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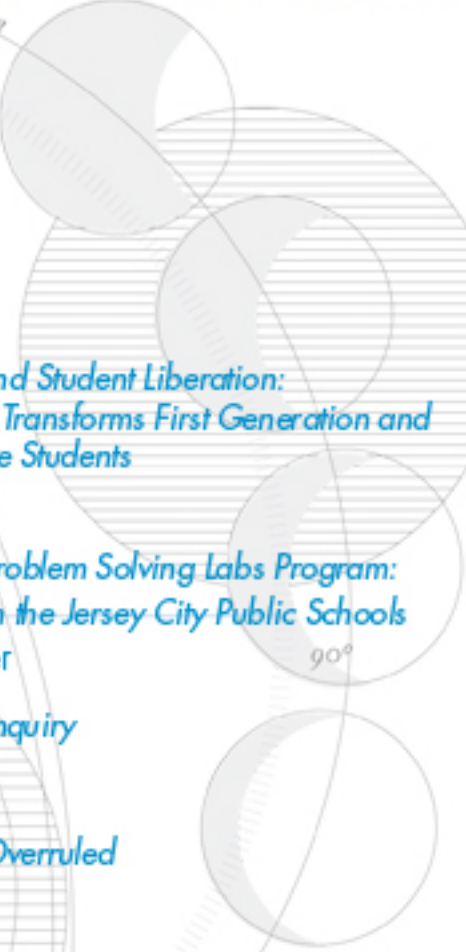
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Critical Thinking



Critical Thinking, Dissent, and Student Liberation

How Liberal Arts Education Transforms First-Generation Low Socio-Economic College Students

Erik E. Morales

Assistant Professor of Elementary & Secondary Education

Findings from a recent qualitative study of 20 working class/first-generation college students capture critical points in their college careers during which they were changed significantly as a result of exposure to liberal arts teaching and learning. This diverse student sample (10 female/10 male, 6 African American, 8 Hispanic, and 6 White) comes from a variety of racial, ethnic, and geographic backgrounds, but all have encountered freeing experiences as a result of their liberal arts coursework. A major finding presented and explored here is the role that critical thinking and validation of dissent played in liberating students from limiting and restrictive thinking. How this dynamic played out and the types of classroom assignments responsible are presented below.

Much research has been done documenting the financial, political, and professional consequences of a college education (Bowen, 1977; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). The vast majority of this important work uses large quantitative databases to draw statistical correlations and conclusions as to what a college education means on a macro level, and more often than not, these conclusions support the importance and value of higher education among large populations in terms of persistence, future earnings,

ideological values, and political persuasions (Attinnasi, 1989; Mayhew, Wolniak, & Pascarella, 2008; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1998, 2005; Richardson & Skinner, 1992).

Specific to the benefits of a quality liberal arts education, research has ascribed increased levels of truthfulness and humility (Cronan, 1999), commitments to justice (Hill, 1994), and increased active citizenship (Rosenfeld, 1985). Furthermore, Bowen's (1977) research found that those who were college educated

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

*I Know It When I See It**Steve Haber, Editor, The Academic Forum*

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Dr. Steven Haber

I have always had a problem with the term “critical thinking.” There are so many definitions and no two scholars can ever seem to agree on the meaning. More commonly, there tends to be an increasingly lengthy laundry list in the education literature of skills, attitudes, modes, and methods of inquiry associated with this illusive skill or set of skills. I prefer not to dwell on the nuances of the various defini-

tions but instead am reminded of the famous quote from Supreme Court justice Potter Stewart, “I know it when I see it.” He was referring to pornography, but I think the quote is equally serviceable in discussions of critical thinking. Having said that, I believe there is value in trying to rely on some formal definition before we start looking. The early 20th century educator John Dewey did not use the term “critical thinking,” but instead referred to what he called “reflective thinking” (Dewey, 1933).

Active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusion to which it tends.

I’d like to add to this quote another one by Einstein who purportedly said, “Education is what remains after one has forgotten everything he learned in school.”

Taken together, these two quotes suggest that in order for thinking to be critical, and by that I mean important, useful, and memorable, there must be some degree of active ownership on the part of the student, plus engagement, plus a challenge to existing beliefs. Thinking back to my own education I can think of a few examples of instances when I felt I was really thinking critically. Most of these moments involved projects which I was assigned to do at home, either by myself or with others. I remember one project in sixth grade where we had to create a visual demonstration of the blending of primary colors of light using a color wheel. The instructions, as I recall, were rather open ended.

Any materials could be used to make the project. The only criterion was that there should be a color wheel displaying the primary colors, red, green, and blue and that the wheel had to spin fast enough for the colors to appear to blend together.

I remember that I decided to create the color wheel first because that seemed like the easiest part. Selecting a shirt cardboard, I cut out a circle using a coffee can as a template. Then I used the same coffee can to trace the outer edges of blue, green, and red construction paper before cutting them into three equal sized sections of the color wheel. Once these were glued in place, I only needed to find something to make it spin. I found in the attic a small electric motor from an “Erector Set.” Using a sharp screw, I pierced the center of the color wheel and mounted it onto the spindle of the motor and plugged it in. It only spun for a few seconds before the color wheel flew off and sailed across the room, but in those few seconds, I suddenly understood what I was supposed to learn.

Once the color wheel started spinning fast enough, the three primary colors appeared to blend together to form what looked like a light gray, almost whitish hue. The faster it spun, the lighter the color appeared. And that meant white light, which appears to be the absence of color, is actually a combination of colors blended together. To prove this, we only have to look at the color spectrum that occurs when white light is refracted into its component wavelengths using a prism, which we discovered by doing another project that involved the borrowing of some hanging crystals from a chandelier. It has been more than forty years since I did the color wheel project, but I still remember it vividly and think about it often.

What made this project so successful in terms of occasioning critical thinking is that it conformed to both Dewey’s and Einstein’s criteria. In order to do the project, I had to be active—finding and constructing the materials, creating a design, and figuring out how to make it work. I was engaged in the project because I enjoy building things, solving problems, and also because I was curious to see what the outcome would be. And finally, the project most definitely challenged my existing beliefs. Although the assignment did not call for us to identify a hypothesis beforehand, clearly I had one, and that is that dark colors such as red, green and blue would appear to form a dark color when spun, just as they would if one blended those colors of paint together. That was Dewey’s, “...consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowl-

edge....” But when the spinning wheel produced the unexpected light grayish color, I was forced to revise the hypothesis “...in the light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusion to which it tends.” Finally, connecting back to the Einstein quote, this project taught me the important lesson that there is great value in questioning and re-examining what we think we already know.

In this issue of *The Academic Forum*, we will examine critical thinking and problem solving from an interdisciplinary perspective. Erik Morales examines the transformative aspect of critical thinking among first generation college students. William Wattenmaker reports on an exciting project called Social Problem Solving Labs, a collaboration between New Jersey City University, University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, and the Jersey City Public Schools. Jason Martinek discusses critical inquiry in the teaching of history. Bruce Chadwick demonstrates the critical thinking incorporated into mock trials in his first-year composition classes. Tracy Amerman, Audrey Burns and Jo-Anne Mecca compare the critical thinking aspects in the teaching of Special Ed. Kindergarten and in teacher training courses. Robert Thurston of the OSP Program discusses the critical and creative thinking aspects of teaching science fiction. Rubina Vohra and Ivan Steinberg discuss the need to consider the realities of the job market as they relate to the university curriculum. In a similar vein, Basanti Chakraborty assesses the state of critical thinking in the university curriculum. Finally, we would like to thank Audrey Fisch and her publisher Helm Information for gra-

ciously allowing us to reprint an excerpt from her recently published book, *Frankenstein: Icon of Modern Culture*.

For the 2010-11 issue *The Academic Forum* is seeking articles on the creative process. (See Call for Papers, p.45) We are particularly interested in pedagogy, research, theory, best practices, performance, and assessment. Articles that are accessible to non-experts in the field are especially welcome.

As always, we express our deepest appreciation to all of our contributors for their efforts in producing an outstanding collection of articles. Special thanks to Interim Vice President for Academic Affairs Jo Bruno for her continuing support of the publication. Ellen Quinn did an outstanding job of layout and design. Thanks to Laura Wadenpfehl for her careful and thoughtful proofreading. Thanks also to the editorial board for their comments and helpful suggestions: Joan Bailey, Ron Bogusz, John Collins, Erik Morales, Ellen Quinn, and Laura Wadenpfehl. On behalf of the editorial board, we wish the NJCU community a restful and productive summer.

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THE NJCU-UMDNJ SOCIAL PROBLEM SOLVING LABS PROGRAM:

Teaching Critical Thinking in the Jersey City Public Schools

William D. Wattenmaker, Associate Professor of Psychology

Critical thinking is most often discussed in the context of teaching academic content. Applying critical thinking skills, however, is also crucial in addressing situations in our social, personal, and emotional lives.

A program I have been working on is designed to teach children in the Jersey City Public Schools critical thinking skills and to teach them how to apply these skills to problems they are experiencing in the school context. Although the main focus of the project has been to teach students how to apply critical thinking skills to personal situations, there has also been an attempt to work with administrators and teachers to infuse these skills into core academic areas. The goal of the program is to teach children critical thinking skills as early as possible so they can be applied not only in the classroom but also in interpersonal situations such as conflict resolution, drug use, and violent behavior.

OVERVIEW OF THE NJCU-UMDNJ SOCIAL PROBLEM SOLVING LABS PROGRAM

The New Jersey City University—University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey Social Problem Solving Labs Program is a collaboration between New Jersey City University (NJCU) and the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey (UMDNJ) in New Brunswick. The Social Problem Solving Labs (SPSL) are rooms staffed mostly by NJCU undergraduate students, although clinicians and staff from UMDNJ as well as advanced psychology doctoral students from Rutgers University are also often present in the labs. Children who are experiencing academic, interpersonal, or behavioral problems in school situations are referred to the labs by teachers and administrators from several Jersey City Public Schools where the labs are located.

The SPSL focus on teaching critical thinking skills that alter the thought processes that lead to maladaptive behaviors. The activities in the labs are designed to provide each student with an individual action plan and solution for the specific problem that was the basis for the referral. Various critical thinking exercises are used such as considering consequences of actions and generating alternative behaviors. These are followed up by plans to implement a solution. Other lab activities are relaxation and breathing techniques, role playing, awareness of body language, expressing feelings through drawing, and taking the perspectives of others.

There are a number of indications that the SPSL program and the development of critical thinking skills have been successful. Indeed, the program was recently the focus of a study funded by the U.S. Department of Education, and the study found many positive results. The major results were that in comparison to control schools, those schools in Jersey City that had implemented the SPSL program demonstrated significant improvement in areas such as aggressive behavior, delinquent behavior, student effort, and student engagement in the school (Brown, Stillson, & Bruene-Butler, 2008). These results indicate that the Labs have been successful in changing thought processes and behaviors.

DEFINING CRITICAL THINKING IN RELATION TO THE SPS LABS PROGRAM.

Although the definition of critical thinking often varies from discipline to discipline and researcher to researcher, there is a

general consensus that critical thinking involves generating ideas, interpreting and evaluating information, forming inferences, considering implications and consequences, and identifying the question at issue. A commonly cited definition of critical thinking is one provided by Halpern (2001).

The term critical thinking is the use of those cognitive skills or strategies that increase the probability of a desirable outcome. It is purposeful, reasoned, and goal directed. It is the kind of thinking involved in solving problems, formulating inferences, calculating likelihoods, and making decisions. Critical thinkers use these skills appropriately...in a variety of settings. (p. 254)

This definition is an accurate description of the skills and activities we try to teach children in the SPS Labs.

Others have also noted that problem solving and decision making are key components of critical thinking. Willingham (2008), for example, noted that

[...]from the cognitive scientists' point of view, the mental activities that are typically called critical thinking are actually a subset of three types of thinking: reasoning, making judgments and decisions, and problem solving. (p.27)

Likewise, Rudd (2007) noted

Critical thinking is reasoned, purposive, and reflective thinking used to make decisions, solve problems, and master concepts. These definitions are highly consistent with the activities and goals of the SPS Labs. (p. 47)

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The inclusive and applied nature of critical thinking has also been discussed in the literature. Halpern (2001), for example, discussed the extension of critical thinking to very practical, applied situations including interpersonal relations, and notes

that a strategy that is explicitly taught in courses on critical thinking is assuming the perspectives of others in the process of making a decision and in creative problem solving (Halpern, 2003). Halpern (2001) concludes that “[C]ritical thinking includes a variety of types of knowledge, application to a broad range of problems/issues, and metacognition” (p. 254).

There is also a consensus that critical thinking can be viewed as a general disposition or character trait

(Facione, 1990; Siegel, 1988). These traits include habitually inquisitive, open-minded, flexible, fair-minded in evaluation, prudent in making judgments, willing to reconsider, and orderly in complex matters (Facione, 1990). General dispositions

such as these tend to be applied to a wide variety of situations from academic content to applied practical contexts such as social interactions.

The SPS Labs attempt to develop many of the critical thinking skills described above. The program encourages students to think through problems on their own, to think of consequences of actions, to draw inferences, to develop ideas, to think creatively, to identify problems, to select goals, to anticipate obstacles, to be purposeful and goal directed in solving problems and making decisions, to assume the perspectives of others, and in general, to develop strategies that will lead to effective problem solving. In the next few sections the SPS Lab will be discussed in more detail. The general framework for the steps that are used in the social problem solving lab was originally developed by Maurice Elias of Rutgers University (Elias and Bruene-Butler, 1999).

CREATING AN ATMOSPHERE FOR CRITICAL THINKING

One of the keys to generating thoughtfulness in students referred to the SPS labs is to provide them with a supportive and caring atmosphere. Children and adults when confronted with a critical or hostile environment will not feel comfortable expressing their thoughts and ideas. Creating a supportive atmosphere is accomplished not only through body language, facial expressions, tone of voice, and the words that are used, but also by the general philosophy or approach that is adopted. The approach used in the SPS Labs is not to have the NJCU students (i.e., instructors) dictate answers or solutions to students, but rather to serve as facilitators. The model is one in which the instructor and the child work as a team, rather than one where the instructor has the answers that the child must follow. This approach also results in the children doing most of the thinking.

There is a sequence of steps that the children are led through in order to develop a solution to their problem, and at each step the instructor asks a series of questions and follow-up questions and the children provide the answers. For example, at one of the steps, referred to as “brainstorming,” the instructor might say, “Okay your goal is to quit getting into so many fights. What are some of the things you can do to prevent getting into fights?” It is then up to the child to generate as many alternative behaviors as possible. The instructor listens carefully to the solutions the child generates, acknowledges and summarizes each solution, and encourages the child with follow-up questions such as, “Is there anything else you could do?”

After the child has exhausted his or her ideas and the instructor thinks of a good solution that the child did not generate, then the instructor might suggest it and see how the student reacts. But the instructor phrases the question in such a way that he/she is seeking the child's opinion rather than giving an answer. For example, the instructor might say, “I just got this idea..., what do you think of it?” Thus the goal is not only to create a comfortable atmosphere where the ideas

“One of the keys to generating thoughtfulness in students ... is to provide them with a supportive and caring atmosphere.”

of the student are respected, but to always have the child actively involved in thinking about the problem and learning to develop solutions independently.

The NJCU students are often surprised by how much the children enjoy coming to the lab and working on their problems. In large part I believe this has to do with the climate of acceptance and support, as well as the pride and confidence they gain in working through a problem. This approach contrasts sharply with telling children what to do. Telling children what to do does not expose them to the process of thinking through a problem. Children see the product but not the process of thought. In a supportive, non-critical atmosphere in which children are encouraged to do the thinking, they can begin to acquire the skills that will allow them to become independent thinkers.

THE PROBLEM SOLVING SEQUENCE

A main component of the labs is a series of steps designed to promote optimal problem solving and decision making. This sequence includes steps such as defining the problem, stating a goal, thinking of possible solutions, analyzing solutions in terms of positive and negative consequences, selecting a solution, planning how to implement the solution, and reflecting on the effectiveness of the solution once it has been tried.

It is hoped that as the children work through these steps multiple times with different problems, that they will develop an abstract template for making decisions that will be automatically activated when they face future problems or decisions. When children and teenagers are faced with important decisions in their lives, adults are usually not there to give them answers or to prompt them to think through consequences. Thus it is important that children start to practice and internalize this abstract template as early as possible. The problem solving steps will be discussed below in relation to critical thinking.

STATING THE PROBLEM AND SPECIFYING A GOAL

Two of the important steps that children are asked to take in the SPS Lab are to reflect on what the problem is and to specify what their goal is (i.e., what they would like to have happen instead of what is happening). These steps involve critical thinking in that they require taking a step back and looking at the situation from a broader perspective. This is often hard work for the children, requiring a great deal of strategic thinking with which children often have little practice.

This step is also important because children often come to the SPS lab upset and emotional. Strong emotions can make it difficult to think about a problem. If the child is able to define the problem and put it into words, however, then he or she can begin to think about the situation in a constructive way. Defining the problem and putting it into words moves the problem from an emotional state to a cognitive problem. This is essential because problems cannot be solved at the emotional level, but once the problem is defined and put into words, analytical and critical thinking skills can start to be applied.

BRAINSTORMING AND THINKING ABOUT CONSEQUENCES

After the problem has been defined and a goal has been stated, it is possible to begin to think of solutions. In what is referred to as the brainstorming stage, children are encouraged to think of as many solutions to the problem as possible. In order to encourage creativity and allow the child to be free to think, in this step of the sequence there is no evaluation of the solutions that the child generates. In terms of critical thinking, this stage gives children practice in generating alternative ideas and solutions, and encourages the development of creative thought.

Following the brainstorming stage, each of the solutions that was generated is carefully evaluated in terms of what the positive and negative consequences of the solution might be. For example, if the child was being bullied by another student, and one of the solutions that the child generated was to have his parents contact the principal, then the child is asked to think of all the possible positive as well as negative outcomes of this solution. This gives the child practice in critically evaluating ideas and thinking through the potential consequences of behaviors.

SELECTING, PLANNING, AND RE-EVALUATING SOLUTIONS

Following careful evaluation of the consequences for all the solutions that were generated, the child is asked to select the solution that he or she thinks would work best. As in all stages of the decision making process, the child is the one who is encouraged to review the positive and negative consequences and select the best solution. This gives the child practice in weighing positive and negative consequences and in selecting one solution from several possible alternatives. If the child selects a poor solution, or if there is clearly a better solution than the one the child selects, the instructor guides the child away from the selected solution and towards the better solution. This is done not by telling the child what the best solution would be, but by bringing the possible negative outcomes of the selected solution to the child's attention, and encouraging the child to re-evaluate and re-think some of the other alternatives. In this way, the instructor subtly guides the student to select a better solution.

Once a solution is selected, the child is asked to plan how the solution will be implemented. This involves thinking of issues such as how, when, and where to try the solution. For example, if the solution involves talking to the teacher about an issue, then the child is asked to think about the best time to approach the teacher, whether anyone else should be present, and exactly what the child is going to say. It is often useful in this step to engage in role playing, where in the above example for instance, the instructor might play the role of the teacher and the child can practice what to say, and how to respond to various reactions that the teacher might have. The child is also asked to think of any obstacles that might occur in enacting

the solution, and how to get around these obstacles. This step teaches the child skills related to strategic planning, and practice in anticipating and thinking of obstacles to solutions.

After the solution is implemented, the students return to the lab and are asked to reflect on how it worked. If the solution did not work well, they are asked to evaluate what went wrong. The next step might be additional practice in planning how to implement the solution, thinking of another way to implement the solution, or re-evaluating the alternative solutions that were rejected and selecting a different solution. This teaches the child to reflect on how effective a solution or idea was, to re-evaluate ideas, and to step back and re-think a problem or solution. As noted by Halpern (2001, pg. 254): “When we think critically, we are evaluating the outcomes of our thought process—how good a decision is or how well a problem is solved.”

EMOTIONAL LITERACY, CRITICAL THINKING, AND PROBLEM SOLVING

Among the key aspects of what occurs in the SPS Lab is to have the children express their emotions, learn to monitor their emotional state, learn to develop a vocabulary for describing emotions (e.g., learning to discriminate between feelings such as disappointment and anger), learning to try to identify causes of emotional states, gaining awareness of situations that trigger specific emotional reactions, learning what physiological changes correspond to different emotional states, and learning to read the emotional states and reactions of others. There is evidence that emotional literacy or emotional intelligence is an important determinant of life and career success (Goleman, 1995).

Although emotional literacy or intelligence is not as closely linked to critical thinking skills as some of the problem solving components described above, activities such as monitoring one’s emotional state and learning to analyze the causes of emotional states require skills such as self-reflection, self-monitoring, and thoughtful analysis of links between life events and emotional states. These all require a great deal of cognitive effort and seem to overlap with many abilities typically associated with critical thinking. Thus critical thinking and emotional intelligence might be closely linked.

Emotional intelligence might also be closely associated with many types of problem solving. A negative emotional state serves as a signal that there is a problem that needs to be solved. If there is conscious awareness and recognition of a negative emotional state, then a process of defining the problem and searching for solutions can occur. If the negative state is not consciously realized or not systematically analyzed, then the problem or cause of the negative emotional state is not identified and a search for solutions cannot begin. The person remains stuck at the emotional level and cognitive and critical thinking skills are not applied. Thus the cognitive skills associated with emotional literacy are critical to constructive problem solving and adaptive behavior.

It has been said that if thoughts are like tall reeds of grass,

emotions are the wind. Indeed, the most difficult time to think critically and rely successfully on cognitive skills is when we are experiencing great emotions. In a school environment, this might be a situation where a child is being harassed and provoked to violence. In these instances, the greater the extent to which one has thought through consequences, selected goals, and practiced solutions, the more likely it is that critical thinking will overcome the power of emotions.

INFUSING THE PROBLEM SOLVING STEPS INTO ACADEMICS

Although the SPS Labs are focused on working with individual children who are referred to the labs, teachers in the schools that have labs have also been trained to try to infuse key elements of the problem solving sequence described above into academic lessons. For example, when reading a story, teachers can stop and ask students in the class to brainstorm about what the main characters could do in the situation they are in, to think of consequences of possible actions, to select what they think would be the best option, or to imagine emotions the characters might be feeling. Similarly, in history, the teacher can take a crucial moment or decision and ask students to think of the possible alternatives a president or military leader had at a particular point in history. The students can then generate possible actions, think through the consequences of the actions, and select what they believe would have been the best solution. Lesson plans that use the problem solving sequence have been developed for a range of academic subjects.

This integration with academics provides students with more practice in problem solving and critical thinking. This increases the likelihood that students will develop a general template for making good decisions and reinforces critical thinking skills practiced in the lab. The more contexts in which the students practice critical thinking skills, the more likely they are to apply these skills in different situations and to develop a general disposition for critical thinking.

Integrating the problem solving sequence into academics also allows the student to become active participants in the learning process which produces greater interest, comprehension, and retention.

ASSESSING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS

Although assessment of critical thinking skills would typically focus on examining aspects of thought processes that are used in reasoning and reaching conclusions, the SPS Labs program has the additional goal of trying to change behavior. Thus assessment must also focus on behavior change. There is evidence from many different sources that the labs have been effective in changing thought processes and behavior. For example, as mentioned above, Jersey City Public Schools that have SPS Labs were recently included in a study funded by the U.S. Department of Education. The study found many positive results such as a significant decrease in the frequency of

aggressive behaviors, a significant decrease in the frequency of delinquent behaviors, increased student engagement in the school, increased student effort, and higher levels of a reported “sense of connectedness to the schools,” and “quality of school relationships” (Brown, 2008). This study examined intervention programs in several different school districts. Jersey City Schools that had SPS labs using the SPS process were among the few to demonstrate statistically significant improvement.

There are many other indications that the labs are working. For example, the school in which the labs have been running the longest received a district-wide award for the greatest reduction in school violence. The school attributed this reduction to the Labs Program. In general, teachers and administrators as well as the students are enthusiastic about the labs and feel that the labs reduce violence, interpersonal conflict, and behavioral problems. The NJCU-UMDNJ Labs program has also received two national awards for “implementing unique and specific strategies” and has been showcased at several statewide workshops sponsored by the New Jersey Department of Education.

SUMMARY

The SPS Labs provide a series of exercises in critical thinking that are designed to teach skills such as identifying problems, selecting goals, developing ideas, thinking creatively, drawing inferences, anticipating obstacles, practicing how to implement ideas, monitoring and analyzing emotional states, and being purposeful and goal directed in solving problems and making decisions. These exercises are taught in a supportive atmosphere that is designed to encourage independent thinking. The behaviors that result in children being referred to the SPS Labs are often the result of flawed thought processes. Consequently improving critical thinking skills should increase the frequency of positive, adaptive, and healthy behaviors.

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THE THREE C'S OF HISTORICAL INQUIRY

Jason D. Martinek, Associate Professor of History

Perhaps our most difficult job as history teachers is getting students to see that history is not all about memorizing names, dates, and events. Instead, it involves high levels of analysis and interpretation. I like to introduce students to the art of historical thinking by quoting Dutch historian Pieter Geyl, who got right to the heart of the matter when he wrote, “History is indeed an argument without end” (Schlesinger, 1999, p. 164).

I use the example of Reconstruction, the first thematic unit in the course, *American History Since 1865* (HIST 152), to point out the civic and moral import of competing interpretations, especially as it pertains to the need for each generation to write history anew. In contrast to conservative pundits’ excoriation of “revisionism,” I suggest that it is not always a bad thing (Nash, 2000). After all, if we were still basing our histories of Reconstruction on the scholarship of the first generation of professional historians (1890s-1920s), the narrative would be highly racist. By examining how we moved from overtly racist interpretations of Reconstruction to narratives that stress the drive for equality and self-determination among African Americans, I am able to highlight the necessity of new interpretations of the past.¹

Thus, although our central job is to tell stories about the past, we have certain obligations to do justice to these stories as well as the subjects of them. Formulating new interpretations that accomplish these goals requires critical thinking skills that are both cross-disciplinary as well as discipline-specific. At the most basic level, we share with our colleagues a commitment to getting students to critique, assess, and evaluate both raw data (primary sources in our parlance) and scholarly interpretations of raw data (secondary sources). But our discipline also entails developing critical thinking skills specific to the historian, especially in terms of the three “C’s” of historical inquiry: change, causation, and context.

HISTORICAL CHANGE

In the main, historians document change over time. To introduce students to the concept of change, we use periodization. In terms of American history, this gets reflected in how we

have come to divide our nation’s past: The Colonial Era, the Revolutionary War Era, the Early National Period, the Age of Jackson, the Antebellum Period, Civil War and Reconstruction, the Gilded Age, the Progressive Era, the Roaring Twenties, the Great Depression, the Cold War. Our curriculum here at NJCU follows this traditional pattern.

But the best history teachers are not content with working within this framework alone. Since the 1960s historians have come to criticize the monikers we use to describe an era as well as the very divisions themselves. One of the things that makes history so exciting to study is that we do not all agree about where these divisions lie.² To be sure, students must know the standard periodization of American history. Yet, we must also get students to question and critique these appellations.

For my part, I do this by asking students to reflect on the meaning of some of these demarcations in American history. A favorite assignment of mine is to ask students to write an essay about whether the period between 1870 and 1900 was a Gilded Age or Golden Age of American capitalism. Another favorite is to ask students to reflect on how progressive the Progressive Era was. In assignments like these, students are challenged to think critically about periodization and begin to come into their own as historians.

HISTORICAL CAUSATION

The second “C,” causation, addresses why historical change occurred. What led the historical phenomena under investigation to rise, fall, or transform? Some of the fiercest debates among historians have resulted from disagreements over questions of causation.

There is no better example of this in American histori-

ography than the debate surrounding why socialism failed in the United States. Scholars have argued about it for over a hundred years. Werner Sombart first raised the question in 1906, answering it by saying, “Socialist utopias come to nothing on roast beef and apple pie.” In his wake, historians have added a panoply of explanations, including, but not limited to, the stranglehold of the two-party system, the utopian and thus unfeasible nature of the socialist program, the internecine strife within the socialist movement itself, and the repression of the movement during World War I (Martinkek, 2007; Lipset & Marks, 2001; Weinstein, 1984; Laslett & Lipset, 1974).

The challenge in teaching causation is to get students to consider the full range of causative factors that led to historical change and not fall into the trap of providing a mono-causal explanation. In the upper-level course, *Social Aspects of American History* (HIST 402), I plan several discussions specifically around questions of causation. Together, students and I talk about why major events occurred in American history from the origins of slavery to the process of Indian Removal to the causes of the Civil War. Through these discussions, students begin to see the complexity involved in shaping a historical narrative. More important, by becoming attuned to causation, they are well on their way to learning a life-long skill with broad applicability.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The final “C” of the three “C’s” of historical inquiry is context. In key respects, it is the most difficult of the three “C’s” for students to grasp. It requires taking the past on its own terms without reading back into it contemporary values and attitudes. One of our key responsibilities as historians, I tell students, is to think about what happened in the past based on the options available at the time.

I ask students to take a page from David Herbert Donald and his magisterial, Pulitzer-Prize winning biography of Abraham Lincoln. As Donald (1995) tells readers,

In tracing the life of Abraham Lincoln, I have asked at every stage of his career what he knew when he had to take critical actions, how he evaluated the evidence before him, and why he reached his decisions. ... It [this book] seeks to explain rather than to judge. (p.13)

Students are directly confronted with the challenges of context in the history department’s capstone course, *The Study of History* (HIST 418). In this course, students get the opportunity to research and write their own history theses. As part of this project, students have to make contextual choices that can have major implications on the shape of their historical narratives. Every student faces that daunting moment when it is just he or she, a mound of research, a blank page, and a seemingly endless world of possible ways to shape the historical narrative.

By working one-on-one with students, I push them to

reconstruct the world through the eyes of their historical actors, prodding them to think about what their subjects knew, what they did not know, and how these things shaped their actions. The challenge is great, but the payoff is greater—a piece of scholarship that achieves the lofty goals set by Richard Marius and Melvin Page (2007) in their *A Short Guide to Writing about History*, a history that is “both plausible and trustworthy and that is accurate and may be corroborated” (p. 96).

Thus, even as the History department at New Jersey City University places a premium on content, as this short introduction to the three “C’s” of historical inquiry suggests, it also stresses critical thinking skills. The value of these skills is immeasurable. No one better highlighted their value than historian Herbert Gutman, who, during an interview, answered a question about the value of historical understanding this way: (1986)

The central value of historical understanding is that it transforms historical givens into historical contingencies. It enables us to see the structures in which we live...as only one among many other possible experiences. By doing that, you free people for creative and critical thought. (p.345-6)

And I can think of nothing better to pass on to students than this, freeing them to think creatively and critically about who we are and how we came to be that way.

II

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END NOTES:

- 1 The classic example of the early twentieth century interpretation of Reconstruction is William Dunning's (1907), *Reconstruction: Political and Economic, 1865-1877*. W. E. B. Du Bois (1935) challenged Dunning's interpretation of Reconstruction in *Black Reconstruction in America*. Modern interpretations of Reconstruction owe a great debt to Du Bois, including the work of Eric Foner (1988).
- 2 See, for example, Peter Filene's (1970) classic article, "Obituary for 'The Progressive Movement'" or Daniel T. Rodgers, (1982) "In Search of Progressivism."

THE MOCK TRIAL

Objection Overruled

Bruce Chadwick, Professor of English

The defendants and their lawyers dressed in jackets and ties, pant-suits and dresses, stood behind a wide, wooden table on one side of the old, ornate Gothic Lounge in Hepburn Hall. The prosecutors, with papers and pencils in hand, rose on the other side. All turned slightly to their left. Some tugged at their ties while others rubbed their wrists. They were a bit apprehensive.

The foreman of the trial jury rose from his chair and stared at the judge. The magistrate leaned forward on the lectern. “Do you have a verdict?” he asked the foreman.

“We do, your Honor,” said the foreman. “We find the defendant...” There was a long pause as 60 some students in the audience waited for the decision. “...Not guilty!”

Wild applause burst out from across the court room and students celebrated the acquittal of a man accused of murdering a famous prostitute in old New York in 1836, a case that kicked off the tabloid newspaper boom in America. It was another mock trial at the end of a semester of learning, an exciting judicial drama that has stimulated American education for more than 240 years.

Over 14 years as an English professor at New Jersey City University, I have staged more than two dozen mock trials in my classes. I do not owe the idea to a personal desire to develop new educational wrinkles, my own previous experience, or anyone’s intellectual pursuits. I owe it all to O.J. Simpson.

I arrived at NJCU in the fall of 1994 when Simpson, charged with murdering his wife Nicole Brown Simpson and Ronald Goldman, was scheduled to go on trial in Los Angeles. One of my first classes at the University was *College Writing*, a developmental composition class that prepares students for writing at the college level. I had taught journalism classes at other universities but never a general writing class for incoming first year students. How to teach it? How to reach them?

A month before the semester began, I was watching the endless parade of television news stories about the upcoming Simpson trial and an idea flew out of the television set and hit

me square between the eyes—why not stage our very own mock trial of the former football star in the classroom? I could serve as the judge and the students would be defense lawyers, prosecutors, and witnesses. We could bring in another class as the jury. With some luck in timing, the class verdict would be delivered a few weeks before the real verdict in the Simpson court room.

The trial was a great success. We staged it in the Gothic Lounge, invited other classes, professors, and deans and enjoyed ourselves immensely. The trial ran for a week and the students did an outstanding job of researching and presenting the case. The stunning verdict, “Not guilty,” was a precursor to the even more stunning real life acquittal that would follow a few months later.

The experience not only taught me that the mock trial was an engaging way to teach students, but that if I staged it in a certain manner, it had numerous educational benefits. It was the first of numerous trials with different subjects as the defendants. We have tried Old West marshal Wyatt Earp for excessive use of force in the gunfight at the OK Corral; ice skating star Tonya Harding for conspiracy and aggravated assault for having competitor Nancy Kerrigan beaten up; dapper man about town Richard Robinson for killing the prostitute Helen Jewett in old New York in 1836; wild-eyed nineteenth century tabloid editor James Bennett; the “witches” of Salem, Massachusetts; the man accused of killing Hollywood film director William Desmond Taylor in 1922; and even Jefferson Davis, the president of the Confederacy.

In each trial the goals are the same: 1) to educate students about a famous criminal case in an entertaining way; 2) to study historical, political, and social issues of an era; 3) to bring students together to work in teams, and in the process get to know each other; 4) to get students to think critically, to enhance public speaking, and, most importantly, to improve writing.

*“The mock trial
gives them a chance
to look behind the
curtain...”*

This was no great discovery on my part. The mock trial has been a part of American higher education for more than 250 years. It was invented in the late 1750s by George Wythe, America's first professor of law, at William and Mary College, Virginia. He saw it as a hands-on experience for his law and history students, a way to get them to read more, to understand the legal system and, in an indirect way, to give shy students a chance to bloom through the experience. His rationale was that good students would make good public officials upon graduation. Everyone had roles in Wythe's trials; there was no legal bench to hide behind. Everybody was required to speak and act in court, often in dramatic and persuasive ways. Shy quiet students turned into towering orators and bombastic prosecutors. It was a wildly different style of teaching than any found in other American schools whose style of higher education John Adams famously described as “a dreary ramble” (Adams, 1854).

Wythe had the skills to monitor the trial and get students to use it as a learning experience. They all had high regard for him. One of his proteges at William and Mary, Thomas Jefferson, wrote of Wythe:

[...]his virtue was of the purest tint; his integrity flexible and his justice exact, of warm patriotism and devoted as he was to liberty and the natural and equal rights of man. He might have truly been called the Cato of his country...for a more distinguished person never lived,” and added that he led “a life of exemplary virtue.” (Washington, 1858)

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In fact, Wythe thought the mock trial was so good that he not only kept it as part of his curriculum for decades, but added a moot legislature, based on the same principle. That, too, was a great success for his political students. Wythe said that the goal of his court and legislature was “to form such characters as may be fit to succeed those which have been ornamental and useful in the national councils of America.”

The students enjoyed these eighteenth century mock trials and legislatures. Thomas Shippen said,

I surmounted the difficulties which were opposed to me by my diffidence, my youth and the solemnity of the occasion much better than I myself or any of my friends expected. And the applause I met with, tho' I did not think I deserved it, repaid me for the pain and anxiety I felt on the occasion. (Shippen, 1784)

Another student, John Brown, later a United States Senator from Kentucky, said that the mock trial and legislature helped him broaden his personality.

I take an active part in both these institutions and hope thereby to rub off that natural bashfulness which at present is extremely prejudicial to me. These exercises serve not only as the best amusement after severe studies, but are very useful and attended with many important advantages. (Robbins, 1916)

Among Wythe's students who appeared in his mock trials and moot courts were presidents Thomas Jefferson and James Monroe, U.S. Supreme Court Chief Justice John Marshall, and dozens of United States senators and congressmen

Wythe's mock trials blossomed. Within a few years, every college in America began using the mock trial and soon the idea spread to European and Asian educational institutions. In the United States, hundreds of high schools and colleges now have mock trial teams and host mock trial tournaments. There is an annual National High School Mock Trial Championship held each year (the 2010 clash will be staged in Philadelphia, May 6-8). Some colleges sponsor their own tournaments. Harvard University thought so much of the mock trial that it established its own Mock Trial Association.

Dozens of publishers have issued mock trial handbooks that can be used to study cases and prepare students for participating in them. Among these works are *Mock Trials: Preparing, Presenting and Winning Your Case* (Trumbull-Harris & Lubet, 2001) and *Jury Trials in the Classroom* (See & See, 1998).

Here at NJCU, we do not stage full blown mock trials that require a semester of preparation. They require just two weeks of research and presentation, a small part of the semester, but they work and work well. I ask students from another class that meets at the same time to sit in on our trial as the jury, weigh the evidence, and then issue a rather quick verdict after a ten minute discussion in the hall outside the classroom. I expected nothing more than a mildly interested group of students who stood in the hall and nodded their heads a few times. That's not what happened, though.

From the very first Simpson jury in 1994 to my Jefferson Davis trial in the 2009 fall semester, my other class juries have been absolutely riveted to the case, following all of the arguments, listening to all the testimony, writing down notes on pieces of paper and engaging in heated, extraordinary intellectual debates in our hallway “jury room.” If we did not have a time limit, these deliberations would last for days. I love the jury reaction so much that I often look up from my judge's lectern to observe them as they sit there, fixated on the testimony, eyebrows knit, heads tilted, taking notes.

In serving as the judge in the trials, I know how to move the trial along just like a real legal event, but more than that, I can tell when students and witnesses are getting nervous (actually, few do) in such a public forum. When I sense that, I can call them to the judicial “sidebar” and calm them down, remind them of what to say, and what they need to do next without anyone else in the courtroom knowing what is going on. I can remind students who freeze up as witnesses what they had told the “grand jury” as a reminder of what they are supposed to say on the stand—and they snap right out of their doldrums.

Sometimes the verdicts have been predictable and sometimes they have not been. On the predictable side, Wyatt Earp was found innocent of murder because he was a lawman doing his job. Harding and her accomplices were found guilty. The Salem witches were found innocent. On the surprise side,

Simpson was found innocent. Richard Robinson is usually found innocent. The newspaper editor is sometimes found guilty.

The students who serve as lawyers and defendants in the trials have never been predictable. I do not pick them; they volunteer. Shy students who rarely speak in class often turn out to be wonderfully effective lawyers, astonishing me. Sometimes students from whom I do not expect much, study their roles as witnesses so hard that they become riveting during the trial. One student last year became a complete actor, creating a compelling persona for his character. He startled the entire court room.

Students who I think cannot lose the case because of their personalities often do, and by contrast some of the weakest students wind up victorious. It is the nature of the mock trial to bring out not only the best in students, but to let them discover talents they never thought they possessed.

The verdicts are not based solely on the evidence, as often occurs in real life courtroom dramas. Juror passions and the public climate always affect the trial. A newsman was found guilty last year after months of public criticism of our contemporary media in real life. In our trial of Jefferson Davis, the verdict was based more on the jury's desire to bring about a united America through the verdict rather than follow the rather clear letter of the law.

Student learning through mock trials is considerable. I get them to learn much because I never tell them that this is a learning experience. I just tell them that we are going to stage a mock trial and that they should have a good time, and that the trial breaks up the tedium of listening to me lecture. Indirectly, without understanding what is happening, they learn a lot.

The trials never follow a set pattern. I stage trials when I find a course that lends itself to them. The writing courses are always tied into trials, so I picked different cases. The Jewett trial tied into the history of journalism course because it was the first well covered murder trial in the first days of the "penny press" or tabloid journalism era. We put a sensational newspaper editor on trial with the killer to gauge a modern jury's reaction to the press. We put Wyatt Earp on trial for police brutality in a year in which a number of police were involved in over-reaction in criminal cases and what seemed a police shooting rampage. The Salem Witch trials were a natural for my *Colonial History* class because they occurred in the late seventeenth century and because there is still attention to witches today.

My next trial is going to involve Julius Caesar. We are going to put him on trial for war crimes committed while he was head of the Roman army in Gaul. What is the difference between Caesar's actions two thousand years ago and that of the American army in the Middle East today?

Students' knowledge of the criminal justice system, whether investigations, indictments, trials or sentences, is little more than what they see on television. The mock trial gives them a chance to look behind the curtain and really research cases and enrich their legal history. It is an eye opening experience for many. Several of my students have been so

fascinated by trials that they later went to law school and became attorneys. Two women won a national mock trial/debate tournament over two men from Yale University.

My students also become better writers. They are required to write out opening statements and closing summaries of the cases, plus questions. They are asked to do this in a professional way. All of the attorneys, defendants, and witnesses utilize the critical thinking process in their questions and answers. There is nothing like a criminal trial to get people not only to think critically, but also to think fast.

The trial usually involves twenty or so students. The rest are there as witnesses and they, along with the jury, learn critical thinking skills as they follow the cases from start to finish. All of my students learn to read better and read for enrichment in the mock trial. I send them off to the library or the internet to conduct research on the trial and their role in it. Some read chapters of books. Even those who only read a few paragraphs are picking up more reading skills.

There has not been one trial in which a student there as a witness did not come up to me later and say that the lawyers or defendant should have said this or done that or framed their argument in a specific manner. All the students read up on the case in books, magazines, law journals, and on the internet. Their reading skills blossom by doing this.

I have been at New Jersey City University fourteen years. There is not a semester that goes by that some student who was involved in one of my trials, or a visiting alumnus who doesn't start talking about the trial. "If we had done this better..." they will say at some point. I smile. In getting them to consider how to do something better, we did do better.

People always ask what trial will I do next?

I pause, rub my fingers over my chin, and ask "Who *did* kill John F. Kennedy?"

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FRANKENSTEIN

Victorian Burlesque-Extravaganza

Audrey Fisch, Professor of English

Almost immediately after Mary Shelley published her novel, “Frankenstein” took life as a powerful icon. Both her Creature and his creator have remained extraordinarily resonant and resilient figures in fiction, drama, film, science, and popular culture. Paul O’Flinn (1983) writes that “There is no such thing as *Frankenstein*, there are only *Frankensteins*, as the text is ceaselessly rewritten, reproduced, refilmed, and redesigned” (p. 194). In fact, the multiplicity of “Frankensteins” began almost immediately after the initial publication of the novel in 1818, as the novel *Frankenstein* entered and was reshaped by popular culture and as Mary Shelley herself revised her text for later publication. “Frankenstein” then the icon known today by children and adults throughout the world, draws on both Mary Shelley’s Creature and his creator, Victor Frankenstein, and also on the diverse progeny of that original 1818 text.

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The goal of my volume, Frankenstein: Icon of Modern Culture, is to capture and explore some of these “Frankensteins,” beginning with Mary Shelley’s initial 1818 Creature and following that Creature through many of his different incarnations. The selection included below excerpts and explores one of my favorites—Richard Henry’s Frankenstein; Or, The Vampire’s Victim (1887), a wacky, slapstick, but still poignant version which adds vampires, a sun goddess, and a double of the Creature to the cast of characters in Mary Shelley’s tale. The results are hilarious.

Richard Henry’s *Frankenstein; Or, The Vampire’s Victim* opened on December 24, 1887 and ran for 106 performances, the longest run of any of the early British dramatizations of *Frankenstein* (Forry, 1990, p. 55).

.... It is ...one of the most frenetic, featuring a vampire, his female counterpart, Italian guards, Spanish bandits, danc-

ing Arctic bears, and a resolution achieved through the benevolent intervention of a Sun Goddess.

Frankenstein in Henry’s *The Vampire’s Victim* loves both the innkeeper’s daughter, Tartina and chemistry. His Creature is an invention, a “patent mechanical man” who won’t cost much, won’t need “feeding,” and won’t defy him (p. 24). As “a deed that shall astound posterity,” he makes not one but two Creatures, the Monster and his rough draft of sorts, a Model, who is the “exact counterpart of the Monster but less finished” (p. 24-25). The Creature comes to life “apparently of its own accord” (p. 25), and without any intervention by Frankenstein, as does the Model; thus, *The Vampire’s Victim* is the only variation of *Frankenstein* in which the Creator is both absent from the scene of creation and only marginally responsible for the act of creation.

... [T]he mist rolls away and the laboratory of

EDITOR’S NOTE: *On behalf of the editorial board, we express our sincere thanks to Dr. Fisch and her publisher Helm Information for graciously allowing us to reprint the following excerpt from her recently published book, Frankenstein: Icon of Modern Culture (Fisch, 2009). The text illustrates that literature and literary figures are living things, and that through the creative and critical process, they can be re-envisioned and re-created by each succeeding generation of artists and scholars. Please note that the citations have been revised to conform to APA format.*

FRANKENSTEIN is disclosed to view... two figures of human shape standing ... Both are covered. The larger figure (C.) is the MONSTER a Mechanical Man, which FRANKENSTEIN has made. The other is the MODEL from which he enlarged the finished work. The MODEL is an exact counterpart of the MONSTER, but less finished, and his business will be wherever possible to mimic the MONSTER'S doings. ...

(An impressive pause. Presently the silence is broken by melo-dramatic music – pizzicato – drum rumbles &c. The covering falls off the MONSTER – apparently of it's [sic] own accord. Again a silent pause. Then the MONSTER yawns – winks, sneezes, whirrs, rumbles &c. according as may be divised [sic] in consultation with Mr. Leslie. Finally the MONSTER steps down stage and salutes the audience to appropriate music – and with a dazed unconscious air as though not yet thoroughly endowed with life. Meanwhile the MODEL remains absolutely motionless, and to all appearances lifeless. The MONSTER now stalks cautiously across the stage, and with halting gait as though uncertain of the use of his limbs. Gradually he becomes bold and as he finds himself able to walk more easily, makes hideous faces to express his delight. He surveys the laboratory – discovers table, bits of clay thereon, portions of springs – all of which he compares with himself, and by signs of intelligent recognition indicates that he realizes that he has himself been manufactured from similar materials. Pursuing his investigations round the chamber, the MONSTER finds chisels, masks, physic-bottles &c. Tries physic, makes wry faces. Indicates by sings [sic] that he would like drink of another sort – also a smoke. Now discovers MODEL – examines it with a curious attention which is intensified when he discovers the MODEL is really a counterpart of himself.

Thinks he'll break MODEL up as being of no further use now – alters his mind – shivers – sneezes – tries to put on his drapery covering again – eventually ties it round his neck, like a comforter. Anon he accidentally touches himself in the ribs, and chest, and unconsciously squeaks "Mama! Papa." &c. – all sorts of noises in recitative and after one or two false starts breaks out into the following speech.) (p. 25-26)

As in *The Model Man* [an 1849 version of *Frankenstein*], the Creature in *The Vampire's Victim* can speak, and, after coming to life, waxes rhapsodic about his state of being:

MONSTER

Where am I? also what – or which – or who?
 What is this feeling that is running through
 My spring – or rather joints – I seem to be
 A comprehensive (*feeling joints*) Joint-stock companee,
 My veins – that's if they are veins – seem to glow
 I've muscles – yes – in quarts – I move them – so!
 (Cranks horribly all over fiddle BUSINESS in orchestra.)
 Horror! I've broken something. I'm afraid!
 What's this material of which I'm made?
 It seems to be a sort of clay – combined

With bits of flesh and wax – I'm well designed –
 To see – to move – to speak I can contrive –
 I wonder if I really am alive!
 Song – "I wonder if I'm alive."

*If my efforts are vain and I can't speak plain
 Don't laugh my attempts to s-c-o-r-r-n
 For as will be seen, I am but a machine
 Who doesn't yet know if he's bo-orn*

*I can move my feet in a style rather neat
 And to waggle my jaws I contrive, O!
 I can open my mouth from North to South
 I wonder if I'm – alive O!
 I wonder if I'm alive O!*

(*Quaint Dance*)

I can smile (*grins hideously*) and wink, I believe I could
 drink
 If a stuff glass of grog were at hand
 I can bend - I can bow, I can kick up a row
 Like a Salvation Army Band.
 I can turn up my eyes I could eat pork pies
 Four-in-hand I believe I could drive O!
 I've an appetite got
 I could eat cinders hot –
 By Jingo! That coal was alive O!

I don't want to be flash
 But I think I could mash (*ogles ladies in the stalls*)
 Attractive at least is my fo-o-rm!
 I could act on the stage –
 I could get in a rage – (*tears his hair*)
 I could smoke – (*burns his fingers*) That cigar's rather w-a-
 am [sic]

My limbs are all loose
 I could dance like the dooce
 (apologetically)
 But such language you cannot survive O!
 For such freedom as this may be somewhat amiss
 From one who's just learnt he's alive O! (p. 26-27)

From here, the Creature turns to his peer, the Model, and they discuss their hunger and whether to eat each other.

MONSTER (to MODEL.) I say can you speak?

MODEL (*Grinning*) I think so.

MONSTER What's your name?

MODEL I dunno –

MONSTER (*wondering*) I dunno?

MODEL What's yours?

MONSTER (*With a happy thought*) The same!
Perhaps they'll christen soon to give us status.

MODEL And later on perhaps they'll vaccinate us.

MONSTER (*Derisively*)
Well, while they're doing you, if they would remove
Those lumps of yours – your figure 'twould improve.

MODEL (*surly*)
My figure may be lumpy – lacking grace
But were I you, I'd amputate my face.

BOTH (*threatening*)
What!

MONSTER But let's be friends we're now to life you
know.
Don't you feel hungry, Model?

MODEL I do so.

MONSTER (*eagerly*)
Let's eat each other. (*MODEL looks puzzled*)
It's easy, don't you see
I dine off you, and then you sup off me.

MODEL The notion's good – if it were just reversed,
You sup off me and I dine off you first.

BOTH (*aside*)
O, for a fire!

MODEL (*aside*)
To boil, bake, roast or stew him.

MONSTER To fry, or fricasee him, or ragout him.
(p. 27-29)

When Frankenstein, whom the two call their Manufacturer, discovers they are alive, he is appalled and claims that they were made as “mere machines” and never thought they “could by any means to life be brought” (p. 31).

FRANK (*seeing MONSTER*) Ah!
There it stands. You Beauty! all my making.
I fancy now it's really very taking –

And there's the Model which I first did mould –
A study for the big 'un you behold!
There's no dissection – I mean deception – no frivolity.
There should be no space here It's all my work and of the
finest quality

It works two ways – by winding, rather fast –
Or putting a penny in its mouth! The last
Would come expensive if used much you see,
But blow the cost – this time I'll spend a “dee.”
(*Putting penny in MONSTER's mouth*)
This is my patent plan here let me mention.

MONS Chocolate or butterscotch? (CHORD.
Spluttering and pushing him)
Here, what do you take me for? That coin's a French 'un

FRANK (*horrified* L.C.)
Great Scott! Alive!

MONS (*coming down*)
Yes, quite so. How d'ye do?

FRANK (*terrified*)
What have I done? His eyes they pierce me through
I've made a Monster! Cursed be my skill!

MONS (*in Scotch dialect*)
Y'll mak' this mon stir by sic words – ye will!

MODEL But, look here, Manufacturer, don't you think
It's time you asked us – (*Bringing down MONSTER*) if
we'd take a drink?

MONS Although but terra cotta – I'm a hot 'un.

FRANK Don't think I shall to your terra cottan.
Avaunt! And quit my sight, you two sensations.

MONS We can't av-aunts you know – we've no relations.
but let's be friends. Out state true pity winds
We are two orphans (*Clutching MODEL & weeping*)

MODEL Yes – but scarcely twins!

FRANK Friends! Never! For some demon down below
Hath brought you both to life! I hate you! Go!
I made you mere machines. I never thought
You could by any means to life be brought.
Go! Monster! Never dare to cross my path!

MONS You wait a bit till I've worked up my wrath!

(BUS.- *He puffs like a steam engine till he gets rage up.*
MODEL assists by whistling, feigning to stoke him, and
other railway-engine business. Then the MONSTER turns
furiously upon FRANKENSTEIN.)

MONS Aha! 'Tis my turn now! You once were civil to us!
(*Aside to MODEL*) That's true, eh?

MODEL O, yes! He often fondled us when we were clay!
He greased our larynxes to make us speak –

MONS True! The night before Larynx was stretched –
this week!

(*In sepulchral manner*) –

My heart springs warn me that there is at hand
A dreaded dismal grim and ghostly band!

(*Phantoms of villagers and vampire-heads appear through
gauzes*) –

Behold – young boy! – your punishment’s begun!

FRANK (*Pathetically Down D.C.*)

Lor! What have I been and gone and done!

FINALE.

MONS Manufacturer! Pray beware
How my rising wrath you dare!

FRANK At your vengeance I should smile
I defy you all the while – Yah! (p. 30-31)

While *The Vampire’s Victim* diverges from its predecessors in having the two Creatures come to life on their own and away from their creator, and while their awakening and initial confrontation with Frankenstein references many of the stock jokes featured by variations on *Frankenstein* (references to a desire for drink and a smoke, for example), the Creature here retains a surprising measure of pathos and interest that link it directly back to Mary Shelley’s novel. The phantom vampire-heads and steam-engine puffing Monster and his Model companion are plainly silly, yet the play takes *The Model Man’s* conceit of a cheap worker and moves beyond it. Frankenstein is called a Manufacturer, and the two Creatures are imagined as thinking, questioning, and—particularly the Monster—articulate beings, who wonder why their creator spoke civilly to them and fondled them and gave them the capacity to speak but suddenly curses them when alive.

Forry (1990) explains that *The Vampire’s Victim* appeared “during the last gasps of burlesque-extravaganza” and contrasts the “sleek one-act burlesque” of *The Model Man* with the “brash three-act spectacle” of *The Vampire’s Victim* (p. 54, 68). Certainly, *The Vampire’s Victim* is more generically confused, ranging far more broadly from comedy to melodrama, than its predecessor. While *The Model Man* is always cheery, more than once within the course of *The Vampire’s Victim* there is an attempt at scary melodrama. Several times, Frankenstein finds himself at the mercy of his Creature who curses, rolls his eyes, threatens, and is meant to inspire terror.

ALL Let us throw this fear aside,
Let the Monster be defied
Though Frankenstein this on himself has brought
For making a Machine he didn’t ought.
Help him to slip from that fierce grip.

TARTINA Release my love, good Monster, lo, I crave

Ah see to thee I plead with bended knee!

MARAS Let him go, let him, go let him go, we crave!
Or your blood, or your blood shed will surely be!

MONSTER I have no blood. He for ever is my slave!

ALL Would he could at once escape

That foul fiend of awful shape

Lo, the Monster rolls his eyes! (MONSTER *makes face*)

(ALL *retreating*)

We with terror all shall die!

MONSTER, VISCONTI, MODEL Ah too late! He
can’t escape

From the fiend he dared to shape

He will find out by-and-by

We are men of Mys-te-ry!

FRANK Would I could his grasp escape

Why this Being I did shape

See how fiercely rolls his eye!

Lost, ah lost! Indeed am I! (p. 35-36)

Yet despite these attempts at melodrama, neither the Creature nor the Model ever manages to hurt anyone.

The Vampire’s Victim, even more than *The Model Man*, is interested in the Creature’s humanity, not his ability to inspire terror. While Frankenstein scorns the Creature as “an IT, because you’re neuter – not a true man,” the Creature insists “If I’m not human, I’m as good as you-man!” and asks, more-over, for a mate (p. 47).

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MONSTER (*Sheepishly*)

To tell the truth, I scarce know how to frame it!

But I must try. Know then I have a scheme –

I’m really not so monstrous as I seem –

Now here – (*touching heart*) in what I think you call my
heart.

I feel a sort of kind of curious smart!

I don’t quite know, you know, but I’ve a feeling –

I feel it here – and there – below – above!

(*Romantically*)

And I’ve a notion ‘tis the dawn of love! (*Weeps*)

FRANK Lor! What has moved you thus to weep – A
Bunion?

MONS No, no, a local plant (*producing onion*) This
Spanish onion.

FRANK (*Singing*)

He’s dropping now a Muley-tear!

His agitation just to cool &c.

(*Laughing immoderately*)

Aha! You love! That’s surely as a jape meant –

That where your heart should be – is an escapement

Which when you are excited – whirrs –

MONS Isn't true?
 Then when it whirrs – so much the worse for you!
 I'll smash you where you stand if you don't aid me
 And make you still more sorry that you made me! ...

FRANK Well, what's your proposition? – come decide!

MONS (*softening*)
 That's business now! – Provide me with a bride!
 ... one that's nice –
 Who'll run in double harness – free from Vice,
 Fit for a respectable Monster – well attired,
 Good references given and required!
 (*Pathetically*)
 But! I'm a lonely Monster – and I yearn
 To love, and to be loved in return
 I see all things around me made in pairs
 You have your sweetheart – other folks have theirs
 Then why have you made me without a mate? (p. 49-50)

*“There is no such thing as Frankenstein,
 there are only Frankensteins...”*

20

Jokes about the whirring operation and the onion undermine any seriousness in the scene, yet the Creature's claim is more plainly put than in all the variations on *Frankenstein* in the nineteenth century....

Frankenstein makes a mockery of the Creature's desires by planning to wed him to a female Vampire, Mary Ann, who is also in search of a husband. The play, however, shows the Creature, in a scene that prefigures the famous encounter between the Creature and the peasant girl Maria on the bridge in the Karloff/Whale *Frankenstein*, winning Mary Ann for himself, without the need for help from his creator.

(MODEL go [sic] on bridge and saucily chucks MARY ANN under the chin. She screams.)

MODEL Ah scrumptious screecher! Just one little kiss!

MONS (to MODEL.)

Back, dastard! Back! (to MARY ANN) He shall not harm thee, miss!

And art thou safe! My own! My little one!

(MARY ANN reclines lackadaisically in the MONSTER's arms)

What will restore thee? Wouldst thou like a bun?

(*Romantic gag*)

Two souls with but a single heel! (*Treads upon MARY ANN's foot – loudly she shrieks*)

Two boots that beat as one!

M.ANN (*haughtily*)

Your light fantastic foot should be diminished!

MONS Mistake me not because my form's unfinished – My O.P. should is I fancy bumpy

And my complexion is a trifle “lumpy.”

Also there's something queer about my feet

I'm for a study – not a work complete –

But still I love you – you are so divine!

M.ANN Of course – And now you want to say, “Be mine!”

MONS Yes! Yes! – I've only lately learned to talk –

Why, three days back I couldn't even walk.

M.ANN Lor! What a backward child you must have been

You're pretty forward now

MONS Yes, since I've seen

Your lovely face – the spring I've here inside

(*touching chest*) Impel me to remark O! be my bride!

M.ANN What, would you love and cherish me for life?

MONS (*confused*) Well, somebody is making me a wife!

I've one on order –

M.ANN Why perhaps that's me!

I'm promised a new husband! Are you he?

MONS (*canoodling*)

We must have been made for each other, eh?

You're charming – so am I – (*makes faces*) – so most fols [sic] say!

One chaste salute – eh? – one? (*she nods, he kisses her.*) (p. 57-58)

This Creature seems to justify his claim to full humanity; his kindness enables him to find his own mate. Thus while the language and action of this convoluted play are absurd, *The Vampire's Victim*, even more than *The Model Man*, humanizes its Creature and insists on his right to love.

With its attention to the Creature's humanity, *The Vampire's Victim* may represent a highly original re-writing of *Frankenstein*, but the play also descends, by its end, into chaos. When the Creature is wed to Mary Ann, and her vampire nature is revealed, he is unaccountably terrified.

VIS and FRANK She is a Vampire!

MONS (*terrified*) Can this be true?

FRANK It is old chap!

Aha! We've caught you in a vampire trap!

VISC She'll gnaw your flesh!

MONS No, no!

FRANK – and let me say!

He has no flesh – I made him out of clay!

TART What, shrink from her – your wedded wife! O coward!

MONS Yes; but you wouldn't like to be devoured!
I'll have my revenge – (*snatches dagger from F's belt and vainly tries to stab MARY ANN, VISCONTI & FRANKENSTEIN & C.*). (p. 62)

Shortly after this violent outburst, the Creature joins forces with Visconti, the Vampire villain, but the play finds him not plotting revenge so much as working happily at the Vampire club and, like *The Model Man's* Creature, seemingly attaining all the attributes of a gentleman.

ENTER MONSTER L.C. in extravagant evening dress – under which is his terra-cotta make-up.

(*with letter and telegrams in his hand*)
At last I have escaped my Vampire Bride –
I've sent her with her Mother to abide.
I don't know if she has a mother – but
I sent her off to see – and then I cut.
And to forget my matrimonial fetters,
I joined this Club – These are my wires and letters
When no wires came – you can't think how I missed 'em
I do all business on the new wire system.
(*opening letters &c*)
All bills long due – but not one billet doux –
And yet I think I'm striking (*turning himself Round and showing off his clothes*) Eh? Don't you?
(*To audience*). (p. 72)

Probably because the play requires it to produce the requisite melodramatic climax, the Creature seeks revenge, however. He admits “thoughts of deeper vengeance in me fizz/ For giving me a bride – I'll collar his” (p. 72). To achieve this vengeance, the Creature kidnaps Frankenstein's beloved, Tartina, and the whole cast somehow end up in the Arctic aboard a ship where the Creature and the Vampires are defeated by the appearance and intervention of a Sun Goddess. All ends happily and haphazardly, without any real resolution.

FRANK (*threatening him*)
I'll strike you with the North Pole when I find it.
(*Looking around delightedly and cuddling TARTINA*)
Yet, after this, I even could forgive –

But no – I'll kill him –

TART Don't! Pray let him live!

MONS Now I'm alive, from life don't make me shunt –

FRANK Well that depends on our kind friends in front –
If you (*to audience*) are willing, let your favour shine.

MONS Upon the Monster –

FRANK And on Frankenstein. (p. 84-85)

Clearly *The Vampire's Victim* could not resolve the issues it raises. The contrived and incomplete ending is perhaps a testament to the complexity with which, despite its foolish jokes and ridiculous plot contrivances, *The Vampire's Victim* takes up the issue of the nature of man and the essence of humanity.

Indeed, notwithstanding the appearance of a Sun Goddess, a Vampire, a Devil, and a Water Genie, these Victorian “Frankensteins contain sympathetic, amiable Creatures who are rewarded by nearly full assimilation into the Victorian world. These texts deviate from what Chris Baldick (1987) identifies as the “pattern” set by Peake's *Presumption* of an “inarticulate,” “virtually silenced,” “ram-paging monster” (p.59). In so doing, they make clear that, even within the realm of drama, the Creature's progeny were both numerous and distinct, neither simple nor simplistic revisions of Mary Shelley's original.

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THOSE WHO CAN, TEACH, THINK, AND TWEAK

Reflections from Two Urban Educators

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“How will I reach them today?”

“What should I do about Jasmine who just doesn’t seem to be able to process and apply what we’re doing in class?”

“Is anyone really listening to me?”

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“Students have so many other challenges. How can they focus on school?”

Questions such as these are on all teachers’ minds, whether they are teaching in a kindergarten class or college classroom. Questions that haunt teachers often are the same, and teachers need to think critically to answer those questions for themselves, their classes, and for individual students.

The idea that adults learn differently from children has been around for almost a century. There are several differences in how adults learn as opposed to how children learn (Knowles, 1978; Lindeman, 1925; Brookfield, 1988). Knowles (1978) writes, “Individual differences among people increase with age; therefore, adult education must make optimal provision for the differences in style, time, place and pace of learning” (p. 12). Even though the adult learner and young learner have different needs, the authors questioned whether teachers of these groups of students have such different needs as well.

The authors have shared their questions and concerns with each other. One author, Audrey Burns (AB), is an elementary teacher and the other, Tracy Amerman (TA), a college instructor and both have experience with diverse, urban learners. Interestingly, we found our concerns to be more similar than dissimilar. Reflection on pedagogy is vital for any

teacher, no matter the age of his or her students, to adjust and modify instruction to effectively meet the needs of the students. Following are the areas we have both struggled with as teachers and our reflections regarding those challenges.

ENGAGING STUDENTS

Think of workshops and/or conferences you have recently attended. How engaged were you? Did the presenter use strategies to capture your interest and attention? What do we do as teachers when the students are not engaged in a way that is conducive to learning? As teachers, we learn to capitalize on the enthusiasm of students to enhance and foster aspects of their development. How can we ensure that the student is as engaged in the learning environment as we are?

TA: Two years ago I taught the undergraduate course

Introduction to Special Education. Almost 30 students were enrolled. The students were pursuing various fields including school nursing, early childhood education, elementary education, and special education. Although I felt I brought my enthusiasm and energy to the class, some of the students were not engaged. I tried videos, group work, and varied instructional techniques to no avail. I actually felt a bit defeated. I remember one student who would text during class lectures and videos. I am sure that I am not the only instructor who started to direct my discussions towards the students who were engaged. Reflecting, I feel it is my responsibility to engage all the students in the class. My continual challenge is to develop techniques to engage the various students I teach from undergraduate to graduate, pre-service to in-service teachers, and externally motivated students to self-motivated students.

AB: To me there is nothing more frustrating than having 25 kindergarteners squirming around on the rug and I have no control. Activities that utilize the natural enthusiasm and active nature of children generally keep their attention. Rhyming games let children explore the nature of language and make it okay to “play” with words in a way that is as fun as it is instructive. Music and movement are also fun activities since they engage children on a physical as well as cognitive level. Sometimes, though, even the usually effective techniques do not work. One morning I began my usual routine of gathering the students on the rug in preparation for a story. This part of the morning is always a challenge for me as there is always some student who distracts the other children throughout the entire story. I often wondered why these books were so long and questioned how to keep all students engaged for an entire story. This particular day, I tried photocopying random pictures of the story and placing them on a board within view of all students. Almost immediately the more challenging students started to ask questions and suddenly became interested in the story we were going to read. I gathered all of my students on the rug and had them discuss what they were looking at and asked questions that would get them thinking based on the five W’s: Who, What, Where, When & Why. My classroom was loud but there was learning going on and the students were excited. I didn’t get to read the book on that particular day because we ran out of time, but boy, were they eager the following day.

GETTING STUDENTS TO THINK CRITICALLY

It is imperative that a teacher understands that not all students process information the same way. Being able to identify the cognitive process that a particular student uses to integrate various pieces of information into a coherent thought will enable the teacher to identify effective strategies that will enhance the educational experience for the student.

TA: In one of my first methods courses, a practicing teacher asked what she should do about one of her students who kept lifting the legs of his desk and moving it. The responses from the class astounded me—“Make him stand up for the period,” and “Keep him in from recess,” were two of the responses. What happened to thinking out of the box? Anyone reading this can probably offer a number of more positive strategies for helping the student to stay in his appropriate spot. These students were fairly new to teaching. What would they suggest after ten or more years in a classroom?

When I teach my undergraduate methods courses, tests are constructed in a format that is somewhat unfamiliar for my undergraduate teacher candidates. Students are expected to think and apply their knowledge just as they would in a classroom. So instead of asking students to name parts of a lesson plan, I might ask students to give three objectives for a lesson on deserts. (Yes, many of them do write about desserts, believe it or not). Some students are just not able to think and create on cue. For me, performance in the methods courses is the first indication as to whether students may have difficulty in field experiences where they are expected to think and act quickly and effectively. In another class, I was using an example of the causes of the Civil War to make some points about differentiating instruction. One student kept talking about the Civil War, but missed the point about differentiating instruction.

AB: A student in my third grade language arts class was a very good reader and read with fluency and accuracy, but when I asked her questions about what she read, she was unable to answer. Her comprehension skills were very weak. She didn’t connect what she was reading to her prior knowledge. At first I had her highlight important facts as she read, but this was also a challenge for her as she did know which facts were important. When I asked her about a picture that I was holding up, she would explain it in great detail. She was a visual learner, and reading words made it difficult for her to picture something in her head. We used an imagery strategy where she tried to create the story in her head as she read. I also told her to pretend that she was watching a movie as she read, and if it didn’t make sense, she should rewind the movie in her mind. She adopted her newfound skill and applied it to her reading. Now when she summarizes a paragraph, her comprehension is evident. I also noticed that she slowed down her reading process and became a more enthusiastic reader. A graphic organizer was also an effective learning tool for her as she was encouraged to fill it out as she read. Sometimes students need more direct instruction to guide their thinking and need guidance in recognizing that there are many different ways to accomplish one task.

TEACHING URBAN, MULTICULTURAL STUDENTS

As teachers, we not only deal with curriculum, testing, and research based instructional practices, we must also understand how students' backgrounds influence their learning and experiences in the classroom.

TA: Working with urban, multi-cultural students at NJCU has been a benefit, but also sometimes a challenge. After speaking about the disability spina bifida in an introduction to a special education graduate class, a student who was born in another country said that children with disabilities were not accepted in her country. When a child was born to her great-grandmother with spina bifida, her great-grandmother called him a "pig" due to a tail-like protrusion, and the child was not accepted by the family or community. She said her great-grandmother thought she was being punished and immediately became pregnant again. The other students were appalled. Although we were all from diverse backgrounds, the cultural difference stood out. We then had to have a discussion about cultures and ideology of cultures different from our own.

AB: "I don't want to eat all of my lunch," he said to me when I asked why he had returned to the classroom with his lunch half eaten. As I began to question this student about why he didn't want to finish his lunch, I learned that he was going to bring the unfinished half home to a younger sibling. The uneaten half was going to be dinner for another child. As a new teacher in an inner city school, I was confronted with the situation of having to teach kids whose life experiences were vastly different from my own. Even at five years of age, some of my students had already had experiences that I would probably never have to confront. I realized that I needed to view my students from a different perspective and format my lessons in a way that made sense to them, not to me.

SETTING HIGHER EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENTS

What do we do when there is that disconnect between the students' present levels of academic achievement and where we want them to be? Our expectations need to be consistent with the ability of an individual student's potential to perform. As teachers we all have high expectations for our students, and we all want our students to achieve success, but are our expectations always realistic? We may want all teacher candidates to attain a B or better in all education courses or all of the kindergarten students to be reading by May. Are these expectations attainable for all? Are we providing the support and effective instructional techniques to help students achieve these goals?

TA: A colleague and I have often discussed that our teacher candidates want to be graded for effort. I have heard on

more than one occasion, "But I put a lot of time into this and that's the best I could do," meaning I should reward the student's effort, not the final product. I once taught a graduate student who handed me a research paper that was not stapled and was a crumpled mess. I took a look at it and there were punched holes in it (on the right side, no less), two copies of the first page (I didn't know which one to read) and very messy corrections. I handed it back to the student and told him that his paper did not meet the standard for a graduate student's paper. The next week, he asked to speak to me and reached into his bag to hand me something. I assumed it was his paper corrected and written in a professional manner. He actually tried to hand me his transcripts from another school to show what a good student he was and that I was wrong. So rather than meet the standard of the class, he wanted to argue about what kind of student he was.

Another student did not receive full credit for a lesson plan because he left out the section for closure. The criteria for every section, including closure, were identified and described in an accompanying rubric. He met with me after class and I explained he did not even have a section for closure. He told me that his closure was assumed and of course he would be doing closure and argued vehemently that I should know that. I was fairly new to the University at the time and gave him the opportunity to redo the lesson plan and receive an average grade for the first and second lesson plan assignments. He did not take advantage of the opportunity and did not hand in another one.

WORKING WITH SPECIAL NEEDS STUDENTS

Many students of all ages who have disabilities have a difficult time feeling comfortable in front of other peers. In addition to providing the appropriate academic support, teachers also need to recognize that self-confidence and self-esteem are just as important for these students. Students know when teachers sincerely care about them and believe in their abilities.

AB: Teaching phonics to young children can be fun and somewhat challenging. As a teacher I know that phonics instruction develops into blending ability, so I want to make sure that I have the participation of all my students. This lesson is usually taught in a large group setting and later reviewed in language arts centers. I had a student in my class who had Cerebral Palsy and only had the use of one of her hands. She was a quiet child who did not feel confident when we were doing this lesson. I had the students clap out each phoneme as I said it and then they would guess the word. I overheard a student say that "she" could not do it because her hand doesn't work. When I asked this student to guess the word, she was able to do so, but I could tell by the look on her face that this was

not fun for her. The following day I changed my way of teaching. I told all the students to pick an instrument and have a seat. I wrote a combination of words on the board and instead of clapping, I asked the students to bang out each phoneme on percussion instruments before guessing the word. The disabled student's face lit up with joy as she was able to bang her tambourine on her knee. My expectations were two-fold: 1) that this particular student would be able to participate fully and 2) the other students would recognize her potential as well.

TA: I was giving a test in a methods course for special education teacher candidates. One of the questions was to recall the three types of curriculum. One student, who was diagnosed with a learning disability in adulthood, was one of the last two students who remained. She approached me and said, "I can explain all three types, but I just can't recall what they are called." I wrote the letters "e," "h," and "a" on her test. She immediately went back to her desk and wrote "explicit," "hidden," and "absent." The other student, who does not have a learning disability, was still working and said, "That isn't fair!" I told him to come to my desk and I wrote the exact same letters on his test. I heard him mumble as he returned to his desk, "Yeah, I still don't know." Recall for students with learning disabilities is often an area of weakness. Just think of someone asking you to identify your second grade teacher. It might be a challenge or a tip-of-the-tongue experience. But if someone asked me, "Who was Mrs. D'Amico?" I could easily answer, "My second grade teacher." Teachers need to remember we are assessing students' knowledge. Not trying to confuse or trick them.

AB: A student in my kindergarten class was diagnosed as Communication Impaired by the child study team. I was assured that his stay in my class would be a short one. He did not speak in sentences but was able to express himself vocally without the use of words by making sounds. I try to incorporate rhythm and music in my daily language arts lessons. Through the use of rhythmic repetition of certain lessons, the students quickly learn things such as the days of the week, months of the year, etc. My non-speaking student was soon reciting the lesson along with the rest of the students. What he didn't know, he was able to pick up from his peers. Slowly his confidence and ability increased, and by the end of the school year he was speaking in full sentences and was actively participating in reading the daily news and weather at the beginning of each school day. I was thankful he stayed in my class and that I was able to work with his special needs.

HAVING STUDENTS MAKE CONNECTIONS

Teachers often try to be helpful but sometimes take away the independence students need to be successful in the real world.

TA: When I saw that a student who excelled in my methods course needed a University supervisor for her student teaching practicum, I was eager to volunteer. I assumed this practicum would go smoothly. During my first observation, the student teacher taught a lesson on creative writing. She stood up in the front of the classroom, relied on the text, did not cross "the line" (the imaginary line between the front teacher part of the room and the back student part of the classroom), and provided whole group instruction. I met with her after the observation and asked her why she did not try a more interactive lesson as we discussed in the methods course. She said that was not the expectation at this school.

I told her that she was in a difficult position—to do what the school expected or to do what I expected. During my next visit, she had the students engaged in a very active math class where each student had an improper fraction on one side of an index card and an answer on the other side. Students would take turns answering problems and responding if the answer was on their card. At one time two students were arguing over whether to reduce fractions before adding them or to reduce after adding them. During my post-observation conference, the student teacher was a bit upset that two students were arguing. I, on the other hand, was thrilled. Two students were arguing about mathematics! How often does that happen?

AB: One of my kindergarten students who was classified as autistic was taken to the bathroom by her personal paraprofessional every day on a set schedule. Every morning at 11:00 a.m. the student would be taken to the bathroom. As a special education teacher, I felt that there was no clear reason why this student needed any help going to the bathroom. By role-playing with her paraprofessional, I began teaching this student how to raise her hand. By observing the student, I was able to recognize when she had to go to the bathroom because she would fidget in her chair. I repeated the role-playing for approximately one week until she was able to connect the raising of her hand with her need to go to the bathroom, which would result in her being allowed to go to the bathroom by herself. The role-play in the classroom eventually translated into her being able to communicate a basic need and have that need met without assistance. Hopefully this will be the first step towards her realizing that she is able to function independently. This newfound independence will help her integrate herself into her peer group.

*"My classroom
was loud but
there was learn-
ing going on..."*

MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN A STUDENT'S LIFE

TA: In the end most teachers probably want to know that they made a difference in a student's life. About two years ago I was going to teach my class in Rossey Hall. One student came on the elevator, recognized me, and said excitedly, "Hi, Dr. Amerman, remember me? You told me that you saw me working as a school administrator. Well, I'm back completing my master's degree in Educational Leadership." I did remember her. She was bright, articulate, creative, and demonstrated leadership potential. We recently saw each other at a student conference and she introduced me to her high school students as the professor who believed in her and helped her find her calling.

AB: Knowing that I have made a difference in the life of a child is the best present anyone could give me. A student in my class last year made such an impression on me that I gave up my lunches and preps to work with him. He had very weak communication skills and was unable to communicate with others. I was walking down the hallway one afternoon and a woman came running towards

me with her arms outstretched. I had no idea who she was. In her best English she told me that I was a gift from God. She said that her son was talking and had asked for a fire truck for Christmas. It was my student's mother and she was crying. I was not a miracle worker, but I had confidence in his ability to improve and we never gave up. Just knowing I made a difference to this family makes me remember why I became a teacher.

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A SEMESTER OF VISITING OTHER WORLDS

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Many, many years ago, in a land far far away, I was a teaching fellow at the University of Buffalo. Although stuck with a curriculum of basic textbooks for the Freshman English composition course, we were allowed to choose a book length work of fiction on our own. However, that choice had to be approved by the faculty member in charge of the teaching fellows, a stern humorless type. Of course, he rejected my choice, *The Martian Chronicles* by Ray Bradbury. Even though Bradbury was a heavy hitter for me as a young reader, this faculty member had never heard of him. I learned just now, when I looked the faculty member up on the Internet, that he had been a respected literary critic. Literary critics of that time often turned up their well educated noses at science fiction. Many still do.

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Times change though, a theme well discussed in science fiction. A few years ago I taught the English Department's science fiction course at New Jersey City University. A whole course devoted to sci-fi. Would that faculty member have cringed at the thought of such a course or would he have learned to accept pop fiction so long as it was not pulp fiction? At any rate, I was glad to have a chance at the subject, even if it was decades after his ungraceful rejection. By that time I had written and published a fair number of sci-fi books and stories myself. In an earlier semester, I had even been a guest lecturer in the same science fiction course when it was taught by the late Bob Arey, a sort of larger-than-life and very likable professor who was one of the first people I met at the University.

As it turned out, the course itself was an enjoyable 15 weeks. The students were interested in the subject with a lot of ideas that I had not anticipated. It was also fun for me because the course naturally made me go back over my own life in the field. A few of the writers in my syllabus were ones I had known or at least observed up close, others with whom I had socialized, argued, or befriended. For example, I first

met one of the writers discussed in the course, Samuel R. Delany, back in the mid-1960s at a high rise commune in Toronto, Canada. Slightly more than a decade later I wrote the introduction to a library edition of *Drifglass*, a book I selected for the science-fiction course.

When the course was coming to an end, I felt an urge to come up with a final project that would combine the literary orientation of the course with the sort of creativity that the literature of the imagination encourages. Science fiction is often known as speculative fiction, a term I favor because it is wide-ranging and centered on the basic speculation, "What if?" One might argue that this question is at the basis of all fiction. What if your shabby/genteel family had to marry off its four daughters? What if your intellectual student hero murdered a repulsive individual whose death seemed to him to better the world? What if your adolescent hero traveled to the city to attempt to work out his ideological problems and found peace watching his sister on a carousel?

But these are all human situations that do not require their authors to imagine a different world or extrapolate on futuristic social or psychological situations. *What if* seems to

need a more exaggerated, more fanciful, more imaginative answer to the question at the heart of the story. What if a scientist could create human life out of inanimate body parts? We read *Frankenstein* in the science fiction class. What if a scientist were to travel across time and view the progress of human civilization and its outcome? We read *The Time Machine*. What if a team of astronauts encountered the atmospheric and gravitational fields of Jupiter? We read “Call Me Joe,” a classic short story by Poul Anderson.

It was from the *what if* question that I derived the assignment I gave the class. In the last part of the course we had read material written since the middle of the 20th century. First there was my sentimental favorite and rejection of my former supervisor, Bradbury’s *The Martian Chronicles*. This work explored several aspects of what would happen when humans reached Mars and found all sorts of wonders there, all told within a definite 1950s context. (Bradbury is all about wonder. Some say the sense of wonder is an essential feature of science fiction.) Next was Philip K. Dick’s *The Man in the High Castle*—what if the Nazis and Japanese had won World War II and each shared the government of the former United States, divided at the Mississippi River (part of a subgenre of science fiction called alternate world). Then there was the aforementioned Samuel R. Delany’s short story anthology, *Driftglass*—several *what ifs*, including what would happen to space travelers who had been genetically adapted to space travel (“Aye, and Gomorrah”). Finally, there was Ursula K. Le Guin’s *The Left Hand of Darkness*, posing the question—what if there was a race who could switch sexes on a regular basis, and from this concept work out an intricate set of political and social customs.

Building on our discussions, I came up with the following assignment based on specific science-fiction worlds. The students were to choose one of two possible worlds, one in which the elderly dominated or one in which art was nonexistent. In each world a crisis related to the vision of the world would precipitate complications. The students were to extrapolate what the possibilities were in the manner of the science fiction authors they had studied. In the first part of the assignment, their goal was to show how each of the four writers studied in the course might develop the world and/or situation. They were not required to develop a plot or even characters, though some did make forays in that direction, but they were to show how the methods and techniques of each of our writers might be applied to the story. Then, as an option, they could write a version of how they might approach the basic material, or even write their own short story using the world they had chosen.

My rationale for this assignment was to apply critical thinking through creativity to what was essentially a complicated comparison and contrast assignment. By seeing how each author went about a sci-fi and literary problem, then applying it to an imaginary situation, one could derive insights about how each writer crafted his/her stories. Would it work, I wondered, or would I get ridiculous responses that did not connect with the writers?

As it turned out, the projects more than satisfied the challenge of the assignment. It should be noted that this was a small class with only nine students doing the assignment. Five did the world of the elderly and four the world without art. Their responses were thoughtful and provocative, as was the ability of the students to recognize how the various writers might have dealt with the challenge. Along the way one student commented that imagining science fiction worlds like these, “makes people think about [this] world and how complicated it really is.”

THE WORLD OF THE ELDERLY

Capturing the poignancy that Bradbury injected into his work, one student described the world of the elderly as a place, “. . .where age is equivalent to gold and life resembles. . .a fine wine.” The story goes on to postulate a world in which old people are treated like royalty and served by youth. The young people long to be chosen to become old—some are not. For another student, Bradbury’s senior citizen world was one where youth is looked down upon until they achieved old age. In both cases the stigma of youth seemed to be derived from overpopulation. Thus the students included the edge of social criticism often found in science fiction. (Sometimes, in science fiction, the medium is too much the message. The recent film, *Avatar*, had so many well-intentioned politically-correct messages that it was nearly weighed down by them.)

In considering the work of Philip K. Dick, whose stories are the bases of numerous movies (*Blade Runner*, *Minority Report* and more), the students realized that his penchant for flawed characters would be applicable—also that the sci-fi premise would not be the point so much as the characters struggling to survive in their respective worlds. One of the students was clearly thinking of *The Man in the High Castle* by placing his proposed story in an alternate world where Native Americans had defeated the European intruders 400 years before. Further, he included the view that Native American culture has more respect for its elderly people. His suggested story would have the indigenous people face a new invasion from Europe with the Europeans this time employing an advanced technology denied to the Native Americans who had preserved their traditional culture. Another student emphasized more the young people’s view of the world, portraying a character who cynically resented the dominance of “frail, angry wrinkled people.” Another portrayed a world in which age was the basis for the economy. Paying for a service in years would take years off the individual and lengthen his or her life. In a restaurant after a waiter placed a device on the skin, “instantly a majority of his wrinkles faded and his hands stopped shaking.”

The projections invoking the work of Delany and Le Guin were also thought provoking. A character who is an outcast steals a device responsible for the life-maintenance of old people, then discovers love and meaningful life with another outcast. The student’s concept developed from an insight into

Delany's intense empathy with outsiders and outcasts. Another student played on both Le Guin's anthropological leanings and her feminism by imagining a sexually-free near-utopia where women ruled and young men were raised only for purposes of procreation.

THE WORLD WITHOUT ART

Those students who dealt with this subject had particularly complex responses. One assuming the Le Guin approach suggested a world where victorious humans must educate the defeated world about Earth culture, including humanity's achievements in art. Although the aliens resist the message at first, they come to an appreciation through the teacher's introduction of art illustrating violent subjects, thus placing art in a context they could understand. In a rather thoughtful approach to the challenge of envisioning a world without art, another student based his version of a Le Guin-like world with the premise that even though Earth people were unable to perceive it, the aliens did indeed have a high degree of artistic expression present in their practical craftsmanship. One of the alien's clocks, for example, would be just as much a work of art as a human's Renaissance painting. The medium is the message in each case.

Taking inspiration from the work of Samuel R. Delany, students recognized that his writings are especially suitable to the portrayal of a world without art. They picked tortured and flawed artists as their protagonists. One student projected a world in which the aliens would be fine artists but go unrecognized by the people of their world. In what I found to be a particularly intriguing concept, another student suggested an interesting character, a scavenger in an ugly underground world who discovers the greatness of art through an art book he has found in a massive junk pile and begins to create his own art out of the debris he has been collecting. He attempts to bring his creation to a more sophisticated upper world, only to be cruelly sent back to his own world, though examples of his sculptures remain in the upper world. In the underground he is told that he is not an artist, only a scavenger.

Years later, when the value of his sculpture is finally recognized above, representatives of the upper world come searching for him and discover that he has gone on creating art in the intervening time. When they try to obtain it from him, he begins to destroy it, proclaiming—as his inartistic society has convinced him—that he is a scavenger and not an artist. This story combined Delany's view of social outcasts with an interesting idea about the identity of the artist. It was also a thoughtful allegory of underground art, its eventual acceptance, and the despair of the artist.

Invoking the work of Dick and Bradbury, the students again illustrated the unique characteristics of the author within the challenge of the assignment. One student imagined a world intentionally influenced by Plato's Republic. Since Plato made no room for artists in his utopia, Philip Dick's world would have no use for them either. Subversive artists

tried to reverse the utopia's neglect of art. For another student, in her projection of Ray Bradbury's world without art, a carving on a piece of wood handed around from person to person would help to re-establish art in the world.

For those students who chose to create their own story, the results were similarly intriguing. One devised a quite complex plot involving aliens stealing creative powers and creative people from earth and attempting to use the creativity for the enlightenment of their own planet. The story here was about a human attempting to get to the bottom of what had happened.

Less complex but quite affecting was a story about a very young woman who created ephemeral art out of colored sand, then sat and waited for the wind to gradually blow it away. The character was uncertain as to "why she would do this, take days to make the sand the right color, feel and smell, hours upon hours to make the image on the ground, [then] wait seconds for the wind to blow it away." Her father, a man weathered and damaged by years of hard labor who disapproves of her art because his world has no liking for art, joins her. While she ritually chants beside the art work, he performs his own chanting, then lies upon the sand as the wind becomes strong. The wind swirls the sand around him and seems to flow into him. He had been in physical pain but arises without pain, calling his daughter an art healer. For me there was an abundance of thought provoking questions that plague creative individuals in this brief story: how much art is actually ephemeral (most of science fiction actually, as the world catches up to its projections), how much art is in conflict with society, how much of art meets social disapproval, how art often does have a healing power. This story, conceived by a media major with a strong visual sense, touched me deeply, convincing me that the whole experience of the science fiction course was justified.

In subsequent years I have often thought about what can be learned from this exercise in applying the creative process to an analysis of authors' views and course themes. I think such exercises show that there is a payoff in drawing out the students and that imagination is a useful tool in the study of literature. Although we analyze literature in terms of characters, themes, structure, and linguistics, we do not often study it for imagination. After all, there are no rules, no vocabulary for the analysis of how imagination is applied. Although there are some linguistic approaches, they always seem beside the point to me. Scholar, deconstruct thyself.

I had to resolve for myself how to evaluate the students' responses to the assignment. While I could easily see how well the students had considered how various authors might treat the imaginary worlds, I found it more difficult to judge the fictions they created for these authors, except in varying degrees of awe or wonder at the stories they had created. I think they did well in the latter area, and I am not certain I could tell anyone why, at least not in analytical terms. Analytical terms are probably not useful for judging their responses. We can merely, like the elementary school teacher

looking at the poems of her/his students, just say, “Nice work. I like the way you...” And that’s the way I see the fictional forays of these students. I had hoped to like them, and by and large I was impressed by them, not only for their proposed

“...there are no rules, no vocabulary for the analysis of how imagination is applied.”

stories but for the ways in which they corresponded well to the authors of the course. Most utilized the outcast/outsider in Delany, the careful building of the world of Le Guin, the paranoid anarchy of Dick, and the nostalgic values of Bradbury. Although immensely popular in films, and for young readers, science fiction in the past has been a kind of stepchild for literary study. When a noted author like Aldous Huxley or Doris Lessing experiments with the genre, it becomes respectable, but for the most part, science fiction is

merely popular fiction, more suitable for readers outside of academia. It is good that courses in sci-fi do exist, and I foresee more emphasis placed on the study of science fiction, as well as on mystery and crime fiction in the future. On the other hand, maybe genre fiction is right where it belongs, outside academia. We can, after all, relax with a sci-fi novel or a mystery in ways beyond academic interpretations. Who wants to analyze a space opera or a hardboiled detective story? Well, I do, but nobody has to listen.

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However, creativity can be useful for critical thinking exercises. However one applies it, creativity can motivate students to evaluate material from a different perspective. Students being asked to analyze Machiavellian methods can perceive them in the practical ways Machiavelli intended by applying them to a contemporary workplace, for example. One might understand the way Dickens viewed a cityscape by attempting a description of one’s own neighborhood in a Dickensian style.

Of course many among us already use creative assignments, role-playing exercises, and discussion formats that include students’ power points, with slides decorated with appropriate imagery. Any procedure that involves the student in exploring his or her imaginative potential can be rewarding and fulfilling. Applying creativity to classroom work does at least accomplish one goal. It opens the mind to possibility. Much of student writing is too restrictive, following formulas and guidelines, not risking anything that might turn a merely competent paper into something more.

Hughes Mearns, a pioneer in encouraging education to use more creativity in student writing, wrote about the subject in the 1920s in his book *Creative Power* (1958). Mearns, credited with coining the term “creative writing,” encouraged free expression for students’ imaginative creations, especially in the formative elementary school years. Several years earlier he was himself the creator of a classic nonsense poem

As I was going up the stair
I met a man who wasn’t there
He wasn’t there again today
I wish, I wish he’d go away.

I remember the verse from a book I treasured as a child, when I was beginning to write stories myself. Mearns might not have intended it, but to me that verse pretty much sums up the creative impulse, especially for science fiction. We keep encountering what is not there, try to wish it away, and then finally have to deal with it.

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JOB GROWTH IN THE U.S. IN THE NEXT DECADE

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Economists broadly define a depression as a historical period in which there is a 10 percent drop in output and consumption. In the Great Depression of the 1930s, the Gross Domestic Product of the United States fell by 25 percent and unemployment increased to 25 percent. There are some frightening and alarming similarities between then and now—banks are shaky and the economy is deep in debt. However, our financial system today is clearly better regulated than it was in the 1930s. Bank deposits are FDIC insured and the Federal Reserve Bank has taken an active role in trying to stanch the losses in the crisis. President Obama's administration is trying to do everything possible—spending like wild, rescuing banks and a few companies, and loosening up the money supply. However, employment in the United States is lagging well behind the economic indicators.

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Joblessness is at a 26 year high and rising, which for the millions of unemployed means not only a loss of income but also a loss of health care coverage, pensions, job experience and skills, and, in too many cases, loss of homes. This picture dashes the hopes of young graduates who are trying to enter the labor force. In the light of this reality, putting people to work should be society's primary responsibility.

Our demography is rapidly changing. With the increase in work visas and entry of documented immigrants, our labor force is expanding. Furthermore, our work force is fragmented, consisting of skilled, semi-skilled, and unskilled workers. Additionally, our population is aging with a large number of people developing chronic debilitating diseases while life expectancy is rising, and so a crucial question arises—*What majors should our students choose that will give them the best opportunities to grow and find employment during the next decade?*

SOME HARSH NEW REALITIES

In the middle of the worst part of the present recession, with more than 15 million people unemployed, some economists

claim that there are approximately three million jobs that employers are not able to fill. There is evidence that we are undergoing a structural shift in the United States economy that has resulted in a serious mismatch between job-seekers and job vacancies. Workers laid off from shrinking sectors, as well as new graduates, lack the skills and training for openings in newly growing fields such as health care, education, accounting, and government services. This mismatch will not reduce unemployment when the economy begins to expand. Furthermore, inflation will strike sooner than expected if employers have to pay more to attract the few workers who are qualified for the available jobs. Both employers and workers may have to accept harsh new realities of lower starting salaries for those who are hired as well as being imperfect matches to fill vacancies.

So far in the current recession, more than seven million people have become unemployed and about 2.5 million more are expected to lose their jobs in 2010. The unemployment rate has reached 10 percent, and even if the economy begins to improve, we may have to wait until 2013 before we see full employment again. There is a lag of several months between

an economic turnaround and job growth. The last recession that ended in November 2001 did not produce job growth until September 2003. This may not be such good news for the class of '10 but the new graduates cannot be as choosy as in the past. They must learn to compete.

In the spring of 2009, the United States economy witnessed slowing rates of decline in just about every significant leading indicator. However, we expect that the recovery will

be less robust than normal and inflation, which is now nearly nonexistent, will become more noticeable by the end of the year.

SOME INTERESTING STATISTICS

Not only is the unemployment rate the highest it has been in 26 years, but the situation is also not improving. Since November 2009, unemployment has hit 10 percent, and the country is observing the fastest rise in joblessness since the Great Depression. The unemployment rate

of college graduates has reached 4.7 percent. The ratio of job seekers to job openings stands at six to one. Furthermore, the cutbacks of temporary workers means that the labor market is in much worse shape than the 10 percent jobless figure for November 2009 would suggest. If we include part-timers who would like to work more and discouraged workers who have given up their job searches, the jobless rate would come to over 17.5 percent. Also, temporary workers, in some instances, are suffering pay cuts if they are lucky enough to keep their jobs. Given the fact that a large national budget deficit will be with us for the next two years, the rate of unemployment will certainly increase in the next two to three years. Very few economists believe it will go down to 6.5 or 6 percent. According to Harvard University economist Kenneth Rogoff, unemployment could reach 11 percent or more (Sasseen, 2009).

The U.S. would need to add a good 11 million jobs to bring the unemployment rate back to where it was at the start of the crisis, and over nine million jobs just to get unemployment back to 6 percent.

ARE THERE BRIGHT SPOTS OR ROOM FOR HOPE?

To increase their chances of landing jobs, current students and new graduates need to consider majoring in the science, health care, education, accounting, and government sectors. As economists, we do not have a crystal ball to be able to read the future perfectly, but we are professionally able to give our opinions about what will most likely occur over the next decade:

- Health care will remain a high-growth sector, partly because of the new emphasis on universal insurance coverage. There will

be an abundance of jobs for a range of skill levels from health-care aids, to nurses, to social workers. Because the population of the United States is skewed so that baby-boomers are now aging and will require various kinds of medical services, there will be an increasing demand not only for doctors and nurses but also for allied medical professionals, such as biotechnologists, chemists, biologists, pharmacologists, rehabilitation therapists, as well as for those trained in nuclear medicine.

- Educators of all stripes will also be in demand. Because of the reauthorization of the *No Child Left Behind* resolution, the Obama administration wants the states to raise graduation standards to better prepare students to do college level work. It follows then that there will be a great need for better trained educators in the secondary-education field.
- Partly because of federal legislation such as *No Child Left Behind* and partly because of improvements in diagnostic techniques, we are finding, as an example, that close to one out of 100 children may be autistic, so it also seems that there will be a growing need for special education teachers.
- States rich in energy or commodities like Texas, Oklahoma, Montana, and Wyoming, will remain buoyant, creating jobs in the alternative energy sector.
- Government could hire a large number of new public servants over the next few years under Obama's administration.
- Since baby-boomers are reaching retirement age, nearly every federal agency will be looking for talent to replace them.
- Under the Obama administration's economic recovery plan, additional staff members will be hired to keep up with the greater workloads.
- Not-for-profit organizations will also be looking for experts in finance and fund-raising. They would welcome both newcomers and those with private-sector skills.
- Given the outrageous events that have occurred because of the lack of regulation of the financial industry and the corruption of individuals, both government in its regulatory capacity and the private sector, are going to require more forensic accountants, which would necessitate the hiring of people who know accounting, economics, and finance.
- People are being held more responsible for their own retirement funds. Thus, because we have been flat out misled about the current economic and stock-market situation by accountants, regulators, rating agencies, stock analysts, hedge fund managers, mortgage brokers, banks, and CEOs, we must recognize that there will be a great need for more professional help in the financial field. Also, there will be a great need for more professionally trained financial advisors.
- The current financial crisis has shown us that even in recessionary times someone has to keep the accounting records straight. Economists are aware that over two-thirds of new

"We need the inventors, the creators, the scientists, the entrepreneurs... to ... guide us out of this nightmare."

job creation has come from small businesses. As these businesses are created and expand, there will be an urgent need for more accountants and personnel trained in finance.

- As the economy improves, comes out of recession, and returns to its normal growth path of 2.5 percent in Gross Domestic Product, retirees will begin to travel again. Thus there will be increased job openings in the leisure and hospitality industry.

The United States economy has changed dramatically over the past couple of years—much faster than workers can adapt to. Because of the rapid growth in technology, jobs that were labor intensive are now more capital intensive, such as the auto industry in which automation has replaced human labor since machines do not need health benefits nor ask for pension benefits. Both employers and workers need to change and lower their expectations; i.e., employers need to provide training to workers, and, furthermore, workers should lower their expectations as they switch careers. Also, it should be kept in mind that a mismatch of work and workers is never a good sign for economic recovery. Finally, everyone should be aware, that even as this article is being written, there are six job seekers for each job opening.

OUR RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE NEXT GENERATION

One of the goals of economic policy is to set the foundation for sustained and durable economic growth. We need the inventors, the creators, the scientists, the entrepreneurs—those who create jobs—to lead or guide us out of this nightmare. However, as we move forward, we cannot disregard the fact that our education system is not effectively, efficiently, or successfully preparing our students and future workers for a 21st century economy.

Therefore, in order to compete and win in the global economy, our businesses must effectively train the workforce, especially in the science and technology sectors. To this end, many corporate leaders are now advocating for more effective investments in education to create and ensure a pool of talented future workers.

Furthermore, as economists, we know that when the next stimulus bill is passed by Congress, there will be job openings in several sectors which will require specific training. Facing this reality, our students need more practical experience while in college because there is presently an obvious weakness in the knowledge of real life applications of technical materials among young people.

Finally, world trade, because of globalization, is going to become more important in the next 10 years. The export-import sector is becoming a very important feature of the economy; therefore, it behooves us to encourage our students to concentrate on studying foreign languages such as Spanish, Chinese, Japanese, Arabic, Hindi, etc.

Since New Jersey City University is the only public urban university in New Jersey with a mission to educate first-generation college students, it would seem that we have a great responsibility as educators. Primarily, we should expect our graduates to have a broader introduction to the liberal arts and a redesigned general studies program to reflect the broader requirements of contemporary life. Since a majority of the faculty believes that the current program is inadequate, we must prepare students to be academically ready and employable in the 21st century. We need a strong liberal arts program which should endow all students with basic intellectual capital that will give them the mobility to move from one job to another, as well as compete and survive in the 21st century.

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THE CASE OF CRITICAL THINKING IN THE UNIVERSITIES

Are we there yet?

Basanti Chakraborty, Assistant Professor of Early Childhood Education

What is critical thinking? How is it defined? E. D. Hirsch (1987) offers the following:

“Critical-thinking skills”: A phrase that implies an ability to analyze ideas and solve problems while taking a sufficiently independent, “critical” stance toward authority to think things out for one’s self. It is an admirable educational goal for citizens of a democracy, and one that has been advocated in the United States since Jefferson. The ability to think critically is a goal that is likely to be accepted by all American educational theorists. But it is a goal that can easily be oversimplified and sloganized. In the progressive tradition that currently dominates our schools, “critical thinking” has come to imply a counterpoise to the teaching of “mere facts,” in which, according to the dominant caricature, sheep-like students passively absorb facts from textbooks or lecture-style classrooms. Critical thinking, by contrast, is associated with active, discovery learning and with the autonomous, independent cast of mind that is desirable for the citizens of a democracy. Conceived in this progressive tradition, critical thinking belongs to the formalistic tool conception of education, which assumes that a critical habit of thought, coupled with an ability to read for the main idea and an ability to look things up, is the chief component of critical-thinking skills. This tool conception, however, is an incorrect model of real-world critical thinking. Independent-mindedness is always predicated on relevant knowledge: one cannot think critically unless one has a lot of relevant knowledge about the issue at hand. Critical thinking is not merely giving one’s opinion. To oppose “critical thinking” and “mere facts” is a profound empirical mistake. Common sense and cognitive psychology alike support the Jeffersonian view that critical thinking always depends upon factual knowledge.

According to Brookfield (1987), critical thinking is a process involving the following common characteristics:

- Identifying and challenging assumptions.
- Challenging the importance of context.
- Trying to imagine and explore alternatives.
- Reflective Skepticism.

An analysis of the definition suggests that individuals engaged in critical thinking identify and challenge assumptions, engage in imagination, explore alternative solutions to problems, and reflect skeptically. Let us examine some of the statements of our students and faculty in higher education.

“Writing an essay on our lives and culture was the best activity.” “I should have explained it to you better!” “Can we discuss openly without any consequences attached to the outcome of our discussion?” “In our class we will not criticize anyone, we will give constructive suggestions.” “Multicultural education is important because it can help to eliminate the stereotypes and discrimination in the world’s classrooms and possibly outside the classroom as well.”

Do we hear such comments in college/university discussions? If so, it is a good sign that our students and professors are engaged in shared responsibilities of examining assumptions and being part of a process of critical inquiry. It may be inferred that professors are modeling the disposition that making mistakes is human, constructive criticism is helpful for all the parties involved, and it is okay to take risks. If professors model such thinking for their students, the students feel empowered to venture into thinking beyond the box. Students may not feel inhibited even if they make mistakes. Such modeling of open thinking inspires and encourages students to think impartially and make judgments based on data and facts.

- How does this kind of teaching-learning process evolve in university classrooms? The university students are exposed to the liberal arts education which is intended to free their minds to embrace logic, reasoning, and values of citizenship and civility. It is in the university classrooms through the demonstrative example of the professors that habits of thinking are refined and strengthened. We live in a world where mere content knowledge and skills in disconnected areas of life are not as important as problem solving and decision making ability. Problem solving and decision making are types of critical thinking that require mental effort and personal discipline. In the problem solving process, people engage in fact finding, create hypotheses, find cause and effect relationships, check for alternative solutions, and base their judgment on the analysis of context and facts.
- Experts in the field of critical thinking suggest that students need a safe and secure learning environment where they examine new, controversial, risky ideas without the fear of

being penalized for wrong responses. In a classroom environment a lot depends on the professor’s ability to create a nurturing environment. Professors who foster conditions of critical thinking encourage students to pose questions, ask a variety of questions, and allow wait time for students to assimilate and reflect on the information. Additionally, such professors ask clarifying questions and model the process of critical questioning. The heart of the process lies in an environment where students feel inspired and motivated to examine assumptions and challenge those through intellectual discourses.

*“Judge a man by
his question
rather than by
his answer.”*

Voltaire

- The structure of the class and teaching style that encourage creativity, reflective thinking, and self-directed learning serve the process of critical thinking well. Assignments and assessment that allow imagination, reflection, and autonomy strengthen the critical thinking process. Enabling students to have freedom to ask questions and take intellectual risks in their written assignments and responses are additional opportunities to engage in critical thinking and reflection. Group work, cooperative activities, and dialogue are vital to the health of critical thinking. However, the value of professorial guidance cannot be underestimated.
- Focused dialogues, relevant discussions, deeper examination of issues are some of the elements professors value to nourish the critical thinking ability of their students. Moderation of discussions enhances the motivation of students in intellectual engagement, dialogue and reasoning. Provisions of incentives and recognition serve as catalysts in sharpening and strengthening the desire of students to engage in critical thinking. Despite, effective strategies and efforts to engage all students in critical thinking processes, some students may not develop the expected level of critical thinking. However, professors who recognize and praise the contribution of students in course discussions increase the likelihood of engagement in the critical thinking process, especially professors who model critical thinking, elaborate on students’ responses, and lead students in intellectual discourse without subjecting them to the fear of failure or penalty.

The essence of the process of critical thinking lies in the ability to pose, clarify and analyze appropriate questions. Along with questions, there is the use of additional visual materials such as pictures, cartoons, and graphic organizers. Performance, such as dance, music and recitations fosters a variety of avenues to access information, examine meaning, and challenge assumptions. Students may find it useful to relate course content to events that happen in their daily lives. Professors engaged in facilitating critical thinking identify and value the multiple intelligences of their students. Students

who are talented in art, music, dance, drama, inter-personal relations, and who love nature may not always respond to the traditional ways of teaching and learning. Some students by nature are reflective. Such students may not reflect in a group atmosphere but may need time to read, research, and produce their personal learning in a completely different fashion. Strategies such as brainstorming, free writing, mind mapping and writing journals may enhance these students' ability to engage in critically reflective thinking.

All students in colleges and universities are exposed to the values of liberal arts education, such as tolerance, dialogue, reason, and sympathy. Through coursework in liberal arts, students are exposed to critical thinking dispositions, problem solving, and global consciousness. In addition, collaboration with liberal arts education faculty in teaching and research are wonderful avenues of critical thinking for faculty and students alike.

The process of scientific thinking occupies a central position in 21st century higher education. Courses with emphasis on scientific thinking are designed in such ways that support students' curiosity, encourage their probing behavior, and their imaginations. Students find autonomy and opportunity to engage in the process of generating abundant fresh ideas, searching for solutions to varieties of problems, and elaborating on existing ideas. Students in such courses receive recognition for their creativity and inventiveness. At the same time, professors as mentors can demonstrate intellectual courage by challenging their own assumptions and revising their own perceptions.

Institutions of higher education have a significant role to play in fostering the critical thinking abilities of students as well as faculty dialogue on pedagogy and research on critical inquiry. The most important ingredient of critical thinking of

students is the learning of content and concept through the process of rigor and enrichment. In this regard, the use of technology in teaching, learning, and research cannot be overemphasized. Learning is meaningless if conducted in isolation. Students in 21st century colleges and universities should have access to information about local, national, and global issues. Our lives are globally interconnected. Students and professors in higher education have the moral responsibility to engage in dialogues, reasoning, and critical examination of issues that not only impact the academic lives of students within the classroom but have implications beyond political and geographic boundaries.

The questions for the mentors and leaders of 21st century college/university remain to be explored and answered—Do I play a significant role in enhancing the critical thinking ability of my students? Do my personal experiences and prejudices stand in the way of fostering critical thinking? Do I play the role of a credible mentor and model for my students in sharpening their critical thinking ability?"

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were more likely to engage in personal self-discovery, were more tolerant of diversity, were less religious, and less rigid in their beliefs about gender roles.

While this type of work is both important and necessary, it has been unable to capture the idiosyncratic nature of learning and change at the personal and individual levels (Harper, 2007). Consequently, despite the existence of multiple studies attempting to assess how college affects students, especially for first-generation college students, there is still a great deal which remains unknown (Harper, 2007).

Furthermore, liberal arts learning in particular can afford students valuable levels of cultural capital which has been positively correlated to college student success (Wells, 2008). Cultural capital is knowledge and awareness of cultural content and norms that assist with participation in higher socioeconomic milieus and class ascension (Bourdieu, 1977). Because college and liberal arts coursework are places where many students acquire cultural capital (Wells, 2008), understanding how low socioeconomic and first-generation college students experience liberal arts learning is a valuable objective.

METHOD

Following the guidelines of Rubin and Rubin (1995) topical semi-structured interviews were conducted. Here, the core topics were the participants' educational experiences and growth in relation to their liberal arts coursework.

The study participants were attending college at either one of two four year colleges in suburban settings, one public and one private. All of the participants (N=20) were interviewed a minimum of three times, with each interview lasting approximately 90 minutes. All interviews were audio recorded and then transcribed. During the post interview analysis process, participants were continuously contacted for member and fact checking.

FINDINGS

An umbrella theme of *liberation* emerged from the data analysis. This theme was further broken down into three sub-thematic categories that describe how the dynamic played out. These were *Legitimizing the Private by Making it Public*, *Contributing Academic Accuracy to Pre-Existing Knowledge*, and *Promoting Critical Thinking and Validating Dissent*. As mentioned above, this text will focus specifically and exclusively on the *Promoting Critical Thinking and Validating Dissent* portion of findings.

PROMOTING CRITICAL THINKING AND VALIDATING DISSENT

In multiple instances the college faculty utilized assignments and texts that expressed and sometimes celebrated critical thinking and dissenting opinions. This reality was often especially significant to these students given their lower socioeconomic backgrounds. Many of the students came from backgrounds where divergence from conventional thoughts, norms, and values was met with considerable resistance. By presenting texts and ideas that embraced dissent, the faculty was creating

contexts in which the students felt comfortable to embrace and express their own dormant rebellious streaks. By allowing the students to embrace and communicate unorthodox views they had previously kept inside, the faculty contributed to the production of the students' ideological autonomy. Thirteen of the 20 students (65%) shared experiences reflective of this dynamic.

At times this dissent/liberation phenomenon came as a result of the coursework's propensity to provide alternative world views that may have been distinctly different from, or even in opposition to, that of a student's home/family. A good example of this can be seen in Kevin's response describing his freshman year philosophy class:

I grew up in a pretty strict Irish Catholic family...[Y]ou see we're kind of recent immigrants. {W}e didn't come over back in the day during the potato famine or anything. We were recent. [M]y grandfather came to the Bronx when he was already like [sic] forty, so this was when my father was already eleven, I think...[My] parents are seriously Catholic and I was brought up with it all around me, but I always had doubts because there was [sic] just a lot of things that didn't make sense...I was fifteen when 9/11 happened, and that was it! I really questioned what kind a [sic] God would allow something like this...with Iraq and all its [sic] just seemed so chaotic, so meaningless... [T]he thing was I couldn't share my thoughts with my family at all because that would be blasphemy...[I]t was the second semester of my freshman year and I had to fill my humanities requirement...I took Intro. to Philosophy not because of any real interest, just for the credits ...that class turned out to be real [sic] special because of what the professor assigned. We did Nietzsche, and Marx and Kierkegaard and they *all* questioned God...you could tell he [the professor] was trying to be objective and neutral, but when he started lecturing on these guys and talking about the courage that it took for them to talk [sic] out and question God, he got a little more excited[.] [Y]ou could tell that he sort of believed in them, even though he didn't say it directly...[W]hat made me so interested was that these guys were describing feelings and ideas I had, but that I couldn't really talk about with my family cause [sic] it just would have become either an argument with my father, or my mother would have been sad and crying and stuff, so what was the use? But in class, I could really explore these ideas and write about them and actually be encouraged when I did that. It was really important because it allowed me to begin to really thinking...Isn't that what college is supposed to be all about? (Kevin, Irish American Male, Computer Science/Private, 21)

In Kevin's case we see an example where the classroom experiences not only allowed the student to express thoughts and ideas that may have been heretical at home, but the student was actually encouraged and rewarded for doing so. In these cases the liberation was freedom of expression and thought within new, more intellectually liberal environments that allowed and fostered dissent from conventional ideas.

“...liberal arts learning in particular can afford students valuable levels of cultural capital...”

Part of this move away from conventionality involved not only critical thinking, but revelation as well. LaTisha's eye opening reaction to the introductory sociology course she took the second semester of her sophomore year illustrates a common experience of these students:

This is gonna [sic] sound strange, but I never knew how poor I was until I got to college, cause [sic] when you're only surrounded by other poor people you don't have nothing [sic] to compare to. It just is what it is....yea...there's TV and all, but that was just make believe....[H]ere it was different, because there was [sic] a lot of really rich people, with nice cars and all. I mean, here were girls my age driving BMWs, Mercedes, Lexus, all that stuff, and I'm sure their daddies bought those for them...[Y]ou know they ain't [sic] work for it....it made me feel really bad, like there was something wrong with me or my parents for not having money. Not only did I have no car, neither did my parents...I mean we take the bus.... I was real [sic] shy at first [at college] when meeting new people, and when they would ask me where I was from, I would be all vague, and just say New York, instead of the Bronx....I thought that when they would hear "the Bronx," they would know I was poor....[P]art of me felt that rich people were just plain [sic] better....[T]hen when I took that soc. class, it was like a big realization, and I started being almost proud of being poor, like the struggle...Shapiro [the sociology professor] basically started out the class with what he called a "simple truth," he said, then wrote on the board: "[P]oor people are poor because rich people are rich, and rich people are rich because poor people are poor." This really blew me away, cause [sic] I never made that connection...I pretty much bought the idea that rich people were rich because they deserved it, or because they just worked harder or were smarter or whatever. But what Shapiro was saying now...was ...that the rich were rich on the backs of the poor....[T]he most important part was that he made it clear that it wasn't our fault that we were poor...[I]t was just like [sic] a product of capitalism. This really excited me in a good way....One day in class we were talking about where we were from, and because of [sic] how he talked, I was fine [sic] admitting where I was from. When he heard I was from the projects in the South Bronx, he viewed it as a something to be proud of, like that [sic] I survived....That class made it so I could be proud of where I was from. I didn't have to lie or pretend to be someone else. (Latisha, African American Female, Business Administration, 20)

Joseph's remarkable story of going from participating in assaults of gay men in New York City to understanding and accepting "alternative lifestyles" is a particularly salient example of how validating dissent, critical thinking, and exposure can result in freedom of individual thought. The quote below is in reference to a required course he took which was focused on race, class, and gender in the United States, and his openly gay professor, Mr. Ginelli:

...You have to understand that I was brought up in a very closed environment, like [sic] where I grew up. There were very clear ideas about right and wrong, and it's like [sic], you were either in or out, right or wrong, straight or a freak...boys were supposed to be one thing and girls were supposed to be another, and as long as you didn't cross that line, everything was okay....Especially when it came to

what a man was and what a man did, there were clear rules, rules that I didn't make, I just followed. You got [sic] to remember, I'm Italian....growing up my dad would call any guy with long hair a "finocchio" [pejorative Italian term for a gay man] and nobody blinked....[W]hen we [Joseph and his friends] went into the City and messed with those gays, it was like we were just having fun, and in a way doing what was right, what was natural....[I]t was almost like we didn't even look at them as real people, they were freaks. But that all changed at college, because they became real, like three dimensional people...[S]eeing that movie [documentary film about the life and death of Matthew Shepard], reading those essays, getting to know Mr. Ginelli, I couldn't no longer [sic] pretend I didn't know better, and like [sic] my grandmother always told me, "[W]hen you know better, you do better." It wasn't much more complicated than that, it was all about exposure....that class gave me, like [sic] the insight and like [sic] the courage to be different from everyone from home. (Joseph, Italian American, Business Administration, 20)

Like Joseph, many of the students in the study found the "courage to be different." This was done through exposure to faculty and assignments that not only provided the students with differing views, but which expressed an appreciation of, and esteem for, dissent in general.

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

The fact that these students both trusted and connected with their professors contrasts with research findings indicating that first generation college students are less likely to have established these types of relationships with faculty (Terenzini, et al., 1996). Consequently, a primary practical implication is the need for professional development for college faculty, especially those in institutions with large first-generation college student populations, that focuses on assisting faculty in making the types of connections explored earlier.

Additionally, and perhaps surprising to some, most college faculty members have not received formal pedagogical training. As a result, there is no formal assurance that college faculty know how to teach well. While many voluntarily attend professional development training and/or are simply "naturals" in the classroom, others fall through the cracks, and are not as effective as they could be. When working with academically well prepared students from college educated family backgrounds, this lack of pedagogical training may not be as much of an issue. But when working with students with the unique needs of first-generation college students, very often more deliberate and structured teaching strategies may be necessary.

In order to cultivate the liberating effects discussed in this paper, professional development could help faculty understand that some of their students' backgrounds may discourage the critical, autonomous, or oppositional thinking necessary for independent thinking. Awareness of these realities can help faculty more effectively teach this growing portion of our national college student body, and ultimately increase student retention.

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New Faculty & Staff

DENISE BRANCHIZIO, MSN

Assistant Professor of Nursing

Denise Branchizio received her Bachelors of Science in Nursing (BSN) from Seton Hall University in 1990 and completed her master's degree in Nursing Education (MSN) from Ramapo College/UNDNJ School of Nursing in 2007. Prior to coming to NJCU, she worked at University Hospital in Newark for the past 19 years. Her many roles included Critical Care Nurse, Nurse Manager, Clinical Educator, and Department Administrator. Her academic interests lie in health care disparities in minorities and women.

YI-YU CHEN, PhD

*Assistant Professor
of Business Administration*

Dr. Chen received her PhD in Management and Global Business from Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey. She is also the editorial assistant of the journal, IEEE Transactions on Engineering Management. Her research interests include strategic alliances, technology and innovation management, international business, and entrepreneurship. Her research papers have been published in the International Journal of Technology Management and one book chapter in Technology and Innovation Management Volume of Blackwell Encyclopedia of Management.

MARC G. DALIO, MA

*Assistant Professor
of Music, Dance & Theatre*

A native of Sparta, New Jersey, Marc graduated cum laude from Rowan University with degrees in Vocal Performance and Music Education and summa cum laude from Boston University with his Masters in Music Education. He is now an assistant professor of Voice and the coordinator of Musical Theatre Studies at New Jersey City University. An award winning professional actor, Marc's stage credits include: Gaston and Beast, in the Broadway national tour of Disney's *Beauty and the Beast* (Best of Denver award winner, National Broadway Theatre award nominee, Metrolina Theatre Award winner) the Broadway National Tour of *Les Miserables*, as well as leading roles in *Miss Saigon*, *Aida*, *Metropolis* (American première), *West Side Story* (Metrolina Theatre Award Winner), and *Noises Off*. Most recently, Marc was seen in the first NYC revival of *Songs for a New World* and New Jersey's first professional production of *I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change*. Marc's voice can be heard on the original German cast recording of Disney's *Beauty and the Beast* as Gaston, and he co-produced, arranged and performed on *A Wish for Christmas*, a CD benefiting the Make a Wish Foundation. A passionate actor, musician, director and educator, Dalio has directed, musically directed and conducted such shows as *Song and Dance*, *Barnum*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Nunsense*, *Songs for a New World*, *You're A Good man Charlie Brown*, *South Pacific* and *Godspell*, and has students performing on Broadway, touring throughout the United States, Europe and Asia.

ALEXIS M. DELGADO, MA

*Associate Director,
Opportunity Scholarship Program*

Alexis M. Delgado is the new associate director of the Opportunity Scholarship Program (OSP) in the William J. Maxwell College of Arts and Sciences. This is his second position with OSP, where he was previously a counselor for three years. Mr. Delgado received his B.A. in Sociology from Rowan University in New Jersey in 2001, and his M.A. in Applied Sociology from Montclair State University. At NJCU he also teaches Human and Intercultural Relations and Orientation to College. Prior to NJCU, he worked at Rutgers as a senior counselor on the New Brunswick campus. In addition, he worked at the Department of Human Services in Passaic where he was responsible for providing case management services and conducting outreach in the community.

DEIRDRE-NOEL ENGELS, MBA

*Assistant Professor
of Business Administration*

Deirdre-Noel Engels began her career in advertising at DMB&B/Publicis as a media buyer for Kraft/General Foods. Leveraging her marketing and media backgrounds, she joined ACNielsen where she worked with clients such as Revlon and Procter & Gamble to conduct in-depth analysis on consumer purchasing patterns. Deirdre also spent two years with ACNielsen's Latin American Division in Mexico City where she helped introduce a new consumer tracking system for emerging markets. Most recently, she was Vice President of Knowledge Management for Cadbury Schweppes' Snapple Beverage Group where she was responsible for consumer and retailer analysis as well as marketplace trends. She is a graduate of Dickinson College, holds an MBA from Fordham University, and is currently working on her doctorate at Pace University. For the past two years she taught as an adjunct professor at Pace University and NJCU and has recently joined New Jersey City University full time as an assistant professor of Marketing. Deirdre-Noel's research interests include category management and consumer decision theory. She looks forward to working with the Marketing department and business students and NJCU.

BARBARA FELDMAN, PhD

*Dean of the William J. Maxwell
College of Arts & Sciences*

Barbara Feldman is a native New Jerseyian. She earned her Bachelor of Arts and Masters of Arts degrees in Sociology from the University of Delaware. She then earned her PhD in Sociology from the University of Pennsylvania. Prior to arriving at NJCU, she served as Associate Dean of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences at Montclair State University. She also served as an associate dean for the College of Arts and Sciences and chair of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Seton Hall University. Prior to becoming an administrator, Dr. Feldman held an appointment in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Seton Hall. In this capacity, she taught courses ranging from Introduction to Sociology, to Sociology of the Family, to Sociology of Gender and the Senior Seminar. Her research has been in the area of the Sociology of Disasters. She has published peer reviewed articles and presented papers at regional and national meetings in this area. Her recent work has focused on the significance of disaster souvenirs as they relate to social class, social networking, and a review of the literature regarding looting during disasters.

CRAIG KATZ, MA

*Coordinator of International Students
and Study Abroad*

Craig Katz brings to NJCU more than 20 years of experience in International Education with a background in International Student Services, English as a Second Language, exchange program management, and study abroad. He holds a bachelors degree from Rutgers University and a masters degree in TESOL from Temple University and has served as Director of ESL and International Student Advisor at Camden County College and Director of International Student Services at Rowan University. Having lived and worked overseas and traveled to more than 30 countries in Europe, Asia, and Latin America, Craig is a passionate supporter of international education and exchange. His focus will be on creating new opportunities for NJCU students to study abroad, developing faculty-led overseas study programs, and promoting NJCU as a destination for international students through the establishment of relationships with foreign institutions and organizations.

MICHELLE PEREPICZKA, PhD

Assistant Professor of Counseling

Dr. Perepiczka earned a PhD in Counselor Education and Supervision from Texas A&M University-Commerce, an MS in Counseling and Development from Texas Woman's University, and a BA in Interdisciplinary Studies from the University of Texas at Dallas. She was a counselor for two years at the Family Place in Dallas, a domestic violence agency for children and adolescents in supportive living and outreach programs with their mothers. Her area of specialization is in play therapy and domestic violence. Dr. Perepiczka serves the Association for Assessment in Counseling and Education and was nominated for president of the Counseling Association of Humanistic Education and Development for the 2010-2011 term. She is a reviewer for the *Journal of Professional Counseling: Practice, Theory and Research* and the *Journal of Humanistic Counseling, Education, and Development*. Dr. Perepiczka has presented at the National Association of Multicultural Rehabilitation Concerns conference and the meeting of the Association for Assessment in Counseling and Education. She has published on counselor development and wellness.

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AIXA SAID-MOHAND, MAT

Assistant Professor of Spanish

Aixa Said-Mohand was born in Melilla, a Spanish city located in North Africa. He received his BA in geography and history (Licenciado en Filosofía y Letras, en la especialidad de Geografía e Historia) from the Universidad de Granada in southern Spain. As an Erasmus Student he completed the last year of his BA studies at the National University of Ireland in Galway. After two years of studying at the University of Miami in Coral Gables, Florida, as an international exchange student, where he worked as Lecturer of Spanish as well, he returned to Ireland to live and work as lecturer of Spanish at the Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology and the Galway Language Center. He obtained his master's degree (MAT) in the teaching of Spanish as a foreign language from Universitat de Barcelona in Catalonia. For his thesis he carried out research on language use and attitudes among young bilingual speakers in Gibraltar (a British enclave in southern Spain). After living for six years in Ireland, where he obtained a certificate in technical translation from the Language Service Center at Dublin City University, he began his doctoral work at the University of Florida in the Department of Romance Languages and Literatures from 2001 to 2006. Said-Mohand previously was an assistant professor of Humanistic Studies/Spanish at the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay from 2006 to 2009. Currently, he is an assistant professor of Spanish at New Jersey City University Modern Languages Department. His field of study and research is Spanish language teaching and sociolinguistics.

DENISE SERPICO, MBA
*Assistant Professor
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Ms. Serpico holds bachelor of science degrees in Business Administration (Finance; Monmouth University; Accounting; New Jersey City University) and a master of business administration (Economic Crime and Fraud Management; Utica College). Throughout her career she has been employed as an office manager, a finance officer for a skilled nursing home facility for New Jersey firefighters, and served as a financial analyst for several major corporations including Telcordia Technologies, Inc., Allstate New Jersey, and most recently American International Group, Inc. (AIG), from 1998 to 2007. In her leisure time, Denise enjoys designing and detonating professional firework displays. Most of her shows can be seen up and down the Jersey coast, from Sandy Hook to Wildwood. Denise also enjoys providing her community with service and was a volunteer firefighter for 14 years.

RANDY TYNDALL, MS
*Assistant Director
of Multimedia Instruction*

Randy's career in multimedia and audio-visual media spans over 30 years. After completing two years of study toward an Electronics and Electrical Engineering degree, he ultimately obtained both a BS & MS degree in Communications and began his career at Perimeter College in Atlanta, Georgia. In various roles at Columbia Theological Seminary and New York University, he has consistently proven to be a leader, pushing for needed change in educational technology by implementing projects. His experience ranges from starting up and operating an educational access cable channel for over 65,000 subscribers, to assisting in the design of two, separate media-rich facilities. He has a deep knowledge of various programs and multimedia applications such as Photoshop, Premiere, Sound Forge, PowerPoint, Dreamweaver, and Flash, plus many standard video and audio editing programs. Normal duties such as managing a department, insuring delivery of services and equipment, plus video and audio production along with editing have always been a part of his routine at each institution, with additional projects taken on such as photo and audio restoration for an institution's Library Archives. He has taught programming, multimedia authoring and production, as well as training classes for Microsoft Office. He has presented twice for national associations on various graphic and animation applications for the classroom. Randy's outside interests include photography, videography, film and music, both as a listener and occasionally as a drummer. He has been married for over 30 years and has a son who is an aspiring musician in New York City.

TIM WHITE, PhD
Assistant Professor of History

Tim White began his tenure-track appointment in the History Department in the Fall of 2009, after having taught at The New School University and Yeshiva University. He comes to teach at NJCU with a background in urban and twentieth-century U.S. history, and with interests in architecture, historic walking tours, G.I.S. software, public transportation, and the American theatre. Originally from suburban southern California, he moved to New York City to begin his PhD in U.S. History at Columbia University which he completed in 2007.

Separately Budgeted Research Projects Awards 2010–2011

REGINA ADESANYA and
BASANTI CHAKRABORTY

*A Collaborative Examination of the Validity and
Reliability of a Draft Clinical Competency Tool Used to Evaluate
Urban Early Childhood Teacher Candidates*

MAURO ALTAMURA

Public/Private Art Realities: Self-Expression in Plain Site (sic)

CLYDE COREIL

Preserving Moral Dimensions: Thematic Poems for ESL Students

CAROL FLERES and HELEN FRIEDLAND

*Effective Emergent Literacy Involvement for Preschool Children
in Adult Mediators of Learning*

ANDREW GETZFELD

Revisions of the Second Edition of Essentials of Abnormal Psychology

ALINA GHARABEGIAN

Arnold's Sense and Browning's Sensibility in Victorian Religious Thought

EDVIDGE GIUNTA

Environmental Issues in Italian-American Literature

BRIAN GUSTAFSON

Submerging Light and Electricity

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TAN LIN

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TIMOTHY WHITE

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Fall 2010 Volume 16 Number 2

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Submissions should be between 1,000 to 5,000 words in length, preferably typed on Microsoft Word or saved as an RTF file, and submitted via E-mail as attachments or on a PC formatted disc with a hard copy. All citations should be in APA style.

For further information contact:

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