questions that conveyed the rich, complex data characteristics of qualitative research assured rigor in data collection. Document analysis procedures were used to summarize and present the findings. Patterns that emerged in the qualitative interviews and narrative data are presented thematically in the results section of the evaluation report.

**Evaluation Results**

A primary goal of this project was to assess the use and effectiveness of PLATO Learning Systems. The a priori nature of the interview questions allowed for consistency in responses across identified school faculty and conceptualized themes. Open-ended questions were crafted in order to go beyond this goal and obtain a deeper understanding of essential PLATO components, advantages and disadvantages, and building block ingredients for future technology plans. Three sets of interviews were conducted over a period of two days for a total of eleven focus groups and approximately 55 district personnel.

- **District Personnel:** Two key district personnel familiar with both the historical and current PLATO usage participated in a focus group designed to capture the district's perspectives.
- **School Principals:** Nearly all of the 28 principals participated in the interviews.
- **PLATO Administrators and teachers:** Teacher participants were purposively selected based on their dual roles as PLATO administrators and school level faculty (see Appendix D). Approximately 25 individuals attended the focus
groups. The majority of PLATO administrators were classroom teachers, however, a small percentage held other positions such as media specialists.

**Perceptions of PLATO Usage**

Primary uses of PLATO included general education instruction to targeted credit recovery; remedial and/or tutorial instruction for special education students; differentiated instruction for talented and gifted (TAG); students and for students who are excelling; and students assigned to the Juvenile Justice System and Day Treatment classes. PLATO’s assessment tools were used to inform instructional levels and for remediation or acceleration decisions; differentiation of skill levels allowed students to progress at their own pace.

Participants did not feel, however, that system level prescriptions appropriately guide instruction. Many felt access to reports was overly cumbersome. As a result, administrators generally stated the data was not used in school level discussion or curriculum meetings. On the other hand, one administrator reported, “I *think it is a great tool for differentiation of instruction. My school uses it a great deal. I would hope we would keep it only because of what it has done for my school. In my school, K-5, students have their own laptops, as it is very convenient. Kids have access. Grant monies purchased them so usage is different – high usage.*"

**Benchmark assessments.** Initially, the school district mandated use of PLATO for benchmarking for a minimum of two times per year with an optional third district assessment test if desired. Benchmark assessments are tests administered throughout the school year to give teachers immediate, formative feedback on how their students are performing (Gallagher & Worth, 2008). Along with benchmarking data, PLATO also provided progress monitoring data. Over time, it was discovered that benchmark assessments were the only reason that PLATO being used by many schools.

**Credit recovery.** Credit Recovery allows students to retrieve Carnegie credit for classes that they did not pass due to grades or attendance issues; Carnegie unit retrieval is essential for students who wish to graduate on time with their grade cohort. Data reported by faculty suggests that credit-recovery programs may have had positive effects in terms of earning credits toward graduation, attendance rates, and improved passing rates on state standardized tests.

**Special populations.** PLATO resources were used to assist children with special needs by providing expanded teaching, practice, and reinforcement tools designed to meet specific learning modalities. Talented and Gifted (TAG) programming provided the ability to maximize learning outcomes for these students by differentiating instruction. PLATO software was used to target specific district needs with students in alternative school settings such as the district’s Juvenile Justice Center (JJC). PLATO was referred to as, “very convenient to have to make assignments for those children [at day treatment] who tend to work well on the computer."

**Data Usage and PLATO Reports**

Some PLATO school administrators stated that they printed reports after the district assessment, often for every homeroom teacher, for use at grade level meetings or at School Building Level Committee (SBLC) meetings as site administrators requested. The Test Pack reports do offer prescriptions that could be invaluable to educators if used consistently. Unfortunately, a common theme heard throughout the district was
that the reports and the data were not generally used to inform instruction or monitor student progress.

**Access to reports.** At the school level, administrators and PLATO administrators had full access to the system and some school administrators reported analyzing data regularly during curriculum meetings. However, this practice was not the norm and more often the participants reported a variety of ways they use (or don’t use the data reports). Principals generally felt the assessment data did not reflect changes needed to be addressed. PLATO administrators consistently reported that their job was only (1) to set up the classes and assign the test packs and (2) to pull the reports from district assessment testing. Rarely, did they provide teacher support or serve in any mentoring role to the teachers. This finding is directly related to the lack of professional development heard from the majority of participants. At some school sites, teachers printed their own reports while others did not. The findings from the 3 groups demonstrated the inconsistency of use and reinforced the need for a district-wide technology policy.

**Professional learning, support, growth, and leadership.** A thorough analysis of the interviews relative to professional development revealed emerging themes related to the ongoing support, usage, purpose, and functionality of the PLATO software. ISTE (2010) supports sustained opportunities for professional growth and development in technology through the facilitation and participation in learning communities that simulate, nurture and support administrators, faculty and staff in the study and use of technology. Performance Indicators for Teachers, NETS-T, include four indicators for engaged professional growth and leadership that teachers should use and model effectively as they design and engage students in learning through technology integration. The indicators suggest that (1) teachers should participate in local and global learning communities to explore creative applications of technology to improve student learning; (2) teachers should exhibit leadership by demonstrating a vision of technology infusion, participating in shared decision making and community building, and developing the leadership and technology skills of others; (3) teachers should evaluate and reflect on current research and professional practice on a regular basis to make effective use of existing and emerging digital tools and resources in support of student learning, and (4) teachers should contribute to the effectiveness, vitality, and self-renewal of the teaching profession and of their school and community. Overall, the district and PLATO administrators initially provided opportunities for the professional training; however, participants generally voiced a greater need for ways to improve the delivery, understanding, and usage of the PLATO software. The general consensus was that adequate support was not provided by the software administrators leading to inconsistent use and frustration with the technology.

**Technical Support.** Technical support was not consistently provided by PLATO representatives. Interview findings revealed that the system often froze and shut down making it unreliable. The NSDC states that in order to be successful, e-learning requires specialized resources in addition to those necessary in face-to-face staff development. E-Learning requires an investment in the technology infrastructure including hardware, connectivity, and the software that support learning (NSDC, 2001).
**Misalignment to standards based curriculum.** An issue with PLATO reports that was repeated in several focus group interviews was that school based principals and faculty did not feel that PLATO district assessment tests paralleled the current grade level expectations. Teachers reported that because the district assessments are not aligned with the grade level expectations, that the results were not considered valid. District personnel stressed that this was one of the most problematic areas of PLATO, i.e., PLATO not been responsive to change requests by the neither district nor updates in state or federal educational guidelines. Several participants commented, “if the test packs can be aligned with the common core standards, we as individual schools can utilize those test results to guide instruction more specifically toward individual students.” Another comment along these lines, “the teachers don’t like using it at my school because of the Grade Level Expectation conflicts. It doesn’t match the GLEs so they are figuring out that we need to cover the GLEs. It doesn’t pay ‘cause it doesn’t match…”

**Student Barriers.** Other validity concerns were voiced throughout the interviews such as: student boredom, excessive learning curves for the learner; mismatch of grade and ability levels, “from the kids point of view, children’s point of view, they don’t like it. It is not engaging enough for them. There are not enough graphics.” Administrators reported that the testing process was difficult for younger 2nd grade students. Students have to manipulate the computer keys to access data to answer reading questions and their ability levels are not as good in 2nd grade. Teachers also reported in interviews that the Test Pack assessments were too long and students did and could not finish a test within a one-day span.

**Time as a Barrier.** Principal respondents were concerned that if schools are set up for students to use computer labs twice weekly, teachers do not have time to access reports and review them before bringing students to the computer lab again. “Time is the barrier when accessing reports. All of our classes go to the computer lab twice a week for 30-minute periods. One day they do English language arts and one day they do math. That’s why teachers don’t access reports anymore. It takes time to access the reports and they are busy when students are using the computer lab and don’t have time to access the reports.” The issue of time seemed to primarily to go back to the perception, “there is no easy way to do anything and also when you print a report, you really have to search. Like it’s not easy to find what you are looking for. You really have to go and open everything to find out what all you are looking for.”

**Conclusions and Recommendations**

Today’s students are expected to function in the 21st Century world managing data and information; the students have to be able to have access and to use multiple forms of technology. All schools need equitable access to technological resources. Educators must have ongoing professional development to learn how to integrate technology into common core lessons. Best practices from the U.S. Department of Education’s National Technology Plan *Transforming American Education: Learning Powered by Technology* (2010) suggests that districts upgrade equipment, software, and train teachers to use technology proficiently; however, limited funding mechanisms are attached to the suggestions. Greaves et al. (2010) reporting in the *Technology Factor: Nine Keys to Student Achievement and Cost-Effectiveness* suggest best practices for hardware implementation, software purchases, technical support as well as professional
development costs. Costs per year per student appear to be insignificant until figures hit millions of dollars based on student numbers. The confounding factor is that adding new software programs isn’t possible without equipment upgrades or replacement if computers and infrastructure are too old to support new software; consideration of both costs is necessary.

As digital age students become more prevalent in our society, computer assisted programs are an ideal way to incorporate educational technology into the schools and meet the needs of 21st century skills. Computer Assisted Instruction (CAI) or Integrated learning Systems (ILS) such as PLATO are Learning Management System (LMS) that offer, (1) Subject specific content or topics of focus; (2) Record keeping databases, (3) Management systems; (4) Individual supplemental learning; and (5) Enhanced learning based on student skill level. However, educators must realize that these programs are neither a One Size Fits All™ model nor are they intended to replace classroom instruction. The potential cost benefits can be measured in dollars and student achievement.

Integrated learning systems, such as PLATO, can be extremely effective as a comprehensive way to instruct, remediate, and accommodate individual student needs. However, as detailed throughout the report, school faculty reported a wide variation of uses and perceptions of effectiveness in teaching and learning.

While PLATO was established as a learning management system for all parish schools, individual schools added computer programs to enhance their instructional programs and meet student needs. One can imagine that there are advantages and disadvantages to having multiple resources. From a district-wide perspective, it is difficult to manage technology funds and plan for assessing the overall effectiveness of technology on student achievement. Program duplication is costly. Using data to inform instruction is at best difficult without comprehensive, measurable, and cohesive technology outcome data. With site-based management, variability in the how and when reports are utilized can be problematic. On the other hand, there are advantages to using a toolbox approach to technology. Individualized teaching and student learning is a hallmark characteristic of ILS and, of course, at the top of the list.

What students should know and be able to do is at the core of educational reform. PLATO and similar programs have the capacity to provide teachers and students with accurate prescriptions that match the learning goals. However, if some teachers use this data and some don’t, then what? This evaluation highlighted the need to consider multiple factors in choosing educational software. Teaching and learning, with or without computers, should be collaborative, meaningful, and continuous.

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Student Descriptions of Effective Teachers

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Abstract

This study identified characteristics of effective teachers, as described by preservice education majors enrolled in an introductory education course. Participants identified an outstanding K-12 teacher and wrote a letter to the teacher in which they described the characteristics and behaviors of the teacher. Letters were qualitatively analyzed and five themes emerged. The following characteristics of effective teachers, as perceived by former students, were identified: (a) caring, (b) high expectations, (c) pedagogical knowledge and skills, (d) passion for teaching, and (e) personality traits. Findings of this study will inform professional education programs on the advisement and development of students in preservice teacher education programs.

Introduction

A major emphasis of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) was the requirement that all teachers must be highly qualified. As Reese (2004) indicated, there was considerable confusion among policymakers as to what constituted a highly qualified teacher, and individual states determined the criteria for meeting the highly qualified mandate. Miners (2007) has since argued that “the quality of instruction in elementary classrooms has little to do with whether teachers have the credentials to meet the definition of ‘highly qualified’ under the No Child Left Behind law” (p. 20). Miners further noted that many teachers who are labeled as highly qualified tend to focus their instruction on basic skills instead of problem-solving skills, and students may not receive the emotional and instructional support that they need.

Viadero (2007) surveyed 349 school districts across the United States and two-thirds of the responding officials indicated that the NCLB requirement for highly qualified teachers had not resulted in improving student achievement or in improving the teaching force. More than half of the states that were surveyed indicated, “…the teacher-quality provisions’ impact on student achievement had been small or negligible” (p. 5). Evidence suggests that the criteria used by states in determining the highly qualified status of teachers may not necessarily be the same criteria used for determining teacher effectiveness.

Studies on the Tennessee Value Added Assessment System (TVAAS) provided convincing evidence of the impact that an effective teacher has on student achievement (Sanders, 2000; Sanders & Horn, 1998). In fact, these studies argue that teachers are the most significant factor relating to student gains on achievement tests from year to year. There is consensus among policymakers and educational leaders in regard to the importance of an effective teacher. As stated by McAleavy (2013), “Great schools always have great teachers, and as a result students do exceptionally well” (p. 14). However, there is less agreement on the attributes that describe effective teachers. As indicated by Anfara and Schmid (2007), “Since there is no universal agreement about what constitutes effectiveness, many scholars would argue that defining effective (or good, successful, quality) teaching is problematic” (p. 55).

Despite the lack of consensus regarding the characteristics that define effective teachers, there is a plethora of research that has studied these characteristics. According to Anfara and Schmid (2007), this research “…suggest that there are certain characteristics that are consistently associated with effective teaching” (p. 55). Lanouette (2012) identified the following characteristics of effective teachers: (a) mobile, (b) organized, (c) patient, (d) challenging, (e) adaptive, (f) syntactic, (g) passionate, (h)
interactive, (i) serious, and (j) caring. Several scholars have identified attributes in their research in addition to these characteristics listed by Lanouette.

Freeman (1988) surveyed 121 undergraduate psychology students using form S of the Counselor Rating Form (CRF-S). The CRF-S includes three subscales that measure (a) attractiveness, (b) expertness, and (c) trustworthiness. In addition to rating their instructors on the CRF-S, students also rated the effectiveness of their instructor according to a 7-point Likert scale that ranged from 1 (not at all effective) to 7 (very effective). Correlation analysis between the two measures showed significant and positive relationships between all three subscales on the CRF-S and effectiveness ratings. Students perceived effective teachers to be attractive in the sense that they were friendly, likeable, sociable, and warm. Instructors who demonstrated expertness, which is characterized as experienced, expert, prepared, and skillful, were perceived to be effective. Trustworthiness, an attribute that portrays an instructor as honest, reliable, sincere, or trustworthy, was also positively related to perceived effectiveness.

Poplin et al. (2011) identified 31 effective teachers from low-performing schools in Los Angeles County, California based on the high performance of students on standardized achievement tests, and they studied the characteristics of the teachers of these high performing students. Poplin et al. found that these effective teachers shared the following characteristics: (a) strictness, (b) instructional intensity, (c) movement, (d) traditional instruction, (e) exhorting virtues, and (f) strong and respectful relationships. Teachers in the study “…believe their strictness was necessary for effective teaching and learning and for safety and respect” (p. 41). Students believed that teachers were strict because they cared about the success and future of their students. Effective teachers maximized the amount of instructional time spent on teaching and learning. They moved around the classroom to monitor and respond to individual student needs. As teachers moved around the classroom, they interacted with students. Poplin et al. found: “Traditional, explicit, teacher-directed instruction was by far the most dominant instructional practice” (p. 41) used among the teachers studied. Effective teachers develop relationships with their students in which there is mutual respect. These teachers love and care for their students because they want them to be successful. They expected virtuous behavior from their students because they cared for them.

Williams, Sullivan and Kohn (2012) analyzed letters written by middle school and high school students in response to letters written by pre-service teacher education majors who asked students to describe an effective teacher. According to Williams et al., students wanted teachers who related to them and who cared about them. Students described effective teachers as those who listened to them and who teach for the purpose of making a difference in students’ lives. Students emphasized the importance of teachers having a personality. According to Williams et al., students desired teachers who are knowledgeable of the content and who can teach the content. Students wanted teachers who held high expectations and challenged them mentally. Students want teachers who manage their classes and students. Students described effective teachers as those who respect students and who are in turn respected by students.

Minor, Onwuegbuzie, Witcher, and James (2002) surveyed 134 preservice teachers and asked them to identify and define several attributes that characterize effective teachers. Minor et al. qualitatively analyzed the responses and identified the following seven themes: (a) student centered, (b) effective classroom and behavior manager, (c)
competent instructor, (d) ethical, (e) enthusiastic about teaching, (f) knowledgeable about subject, and (g) professional. Minor et al. calculated an endorsement rate for each theme and the most often cited characteristic was that of student centered. Descriptors of student centered included terms such as caring and love of students. Creativity and ability to spark a child’s interest were descriptive of a competent teacher. The ethical teacher was described using terms such as fairness, honest, and trustworthy.

McAleavy (2013) identified five characteristics of effective teachers that were common among teachers in schools characterized as maintaining “. . . consistently high standards of teaching or that have shown significant improvements to the quality of teaching” (p. 14). A common attribute among teachers in these schools was that they were knowledgeable of the subjects that they taught and they were able to engage students with the subject. McAleavy referred to this attribute as subject knowledge and beyond. Effective teachers demonstrate flexibility and responsiveness. In describing this attribute, McAleavy explained how teachers planned very carefully for instruction, but they recognized the need to modify the plan in response to student needs.

According to McAleavy (2013), effective teachers get the balance right between teacher input and independent learning. He explained, “. . . the best teachers are able to structure the lesson with the right balance to meet the outcomes that they set to achieve” (p. 15). These teachers use a variety of approaches and methods based on the context of learning. Effective teachers relate to students. They enjoy the company of the students they teach and they seek to know them as individuals. McAleavy described effective teachers as demonstrating a balance of pace and reflection. Teachers are focused on meeting curriculum expectations, yet they recognize the importance of opportunities to reflect on student learning.

Willems and Clifford (1999) described characteristics of effective middle school teachers. Middle school teachers need the Steve Martin, I'm a Wild and Crazy Guy attitude in that they are willing to use creativity to capture the attention of students. Teachers need to be full of energy and “. . . use their actions and craziness to enhance what they are teaching” (p. 734). With this attitude, they create a positive learning environment. Middle school teachers need to carefully plan and organize lessons to accommodate the concrete level of thinking characteristic of middle school students.

Willems and Clifford (1999) referred to the effective middle school teacher as a Mother Goose in that the teacher cares for and understands students. These teachers understand the developmental changes associated with adolescence and they are willing to give extra of themselves to help students achieve. Effective teachers recognize when students do not understand what they are teaching and they adjust their lessons accordingly. Willems and Clifford also characterized effective middle school teachers as Albert Einsteins, Thomas Edisons, and Charles Darwins in that they use their intellect and curiosity for planning creative teaching methods.

As previously indicated, there is a plethora of research on the characteristics of effective teachers. Anfara and Schmid (2007) explained that several characteristics are consistently associated with effective teachers. However, as Anfara and Schmid indicated and as demonstrated in the previous discussion of research on effective teachers, there is no consensus as to what constitutes effectiveness. The purpose of
this study was to determine the perceptions of recent high school graduates (freshman preservice education majors) on the characteristics of effective teachers.

Methods
Participants were undergraduate preservice teachers enrolled in two sections of an introductory-level education class for education majors. During the first week of class, participants were asked to identify a single teacher from their K-12 grades whom they would consider an outstanding teacher and whom may have inspired their decision to become a teacher. Participants were instructed to write a letter to the teacher and describe specific behaviors, characteristics, or events that they remembered and that reveal the teacher’s effectiveness. Fifty-two participants submitted letters and 20 participants were randomly selected from this group. The letters from 20 participants were inductively analyzed to identify themes related to participants’ perceptions of effective teachers. Eighteen of the 20 letters were written by female students. Among those teachers recognized as outstanding, 3 were male teachers and 15 were female teachers. The gender of two teachers could not be determined. Fifteen of the teachers addressed in participant letters were secondary teachers and three were elementary teachers. The grade level category for two teachers could not be determined. Although many of the secondary teachers were English teachers, other content areas were represented among the outstanding teachers to whom letters were addressed.

Qualitative data analysis was used to identify students’ perceptions of effective teachers. The constant comparative method of analysis, as explained by Merriam (2009), was applied to the participants’ letters to code and categorize similar units of content. The analysis process revealed several categories and themes relating students’ perceptions of characteristics of effective teachers.

Results
Characteristics of effective teachers reported in the literature were used to label themes that emerged from the analysis of participant letters. Five major themes emerged and they included the following: (a) caring, (b) high expectations, (c) pedagogical knowledge and skills, (d) passion for teaching content, and (e) personality traits. The theme most supported in participants’ letters was that of caring. This theme characterizes effective teachers as caring for the well being of individual students and caring that students acquire the knowledge and skills to be successful in life. There was substantial evidence to support the perception that effective teachers have high expectations of their students, both behavioral and academic. Participants acknowledged the pedagogical skills of their previous teachers. They appreciated creative teaching methods that held their interest and engaged them in the lesson. Participants recognized teachers who encouraged critical thinking about subject content and who responded to their learning needs. Participants referred to several personality traits in characterizing their teachers. Students develop relationships with teachers whom they perceive as trustworthy, and participants described their previous teachers in this regard. Participant letters also revealed admiration for teachers who are sincere. This desired trait was expressed through various descriptions and experiences shared about teachers. Participants described their teachers as having a passion for teaching. The final themes and categories are presented in the following sections.
Caring

In analyzing the content of participant letters, any statements and descriptions that characterized the teacher as caring about the student as an individual or as caring about the academic success of students were included as support for the single theme that was labeled as caring. Participants often cited specific events that occurred in their lives for which they received emotional support from a teacher. For example, Participant 17 recalled an incident in which she felt isolated and rejected by her peers. She explained how the teacher comforted her:

You poked your head in the door and motioned for me to follow you across the hall. You simply asked how I was doing and didn’t hesitate to grab me when I burst into tears. You will never understand how much I needed that or how much that meant to me.

Several participants referred to the facial expressions of their teachers as evidence that they cared about students. Participant 11 wrote the following: “As I remember the earnest look on your face when we talked, I realize you really did care about me, just as you cared about what happened to . . . [deleted student names] or any of the other students you've ever had.” Another participant offered a vivid description of the genuine care that the teacher had for students. Participant 6 explained:

It is one thing to hear a teacher say she will miss her students but to actually have one cry because she had to leave for a couple of months is another. You were not afraid to show or share your true feelings.

There were other participants who recognized their teachers as caring. Participant 5 communicated the following: “You loved and cared so much for every one of your students.” Participant 13 wrote: “If myself or any of the students needed to talk about school or anything outside of school, you were willing to listen and give your opinion when you thought it was appropriate.”

Effective teachers care about the success of their students and they give of their time and energy to help students learn and be successful. Participant 1 reflected on the difficulties experienced in writing a research paper and how the teacher assisted with the assignment. Participant 1 described the experience as follows:

I was always a little behind with everything and you noticed that I was struggling with it [it refers to a research paper]. You had me stay after class one day and you really helped me and motivated me to finish it. You wanted me to do well on it . . . . I never had someone so concerned about me and want me to succeed. You believed in me when I didn't. Just from the two or three sessions we had, I knew that you cared.

Participant 5 recalled how a teacher spent additional time in helping her learn to read. She wrote the following comments to her previous teacher:

You took time and help [sic] me sound out and finally figure out the words. You had to do this quite often with me, but you never gave up or became irate with my constant questions. The following school year I was reading on a sixth grade reading level. I believe it was because you cared and took the time for me.

Several participants expressed their appreciation to teachers who showed concern for students’ achievement. Participant 7 stated: “Second, I look up to you because you try to help students succeed in your class.” Participant 8 shared the following praise for
the teacher: “You also took the time to explain things and showed us that you really care about the students.”

Caring teachers recognize individual and developmental needs that extend beyond teaching and learning of content. Participant 16 praised a teacher for this attribute in stating, “Thank you for caring about the future of your students and those you can reach otherwise. . . . You have a keen ability to see people where they are, and see where they have the potential to go.” In describing how the former teacher influenced her educational philosophy, Participant 16 stated: “I learned that giving students a voice and a chance to discover that voice is more important than teaching what they need to know on the next test.”

**High Expectations**

Students appreciate the high expectations of their previous teachers. Students acknowledged teachers for both their behavioral and academic expectations and used descriptors such as strict, hard, and challenging in their communication to teachers. For example, Participant 2 stated: “I have never been challenged so much in any other class (including my college-level classes), but I also have never been so eager to participate or step up to that challenge thanks to you.” Another student, Participant 3, wrote: “I am writing you a letter to explain how you have been such an encouragement, a great role model, and hard but extremely helpful teacher to me.”

In characterizing their previous teachers as hard and challenging, students also credited these expectations for their positive learning experiences and development into young adults. As indicated by Participant 3 in closing the letter: “Finally you have helped me more than you can imagine in academics. You are probably the hardest teacher I have ever had.” Participant 3 continued to praise the previous teacher for high expectations by stating: “You made English hard but fun. Expectations were there, and the standards were high, but that helped me more than any other teacher I have ever had.” Teachers with high expectations are recognized as such by all students on the school campus. As Participant 10 explained: “I remember walking into your class on the first day of my sophomore year of high school. I was terrified because your reputation of being challenging and strict had preceded you.” Despite their reputation as hard and strict, teachers with high expectations are willing to help students meet their expectations. For example, Participant 1 indicated: “I also knew how many stories I had heard about you and how strict you were with the writing.” In reflecting on how the teacher had stayed after school to provide individual assistance, Participant 1 continued: “I never had anyone so concerned about me and want me to succeed.” Although students perceived their best teachers as strict and challenging, they were eager to attend the classes with these teachers. As Participant 3 explained: “I want my students to think of me as a hard teacher, but I want them to also be happy and enjoy coming to class. That is how your class always was for me.”

**Pedagogical Knowledge and Skills**

Effective teachers were recognized for their pedagogical skills. Students described several behaviors and characteristics of their teachers that reflect a keen aptitude for teaching. Content analysis grouped the following four categories of pedagogical skills into a single theme labeled as *Pedagogical Knowledge and Skills*: (a) creative lessons, (b) engage students in learning, (c) responsive to students, and (d) encourage critical thinking. Participants perceived effective teachers as creative in their lesson delivery.
Effective teachers engage students in learning and they are responsive to student learning needs. Students appreciate teachers who challenge them to think critically and who relate subject content to their lives. Participant comments in support for each of these four pedagogical skills are presented in the sections that follow.

**Creative Lessons.** Participants praised the creativity of their previous teachers and described specific learning activities they experienced in the classrooms. Participant 5 explained how a teacher used songs to teach students multiplication. Participant 5 also described how the teacher used an egg carton as a bird nest and chocolate candies as bird eggs to teach students how to count. Participant 5 wrote the following to the teacher: “You were the most creative teacher I have ever had. I look back and can think of many things you had taught us using your creativity.” Participant 11 recalled how a foreign language teacher used puppets and stuffed animals to teach simple phrases in the foreign language. Participant 10 wrote the following to a teacher: “I hope to implement your dynamic and creative teaching styles into my own teaching, as well as your compassion for your students.”

**Engage Students in Learning.** Students are motivated to learn and will engage in learning when lessons are interesting and relevant to them. Participant 2 wrote the following: “Right off the bat, you had a hold on our class’ imagination and determination.” Participant 8 attributed interest in science to the teacher and wrote: “You made learning interesting and enjoyable.” In complimenting a history teacher, Participant 13 stated, “You made class very interesting and made a sometimes boring subject easy to learn.” Participant 7 told a teacher, “I do not think I slept once in your class. Every class period was full of learning.” Students often referred to teachers’ classes as fun and students were eager to attend class. Participant 19 told a teacher the following: “You made class so much fun and I was always so excited to come to class!” Participant 20 stated: “You made learning a fun experience right from the start.”

**Responsive to Students.** Effective teachers evaluate the needs of their students and respond to those needs. As Participant 13 explained: “I still remember how much time you would spend outside of class to make comments on everyone’s papers so that we would know what to work on and what we were doing well.” Participant 6 complimented the teacher in stating: “You took your time to explain things and even participated in group activities like you were a student. If things in your curriculum were not understandable you would change it around to accommodate everyone.” Participant 7 stated: “... when I asked questions I knew they would be answered immediately.”

**Encourage Critical Thinking.** Students appreciated teachers who challenged their thinking about subject matter. As Participant 7 communicated to a teacher: “I loved the way you made us think outside of the box. Not every problem has only one solution.” Similarly, Participant 2 stated: “You empowered us to know that the textbook doesn’t always hold the answers, and that by thinking outside the box we can learn more about ourselves.”

**Passion for Teaching**

Participants used descriptions such as energetic and enthusiastic to characterize their teachers’ passion for teaching. As expressed by Participant 2, “From day one, you were energetic, wise, and stern. . . .” Participant 8 wrote: “The most lasting impression that you’ve made on me that has impacted my outlook on life is your passion for teaching.” Participant 13 described the passion of a teacher as follows: “You had a
great passion for the history lessons that you taught us.” Participant 10 described how one teacher dressed in a toga to teach Shakespeare’s plays and praised the teacher’s passion by stating: “It was as if your objective in your classroom wasn’t just to teach from the test, but to teach from the heart.”

**Personality Traits**

Participant letters recognized several personality traits that characterize outstanding teachers. In particular, several participants referred to their former teacher as a role model. The characterization of a previous teacher as a role model reflects a combination of personality traits. Those traits were identified through the constant comparison of content both within and across participant letters. The following personality traits were identified: (a) sincere, (b) trustworthy, and (c) humorous. The sections below present evidence in support of these traits.

**Sincere.** The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines sincere as “having or showing true feelings that are expressed in an honest way” (sincere, 2013). The dictionary also includes the words genuine, authentic, and heartfelt as words that are related to sincere. Participant letters included numerous adjectives to describe the heartfelt and genuine feelings that teachers demonstrated toward students. Participant 6 stated: “Your loving attitude toward children truly defined the law ‘No Child Left Behind.’” Participant 6 continued to praise the teacher in stating, “You were not afraid to show or share your true feelings.” When closing the letter, Participant 17 conveyed the following to the teacher: “You were the most human teacher I’ve ever had, and I will never forget you for that. I want to be just like you when I grow up!” Participant 2 described the heartfelt and genuine feelings of a teacher as follows:

I never felt like “just a number” in your class. It seemed that you knew each of your students on a spiritual level and understood us as people, not as just another class of students. You always worked beside us, not above us.

Participant 13 referred to the authenticity of a teacher in describing the teacher as humble. Participant 13 stated: “I also respected the fact that you were willing to tell us that you weren’t the right person to ask in some situations. It is humbling to see that someone is willing to admit that they don’t know everything.” Participant 10 recalled a tragic event that occurred during the school year and described how the teacher comforted students in the class after the death of a classmate. Participant 10 explained:

Our class bonded with you in a way that can’t be explained because you showed strength and courage when the rest of us were afraid. . . . We clung to you for security and strength because you had showed us that before.

**Trustworthy.** Participants often referred to their teachers as friends and in this regard, participants depended upon and confided in their teachers. For example, Participant 6 wrote the following, “I could come to you with any problem and know that my secret was safe with you.” Participant 2 also expressed a sense of trust in the teacher: “From day one, you were energetic, wise, and stern, but at the same time we knew we could trust you with anything in the world. Participant 14 was especially grateful for the friendship shared with a teacher. She explained:

The best lesson I learned from you was how to be a true friend. Any day I needed advice, encouragement, or a shoulder to cry on, you would drop
what you were doing and be my friend. Every person needs someone he/she can always depend on. Some don’t have ideal families; some don’t have friends. I learned from you that I need to be not only a teacher to my future students but also a friend when they have no one else they can trust. I’m so glad I was blessed with a true friend like you.

Participants appreciated teachers who treated all students fairly. Participant 20 recognized the fairness of the teacher in stating: “While in your class, you would never hear a complaint about unfairness or rude behavior. That type of behavior was clearly unacceptable in your eyes.” Similarly, Participant 14 appreciated the fair treatment of students and respected the teacher for relating to all students. Participant 14 wrote:

Many teachers choose their “favorites” because of the grades they make or the sports they play, but I remember noticing in . . . [deleted reference to specific class] class how close you were to all of your students. Each one had potential in your eyes. By this example, you taught me how to be fair to every pupil. I now see how every student blossoms when he/she receives direct attention.

Participants described their teachers as respected and having morals. For example, Participant 7 stated, “Not only are you a great math teacher, you are also an amazing woman. I look up to you in so many different ways.” Participant 20 also described how students respected the teacher: “We all looked up to you and wanted to do our best because that was what you expected. . . . You are such a strong individual with established values and you try very hard.” Participant 3 admired the teacher’s morals and stated: “You are also an amazing role model for your students. You have your morals and principles that you let us know. I have never seen you compromise any of your beliefs for a student or anyone else for that matter.”

Humorous. Participant letters described teachers as humorous. In reflecting on an experience during which the teacher explained a difficult concept, Participant 1 wrote to the teacher: “You even made it humorous.” Another participant letter complimented the teacher for using humor to welcome students to the class at the beginning of the school year. Participant 10 stated: “Instead of opening class with a lecture about how much work we’re going to be doing, you began telling a joke. . . a pun to be exact.” Participant 11 simply stated: “You were funny.”

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to identify the perceptions of pre-service teachers regarding the characteristics of effective K-12 teachers. Several themes emerged from the letters participants wrote to their former K-12 teachers. These themes included: (a) caring, (b) high expectations, (c) pedagogical knowledge and skills, (d) passion for teaching, and (e) personality traits. Several specific pedagogical skills were identified when coding and categorizing the data. The categories of pedagogical knowledge and skills included: (a) creative lessons, (b) engage students in learning, and (c) responsive to students. Similarly, there were three specific personality traits that emerged from data analysis. These traits included: (a) sincere, (b) trustworthy, and (c) humorous.

The above themes and categories reflect characteristics of effective teachers that were previously identified in other studies. For example, Lanouette (2012) listed caring as one of 10 characteristics of effective teachers. Willems and Clifford (1999) referred to
the effective middle school teacher as a Mother Goose because the teacher cares for students and wants them to be successful. Similarly and according to Poplin et al. (2011), effective teachers care about the success and future of their students. High school students in the study by Williams et al. (2012) indicated a preference for teachers who related to them and who cared about them.

Minor et al. (2002) used the term student centered to refer to descriptions of effective teachers as caring and as showing love for students. This characteristic was reported more frequently than any others Minor et al. identified. Approximately 55% of preservice teachers listed descriptors associated with the theme student centered.

Another theme identified in this study was that participants perceived effective teachers as having high expectations. Participants described their teachers as strict and challenging. These attributes were identified as characteristics of effective teachers in other studies as well. Lanouette (2012) included challenging as one of his ten characteristics of effective teachers. Poplin et al. (2011) used the term strictness in describing effective teachers from Los Angeles County, California. Teachers explained their strictness as necessary for teaching and learning. Students explained the strictness as reflective of the teacher’s concern for their future. According to Williams et al. (2012), middle school and high school students want teachers who hold high expectations and who challenge them mentally.

In this study, personality traits emerged as a theme associated with participant perceptions of effective teachers. Pope (2006) described personality as the conduit through which humans interact” (p. 26) and, because the process of teaching and learning involves human interaction, personality of both the student and teacher must impact the process. Pope expressed a need for understanding the relationship between the personality of the teacher and teacher effectiveness. He further recognized the difficulty in studying this relationship because “… a single definition of personality does not yet exist” (p. 26). Identifying personality traits from participant letters proved to be challenging due to this lack of a common definition for specific traits.

Freeman (1988) found strong correlations between teacher effectiveness and the three constructs measured on the CRF-S instrument. Personality traits identified from participant letters to teachers in this current study were similar to the constructs measured on the CRF-S. In particular, one of the three constructs measured on the CRF-S is trustworthiness. According to Freeman, descriptors of trustworthiness include honest, reliable, sincere, and trustworthy. All four of these descriptors were used to describe effective teachers in the participant letters that were analyzed for this current study. In fact, two of the three categories that emerged from the content of participant letters were labeled as sincere and trustworthy, and both of these personality traits were measured as a single construct referred to as trustworthiness on the CRF-S.

A third personality trait identified from participant letters was humorous. Williams, Sullivan, and Kohn (2012) also identified humor as a descriptor of effective teachers. Middle school and high school students in their study desired their teachers to be fun and have a sense of humor. Willems and Clifford (1999) emphasized the importance for middle school teachers to use their craziness in capturing the attention of students.

Scholars emphasize the importance of pedagogical skills in effective teaching, and pedagogical skills emerged as a theme in this current study. Specifically, this study identified the following pedagogical skills as characteristic of effective teachers: (a)
creative lessons, (b) engage students in learning, and (c) responsive to students. McAleavy (2013) described effective teachers as having flexibility and responsiveness. He also described effective teachers as knowledgeable of the content they teach and able to engage students in the content as well.

Poplin et al. (2011) identified movement as a characteristic of effective teachers in Los Angeles County, California schools. In describing this attribute, Poplin et al. explained that effective teachers constantly move around the classroom. In this regard, they are capable of monitoring and responding to student needs. Minor et al. (2002) found that middle school and high school students communicated a desire for teachers who are creative. Willems and Clifford (1999) referred to effective middle school teachers as Albert Einsteins, Thomas Edisons, and Charles Darwins because they must use their intellect and creativity in developing lessons that engage middle school students. Minor et al. (2002) identified competent instructor as a theme in their study, and descriptions for this theme included creativity and ability to spark a child’s interest.

The findings of this study are supported by and contribute to the current literature on characteristics of effective teaching. Although different terminology may be used to describe a behavior or attribute of an effective teacher, there are common characteristics found among all studies. These common characteristics provide for a general description of the effective teacher. However, there is need to study the characteristics of effective teachers among more specific groups of students.

There were 20 participants in this study; 15 of these participants wrote their letters to high school teachers and 3 wrote letters to elementary grade teachers. Most of the 20 participants in this study were recent high school graduates, as they were enrolled in an introductory-level education course for undergraduates. It is possible and likely that the participants reflected on their most recent experiences and this may explain why most of the teachers addressed by their letters were secondary teachers. Therefore, the perspectives of those who are describing effective teachers are those of recent high school graduates, and the teachers whom they are describing as effective are mostly high school students. Most of the research reviewed for this paper surveyed older students. I did not locate any research that studied the perspectives of students in elementary school grades.

Willems and Clifford (1999) pointed out the challenges that middle school teachers experience because of the developmental, both physical and cognitive, changes that occur in students at this age. Similarly, young children in lower grade levels have different social, emotional, and cognitive needs. Future research on the characteristics of effective teachers should differentiate the attributes for elementary, middle, and high school grade levels, as the developmental needs of students would differ across these grade levels. Although the methodology would be challenging, a study from the perspective of the elementary child would identify attributes of teachers in the elementary grades.

Eighteen of the 20 participants in this study were females. Thus, the perceptions reflected in the results of this study are primarily those of females who are entering college directly from high schools. Future research should explore perceptions of effective teachers from the perspectives of diverse groups, especially with respect to gender and ethnic diversity.
References
Developing Children’s Positive Attitudes On Diversity

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Abstract:

The purpose of this presentation/article is to raise and discuss some theoretical and practical aspects of developing positive attitudes on diversity in the minds of young children both in home settings and in early childhood classroom settings. Among other things, it explores the roles that educators of young children in early childhood education classroom settings and families in home settings can play to promote positive attitudes on diversity with particular emphasis on race. The information for this presentation is based on the author's many years of experience of working with young children, literature review and data collected from early childhood education teachers and parents through interviews. The final analysis of the data demonstrates that young children starting from the age of three years not only notice racial differences, but also throw different race related comments.

The Formation of Desired and Undesired Behaviors:

It is a common sense that the formation of desired or undesired behaviors starts early in childhood period. The author of this short article believes that almost all societies recognize this fact. In other words, it does not need an expert to say that desired or undesired behavior starts to form early in life. For example, in Ethiopia where the author this article was born, people in rural areas always warn that if someone is looking for acceptable behaviors/characters from her/his children, she/he needs to start working in the early age of the child while the child is still being breast fed (Wubie, 1993, 2001, 2008). To strengthen this principle, people in rural Ethiopia always tell a story about how a young man’s undesired behavior was formed early in his life. According to the story, there was a young man who was accused of stealing an ox from a peasant farmer. The young man was caught red-handed while stealing the ox. He was taken to a court to face punishment. While the judge was examining his case, the young man requested the judge to give him a chance of saying something. When he was given the chance by the judge, the young man narrated the following: “When I was very little boy, I stole an egg from a neighbor’s home. My mother praised me. When I was a bit older, I stole a hen, my mother thanked me. Now I stole this ox”. Having said this, he demanded the judge if could ask a question. When the judge allowed him to do so, he asked “Who is guilty me or my mother?” After a lot of thinking, the judge passed an order so that the mother would be put in jail instead of her son. Actually, people say that this is a true story. But, it is always used to teach parents or caretakers on how to raise their young children. The essence of this story is that when that little boy first stole an egg from a neighbor’s home, his mother would have discouraged him by telling him that taking somebody's property was unacceptable and punishable behavior.

Although many people in the rural areas of Ethiopia do not have formal education, they teach their children through stories and direct talking what they think are important for the life of their children and the society in general. For example, as stated in Wubie (2005, p.17), “Respect for God, parents and elders, love toward extended family, obedience, concern for others, remorse, empathy, forgiveness, self-discipline, truthfulness, honesty, sharing and cooperation as opposed to individualism” are among the values that are highly emphasized” by many parents living in rural Ethiopia.
Particularly, respect to parents is highly valued. Actually, “next to God parents, are respected as creator their children” (Wubie, 1993, p.10).

Are Young Children Color Blind?
As discussed in Wubie (2001, 2008), many researchers emphasized that children at a very young age notice racial differences. They insist that children recognize colours from early on (http://www4.uwm.edu/letsci/africology/faculty/upload/children_colorblind.pdf retrieved on 11/8/2013). “Children are not color blind. Infants notice racial cues, and by the age of three or four most children have a rudimentary concept of race... and can accurately apply socially conventional labels of “black” and “white” to pictures, dolls and people” (Ramsey, 1995, p. 18, cited in Wubie, 2001, p.133, Wubie, 2008, p.133). Also, Derman-Sparks (1994) told stories such as how she witnessed a three-year old child refusing to hold the hand of a black child and how she witnessed a five year old boy saying, “You can’t play with them because they have Chinese eyes” (Cited in Wubie, 2001, 2008).

The narratives of the teachers and the parents whom the author of this article interviewed support the essence of such literature. For example, the following statement from a teacher substantiates this idea:

> You know, sometimes you hear some children saying things like “he does not look nice because he black, boys don’t play in the home corner, you can’t do this because you are a girl”, you know, they comment stuff like that (Cited in Wubie, 2001, 2008)

As explained in Wubie (2001, 2008), during interview, two teachers narrated their experiences in relation to race. As one of them recounted, she was teaching young children about different hair styles by showing hairs of children from different races like black, white and Asian. She tried to explain that though different everybody has beautiful hair. A four and half year old child pointed his finger to a picture of a black child’s hair in the book and said, “That is not beautiful”. When she asked him why, he said, “Cos my mom told me that black kids’ hair looks funny and ugly”. According to the second teacher’s story, while she was interacting with a group of children, she and the children were chanting “enie, meenie, miney, moe catch a tiger by the toe”. One of the children chanted “enie, meenie, miney, moe catch a ‘nigger’ by the toe”. When the child was asked why he told the teacher that he heard it from his father.

Also as stated and discussed in Wubie (2001, 2008), a mother recalls her friend’s experiences in an early childhood education setting. Her friend went to a day care to participate in the celebration of her daughter’s birthday. She was sitting around a table with her daughter, the teachers and other children were sitting. She asked a little boy who was sitting beside her what his name was. The little boy told her his name. Then, the mother told him that her daughter always mentioned his name at home and she liked him so much. The little boy then said, “But I don’t like her”. The mother asked “Why?” The little boy answered, “Because she is black”.

The fact is that children from different races make comments. In other words, it is not only little white children who make race related comments. It is also little black children. In fact, the following story from a teacher support this fact:

> It was lunch time. I was listening to news from a radio. A five year old little black boy came to me and said, “Why do you
listen to this radio?” I said, “Why not?” He said, “That is the
white man’s garbage”. I was shocked to hear this from a five
year old child. You see, racism does not come from one
side. It comes from all directions. It is not only a white/black
issue. It is an issue that exists between all races: white,
black, yellow and brown. I think we should try to fight racism
that comes from all directions (Cited in Wubie, 2001, 2008).

Based on the narratives of the few teachers and parents cited in this article, very young
children, black or white, voice negative words or phrases in relation to race. The
question is how do such young and innocent children get race related and negative
words or phrases? Quite a lot of articles (Mock, 1986; Kind & Chipman, 1994; Derman-
Sparks, 1994) stressed that these voices are not the voices of young children. Rather,
they are voices of adults picked by young children from the surroundings.

On the other hand, other studies suggest that “Infants are able to nonverbally categorize
people by race and gender starting from six months of age” (Winkler, 1997). Actually, in
a study conducted on 200 children of mixed race children of age 6 months to six years,
researchers found out that the six months old infants “looked significantly longer at
unfamiliar face of a different race than they did at unfamiliar face of their same race”.
on 11/5/2013)

However, as stressed in Wubie (2001, 2008), the author of this article believes that
children are like mirrors and tape recorders through which one could see adult’s
behaviors/actions and hear their voices. The voices could come from parents, from
family members, from peers, from the neighbourhood and from the playgrounds. In
other words, the negative words may not be the creation of the little children. Instead
the little children could be echoing the voices of adults or the voices of older children.
The point here is that adults who are interacting with young children need to mind what
they say and do.

The Roles of Young Children’s Teachers and Parents:
Early childhood education teachers and parents are not the only teachers of young
children. Peers, neighbors, mass media and other environmental circumstances are
teachers of young children as they imitate or pick good or bad things from their
surroundings. In spite of that, however, the role of school teachers and parents is
immense in shaping children’s behaviors, skills and knowledge. They need to examine
their own beliefs on diversity and be open to the implementation of anti-bias curriculum
11/7/2013). It is important to develop and design techniques as to how to use race or
other diversity related incidents as learning opportunity forum or center of interest. In
other words, young children’s teachers should never ignore when little children mention
race related things. Instead they need to use that incident as a center of interest and by
making it part of the daily or the weekly classroom curriculum. The following statements
from a teacher stresses on how to deal with such issues:

If a teacher comes across a child who says “I don’t like to play with that
Chinese boy or with that black boy or with that white boy”, she would not
try to silence the child by whispering “sh, sh, sh, sh, don’t say that
anymore or I don’t want you to say that kind of thing anymore. Instead,
she would make the issue one of the topics of the day” (cited in Wubie, 2008, p.134)

What this means is that the teacher can use the incident to create a teachable moment. She/he can tell stories, read books, encourage children to draw pictures and do other activities that can help to develop positive attitudes toward diversity. She/he would encourage each child to tell how children of different faces and colours could be good friends. She/he would create different methods to show the faces of children of different races and discuss how everybody is beautiful and loveable.

The same is true with parents. Parents can play a large role in inculcating positive attitudes on diversity in the mind of their young children. Among other things, whenever, their children comment negative words or phrases with regard to diversity, parents or caregivers need to be able to change that incident to a teachable moment. Also, it is important that parenting programs aimed at training parents need to include the issue of diversity in the contents of the curriculum.

Conclusion:
The analysis in this short article highlights how very young children voice race related and negative comments. The article also emphasizes the roles that young children’s teachers and parents play in combating negative attitudes in the mind of children. Here, it is very important to note that to have negative attitudes or to develop hatred toward one another is not healthy for the emotional and the mental development of young children. For that matter, it is not also healthy for grownups. In fact, numerous research articles warn that hatred creates frustration, inferiority, superiority, over-confidence, jealousy and lack of self-esteem preventing from becoming independent and responsible for oneself [(http://www.charminghealth.com/applicability/hate.htm Retrieved on 11/9/2013)]. Actually, “racism attacks young children’s growing sense of group as well as an individual’s identity” (Derman-Sparks, 1994, p. 68, cited in Wubie, 2008). In that case, as stated in Wubie (2008, p.135), parents always need to keep in mind that “to have positive attitude toward each other and to interact in harmony with one another is a source of emotional and mental health for their children which eventually promotes healthy and peaceful relationships among members of future society”. Overall, if one wishes to have children who are healthy mentally, socially, emotionally and physically, one of the major instruments is to develop love toward one another.

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11/7/2013)


