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Editor's Note

The second issue of *Learning Matters* celebrates the dedication of the Durham Technical Community College faculty, staff, and students to the hard work of teaching and learning. The Durham Tech Teaching-Learning Center has as its mission to enhance "...teaching and learning excellence for faculty, students, and staff..." This publication is a part of that effort.

Learning Matters is published with funds given by the Durham Technical Community College Foundation. Lou Rollins, Executive Director of the Foundation, has been very helpful in the development of this project. The journal is the result of the effort put forth by the contributors, the Teaching-Learning Center Advisory Committee, and the Marketing and Communications Department. I want to express my gratitude to Tom Gould, Communications Chair, who has once again given his time to edit and consult on format issues for *Learning Matters*. His expertise and support are key to the success of the journal. [M.A.G.]

Introduction

Barbara Baker

Every day, the faculty, staff, and students at Durham Technical Community College prove learning matters. We see significant differences that allow students to create a better life for themselves and their families by increasing their earning power. We see students take the first steps toward a Bachelor's degree, and we see students who can finally read a children's book to their grandchildren.

The collection of articles included in this second edition of *Learning Matters* reflect the many interests of the contributors as well as some of the unique approaches to teaching and learning among the faculty and staff of Durham Technical Community College. Topics include insightful pieces about applications of technology, journaling as a teaching tool, theories of instructional development, and evolving research methodologies. In examining teaching and learning, the authors have centered their studies on their specific interests and the success of students.

This common thread of student success is one that is ever present among those who serve the students of Durham Technical Community College. Whether an employee is among the faculty or the staff, all are in the business of nurturing the teaching and learning process to help students succeed. This commitment runs through all of the essays.

Complementing the work in the classes is an array of support and student development services. It is easier to keep students involved in teaching and learning if they have support systems and an outlet for their interests outside of class. Durham Technical Community College is committed to student support and development.

Of special interest is how Durham Technical Community College uses the teaching and learning process and all of its support services to ensure students leave the college with the ability to be effective participants in

the workforce. We need to make sure students have workplace, or soft skills, when they graduate from programs at Durham Technical Community College. Whether they have chosen a technical career degree, diploma or certificate or a university transfer curriculum, they will all eventually use in a workplace setting what they learn here. Some sooner than others, but eventually they will all be expected to demonstrate the ability to work collaboratively, solve problems effectively, understand the importance of timeliness, come to the workplace ready to work, and exhibit a willingness to learn throughout their careers. Ensuring a student has workplace skills is our responsibility as educators. These essays provide insight into this issue.

Offering instruction and support in a way that makes sense – at places and times appropriate for students with a diverse set of needs and wants and in formats that allow for learning the tenets of the subject matter – is how faculty and staff help students accomplish their educational goals at Durham Technical Community College. Faculty and staff must continue explore the needs and wants of students. Each of the contributors included here takes this responsibility very seriously.

Facing Reality & Making Connections

Stacey Whitlow and Kristin Smith

“First I’ll give you the good news: out in the real world, you’ll find there is no such thing as Algebra...the bad news is that you’ll have to write more term papers than ever, only they’ll be called memos, reports, speeches, and briefs.” Bob McTeer, CEO of the Reserve Bank of Dallas, as he offered his commencement address to Texas Lutheran University.

Of course, as educators, we all know that in the real world, term papers eventually morph into memos, and algebra is evident in our bridges and architecture. In academics, the real world seems to have made a comeback. It is, unfortunately, a world full of bankruptcies, recession, and unemployment. According to Dr. Chris Chinien of UNEVOC, three overarching forces, globalization, technology, and demographic shifts, drive the modern workplace. These changes are so significant that they are transforming our economic and social landscape into a new and formidable reality. While the nineteenth and twentieth centuries prepared individuals for an economy that thrived on agriculture and manufacturing, the emphasis in the twenty-first century focuses on process and information. According to the Census Bureau’s projected job growth between 1998 and 2008, the job outlook involves positions in technology, law, and healthcare.

The effects of these shifts are apparent on global, national, and local levels, and they have serious implications for our economies, for our workers, and, perhaps more than ever, for our students. With the recent recession and the record number of workers finding themselves unemployed, community college instructors face many challenges. Among them is the question of how we can best help our students gain and keep employment in this new economic landscape.

An employer’s success today depends upon the ability to survive continual change. The differences between the economy of yesterday and today can be summed up in one word—adaptability. Under the old manufac-

turing guidelines, employers looked for individuals who possessed certain skills and knew specific information. Under new guidelines set in the information age, employers are now looking for individuals who can find, synthesize, manage, and deliver information. As community colleges prepare students to enter the workforce, this shift necessitates an expanded focus. While it may have once been sufficient to teach proficiency in a technical skill, today's economy dictates that skill sets are broadened to include "soft" or "transferable" skills (also referred to as "professional" or "workplace" skills). These skills include, among others, a heavy emphasis on communication, teamwork, the right attitude, and flexibility.

While these skills may have once been thought of as professional or managerial, they are now demanded for most employees across varying fields in virtually all positions. In a recent Teaching-Learning Center and grant-sponsored workshop, Human Resource Representative Stephanie Williams of M & F Bank remarked that the business world can "always train candidates to do what [they] need them to do. [Businesses] cannot train [employees] to exhibit professional skills." Translated, employers expect potential candidates to arrive for an interview already in possession of these soft skills. Business and industry leaders are seeking employees who can already communicate effectively, compute accurately, think and react skillfully. This demand reflects what we have already witnessed over the past several years: economic shifts are demanding a better-prepared workforce, possessing all the technical, academic, and professional skills needed to get the job done well.

In response to this demand, many businesses and individuals have turned to local community colleges. Record numbers of students have returned to school in hopes of fine-tuning or revamping their skills. These students believe that further education will allow them to be more competitive applicants in an overwhelming pool of qualified potential employees. Duke Hospital, one of the areas largest employers, now receives over 800 resumes in a single week. How can we help our students to compete among hundreds of other highly qualified applicants? Our mission statement at Durham Technical Community College

outlines our responsibility in teaching students how they can prepare to meet the challenges of an evolving workplace. We are charged to “offer education and training opportunities that enhance and upgrade workers’ skills necessary to meet the challenges of a changing workforce.”

Educators have often embraced the idea of Lindeman’s life-long learner. It now appears that the business world is openly embracing the very same idea. Jack Welsh, the CEO of General Electric, believes that “When the rate of change on the outside exceeds the rate of change on the inside, the end is in sight.” If we do not teach our students how to adapt to new situations and exhibit the skills now necessary for economic opportunity, we are setting them up for an end plagued by failure.

Businesses are telling us that the ability to adapt to new situations is essential for new employees and that soft or transferable skills are what give applicants the competitive advantage in the hiring process. The reality of our new economy is that most individuals will change careers several times throughout their professional lives; it makes sense that transferable skills will be necessary as they move from career to career. Once we acknowledge the importance of teaching these transferable skills to our students, we are faced with a new challenge: How do we maintain our course curriculum and ensure the development of these soft skills?

The answer to this question is revealing itself in a less complicated way than we had originally anticipated. As we began to research how we could implement soft skills into a Developmental Reading 090 and an English 111 course, we were struck by the simplicity of honing and reinforcing these skills. Above all, we wanted to preserve our current course objectives and teach our assigned curriculum while maintaining an atmosphere of academic freedom. We discovered that in many cases, we already promote the development of these skills by default in our classroom activities.

As we continue to teach, maintain, and meet our course objectives, some of these soft skills are presently included in the curriculum by circumstance. Our group work, for instance, encourages students to learn to

work well with others. Oral presentations and problem-based learning, which are regularly included in our lessons, necessitate the development of communication and problem-solving skills. The skills learned during these activities are rarely the focus of what we are doing; however, it may enhance their development and, ironically, the material we are teaching, to broaden our lessons by including these skills as specific objectives.

As much as we hate to admit it, there is often a disconnect between the skills that we attempt to teach in our classrooms and our students' perceptions of those activities' relevance to their future goals. Rather than viewing the learning process as a foundation for their future, all too often students see it as one more hoop to jump through before getting to where they want to go.

We understand how the tasks we ask our students to perform provide a foundation for later endeavors, but we could be doing a better job of helping students see the connections. Ironically, students have been searching for these connections all along. Our own students have often asked us how what we are doing in class is relevant to the real world. To be honest, we used to stumble on our answers. We'd tell them feebly, "learning this will make you a better person," yet somewhere in the back of our minds we were left with a nagging little thought that we didn't really have a concrete answer for them. For example, while we often put our students in groups and ask them to complete certain tasks, we hadn't traditionally asked them to think about the dynamics within the group.

By asking our students to evaluate their own role in the group, we ask them to review soft skills on a conscious level. When we included an oral presentation component, we rarely asked students to make a conscious connection between the material and the soft skills they learned while preparing their presentations. By videotaping their presentations and asking them to complete self-evaluations, we are reinforcing soft skills and asking students to assess their current skill levels. These self-reflective activities draw critical connections for them; our students begin to link our course objectives to their own personal and professional growth.

By incorporating critical thinking skills concerning the development of soft skills during our current activities, we help our students begin to draw connections between these skills and their future economic opportunities. By teaching our students to recognize process, we are teaching them the soft skills they need in order to survive. In our own experience, this has also been met with a reinvestment on the student's part. By connecting our classrooms to the real world, we not only increase our students' chances of success and witness a renewed effort with definite goals; we also increase our own credibility.

When we started this project, we wanted to further incorporate soft skills into our current course curriculums while maintaining the predetermined course objectives. We knew we needed to illustrate the connection between what we already do in our classrooms and what our students will encounter in the workplace. Our goal over the course of the semester has been to explore various methods of teaching students to "present themselves" effectively. The outline of our project, included below, shows how easily these soft skills can be applied using a preexisting course outline while meeting current course objectives. In this project, our goals were to:

- * Illustrate a link between the workplace and the classroom;
- * Demonstrate the relationship between course objectives and the eventual workplace (logical reasoning, audience awareness, critical evaluation and analysis, and problem-solving in this case);
- * Show possible adaptations of concepts; and
- * Develop ideas that can be adapted and used in other courses and in various disciplines.

We originally piloted our project in an English 111 course. We devised a unit centered on job-preparedness and it is working as the basis for the traditional core requirements of this writing-intensive course.

Ultimately, English 111 has been adapted in five stages. The five stages are summarized below:

Stage 1: Making Connections

- * The class is introduced to “workplace skills” and the grant project “Presenting Yourself.” [Funds available through the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Act of 1998 allowed a team of instructors to develop a pilot program introducing students to presentation skills.]
- * The class will take a short version of the MBTI and explore possible career interests/options based on their results.
- * A modified diagnostic (a preexisting requirement for the course) is given. The writing assignment asks students to reflect and respond to their current characteristics, their skills assessment (MBTI), their potential professions and the skills (including soft skills) required by those professions. The last part of the diagnostic asks students to relate these skills to English 111 objectives and their goals for the course.

Stage 2: Exploring Connections

- * Assignment for Paper One: Students will pick an article/essay to analyze and critique concerning a potential problem or challenge in a potential workplace.
- * Assignment for Paper Two: Students will explore the different points of view regarding this workplace issue including possible solutions to the problem.
- * Assignment for Paper Three: Students will collect, analyze, and summarize at least ten credible sources in the field dealing with their selected topics.
- * Assignment for Paper Four: Students will create and defend their own solutions/alternatives to the research problems/topics.
- * Assignment for Final Portfolio and Presentation: Students will present and defend their research. They will focus on both written and spoken communication. PowerPoint presentations or acceptable visuals are required. Students must submit a final portfolio.

Stage 3: Evaluating Yourself

- * Students will informally present the first drafts of Paper One on a self-selected workforce problem/challenge.
- * These presentations will be used as the benchmark for current skills assessment and they will be used again later in the course for self-assessment.
- * Videotaped presentations will be reviewed by instructors, and then placed in the library on reserve with instructor feedback for students to view when they are asked to complete their self-evaluations.

Stage 4: Learning to Present Yourself

- * Instructors will use a one-week adaptable unit.
- * Lessons will focus on how to develop effective presentations and portfolios.
- * Individual students will formally review the informal presentations and self-assessments will be conducted.

Stage 5: Presenting Yourself

- * A review of presentation skills will be conducted at the end of the semester.
- * Students will be given subsequent workdays for portfolios and presentations.
- * The final paper's solution to the workplace problem identified in the second paper will be presented formally.
- * The final presentations will be videotaped and reviewed for assessment.

The plan we have devised is a work in progress. We do not claim to have all the answers, but we are proud of the fact that that we are trying to address the concerns of our students, our college mission, and our local employers. In the early stages, we hoped to foster further discussion concerning the need, impact, and methodology of teaching essential soft skills to a student population that is preparing to enter a rapidly changing economy. We now feel it is important that we help our students

understand the relationship between future opportunities and soft skills. We need to help them understand that there will be jobs in the future for those who have achieved the necessary credentials and possess the essential soft skills demanded by employers.

During the traditional job interview, our students have 10-30 seconds to make a first impression. They will rarely receive a second chance to impress their potential employers. While we cannot offer them second chances at their first impressions, we can offer them several chances to perfect their future first impression. Within the safety of our classrooms, we can help our students understand what it means to present themselves to future employers through self-reflection and feedback in a more open and less competitive environment than they may later encounter. By acknowledging the life-long learner as a necessity, not only in our classrooms but in our workplaces as well, we are trying to guarantee our success through theirs.

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Psychological Implications of Game Use as an Instructional Method

Peter Wooldridge

In "The Use of Games as an Instructional Method," McLeod (2002) argues for the use of games as an instructional tool, discussing his use of the method in his mathematics classes. He rightfully points out that games are adaptable, can mimic features of the "real" world, can encourage cooperation and communication, and can provide opportunities for students to become active participants in their learning process. He also provides evidence that the use of games can help to generate new connections between the material and the world outside the classroom.

There are, however, several assumptions that McLeod makes that should be examined. Perhaps the most important is his statement that in games, "anxiety is replaced with competitiveness through the motivation of being rewarded," which leads to better retention of the concept. Research suggests that this may not always be the case. For example, individuals who attribute their success to an external cause (reward) may show a decline in self-esteem and an increased risk for depression (Lord, 1997). Thus, some students engaging in the games may tend to develop a mildly depressed state, which could, in fact, increase anxiety (Benton, Robertson, Tseng, Newton and Benton, 2003). This result is further complicated by the fact that the presence of rewards can lead to decreased interest in an activity (Lord, 1997).

McLeod's assumption that anxiety is replaced with competitiveness is important for another reason. Competition can certainly serve as a motivator, but there are inherent dangers in its use. Competition can lead to decreased trust, a lack of cooperation, and a "winner-take-all" approach to problem solving (Kulhman and Marshello, 1975), all of which might be concomitants of anxiety. In fact, the presence of competition may actually increase the risk of anxiety, rather than replacing it.

Other variables can influence approaches to a competitive solution. For example, men tend to seek out equity in reward distribution while women tend to seek equality (Mikula, 1974). There is also evidence that while “teams” cooperate more than individuals in a competitive situation, the “loudest” voices in the team tend to have the greatest influence on decision-making (Lord, 1997). Thus, when introducing a competitive situation to the classroom, the instructor runs the risk of students focusing on the “fairness” of the process and outcome rather than the concept itself.

None of these observations argues against the use of games as instructional tools. However, faculty members must be aware that the introduction of a game will activate each student’s game “schema,” or set of expectations, about games and game behavior. This schema is likely to include the student’s positive or negative perception of “self” as game player. The faculty member must take time to prepare the class for the introduction of games, and, ideally, should create a situation where no one can really “lose.”

For several years, I have used the game RISK in my social psychology classes to illustrate the concepts of cooperation, competition, aggression, helping, alliance formation, and resource distribution. While the game provides an opportunity to examine all of these concepts, it also tends to elicit very strong emotional reactions in some students, such as extreme competitiveness and anger). To counter these reactions, I introduce the concept of game playing several class sessions before the actual use of the game. In these early discussions, I emphasize the need for the students to attend to their own behavior during the event and ask them to think about their responses. In some cases, I have asked students to serve as objective observers of each team’s behavior. This structure tends to move the focus of the game away from a concern about who will win or who will lose. Rewards are also offered, but I don’t provide specifics about what they will be. Again, the aim is to move the emphasis away from the outcome to the relevant concepts emerging from the game playing process.

Perhaps the most important element I introduce is to change the rules so that no one can really lose. Prior to the game, I list several rules about how resources can be distributed and what constitutes "winning." One rule that I list is that I, as instructor, have the right to change the rules whenever I please. The last rule I list is that nothing is forbidden unless I say it is. The first rule provides me with the opportunity to manipulate the game as it proceeds, while the second gives students a great deal of control though they usually don't recognize that fact until later in the game.

Finally, after the game is completed, I send the students home with a list of questions to answer that focus on how the game proceeded, including a question that asks them to explain why I changed rules during the game. The first part of the next class meeting is used to discuss these questions and to tie the game process to the various theoretical concepts.

Consistently, students tell me that this is one of the most powerful experiences they have in the class. And, having used the game over repeated classes, I have been able to discern patterns of behavior that I have been able to test for in later RISK games. This has, in turn, added to discussions of the experience in later classes. More recently, I have introduced a "murder mystery" game to examine the similarity of the group dynamics that develop to those that I have seen during RISK.

In this article, I have further elaborated on an article by McLeod (2002). While he is correct to argue for the use of games as an instructional tool, faculty members who choose to use them must be aware of the psychological implications of "games." Preparation of students for this instructional tool, a change in emphasis from outcome to process, and subsequent discussion of related concepts are key to an effective use of this method in the classroom. With the increasing use of alternative instructional delivery methods, e.g., online courses, further analysis of this instructional tool is certainly necessary.

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Hybrid Classes: Maximizing Institutional Resources and Student Learning

Thomas Gould

“Hybrid instruction is the single greatest unrecognized trend in higher education today.”—Graham Spanier, President of Penn State University

Introduction

Recently, the North Carolina Community College System office released a memorandum to all the Chief Academic Officers and Distance Learning Coordinators of the state’s community colleges announcing the System’s new emphasis on Hybrid course instruction. This official statement of direction recognizes and validates the steadily increasing trend, both within the state and across the country, of integrating/adding hybrid, or blended, instructional delivery into traditional and Internet course offerings. The integration of Hybrid course instruction will benefit both the institution and the students. Institutions will be able to maximize their available physical resources, and students will be able to maximize their learning potential.

Hybrid classes are commonly defined as courses “in which a significant portion of the learning activities have been moved online,” a combination of traditional classroom and Internet instruction (Garnham and Kaleta). Instructional time traditionally spent in the classroom is reduced and replaced with online learning activities. The ultimate goal of hybrid instruction is to combine the most effective instructional aspects of the traditional classroom with the most effective instructional aspects of the virtual classroom “to promote active independent learning and reduce class seat time” (Garnham and Kaleta). Using available computer-centered technologies, instructors use the hybrid model to redesign some course content into new online learning activities, such as discussion forums, case studies, tutorials, self-testing exercises, simulations, and online group collaborations.

Maximizing Physical Resources

At the present time, record student enrollment growth and budgetary constraints are challenging institutions to effectively serve their students. With enrollment projected to continue to increase and with little hope for an improved economic climate, many institutions are facing a crisis situation. Classroom space, especially computer lab access, is at a premium. Simply put, institutions have insufficient physical resources to meet the needs of their expanding student bodies, and with the current state budget projections significant help from state government will not be forthcoming. Institutions must, therefore, look within for remedies. While not a panacea, hybrid courses will allow institutions to maximize their available resources to meet the educational and institutional needs of their students. On a resource level, hybrid instruction reduces overcrowded classrooms. Specifically, two classes can operate in one physical space. For instance, if two classes traditionally meet two days a week, say Monday and Wednesday from 9:00-11:00, converting these classes to hybrids will allow each one to occupy the traditional classroom one day a week, one on Monday and one on Wednesday, and to hold the other class period on the Internet. This ability to operate multiple classes in one physical space is especially important when computer labs are involved. Even more than traditional classroom space, available computer lab space is in short supply. The technology-heavy environments of the academic and professional worlds demand computer literacy from our students. Hybrid instruction offers students the opportunity to gain that essential experience, both in the computer-equipped classroom and in the completion of Internet assignments and activities. Additionally, hybrids allow institutions to offer more classes at peak demand times of the day, thus maximizing the scant available resources by increasing flexibility in scheduling. According to Ron Bleed, Vice Chancellor of Information Technologies at Maricopa Community College, hybrid course offerings “may also be the only way colleges and universities can keep up with the continuing population growth and the demands for lifelong learning” (qtd. Young). On a pure cost level, hybrids reduce paper and photocopying costs. In hybrid courses, all course documents, including syllabi, lecture notes, assignment sheets, and other hard copy handouts, are easily accessible to students on the course web site.

Institutional costs decrease as students become familiar with the vast resources available on the web; institutions will be able to effectively communicate with their students electronically, thus reducing the need number of printed schedules, bulletins, advertisements, and so on.

Furthermore, faculty compensation and professional development funds have been among the early casualties in the budget wars. Unfortunately, developing online course material is time consuming. While “faculty workload and compensation policies that take into account the effort required by distance courses can encourage faculty participation and improve the quality of instruction,” the lack of such compensation discourages an already overworked faculty from participation (“Compensating” 7). Hybrid course development can serve as a way for interested faculty to ease into distance learning formats without the burden of developing an entire course online. At Guilford Technical Community College, faculty began “with a web-supplemented site [syllabi, grades, announcements] and then add[ed] materials to develop a hybrid class...” (Cerniglia 2). This “graduated approach to course development” produced an addition benefit: “Over two semesters, materials were added, tested, and refined, resulting in higher-quality materials than might have been developed in one semester without student feedback” (3). In this way, the institution maximizes the expertise of its faculty without incurring professional development costs. Even in the midst of a budget crisis, colleges still embrace the same mission: To educate its students. In fact, state budget problems only mirror a dire larger economic picture, illustrated by rising unemployment figures. When workers find themselves out of a job and with bleak prospects for employment, they turn to the colleges for reeducation and retraining. So, the colleges face a double impact on their resources: record enrollment growth colliding with budget cuts. The integration of hybrid instruction into the college’s offerings will not solve the problem. However, hybrid instruction will allow institutions to maximize their available resources to meet their students’ educational needs.

Maximizing Student Learning

In addition to institutional benefits, hybrid instructional delivery of classes will enhance student learning in a variety of ways. Online instruction, like traditional classroom instruction, has strengths and weaknesses. However, combining the strengths of both models can lead to a highly effective delivery of instructional materials. The old fear in distance learning of pale students huddled over their computers, learning in isolation and deprived of human contact has been proven groundless. Today's students are comfortable with electronic communication and view their online activities as integral to their learning experience. The benefits to the students of hybrid instruction are manifold.

First, student participation in all aspects of the learning experience is increased in a hybrid format. Faculty who have used the hybrid model report an increased interaction of students with their fellow classmates and with the course instructor ("Hybrid"). Some students are reluctant to participate in traditional classroom discussions or direct questions to the instructor. The hybrid environment offers a less-intimidating forum for student participation. In a hybrid format, "some students who rarely take part in classroom discussions are more likely to participate online, where they get time to think before they type and aren't put on the spot" (Young). On Discussion Boards, students can freely interact with their classmates, posting paragraphs and responses and asking questions. Often, these online discussions achieve the back and forth conversational quality desired in traditional classroom discussions. Students are able to offer their classmates information, encouragement, and support. In particular, introverted students and English as second language students participate fully in the learning activities. The inclusiveness of all students leads to a richer and more diverse learning experience than the traditional classroom model. Interaction with the instructor is also increased, thus enhancing learning. Students are more likely to e-mail a question than to raise a hand in class. Research indicates that students "are more motivated [to succeed] if they are in frequent contact with the instructor" ("Guide #9"). An additional benefit of this form of communication is that the student can ask a detailed question and the instruc-

tor can respond with an appropriately detailed answer, free from the situational constraints that limit one on one communication in a traditional classroom. In a hybrid format, students are highly engaged in the course progress, both with their classmates and with their instructor. Students so engaged are less likely to withdraw from the course and more likely to seek help if difficulties arrive, either from classmates or instructor.

Another benefit is flexibility. With jobs (sometimes multiple), families, and other classes, today's students often have crushing constraints on their available time. Commuting time to campus only increases the burden. Hybrid classes will alleviate a portion of the time wasted commuting. Scheduling of classes also becomes less of a nightmare. Classes with lab components can take up an enormous amount of time, leaving less available space for additional classes. Hybrids will give students more options to develop manageable schedules.

Another benefit for students is the development of and emphasis on so-called "soft skills," necessary for successful completion of any course with a substantial online component. These skills are highly desired by today's employers. To succeed in hybrid classes, students will necessarily develop or enhance time management skills crucial to academic and professional success. Hybrids require students to meet specific deadlines for posting work to the Discussion Forums or submitting work to the instructor. Critical thinking skills and problem-solving skills are also emphasized. The text-based format of the courses enhances comprehension skills. Additionally, hybrids increase computer skills, another highly valued trait in the modern workforce, regardless of the profession. Hybrids train students in a variety of computer skills, including file management, e-mail use, and web site navigation, that will prove valuable in the workplace.

Hybrid courses, in effect, are writing-intensive courses. According to Peter Sands, "[b]ecause of the highly text-based nature of websites and e-mail, hybrid courses become de-facto writing-intensive courses when

teachers work carefully to integrate the online and classroom components.” Discussion Forum postings and responses and e-mail communication with classmates and the instructor all provide students with ample opportunities to hone their written communication skills. The format of the course also reinforces to students the importance of writing skills, regardless of the course. This understanding will then continue in the workplace. One constant complaint of today’s employers, regardless of the field, is the inability of their workers to construct effective written communication, particularly problematic in our text-driven work environment. Hybrids require students to produce coherent and effective writing. This skill inevitably leads to increased opportunities for academic and professional success. Furthermore, in contrast to traditional classroom writing activities, hybrids can realistically reflect the “real-world” writing conditions, including collaboration. Successful hybrids incorporate collaborative activities. Rachel Spilka, at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, realized that in traditional classroom assignments she “wasn’t able to simulate writing situations in workplace settings, or to expose students to the complexities of workplace writing.” Using a hybrid format, she developed assignments where students have “produced much more thoughtful, tactful, and sensitive memos, letters, and reports than have students in [her] traditional, face-to-face classes.” In collaborative activities with their hybrid classmates, her students “improved their skills and displayed such qualities as good judgment, tactfulness, empathy, patience under difficult circumstances, and the ability to negotiate. All of these qualities they will have to demonstrate when they work and write in workplace settings” (Spilka). Students in hybrids quickly discover that they are not learning in isolation; instead, they are members of a learning community, dependent on and responsible for their classmates. This learning environment more closely resembles the work place than the traditional classroom.

Hybrid classes address a variety of learning styles by offering instructional materials in a wide range of formats. As a result, every student in the course is fully engaged in at least some class activities (Young). For

instance, auditory learners benefit from traditional classroom instruction as well as online audio files. Visual learners benefit from a consistent and structured layout as well as graphics. Tactile learners benefit from “hands-on” computer use and navigation. With an appropriate organization of assignments, “teachers can have students engaged in doing, rather than just experiencing or reading” (Sands). These examples are just a sampling of benefits to diverse learners. Additionally, students have greater access to course materials and therefore are more fully engaged in a hybrid than a traditional course. They can view and review prerecorded lectures and access course notes and other materials such as course syllabus, assignment schedule, task sheets, grades, and so on. This easy accessibility of course resources serves to promote a positive learning environment for all learners.

The combination of online and traditional classroom instruction fosters a more objective-focused and more time-efficient course than the traditional classroom-only model. At the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, “instructors reported that the hybrid course model allows them to accomplish course-learning objectives more successfully than traditional courses do” (“Hybrid”). Hybrid course development requires careful scheduling of assignments, and the creation of effective distance learning components demands a “focused preparation” of course material (“Guide #2”). Therefore, instructors come to reevaluate how their course materials and instructional strategies achieve course competencies and objectives. Students then more clearly see the connections between the assignments and the objectives, making the course more purposeful for them. Furthermore, hybrids encourage integration of out-of-class activities with in-class activities to allow for more effective use of traditional class time. Students use the online component to generate material for in-class time, thus avoiding wasting valuable class time spent on learning activities students could very well do in front of their home computers.

The Research

To date, two institutions, University of Central Florida and University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, have conducted comprehensive examinations of hybrid course effectiveness. Faculty participants in hybrid course instruction at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee “almost universally report their students learned more in the Hybrid format than they did in the traditional class sections” (“Hybrid”). In fact, instructors stated that hybrid-enrolled “students wrote better papers, performed better on exams, produced higher quality projects, and were capable of more meaningful discussions on course material” (Garnham and Kaleta). Data from the University of Central Florida indicates, “students in hybrid courses achieve better grades than students in traditional face-to-face courses or totally online courses” (Garnham and Kaleta). Furthermore, hybrid courses have lower withdrawal rates than do fully online courses, and student retention in hybrids is “equivalent” to that of traditional courses (Garnham and Kaleta).

Certainly, Hybrid course integration will not solve the complex budgetary and enrollment growth issues facing state governments and colleges and universities. However, hybrids do offer an alternative, innovative, and effective strategy for providing needed educational opportunities and avoiding cutting services. Furthermore, hybrids should not be viewed as a stopgap method for meeting student demand and offsetting budgetary constraints. Instead, hybrids should be embraced as an instructional delivery system that benefits both the educational institution and the student population it serves.

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Ten Years of Library Reference Services: Reflections on the Past and Speculations about the Future

Julie Humphrey and Mary Jackson

Introduction

One of the authors of this paper graduated from library school in 1993, just 10 short years ago, and the other in 2001, quite recently. We each come from a unique perspective. Much of what we do in the library has changed in the past ten years, but much has also stayed the same. Librarians are still trying to find the information that patrons need, but how we go about finding that information can be radically different. In this paper, we will review some of the major changes in library services in the past ten years, the impact of those changes that we are still feeling today, and some exciting new developments. Our focus is on library issues and trends that are impacting community colleges in general and Durham Tech in particular.

CD-ROMs

In the early 1990's, CD-ROMs were the popular computer products. Librarians were amazed at their large storage capacity. Entire indexes were placed on CD-ROMs, which allowed for rapid and far more complex searches than paper indexes. In a 1992 graduate technology class, students were singing the praises of CD-ROMs. The professor wisely stated that time would tell if CD-ROMs would have a lasting impact on library research. At one point, CD-ROM towers were a fixture in many libraries. With the rise of online databases and their enormous storage and searching capabilities, CD-ROMs are nearly gone or play a much smaller role in library services.

Electronic Databases

The move to full-text online databases has provided library users with vast amounts of information. While no one would want to return to paper indexes, new problems have arisen with the new technology. The most basic issue with online databases is that users must have access to an online connection. According to a U.S. Census Bureau study in 2000, 51% of American households had computers and 42% had Internet access (U. S. Census). While those statistics are encouraging to those promoting remote access to online databases, the households without computers or Internet access are the demographic groups typically served by community colleges. With a significant portion of the population without access to a computer at home and a greater need for students to have access to a computer for research, community colleges will need to provide funding for computers for their students.

Database Searching

Another challenge posed by the online full-text databases is the amount of information available. With paper indexes and even with CD-ROM searching, there were a limited number of articles that the researchers could find in their own libraries, even on very broad topical searches. With the rise of huge full-text databases, students can frequently find thousands of articles on a topic. If they do an Internet search, they might have hundreds of thousands of hits. In a study tracking student users on a Georgia library system similar to NCLIVE, researchers found that the system made seven cognitive demands on the students. These skills included interpreting search results and refining searches (Fitzgerald). In another study undertaken in 2002, graduate students were asked to accomplish three simple search tasks using the Internet. Only 15% of the students were able to complete all three tasks (Nachmias and Gilad). Librarians are trained in the use of techniques to develop and to refine search strategies. The question for librarians and educators is when and where these strategies should be taught. Even if these skills are now taught in elementary and high schools, those of us working with large populations of adult learners know that students were not taught these things 10 or 20 years ago. Steven J. Bell, a library director at Philadelphia University, points out in an interview with

The Chronicle of Higher Education that database vendors need to “think creatively about what we (the vendors) can do to make the databases more appropriate to the needs of student researchers” (Carlson). While we can hope for that goal, our students need to be taught skills for effective searching

The Georgia study also identified that students must be able “to assess the relevance of articles found to their own information problem” and “to evaluate in a critical way the quality of the information provided by the items”(Fitzgerald). When faced with massive amounts of information, the evaluation of this material becomes vitally important. Again, the issue is who should teach them these skills and when. Bell points out that “instead of automatically searching 5,000 things, I could search just 500 that are very appropriate to my topic” (Carlson). Having the vendors do a better job of selecting the resources in the databases is part of the solution. The reality is that no matter how good the database is students still need to develop the skills to critically evaluate the information that they find. If students are using the Internet (and many are), these skills are even more vital. As librarians, we wrestle with what our role should be in this process.

E-mail Reference

In a recent survey of academic libraries from the Association of Research Libraries (ARL), 99 percent offered e-mail reference (Tenopir 38). The Durham Tech Library offers e-mail reference services and has seen e-mail reference requests soar in the past year. There is a link to the library e-mail from the web page, and we get messages several times a week. Two years ago, we may have gotten one or two messages a month. We are glad to offer this type of service, but we become frustrated from time to time. In the library literature, there is a phenomenon known as the “invisible patron with minimal information,” which we encounter often in our email requests (Tomaiuolo and Packer). Often there will be no signature attached to the request, no subject line identifying if this is a valid request (tricky to determine in this “Spam Age”), and such sparse information that it can be difficult to work from. It really helps when we know a little about the person and which course they are taking.

Determining if the patron is an adult high school student or an upper-level nursing student alerts us to the type and depth of information he or she might need.

E-mail has been criticized for posing barriers to aspects of traditional reference encounters. Coffman and McGlamery state, "Patrons often do not receive the same immediate response, and librarians cannot as easily conduct the reference interview that is so often necessary to accurately determine users' needs" (Coffman and McGlamery 66). These types of situations illustrate the limitations and difficulties involved with e-mail reference. Many of our initial responses involve our librarians simply asking further questions of the student before beginning work with the question. Some larger libraries have had to set up a separate service area, away from the public services desk, for answering e-mail and telephone questions. We have not reached that point at this time. With more students in online classes using the library remotely and more students becoming more technologically savvy, the library may need to think about issues such as this one.

Virtual Reference/ Digital Reference

In the ARL survey mentioned earlier, 29 percent of academic libraries offered real-time virtual reference services in 2001 (Tenopir 38). Real-time reference tools include chat software, instant messaging software, and more complex collaborative browsing software (Kasowitz, Tenopir 39). Chat software allows patrons and librarians to communicate interactively with messages sent back and forth. Two of the major companies producing simple chat software are AOL's Instant Messenger and Human Click (Kasowitz, Tenopir 39). Still in the early stages of development and use, there is a trend within libraries to experiment with, offer, or think about offering, this type of futuristic live virtual reference. Some of the more advanced software allows librarians to not only chat with patrons, but to "co-browse the Internet by 'pushing' web sites to the client's computer" (Hoag and Cichanowicz).

Although the benefits to patrons and librarians seem high, there are many issues that are inhibiting smaller libraries from providing this type

of service. At this time, the price of virtual reference software is still relatively high. Determining whether students and faculty have the patience to learn a tool like this would take some research, as would the evaluation process of various types of software. Also, training librarians to use the software would be time consuming. The on-going technical support required would be an additional barrier (Kasowitz, Tenopir 39). Also, going back and forth between actual walk-in patrons at the desk and real-time virtual patrons would be difficult. On the other hand, allotting staff to work entirely with "virtual patrons" would require more funding and more staffing, unlikely to be obtained in smaller college and university libraries. A brochure for a North Carolina workshop on virtual reference called "It's Not Your Grandma's Reference Anymore" came across our desks this week. These services are definitely being offered in our state. However, it may take a collaborative effort among a variety of North Carolina colleges and universities jointly sharing virtual reference software before the Durham Tech library will have the opportunity to engage in this type of reference service.

Conclusion

As librarians, we understand the increased responsibilities that result from the complexities of the Information Age. The challenges that come with delivering information electronically are enormous. We have witnessed many changes throughout the past ten years and will come to terms with many more in the future. It is very important to keep up with library trends; however, we cannot let technologies take precedence over the quality of service we provide to our students, faculty, and staff.

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Learning Theory and Instructional Design

Gregory McLeod

Introduction

Designing effective instruction goes beyond systematically executing various steps within an instructional design model. Among a host of considerations, effective instructional design should take into consideration the theoretical bases in which it is grounded. This is not to say that learning theory offers instructional designers answers to design problems but instead, offers clarity, direction and focus throughout the instructional design process. Merrill (2001, p. 294) explains that a “theoretical tool, in and of itself, is not an instructional design theory but defines instructional components that can be used to define instructional prescriptions more precisely.” Likewise, Merriam and Caffarella (1999, p. 250) make the point that “[learning] theories do not give us solutions, but they do direct our attention to those variables that are crucial in finding solutions.” Thus, understanding theoretical frameworks and properly incorporating them within the scope of instructional design is important for designers to effectively prepare and present instruction as well as for organizational entities to more precisely and efficiently address training-appropriate issues.

Three learning theories, specifically behaviorism, cognitivism, and constructivism, are addressed within the scope of instructional design. This article contains an interpretation of the learning process of each theory along with the implications each has on the instructional design process. It also examines the opportunities and challenges each theory presents to designers. This synthesis concludes with philosophical thoughts and suggestions for appropriate use.

Behaviorism

Addressing instructional needs from a theoretical perspective of behaviorism proposes a stimulus – response approach to designing instruction for learners. Behaviorism is an orientation to learning emphasizing

methodically time-controlled events and constructed environmental conditions intended to bring about particular behavioral responses. Merriam and Caffarella (1999, p. 251) identify three assumptions all behaviorists such as Mager, Skinner, Thorndike, and Watson share about the learning process:

First, observable behavior rather than internal thought processes is the focus of study; in particular, learning is manifested by a change in behavior. Second, the environment shapes behavior; what one learns is determined by the elements in the environment, not by the individual learner. And third, the principles of contiguity (how close in time two events must be for a bond to be formed) and reinforcement (any means of increasing likelihood that an event will be repeated) are central to explaining the learning process.

The first of these assumptions implies that behavioral-related instructional tasks have little regard for the cognitive processing of the learner involved in the task. This approach focuses entirely upon learners understanding the “what” through methods like rote memorization, identification, and association. This theory is concerned with illuminating only what learners need to know.

The second assumption of behaviorists says that learning is strictly influenced by environmental factors. This view is shown clearly through the early work of Robert Gagne, who was heavily influenced by behaviorists such as Skinner and Thorndike. Gagne’s early research examined positive and negative training transfer. “[Gagne’s)] research was done with training subjects on complex motor tasks using multiple trials and observing them for periods of little or no improvement in learning” (Fields, 1996, p. 225).

The last assumption of learning presented based on behaviorism stresses repetition and reinforcement (operant conditioning) in order to develop desired habits. B.F. Skinner was a major contributor to operant conditioning focusing on “positive and negative reinforcement schedules, the timing of reinforcements, and avoidance behavior.” (Merriam and Caffarella, 1999, p. 252).

Implications of Behaviorism on Instructional Design

One of the key areas where behaviorism impacts instructional design is in the development of instructional objectives. Morrison, Ross and Kemp (2001, p. 91) define an instructional objective written from a behavioral perspective as “a precise statement that answers the question, ‘What behavior can the learner demonstrate to indicate that he or she has mastered the knowledge or skills specified in the instruction?’”

Writing “precise” instructional objectives can be challenging but offers instructional designers clear, measurable goals to which to guide their instructional design. Mager (1984, p. 21) determined that performance, conditions, and criterion are the elements of instructional objectives. From a behavioral viewpoint, the conditions element of writing instructional objectives can represent the stimulus/environment and the performance element can represent the response while the criterion element is considered the acceptable level of behavior expected.

In all, an implication of behaviorism on instructional design is built upon the concept that learning is based on mastering a set of behaviors that are predictable and therefore reliable. Thorough instructional and learner analyses and precise instruction will lead to desirable and demonstrable skills.

Strengths and Weaknesses of Behaviorism

The strength of instructional design grounded in behaviorism is that when there are specific goals to be met, the learner is focused clearly upon achieving those goals whenever there are cues to prompt the learner’s behavior. Kuchinke (1999, p. 51) succinctly states, “The strength of this framework lies in its ability to find quick responses to well-defined problems.”

However, since behaviorism is stimulus – response based, instructional design is dependent on the workplace or classroom having and maintaining the appropriate stimuli to continue the intended behavior. Thus, if a certain incentive is not present or does not occur, then the expected and desired performance may not take place. As an example, a

factory worker who has been conditioned to react to certain signals on an assembly line may stop performing when something out of the ordinary happens. Additionally, learning is a reactionary process to an environmental condition and knowledge is considered finite. Thus, behavior theory-based instructional design is heavily instructor dependent with high demands on resources in order to adapt to changes and needs, which can be costly and time-consuming. Through behavioral conditioning research, Skinner realized there is a burden on the instructor to maintain reinforcement. "Behavior that is not reinforced is likely to become less frequent and may even disappear" (Merriam and Caffarella, 1999, p. 252).

Cognitivism

Whereas behaviorists consider that learning involves responses to stimuli from the environment, cognitivists contend that learning is much more than this. Cognitivism carries the notion that "[l]earning involves the reorganization of experiences in order to make sense of stimuli from the environment. Sometimes this sense comes through flashes of insight" (Merriam and Caffarella, 1999, p. 254). Thus, a cognitivist views the learning process as an internal and active mental process, which develops within a learner, increased mental capacity and skills in order to learn better.

One assumption of cognitivism is that an existing knowledge structure must be present in order to compare and process new information for learning. This existing knowledge structure is referred to as schema. Schema is activated and utilized for the benefit of learning when a learner is "made aware of his background knowledge and exposed to strategies to 'bridge' from pre-requisite skills to learning objectives" (Blanton, 1998, p. 172).

Implications of Cognitivism on Instructional Design

Implications of cognitivism on the design of instruction are prominent throughout the task analysis and learner analysis phases of instructional design models. Cognitivists believe learners develop learning through

receiving, storing and retrieving information. With this notion, it is imperative for instructional designers to thoroughly analyze and consider the appropriate tasks needed in order for learners to effectively and efficiently process the information received. Likewise, designers must consider the relevant learner characteristics that will promote or impede the cognitive processing of information. Blanton (1998, p. 173) further elaborates that the implications of cognitive learning theory on instructional design should bear in mind that “the [instructional] goals should include learner needs and interest, reflect the concerns of society, and make every effort to insure that goals are focused at least toward the present and, hopefully, toward the future needs of the learner.”

Unlike behaviorism, which is environment-focused, cognitivism directs instructional designers to consider the learner as the focus of the design process. This does not inhibit the design of instruction in any way but merely shifts the focus of the design. In fact, a cognitivism learning perspective facilitates instructional design since it is grounded upon an objective view of knowledge transfer.

Strengths and Weaknesses of Cognitivism

Learning is relevant. Cognitive-focused instruction has the potential to provide more meaningful learning to the learner with a longer impact. Merriam and Caffarella (1999, p. 254-255) conclude from the work of the cognitivist, Ausubel, that “learning is meaningful only when it can be related to concepts that already exist in a person’s cognitive structure. Rote learning (behaviorism-based), on the other hand, does not become linked to a person’s cognitive structure and hence is easily forgotten.”

Writing behavioral-based instructional objectives as stated earlier specify clear, measurable terms. However, Morrison, Ross and Kemp (2001, p. 96) point out that such an objective becomes “the end rather than the means for instruction.” They continue to point out that cognitive-focused instructional objectives overcome this problem by “first stating a general objective to communicate the intent.” Further, (p.97) “cognitive objectives are well suited for describing higher levels of learning.”

A major weakness of cognitivism lies in its strength. Whereas schemas help to make learning more meaningful, a learner is markedly at a disadvantage whenever relevant schemas or prerequisite knowledge do not exist. To account for this, a designer will need to ensure that the instruction is appropriate for all skill levels and experiences. Designing such instruction could be costly and time-consuming.

One additional weakness of cognitivism is similar to behaviorism in the belief that there are only finite, pre-determined goals. Having pre-determined goals may be in fact desirable for an organization since it offers clear direction and purpose but such a fixed set of expectations can limit the potential of the learning. Learners and instructors may become satisfied with obtaining minimum competencies or carry the attitude that “if it’s not broke, then don’t fix it!” when the learning experience could actually be designed better.

Constructivism

There are a number of perspectives found under the learning theory umbrella of constructivism. Each of these perspectives shares a common premise that individuals actively construct knowledge based on experience. Thus, knowledge cannot be simply passed on from learner to learner, but must be constructed individually by each learner. Boethel and Dimock (2000, p. 6-8) outline that constructivist-learning theory emphasizes six assumptions of constructivism:

- * Learning is an adaptive activity.
- * Learning is situated in the context where it occurs.
- * Knowledge is constructed by the learner.
- * Experience and prior understanding play a role in learning.
- * There is resistance to change.
- * Social interaction plays a role in learning.

Examples of constructivist learning are found in experiential learning, self-directed learning and reflective practice. These learning strategies explicitly show that the focus is squarely on the learner’s construction of knowledge within a social context.

Implications of Constructivism on Instructional Design.

Instructional design considerations within a framework of constructivism begin with taking into account the learner's prior knowledge, understandings, and interests. Boethel and Dimock (2000, p. 17) state, "Teachers must understand what learners bring to the learning situation and begin there in helping students build new knowledge." Therefore, like cognitivism, constructivism begins with a thorough learner analysis and determination of appropriate tasks to promote constructivist learning.

As opposed to an objective approach to learning, constructivism is more open-ended in expectation where the results and even the methods of learning themselves are not easily measured and may not be consistent with each learner. Thus, heavy attention must be paid to the context of the learning situation. Spector (2000, p.7) notes that when from the perspective of constructivism, "context must be taken into explicit consideration when planning instruction." Addressing types of context in which the learning takes place is necessary in the scope of constructivism because it not only addresses instructional context but also learner context. Within the context of the learner, attention must be paid to the "goals of the learner...the learner's perceived utility of the instruction... and the learner's perception of accountability (Morrison, Ross, and Kemp, 2001, p. 55-56). These address directly the fundamental assumptions of constructivism.

Strengths and Weaknesses of Constructivism

Rossner-Merrill, Parker, Mamchur and Chu's (1998, p. 286-287) analysis of the cognitive flexibility theory concludes several strengths of constructivism. Content can be presented from multiple perspectives using case studies, learners can develop and articulate new and individual representations of information, and active knowledge construction is promoted over passive transmission of information.

Since constructivism promotes individual learner interpretations and interests, this can pose an instructional problem. There could potential-

ly be problems in adequately evaluating learning. Learners may each have different experiences within the learning process but each have valid and sufficient learning take place. Boethel and Dimock (2000, p. 18) address the concern that “teachers cannot respond to the multitude of student interests due to lack of resources available in the classroom or the school.” Furthermore, from a control perspective, imagine the chaos and litigation that would arise if every attorney decided to interpret laws and practices in their own unique way with no recourse from the courts?

Conclusions

An understanding and incorporation of learning theory is needed when designing instruction because it adds focus and direction to the process. Instructional designers should address their goals and intentions of designing instruction in order to best incorporate learning theory within their programs. This requires considering the learner’s needs and characteristics, content and context, the strengths and weaknesses of the learning theory considering the scope of the instruction as well as the designer’s own intentions, preferences, and expectations.

Each theoretical perspective offers benefits to designers but the perspectives must be taken into context depending upon the situation, performance goal(s), and learners. And since the context in which the learning takes place can be dynamic and multi-dimensional, some combination of the three learning theories and perhaps others should be considered and incorporated into the instructional design process to provide optimal learning.

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Journaling and Reading: A Case Study

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In an ideal world, students would graduate from high school with the skills necessary to enter the college or career of their choice. These ideal students would be able to pick up a college content-area textbook and independently read their assignments, interact with the assignments, think critically about the assignments, and pass tests on the reading assignments without difficulty. The ideal student does not exist in many cases; according to one study, “50 to 70 % of university and college students in the United States need remedial and developmental support” (McCusker, 1999). “The students we encounter in college reading programs are not illiterate, they are alliterate. That is, as high school students they have not read what they were assigned to read nor have they acquired the habit of reading for pleasure” (Simpson and Randall, 2000, p.66). What has happened to create less than ideal students? This question could be debated for years. Blame could be placed at many doorsteps. The task for an instructor faced with these students in the classroom isn’t to place the blame for the problem, but to correct the problem.

Developmental Reading at Durham Technical Community College is designed to transform students with weak or limited reading skills and mold them into proficient readers who can enter college classrooms and successfully complete assignments. Developmental Reading at DTCC is divided into three levels, and reading courses from other community college settings or universities are not accepted for transfer. In addition to classroom instruction, students also have access to tutoring at the Campus Learning Center. As an instructor at DTCC, I begin each semester brainstorming ideas for my reading classes, hoping to come up with something new and different to help my students become these proficient readers.

I require my students to keep a journal throughout the semester. I have always loved writing, and I have always firmly believed that writing

should be incorporated across the curriculum in every classroom regardless of the subject matter. While I didn't know much about journal use with developmental reading, I did know that in general, "...both reading and writing involve the making of meaning... This meaning making process involves many similar and overlapping cognitive processes, specifically planning, drafting, aligning, and revising" (Valeri-Gold and Deming, 2000, p.150). The basis for my specific idea of journaling in a reading classroom came as I was reading *Reaching Adult Learners with Whole Language Strategies* by Kroeker and Henrichs. Kroeker and Henrichs provide suggestions of using journals as learning logs, summary-response logs, textbook logs, and records of dialect. Each of these journal suggestions intrigued me, and I began thinking about how I could incorporate a journal into Reading 080. I proceeded to put together some basic guidelines and requirements for the journal (see Appendix 2), and then I decided to just take the journaling one class session at a time.

Naturally, as I passed out my stack of handouts during the first class meeting, my students were less than enthusiastic at the idea of keeping a journal. I answered many questions, such as "How long does each entry have to be?," "How will we know what to write about?," and "Are you going to check it each time we come to class?." I could tell immediately that even though I had tried to emphasize that I would be looking for effort and thought and not counting the number of words written that my message was not getting through. I could also tell that I had not clearly communicated the purpose of the journal as a learning tool for interacting with assignments and recording thoughts and observations related to the assignments, not as a setting for having to think of something to write about. I tried not to let these setbacks discourage me and proceeded into the semester. As we read an assignment, an idea would hit me, and I would think, "That's perfect for journal writing," and I would make the assignment.

Now that I have completed my first semester of journaling with reading students, I have learned many lessons, I have spent some time reading the limited available research, and I have a new direction for next semester's journal assignments for reading students.

The following resources provided me with insight into the connections between reading and writing, the use of journals, and specifically the benefits for developmental college readers. More specific references to the research will be made throughout this article.

Pomper brings an instructor's perspective to "Writes of Passage." She provides a testimony of her reading program in which writing is central to the classroom experiences. She provides seven points around which her reading instruction is centered:

- * Learning requires reconstruction by the learner,
- * Reading and writing are processes,
- * Reading and writing range from aesthetic and reflexive to efferent and extensive,
- * Reading and writing connect cognitive domains with affective domains,
- * Reading and writing may be both holistically and analytically taught, learned, performed, and evaluated,
- * Reading and writing are enhanced by speaking and listening in small groups, and
- * Reading and writing should be taught together.

Pomper discusses reading and writing processes as well as providing example-writing activities that connect to writing.

Another instructor perspective is relayed in Taylor's "Write to Understand: Journaling in the Reading/Study Classroom." Taylor presents two ways for journals to be used in a reading classroom: the free journal and the study skills journal. With the free journal students respond to reading assignments by writing about the author's purpose before class discussion is held on the reading assignment. The free journal also includes notes and class work or homework related to the reading assignment and follow-up writing after class discussion and assignments. Students are encouraged to think about and to reflect on their study habits in other courses while using the study journal. This journal is designed to be a safe place for students to reflect on their growth as their study skills and reading skills improve.

Kerka's "Journal Writing and Adult Learning" briefly discusses types of journaling such as reader response, learning, and reflective. Kerka also shows the benefits of using journals with adult learners and some basic guidelines for using journals in the classroom. Kerka emphasizes the importance of student understanding of the use of journals for maximum benefit.

Perham shares the experience of using a collaborative journal through "Collaborative Journals: A Forum for Encouragement and Exploration." Perham's journal use specifically applies to an introductory level Romantic poetry class; however, the guidance provided for the use of collaborative journals could be used in any class. Perham's students periodically throughout the semester go to the library to write in the class journal. The students write entries to the class as a whole or to individuals regarding class discussion of poems. Perham emphasizes the appropriateness of journaling due to the focus placed in the individual and the appropriateness of collaborative journals due to the focus placed on the class as a learning community.

In his article about reading-writing relationships, Shanahan relates his journey through education as he emphasizes his support for the use of integrated teaching methods and themes. Included in this discussion of integration is emphasis placed on combined teaching of reading and writing. Shanahan also strongly voices the need for the correct use of integrated teaching if student learning is to really take place. Shanahan's discussion of the correct use of integrated teaching also emphasized that reading and writing should be given equal teaching time.

Holt's chapter in *Secondary School Reading* discusses reflective journal writing for teachers. The chapter shows how a group of adult educators kept reflective journals regarding their classroom practices and how these reflections improved their instruction. Most helpful was the list of cognitive activities stimulated by journal writing. This list of cognitive activities (including observation, speculation, rereading, problem-stating, and connections) could apply to anyone keeping a journal.

Falk-Ross relays a study of journaling and writing with developmental college students in "Toward the new literacy: Changes in college students' reading comprehension strategies following reading/writing projects." A small group of developmental reading students spent their semester improving reading by participating in activities such as an I-Search Paper, shared reading, and direct skills instruction. Results of the study showed improvements in reading comprehension, critical reading, and more productive reading. TABE test scores showed improvements of 3 to 4 grade levels in reading achievement.

McFarland, Dowdey, and Davis made investigations into ways to address the needs of developmental reading students in their paper, "A search for non-traditional pedagogies in teaching developmental reading and writing." McFarland et al. discuss the relationship between language and theory as related to reading and writing connections, critical literacy, and feminist theory. After discussion of these underlying theories, the paper focuses on how the theories affected instructional decisions.

Myers briefly shares the importance of the literacy histories of students in "Beginning the Semester with Literacy Introductions." Myers showed satisfaction with getting to know students from their literacy histories and students reflecting on positive literacy occasions in their past.

McCusker provides a brief statistical background of developmental students in "Effective Elements of Developmental Reading and Writing Programs." The article also discusses strategies to use with developmental students such as collecting student data, providing support services, using computers in the classroom, providing flexible testing, awarding college credits for courses, and sharing of remedial techniques with content area faculty.

I have reflected on my current practices related to writing in the classroom, examined the journals written by students this semester and have decided on some new goals and practices for journaling for the coming semesters.

Current classroom practices related to writing

The following techniques enable the reading instructor to provide writing practice for reading students:

- * Use questions for reading assignments that require critical thinking rather than simple comprehension so that students must write paragraph or essay answers.
- * Encourage and model thinking that goes beyond a simple reading of the text or reading materials.
- * Use social interaction and group discussion activities to accompany reading assignments so that students discuss questions before writing answers or essays.
- * Personalize learning when possible so that reading and writing meets student needs.
- * Involve student interests when possible when selecting reading materials so that reading and writing reflect student career interests, personal interests, and everyday life skill interests.

Reflections of sample journal entries

(See Appendix 2)

Example set 1: Journal entries in this set were written in response to the mystery story, “The Parker Shotgun” (entries A – C) and the southern work “Waiting for hard times to end” (entries D – E). “The Parker Shotgun” features detective Kinsey Milhorne retelling how she solved a case involving the murder of Rudd Osterling and the theft of an expensive rifle – a Parker shotgun. The journal assignment for this story was to retell the story from the perspective of a character other than Kinsey. My hope for this assignment was to see evidence of students drawing conclusions about what the other characters might have been thinking or how the other characters might have explained the events a little differently based on their feelings. For the most part, students simply retold the story simply using a different voice. I didn’t see much evidence of conclusions or inferences. The second story, “Waiting for hard times to end,” tells about the main character, Bunny, coming of age in a dysfunctional family after her sister runs away and is later found dead in

a hotel room. The assignment for this story was to have a conversation with Bunny. Students were told they could ask Bunny questions, give her advice, or simply write what they would want to say to her character. Overall, I felt the entries for this story were a little more reflective. Students showed interest in helping Bunny and interest in making the family's life better.

Example set 2: This set of journal entries followed a learning log format. After our discussion of the purposes for writing (narrative, descriptive, expository, and persuasive), students were asked to select their "favorite" and explain their reasoning. This set of entries demonstrated a basic knowledge of the concepts. I was also pleased to see that some explanation was present in each entry. Even though there is still room for improvement in these sample entries, I thought these entries showed more thought on the part of the students than set 1.

Example set 3: This set of journal entries followed a dialogue format. Students read an article in Newsweek about children and lead poisoning. After the reading was complete, students were instructed to free-write for 10 minutes in response to the article. Suggestions were made to share opinions of the article, relate a similar experience, converse with someone related to the article, or write on any idea. After ten minutes, students were instructed to pass their journal to a classmate. Students then had another free-write session for 10 minutes. This time the emphasis of the free-write needed to include a response to the classmate. For homework, students completed the journal entry by responding back to the classmate response. This set of entries met my hopes for my students better than any other journal topic from the semester. Students showed thought, reflection, opinion, and personalization of the topic.

New Goals for Use of Journal in Reading Classroom

Goal 1: Students will increase their critical thinking either by learning to think critically or simply increasing the amount of time spent thinking critically.

Goal 2: Students will interact with texts and reading materials through journaling instead of simply reading assignments passively.

Goal 3: Students will make use of a journal as an additional tool for learning and for improving reading skills.

New Journal Practices

Management of journals: In the future, I plan to manage the use of student journals differently. This semester I introduced journals on the first day of class and made journal assignments about once a week throughout the semester. I did not check behind students to ensure that the work was being completed or respond to their writing in any way. In my experience, developmental students need help in learning to budget their study time. I think some students would have done better with their journals if they had known that I was going to periodically check them or to respond to their journals. If I respond to student journals periodically throughout the semester, then I can increase opportunities to convey knowledge and communicate with my students (Perham, 1992). Student journal writing can serve as evidence of their learning or lack of learning. If I am reading student journals regularly, then I will have another way to monitor progress of students. Another change in management of journals will be to increase the number of assignments for students. The more students write in their journals, the more they are able to practice writing in a "safe" place (Journals will never be graded for spelling, punctuation, or "perfectness"), and the more they will be able to test their ideas, questions, doubts, etc. (Kerka, 1996). Also, the more students write in their journals the more they are given opportunities to make meaning out of what was read and to articulate connections between old and new information (Kerka, 1996). Lastly, a new management focus will be to help students learn how to reflect correctly. It could be assumed that everyone knows how to reflect on something; however, students many times misinterpret any writing based on reading as simply summarizing or retelling what happened in the reading instead of thinking beyond the text or thinking about how the text relates to their life. One of the keys to journals being effective tools of learning is writing reflectively (Kerka, 1996).

Topics: The topics for journal writing this semester have been very much “off the cuff.” As my classes would be reading an assignment, a journal topic would come to mind and I would assign the topic. I feel like my topics were appropriate and thought provoking, although there is always room for improvement. Maximum learning comes from maximum teaching, which comes from maximum preparation. I know if I spend some time before the semester begins thinking about journal topics my students will reap the benefits. The more time I spend planning these topics the more challenging they will be for the students. Even though these are developmental students, they still need challenges, or they will never be ready for college curriculum (Taylor, 1985). In addition, the more I plan topics that closely follow reading assignments, the more likely it will be for learning to occur. “Writing makes learning happen” (Taylor, 1985). Holt’s list of cognitive activities stimulated by journaling (1994) also demonstrates benefits students can receive from journaling simply by my planning a variety of journal topics that reflect these cognitive actions.

Emotions associated with journals: Journaling is often not a favorite activity for students. Many times they do not understand the benefits journal writing can bring them, and it is not easy to convince them of the benefits when they are willing to listen. As Pomper (1989) says, “They view reading and writing merely as subjects. And they expect to hate them.” While different students have different interests and everyone doesn’t have to love writing, it also isn’t ideal for students to “hate” writing. I hope I can help my students change their thinking and emotions about journaling into something more positive. If I can better communicate the purpose of journaling, the benefits of journaling, and the safety of journaling, then hopefully student attitudes will change. I am also going to find ways to provide more choices or freedoms in journal topics. Hopefully, students will find choices and freedoms in journal writing a positive reinforcement.

Better understanding of available research: Now that I have a better understanding of the research presently available regarding journaling and developmental students I feel like I can carry these ideas into my teaching. Sound teaching is based on sound theory, and sound theory is based on research. Shanahan (1997) strongly urges instructor understanding of reading and writing: "Improved learning is only likely to be the result if reading and writing are combined in appropriate ways."

Initiate research: Research in the area of journaling with developmental students is somewhat limited. I was able to find information, but it took many, many hours of searching. Not all of the research that I found was related directly to journaling – some of it focused just on writing, and some of it simply discussed college students and not developmental reading students. In addition, the age of much of this research is over ten years old. While research over ten years of age is not necessarily faulty or ready to be written off, it is another reason to look for research opportunities. My classroom is a research setting. There are subjects at the ready. I need to take the opportunity to continue the work in this field for my benefit, for the benefit of other reading instructors, and most of all for the benefit of students.

Teaching any subject is an art, an art that needs continuous editing, brushing up, and improvements. Teaching reading is a contemporary art. The artist or the teacher understands the art, but the viewers of the art or the students sometimes need some guidance to understand the picture. "To teach reading is to teach something invisible, for there is no way to observe the perfection of a product, nor even evaluate the evolution of a process. Furthermore, to teach it to college freshmen is to teach people who believe they already know how to do it" (Pomper, 1989).

(Appendix 1)

JOURNALING FOR READING 080

This semester you will be required to keep a journal that contains your thoughts related to readings and class assignments. The processes of reading and writing are very closely related, so this project should be an asset to your learning. The journal will count for 20% of your final grade. The journal will be checked for completeness, thoughtfulness, creativity, and effort. The journal is not meant to be busy work nor is it meant to simply summarize reading assignments. You should not be concentrating on length when you work on your journal. You should simply write until your thoughts are complete.

Possible Journal Topics

Talking to the author: Pretend you are having a conversation with the author of your reading assignment. What questions would you like to ask the author? What comments do you have for the author? Do you agree with the author's position on the topic? Did the author support his or her opinion? How could the author improve what he or she has written?

Talk to a classmate: Hold a written conversation with a classmate. Respond to his or her comments on an assignment. Critique his or her work. Share something about yourself.

Textbook log: Choose a textbook from another class. Write about an assignment from this book. Was it difficult to read? Did you learn anything? Did the reading live up to your expectations? What suggestions would you offer to the author of the textbook? What suggestions would you offer to someone else who had to read the same assignment? What kinds of strategies did you use when reading the assignment?

Learning log: Write about what happened in class today. What did you learn? What did you think of contributions made by classmates? Did your thinking about anything change? Is there anything about class that you wish had been different?

Free choice: Respond to the reading assignment in any way that you choose.

(Appendix 2)

Sample Student Journal Entries

(Student work is recreated exactly as produced by students)

EXAMPLE SET #1

A. I had collected guns for years, when I met Jackie. I let Jackie and her drug taken young son know that these guns of mine were off limits. For years they left them alone, I was hounded by Jackie to get rid of them, but I loved them like she loved her son. I came home one normal afternoon to realize my most prized possession was gone. I knew from Jackie and I getting into an argument earlier that week about the Parker shotgun that these two money hungry twits knew something about its disappearance. We had all gotten into an argument and no one knew anything but Eric had a debt to pay off and as soon as I ran over to the Osterlings I found what I was looking for. That stubborn piece of white trash wasn't going to give it back so I went back to the house and got the Smith, ran back to the Osterlings and shot Rudd in the head. These idiots around me don't know who their dealing with. I am a old man with little time to waist on folks I don't like. God will have the best of me soon but these money hungry folks will never see the best of me.

B. Eric's point of view

My mother stepfarther and I had just finished celebrating the holidays and everything was getting back to normal when I found out that a friend of mine had been murdered, not only murdered, but he was murdered with the shotgun that I had given him in exchange for money I ode him for drugs.

Rudd was his name and he was a very likeable guy. He had given me drugs on credit lots of times and I wanted to pay him, but the problem was I didn't have any money to pay him with. He had a nice looking wife at home who was very pregnant and he said he was going to stop selling drug because of the baby on the way.

My stepfather kept a collection of shot guns and I never really thought about them much, until my mother told me she had taken one of the guns in to a pawn shop to sell it and found out it was worth a lot of money. She did'nt tell me how much, so I figured a couple of thousands. I figured I would pay rudd by giving him the shot gun, so I staged a break in at home so my mom and stepfather would'nt know that I had taken the gun. When Rudd was found dead, shot with the same gun I had given him, I figured someone else maybe owed him and would'nt pay up, they struggled with the gun it went off and killed Rudd.

A lady detective by the name of Kinsey Millhone came by my mother's house on day. She was asking questions the shotgun and how had Rudd gotten it. I new there was a lot more to the story than a simple struggle; and I now knew how much the shotgun was really worth, with a lot more than I ever imagined, because there was only two of these shotguns ever made. Ms. Millhone was relentless, she kept asking questions about how Rudd got the shotgun; so I finally broke down and confessed that I had given it to rudd in payment for drugs, no one really seemed surprised. Ms. Millhone say she'd be back later.

When Ms. Millhone came back to question my mother again she had already left with Mr. Avery, the pawn shopowner. She came in anyway and asked if she could speke to my stepfather. I really did'nt want to let her in, but she came in anyway. She told him she had done some investigating and found out that my steptfather knew all the time that I had given his shotgun to Rudd for payment for drugs. He went to Rudd house to get it back, but Rudd would'nt give it back, because he knew the shotgun was worth a lot. They struggled and the gun went off, killing Rudd. Meantime my steptfather return home with the shotgun, puts it back in the case. He then have a stroke that leaves him paralyzed and unable to walk or talk.

Lisa, Rudd's wife ends up with the shotgun because Ms. Millhone said that we all knew or should have figured out who killed Rudd when the shotgun reappeared but we did'nt do anything about it, so justice has been served.

THE END

C. Lisa's point of view

I walked into Kinsey Millhone's office. I am tired of the cops doing nothing to help. I will get a private investigator to find my husband's murderer. After we talked a while I gave her a retainer of several hundred dollars and went home.

Then later Kinsey showed up at my house asking me about Eric Barnett. I told her yes that he had been at the house 2-3 times a week. I asked her. Do you think he killed him?

Kinsey told me she wasn't sure but that she is working on something.

I can't believe that old Mr. Barnett killed my husband. It serves him right to be stuck in that wheel chair. He will be in prison for the rest of his life.

D. Having a conversation with Bunny

Hi Bunny I've just read your story and it was a very good one. There are many questions I would like to ask you and you really do not have to answer them. Why were you pernickis Why did you rebel against your mother. Before your father left your mother, what type of relationships did they have. Was your father the only friend you had. Tell me about the relationship between you and your father. Bunny I see that you will not answer my questions. However the story tells me the answer to them. Your story should be read by so many teenage run-aways and just maybe they will think twice about it.

E. Conversation with Bunny

Why did your mother and two brother treat Rhonda ugly or any kind of way? Do you think that if they treated her better she would have stayed? So what do you think about Rhonda? Did you ever think that she was lying to you about writing and coming to live her. I want to give you a little advise. I understand that you love your sister and you believe in her. But she only gave you false hope. I don't think Rhonda had intention of coming back home or even letting you come see her. You have to understand that your mother loves you and you should listen to her.

She is not going to do anything to hurt you. You are growing up and you have to make your decisions. Take life one day at a time and don't let anyone influence you.

EXAMPLE SET #2

A. Which type of writing is most interesting to me. I would choose expository writing. I like expository because I want to know the facts about things. I can go and challenge what they say if I might find it somewhat unbelievable. The author doesn't take sides so opinions are eliminated. To help me better understand how something work or how the human body function I will want to make sure that the writing is expository. Did the text book explain enough? I think the text book explained enough. The definition was given and an example. I know what facts are so it was easy for me to grasp the concept of expository writing. The author told me what to look for to establish expository writing.

B. What type of writing interests you the most and why? I like Descriptive writing the most because when I'm reading I like to visualize what I'm reading, if I can see it in my head then I feel I can understand it more. Plus when your reading something that is descriptive it is sort of fun because it is like a picture show playing in your mind and that's what interests me the most.

EXAMPLE SET #3

A. If my child had lead poisoning I would first get a second opinion from a nother Dr. I would be praying and hoping this was not true. If my child had lead poinsoning I would then call my attorney a seek his advice. I know my attorney would then send for my child medical records to take the paint company to court. My feeling about this article is that I believe that company new the paint was harmful. My opinion on the article is that I don't think anything is going to be done about it until she takes the case to superior court. This article reminds me of poor black familys that are not educated enough to seek the professional help she needs to win this suit, she has a good law suit because her child

could experience all kinds of illness throughout his life. I hope she is smart enough to follow through with her commitment and that she sue their socks off. If you can't get help one way seek another don't give up hope.

Response from Mollie: I agree when you say maybe the lawsuit needs to be taken to a higher level (supreme court). The mother Mrs. Lee is working as a volunteer for her local lead awareness group to help get this problem in the public eye. But I think she needs to collect her fellow volunteers and get a petition out to take this dangerous situation to a higher level. I don't think this should be a poor mans burden, this is a situation where large companies are responsible and lawyers to fight for these unfortunate families should wave any and all retaining fees, court fees – etc. This is a rather large issue.

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