PLACE, SELF, COMMUNITY

City as Text™ in the Twenty-First Century

Bernice Braid AND
Sara E. Quay, EDITORS

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Edited by Bernice Braid
and Sara E. Quay

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Bernice Braid

Sara E. Quay

INTRODUCTION

Place, Self, Community: City as Text™ in the Twenty-First Century

Bernice Braid
Long Island University Brooklyn

> The contradictions are self-evident, but then, cities are contradictions with street lights, or else they are not cities at all.
> —Adam Gopnik, 2019

Students and faculty who have designed or participated in City as Text™ (CAT) know well that every place they have explored has organized itself into areas, events, and interactions that either immediately or eventually make sense out of contradictory bits of information. This realization might be more self-evident in urban walkabouts but has bubbled up to consciousness in rural settings, forests, jungles, neighborhoods, and even a shopping mall explored at a National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC) conference.

What lies beneath the surface, we tell our explorers, is what we want to expose to our gaze and unmask for our deeper consideration. What we suspect about "place" reveals what makes it unique: the particular contradictions that reveal themselves only if we look more carefully, critically, and sensitively at what hides them. These underlying contradictions are what we think about when we consider a constellation of CAT questions about a place: What does it feel like to live/be here? For whom/what? Under what circumstances?

When we start to discuss our answers—and for explorers the questions are always "ours" to begin with, for reasons that will become apparent throughout this monograph—we begin to identify several profoundly important elements of our activity: the matter of whose lens—from what viewpoint—we are looking; in what context

and in what setting we are looking; under what circumstances we are looking—who else is there with us; who the players are in what we are watching. Since all our assignments have been completed in public spaces, our interpretations and conclusions also include the important dimension of participant-observer components in all our awareness and discussions.

Together these concerns and attributes animate a complicated activity that appears to have shaped the insights and sensibilities of practitioners and veterans of City as Text and Place as Text so that their level of consciousness about "practice" remains with them as they move into fresh territory and new stages in their lives. The extent to which conscious and unconscious awareness remain as an active residue of serious immersion in this kind of exploration, shaping capacity to see, interest in discovery, and commitment to participate, has struck the authors of this monograph and motivated us to analyze practice as well as product and to parse how applications of City as Text exercises yield the rich rewards we witness and live with.

Our terminology in this volume has a history. Over four decades ago, City-as-Text morphed into City as Text™, which was trademarked in the 1980s to indicate that its origin was in the National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC), which should be acknowledged in publications. Students nicknamed courses and conference sessions CAT, an acronym still in use. When sites broadened beyond urban areas to include rural areas, villages, parks, forests, and jungles, the umbrella term shifted to Place as Text, which is now the official name of the NCHC committee working on the project. Publishing practice has been to use the trademark for titles and for the initial appearance of the phrase in the body of any NCHC journal essay or monograph chapter, omitting the symbol thereafter.

NCHC has published three monographs that address various elements of the structure and implementation of site-specific field-based educational practices: *Place as Text: Approaches to Active Learning* (2000, 2010), *Shatter the Glassy Stare: Implementing Experiential Learning in Higher Education* (2008), and *Writing on Your Feet: Reflective Practices in City as Text™* (2014). Fundamental

to them all is the practice of City as Text as a mapping strategy that reshapes the typical habits of observation and analysis among people in general and perhaps students in particular. A very early *Forum for Honors*, published in 1991 as a Festschrift for John Portz, one of the founders of NCHC, celebrated his work to help launch NCHC's Honors Semesters, with the 1976 Washington Bicentennial Semester (WBS) as the inaugural Semester in which CAT was initially tested, though not yet named. That publication was timed to accompany the first of several alumni reunions for Honors Semesters students at the NCHC's first Chicago conference in 1991.

All of us who have engaged in designing curricula and taking part in courses or semesters that have used CAT to integrate the experience of place, along with knowledge acquired through readings in differing disciplines, have noticed that students emerge from their experience with a range of sensitivities that distinguishes them from others who have not undertaken these explorations. Noting these differences has prompted the earlier monographs. The probing of place—and thinking about how space is transformed into place whenever people congregate or configure it—led to the earliest monograph (*Place as Text*), now in its second edition. Thinking about assignments led to the second monograph (*Shatter the Glassy Stare*) and focus on how we see, collect images, and think about first impressions and expectations to make sense of both process and product. Considering the profound effect on thinking and behavior produced by writing assignments scattered at crucial points in the experiential project inspired the third monograph (*Writing on Your Feet*).

A dramatic and impressive dimension of learning and project development, in particular a striking pattern of increased social awareness, remains unexamined despite increasing adaptations of mapping principles practiced in CAT curricula. This examination is crucial given a broadening commitment to international education and service learning that increasingly adopt design elements of CAT strategies for mapping and making sense of new environments. This fourth monograph explores relationships between mapping and

making meaning, between observing and participating, between interacting and reflecting, and between observing and engaging.

Place, Self, Community: City as Text™ in the Twenty-First Century focuses on the power of structured explorations (reflective practices ranging from debriefs and discussions to reflective writing and discussions) and on forms of immersion in place. This monograph explores the inherent integrative learning capacity to generate a sense of interconnectedness, of self-in-context, which finds expression in professional practices that endure long after the original experiential adventure is over. It explores the ways that this pedagogical strategy affects professors as well as students, and it examines instances of experiential learning outcomes that illustrate the power of integrative learning to produce social sensitivity and engagement, especially when that integrating includes unscripted, raw experience in the service of making sense of complex settings. An emphasis on developing antennae for context and lens distinguishes this approach to learning.

Contributors include individuals whose professional lives track in some way back to foundational experiences that illustrate linkages between early immersion and later social engagement. Authors represent social sciences, humanities, and science backgrounds and applications. They include the voices of alumni of NCHC's Honors Semesters, professionals who have used this approach in diverse settings, and commentators on both process and practice.

From its inaugural Washington Bicentennial Semester (1976), the Honors Semesters Committee (now Place as Text Committee) has sought to fashion an integrative seminar that relies on field immersion exercises to shape a synthesizing lens among student participants. By the first United Nations Semester (New York City, 1978), which incorporated reflective essays and discussion practices, it was clear that a formally labeled course was needed to provide scaffolding for the kind of analysis students needed throughout the Semester. Also from the start, it was clear that faculty were not familiar with pedagogical strategies likely to prompt the reflexive intensity possible in field-based learning, nor were they necessarily discursive in their teaching practices.

Therefore, by 1978 the Honors Semesters Committee offered its first Faculty Institute, which ran concurrently with the Semester-in-process. It included a four-day immersion workshop in which enrollees did the same explorations, writing, and seminar discussions that the students did. The faculty met with those students at least once for a focused session on the theme of the Semester and possible research topics that could emerge out of in-depth, onsite experiences. In the forty Faculty Institutes offered so far, many of which were timed to coincide with student residential projects, faculty interested in adapting this pedagogical structure to coursework, study abroad, or service learning programs on their home campuses have benefited from even the brief four- to seven-day immersion an Institute permits and from sessions with students in residence when overlap has been feasible.

This monograph variously explores connections among place, self, and community. The importance of focus, context, lens, and repetition to how memory allows the brain to make meaning is structurally significant. Paul Witkovsky's "Brain Activity and Experiential Learning" examines how City as Text operates as it considers the many stages of CAT design.

The impact of unfiltered observations in Yellowstone National Park, transformed after interpretation, reflection, and analysis of both students and faculty (Susan M. Cannata, Jesse Peters, Alix Dowling Fink, Edward L. Kinman, JoEllen Pederson, Phillip L. Poplin, and Jessi B. Znosko) is the subject of "Lost in Learning: Mapping the Position of Teacher in the Classroom and Beyond." Broadening the context of explorations to the vastness of the Grand Canyon deepens the connections between the explorer and the field explored in Ted Martinez and Kevin Gustafson's "Learning from the Land: Creating Authentic Experience-Based Learning that Fosters Sustained Civic Engagement."

In a theoretical discussion of field explorations, Ron Weerheijm and Patricia Vuijk consider these explorations as laboratory material for classroom deliberation. Their "Integrating Dynamic Systems Theory and City as Text™ Framework: In-Depth Reflections on 'Lens'" demonstrates that the framework of cognitive development

within CAT is applicable to many disciplines. Then, voicing the way that CAT has specifically informed the lives of alumni brings the volume back to current practices with examples from the United Nations Semesters in 1978 (Dawn Schock, "Reflections on the 1978 United Nations Semester") and 1984 (Will Daniel, "Engaging with the World: Integrating Reflections and Agency"), as well as the 1998 Thessaloniki Semester in Greece (Michael Rossi, "The Merits of Applied Learning").

A first impression of the Place as Text Committee at work in Mimi Killinger's "Committee as Text" next leads to an in-depth examination by Sara E. Quay of a sequence of assignments and their role on a specific campus in "Connecting to Place: A City as Text™ Assignment Sequence." Illuminating the range of experiments our CAT colleagues have undertaken, Season Ellison, Leslie Heaphy, Amaris Ketcham, Toni Lefton, Andrew Martino, and Sara E. Quay discuss in "Reading the Local in the New Now: Mapping Hidden Opportunities for Civic Engagement in the First Virtual City as Text™ Faculty Institute" their introduction of CAT practices in a virtual Faculty Institute. Gabrielle Watling's "Doubling Back on the City as Text™ Walkabout" guides readers through a form of thinking back on CAT after the fact, reexamining and rethinking personal experience and group encounters. In writing about a systematic application of student-initiated CAT projects to enhance community development, Jean-Paul Benowitz offers a unique example of the power of process in "Transforming Community-Based Learning through City as Text™."

Bernice Braid's closing essay, "Acts of Interpretation: Pedagogies of Inquiry," returns readers to a moment in the CAT process that may be a functional linchpin, when students and faculty alike begin to see their own pivotal role in creating a sense of self in an emerging, unfamiliar, unfolding drama—one in which everyone present is playing a consequential role.

A set of presumptions informs the version of experiential learning examined in this book: our senses themselves are instruments through which we acquire information; impressions assembled into patterns confer meaning when interpreted with evidence; reiterative analysis engenders understanding when configured in context;

and identifying a personal perspective in this process is crucial. An observation that pervades reports of fieldwork and seminars is that emotion colors memory retention and that reflection on experience helps retain understanding and opens people up to new insights. In *Place, Self, Community: City as Text™ in the Twenty-First Century*, what writers consider is not a formula but a framework as they share experiments and applications of their pedagogical practices and educational adventures.

What we see has everything to do with the way we see. How do magicians confound our senses in their successful magic-acts?

> It is our preconceptions that create the blind spots in which magicians do their work. By attrition, coin tricks loosen the grip of our expectations about the way hands and coins work. Eventually, they loosen the grip of our expectations on our perceptions more generally. . . . Tricked out of our expectations, we fall back on our senses. What's astonishing is the gulf between what we expect to find and what we find when we actually look. (Sheldrake 14–15)

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PLACE, SELF, COMMUNITY

City as Text™ in the Twenty-First Century

PART 1: THEORY AND PRACTICE OF CITY AS TEXT™

City as Text™ is both a theory of learning and a practice of exploration. In this section, two longstanding CAT projects—one an annual short-term program at Yellowstone National Park, the other an honors semester at the Grand Canyon—are discussed in light of their use of CAT strategies outside of traditional urban settings along with the lasting impact those programs have on students and faculty alike. The section is bookended by theoretical essays, one from a scientist who offers some context for the link between the brain and experiential learning, the other proposing an additional lens for understanding CAT.

Brain Activity and Experiential Learning

Paul Witkovsky
New York University

> For the things we have to learn before we can do them, we learn by doing them.
>
> —Aristotle, ca. 350 BCE

INTRODUCTION

The chapters in this book deal primarily with students' learning experiences as documented through self-awareness, knowledge acquisition, and behavior. Language makes it possible to communicate these changes to others. This essay, in contrast, will examine learning from the perspective of brain function. The current framework of thinking among neuroscientists, psychologists, and philosophers is that the brain is fully responsible for our minds, and thus studying how the brain functions in molecular, cellular, and systems terms sheds light on all mental processes, including those that are the substrate of learning. A scientific understanding of brain function thus helps to explain the long-term benefits of experiential leaning described by the theorists and practitioners of City as Text™ (CAT).

Learning is the acquisition of knowledge about the world, and in order for that knowledge to be applied to future situations, it has to be stored, recalled, and put to use in a new context. Learning cannot occur without memory, which comprises the multiple processes of information storage and recall.

In recent years, the possible means of exploring brain activity have increased dramatically thanks to advances in molecular biology and in scanning techniques such as functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI), which allow the investigator to observe human brain activity in real time while the subject performs some defined task. Additional information comes from a variety of studies that focus on developmental learning in children, defects in memory acquisition and retention resulting from brain injury or disease, and laboratory experiments on animals using techniques that permit the analysis of brain behavior on a single-cell or systems level.

Evolutionary thinking also contributes to the analysis of learning and memory. Early hominids had to develop multiple abilities in order to survive; evolving predictive capabilities about the environment, for example, was essential to avoid being killed. A crucial product of human evolution was aversive and fearful behavior that led the individual to avoid threatening or dangerous situations: a large predator or a dark and unexplored space. Such situations linked emotion to memory, and we know from recent brain studies that emotion heightens memory through indirect brain circuits (LeDoux). Readers will recall from their own experience that emotion heightens memory. Think back to childhood accidents or near accidents: receiving an electric shock from an outlet or almost being hit by a car after not looking in both directions at a crosswalk. Simple examples from everyday experience, when extended and amplified, indicate why evolutionary pressure to link emotion and memory would have survival value for the species. Moreover, not only fearful emotions enhance memory; the nervousness of a first piano recital or the excitement of a first date creates an emotional tone that contributes to the vividness of a given memory years or even decades after the experience.

A VERY BRIEF OUTLINE OF NEUROBIOLOGY

In order to discuss how memories are formed and stored, we need some basic information about the cellular organization of the brain. The human nervous system consists of a central portion (the brain and spinal cord) and a peripheral portion that supplies nerves to the body, e.g., the gut. We are concerned in this essay only with the brain, which contains nerve cells (neurons) and glial cells. Neurons are organized into functional circuits governing every sort of activity from movements to abstract thought, and the glial cells help neurons carry out their tasks in multiple ways but are not directly involved in mental processes. Our brains have about ten billion neurons and perhaps ten times that many glial cells. Like every cell in an organism, neurons have a cell body with a nucleus that contains the cell's genetic material and—in the non-nuclear part of the cell body, called the cytoplasm—the various cellular structures needed to keep the cell alive, that is, to produce energy, synthesize needed materials such as proteins, and destroy unwanted material. Although neurons share many properties with other types of cells in the body, they differ in two fundamental ways: 1) their surface membrane is excitable, meaning that it generates electrical signals, which are the substrate of brain communication, and 2) they have irregular shapes as a consequence of emitting multiple processes. These processes join neurons into functional circuits wherein neurons send and receive messages by electrical and chemical means. Typically, a neuron has a long, slender process called an axon. The axon is capable of discharging and transmitting brief electrical pulses (called spikes or action potentials) that constitute the neuronal signal. At its terminal end, the axon expands into many fine swellings, each of which forms a structural relation called a synapse with a neighboring cell. Other processes, called dendrites, emanate from the neuron's cell body and typically receive synapses. Synapses are the communication points between cells and, as we shall see, are modified by learning experiences. One side of the synapse contains a chemical called a neurotransmitter. Some neurotransmitters excite the target cell, and others inhibit it. Moreover, synapses are polarized: the information flows only in one direction. Typically,

the axon terminal controls the release of the transmitter, whereas the dendrites have receptors that respond to the transmitter. Each neuron makes multiple synapses, up to many thousands, with its target cells. The presence of axons and dendrites is common to virtually all neurons, but the particular spatial geometry of each neuron's processes is dictated by the specific communication task the neuron carries out.

A crucial point is that the organization of the adult brain is not completely governed by genetic processes or pre-wired. It is true that in the early stages of brain development, genetic programming dictates the generation of neuronal cell bodies and the growth of their axons toward their targets, but the specific patterns of synaptic connectivity that define neuronal circuits are strongly shaped by experience, by learning and repeated use. As young humans interact with the world, their brains establish connections through sensory experience—looking, touching, smelling, hearing—and by motor movements. A newborn's first movements are awkward and reflexive but become refined by repetition. Similarly, language acquisition happens through the repetition of significant sounds from the caregiver and then by the infant. Many studies show that for the developing brain, repetition strengthens synaptic connections, whereas disuse causes connections to be pruned (Kandel, Dudai, and Mayford). Moreover, human brain development is not confined to early childhood: it continues into the adult state. The ability of neural circuits to enhance some connections and to eliminate others is called *plasticity*, and it underlies all learning and memory.

Of course, the brain is more than a random collection of interconnected neurons. On the contrary, neurons assemble into functional regions devoted to the processing of sensory information, the execution of motor tasks, the control of language comprehension and production, and all higher operations, including cognition. Brain imaging has enabled investigators to identify which brain region or regions are activated when the subject performs a given task, and a general conclusion is that for most tasks, brain information flows widely, with the result that multiple brain areas are activated.

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

Before expanding on these details of brain structure and function, I think it will be useful to consider the learning paradigms for which brain circuits are the substrate. If learning can be parsed into identifiable components, for example, memory formation and attention, studying their neurobiological correlates becomes easier. Given the bias of this book, here we focus on experiential learning, for which a well-accepted theory was developed by David A. Kolb.

In Kolb's schematic, one begins with a concrete experience such as learning to ride a bicycle. The physical experience of mounting, pedaling, and steering the bike leads to reflective observation about what went right or wrong in a first attempt at biking. Observation, in turn, leads to abstract conceptualization of what needs improvement and how to go about it. Conceptualization gives rise to active experimentation in which the novice biker tries again by incorporating behavioral modifications derived from past learning. In neurobiological terms, this set of linked processes begins with sensory experience of the hands gripping the handlebars and the feet feeling contact with the pedals, coupled with the emotional twinges the rider experiences as the bike wobbles and perhaps falls. There are, as well, the motor (muscle movement) responses: steering the bike, pushing the pedals, and so forth. Visual and tactile sensations flow from the peripheral receptors in the hands and eyes into their corresponding primary regions in the brain's cerebral cortex, the convoluted surface area of the brain.

The brain is divided into four lobes: occipital, parietal, temporal, and frontal. Vision begins to be processed through the back end of the cortex in the occipital lobe, whereas touch is initially processed in the parietal lobe. Sensory inflow guides the production of the motor responses that move the bike. At the same time, memories are being formed that include motor performance, the environment in which it occurs, e.g., a city street or a park, and the emotional flavor of the event. These memories are stored and inform the reflective observations of what went right or wrong. Memories are channeled to cognitive portions of the brain in the frontal lobe, where notions of how and what to improve are generated, and these

newly created ideas inform the biker's future attempts. As most of us recall, repeated iterations of this cycle occur before one rides a bike with ease and confidence.

Kolb emphasizes that in order to profit from the series of steps in the cycle, the learner must

a. be willing to be actively involved,

b. be able to reflect on experience,

c. possess and use analytical skills to conceptualize, and

d. employ decision-making and problem-solving skills.

When these four processes are correctly applied (and reapplied), users acquire long-term memories of experiences, techniques, and information that increase their cognitive abilities to cope successfully with novel situations that extend beyond the initial experience. Not every human will react identically to the same challenge. Some are natural athletes who easily learn to ride a bike, whereas others have lesser athletic gifts but might be good at grasping mathematical concepts. One learning mold does not fit all, but the concept of actively participating in these four steps is generally valid and necessary.

MEMORY

Given that memory is central to learning, we need to consider in greater detail how memories are formed and stored. A crucial phase of memory research revolves around a man known during his lifetime as H. M., but since his passing in 2008, we know his name: Henry Molaison. Molaison suffered from intractable epilepsy, and in 1953, at the age of 27, he underwent surgery that removed, bilaterally, a portion of his medial temporal lobe that included most of a structure called the hippocampus, so named because of its resemblance to a seahorse. Many brain structures, including the hippocampus, are paired, with one on each side of the brain, so H. M.'s surgery was bilateral, removing both hippocampi. Molaison recovered from the surgery. The frequency of his

epileptic seizures was greatly reduced, but the law of unanticipated consequences manifested itself in a surprising way: he could no longer retain memories of recent events. Beginning in 1957 and until his death, Molaison was studied intensively (Milner, Corkin, and Teuber; Corkin). Over the hundreds of times Milner met with Molaison, she had to introduce herself each time because he retained no memory of their prior encounters. On the other hand, he retained memories of events in his childhood. Milner tested him on memory acquisition and retention tasks, and the results revealed the complicated and multistage nature of memory formation and storage. The fact that he remembered well distant events from his early childhood indicated clearly that long-term memory storage was not situated in the medial temporal lobe, the part of his brain removed by the operation, yet he did suffer memory loss of past events in a graded way. Events that occurred just before the surgery were lost completely, and there was partial loss of other memories in inverse proportion to their temporal distance from the surgery, up to about ten years. We learn from this finding that memory storage is a progressive process. (*N.B.* In a 2016 *New York Times Magazine* article, Luke Dittrich referenced research indicating that the surgery also slightly damaged H. M.'s frontal lobe; the possible significance of this finding for conclusions about memory formation is as yet undetermined.)

Another crucial finding was that Molaison did not lose all memory function. He could learn motor tasks and benefit from prior experience on repeated trials of a task even though he did not specifically remember having practiced the task earlier, leading researchers to make a distinction between *explicit*, or declarative, memory and *implicit* memory. Explicit memory is the sort concerned with objects, facts, places, and persons, in short, all the details that underlie our knowledge base: the *where*, *what*, *who*, and *when* of an experience. In humans, declarative memory requires conscious awareness. Implicit memory refers to motor skills that we have acquired through practice (riding a bike, playing the piano, drawing) and that come into play automatically when we perform a given activity. Implicit memory does not require conscious

awareness and is not routed through the hippocampus but does depend upon the cerebellum, among other brain structures. Molaison's brain was removed post-mortem, processed for microscopic study, and is still being studied today. The brain sections show that, in addition to the hippocampus, he lost the amygdala (almond-shaped structure), which is a crucial component of the brain circuitry processing emotions. He also lost entorhinal cortex, which is implicated in memory storage. These three structures—hippocampus, amygdala and entorhinal cortex—are located in adjacent brain areas that are intimately involved in memory, including its emotional component.

Molaison was also able to remember number sequences for a brief time, especially if he aided himself by repeating the numbers frequently. Additionally, his intelligence was found to be above normal; he had no known memory deficits prior to surgery; he retained language skills and personality; and he expressed an interest in helping scientists gain insight into the biological basis of memory. What the Molaison case revealed indisputably was that memory formation, consolidation, and storage are a complex set of processes involving multiple brain regions.

Early studies on memory formation employed simple systems such as classical conditioning, a kind of learning also called Pavlovian. Pavlov trained dogs to expect food after the ringing of a bell. The bell is the "conditioned stimulus," so-called because by itself it is neutral, but it acquires significance in the learning paradigm. The food is the "unconditioned stimulus" because no prior training is required to give it significance. After a small number of pairings (the sound of the bell followed by the presentation of food), the dog learns to associate the two and salivates (the conditioned response) to the sound of a bell. This paradigm is an example of implicit memory formation in that the salivation response occurs reflexively.

At the time Pavlov's investigations were underway, neuroscience was in its infancy. Explaining how a Pavlovian reflex operated on a cellular level took another five decades or so. Although reflex responses were known in mammals, for example, the eye-blink that

results from touching the eyeball, the mammalian brain appeared too formidable an experimental subject. Eric R. Kandel opted to study reflexive behavior in a marine mollusk, Aplysia, whose simple nervous system of fewer and larger cells facilitated experimentation. A single shock to the tail of Aplysia was followed by gill withdrawal. Kandel, Dudai, and Mayford analyzed the withdrawal reflex at the cellular level and showed that the synaptic connections between the sensory input (the shock) and the motor response (the withdrawal) were strengthened by repetition, providing a clear example of synaptic plasticity. Moreover, Kandel was able to identify some of the neurochemicals participating in reflex modification. In spite of the great evolutionary distance between a mollusk and a human, the same neurochemicals are found in the human brain and often have similar functional roles. In Aplysia the relevant cellular components of the reflex circuit could be removed from the animal and studied in a culture. In this reduced system, the neurochemical serotonin could be applied in place of the tail shock: it had the same facilitating result. One application of serotonin resulted in a short-term increase in synaptic strength, whereas systematically spaced application of serotonin led to long-term changes, which depended on gene activation and protein synthesis. These results became a model for how memories are formed and stored in the human brain (Kandel).

Before the experimental tools for exploring mammalian brain function on a cellular or systems level were available, D. O. Hebb postulated that repeated activity led to stable changes in synaptic circuitry:

> Let us assume that the persistence or repetition of a reverberatory activity tends to induce lasting cellular changes that add to its stability. . . . When an axon of cell A is near enough to excite cell B and repeatedly or persistently takes part in firing it, some growth process or metabolic change takes place in one or both cells such that A's efficiency, as one of the cells firing B, is increased. (62)

His mechanism was stated more succinctly by Löwel and Singer: "neurons wire together if they fire together" (211). This insight has

proven correct. Recent investigations of the hippocampus, which as we learned from the analysis of how H. M.'s amnesia is implicated in short-term memory formation, show that stimulation of nerve fibers entering the hippocampus increase synaptic transmission in hippocampal cells, a phenomenon called "long-term potentiation." Investigators have shown that hippocampal synapses increase their efficiency through repeated stimulation and that the effect can be short term or long term depending on the timing and duration of the stimuli. Short-term enhancement does not require gene activation or protein synthesis, but long-term stimulation does, exactly analogous to what was found in Aplysia.

Moreover, with regard to learning and memory, much more information has been gleaned from hippocampal studies. Unlike simple reflexes, hippocampal cells are activated by complex stimuli. One of the striking features of the hippocampus is that it is a brain center concerned with the location of the body in space. A simple experiment in mice or rats indicates how this works. If a rodent is placed in a water tank containing a small platform, it will ultimately locate the platform and rest there. If the water is now made murky so that the platform is invisible, the rodent will nevertheless head straight for it. Further work shows that hippocampal cells are "place" cells that chart the environment, i.e., each neuron fires when the rodent passes through the limited environmental space coded by that cell. Coding of space extends to a neighboring region, the entorhinal cortex, which contains so-called "grid" cells that provide the hippocampus with information about position, direction, and distance. Both of these brain regions are intimately involved in memory formation. Moreover, the hippocampus-dependent memory for space and the subsequent retrieval of the memory are optimized by attention. This relationship was studied by associating the exploration of space with a defined task such as searching for food. Finally, when mice were genetically modified to prevent long-term potentiation in the hippocampus, the animals showed deficits in hippocampus-dependent learning paradigms (Kandel, Dudai, and Mayford).

Although these studies were performed on rodents, they are presumed to apply also to humans. Evidence comes from drivers of

black cab taxis in London who acquire a very detailed knowledge of the city's geography. A magnetic resonance imaging study of their brains identified an increase in posterior hippocampus volume relative to that of untrained control subjects (Maguire et al.)

To summarize where our discussion has taken us: short-term memories of specific events are first formed in the hippocampus, and explicit learning by repetition results in synaptic strengthening in certain hippocampal synapses, leading to the formation of stable brain circuits that underlie future performance. Other related studies have shown that for long-term memories to be established, new protein synthesis is required. Long-term memories are distributed widely in the brain, and somehow, in ways that are still not well understood, adding an emotional component and a time/place component to the memory event increases the probability of its retention in the brain. Long-term memory formation is not a one-time event; instead, the memory is renewed each time it is recalled, at times resulting in alteration of that memory.

ATTENTION

Attention refers to the behavioral and cognitive process of selectively concentrating on a discrete aspect of information while ignoring other available information. The relevant information could come from the environment (some interesting sight) or be internally generated by cognitive processes (what do I do next?).

As noted above, hippocampal studies brought out a salient feature for learning theorists: the stability of location mapping by hippocampal neurons was increased when the animal had a task to perform compared to animals with no such task. Tasks included foraging for food or remembering the spatial relationships of the environment in order to turn off disagreeable stimuli such as loud sounds or light (Kentros et al.). These concerns may seem modern, but only the ability to study them in biological terms is modern. The Spanish philosopher Juan Luis Vives (1492–1540), in his 1538 multi-volume study *De Anima et Vita*, concluded that the more closely one attends to stimuli, the better they will be retained. The modern notion that we humans can multitask—e.g., look at

our computer while listening to a lecture or talk on a cell phone while driving—is true only to a limited degree since performance in one or both tasks is reduced. In the first example, retention of the lecture material is reduced, and in the second example, driving deteriorates, leading to more accidents. For maximum benefit, attention should be focused on a single task.

The human brain has multiple specific centers involved in focusing attention on the task at hand. We can begin by considering external stimuli of interest that come to the individual through one or more sensory pathways (e.g., vision, audition). All sensory pathways in the brain consist of a series of stages beginning with the sensory organ (the eye, the ear) and processing through various brain centers, culminating in multiple cortical areas. In vision, for example, the lower stages of processing characterize the visual stimulus in terms of its shape, size, color, contrast, and movement. Each processing neuron is concerned only with a small piece of the visual world. For this visual stimulus to have behavioral relevance, however, it has to be identified, meaning that some relevance is assigned to it by reference to whatever related material is in the viewer's memory. Higher visual processing areas in the brain are concerned with more global properties of the stimulus. Neurons in the parietal cortex direct the viewer's gaze toward the direction of movement, and cells in the inferotemporal cortex identify faces. Some humans lack the ability to recognize face definition, a condition called prosopagnosia, which is associated with damage to the inferotemporal cortex.

Attention centers in the brain receive input from multiple sensory pathways. Imagine an early human on a hunt for deer suddenly encountering a large and aggressive bear. The size and face identification neurons would play a role in identifying the animal, and its sounds and body attitude might well indicate aggression. Finally, its direction of motion would obviously be important in determining the hunter's course of action. For these external stimuli, attention centers in the parietal and temporal cortex come into play. For internal concerns like task performance that demand the actor's close attention, the frontal cortex and basal ganglia are implicated.

In general terms, attention focuses the mind away from extraneous stimuli—the background noise with which our everyday waking lives are filled—onto the relevant stimuli for ordered activity. Many psychological studies show that lack of attention or dispersed attention is inimical to learning. Attention-deficit hyperactivity syndrome is a case in point, and many mental illnesses, such as bipolar syndrome or schizophrenia, have analogous learning difficulties. On a less pathological level, boredom and apathy diminish learning because they get in the way of focused attention. It follows that a good learning strategy is one that increases attention and dispels boredom.

DEVELOPMENT

Newborn humans are relatively helpless beings, but as recent studies have shown, they are far from lacking the ability to observe and react to their surroundings (Gopnik). The newborn brain is not a blank slate; it has built-in preferences that help channel activities. One example is a preference for hands and faces. In the first few years of life, brain circuits are wiring up through axon growth and synapse formation. Acquisition of the ability to identify visual, auditory, and other sensory stimuli is associated with the enhancement of some synapses and the elimination of others. We can relate this process to the way babies learn, which is primarily by observation of others and attempting to copy their actions.

In that regard, a fascinating and relatively new neurobiological finding is "mirror neurons." The phrase refers to neurons that become active both while an individual executes some action *and* while the person sees or hears another individual performing a similar action (Del Guidice, Manera, and Keysers). Such mirror neurons have been identified in primate brains, including in humans. A working postulate is that mirror neurons help to form functional brain circuits by focusing the infant's activities on certain movements and perceptions, thereby utilizing a Hebbian learning mechanism that reinforces certain synapses and builds functional circuits. Some researchers have implicated mirror neurons in the process of socialization. The question is still open whether mirror

neurons are built into the brain's genetic information or are formed through activity; this is still an active area of research from which we can expect important insights about learning in the near future.

As the child matures and acquires language, much new learning is done through play. Alison Gopnik has noted that children left to their own devices with toys and puzzles are quite good at developing hypotheses about how things work. In fact, they behave like young scientists, testing first one possible mechanism and then another until they arrive at a solution. Young children do also pay attention to what a parent says, but as Gopnik points out, if the parents play teacher by saying "this is how x works," then children tend to adopt that solution rather than coming up with one of their own (4).

SUMMARY

In this brief survey, we have examined experiential learning from two perspectives: from the standpoint of brain function and as a theoretical framework for examining the psychology of learning (Kolb). To these we can add the knowledge acquired by teachers and educators as they search for the best methods to convey information and stimulate interest about the world in their children and students. In particular, we want to make reference to the conclusions reached by those participating in the City as Text programs documented elsewhere in this book. The challenge is to find unifying hypotheses that will identify putative specific brain mechanisms associated with learning that can be examined experimentally.

Some principles have emerged. One is that the newborn brain is not a tabula rasa. Infants are born with certain genetically dictated predilections, and these guide the ways they acquire and store information. Understanding these mechanisms obviously will have relevance for teaching strategies. One principle derived from observing young children (two to five years old) is that leaving them to sort out problems is a good strategy when coupled with the presence of an adult who listens and comments on what a child has learned. This mode of acquiring knowledge fits well within the framework of experiential learning.

Some factors that emerge from brain science in relation to individual learning seem clearly to favor the acquisition and retention of new information. One of these is attention, which involves not only exclusion of random stimuli but also a conscious focus on a subset of information that is considered relevant. In that context it is worth focusing on sensory input.

Humans utilize multiple avenues of sensory input—vision, audition, taste, smell, and touch—but of these vision is the most important. Our language reflects this in, for example, the sayings "I see what you mean" or "it's in my mind's eye"; vision clearly is a metaphor for comprehension. Audition comes in a close second. Both vision and hearing function at a distance, whereas taste and touch require contact with the stimulus. Odor does function at a distance for animals such as dogs that are well endowed with odor sensitivity, but humans are not particularly sensitive or discriminative for odors, so for early man evolution favored the development of vision, and a large fraction of our brain is devoted to visual information processing.

As described above, the brain manifests multiple centers for focusing attention, each associated with one or another modality of sensory input. We see a parallel here between brain organization and Kolb's scheme. He places great significance on the willingness of the subject to participate in the learning experience, i.e., to pay attention to the task at hand. In City as Text exercises, the student's first task is to take in the new surroundings, and that happens via sensory input, particularly visual input. As Bernice Braid puts it, "Developing the eyes, ears, noses, and tastebuds that serve as collecting tools for systematic observation is central to integrative fieldwork in City as Text™" (20).

A second factor that favors short-term memory formation is emotion, in all its varieties from fear to exhilaration. Emotion also is an inevitable accompaniment of City as Text exercises. Any new situation tends to elicit a little anxiety simply because the learning situation is unpredictable and open-ended, and this emotional color also favors short-term memory, as documented by animal experiments and psychological examination of human memory storage.

A third factor common to neuroscience investigation and City as Text exercises is the importance of place. Evolutionary pressures have resulted in the wiring of neuronal circuits specifically for place recognition, both in the hippocampus and the adjacent entorhinal cortex. Although this work has been carried out primarily on rodents, evidence suggests that "place-coding" neurons also exist in the human brain. We can imagine that early humans would benefit from circuits that recognized familiar elements in the environment, such as places of shelter or sources where food and water could be found. Thus, the emphasis on "place" in City as Text fits in well with what we know of mammalian brain organization.

This brief review has suggested some evident parallels between the ways in which our brains are organized for knowledge acquisition, for memory formation and storage, and for learning strategies that emerge from direct experience. Many other factors, including those involving higher-order functions such as language and cognition, enter into the educational experience, but while brain scientists posit that language and cognition also are subserved by neural circuits, a neural description of their workings awaits much further experimentation and may further deepen our understanding of why experiential leaning has such a powerful impact on its practitioners. Meanwhile, recognizing that cognitive science provides grounding for the value of such learning affirms the validity of participants' subjective perception that City as Text is a transformative practice.

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Lost in Learning: Mapping the Position of Teacher in the Classroom and Beyond

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INTRODUCTION:

MAPPING AND STORIES

Over the last thirty years or so, conversations about teaching pedagogy have consistently focused on the benefits of experiential learning and interdisciplinary connections. In order for students to learn in an optimal way, to develop their critical thinking skills while simultaneously mastering content, they must engage with multiple ways of seeing and knowing.

They should learn to acknowledge complexity, to evaluate information, and to challenge their own positionality and self-assuredness. Put succinctly, they must become comfortable with being uncomfortable.

These practices provide students with the skills they need to be successful in whatever paths they choose: adaptability, creativity, innovation, the ability to work collaboratively, and understanding the need to see issues from multiple perspectives. As teachers in higher education and supporters of Place as Text (PAT) pedagogy, we have searched for strategies to encourage students to engage in ways that promote these skills.

Perhaps one of the best examples of teaching strategies designed to transform students can be seen in Longwood University's Yellowstone National Park Program (LU@YNP). This place-based course, designed to connect interdisciplinarity with experiential learning, places students in Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem (GYE) with a faculty team. As students engage with issues and ideas during this immersive course, they are thrust into new contexts and pushed to see the world in new ways. The course is an example of deliberately placing students in what Mary Louise Pratt calls "contact zones," which are "spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery or their aftermaths as they are lived out in the world today" ("Arts" 34). Those who exist in these zones—in our case, faculty and students—are subject to perspectives, according to Pratt, that emphasize "how subjects are constituted in and by their relations to each other. It treats the relations among . . . travelers and 'travelees,' not in terms of separateness or apartheid, but in terms of copresence, interaction, interlocking understandings and practices" (*Imperial Eyes* 7). During LU@YNP, students are immersed in a myriad of contact zones as they consider numerous social, political, and environmental issues, all while looking through multiple lenses. For example, while students in this class often look at wildlife through the literal lens of a telescope, they cannot be passive observers of grazing antelope, lumbering bison, or gamboling bear cubs. They learn how to put their observations into political, economic, cultural, and environmental contexts. They hear the impassioned words of wildlife conservationists, they listen to the concerns of ranchers who live with the wolves that have moved beyond the park's boundaries, and they see the effects of

invasive species in GYE, all of which forces them to navigate and negotiate competing discourses. The positive result, one that participants repeatedly call transformative, is that they emerge with a greater awareness of those "interlocking understandings and practices" (Pratt, *Imperial Eyes* 7).

This type of learning is exciting for students. During the course, they create maps—both literal and figurative—to consider and articulate their experiences and position themselves relative to other physical and philosophical markers. A map becomes, then, another kind of story: it is a particular kind of story of course, one made of lines and shapes and symbols and words and colors. But it most definitely tells a story that this is a place; this is where we are; this is where we have been; this is the way to another place. As students engage with a multitude of stories and construct their own maps, they realize that they must get lost in order to learn how to find themselves. Perhaps best of all, they learn how to recreate this process over and over again, thus promoting healthy inquiry into complex issues. The faculty team has discovered ways that recursive mapping generates stories to explain these maps: stories that subvert linear, predetermined explanations of experience, and stories that are continuously revised and retold. The students are always seeking, evaluating, and mapping.

The mapping experience is great for students, but what about teachers? Obviously, those of us who have taught in this program for years, those who keep coming back, enjoy the class. We like to see the effects it has on our students as they engage with new ideas and begin to ask complex questions. At the same time, something deeper results from teaching this way that is rarely discussed but is as important as the effects of PAT pedagogy on students. Bernice Braid notes that, in NCHC Faculty PAT Institutes, "Participants undergo the stress that students feel in radically unfamiliar territory, but equally they experience the exhilaration students exhibit when they see patterns emerge from a dizzying array of fresh stimuli. Integrative thinking and connected knowing are energizing and provocative" (10). The same is true for faculty involved in LU@YNP. While dizzying and discombobulating, LU@YNP also serves as a

safe place for faculty to take risks in how they teach. The program provides a quick means to assess how new ideas engage students in learning, and the varied resources in GYE serve as a giant teaching laboratory. As faculty, we, too, are participating in experiential learning and making interdisciplinary connections with colleagues in ways that traditional teaching institutions fail to encourage. In this way, we map out new and interesting ways to teach and learn.

All of us who have taught in the GYE course carry many maps with us. We have defined and redefined that space many times; we have considered and reconsidered countless moments of information, observation, and possibility; and we have written many stories, telling them over and over, replaying them in our minds, writing them down, sending them forward, calling them back. We keep our physical and mental maps close, telling the stories that guide us again to that place, to those students and colleagues gathered together in the first light, starting to make maps all over again. The teaching experiences associated with this course have altered the way we approach learning and made us better instructors.

This chapter, in fact, is a story, one that articulates the effects on faculty that stem from designing, implementing, and participating in a PAT course: we talk about where and how LU@YNP began, how it has evolved, and where we see ourselves heading. We reflect on our roles in this dynamic, mobile learning community and consider how the power of this immersive experience has shaped

1. our senses of self as teacher-scholars;
2. our notions of connectedness among the disciplines;
3. our worldview of students and ourselves as parts of communities;
4. our roles as professors in authentic, shared inquiry with students; and
5. the transformative influence on our pedagogy beyond the LU@YNP context.

Thus, we see ourselves as students in our own classroom and consider what we have learned as explorers on a learning quest to

address complex civic issues. This chapter—in process, form, and content—is a mirror of the program: many voices contributed to its articulation, and just as when we teach in Yellowstone, it becomes difficult to determine where one person's idea blends into another's. The natural motion of a group of teachers who accept openness and exploration will always demand self-reflection, introspection, and even repetition. We circle back, start out again, and call to each other to find our way, resisting the disciplinary boundaries that too often impede exploration.

Our story is one map among many but also many maps that make one, and we hope it might inspire other explorers to start their own journeys.

THE STARTING POINT: BACKGROUND AND EVOLUTION OF LONGWOOD UNIVERSITY'S YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK PROGRAM

The genesis story of LU@YNP begins in 2003 with the American Democracy Project (ADP), an effort of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities that was initiated in partnership with *The New York Times*. In 2005, three members of the Longwood faculty participated in ADP's Stewardship of Public Lands (SOPL) seminar. Just over one year later, two Longwood faculty members co-taught a spring semester pilot for a new capstone course. Dubbed "Science and Civics in Action," the course focused on the reintroduction of wolves to Yellowstone, and Longwood students travelled to GYE. The first excursion of Longwood students to our first national park was transformational for both students and faculty, and, more than any of the preceding events and activities, it fueled the development of the LU@YNP program that exists today. Over four field days, students interacted with key stakeholders, including ranchers, business owners, and biologists, and they explored two gateway communities: Gardiner at the park's North Entrance and Cooke City-Silver Gate in the northeast. Faculty were deeply affected by the students' responses, many of whom had never been to the West and some of whom had never flown on a plane, so the semester was a liberating

experience for them. Observing wild wolves had a profound impact on them just as it had on faculty participating in the SOPL seminar. Faculty also learned such lessons as how to keep students, garbed in Virginia winter clothes, warm at daybreak in a Montana March. From the good and the bad, we were convinced that an immersive field experience in the human communities and physical landscapes of GYE was a unique way of achieving Longwood's institutional mission of developing citizen leaders prepared to make positive contributions to the common good of society. Over the next few years, Longwood continued to organize small groups of students for a field-based course in Yellowstone. Interest in participating in the program continued to rise, leading to expansion of additional faculty and a variety of professionals with specific expertise. With growth, assignments and activities were revised and improved.

The evolution of the LU@YNP program—from its inaugural offering in 2006 to its markedly different descendent today—has focused on promoting transdisciplinary, collaborative, and immersive experiences that promote transformative learning by students. That change over time extends beyond programmatic elements: faculty members themselves have experienced their own transformative learning. We have moved away from our roles as content experts and instead have led as experts in extra-disciplinary inquiry, information literacy, collaboration, and communication. What we have come to discover is that our power as educators does not necessarily lie in content knowledge but in our ability to enter the educational space as true members of the community, as travelers as much as guides, modeling the skills and strategies that enable all of us, students and teachers alike, to take the transformational educational journey. On that journey are as many maps and destinations as there are travelers.

THE JOURNEY

The First Steps

The LU@YNP learning community is mobile, crisscrossing GYE in a caravan of minivans and SUVs, and often faculty and staff are recruited to be drivers throughout the course. The role of

driver allows faculty members to have a first experience with the program without the pressure of being an instructor of record. All traveling faculty members play key roles in instruction, particularly through the vital conversations that happen in the vehicles; however, for their first trip, drivers are spared the pressures of answering detailed questions about the syllabus or grading written work. Several team members commented that, on their initial responses to being invited to participate, they were insecure about their unfamiliarity with GYE but felt liberated at not having to be in charge or contribute discipline-specific knowledge. One team member recalls:

> When I was first invited to join LU@YNP, I was prepared to be solely in the utilitarian role of driver; all I had to do was drive students from place to place and occasionally attempt to engage them in conversation. I anticipated feeling liberated because I did not feel responsible for course content, I would not have to do any grading, and I would get to drive around GYE for nearly two weeks. I also felt quite underprepared. I had never been to Yellowstone National Park; I knew nothing about the reintroduction of wolves; I had never met the students before this class; and I had never seriously contemplated stewardship of public lands issues. Because I felt so underprepared, I anticipated hiding behind the role of driver, happy to be a passive figure in this adventure. Ultimately, though, the course made it impossible to be passive, and with each successive year, I saw my engagement and participation in a new light.

Joy Ochs, reflecting on PAT experiences for students, observes: "Participating in experiential learning does not allow students the passive option of hanging back and forming an opinion later. Immersed in the experience, one must constantly assess and refine one's perceptions" (29). The same goes for faculty. Even as new participants in LU@YNP, most faculty have recognized their inability to be passive even when thinking of themselves as "just a driver." The dynamic space of a van filled with inquisitive students demands that faculty start to engage in ways they may never have considered.

Sometimes these instructors start to feel lost and have to find new paths and positionalities. Teaching starts to feel different.

For most faculty members, including some very seasoned teachers, the first year in Yellowstone creates apprehension. One person reported that she had as much, if not more, to learn as our students: “In Yellowstone, my answer to most questions was ‘I don’t know. Who can we ask?’ To be honest, it felt really good to let go of any control over course content. I WAS a student.” Another faculty member reported being anxious about learning to play new roles in which he had little control: “My greatest discomfort was learning how to pivot while in the field. What do we do when something goes wrong, such as the weather isn’t cooperative for an activity, a facility is unexpectedly closed due to federal sequestration, or a stakeholder cancels a meeting at the last minute?” The above responses are similar to the experiences of students in the class. Anxious about being in a new space, one that is outside the walls of a traditional classroom, faculty are taken out of their comfort zones and thrust into contact zones. In the field, faculty and students speak with members of the local communities, some selected intentionally to ensure that a particular viewpoint is shared (e.g., cattle rancher, wildlife biologist), and countless others with whom students—in small groups or individually, in souvenir stores and coffee shops—interact informally. In this setting, academic expertise is not privileged; rather, it exists alongside local expertise and indigenous knowledge, contributing in similar ways to the students’ deep inquiry. The unscripted and largely unpredictable milieu further challenges the faculty members as they relinquish the standing of expert and the control of the class script.

The reflections above show faculty identifying uncomfortable feelings. For some, that discomfort came from not knowing the place in this place-based course; for others it came from the teams of faculty and community partners with whom they were working. For everyone, uncomfortable feelings come from the unknown and the uncontrollable, yet in the midst of this uncertainty, faculty forge new connections and start to map their locations as teachers in powerfully new ways.

Along the Way: Connectedness among the Disciplines

For first-time faculty team members, a predictable phenomenon is that they bring new ideas and seek to contribute something related to their disciplinary expertise. In the early years, we enthusiastically chased all these ideas, piloting countless new projects, sometimes incorporating multiple new projects in a given year. We initially felt pressure to cover all disciplinary bases, to bring in everything each of us considered to be pertinent, essential information. Although no students were harmed in the process, it was taxing for all involved. In retrospect, we recognized that we were clinging to the ways we were trained, performing the trappings of education in a westernized, structured academic culture. We operated in the world of intellectual *competition* when we needed to embrace intellectual *community*. Milton D. Cox, observing a "nationwide decline in community," wonders if this decline is "mirrored in the way we teach and our students learn" (83). He quotes Parker J. Palmer: "Academic culture is a curious and conflicted thing . . . infamous for fragmentation, isolation, and competitive individualism—a culture in which community sometimes feels harder to come by than in any other institution on the face of the earth" (qtd. in Cox 83–84).

Team members, trained in individualized pedagogy with little experience in team teaching, are so used to fragmentation and isolation that making the shift to community teaching and learning can make faculty feel that they are not doing their jobs. One team member states, "I didn't have any idea how to use my disciplinary expertise, so I didn't contribute much in my first year. This made me feel bad, like I wasn't doing my part." Another member notes: "In graduate school I had been taught to conquer information. Learn the research, study the methodology, compare studies, and be able to speak confidently about findings. That is how I approached teaching my first year of teaching. For every class, I prepared for hours reviewing material—most of which I never got to bring up in lectures." Our team learns pretty quickly that there is not enough room in the course to accommodate individual pedagogies. Gradually, though, we find that the more we reject disciplinary silos and

expertise, the more we find community. Mirroring what Cox calls "the positive accomplishments" of participating in a learning community, faculty identify the most important skills that they transfer to their students: "an ability to work productively with others," being "open . . . to new ideas," the "ability to think holistically," and the "ability to think creatively" (86). When faculty work communally, they pass on the positive impact to students. We do draw on our disciplinary expertise at key moments, but it is more important to get students to think about what they observe, ask good questions to promote exploration, and guide students in the process. Consequently, faculty must be open to new ways of seeing and to competing ideas, particularly ideas that challenge their own disciplinary knowledge. For example, one might assume that data on wolf movements are key for biological research. But what happens when we pose the question of whether we really need these data, asking what it is used for and by whom and asking also whether the wolves have a right to exist without the tracking collars that provide such data. Eventually, we come to see that we have to be open to ideas that challenge our typical ways of thinking just as we ask the students to be. We have to let go of our control of knowledge and trust our peers and our process. We have to find ways to model intellectual inquiry and collaborative mapmaking.

The LU@YNP program really matured when faculty let go of instinctive, discipline-guided ways of thinking and, instead, worked to identify key emergent themes and ensure that new ideas could be meaningfully connected to those themes. As we focused on these themes, we also emphasized core practices necessary for students to see the whole forming from all the pieces. Chief among the core practices were intentional reflection, identification of connections, and critical dialogue. We started to learn how to challenge everything, even each other. The evening debriefing sessions with all students and all instructional team members became a dynamic space for talking, questioning, and wondering. A faculty member reflects:

> One of the most interesting teaching techniques I enjoy is a discussion of a particular topic from many different lenses

> while having subject matter experts from the different lenses. We are able to alternate between professors and stakeholders and students in the discussion to discover the interconnectedness of the topic to many different fields. Students come to understand that large, complex issues require examination from many perspectives (lenses) to understand it better.

In a discussion on a subject like bison, the biologist may discuss topics that include brucellosis, an infection tied to cattle ranching; the mathematician may use a quantitative lens on how we estimate herd sizes and population; the geographer may use a spatial lens on a particular route that migrating bison take when resources are limited; the literary scholar may adopt a narrative lens with stories about bison, who tells them, and how they are told; and the sociologist may discuss the park visitors' reactions to the slaughter of bison outside of the park. Students may bring into the discussion their observations from the field such as

1. public documents (what type of information is being distributed?),
2. community involvement (how are the local citizens engaging with issues?),
3. stakeholder information (what local, state, and federal policies are relevant?), and
4. information from local authorities (wildlife departments and policy).

This process allows students to see how large issues in the community require multiple disciplines to understand the topic fully but also to recognize that acknowledging multiple perspectives is essential to negotiation and decision-making processes; of course, this process works only when the faculty are as willing as the students to challenge ideas, explore issues from all sides, and relinquish the podium of expert.

One time, a student said, "I came into this class thinking I knew a lot about these issues. I see now that I have so much to learn and

to think about." When explaining what we ask students to do, one faculty peer said, "The simple—yet immensely complex answer—is THINK: observe, reflect, analyze, repeat. These are the practices found in all academic disciplines and are the foundations of PAT courses." We, too, have so much to learn and think about, yet all team members express feeling delighted and refreshed as a result of the shift from teaching specific content to modeling ways of seeing and of negotiating the places, people, and issues presented to us. Alan W. Grose reminds us that "[p]erhaps the most valuable ingredient that we can bring to the learning situation is not our theoretical expertise but our practical experience of having struggled to make sense of things for ourselves" (126). Our own struggles are—and should be—apparent to students. Through our process of thinking, evaluating, asking, telling, describing, doubting, and deciding, we are learning how to make maps while we are helping students make them. In effect, each team member is saying, this is where I am right now, this is how I got here, but this does not mean that I end here. The maps are a collage of interdisciplinary considerations and reconsiderations, and this foundation of teaching is exhilarating.

Joining a uniquely large interdisciplinary team creates angst for some faculty who have never participated in team teaching nor had to think through the logistical challenges of teaching a large number of students in the field. We have had to consider how to organize the class so that all the faculty members feel that they make contributions beneficial to the overall goals, one of which is to release the hold the faculty team often has on "expertise." One member observes:

> The teaching that I had done before this experience had me as the sole professor. It can be difficult to teach a class with one other professor, but this class had five different professors from different fields co-teaching the class. . . . It takes a lot of work to get the courses organized—from logistics to pedagogy to coursework. Each professor has her own style of teaching.

Integrating into the team is a process involving many conversations within the group to develop a list of mutually accepted objectives.

New proposed assignments go through a process to determine how they fit into the current course structure and learning objectives to make sure that they align with and advance these objectives. One faculty member reflected:

> One of my epiphanies as a professor came when I developed more comfort with team teaching in the course. I find that the course is so much richer with this style. Although the workload is large, especially at the beginning, having a team to discuss new ideas is great. Having a team of experts in the field is also great. The team has different faculty and staff with different talents. One person does not have to do it all, which is a very big advantage when teaching a large class of students in an off-campus location.

For many, this part of the journey is practice in getting lost. Being surrounded by people who have different ways of seeing the world and who understand information differently can be disorienting. Losing the comfort of one's own disciplinary silo can be shocking, but it is a good place to be when setting off to create new maps as new discoveries are made. Feeling lost or uncomfortable pushes students to engage with new ideas and to start to develop their own strategies for mapping their positions. To facilitate this process, faculty must experience it, too. This method of teaching becomes exhilarating; not only do we see the passion of discovery in the students, but we also feel it ourselves.

This kind of engagement is not for everyone since it requires a real trust in the pedagogical process—something acquired over time—and extensive practice in "sitting on your hands." For some faculty members, this horizontal structure has been a reason to decide not to continue with the project; for others, it is the key ingredient in a course experience focused on transitioning students out of their nearly two decades in a "write for teacher" mode and into a role of civic agent. Faculty can experience a pedagogical high in not focusing on students' learning the facts we want to teach but instead setting in motion and facilitating an experience that is dynamic and improvisational but also clearly focused on how students are thinking.

Along the Way: Teachers—Scholars—People

Perhaps one of the scariest acknowledgements is that our disciplines and our expertise are not the center of students' learning experiences, that content is not as important as the ways we help students think about the world in which we live, and that we can learn from our students. One team member stated:

> As faculty, we need to be reminded that helping students think is ultimately our role. Not that we have to help students to learn to analyze a poem, or to recite the definition of a keystone species, or to orient themselves on a trail with a topographic map. Instead, we have to extract commonalities among disciplines. We are forced to recognize the bare-boned, foundational exercises upon which any disciplinary knowledge rests: observe, reflect, analyze, repeat. Once we drop the role of expert, we are then open to what our students can teach us.

We want to make it clear that the scholarly journey is also a personal journey, and who we are is bound up in the ways that we understand. Thinking, speaking, and writing are ways of *being* in the world. At the same time, the world can shape us in unexpected ways. One colleague remembered well one of those moments:

> During one wildlife observation, I was required to move the minivan to a location away from the group. Being a half mile away, I couldn't hear any noise from the group. On the other hand, the quiet was not quiet at all. Birds were everywhere, although I didn't necessarily see them. The birds' melodic beauty tempted me to walk further to a sage flat. The night before dusted this area with snow, looking like it had been sprinkled with powdered sugar. As I slowly walked, each step made enough sound to break the birdsong, but then my sense of smell noticed the refreshing scent of sage. Soon the warmth of the sun felt good on this chilly morning. It seemed that my brain had turned a

> dial that heightened all of my senses. It was a transcendent moment. Self-awareness at this moment made me feel that I had entered another world.

This personal experience turned into an isolation activity that all faculty and students engage in. The type of self-reflection that leads faculty to reflect on how assignments and activities affect students is exactly what makes the pedagogy so powerful. The faculty *are students*, but, unlike most undergraduate students, we are capable of analyzing our maps while in the process of creating them. We see connections and wonder how we can push the students to let go, to reevaluate, to become the careful explorers we want them to be. We want them to want to know how and why they know.

Teaching an interdisciplinary course reminds us that we are not just faculty; we are, first and foremost, humans, humans grappling with the world. It reminds us how fragile connections are, how tenuous connections can be, how quickly friendships can be lost, and how easy it is to lose the very self you think you know. Sometimes when we lose a sense of self, we also lose the world. To keep it, we must constantly examine the stories we encounter and contemplate the ways that we know. One faculty member stated: "We are as much students as teachers, as much country folk and urban adventurers as faculty. We should all consider our own stories and learn from the webs of connection all around us. My time with my colleagues in the GYE course has taught me this again and again." Some faculty participants experience liberation in not needing to be responsible for knowing everything. One peer stated: "We cannot ignore that students look to us as experts and expect us to have all the answers, so it can be challenging to deal with the disappointed student who wants to be told what to do. But how fun is it to say 'I don't know' to a student question!" Another team member gained a greater understanding of self as faculty:

> Over time and several return trips to Yellowstone, more than my course assignments have changed, my sense of self as a sociologist has also changed. My status is no longer wrapped up in being an area expert in cross-national

> comparative policy but is now shaped by my dedication to encouraging student inquiry with the belief that students can't learn sociology inside a classroom alone.

If we want to help students see without lenses or, more likely, to acknowledge the lenses through which they see, then we must identify our own.

Along the Way: Roles as Professors in Authentic, Shared Inquiry with Students

LU@YNP moves faculty from being experts to just being people who are engaging with ideas. As Paulo Freire observes,

> Through dialogue, the teacher-of-the-students and the students-of-the-teacher cease to exist and a new term emerges: teacher-student with students-teachers. The teacher is no longer merely the-one-who-teaches, but one who is himself taught in dialogue with the students, who in turn while being taught also teach. They become jointly responsible for a process in which all grow. (80)

Students often think of the professor as a subject matter expert, but even though the professors may lead an activity in the specific field of their discipline, most often discussions are transdisciplinary by nature and design. Faculty in the LU@YNP program become discussion leaders to assist students in finding the information. One professor may ask another team member to give more information about a topic while in the field. Frequently students ask a question for which the "lead professor" may not have a ready answer, but another professor might. One professor noted: "This seems to be a very fun part of the class. Students can see that no one has all of the answers, but together we are able to learn much more. Even better is when we do not have an answer, but we are able to suggest that 'that would be a great question for the wildlife biologist tomorrow morning.'" Because our pedagogy depends on team-based inquiry while we are in the field, professors also participate in the PAT exercises. These have now become second nature for the faculty.

We can experience each community in the ways that the students do. As students gradually become more comfortable and natural in the exploration of the community, so do faculty. According to one faculty member: "One of the most enjoyable and enlightening activities, for me, is the evening debriefing meeting in which students discuss their new discoveries in the surrounding communities. These meetings bring new insights for me as well as the students." Another team member recalled:

> One of my favorite memories from my first year was when we were on a guided hike through the back country. Our guide, a former park ranger, encouraged us to use all five senses to experience the hike. The group of students and I took that as a challenge. When we found things along the trail, we would pick them up, smell them, and then put them back. One item we found was an antler. The students asked me to taste it, and after checking with our guide, I did! I licked an antler that was lying out in the woods. As you can imagine laughter ensued. But we learned about the taste of an antler; and we bonded over the experience.

Faculty members who view themselves as participants in this educational adventure also enhance the shared experience of the entire group:

> Life and literature take us many places, and I love to go on the journey of discovery with my students. There is magic in witnessing their travels as they engage with new and interesting ideas and really start to figure out, not only *what* they think, but also *how* to think. If nothing else, experiential learning shows us that we are always in negotiation. We must consider where we have been in order to understand where we are going, or where we could go. My colleagues and I only want to give our students the tools with which to figure out what *they* think, to decide for themselves what stories they will write and tell.

Another faculty member reported a shared journey with students, one that developed through the creation of a reading assignment:

> I don't remember the first time I met Rick McIntyre, a park ranger who has studied Yellowstone wolves for over twenty-four years through daily observations. I know it happened. I remember a team leader being excited. I remember everyone being in a circle. But I don't remember Rick. It was my first year in Yellowstone, and my job was to drive a van and not hit anything. I had no context and no meaning behind the name Rick McIntyre. I think a lot of our students used to be like me. A lot of our previous students probably don't remember meeting Rick, even though most of them have. That changed last year (2019) when we had students read Nate Blakeslee's *American Wolf* before they traveled to Yellowstone. Nate features Rick and his stories about wolves in *American Wolf*. Our students fell in love with the romance and tragedies of wolf packs before they ever got to Yellowstone, all told though the lens of Rick's eyes and heart. And when we saw Rick, they knew. They knew he understood the wolves better than any other human on Earth. And they will remember the first time they met Rick McIntyre.

Obviously, this anecdote underscores the power of language and print to heighten experience.

As these quotations have shown, not only the students are learning how to "observe, reflect, analyze, repeat" but also the faculty. We are constantly reflecting on the course and our connections to each other, to the disciplines represented on the team, and, most importantly, to the larger purpose of the course. We try out new and innovative assignments or experiences, we observe what happens, and we make changes based on our collective analysis of what works and what doesn't, linking our skills with our knowledge and, most importantly, highlighting our ability to learn. One person wrote about the PAT pedagogy as transformative:

> I have been on NCHC PAT faculty institutes and have been able to teach a semester-long course using PAT and techniques employed in LU@YNP to explore different cities with students. Each time I travel with students, I get caught up in their excitement for exploring and discovering a place

> and its people and issues. LU@YNP has made me, I hope, a more engaged educator who is able to ask the right questions to spark further interest and inquiry. Even when I am not in the classroom, I use the skills of observation, conversation, and mental mapping to explore new places and even those familiar to me. The concept of seeing a place with fresh eyes is something that I keep in the back of my mind, and it is my hope that it allows me to connect with my students and show them that learning never stops.

The shift from content experts to co-learners is challenging and sometimes seems to colleagues either impossible or simply bad pedagogy. We have all heard the retort that students must memorize "x" to understand "y," that we cannot send them out to explore without some kind of agenda. Once we recognize, however, that our core values are student-driven inquiry, community engagement, and place-based learning, then we begin to see that as faculty we are participants in a process that democratizes learning, a process in which faculty members are partners rather than purveyors, a process in which we are continuously learning alongside our students. We are in a perpetual state of "becoming"; we are, as we should be, "unfinished, uncompleted beings in and with a likewise unfinished reality" (Freire 84).

Transformative Influences on Our Pedagogy beyond Longwood University's Yellowstone National Park Program Context

Being part of the faculty team results in new perspectives and new pedagogies, thus informing other teaching strategies and opportunities outside of LU@YNP. Faculty have developed new skills arising from the perspectives they have learned in the LU@YNP context. One team member noted:

> Before departing for Yellowstone, a place that I had only seen in books, I was included by my colleagues in preparatory meetings, which were very exciting. I was learning about how the sciences connected with sociology or policy

> and the written word. Experiencing this course for the first year, especially, it is difficult to describe other than transformative.

Some of these transformations have resulted in different approaches for other courses faculty teach:

> After my first year, I took the inspiration I had received from Yellowstone, the faculty team members, and the students and redesigned my on-campus courses to make sure my students were doing sociology in the community. Lower-level students did oral history projects (inspired by the Yellowstone Oral History Projects) with volunteer fire fighters in our community, then with elders at a senior center, then with volunteers at a therapeutic riding center. Upper-level students started doing evaluation research with a local Head Start program. We are now in year four of creating and evaluating programs that encourage parent involvement. All of my students do PAT explorations early in the semester to sharpen their sociological imaginations. Over time and several return trips to Yellowstone, more than my course assignments have changed, my sense of self as a sociologist has also changed. My status is no longer wrapped up in being an area expert but is now shaped by my dedication to encouraging student inquiry with the belief that students can't learn sociology inside a classroom alone.

Several team members have taken the model that is used in LU@YNP and adapted it to other communities. Longwood colleagues have taken students to Alaska to examine stewardship of resources including oil, minerals, and wildlife; here the students explore firsthand the sociological, mathematical, and societal effects of land rights and usage while considering how citizens can serve as best stewards of our natural resources. Lessons from GYE also have impacted elementary and high school teachers through teacher workshops. One faculty member noted:

> I applied for and received a National Geographic Society grant to fund in-service teacher institutes focused on the

> Chesapeake Bay watershed. Lessons learned out West made for a strong foundation for a transdisciplinary approach for teachers across the curriculum and grade levels. A multidisciplinary team from five organizations was formed to facilitate a series of workshops. We met several times to understand our roles to promote thinking among the teacher participants. After a year of participation, a large proportion of the 100 teacher participants indicated significant changes in their teaching by getting students outdoors for meaningful watershed explorations, use of geospatial visualization, and talking about environmental issues in a civic context.

LU@YNP has also had an impact on Longwood alumni. In 2016, the Brock Endowment for Transformational Learning was established to support the development of place-based programs that steep students in challenging civic issues. To date, five Brock Experiences have grown from the roots set by LU@YNP: Arctic Circle, Chesapeake Bay, Colorado River, Borderlines, and Boston. Although diverse in location and focal topic, all require authentic explorations of communities and dialogue with diverse stakeholders.

Additional examples of LU@YNP influences include a middle-school science teacher who joined the team for several years and was inspired to return to school and complete his doctoral degree based on research he completed in the field with LU@YNP students. We also host professional development programs on our respective campuses, helping colleagues recognize the ways they can be co-learners and facilitators of exploration as opposed to using pedagogy strictly focused on telling students what to see and how to respond.

Along the Way: Worldview of Students and Ourselves as Parts of Communities

One of the most powerful lessons to come out of the program, for students and faculty alike, is the importance of understanding ourselves as a part of communities, of realizing how connected all

our maps actually are. LU@YNP emphasizes the development of multiple learning communities among students as they explore issues and disciplinary lenses. Through a combination of both structured planning and serendipity, we constantly and intentionally mix student groups so that they can learn from the diverse perspectives—disciplinary and personal—of their fellow students. Faculty also are part of these groups, further challenging them to think beyond their disciplinary expertise. One colleague stated:

> The recursiveness of the foundational practices (observe, reflect, analyze) is part of what builds community in this course. As students observe, reflect, and analyze, so do faculty. No matter how many times you might visit a place, the content is never the same: the weather is different, we meet with different stakeholders, we see different wildlife, walk different paths, the students are different. The content of GYE is never mastered, so the class is always new.

Navigating the opinions and experiences of diverse stakeholders is a practice that is transferrable to any civic issue. In this class, faculty and students work together on that navigation. One faculty contributor reported:

> Again, it all comes down to telling stories. Whenever I start a new class, I tell the students two things. First, we are a community. Our successes and failure will depend on everyone, on the ways that we speak and listen and on the ways that we respect and care for each other. We will be engaged in learning, and that means developing ideas and discussing those ideas openly in a safe environment. Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, I explain that stories tell ourselves and others who we are. We all have a story to tell, a way to articulate ourselves to the world. As we navigate our lives and loves, our struggles and successes and failures, everything is filtered through language and the magic of stories. And to study stories is to learn how to navigate the worlds we live in and those we imagine, to believe in the power of language and to respect the

> potential of human experience. We are asked to ponder where we are, both literally and figuratively, and are pushed to consider where we may be going.

As faculty and students travel through GYE, they form communities that are grounded in interdisciplinary experiences and steeped in story. These experiences and the skills learned during the course are unforgettable and transferrable, informing how we will grapple with the world beyond our time in GYE.

The multitude of stories we bring into the course, the materials we read, and the stories we tell each other demand negotiation, collaboration, respect, motion, and balance. We are working on something, and so we build our community, we start our interdisciplinary journey into GYE, and we open conversations, forever changed by the stories we read and hear, stories told by students, faculty, and community members. The experiences of others make us consider our own experiences. Along the way, other stories become entwined with our own stories, and we choose what we will accept, what we will internalize, and what we will tell—and, of course, sometimes the stories choose us.

The benefit to student learning of this educational approach is incalculable because students are positioned not as receivers of academic information from a professor but rather as true participants in a dialogue with persons who are at once very different and quite similar—as humans, Americans, workers, family members, and concerned community members. For faculty and students alike, this course has shaped, and continues to shape, who we are as people and molded us into better teachers and learners.

CONCLUSION: WHERE WE GO NEXT

As we find our way with each other as educators, we have reached a few realizations:

- We function better as a team.
- The best teachers are also students.

- Academic disciplines are inherently connected.
- Uncertainty leads to inquiry.
- We are all parts of communities.
- One must get lost to find a way.

As the program grew and the approach matured, we came to understand a new faculty identity. On campus, we are teacher-scholars associated with our disciplines. How many times in our careers must we introduce ourselves to a group using our name, institution, and discipline? In this mobile learning community, though, we wear different hats. We are expert question-askers, adept facilitators, and seasoned agents of change. In collaborating with stakeholders, we defer to them the content expertise, allowing students to hear new perspectives and grapple with inconsistencies. The biology professor could surely cover the topic of the trophic cascade efficiently and succinctly, but how much more meaningful it is for students to piece that together from conversations with ranchers, wildlife biologists, and hunters. Passing the hat to others, we guide the students' asking of key questions, their processing of seemingly conflicting data, and their search for public information that exists well outside the more familiar academic databases. This stepping out of the disciplinary role of "sage on the stage" sets up deep, meaningful, and authentic collaboration among colleagues and with students. Since no one is wearing the nametag of "expert," we all are working together to explore issues, to uncover new ideas rather than cover course material, to come to new understandings together. In that, the LU@YNP program really is a mobile learning community, one with a horizontal structure and with critical contributions being made by all members.

Just as we ultimately are asking students to create new maps that will assist them through life, the faculty are pushed to reconsider their own maps and mapping skills. Most faculty have—through experiences, training, and the development of "expertise"—positioned themselves in spaces and on maps that are fairly rigid. When a group of teachers, however, is brought together with the expressed goal of crossing disciplinary boundaries, of developing

strategies and assignments that problematize issues and beliefs, of seeing through the eyes of others, the lines and delineations fall away so that we, too, must create new maps, finding our way into new spaces, into new ways of being and of interacting in the world and with each other. What happens to the faculty who teach in this program should serve as an example of professional development that has a direct and positive impact on student learning. The experience has taught us how to engage with each other, with our students, and with ourselves in new ways. Through it all, we have developed the maps that push us into innovative educational spaces.

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Learning from the Land: Creating Authentic Experience-Based Learning that Fosters Sustained Civic Engagement

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Grand Canyon Semester (GCS) presents an excellent test case for exploring the success of Honors Semesters in meeting the goals articulated in this contribution to the NCHC Monograph Series: the transferability of skills and the interrelation of integrated learning, experiential education, and civic engagement. GCS began in 1978 as a partnership of Northern Arizona University (NAU), Grand Canyon National Park (GCNP), and the National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC) that would offer a place-based, experiential, immersive Honors Semester program. Students came from across the country to live onsite at Grand Canyon and NAU and to take interdisciplinary courses taught by NAU faculty, GCNP staff, and NCHC facilitators. From its start, GCS was organized around an applied core of courses that were team taught, featured integrated assignments, and used both classroom and field-based learning

in ways designed to break down disciplinary silos and to ground learning in authentic, real-world applications. GCS embodied many of the key pedagogical tenets of integrative learning identified by Carolyn Haynes: team teaching and planning, clustered courses, learning communities, interdisciplinary core seminars, inquiry- and discovery-based teaching, multicultural pedagogy, thematic focus, and collaborative learning projects.

Forty years on, GCS is now the longest-running semester program associated with NCHC, a persistence that no doubt owes a great deal to the immensity and complexity of the subject. Indeed, perhaps only an integrated approach can provide an authentic learning experience for an object of the magnitude and complexity of Grand Canyon. The central question posed by the present volume is whether the experiential, integrative learning practiced by GCS does lead to an increase in analytical skills, greater interest in and levels of civic engagement, and the desire for careers that make a difference. This essay begins by considering the distinct opportunities Grand Canyon offers for considering and practicing civic engagement. We then look at the changing landscape of integrative pedagogy in GCS. The essay concludes with discussion of a recent survey of GCS alumni that offers some qualitative assessment of the program's success in meeting the goals articulated by this volume.

GRAND CANYON AND THE *CIVIS*

In a discussion of Honors Semester programs, Bernice Braid emphasizes both the structural similarities of such programs and the necessarily local differences among them, specifically the way that "themes chosen . . . have embodied a particular pertinence to the selected site" (Introduction 9). The most conspicuous feature of GCS is its exurban setting, the fact that the program is predicated on getting out of the city. The program thus offers a chance to consider what the natural world can teach us about citizenship, and it does so in large part because Grand Canyon provides contexts that reveal the historic and cultural contingency of the modern *civis* in at least five ways:

1. geologic time: Grand Canyon is a record of deep history, of time before human civilization;
2. cultural difference: modern European expansion is merely the most recent stage of human habitation of this region;
3. the National Park System: GCNP is one response by an increasingly urbanized culture to preserve natural areas;
4. tourism: a related desire of citizens from increasingly urbanized areas to marvel at the natural world; and
5. Glen Canyon Dam: the colonization of the Colorado River to provide electricity to millions of people in the Southwest United States and its attendant cultural and environmental costs.

The last two points are increasingly important because, for all its monumental character, Grand Canyon has an ecology that is remarkably sensitive to the effects of carbon emission on the global climate. While Grand Canyon is an ideal site for pursuing a variety of traditional disciplines—geology, anthropology, environmental studies, political science, economics, tourism studies—the integrative approach of CGS foregrounds the ongoing relationship between built and natural environments along with the ethical demands on us as regional, national, and global citizens. The term "connectedness" can be and often is used to denote the relation between interdisciplinary methodologies and a more properly ethical turn. In the course of making connections through a multidisciplinary approach to Grand Canyon, participants develop a sense of connectedness that goes beyond coursework to reach a new sense of not only their place in the world but also (one hopes) their agency to make it better.

THE LANDSCAPE OF INTEGRATIVE LEARNING AND REFLECTION IN GRAND CANYON SEMESTER

GCS addresses connection and connectedness primarily through a field- and lab-based science curriculum. Such instruction may be the original form of authentic learning by taking real field

data to quantify a real-world problem. Science methods and applications have always been and will always be a part of the GCS learning model, but the more recent inclusion of and shift toward integrative practices such as cultural mapping and Place as Text have provided a broader interdisciplinary framework for authentic field-based learning experiences as well as greater emphasis on self-reflective writing. David A. Kolb's cycle for experiential learning suggests that beginning with concrete, here-and-now experiences is the best way to add texture, life, and personal experience to learning. GCS takes this suggestion quite literally, creating a pedagogical schedule that takes students into the field to have concrete experiences and make observations before they learn and apply existing theories. For example, in one weeklong module entitled "Tourism," participants visit the South Rim of Grand Canyon, where they observe and speak with tourists, talk to park rangers and managers, and meet with local municipal leaders on a multi-day fact-finding mission. Days later, back in the classroom, students unpack their observations, reflecting on and comparing their learning to established theories and case studies. This practice is repeated throughout the semester in modules such as "River Management," "Sacred Landscapes," and "Wilderness": in each case, students enter the field, collect concrete experience and observations, and then participate in the rewriting and understanding of existing theories and literature. Through their own experiences and observations, students are empowered to discuss and challenge existing theories and management practices. These additions and revisions can be welcome and refreshing in a rapidly changing political and cultural landscape that is sometimes dominated by outdated modalities.

In the best-case scenario, students embrace the opportunity to contribute to new meaning and challenge existing norms. For those less inclined to challenge the status quo, experiential learning practices create and maintain the beginner's mind. In *Writing on Your Feet*, Sara E. Quay uses the "beginner's mind" analogy to show how instructors can move from the role of expert in the field to co-learner with students. We have adapted this theory and applied it to GCS participants. On the first day of the program, we take students

directly to the North Rim of Grand Canyon, a landscape so vast that it defies synthesis in simple terms, and we allow students to struggle with their thoughts and observations. Sometimes their academic training propels them to new realizations and applications. At other times, their academic training lets them down in this new and vast arena of learning—an experience that can be disorienting and frustrating for many honors students. We call this pedagogy keeping students "off balance," where they are challenged to make new meaning, where safe academic risk-taking is required. This way of making meaning can be an entirely new landscape for even (or especially) the most experienced honors student, and it also presents a chance for students to build skills as well as self-confidence.

The effects of such pedagogy are typically measured through academic reflection. Among the many models for such work, Kolb's remains the most influential with its emphasis on a recursive cycle of concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. Two of the most common forms of reflection in Honors Semesters are mapping (and reflectional remapping) and the turning-point essay (Braid, "History" 8). Drawing on the work of Clifford Geertz, William W. Daniel writes of mapping as broadly conceptual (12–14), an activity by which one ultimately finds one's own place in creating a sense of order. Robyn S. Martin has provided a thoughtful adaptation specific to GCS in what she calls an "end-of-semester" map, which she characterizes as a reiteration of the initial act of mapping in both Honors Semesters and City as Text™ (CAT) that foregrounds the integration found in other kinds of reflection. This assignment, which is attractive in part because GCS is defined by large and culturally contested spaces, challenges students to see how and why their maps have changed over time as a result of the program (59). This practice of recursive mapping can be pushed yet further: How large should such a map be? How does the map express not only the connections among various disciplinary approaches to the immensity of Grand Canyon but also the connections between a mostly pristine and preserved landscape with the urban and suburban world from which most participants come and to which most return? The map,

as both literal artifact and conceptual tool, offers great potential for promoting civic engagement by encouraging participants to think about the connectivity between the setting and lessons of GCS and their personal and professional life once they leave Grand Canyon.

ASSESSING INTEGRATIVE LEARNING AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT IN GRAND CANYON SEMESTER:

GRAND CANYON SEMESTER PARTICIPANT SURVEY RESPONSES

The question remains whether GCS has an impact on the civic engagement of the students who participated. One benefit of GCS's being a longstanding program is that we have access to some longitudinal data. In May 2019, a reunion of GCS participants was held at the South Rim of Grand Canyon. Participants from all years were invited to this four-day event that sought not only to connect old friends and allow them to reminisce but also to carry on the spirit of GCS with a service project with GCNP, ranger talks, camping, and hiking. The effort was spearheaded by GCS alumni with participation from GCS faculty. In all, over seventy GCS participants and faculty from 1999 to 2018 attended. Prior to the start of the event, a website was created to post information, answer questions, handle logistics, and collect RSVPs. A "Who's Who" message board and survey were also created to find out where people were currently living, what they had been up to, and if they would be attending. Two questions in particular generated some data on the impact of GCS practices on participant outcomes and professional status. To the first question—"What are you up to these days?"—respondents generally stated their career, professional activities, or volunteerism. From these answers, we could determine whether a participant had maintained the GCS core values of social justice, civic engagement, and conservation in their current work. The second question—"Did your participation in GCS influence what you are working on now (or in years past)? If so how?"—revealed if the learning experience of GCS had influenced the professional choices and outcomes of the participants. To this second question, one respondent said, "Absolutely! GCS sparked my fire as an environmental advocate.

I've built my career on public lands and wildlife conservation." Another stated, "Grand Canyon Semester completely changed my life and continues to reverberate through my daily work and experience. I became first a college lecturer and now a high school teacher because of GCS—and, specifically, a teacher interested in integrative, place-based teaching and learning." Another respondent, who is an outdoor recreation planner for the Bureau of Land Management, said simply, "Definitely. Found out people can be paid to do things outside!" A respondent who is an environmental educator said, "Absolutely—the experience galvanized my interest in environmental education and love of the outdoors. It shaped the way I view education and teaching. This type of learning resonated with me and it inspired the type of educator (as well as person, mother, etc!) I am today." Finally, a respondent from 2002 summed up the experience this way: "GCS instilled and solidified intrinsic values that guide my life and career."

Respondents in some cases offered specifics on formative events and program elements as part of their answer. One participant from 2012 who is currently working as a geographer and project manager for an international humanitarian nonprofit said, "My GCS thesis project focused on participatory mapping, which is now the focus of my career. I now work across the globe conducting and supporting participatory mapping projects for humanitarian efforts." Numerous respondents pointed to their independent research project as being formative to jump-starting their careers. A healthcare worker in Phoenix said that GCS was her introduction to the lack of access to healthcare services in rural communities. Multiple participants stated that GCS helped them get internships in GCNP, which subsequently led to a career in the National Park Service. Two respondents focused on personal characteristics acquired during the program that led to their eventual success. One reported gaining a "sense of self" that was a turning point in life and shaped a career in botany while another claimed to acquire the ability to leave home and search for other internships throughout the country. Some respondents even pointed to specific assignments and events. One remembered a geology faculty member pulling over

the twelve-passenger van to show the students an overturned fault. This experience was raw and unscripted, as the student describes it, and taught them that they were in a "living laboratory." Another student remembered a specific assignment: in 1999, and for years after, students were given a writing prompt entitled "Grand Canyon National Park: Image vs. Reality," in which they were to compare their prior perceptions of Grand Canyon with what they observed; to this day the respondent, a teacher, uses this critical analysis style of inquiry with students.

In all, fifty-five participants answered the GCS reunion online survey. Their responses revealed who had a career in conservation and social justice and if their GCS experience contributed to that outcome; this information could be derived when respondents noted how GCS influenced their choices and when their career history revealed sustained involvement in issues of social and environmental justice. For example, one respondent said, "Absolutely! My semester determined much of who I am today. In my professional life I use place-based learning in my teaching. I also teach in an interdisciplinary program and love getting my students to consider issues from multiple perspectives so their knowledge/expertise has context." This response is from a participant who now has a PhD in water resources and teaches environmental science courses at the university level. This comment demonstrates that the GCS experience directly influenced the respondent's career.

These anecdotes, statistics, and stories go a long way toward revealing the effectiveness of integrated and experiential learning. Independent research projects in particular were shown to be formative by allowing students to go into depth on a topic of their choice. Field trips and real-world experiences led to internships and jobs that eventually led to careers. Treating the world—not just a classroom—as the place of learning allowed students to see the authentic, real-world application of course or program outcomes. One response deserves to be quoted at length:

> I think the fact that we actively played a role in our own teaching, learning, cooking, and preparing (for activities) gave me agency because I was encouraged to practice small

> bits of agency throughout GCS (through aforementioned teaching, learning, cooking, and preparing). Because GCS encouraged us to take responsibility for our thinking (through weekly Thought pieces), personal management (through Cook Groups and the like), professional endeavors (like independent, semester-long research projects), and learning (through student-facilitated discussions every Friday), in manageable, supported ways, when I have approached tasks in any of these categories since GCS, I feel ready to take them on. This pertains to planning my future, because the confidence I developed through claiming my own agency during GCS boosts me through the difficulty of applying for jobs/contacting graduate school advisers/recovering from rejection letters.

This account is useful for what it says about transferability, the term that ultimately lies behind the question "When will I ever use this?"—even (or especially) when "this isn't my major." One might describe transferability as the professional or life skills that are largely independent of the particular content of a course or program. The response above testifies to the value of the Honors Semester model in general, and one could readily replace "GCS" with the name of another program to create a statement that would likely resonate with many alumni. Some of this transferability seems directly related to the integrative learning elements in GCS: project-based assignments, inquiry, real-world field trips, and prompts that encourage critical analysis of complex issues. These high-impact practices (HIPs) encourage students to synthesize the lessons in one course with those of another course and emerge at the end of their education able to see their connection to the bigger picture.

Equally striking, however, is the extent to which respondents to the GCS survey emphasized benefits that seem specific to the location and content of GCS, including a lifelong commitment to environmental issues up to and including a career that would make a difference on those issues. This commitment should not be surprising given the high degree of self-selection among participants

in GCS. Not everyone is looking for a program that includes a weeklong rafting trip on the Colorado River, but those who are passionate about the outdoors and the environment may gravitate toward this program. The survey likewise involves self-selection since respondents who planned to attend the GCS reunion were likely predisposed to see the program as a positive experience. The responses nonetheless indicate two main points: GCS, perhaps like all Honors Semesters, appears to provide participants with key aptitudes (organization, resourcefulness, self-sufficiency) that are transferable and lead to meaningful personal and professional lives; and the program either instills or confirms in participants an ethics of conservation that, in turn, often leads to a long-term commitment to the environment. The most common narrative of success for GCS is that it takes students with at least a passing interest in the "local truths" embodied in this unique region and helps them see the potential for a life characterized by specific forms of civic engagement and professional fulfillment.

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Integrating Dynamic Systems Theory and City as Text™ Framework: In-Depth Reflections on 'Lens'

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INTRODUCTION

City as Text™ provides a semi-structured learning environment in which small groups of people are challenged to examine parts of a city through "mapping, observing, interpreting, analyzing, reflecting." In 2014, I (Ron Weerheijm) attended a City as Text (CAT) Faculty Institute in Lyon. During an early session on the hills overlooking the eastern part of Lyon, our group observed a Basilique, the Notre Dame de Fourvière (1872–1884; interior finished 1964). Having a degree in architecture, I looked at this church from architectural and historical viewpoints. I was puzzled. In a quick scan, many different styles competed for my attention, hurting my eyes with all those columns, bases, ceilings, and influences

from the Greeks to the Moors and from Ancient Egyptian to French architecture all in one building. My impression was that the church had been built by an architect who had not been able to choose what style to build it in or what tradition to connect it to. At the time, I did not know that locals sometimes referred to the church as "an elephant lying on its back." I was unconsciously viewing it as an architectural professional with knowledge about the styles and typology of buildings. From this perspective, the church did not fit into any category; it was an outlier. I concluded that the church was bombastic: I emotionally judged it to be ugly.

One of our group was a Christian. She looked at the same church I did but reflected on it from a religious perspective: as a place of worship, a place to feel connected to God, and as a place where she could celebrate His "being." Her upbringing determined her focus of reflections. Our views collided even though we observed the same building from the same hill on the same morning: I thought the church was ugly, whereas she felt it brought her "closer to God." In our dialogue about why we saw what we saw, we discovered our divergent thoughts and feelings about the same object and could see that they reflected our backgrounds. Her Christian context enriched my perspective on this church, and my architectural context enriched my colleague's reflections. Instead of accepting polarizing views, we became aware that our inner context strongly determines how we reflect on external cues and that we are frequently unaware of the impact these internal processes have on our communication with others in daily life.

According to Bernice Braid, a facilitator of the Lyon 2014 Faculty Institute, these observations were rich with possibilities as illustrative material. The group spent some time at Notre Dame de Fourvière, and its design was the primary subject of our discussion, largely negative on aesthetic grounds but quite provocative. In addition to the issue of materials and design, proportions, and layout, however, there was the notable range of focus among viewers: the building as monument (it is enormous, featured in the city's marketing materials as a visual symbol, brightly lit for nighttime viewing and overlooking the entire city); the building as a place of

worship; and the building as a cultural museum containing endlessly rich statues and commemorative images that tell an entire history, sometimes in ironic ways. We noted also its continuing existence, maintenance, and prominence: from issues of interior design and visible upkeep to a domestic building down by the river that is its exact replica, though much smaller, suggesting that the architecture itself has been valued, or at least intentionally preserved, by the city even though many find it unattractive or ungainly.

Individuals in the group represented a wide variety of interests and training, from journalism to classics to architecture to literature and more. Discussion, as a result, was vigorous during our initial reflections in front of the Basilique; then it kept coming up as a refrain in all later reflection sessions and in the culminating workshop on Turning Point Essays and applications. It aroused profound, divergent, and passionate commentary, including deep distaste and broad admiration. The entire group seemed fascinated by the fiery rhetoric everyone used—"It's ugly"; "It's amazing"; "It's unforgettable"; "I hate it"—and our evident inability to forget or dismiss it. Questions persisted about why and when it was built and why it was restored in the twentieth century.

The image of the church, present in discussion though absent visually, never disappeared, returning in virtually every reflection session and culminating in the final Turning Point Essay workshop, which is both a deep reflection session and a jumping off point for a working session on how to apply the strategies we used in Lyon to other contexts. What was evident in this final daylong event was the continuing intensity that each participant expressed in search of the moment when observations clicked, and it was also evident that the way each viewer constructed that moment shed light on process and product. To the facilitators' surprise, one of the most intense images recurring as an example of how and why a "lens" works was that "elephant on the hill."

What we had in hand, then, was a shared experience that fractured into a kaleidoscope of images such that each person in the room had a revelatory moment captured forever: each internalized photo shot was different from everyone else's. Such shots had many

iterations: a) observations; b) interpretations; c) analyses; and d) reflections—all occurring in four and a half days of mapping/discussing/writing. The power of that single sunny day on the hill may have derived precisely from the unsettling discovery of how differently each person saw, savored, and sustained what became a dominant memory and an echo of a challenging experience. Notre Dame became the recurrent metaphor for the entire experience of Lyon and of our time together: a challenge, delight, horror, and wonder, unforgettable perhaps because it was unresolvable into a single image signifying a single thought. Because of its complexity and the contrariness of viewpoints about it, this Basilique is a perfect meme for what Clifford Geertz reminds us is "thick description." And it resonates still.

Our experience of the Basilique is a valuable centerpiece in examining the overall strategy of professional training institutes open to faculty who wish to adapt it. City as Text Institutes bring together small cohorts of learners from divergent disciplines and countries who convene for four to six days to work through several experiential learning cycles, always culminating in a daylong workshop for which participants have written extended reflections (the Turning Point Essay) that serve as texts for open discussion. Making faculty and students aware of disjunctions through the CAT framework supports their personal and professional development and has several unique benefits; mapping, observing, interpreting, analyzing, and reflecting are assignments that challenge the diverse group of participants to open their eyes and minds, sharpen their senses, pay attention to each other's reflections, and integrate them into new conceptions of their surroundings.

Having worked their way through all four stages of David A. Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle model (concrete experience, observations and reflections, formation of abstract concepts, and generalizations/testing implications of concepts in new situations) and done so eight or nine times in a six-day institute, individuals are in a position to unpack their own experiences as if they were students themselves. They can consider how to apply their efforts as faculty to new sites and situations. The discomfort evident among

people used to thinking of themselves as experts is expressed in these final workshops, but significant excitement is audible in all the voices as the discussions echo with the surprise and discovery of recognizing signs of a breakthrough.

We develop here various theoretical and philosophical aspects of this interplay between inner context, i.e., socio-cultural background, and outer contexts, introducing a well-known Dutch evidence-informed reflection methodology that incorporates six key assumptions of the Dynamic Systems Approach (DSA). Integrating DSA with reflective processes on the interplay between inner/outer context offers facilitators a stronger grip on affecting students' learning experiences, which optimizes the learning processes of individuals and groups who participate in CAT.

The Dynamic Systems Approach (DSA) provides another lens through which to examine the role that open-ended, inquiry-based exercises in observation, interpretation, analysis, and reflection can play when used as cognitive learning tools. By explaining how DSA works to produce its results, we provide additional tools for effective learning strategies. Figure 1 illustrates the impact of each steppingstone in this approach. City as Text strategies aim to introduce practitioners to organizational structures that include the acquisition of raw information built into a framework that invites students to notice, remember, understand, and then structure what they remember so as to analyze it, make sense of it, and then consider how it has functioned as an instrument for making sense of their world and their place in it. With this apparatus available to them, they begin to think about how their complex map of experiences compares to and sheds light on all other experiences they have had, providing them with tools to set out mapping new territory.

THEORETICALLY BASED INNOVATIONS FOR NEW CITY AS TEXT STEPPINGSTONES

This paper addresses three theoretical innovations for the current City as Text method. First, we introduce a developmentally appropriate conceptualization of the inner context construct.

Second, we introduce the Dynamics Systems Approach and discuss how the six key assumptions of the DSA can stimulate students to reflect more deeply on the interplay between outer and inner contexts. Third, we develop an evidence-driven reflection model that is suitable for systematic reflection on the DSA components. This integrated reflection model provides facilitators with several theoretical and didactic steppingstones to encourage students to discover intrapersonal and interpersonal developmental processes within the CAT method. Figure 1 visualizes these theoretical innovations and their elaborations into new CAT steppingstones, which are then outlined in more detail.

STEPPINGSTONE 1: THE INDIVIDUAL STUDENT IN DYNAMIC INTERPLAY WITH HIS/HER EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT

The first steppingstone of the CAT method is awareness of the unconscious influence of socio-cultural background on observing an outer context. By making this inner context explicit, the facilitators of the CAT method use this inner context to deepen the conceptual learning. Noah Finkelstein describes the influence of the inner context as the student's lens in his/her learning process. The way the student experiences the learning environment, and hence experiences actual learning, is influenced by his/her lens. The way the lens is formed is described by Gary Alan Fine as idioculture: a system of knowledge, behavior, and habits that together function as the personal lens through which the student experiences the outer context (ctd. in Finkelstein 1194). Both contexts exist next to each other, and querying the interplay between them deepens the learning process of the student.

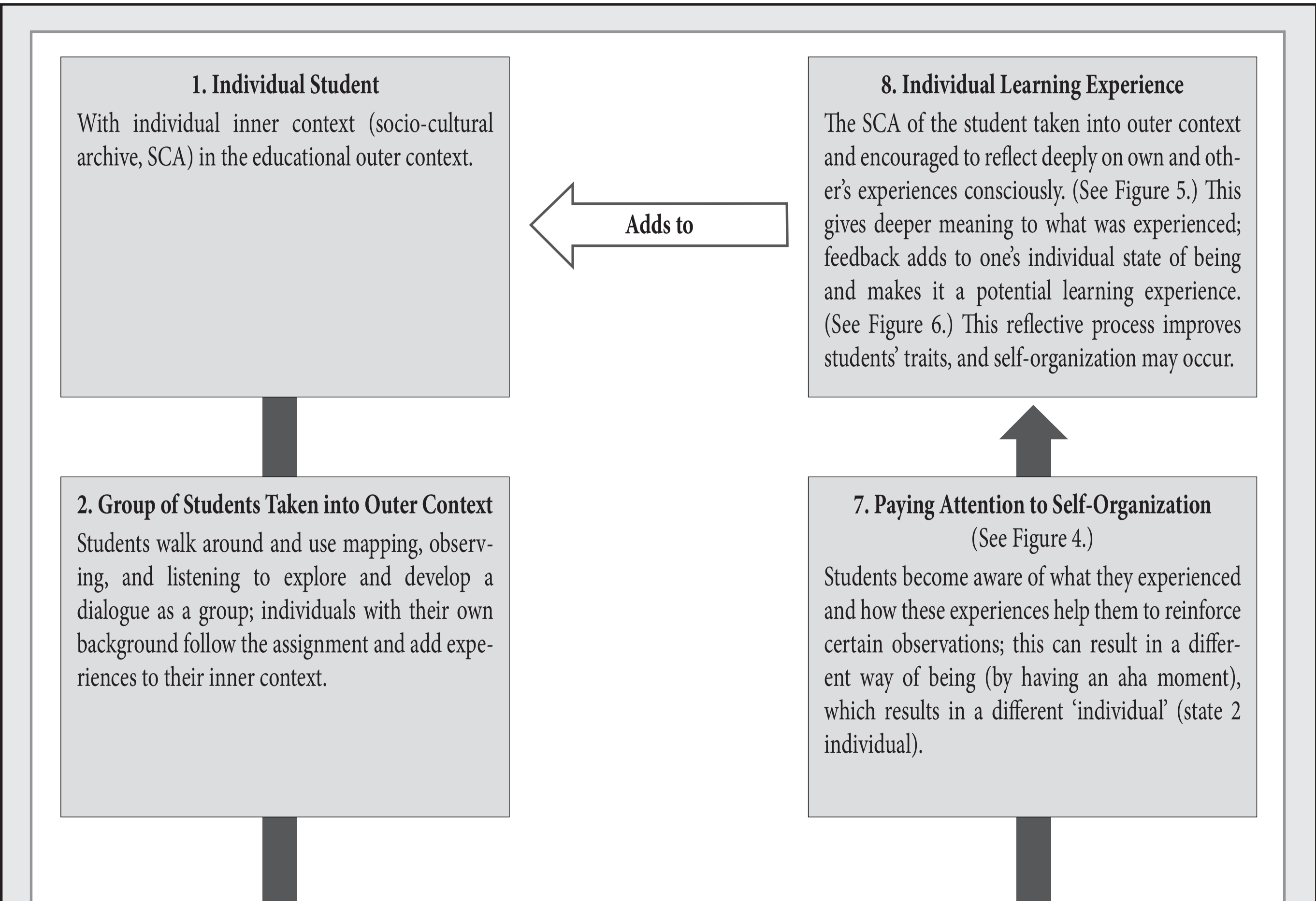
This concept of an inner context has a substantial history. Kate Kirkpatrick, for example, notes that Simone de Beauvoir wrote in 1937, and later in *Le deuxième sexe* (1949), about the idea of "situation." In doing so, de Beauvoir tried to connect her femininity to what she saw not as the "core" or "nature" of her being but as "a situation created by civilization and physiological matters"

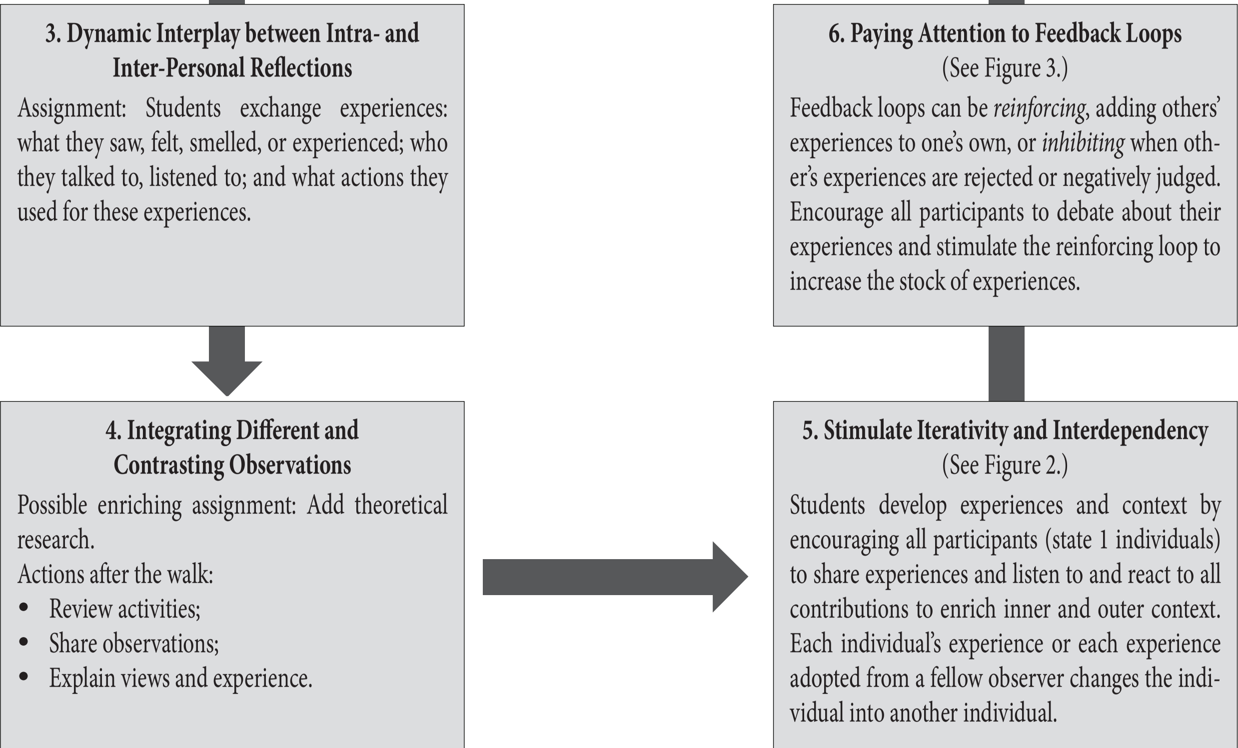
(qtd. in Kirkpatrick 241). Later, she elaborated that this "situation" was determined by a society that offered women fewer possibilities: "Women are 'determined' by society, their social environment, and not by their own ideas and possibilities" (qtd. in Kirkpatrick 278). In this way, de Beauvoir considered gender as a "social construct" consisting of beliefs, ideas, and rules of which most who are enclosed in them are unaware.

In *White Innocence*, Gloria Wekker presents a recent and challenging perspective on the idea of an inner context and how it subconsciously affects how we see the world. In her book about "everyday racism," she uses the term "cultural archive" (first defined by Edward W. Said in *Culture and Imperialism*), which refers to the patterns in our knowledge, attitude, and feelings. How we look at things and talk about things is determined by the society that we have grown up and lived in and that is stored in our personal cultural archive. We consider this cultural archive as "normal." In Wekker's view, being aware of this cultural archive allows us to develop a multi-perspective view or a kaleidoscopic view. The main condition to be able to develop such a view is to be aware of this cultural archive.

Our inner context can be operationalized as our cultural archive without our awareness. This cultural archive serves as our lens on our outer context and is shaped by our backgrounds and by the group and society to which we belong. This inner context is necessary to be successful in education, which cannot exist without it. The connection between inner and outer context was also made by Immanuel Kant: "Space and time are the framework within which the mind is constrained to construct its experience of reality" ("Immanuel Kant Quotes"); in other words, we can only understand the world as far as our own knowledge reaches since we can hardly see what we do not know. Kant distinguishes between what is outside of us ("space and time" as a "framework") and what we as individuals experience or construct within that framework. He considers the mind to be the primary intermediary between space and time and what we see and interpret as reality.

Figure 1. New Steppingstones for the City as Text Teaching Method





The left arrow down shows the City as Text process and evaluation as usually performed; the right arrow up shows the deepening approach by using different steps of awareness derived from the Dynamic Systems Approach. Together they show the iterative learning process that is stimulated by these combined methods.

STEPPINGSTONE 2: GROUPS OF STUDENTS IN OUTER CONTEXTS

The second steppingstone of the CAT method elaborates the explicit role that the outer context plays in student learning. City as Text focuses on unbiased exploring, which offers students a guide or a way of working. Although it offers abundant freedom to explore, students are instructed to focus on mapping, observing, and listening. They go to the city to map (discover the city layout, its highlights, specific buildings, or points of interest), to observe (people, streets, shops, behavior, traffic, and all that is happening), and to listen (literally hear things, but in fact use all their senses: smell, feel, see things). The idea is to challenge students to absorb the external context as deeply as possible. The context is chosen carefully and includes areas with contrasts or specific tensions, such as new versus old, modern versus worn out, space versus density, traditional versus innovative, or areas that have been transformed. We challenge students to become aware of these dialectic tensions and to reflect on them. The outer context is chosen carefully to make the impact on students' learning experiences as explicit as possible.

We have found different elaborations on this idea of outer context as the surrounding situation or environment of some object or activity. These definitions primarily focus on the usefulness of the idea of context and on what we see and experience in it. Michael Cole points toward the Latin roots of the term "contexere, which means 'to weave together'" (qtd. in Finkelstein 1191). According to Cole, the outer context could be considered as the collection of components and the relations among them—the connected whole that includes constituent elements and the relations among them. John K. Gilbert uses the words "focal event" to define a broader view of context. He therefore includes diagrams, a model, and photographs as objects that could function as contexts: "In this idea we find the first options to describe such circumstances that give meaning to words, phrases and sentences" (960). Taking students into the context of a city defines the circumstances for them; the

city is the "focal event" in which we ask them to search for what they see as meaningful. In this "meaningfulness" we already see the role of an inner context that is present although it is not yet clear how it works. Finkelstein notes an interplay between the context we use and the context of the student, in other words, between the outer context and the inner context.

The role of the outer context should be meaningful, should challenge in-depth observations, and should be attractive enough to become the focal event for the beholder. This context should be engaging enough for mapping, observing, and listening to challenge and to add to previous experiences. On the other hand, we have the inner context that gives meaning to this outer context. We have seen that this meaningfulness largely depends on intrapersonal factors of the observer. Therefore, we define this inner context as the "socio-cultural archive" that forms us as individuals.

STEPPINGSTONES 3 AND 4: DYNAMIC INTERPLAY AND INTEGRATION

The discussions about what students observed and what intrigued them are the key steppingstones that bring the outer and inner contexts together. These third and fourth steppingstones are the key mechanisms where "development" (i.e., personal and professional growth) takes place. In the Introduction, we mentioned that one can recognize the "inner" context in the reactions of the observer to outer contexts. City as Text is all about this confrontation and how we as facilitators can transform this confrontation into meaningful learning experiences. We add new experiences to existing experiences, and we store new things apart or together with existing experiences. City as Text uses this possibility of storing memories or making associations that help us to remember things, which is what connecting our inner and outer context is about.

Neuroscientist D. F. Swaab states in his book *We Are Our Brains: A Neurobiography of the Brain, from the Womb to Alzheimer's* that we ARE our brains. What we are and what we do are determined by what is in our brains. The brain also determines what we experience

because the brain makes it understandable (meaningful) for us by using the references it has; so when we experience things, we need to be aware that our brains can make unconscious associations. Daniel Kahneman in *Thinking, Fast and Slow* compares our "daily" brain with a pile of post-its that are scanned whenever we need (or think we need) a fast answer to a question that pops up, but there does not seem to be any order in this pile, nor are the words on the post-its well written, readable, or complete and clear. Some memories are better stored than others, some are scrambled and damaged, and some are stored in the wrong place. Burgess, Becker, King, and O'Keefe clarify how the brain stores them and what it considers necessary to remember. An event is transported to longer-term memory with only those details that the brain thinks will be recognized and thus remembered when we try to recollect the event. We do not store events consciously: the brain chooses how the event will be reduced for us, but even though only parts are stored to remember, we will eventually remember the whole event by just activating these stored parts. This process is called "pattern completion," which might include conflicts in the part of the "pattern separation" activity: we sometimes mix up events. Retrieving memories from the brain can be triggered by almost anything (Pointer and Bond). A word, an observation, an odor, or a certain song or sound can recall a certain memory (Pointer and Bond). If we make connections with stored memories and make new memories, we need to realize that this process might be a result of coincidence. The "pattern completion" is a way of learning, is how we add new things to existing parts. When we learn, we add knowledge and experiences to what is already stored, and with every new learning experience, we change our framework (Kant) and will be able to construct a new reality. For this iterative process, the DSA theory is helpful.

The result of the confrontation between the inner and outer context can hardly be predicted because the factor "coincidence" cannot be anticipated. Because we have little influence on what associations our brains make between the inner and outer context, facilitators and students need to be alert to what happens during the

confrontation. Small observations, ideas, events, words, or feelings may reveal interesting or creative confrontations that support students in giving meaning to the outer context. By unravelling these observations, we may understand more about their inner context. The role of the facilitator is to be alert to these sometimes small signs of confrontation, to understand how this process takes place, and to consider what interventions can bring these confrontations to the surface and make them debatable.

STEPPINGSTONES 5, 6, AND 7: INTEGRATION OF SIX KEY ASSUMPTIONS OF THE DYNAMIC SYSTEMS APPROACH WITHIN THE CITY AS TEXT METHOD

To stimulate students' in-depth learning experiences of the dynamic interplay between intrapersonal and interpersonal reflections within CAT, facilitators must be able to work with a clear conceptualization of the development of inner context in individuals. The DSA, as described by Kunnen et al., provides an appropriate theoretical framework for facilitators to encourage students to wonder about and to discover these intrapersonal developmental processes. The DSA incorporates a non-linear person-centered approach to understanding human individual change processes over time (Kunnen et al.). Through a structured implementation of six key assumptions of the DSA in all CAT steppingstones, facilitators can support students by zooming into intrapersonal and interpersonal developmental processes that lead to personal and professional growth (Kunnen et al.). We now outline these six assumptions and their usefulness for supporting in-depth learning experiences by facilitators and students in CAT, and we offer several new theoretical steppingstones as well for facilitators.

The first assumption is that development and change are always *individual based* (Kunnen et al.). This approach considers both an individual system (an individual student within CAT) as well as individual systems (a group of students as a whole in CAT) as units of study. For the implementation of the CAT teaching method, this assumption implies that facilitators who are working with student

groups need to address the individual development of students as well as their development as a group. Facilitators should be aware that the observations of an individual student are valuable for this student and that these observations should be explicitly connected by the student to his or her inner context. To use the group processes effectively, however, the facilitators should also encourage all students in a group to integrate the reflections (creativity and critical thinking) of the other students on the same outer context into their own individual system, which will support a more in-depth understanding of the outer context by each individual student.

The second assumption is that development of either individuals or groups of participants is *iterative*, causing an individual or a system to continuously change over time (Kunnen et al.). The implementation of the CAT teaching method implies that facilitators should be aware that the development of individual student competencies, thoughts, feelings, perceptions, motivations, and actions proceed step by step: that the next step in a specific developmental pathway builds on the previous step (Kunnen et al.; Vygotski). To support a specific developmental pathway, facilitators must possess knowledge about the underlying developmental theory and use this knowledge to support iterative developmental processes within individual students as well as groups.

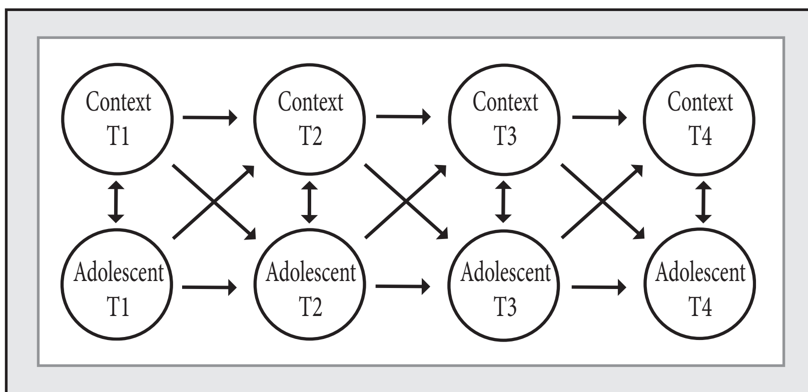
The third assumption is the interdependency between a system's (individuals/groups of participants) intrapersonal *state* and the context (Kunnen et al.). Implementation of the CAT teaching method implies that facilitators should not consider the intrapersonal contexts of students to be a stable (fixed) background but a continuous and bidirectional context subject to changes over time during a semester. Finkelstein refers to that principle when he states, "without the inclusion of a *dynamic*, *relational* notion of *weaving together*, the notion of context remains static" (1194, italics mine). Figure 2 visualizes this interdependency between the system and the context.

Translated into CAT: each student or group of students starts as "Adolescent" at T1 (individual baseline) and is brought into the outer "Context" T1 (context baseline). When mapping, observing,

and listening are done attentively, CT1 evolves into CT2 and AT1 evolves into AT2 during the group discussions or study activities. The activities of sharing observations and reflections on all different perspectives lead to AT3 and AT4 in dynamic interactions with CT3 and CT4. In the words of Kant, we see and know more if we have learned from what we saw and will gain the possibility to experience contexts more in-depth than before. In sum, during CAT, both individual and context will change in the dynamic process of learning. Facilitators must support students' learning by studying literature on the interplay of outer and inner contexts in order to stimulate observation-reflection abilities and help both students and instructors to free themselves from arbitrary boundaries (Carvajal).

The fourth assumption is that there are *bidirectional relationships* between components of the system (individual student/groups of students) across time (Kunnen et al.). Changes in one or two components may influence the other components in the system, which in turn may affect other components (van Geert). In CAT, components are the city or the object under observation versus the student or students and the lenses through which they observe the outer context. The facilitator stimulates the dialogue among students to enhance discussion of the components, e.g., the components of "church" versus "architectural education" and "church" versus "upbringing and religion."

Figure 2. Iterativity and Interdependency

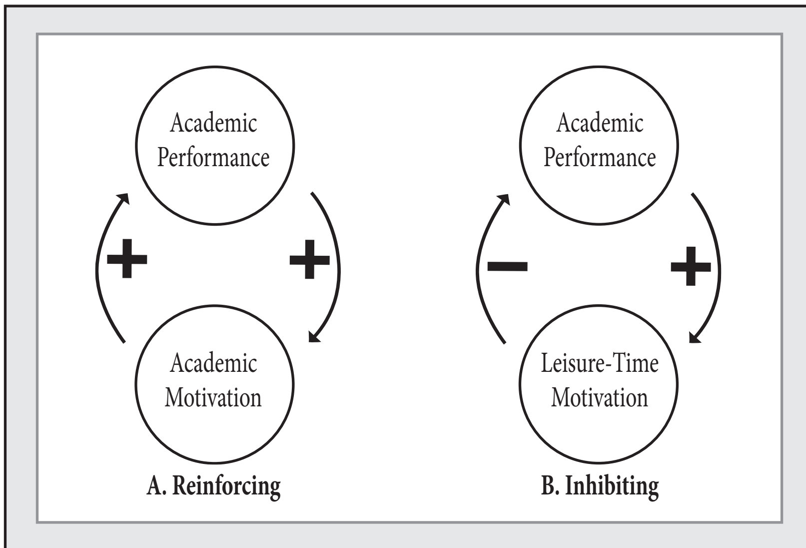


Source: Kunnen et al.; retrieved from van der Gaag, "Iterativity"

The fifth assumption is that some components reinforce in the same or opposite directions, whereas others have an inhibitory effect. These interactions are referred to as feedback loops. Depending on the reinforcing or inhibitory interactions that occur between components, the state of the developmental trajectory will change (Hollenstein). Interactions between two reinforcing components result in rapid growth, whereas other interactions between inhibitory components result in stability. Reinforcing feedback loops can only continue for as long as other components do not interfere. Figure 3 illustrates the feedback loops for relationships between Academic Performance and Academic Motivation (feedback loop A) and between Academic Performance and Leisure-time Motivation (feedback loop B) (Kunnen et al. 7).

Feedback loop A visualizes CAT processes in which group and individual feedback support the individual student's continuous motivation to add enriching content and in-depth reflections to the dynamic interplay between the outer context under study and his or her inner context. For instance, the feedback and the reflections of the facilitator or other students on the initial observations of the

Figure 3. Feedback Loops



Source: Kunnen et al.; qtd. in van der Gaag, "Feedback"

outer context under study could stimulate the student to explore and to reflect on new or maybe contrasting and enriching ideas, on related content (e.g., objects, literature, art), or on intrapersonal and interpersonal factors or strategies that will promote further in-depth understanding of the object under study. In contrast, the inhibiting feedback loop visualizes the academic performance of an individual student who is not or is less motivated to use the feedback of the facilitator and other students. This student will not be able to structurally add enriching content to his or her initial observations and may eventually stagnate in analyzing the dynamic interplay between the outer context and his or her own inner context. These interactions between components in the feedback loops in experiential learning like CAT reflect four overarching abilities that are well described by Kolb and further elaborated by Carvajal:

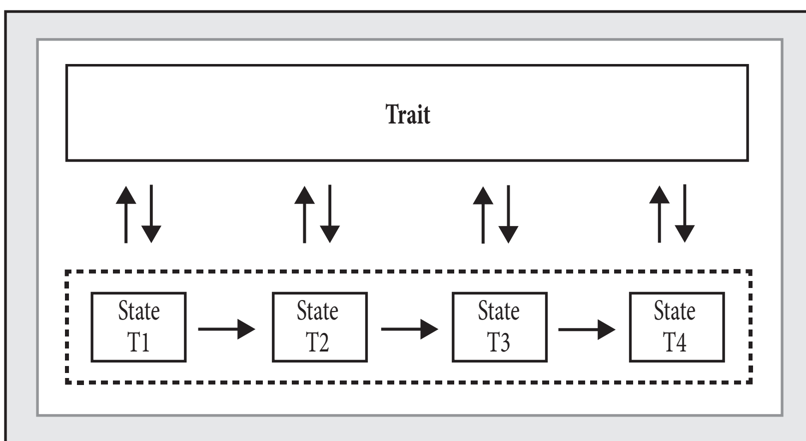
1. concrete experience abilities (immerse themselves fully, analytically, in new situations);
2. reflective observation abilities (assimilate new experiences from a transdisciplinary perspective);
3. abstract conceptualization abilities (integrate different and perhaps conflicting observations into a cohesive network); and
4. active experimentation abilities (apply the abstract concepts of such networks to make decisions and solve problems).

The sixth assumption is that the potential for self-organization occurs through the interaction of components within a system (individual student or groups of students) (Kunnen et al.). Self-organization implies that elements such as emotions, actions, and thoughts can be considered as occurring at a lower-level timescale and that the constellation of these elements may self-organize into higher-level states (Kunnen et al.). In CAT, the selected components and their feedback loops are derived from the four abilities students need to develop through experiential learning. Consequently, at CT1 (CAT baseline or starting point) the interactions between components can be considered as lower-level processes, i.e., states.

Our hypothesis is that individual coaching, focused on promoting reinforcing feedback loops, will result in stable abilities in students. Figure 4 visualizes this process (van der Gaag, "Self-Organization").

Experiencing the development of context by adding others' experiences and views on the outer context in the iterative process (Figure 2) and receiving feedback that adds content and insights in this process (Figure 3) can finally lead to developing higher-order traits as shown in Figure 4. This iterative feedback process contributes to new insights, allowing the individual to use it as a step to a next level of understanding. Kunnen et al. describe this process as "the 'moving together' of 'interacting components' which 'self-organize' into 'stable patterns' which makes developing traits possible and that adds a next 'state' to the individual" (8). Translated to CAT, one way of developing traits is, for example, to dare to ask strangers questions because you want to know who lives in the area you are in (and to discover that most people are very willing to answer or talk with you). Another trait may be developing enriching knowledge about how cities develop, how people move through this part of the city, or how patterns in an area work. This self-organization process is applicable to the personal and educational backgrounds of students (i.e., dealing with a class of children, discussing a book) and will consequently lead to the development of different traits

Figure 4. Self-Organization



Source: Kunnen et al., qtd. in van der Gaag, "Self-Organization"

and "states" of individual students within CAT, which is one of its unique selling points.

Next, we propose a well-known Dutch coaching model that can help students in the process of core reflection on identified components and the associations between these components. Moreover, we discuss the role of the facilitator in this process and propose how facilitators can stimulate the transition from Adolescent T1 to Adolescent T2. The use of reinforcing feedback loops can eventually make self-organization possible by enabling individuals to see stable patterns in their actions or habits that may turn into traits.

STEPPINGSTONE 8A: IN-DEPTH REFLECTION FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF REINFORCING FEEDBACK LOOPS

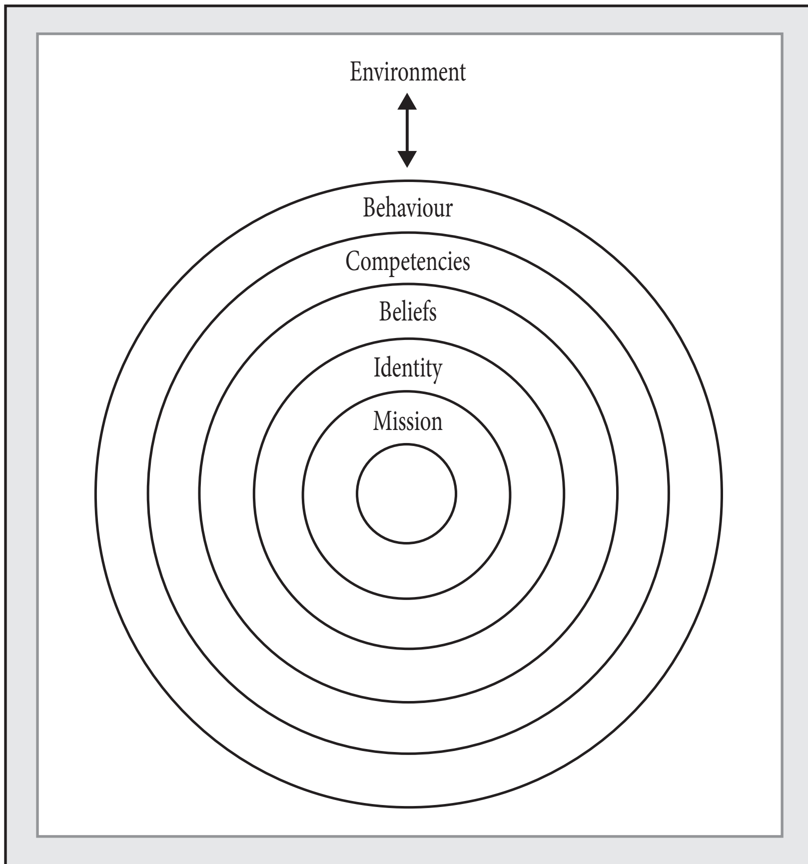
Figure 5 visualizes the "onion-model" developed by Fred Korthagen and Angelo Vasalos. This model provides a coaching framework for developing the four key CAT abilities. The model shows various levels that can influence the way a student performs based on the idea that the inner levels (mission, identity, and beliefs) determine how a student performs on the outer levels (competencies, behaviour, and environment) and that there is also a reverse influence (Korthagen and Vasalos).

If we want to feed and enhance the learning process of students, we need to reflect deeply and discover, as illustrated with the outer and inner contexts, the underlying layers in the participants. If we want the semi-structured method of CAT to be as explorative as possible and to give participants a view of possible perspectives on learning, students need to explore underlying intrapersonal and interpersonal factors that can lead to inhibiting feedback loops. Each layer is a step in the process of reflection and needs attention in order to reach the core: what is your "mission" in this course, activity, or life? The model allows us to work systematically from easy questions (what did you see today?) to more challenging questions (how does this connect to your personal ideas or values?).

The first and most visible layer is the environment in which the participant exists at this moment. Questions include the following: what did you see, how was it mapped, and what did you hear? These questions lead to relatively shallow observations, which are shared among all participants. In this way, all observations can become shared observations. If we connect this process with Figure 2 from the DSA, we can enlarge the observers' view of their initial environment. Maybe they missed some details that others did see and shared. This process can enrich and refine the outer context.

The second layer is behaviour: what did you do to stimulate your experience in this environment as much as possible? Questions

Figure 5. Layers of Reflection



Source: Korthagen and Vasalos

include the following: What actions did you take? Did you approach people, ask questions, observe closely, and maybe observe certain places or people for a longer time? How closely or critically did you look? These questions evoke how participants behaved in the environment and tried to get as much information as possible during their visit. The willingness to overcome shyness and approach people to get this information is an underlying building block in Figure 3 of the DSA and the reinforcing feedback loop A.

The third layer is competencies. We can start to recognize patterns in participants' behavior and actions, like daring to approach people on the street, asking questions, or getting into effective dialogue in the group during the walks. Participants can show different kinds of competencies in the group or in the feedback session afterwards. Stimulating them to speak about these actions and behaviors can make them aware of their own powers, or absence of them, compared to others. This awareness can in turn help them name these competencies more precisely, exchange their values, make them more explicit, or trace their value for activities in CAT and beyond. This layer is a process of creating awareness at different levels.

Until this point, reflection is still a group process; it takes place in dialogues among members of a group and can make all aware of their personal experiences. The sharing of these experiences and the sharing of the different layers can stimulate their personal growth. Connecting this idea to Figure 2 of the DSA makes it possible for participants to develop from AT1 to AT2 or even further, and it can also enrich their context: CT1 can develop to CT2 and maybe even further with the help of others' experiences. The actions of the facilitator in these layers are visualized in Figure 2 of the DSA by the arrows between Context and Adolescent: ask questions; clarify or make students clarify; stimulate aha moments; and draw students' attention to moments that are of specific value.

The next layers of the onion have more in-depth meaning for the individual and are more precise in their actions. Although they can also be performed in a group process, the facilitator now focuses on each individual's reactions in the process of reflection.

The fourth layer is beliefs, which usually become visible when participants add judgments or assign specific value(s) to experiences or observations. They can also be heard in the adjectives that give value to what was seen or experienced. Trying to clarify these adjectives, values, or judgments will reveal if the participant is in the DSA feedback loop A (Figure 3: reinforcing, adding to former experiences, expanding) or in feedback loop B (Figure 3: inhibiting, not seeing connections, maybe even rejecting others' connecting experiences). In this layer, the inner context is addressed, mostly unconsciously, through questions like these: What connections are made? What judgments (or self-judgments) are made, and where do they come from? What answers do you hear as facilitator? How can these answers be used to get the participant in the reinforcing feedback loop (A) to add experiences and other observations to their own and perhaps find leads for further research? This loop A stimulates the learning process and helps the participant reach the next phase of development (in DSA: Figure 2).

The fifth layer is identity. Here, the core questions are these: What does this experience mean to you as a person (or as a professional)? Does it influence you, and in what way, or if not, why not? How does it connect to your ideas, your values, or your deeper knowledge? In this personal approach, participants learn to know themselves better and to understand the relation between experiences and their ideas or feelings about these experiences. The role of the facilitator is to expose connections or values that the participant is not aware of. This layer can be difficult to address since not every individual will be aware of the constituting elements of their identity or will be able to address or talk about them, but if only one or two aspects of this layer can be addressed, it can be considered as a milestone because it will give participants insight into their own deeper reasons and judgments. These insights may well lead to the "turning point" essays of participants in CAT.

The final, deepest, and most difficult layer is the mission, which is the core of the onion. The mission addresses why you as a person or professional are on this earth. What are your deepest reasons and what really drives you? What inspires you to do what

you do? Because this layer involves personal pathos, it is difficult to give examples of questions that might reveal aspects of this personal mission, but facilitators should be aware that some aspects might pop up and should shine a light on this deepest core of the individual.

Some students might have a mission to strive for a better understanding of how cities can contribute to greater sustainability. These students will probably use the outer context to connect more deeply with this mission by focusing on observing small tokens of sustainability in their walkabout: they will observe "green" or sustainable measurements in streets or neighborhoods. Maybe these students are planning to use their observations to improve the quality of sustainability in their direct living area. These reflections on personal missions can be explored more in-depth in dialogues between the facilitator and students, possibly using other layers of the onion as well.

The first three layers—environment, behaviour, and competences—are most visible in our daily lives. The other three layers—beliefs, identity, and mission—are the deeper layers. These layers determine people's behaviors and competencies and the way they observe and reflect on the outer context. Although we are not always aware of what is stored in the three deeper layers, they are, in fact, of greatest importance for the things we do and how we do them.

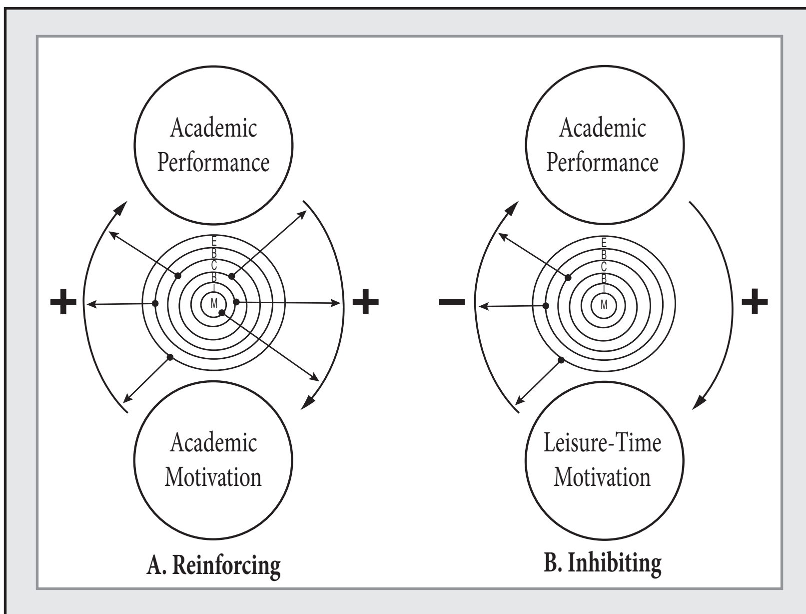
STEPPINGSTONE 8B:
REFLECTION INTEGRATED FEEDBACK LOOPS

Connecting to CAT and to the feedback loops, we hypothesize that the meaning students assign to the object of study will probably determine the nature of the feedback loop (A or B) and will probably also influence to what extent they are willing to explore the deeper layers. For instance, when students are touched, triggered, or intrigued by the object of study, we hypothesize that they will proactively explore all the layers of the model (Figure 6; feedback loop A). As a result, students will feel like they flow in a continuous, creative, and flexible learning system in which they

willingly reflect on and integrate all kinds of feedback and content, potentially leading to self-organization. Consequently, by integrating a broad variety of perspectives, students will enrich their initial observations. If this happens, we can conclude that the assignment was successful. In contrast, when students are discouraged by their object of study, we hypothesize that students will reflect feedback loop B, in which reflections on the deeper three layers are less present or not connected to students' learning processes, resulting in stagnation of self-organization. In this case, the assignment was not successful. These contrasts are demonstrated in Figure 6.

An important question for facilitators is how students can be encouraged to move from feedback loop B to feedback loop A. First, facilitators should be aware of the different layers addressed by the student and what feedback loop is in that dialogue. Next, according to the underlying theory of this reflection model, students should be more willing to broaden their reflections on the object of study

Figure 6. Coinciding Feedback Loops from DSA and Korthagen and Vasalos's Layers Outside In



E = Environment; B = Behaviour; C = Competencies; B = Beliefs; I = Identity; M = Mission.

when they are encouraged to address the inner layers of their reflections (Figure 6; see M = Mission, I = Identity, B = Beliefs). The role of the facilitator is to ask questions that will activate the student to explore perspectives that might better integrate with the inner context of the student. Finally, facilitators should always be alert to participants' interpretations of the object of study, which can range from the obvious to the unexpected.

CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

This paper examines the integration of the DSA in standardized reflection processes for the CAT teaching method. The DSA offers in-depth insights into how reflection in CAT can be enhanced and used in a wider context of the developmental processes of our students. We also have introduced the practical Korthagen and Vasalos model of reflection to demonstrate how this process can be performed. Both the DSA and the use of the model will strengthen teachers' ability to act in the reflection and feedback process in CAT. These models give us a deeper insight into how reflection and feedback can be effective if the facilitator knows how these processes work and what happens during each stage of the process. We also have added value to the reflection process in general, which, in our view, tends to focus increasingly on the important individual development of our students. Therefore, with these models the term "City as Text" can also be read as "Class as Text" in relation to children or "Book as Text" in relation to close reading, and other complex subjects of debate, discussion, and deeper study in which beliefs and socio-cultural archives are important.

The next steps on these models should be how they can be transformed to pedagogical models and pedagogical interventions in class to make them even more effective in regular education. We must develop training material to improve teachers' knowledge of these integrated models. Following the steppingstones is important to ensure that all the steps are executed, but flexibility is needed to ensure that the right components for each student are addressed. It might be interesting to develop this training program in a co-creation process during a CAT semester for educators: developing

while experiencing the process. Both the DSA and Korthagen and Vasalos model and their interplay should be the subject of evaluation during this co-creation process. Another focus of research could be the meaning of the bidirectional circles in Figure 3 in the Korthagen and Vasalos model: Which "components" can be subject for reflection, and how can we use the circles in contact with our students as effectively as possible? This bringing together of the DSA and the Korthagen and Vasalos model adds more depth and meaning to Kant's notion of understanding the interplay between mind and world. With this understanding and this bringing together, we have provided a guide for facilitators that they can use to explore mind and world together with their participants: to explore the interplay between the inner and outer context for supporting the development of the self in context.

AN AFTERWORD

Working on this text and introducing the DSA in combination with the Korthagen and Vasalos model challenged me to review how this all started: the Notre-Dame de Fourvière in Lyon. Is it indeed "ugly," or did I miss something? Why do I see this building as an outlier in the European architectural history of churches? This church does not in any way resemble the cathedrals we know in Chartres, Rheims, or Paris; so studying Pierre Basson, the architect of the Fourvière, I discovered that he was inspired by Byzantine architecture, mostly known from the East Roman Empire <https://www.fourviere.org/en/discover/history/from-the-construction-of-the-basilica-to-the-present-days>. Shortly after a visit to Sicily, he made his first drawings of this church in 1849. Even for those times, the choice of a Byzantine basilica was unusual. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the neoclassical building styles in Europe were appearing, and architects looked back to ancient Greek and Roman architecture as "pure" styles. In that sense, the choice of the Byzantine tradition is an outlier. On the other hand, southern Europe was influenced by Byzantine architecture through its intensive contacts in trade and sometimes wars or occupation. From that viewpoint, Basson, experiencing this building style in Sicily as "special" and

having the opportunity to produce a neo-style in Lyon, used it to make it an "outstanding" and striking church in Lyon. And that it is: "the massive exterior of the Basilica (built 1872–96) symbolizes the strength of the faith of Our Lady. The visitor enters into the light of faith by moving from the symbolic darkness of the outside world into the Basilica's brilliantly lit and richly decorated interior" <https://eymardianplaces.com/lyon/notre-dame-de-fourviere>.

Do I like or appreciate the Notre-Dame de Fourvière more now that I know more about the personal mission, the identity, and the beliefs of Pierre Basson? Well, let's say I understand more about this church, its place in the personal history of the architect and in architectural history. Through this knowledge, I have expanded my architectural library and knowledge about this outer context. Consequently, I would change my judgment from "ugly' to "outlier." The church is one of the northernmost examples of a Mediterranean architectural and social history. My knowledge of this history is too limited to judge if this church is a special example of this history as Chartres is for the Gothic period. It is also not very helpful that the Lyonnais named the church "the elephant on its back." At the same time, whatever I do or do not know about the church, it is and will always continue to be a place of worship.

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PLACE, SELF, COMMUNITY

City as Text™ in the Twenty-First Century

PART 2: SELF-IN-CONTEXT THROUGH INTEGRATIVE LEARNING

Those who engage with City as Text™ (CAT) programming—whether as participants or leaders—recognize the impact CAT has on individuals and groups. In this section, three alumni from Honors Semesters write about how early experience with CAT influenced their personal and professional lives, leading to lifelong practices of civic engagement. In addition, a Place as Text Committee member shares her "initial impressions" of how the CAT ethos extends beyond Institutes and Semesters.

Reflections on the 1978 United Nations Semester

Dawn Schock
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Over forty years have passed since I attended the National Collegiate Honors Council's 1978 United Nations Semester (UNS) in New York. I have since served as a resident director of the 1980 UNS, practiced law, and taught as an adjunct law professor. Since 2008, I have spent half of my professional time consulting on international rule of law development projects. I have worked with teams of legal professionals to support the constitutional transition in Tunisia; trained law students and lawyers in the Balkans, the former Soviet Union, and the Middle East and North Africa region; and evaluated the impact of a host of judicial, legal profession, and legal education reforms throughout the world. After I had embarked on my international work, a friend asked whether I could ever have imagined my legal career taking such a dramatic turn. My answer: Easily. Rather than a departure, the international work has felt instead like a return, a circling back to something begun decades ago during the UNS when I had my first introduction to the global network and work of international NGOs (non-government organizations).

In the Introduction to this monograph, Bernice Braid describes an aspect of the City as Text™ semesters that I see as foundational for my international work and that I will explore here: an integrative learning approach has an "inherent . . . capacity to generate a sense of interconnectedness, of self-in-context, which finds expression in professional practices that endure long after the original experiential learning adventure is over" (xii). Braid's statement accurately encapsulates the legacy of my participation in the UNS.

SELF-IN-CONTEXT

I came to the UNS as a first-semester senior from the University of North Dakota with no declared major; a whopping naiveté born of 21 years growing up in our isolated rural enclave of 1,000 first-, second-, and third-generation German-Russian immigrants; and a burning desire to shed my heritage for the sophistication I imagined I would acquire in New York City. Much to my initial chagrin, however, the UNS faculty had other ideas. As a first assignment, I was asked to trace my family tree and bring it with me for an initial discussion that would set the context for the semester's central theme of internationalization.

This assignment caused me concern.

While an abstract exploration of internationalization in politics, art, and economics was all well and good, grounding it in my ethnic identity—which I found more than vaguely embarrassing (think Lawrence Welk) and wanted to escape—was disconcerting. How could I use the UNS to build an urbane new identity if forced at the outset to lay bare so keen a vulnerability as my provincial roots? What I discovered in New York, of course, was that the rural showed up regardless. My new friends said I spoke with an accent that sounded like I came from the Old Country. And at one of the first parties I attended in the City, a guy with an interest in fashion (we didn't have that in North Dakota) told me that my new suit looked homemade. Of course, it was.

The truth is that I remember little of the first City as Text (CAT) seminar that launched the UNS except for personal discomfort. In methodology, I know that we used the family trees to introduce

ourselves, then divided into groups to explore ethnic neighborhoods in the city, and finally returned to share observations. But I remember almost nothing of the content gleaned from those early explorations.

I can now understand that mental fogginess: I was so profoundly uncomfortable with my own immigrant background that I simply could not understand the basic premise that observing other such communities would yield something of value. With every observation the group shared of ethnic foods tasted, exotic languages heard, and street performances enjoyed during their CAT adventures, I expected a real discussion finally to begin about how those various communities' interests played out in geopolitical terms. After all, I had come to New York to learn about sophisticated matters of statecraft and diplomacy at the United Nations, not to observe the same Babushkas and their equivalents with whom I had grown up. I was truly bewildered by how the UNS faculty and students were so genuinely interested in what I could see only as the banal details of how various ethnic communities lived their lives.

As the semester progressed, though, the first City as Text seminar, showing New York as a kaleidoscope of international communities, started to shed a new light on my own background. Could my German-speaking elders be as worthy a subject of inquiry as the inhabitants of Little Italy and Chinatown that others in the UNS found so fascinating? Were my community's experiences as farmers—resettled from Germany to Russia under a land-grant program and then moving to North Dakota to escape discrimination—a subject of compelling interest rather than merely the target of my self-conscious derision? Suddenly my people were not so different from their people, from your people, and that opened up the possibility that I was not, perhaps, so far behind on the sophistication curve as I had feared. When I returned to North Dakota after the UNS, I wrote my senior thesis on a traditional healer in my hometown: someone who, until that point, I had viewed only with opprobrium and embarrassment.

Soon after the initial CAT seminar, the UNS curriculum directed our attention toward the UN and world affairs. For our

Conflict Mediation class, each of us adopted the role of a participant in the Camp David peace talks for our own mock negotiations. Our research assignments included contacting our respective Missions to the United Nations. Because I played the role of the Palestinians, I was spending time at the Palestine Information Office, which served as their official presence at the U.N. Midway through the UNS, my contact at the Information Office invited me and my friends to a performance by a touring Palestinian children's folkloric group in Bergen, New Jersey. The event poster showed sketches of children wearing traditional-looking costumes, holding hands, dancing in a circle. Looked like fun.

As I recall, my friends who played Israel, Egypt, and Jordan in our mock peace talks joined me on the cultural road trip. Our first inkling that the evening would be more unusual than we anticipated was a heavy police presence outside the venue, complete with snipers on the roof. "A bomb threat by the Jewish Defense League," the policeman who at first blocked our entrance (apparently, we looked out of place) informed us. "Go home," he said.

Instead, we pushed our way through raucous demonstrators and into the hall. We were excited rather than alarmed. To twenty-year-olds, the evening was shaping up to be a winner in the *Most Excellent Adventure* contest we all imagined we were having with our UNS classmates. The black and white keffiyehs that my contact then presented to us and showed us how to wear further cemented our lead in the imaginary contest and guaranteed we would have one terrific story to share in the morning.

The event began with a dinner served family style on huge, long tables. The atmosphere was festive, even electric. Traditional music played, a little girl danced on a tabletop after the dishes were cleared, announcements in Arabic blared over a loudspeaker, Palestinian flags were everywhere. As the music got louder and the flag waving more frenzied, people formed long lines around the perimeter of the hall. We asked what was happening. Money was being collected for the children's schools in Lebanon.

At long last, the program began. A bit of silence, energetic music, and the children burst onto the stage. But they weren't

wearing traditional costumes; they wore camouflage shirts and pants. They didn't hold hands but carried little machine guns they had carved from wood in their Lebanese schools. And they weren't a folkloric troupe in any way that I understood the term. They were the children of the martyrs.

The evening concluded with a short play that my Palestinian contact translated for us. Based on a traditional greeting or blessing—"On the day of your daughter's wedding"—a young couple was shown preparing for their wedding day, but as she finally stood waiting before assembled guests in her wedding gown, the bride was told her fiancé had been killed in the war. She grabbed a rifle and exited in her white lace to join the fight. The crowd cheered.

Abruptly, I was no longer a privileged student from so secure a background that I had, just hours before, mistaken the dire evidence of radically disrupted lives for props in my own adventure. Instead, I came to appreciate for the first time the grave impact of the affairs of state on individual lives.

CONNECTEDNESS

A task I particularly enjoy in my international development work is the opportunity to interview fascinating people from all over the world. Sometimes I ask questions about the impact of existing programs on their professions and lives; other times I brainstorm with them about new programs that might strengthen some aspect of the rule of law in their countries. They are lawyers, judges, students, citizens who use the courts, civil activists. Sharing their stories in my reports and proposals is one of the great privileges of my work.

I believe that my ability to understand and draw meaningful insights from their stories is a skill I first developed during the UNS, a skill that relies on my ability to find common ground with my counterparts. Our common ground sets the tone for the interviews and ultimately informs my ability to discern and analyze similarities and critical differences in our legal systems and cultures. Through this process, I discover—just as I first discovered during the UNS—that each time I learn something new about a

foreign legal system, I learn something new about my own; and in listening to others share critical understandings about their roles in developing societies, I gain deeper insights into my own society, its development and history.

A number of years ago, I heard echoes of the Palestinian children I saw perform in Bergen, New Jersey, when I interviewed a respected Shia elder who had once been an advisor to Sunni government officials during a time when "we barely knew if we were Shia or Sunni; no one cared." He now lamented the deep fissures in his country and region. We were exploring the concept of restorative justice, which is based on the recognition that for some crimes, acts of reconciliation are more beneficial to victims, perpetrators, and society than punitive prison terms. We both knew that the program that was most needed was a political impossibility: allow the many young Shia men imprisoned for civil unrest to pay for their property damage, perform community service, and salvage the rest of their young lives.

Tears welled in the elder's eyes as he described for me how an escalating cycle of ever more desperate protests and increasingly draconian government responses had virtually denuded once thriving Shia neighborhoods of young men, leaving behind a rent social fabric of fatherless children, single mothers, and elderly parents forced to fend for themselves. The family of a young protestor who had been killed by the police asked the elder to speak at the funeral. He planned to advocate for moderation, to emphasize that no progress, only imprisonment and death, had come from the protests. He hoped to call for a more constructive approach to reform. But the mother of the slain protestor spoke first. She called for revenge, rendering impotent his reasoned plea for restraint.

On another occasion, I was surprised to recognize familiar aspects of my grandmothers' and mother's lives in the lives of Arab women law students with whom I worked in the Gulf. I was hugely curious about them before I conducted the interviews: How do they reconcile their roles as law students with the societal limitations within which they live, including an inability to leave their homes without a male escort and the need to remain veiled and cloaked in

public? Why are they earning law degrees? What are their professional and personal aspirations?

They were delightful interviewees, articulate and bright. Under their full-length black abayas, which some opened in my presence, I saw fashionistas and even a t-shirted, tattered-jeans-wearing tomboy. Save for one or two with professional ambitions, the rest said that upon graduation they would either immediately marry or work in government agencies until they could marry and then would use their education to enrich their children's lives. As a whole, they were genuinely excited about their futures, and I generally sensed in them no dissonance between their roles as law students and their societal constraints.

That night during a bout of sleeplessness, I watched a movie, *Mona Lisa Smile*. Julia Roberts played a feminist art history teacher at an elite American women's college during the 1950s. She was driven to despair by her obviously brilliant and well-educated students' unquestioning determination to get married, sublimate their ambitions within those of their future husbands, and not use their degrees for any professional pursuit. In many respects, those were the same students I had just been interviewing.

My first rule-of-law project was aimed at building the organizational capacity of the Kosovo bar association. Hashim was a young attorney with whom I worked. I was honored when he invited me to spend a holiday weekend with his family in a small village close to the Albanian border. En route, we passed through villages that echoed features of my North Dakota upbringing—old men chewing sunflower seeds on benches outside mechanic shops; farm girls in town on a busy Saturday to shop and be seen—but in many ways the scenes before me resembled more the North Dakota of my parents' and even grandparents' eras, when small family farms, each with a haystack, dotted the countryside and were worked with tractors more akin to our modern riding lawn mowers than the computerized behemoths that ply today's vast, corporatized grain fields in the U.S.

Hashim was the pride and hope of his family. His father and brothers ran a tiny lumber business that consisted only of a horse

that they used to pull dead trees from the forest behind their house and a band saw that sat in an old shed and was broken down more than it ran. Any excess income gleaned from the forest had been used to support Hashim's schooling at the University of Pristina, where he graduated at the top of his law school class. Once we arrived at the family home, I would see his picture prominently displayed on the living room wall with his top-of-the-class medal hanging beside it. But on the bus that afternoon, he spoke to me of his family's dependence on him as the one chosen by his father for higher education. He spoke with a near-desperation that made it impossible to ignore the burden he carried. I thought then of my father's uncle Ted. One of eight children, Ted had been designated by his father as the one bound for college. The other boys farmed or worked in the family's farm implement business while young Ted, whether he wanted it or not, went to law school. By the time I knew him, he was a successful lawyer. But on that bus traveling through rural Kosovo, I felt transported back to the early twentieth century of Ted's youth and understood that his burden had been like that of young Hashim.

I now smile at the fact that at the beginning of the UNS, I could not understand what the explorations of New York's ethnic neighborhoods and my own ethnic background had to do with the United Nations. I brought to the task an academic mindset that would have dissected the United Nations into component parts and explored it strictly in terms of its history, member states, and power structures while ignoring its relationship to the world's people. It was a mindset that missed how a consideration of the institutions and affairs of state can never be divorced from the lives of citizens.

I believe it is that type of abstract and compartmentalized thinking that allows us repeatedly to be perplexed in world affairs when utterly familiar acts lead to entirely predictable outcomes. Why would we ever be surprised when parents of slain children call for revenge; when children orphaned by violence turn violent; when young women, taught their entire lives by women who were taught their entire lives to be subservient, are subservient; and when some young men who lack hope and the economic means to marry and raise families succumb to much darker notions of manhood?

The world, its people and affairs, is extremely complex—I do not mean to suggest otherwise—but for my part, a pedagogy that has supplied me with the foundational tools to see myself in others and appreciate deeply our interconnectedness despite critical differences allows me a way through the complexity to a more complete and true understanding of that world.

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Engaging with the World: Integrating Reflections and Agency

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> And you may find yourself in another part of the world . . .
> And you may ask yourself, "Well, how did I get here?"
> —Talking Heads,1980

I have been wrestling with that question since I was first asked how a National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC) Honors Semester led me into public high school education and how I use that Semester's experience in my life and work.

When I first participated in the NCHC United Nations Semester in the fall of 1984, I did not imagine myself anywhere near a public school classroom. I was focused on changing the world and working for social justice. I did my independent study project working with the Riverside Church Disarmament Program, regularly checked in at the old War Resisters League office,[1] and in the spring returned to my home college of Oberlin to participate in and eventually lead the Lorain County Peace Education Project. The community we had developed at LIU Brooklyn during that semester was inspiring and action-oriented, and it set me

on a course that I imagined then was of global impact. In 1985, I went to the Soviet Union as part of a national study tour. I served as an intern in the U.S. House of Representatives. I participated in national demonstrations, getting arrested at the CIA headquarters in Langley, Virginia, in 1987. That summer found me in China as part of a "peacemaking tour." I moved to Corvallis, Oregon, doing volunteer work and landing a brief stint as an adjunct instructor in the Oregon State University Honors Program, teaching classes on the cultural impact of the Cold War and Post-Reagan America. On Mother's Day, 1988, I participated in demonstrations to close the Nevada Nuclear Test Site. I returned to China that summer, leading a group of teenagers for the YMCA in one of its first ventures to China as part of the International Camper Exchange Program. At that point, I probably should have realized my true trajectory. Instead, I moved back to New York and began a short stretch at the New School for Social Research with the thought of earning my PhD in international relations.

In 1990, I returned to the Soviet Union and saw the coming changes initiated through Glasnost and Perestroika. I met with representatives of Birlik in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, and Rukh in Kiev, Ukraine, prior to the breakup of the Soviet Union. I moved to Washington, D.C., canvassed for SANE/Freeze out of the Washington, D.C., office, and then went to work for a small independent school at their Nature Studies and Outdoor Education campus in Capon Bridge, West Virginia. After two years there, I eventually found my way to the University of Denver's Graduate School of International Studies.[2] Somewhere in the midst of all that came the rest of life, those moments that weave us further into the human fabric—finding love, creating family, raising children, breakups, redefining family, and navigating age.

When I was asked to reflect on how I use the experiences of my NCHC Honors Semester as a public school teacher, I took the opportunity to explore exactly how I had arrived here as a high school teacher some thirty years later. A short two years before we embarked on our U.N. Honors Semester, *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform* had initiated the criticism that our public schools were failing their students. We were challenged

as faculty, as students, as a society to do better, yet the report also seemed to launch an existential threat to public education. I did not initially rise to this challenge. I acknowledged the criticism that *A Nation at Risk* posed and that had originally kept me away from pre-college education. I saw it as a not-so-veiled threat to the existence of public education. I initially shied away from working with youth, especially in formal educational settings, because I viewed it as too entangled and constricting. The work seemed treacherous, unprotected, and precariously short-lived. I also naively perceived public school teaching as intellectually and academically unrigorous. I imagined myself grounded in the protected corridors of college life, with "students who wanted to learn," operating with "academic freedom," truly living the "examined life." I was the child of a college professor. I went to an "elite" college. I was the alumnus of an NCHC Honors Semester. The more I pursued those "imagined communities"[3] of idealized academia, the more those imaginings guided me toward the arena of secondary education as a place to effect real, meaningful change; this was the cauldron that I entered as I went into the teaching profession and ultimately what I feel I had really been educated for over the course of that honors semester so long ago.

The core experience for the U.N. Honors Semester was the City as Text™ seminar, which was the invitation not just to learn the semester's content but to live it. I remember the broad representation of students from across the country, our diversity of interests, and our perspectives on life, family, and politics. We heard from one participant about brothers who participated in combine demolition derbies, from a hydrology major from the arid Southwest, from a Puerto Rican who challenged our national perception as a country with a description rather than a name, from a Staten Island native who proffered the idea of local secession from New York City, and from me, a young white man from the American South with a suffix of III, wary of preconceived identities that may have been placed on me. I thought I knew who I was but was uncomfortable with how others might perceive me based on those all-too-familiar archetypes of the "Deep South."

What we learned in those first days about creating community with our diversity of talents is what has stayed with me. The exercise of finding and interpreting Henry Moore statues scattered around the city was profound in its elegance. We had our team of four, our list of statues, and a loose agreement among our team members of where and when we were going to meet to find the statues and begin our exploration of the city, our community of students, and ourselves individually. If I remember correctly, we launched separately in our self-assertive independence, haphazardly finding our way to the same space in the Bronx and that first statue. Life does not always go as planned. Sometimes we take different paths or trains, but the basic hopes and desires are the same, and when we arrive in that space, our arrival is serendipitous. That same spirit of exploration combining both individual and community activity is what I hope to bring to my classroom on a regular basis. Now, some days the lessons go smoothly and straight to their mark, and on others we wander until we see the artifact of our intent. In the aftermath of those moments, these personal connections, the certainty and power of the lesson are realized. What is demonstrated on parchment for graduating is one measure of success, but the true indicator for me has been in those students who circle back around, sometimes the next day, sometimes on graduation day, sometimes years later, and acknowledge what transpired in that community of education.

In the aftermath of my honors semester, I have enjoyed seeing who we became. Many of us went on to be professors, environmental lawyers for the EPA and NRDC, even jurists on state Supreme Courts. I still recall long discussions with faculty over what a Henry Moore statue really meant or how some level of decadence was needed for a successful revolution. We went to block parties in Brownsville and concerts at the Garden; we walked the city at all hours to find what made it and us work. This grounding in a living education was fundamental and is what I continually search for in my work today. How do I bring the material to life? What do I have to offer in the classroom with each block, lesson, or unit? The quintessential element for me is to make the subject real, to give

students the space to explore, breathe life into the subject for themselves, and ultimately see the relevance of whatever we are studying in class to the world they are building.

The practical application of my NCHC Honors Semester has been my own continual pursuit to improve how I can ask the questions, present the content, and infuse my class with a rigorous and engaging curriculum. I did not graduate with an education degree but went to work where I was accepted for my content experience and willingness to challenge myself. I "cold called" high schools in the Denver area that were part of the International Baccalaureate (IB) program. The school where I was offered a job took a chance and supported me as I went through the alternative licensing program. In my work with the IB program, I have seen the success of many students who have pushed themselves to reach a new conception of themselves. I have been fortunate to find a match for my own developing sense of andragogy[4] and the manner in which we implement the IB program as an open challenge for any of our students. This democratic conception of a high-quality education available to everyone was furthered in those classes with NCHC instructors like Ann Raia, Mark Naison, Bernice Braid, and John Ehrenberg. What I learned from my NCHC Semester was how experiential learning and community can challenge, engage, open doors, motivate, and inspire. Fundamentally, I have tried to incorporate that ethos, in some fashion, into all my classes.

In my second year of work, there was a new challenge when my school was mistakenly identified as the site of the Columbine shootings when the national press referenced a Littleton, Colorado, high school (I teach at Littleton High School). While our pain was insignificant compared to those actually at Columbine High School, the resonance of that moment was the significance of building community as the paramount work of education. I went into public education during the early stage of a growing pall over the profession, which has continued until today. The fundamental challenge of education in general and public education in particular remains how to make it meaningful. Amid Common Core, "No Child Left Behind," "Race to the Top," Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA),

standardized testing, Value-Added Models, Student Growth Percentiles, Professional Learning Communities (PLC), Response to Intervention (RtI), and a myriad of other measures, the relationships with students that we build as educators are as powerful a tool as any ("Relationships and Learning").

I would argue that this building of community and grounding of learning is what we benefited from the most in the experiential approach of the NCHC U.N. Honors Semester. What came of that semester in the fall of 1984 at LIU Brooklyn; the U.N.; and New York is that I became a public high school social studies teacher. The path I set on from those NCHC Semesters experiences led me out into the world. I have been there ever since, hoping that I challenge my students in ways that I was challenged by that long-ago NCHC U.N. Semester.

ENDNOTES

[1]I knew I had been away from NYC for a while when I was waxing nostalgic for the old "Peace Pentagon," <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/04/13/realestate/commercial/the-peace-pentagon-an-activist-office-in-noho-is-forced-to-move.html?_r=0>.

[2]The name has since been changed to recognize one of the founding faculty members, now the Joseph Korbel School of International Studies.

[3]The need to establish ourselves and our identities in those created communities of mutually held beliefs seems even more significant and worthy of reflection in this most recent election cycle. See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, <https://www2.bc.edu/marian-simion/th406/readings/0420anderson.pdf>.

[4]While the distinctions in educational terminology are not completely adequate here, I chose andragogy as the broader conception for approaching educational practices over pedagogy and its limits to only being about children. I find myself working to more fully conceive and implement practices for how we learn and develop our learning over the course of our lives, a continuum not as a process restricted to adolescents. See <https://infed.org/mobi/andragogy-what-is-it-and-does-it-help-thinking-about-adult-learning>;

<https://myptoolbox.com/2019/05/21/6-keys-to-facilitating-adult-learning>; and <https://gjismyp.wordpress.com/2011/04/19/pedagogy-vs-andragogy>.

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The Merits of Applied Learning

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In the fall semester of my senior year in 1998, twenty-two years before the time of this writing, I participated in the National Collegiate Honors Council's Honors Semester in Thessaloniki, Greece. I still remember this experience as vividly as if it were yesterday: a four-month long study at Aristotle University in which half our time was spent walking through Thessaloniki's medieval streets and modern boulevards; interacting with the people on a daily basis in the limited (but workable) Greek we knew; and making a number of weekend excursions—beginning on Wednesday evenings for us—to surrounding areas: Athens, Pelion, the beaches of Chalkidiki, the monasteries of Meteora, Mount Athos (for us males), the peak of Mount Olympus, and for the rest of the group a weeklong trip to Crete while I sailed to Byzantium to experience the splendor of Istanbul (Constantinople, or simply "the City" for Greeks). To say the experience left a lasting effect on me would be an understatement. As a double-major political science and history nerd, not only did I eagerly apply for an opportunity to live and study in an area I was fascinated by, and not only did I have an opportunity physically to visit nearly a dozen locations I had read about since

my freshman days, but I made a number of lasting friendships—one of these friends came to visit me ten years later in 2008 during my stay in Belgrade, Serbia, and whose presence created a series of fortunate events that led me to meet the woman who would eventually become my wife.*

As in most City as Text™ (CAT) modules, the emphasis on learning outside the classroom through sight, sound, exposure, and experience offered all of us in the group a unique chance to apply our knowledge and skills from our respective majors and areas of concentration to practical, real-life living. More than simply a "study abroad" program where a bunch of Americans jet across the world to study in a foreign country, CAT methodology requires the student to view the city and its surrounding areas as a living, working, interactive classroom. For myself, being fascinated with Byzantine and modern Greek history, classroom instruction with some of Thessaloniki's finest academics was still overshadowed by attending Greek Orthodox church services in the fourth-century church of St. Demetrios, speaking with vendors and shoppers in the open markets (who almost all bought me Greek coffee upon realizing an American could converse in passable Greek), or simply connecting visual sites to things I had learned about in books and lectures back at the College of New Jersey. Interacting with what were otherwise abstract facts, concepts, and figures for me and being encouraged within the CAT discipline to "get out there and experience"—as was so frequently imparted to us by our group coordinator—gave me and the other students an enormous educational advantage over our peers.

Fortuitously, this latest City as Text monograph on integrative learning and civic engagement is being written in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, when traditional modes of education have been severely restricted, online or remote learning has become routine, and previously unassailable pedagogies in teaching are being reconsidered. In many ways, institutionalized academia has been

*_How is that for City as Text™ curriculum: direct educational enrichment and indirect marital happiness? As I write this, my wife is in the other room, listening to a composition by Vangelis._

under pressure (or assault) to adapt to new and changing circumstances for years (Bacon). Since at least 2010, I have attended nearly a dozen workshops and symposia claiming that online learning is the so-called "future of education," proclamations that are usually met with audible groans and sighs from a skeptical audience of faculty who do their best to learn little more than uploading readings and syllabi to a class webpage. COVID has perhaps forever changed all that as online instruction, either synchronous or asynchronous, now defines most courses. Even without the pandemic to force all but the most recalcitrant professors to embrace digital technology, younger generations of students are graduating from high schools where interactive learning is increasingly commonplace. Additionally, the prevalence of information on YouTube and through podcasts, social media, and imageboard websites is becoming more of a mainstay in what I call "unorganized information gathering" by curious youth.

Ironically, formally trained college professors seem to be among the last group to embrace the myriad options technology offers. With university technology woefully behind the curve and more often than not less funded than in high school, and with courses that largely offer the same readings and assignments for years without changes to syllabi, the outmodedness of education that was heretofore perceived but tolerated has met its reckoning in 2020. Especially within the liberal arts and social sciences, where student enrollment has been in decline for years, departments and administrations remain either incompetent or uninterested in marketing fields of study to a generation of students more conscientious about where their tuition dollars will go. Particularly in universities that attract first-generation college students from working-class, immigrant, or otherwise less-privileged families, the question "what can I do with that degree?" is being asked more and more of deans, department chairs, and admissions counselors.

Within this period of rapid structural change to education, the experimental learning of City as Text is not only useful to consider but vital for reform. At the heart of its philosophy are methods of applied learning long championed but seldom adopted

by academics and educators. Applied learning bridges the metaphoric gap between the university and the public sphere by linking scholarship with interactive professional development, but more than merely adjusting educational methods to be more attentive to job requirements, applied learning empowers students to develop critical thinking and analytical skills that will make them valuable contributors to public-sector and private-sector decision-making processes. Thinking, analyzing, writing, and implementing are pillars of the CAT approach that, as a model of experiential learning developed nearly forty-five years ago, is more poignant and necessary than ever today.

Within my own field of political science, calls for applied learning in bridging the gap between the theoretical and the professional have been repeatedly issued at nearly every annual American Political Science Association (APSA) conference in memory, and as a discipline, applied social sciences offer many parallels to the dynamic nature of CAT (Andres and Beecher). First, problems must be identified and described. Second, they must be explained, and here is where most lesson plans and manuscripts end, but in order for our research to have any relevance beyond the Ivory Tower, we need one more step: making predictions. For all our large- and small-N research designs, we are still largely hesitant to make the predictions that guest speakers on Sunday morning talk shows make with reckless abandon even though we should be able to answer political and policy questions better than anyone else.

More often than not, this last critical step requires us to spend time outside the university and in the location we are studying. To understand why people do what they do, defend what they defend, vote for the people they vote for, and believe what they believe (all opening questions I ask in my class on Politics and Culture), I encourage my students to study the culture, behaviors, attitudes, and beliefs of a community; identify the symbols and narratives the group collectively identifies with; learn about the people in the community; and familiarize themselves with its art, which includes film, literature, architecture, and cuisine—all elements of applied learning that make education both dynamic and relevant

to real-world experiences. As part of making predictions, applied learning must map and frame an area of research, expand concepts of "text," and augment learning that "reflects the complexity and varying dimensions of an adequate understanding of any given subject" (Daniel 12). These methods were given to us during our stay in Thessaloniki, and I applied them a decade later when living in Belgrade. They empower us to make educated predictions about our area of study.

The first method seems the most daunting but also the most dynamic: mapping and framing an area of research (Braid). What to study and investigate? What to research? Where to research? How to research? A natural starting point most likely is examining existing studies on a subject and getting a sense of what inspired others. Often, reading the introduction to a work is enough to begin delineating the boundaries of inquiry. For instance, my dissertation on the connections between collective cultural identity and democratic development in Serbia began by my reading the first few pages of a book on the country published in the late 1990s as the civil wars in Yugoslavia had just ended. The author began by offering a loose connection between ethnic groups displaced by war in the then-present and in centuries past. A quick and passing reference described the Great Serbian Exodus of 1690, in which twenty thousand Serbian families migrated away from their ancestral homelands in today's Kosovo region and settled up north in what was then the Austrian Empire. The author also mentions that the town of Karlowitz served as the unofficial capital of this community, offered a central location for its ecclesiastic leaders, and would serve as an urban center for an emerging intellectual class in the decades to come.

Almost as if the author did not regard this piece of information as relevant to the rest of his work, no mention was made in the book of the value of direct experience of the place, and I realized I needed to go there as part of my field study. This one example demonstrates how important it is to draw one's own map for individual discovery. Because I realized the potential trove of information to be found in an area almost entirely overlooked and neglected by

previous scholars, my learning and research took on a form of discovery largely unique compared to earlier studies. In this sense, the applied learning process of mapping is the educational equivalent of a jet-setting traveler's decision about where to explore next and the excitement of discovering a place previously untrodden.

Once our mapping has been created and our field of exploration set, the second component is to decide what to study and, by extension, to identify the important elements in learning about the area, the people, the events, and the cultural traits. Again, CAT expands an understanding of "text" to include people, places, things, and events that can all be considered "primary texts." During my dissertation field work in Serbia, a number of monumental events were happening: presidential and parliamentary elections, Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence from Serbia, and mass protests and riots in response. I can remember speaking with one of my dissertation advisors who effectively told me to put away all the books and articles and venture outside to collect what had to have been the critically valuable data to any political scientist. There will be time for writing later, he urged.

Although venturing out into the public sphere as an American was not ideal, the raw emotion displayed offered more information about political culture at the time than any published work. Additionally, the friends I made, including one who would eventually become my spouse, offered me the best texts one needed to study the culture of Serbia: film. Through my future wife, I discovered another untapped reservoir of information in the form of popular movies from the 1980s that were considered some of Serbia's finest cinema. Film, music, conversations with people at the local *kafana* or bistro, and walking the streets of Belgrade at both two in the afternoon and two in the morning all contributed to the mapping of my area of research and also provided critically important "texts" beyond published material.

The third component of applied learning—one encouraged in my study in Thessaloniki and practiced by my research in Belgrade—is the integration of various disciplinary approaches in one's research. Interdisciplinary studies are already common in political

science with the quantitative orientation of researchers relying on statistical data and with the qualitative focus on history, sociology, and anthropology. But what about art or engineering? What about music or public policy? What about business or public health? Applied learning also encourages collaboration with specialists not normally assumed to share common interests. Within the CAT semester in Thessaloniki, our student group took courses that offered collaborative projects in economics, history, archaeology, art and art history, urban planning. and civic engineering, where we learned more about the streets of Thessaloniki than I daresay the locals knew. A decade later, I still believe that some of the best research I conducted was communicating with a school administrator in Sremski Karlovci (the old town of Karlowitz) and exploring nearly every part of the city outside the emerging tourist centers with an adventurous Belgrade city tour guide. But more than just sites and experiences, interdisciplinary collaboration introduces the researcher to new texts as resources: movies, artwork, music, school textbooks, newspapers, magazines, festivals, and, most importantly, people to interview.

After revisiting CAT literature and reacquainting myself with the pedagogy, I realize how much of the City as Text immersion I experienced more than twenty years ago has been integral to my own university teaching two decades later and how much it has shaped and influenced the autonomy of my search beyond the conventional boundaries of political science. The impetus was instilled in me as an undergraduate at the College of New Jersey through some exceptionally dedicated and dynamic educators in the history department, but it took a full NCHC Honors Semester abroad for me to put these ideas into practice—ideas that are especially useful at a time when institutionalized education is under significant pressure to adapt to digital learning and when multidisciplinary versatility necessitates creative thinking and innovative analytics.

As many of us in higher learning are beginning to think about returning to a life after COVID, we will have questions about what the state of education will look like and what its capabilities will be, and we will undoubtedly focus on the need to expand instruction

outside the formal classroom. More than an opportunity offered to just a handful of students selected for specialized instruction every year through NCHC, applied learning like City as Text will need to be introduced to a wider audience, helping instructors ask the right questions and enabling students to conduct a creative search for answers through mapping, observing, listening, and, most importantly, reflecting in discussions and in writing.

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Committee as Text

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I mistakenly joined the Place as Text (PAT) Committee in 2017. Perusing a list of prospective standing committees to join on the NCHC website, I had clicked on "Semesters Committee" (now "Place as Text"), having seen NCHC flyers advertising their adventurous institutes, which sounded fascinating though I had never attended one myself. Shortly thereafter I received an invitation to the committee's June working meeting in Brooklyn that likewise sounded promising. Had I been well versed in the City as Text™ (CAT) pedagogy that undergirds PAT, I might have then done some reading, finding out more about the group and perhaps recognizing that prior attendance at one of their Faculty Institutes had historically been recommended for membership on the committee.

Immersion would instead be the first CAT principle that I experienced, finding my way to Brooklyn and the recommended lodging—a hipster Even Hotel off of bustling Flatbush Avenue. I had only to walk catty-corner across Flatbush Avenue to LIU Brooklyn for our scheduled meeting. The campus proved challenging to navigate, however, prompting me to chat with several locals who directed me to an inner courtyard that provided access to our assigned building. After a flight of stairs and some back-and-forth

down hallways, I found our designated corner room with eight or so congenial committee members seated around a conference table. They had wondered about my RSVP "yes" to the meeting but were open—as CAT had trained them to be—to a bewildered new member.

Co-chairs Sara E. Quay and Alix Dowling Fink proved particularly amiable, capable, and in sync, modeling that CAT pedagogy engenders formidable leadership qualities. I inferred a recent change in leadership on the committee as the seasoned outgoing chair, Bernice Braid, amplified and informed our discussions throughout. I took exhaustive notes during opening conversations, jotting down CAT tenets such as "Look for contradictions, see things differently"; "Exploration, not tourism"; "See different things at the same spot"; "Become aware of your attitude toward a place"; and "Engage in experimental pedagogy through organic field exploration and self-reflective writing." Thus began my immersion into CAT ways of learning and being—explaining a great deal, including why directions into the campus had not been clearer. This group liked to see what happens when one is a little lost.

The *interdisciplinarity* of CAT pedagogy, and of the committee itself, likewise became apparent through our discussions. Sara and Alix's agenda for the three-day meeting provided ample space between bullet points for reflection on past experiences and for visions of institutes to come. We heard about last summer's Rotterdam Faculty Institute, a Grand Canyon Semester in the fall, a Southern Civil Rights Faculty Institute in March, and a CAT master class at the most recent NCHC conference in Seattle. In the "project pipeline" for upcoming institutes were "Preservation, Progress, and Politics in Charleston, South Carolina," "Negotiating Empire and Identity in Istanbul," "Ideals and Practicalities: Narratives of Stewardship in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem," and "Negotiating Belonging: Crossroads, Borders, and Communities in Barcelona."

Also up for discussion were CAT programs in Hiroshima, Switzerland, Belize, Cuba, Portland (Maine), and Atlanta, the site of the next NCHC conference. It occurred to me as we discussed the intriguing list that the pedagogy remains constant while the places govern what is learned; in CAT, the multiple disciplines of study are determined by the cities. Furthermore, committee members around

the table brought unique interests and expertise to site selection. Historian and classicist Sal Musumeci had a scholarly passion for food and became a natural choice for co-leading a 2019 CAT Master Class in New Orleans, given the city's unique and varied cuisine. Another historian, Leslie Heaphy, had a primary research interest in baseball—especially the New York Mets—and proposed a Faculty Institute in Cooperstown, home of the National Baseball Hall of Fame. Kathy Lyon, a professor of psychology with a bachelor's degree in studio art and an artist husband, would help facilitate the institute in Barcelona, a city known for its modernist art and architecture. Interdisciplinarity for CAT was rooted both in urban characteristics and in human intellectual curiosity, the heartfelt kind.

Finally, two particular experiences over the course of this working meeting illuminated for me what *integrative learning* means in the context of CAT. The first experience was a reunion breakfast led by alumni from a 1987 Semester housed at LIU Brooklyn, for which Bernice had been a primary instructor and facilitator. The former students and their Semester faculty said the Semester had taught them "to discover," to have a broad map that they filled in for themselves. Bernice described the 1987 Semester as "designed to create as much stress as we could," a "hot house" for students and faculty alike. The students claimed they learned "what they had always wanted to," approaching the city with "unstinting honesty" that revealed "pressures, contradictions . . . the texture of life for people who lived there." They wrote "on their feet" and lived "wide awake." "It was chaos and really structured," agreed the alumni, as they recalled lessons such as "Get out onto the street and bring it back into the classroom" or "Your words should have the feeling of you about them." Their reflections portrayed CAT as a laboratory, as an integrative space that demands we come to know what really matters out there. These thoughts were echoed by the faculty in describing their own experiences in the project.

The second experience in integrative learning was our collective Friday-evening walkabout down Fulton Street into the core of Brooklyn Heights. It was fascinating to watch the ease with which committee members moved through new urban terrain. Bernice led the way while her followers took in the modest elements of Fulton

Street and then the shadowy grandeur of Pierrepont Street, a half block from the Brooklyn Heights Promenade and lined in nineteenth-century brownstones, one of which was Bernice's. Before entering her brownstone, the group listened to squeals from a nearby playground and felt the cadence of the Promenade leading north to piers that had been converted into parks and a roller rink that juts out into the East River.

Steps were a distinctive feature of Bernice's brownstone—steps up to the arched exterior doorway, steps up to her second-floor apartment, steps from the living area up to the kitchen, steps from the kitchen up to the rooftop with a panoramic view of the Statue of Liberty. Again, the committee settled into the experience, notably aware and at ease. On the rooftop, Richard Badenhausen, a T. S. Eliot scholar with a Western mountain orientation, looked down onto Pierrepont Street from the roof's edge, despite the absence of a railing; the risky vantage point afforded him a different brownstone perspective. Back in their living room, Bernice's husband, Paul, passed a tray with glasses of blush and white wine he had dexterously carried down the kitchen stairs. The group enjoyed both the wine and the opportunity for integration into the upstairs/downstairs texture of life in Bernice's brownstone.

I sense that the Place as Text Committee's work together has developed habits in committee members that denote highly developed sensitivities. The group demonstrates a keen awareness of context, a visceral understanding of how places impact lives in enduring ways. CAT lessons in *immersion*, *interdisciplinarity*, and *integrative learning* have shown committee members the benefits of hot houses, of becoming a little lost, of acknowledging the lenses that shape who we are. Their intense focus on relationship to place informs the organizational work of the committee while also shaping their individual connections to cities and to others. I look forward to my first CAT institute, to participating in an experiential learning adventure that will change me, too.

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PLACE, SELF, COMMUNITY

City as Text™ in the Twenty-First Century

PART 3: DESIGNING CITY AS TEXT™ INTEGRATIVE LEARNING EXPERIENCES

While City as Text™ (CAT) faculty encourage their students to "get lost"—pointing toward the unscripted nature of explorations designed to turn space into place—the structure of CAT assignments is, in fact, quite intentional. The first three essays in this section share strategies for designing and sometimes redesigning the City as Text assignments that engage students, faculty, and CAT participants generally in the communities they explore. In the final essay, the many ways that City as Text can be implemented are clearly linked to increased civic engagement for students.

Connecting to Place: A City as Text™ Assignment Sequence

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Endicott College

> Educators need to 'begin again,' to put aside old assumptions and look at themselves and their world with new eyes. They need to achieve the freedom to redefine civic opportunities and responsibilities. City as Text provides a preparation, format, and philosophy for accomplishing this exciting and formidable task.
>
> —Gladys Palma de Schrynemakers, 2014

INTRODUCTION

If, as Gladys Palma de Schrynemakers asserts, City as Text™ (CAT) has the power to "redefine civic opportunities and responsibilities" (99), then the heart of that work lies in CAT pedagogy's carefully crafted link between site-specific observations and written reflections. Schrynemakers goes on to claim that civic engagement "can be reached if students are encouraged to become active learners and are immersed in an environment where they reflect on their experiences and analyze who they have become as a result of

understanding the lives they live" (95). CAT's sequence of assignments, which are used in honors semesters, winterims, and Faculty Institutes, does just this: sending students into the local environment as explorers, followed by prompted written reflections on those experiences (Braid). The three-assignment sequence includes 1) The Walkabout and Initial Impressions Writing Assignment; 2) The Exploration and Observation Essay Assignment; and 3) The Extended Exploration and Turning Point Essay Assignment. Each pair, along with the sequence as a whole, builds students' ability to conduct site-specific observations that increase their understanding of the places in which they find themselves as well as, in Schrynemakers's words, "the lives they live" (95).

While pairing and sequencing create the power in CAT pedagogy, the written reflections provide students the richest opportunity to deepen and transform their relationship to their surroundings. City as Text founder Bernice Braid writes:

> The power of raw experience, caught and conveyed in writing almost simultaneous with an experience, is that authenticity becomes a standard of judgment. Students must invent a vocabulary to express what they have observed, felt, and now see about situated knowledge. They also have a record available for review and comparison as they engage further with a new environment. The recursiveness of the exercise has an impact on consciousness because the chain of experiences recorded reveals nuanced shifts in viewpoint occurring through time. (11)

Putting it another way, honors semester alumnus John Major suggests that CAT "writing is premised on the notion that the stories themselves are artifacts through which students engage in civic conversation. The stories are the medium through which they claim their voice" (16).

The City as Text sequence of local assignments provides key strategies for each site-based exploration and the accompanying written reflection that can be used in any setting, from new student orientation programs to full-semester honors courses. While the

sequence grounds students in site-based learning strategies critical to CAT—including Mapping, Listening, Observing, and Reflecting (Machonis)—a new element entitled "Personal Connection to Place" is introduced in the written assignments. This prompt aims to deepen students' investment in local spaces by inviting them to write about aspects of their explorations that captured their attention and that they want to know more about, perhaps research in greater depth. Samples of all these assignments provide models for faculty who want to integrate City as Text into their own courses and programming.

THE ASSIGNMENTS

Assignment #1—
Walkabout and Initial Impressions Writing Assignment

The Walkabout

The first City as Text assignment is a Walkabout of the college or university campus followed by an Initial Impressions writing assignment. The focus on the college campus is purposeful in that it asks students to look intentionally at spaces they routinely walk through and live in. As a shared community, the college or university is a distinct place, and inviting students to view it as such is a first step in their developing understanding of their own space and the complexities within that environment. The Walkabout is completed during class and can take as little as thirty minutes as long as there is time left for a whole group debrief and a review of the written Initial Impressions assignment. As with all CAT explorations, students are sent out in small teams of three or four students to different destinations that, for this assignment, can include specific buildings, green spaces, or parts of larger spaces such as the campus bookstore, eateries, or study spaces. Students are given maps of the campus along with a copy of the Walkabout assignment and the verbal request that they talk with at least one person during their exploration. The campus Walkabout can be especially impactful for new students during their first semester; however,

even upperclassmen inevitably see and interact with their campus in new ways when asked to use CAT strategies of mapping, observing, listening, and reflecting (Machonis). During this first time that students encounter City as Text, they often feel hesitant and unsure about what it means to read a place, especially one with which they are somewhat familiar. The sample assignment below is very detailed in order to guide students in a structured way through this first experience. The subsequent group debriefing is an important part of the Walkabout. Each team should share some of what they observed, introducing others in the class to that location. In this way, a collective mental map begins to develop, divergent perspectives on the same spaces often surface, and student engagement with and understanding of the site increase.

The Initial Impressions Writing Assignment

The Initial Impressions writing assignment is not a formal paper but rather an opportunity for students to begin processing and documenting their observations in writing. The sample assignment includes an invitation to share images from the walkabout as part of the writing assignment, adding another level of reflection and engagement for students who are used to taking photos to document their personal experiences. The emphasis of the Initial Impressions assignment, however, is on the writing rather than the images.

Personal Connection to Place

To encourage students to locate themselves—through their interests—in the spaces they explore, a Personal Connection to Place prompt is included in each writing assignment. When students are asked to observe their campus intentionally, even in an informal way as they do in the Walkabout assignment, they are being asked to see the space differently from their day-to-day trek between buildings. The Personal Connection to Place prompt leads them to observe and reflect but also to put down in writing questions that arose for them during their exploration. This budding

inquisitiveness—this personal awareness that spaces are multidimensional, contain history, reflect values, and encourage feelings—is an initial step toward the civic engagement at the heart of CAT. In their Personal Connection to Place responses, students share questions about their campus that had not occurred to them before they were sent to investigate its spaces. A visit to the chapel, for instance, might lead a student to wonder about the kinds of events hosted there beyond religious services or to investigate whether there is a religious history to the college's founding. Students become curious about why some spaces are named after certain people, noticing building names and commemorative plaques, which they walked by previously without seeing, and inquisitive about who those people are in relation to the college. Still others want to know more about the history of the buildings or the traffic flow in areas that serve food. Such questions elicit Braid's "nuanced shifts in viewpoint" (11) as the students newly locate themselves in the campus community and the community in themselves.

Assignment #2—
Exploration Assignment and Observation Essay

The Exploration

The Exploration assignment takes place after the Walkabout and moves students beyond the immediate world of the college or university campus to the town in which that institution is located or a nearby area that connects to the community beyond the campus. Although the Exploration assignment follows the same organization of students in small teams of three or four (different from the teams assigned during the Walkabout) who are sent to different parts of the site, the time spent on the exploration is lengthier and more in-depth. Teams can be asked to do the Exploration as homework between classes, spending an afternoon or part of a weekend at the site. If possible, students should get to the site on their own—by foot or public transportation is best—and are again provided with maps of the area through which they will move. When planning the Exploration, sending teams to contrasting parts of the site will

ASSIGNMENT #1

Walkabout Assignment—Campus as Text

In your teams, you have one hour to explore your assigned area on campus (see list of destinations and preassigned teams). You should each take notes and photos of what you see (only take photos of people if you ask permission). Talk to people you encounter in each place. Stay in your group; explore only your assigned area; discuss your findings as you go; point out what you notice/consider important to members of your team. Do not mingle with any of the other small groups should you see them, but do have fun while you explore and learn about what makes your areas work.

As a team, you are to look for patterns (mapping), notice all kinds of details from signage to design (observing), and discover why people go to, go through, or work there (listening). See City as Text™ described below.

Destinations
Various buildings and green spaces on campus.

General Questions to Consider while You Explore
What is the nature of the building and how does it fit into the campus as a whole? What function does the building, including the space around it, hold in relationship to the buildings around it? To the campus as a whole? What does the building say about Endicott that other buildings may not? Who uses the building? What makes you think so? How is the building organized both inside and outside? Talk to people who are using the space. What are they doing there?

As you walk between each building, including as you leave the Academic Center, use the same attention to detail that you use when exploring your assigned buildings. How do you get between the buildings? Is there only one way? Many? What makes you decide which way to go? How is the space between buildings designed? Do those designs change? How do they work? Not work? Who is using them?

Think about the work we have done this semester around semiotics and ideology (political, gender, socioeconomic class, race and representations). What elements of the campus can you read through one or more of these lenses?

Return to our classroom at the assigned time.

Whole Group Debrief
Each small group will have 3–4 minutes for their report. You must be concise and detailed. Begin your report by telling the group which two spaces your team visited and where they are on campus; share adjectives you would use to describe each area and the details you observed that support your selection of those adjectives; highlight anything unusual observed or heard. Do not say: “We went here, then there.” Instead, describe, categorize, interpret what you observed.

Initial Impressions Writing Assignment

Before midnight on Thursday, in a multi-media format such as a blog, PowerPoint, Prezi, etc., develop and upload your individual answer to the following question: What were your initial impressions of the areas you explored? This is not a formal essay but a compendium of your impressions, questions, and thoughts. There should be text (between 200–250 words) and images (collected during your walkabout). It is appropriate to use first person; be sure the writing is error-free.

Somewhere in the visual essay include a section labeled *Personal Connection to Place* in which you 1) note one thing you observed today that you want to know more about; 2) note one element of the campus you read through the lens of semiotics or ideology; and 3) 2–3 questions you would want to look into if you had more time. Some ways to think about your **personal connection**: Was there a building whose history you became curious about? Did you hear something that you wanted to know more about? Or, consider your academic major as a lens for the campus. How would a nurse, scientist, accountant, engineer, or English major see the places you visited today? This is the first of a series of Personal Connection notes you will make during our City as Text™ unit.

City as Text™ Strategies: Mapping, Observing, Listening, Reflecting

1. **Mapping:** You will want to be able to construct, during and after your explorations, the primary kinds of buildings, points of interest, centers of activity, and transportation routes (by foot, vehicle, or other means). You will want to look for patterns of housing, traffic flow, and social activity that may not be apparent on any traditional map. Where do people go, how do they get there, and what do they do when they get there?

2. **Observing:** You will want to look carefully for the unexpected as well as the expected, for the familiar as well as the new. You will want to notice details of architecture, landscaping, social gathering, clothing, possessions, decoration, signage, and advertising.

3. **Listening:** You will want to talk to as many people as you can and to find out from them what matters to them in their daily lives, what they need, what they enjoy, what bothers them, and what they appreciate. Strike up conversations everywhere you go. Ask about such matters as how expensive it is to live there (dropping by a real estate agency could be enlightening), where to find a cheap meal (or a good one or an expensive one), what the local politics are (try to find a local newspaper), and what the history of the place is, what the population is like (age, race, class, profession), what people do to have a good time. In other words, imagine that you are moving to that location and try to find out everything you would need to learn to flourish there.

4. **Reflecting:** Throughout your explorations, keep in mind that the people you meet, the buildings in which they live and work, the forms of their recreation, their modes of transportation—everything that they are and do—are important components of the environment. They are part of an ecological niche. You want to discover their particular roles in this ecology: how they use it, contribute to it, damage or improve it, and change it. You want to discover not only how but why they do what they do. Do not settle for easy answers. Do not assume you know the answers without doing serious research. Like all good researchers, make sure you are conscious of your own biases and that you investigate them as thoroughly as you investigate the culture you are studying.

From: Machonis, Peter A., editor. *Shatter the Glassy Stare: Implementing Experiential Learning in Higher Education*. National Collegiate Honors Council, 2008. NCHC Monograph Series.

help surface contrasts within the town or location being explored, as noted in the sample below by the two different streets that teams explored—Cabot and Rantoul—in the town of Beverly, MA.

To keep teams from running into each other in smaller sites, they can be directed to enter the site at different points and head in different directions. Once again, students are asked to talk to at least one person: a shop owner, for instance, or someone on the street. No whole group debrief in the sample Exploration assignment is included here, primarily because of the course structure in which the assignment was completed. When possible, however, large group reports deepen collective understanding of the place explored and increase dialogue and interpretation, including disparate perspectives on the site. Unlike the Walkabout assignment's open-ended nature, the Exploration assignment has specific prompts, including one that asks students to look for examples of the private use of public space. This prompt also invites students to consider the interconnectedness of place and people, of public and private, of individual and community, all key to developing their sense of themselves not just as individuals but as members of a larger community. Finally, brief readings are included that should be completed as pre-work. These are not lengthy—a short history of the town, perhaps, or a recent article about changes or challenges the community is facing—and begin to provide some context for what the teams might observe during exploration, grounding them in the broader context of the town that may inform or challenge their own perceptions.

The Observation Essay

This essay is more formal than the Initial Impressions writing assignment. Rather than students sharing whatever they want about their exploration as they did in the Initial Impressions assignment, here students are asked to unpack a scene they encountered during their exploration. While students can write the essay in whatever format they wish, their focus on the scene should address the prompts to describe, interpret, analyze, and reflect listed in Part 1. In Part 2, students capture and reflect on the private use of public

space and consider what that observation tells them about the site. Finally, they are asked to constuct a second Personal Connection to Place.

Personal Connection to Place

The second time students complete this Personal Connection to Place prompt they have also engaged in a more in-depth observation and writing reflection about their explorations. In addition, they have completed one Personal Connection to Place reflection in the Initial Impressions writing assignment and are familiar with the prompt. This second reflection often reveals students' increased awareness of self in relation to, or as part of, the larger community. For instance, in exploring the town in which their college is located, students may notice that some churches display bright rainbow flags signifying that they are LGBTQ friendly while others do not, leading them to wonder about diverse forms of worship in the community and who attends which services. Students may observe gentrification in parts of the downtown area and want to learn more about how community members' feel about these changes, homing in on tensions between history and change. Still others may notice disparities in the size and repair of homes and buildings in different sections of the town and wonder about disparities in crime, income, homelessness, and services among those sections. These areas of inquiry register a deepening understanding of the town as a complex community serving diverse populations that may or may not be at odds with one another. Such awareness stands in stark contrast to how students often view their college town as a series of restaurants, coffee shops, and other amenities that are transactional places where goods are sold and purchased.

Exploration assignments can be repeated in different locations multiple times. Whereas the Walkabout/Initial Impressions assignment and the Extended Exploration/Turning Point assignment act as bookends to the assignment sequence, the Exploration/Observation Essay assignment is a useful tool for creating a longer CAT experience within, for instance, a semester-long course or an international experience.

ASSIGNMENT #2

Exploration Assignment—The Town of Beverly as Text

The purpose of your Beverly exploration is twofold: 1) To explore the town of Beverly and 2) To practice "reading" places.

The Exploration
Downtown Beverly has two main streets that parallel one another: Cabot Street and Rantoul Street. For this outing, your team will select a day/time to head to downtown Beverly to explore both of these streets. The entire walkabout should take you approximately an hour. You should be walking slowly, observing, listening, talking to people.

Destinations
Cabot and Rantoul Streets, Beverly, MA

Before You Start
For the assignment, you will want to take photos of buildings, signs, and public spaces you see along Cabot and Rantoul Streets. The photos should capture aspects of downtown Beverly that are especially interesting to you and your group. However, please do not take identifiable photos of ANYONE during this exploration, especially children. Also, do not record ANYONE during your exploration, including during conversations with people you encounter during the walkabout. Instead, record your thoughts, impressions, summaries of what people say or do.

Questions to Consider during Your Exploration of Downtown Beverly
As you walk the length of both streets (Cabot and Rantoul), observe, consider, and take note of the following:

1. What kinds of buildings do you see? Are they businesses or residences? Are they old or new? Are there any buildings that seem to be especially important, for instance historic landmarks or high traffic areas? How do you know these are important places?
2. What kinds of spaces do you see? Are there spaces intended for public use (e.g., parks, benches)? What are they? How are these being used? Are any spaces designated as private? How do you know? Do you observe any people making private use of public space? How do they do this?
3. What are the people on your street doing? Stand in one place and observe for a few minutes. What do you learn?

4. Talk to at least one person to learn more about the downtown area in general and the street you are on in particular. Why do people come to this street? Who lives and works here? What role does the street play in the town?

5. Go into at least one store. What kind of store is it? What does it sell? Who seems to be shopping there? Note one unique thing you observe about the store.

Readings
Prior to class time be sure to read the following short articles about Beverly:

- Cahill, S. (2002). History of Downtown Beverly. *Primary Research.* Retrieved from <http://www.primaryresearch.org/PRTHB/Neighborhoods/Downtown/index.php>
- Conway, M. (2004). A study of the settlement of the city of Beverly from 1628 to 1920. *Primary Research.* Retrieved from <http://www.primaryresearch.org/PRTHB/Neighborhoods/Downtown/index.php>

Observation Essay

This essay has three parts and should take between 3–4 pages to complete.

Part 1: Follow the prompts below to analyze and reflect on a specific scene from your Exploration.

Description—Describe a scene or interaction that caught your attention (some interaction or small group event should be useful here) to focus your discussion and provide an "exemplary text" to interpret and analyze. This part is a literal recording, in brief, of what the event is, who took part in it (e.g., age, gender, possible relation of participants, setting), and where and when it occurred. This portion is 'lab notes' of a sort.

Interpretation—Interpret the scene: what do you think is happening here? How might it illustrate your thoughts about economics, recreation, or some other aspect of life in a social setting? This interpretation should aim at explaining the event to convey how it illustrates the topic for which you have chosen to record it.

Analysis—Analyze an interaction. Given the details you have provided, see which of them supports your interpretation and way of seeing the event or interaction. You are considering, in this segment, "what makes you think so," which means you need to pinpoint elements of the whole that persuaded you of your insights and impressions while you were observing the incident.

Reflection—Think about your part in the scene: you were a bystander, looking at the interaction. Possibly you actually took part in it. How did you see yourself at that moment? Is this event like others you have experienced? If different, how so? Would you behave differently were you in a similar scene another time?

Note: Many explorers weave responses to Analysis and Reflection together in their writing. The breakdown is not meant to be a formula, only to clarify what the observation needs to include to present diverse elements of a whole scene and to get at how your own lens works when you are observing.

Part 2: Reflect on what you learned about the private use of public space in Beverly during your exploration. Describe one example you encountered of how people in Beverly use public spaces. Interpret what that example tells you about the city of Beverly and the ways in which places are adopted or adapted for personal use.

Part 3: In a final paragraph labeled *Personal Connection to Place*, make a note about two things you observed in your Beverly as Text exploration that you want to know more about, and develop 2–3 questions that you would want to pursue if you had more time. Some ways to think about your personal connection: Was there a building whose history you became curious about? Did you hear something that you wanted to know more about? Or, consider your academic major as a lens for the campus. How would a nurse, scientist, accountant, engineer, or English major see the places you visited today?

Assignment #3— Extended Exploration Assignment and Turning Point Essay

The Extended Exploration

The Extended Exploration employs the same strategies as the Exploration assignment with more time spent at the site and more focused questions to consider. Here again, it is useful to send small teams of students (these teams should be different from the ones in the previous explorations whenever possible) to differing locations, allowing the contrasts to reveal themselves for consideration. The sample assignment below illustrates how teams can visit the same (and even multiple) areas of a site without overlapping at the same place at the same time. In this Extended Exploration, students spend at least ten minutes doing a focused observation, the purpose of which is to slow their observations down and give them time and space to look deeply at some aspect of the place they are exploring. In addition, they complete another study of the private use of public space (providing a contrast with the preceding one they did) and are asked to do some pre-reading about the site, again at a general level to gain some context for their own observations.

Turning Point Essay

The Turning Point essay is a critical element of the CAT assignment sequence in that it asks students to identify a moment that shifted their understanding. As Braid writes:

> In the writing sequence for CAT, the pivotal role of Turning Point essays is their power to furnish instrumentality to explorers engaged in making sense of the radically new, unfiltered information that field experiences plunge them into. Recording their own evolution over time, identifying which specific event was a catalyst for what they see as a change in their ways of knowing . . . is, in Clifford Geertz's phrase, "eye-opening". . . . (10–11)

Braid goes on to quote Geertz as he explains what he means by "eye-opening":

> it is from the far more difficult achievement of seeing ourselves amongst others, as a local example of the forms human life has locally taken, a case among cases, a world among worlds, that the largeness of mind, without which objectivity is self-congratulation and tolerance is a sham, comes. (qtd. in Braid 11)

The Turning Point essay challenges students to reflect on their cognitive shifts, the moment or moments during their explorations that moved them to see not just themselves but themselves "amongst others," thus transforming their worldview from individual to community, from self to others. Perhaps more importantly, by identifying and recording that shift—for some the first shift of its kind in their personal experience—they capture a moment of personal growth that will stay with them and possibly shape their choice of majors and career. One student described her growth as "exercising a muscle" that she did not know she had but that she now uses daily.

Personal Connection to Place

The final Personal Connection to Place can be linked to research projects that have arisen from students' explorations and identification of authentic areas of interest they want to research in more depth. Having engaged with the Personal Connection to Place prompt three times (more if the Exploration assignment is repeated), they have now built a running list of what they encountered during their explorations that piqued their interest and curiosity. While one objective of the Personal Connection to Place prompt is to deepen students' connections among themselves and the places they explore, thereby encouraging them to see themselves as "amongst others," the prompt has a secondary outcome as well: through a scaffolding process, the prompt helps students identify not just personal but scholarly interests that enhance their learning and hone their curiosity about the world around them. The sample assignment asks students to do preliminary research on one of their personal interests, but the assignment could easily be developed into a full-scale culminating research project.

ASSIGNMENT #3

Extended Observation: The Town of Salem as Text

Explore

Meet at the Bewitched Statue at 3:30 p.m. Your mission during our hour and 15 minute walkabout is to experience—through observation and interaction—Salem-as-Text. You will be assigned 3 different destinations to explore. Starting with the first destination assigned to your group, follow the prompts below, taking notes on each prompt in your notebook or on your phone. Take photos to document your observations. This is meant to be an in-depth exploration, so spend a good amount of time in each area before moving on. You should go into shops; read plaques at public places; examine storefronts, restaurants, and museum windows; and slowly absorb your surroundings. Follow the focus questions listed below during your exploration of each site.

Locations

You have just over an hour to visit your three locations. If you are assigned to a museum, you do not have to go in if there is a fee. However, take some time to read about the museum and observe how the space around the museum is being used.

Group 1:
- Old Burying Point Cemetery
- Salem Maritime Historic District
- Salem Common

Group 2:
- Witch Dungeon Museum
- Downtown District
- Pickering Wharf

Group 3:
- Salem Common
- Pickering Wharf
- Downtown District

Group 4:
- Pickering Wharf
- Old Burying Point Cemetery
- Downtown District

Group 5:
- Downtown District
- Derby Square
- Salem Maritime Historic District

Exploration
Please follow these prompts for each of your destinations and in your general exploration of Salem:

GENERAL IMPRESSIONS:

1. Scan your area carefully to gather your first impressions. What do you notice? What kinds of buildings do you see? Are there businesses? If so, what types? What do the buildings look like? Are they old or new? What is it about the buildings that gives you this information? Stop at real estate agencies and examine what's available to rent or purchase. You might go inside and inquire as though you wanted to move in to find out what the official price range might be. Is there much turnover? How would you describe the state of the buildings? What sort of real estate do they occupy (land, no land, groomed, overgrown)? Is there evidence of construction? Renovation?
2. On the streets, you will be looking for indices of how this area 'works' for those who live and work in it: What services are readily available? Who seems to live here (group, economic level, dominant age range)? Are there people on the streets? What are they doing? Does the space feel busy? Quiet? Full? Empty? Are there tourists or locals? How do you know?
3. Look for schools, libraries, shopping areas—all kinds of services residents need in their neighborhood. Where do people shop for food? If you locate a food store, stop in and consider what's being sold, at what price range. What other kinds of services are visible? Do answers to these questions seem to support your initial impression about who lives here?

FOCUSED OBSERVATION:

Take a few minutes (10 minutes, perhaps) to do a more focused observation on a single spot. What do you notice about the people? How do they interact? Use the space? Be specific.

PUBLIC USE OF PRIVATE SPACE:

What kinds of spaces do you see? Are there spaces intended for public use (e.g., parks, benches)? How are these being used? Do you observe any evidence of public space being used privately?

Readings
Prior to your extended exploration, be sure to read the following short articles about Salem:

- Adams, G. (2003). The specter of Salem in American culture. *OAH Magazine of History.* via Canvas
- Benham, B. (2003 October). The Salem witch project. *Travel and Leisure.* Retrieved from <https://www.travelandleisure.com/articles/the-salem-witch-project>
- Greenway, H.D.S. (2005 July). The city bewitched into kitsch. *The Boston Globe.* Retrieved from <http://archive.boston.com/news/globe/editorial_opinion/oped/articles/2005/07/01/a_city_bewitched_into_kitsch>

Turning Point Essay

The Turning Point essay has two parts and should take between 5–6 pages to complete.

Part 1: City as Text™ Reflection—The first part of this essay is a continuation of the reflective writing you have done for the Campus as Text and Beverly as Text explorations. Here, answer the following questions: What do you understand more or see differently about your campus and the town of Beverly and/or Salem as a result of this series of assignments and experiences? To what discussion or interaction do you attribute this shift? Why? In addition, what do you see differently about yourself as an explorer as a result of this series of assignments and experiences? To what discussion or interaction do you attribute this shift? Why? In a final paragraph, labeled *Personal Connection to Place*, make a note about two things you observed in your Salem as Text exploration and develop 2–3 questions that you would want to pursue if you had more time. Some ways to think about your personal connection: Was there a building whose history you became curious about? Did you hear something that you wanted to know more about? Or, consider your academic major as a lens for the campus.

How would a nurse, scientist, accountant, engineer, or English major see the places you visited today? This is the last of a series of Personal Connection notes you will make during our City as Text™ unit. This Turning Point essay should be 2–3 pages.

Part 2: Reading Places—Look back at your Personal Connection to Place notes for the Endicott campus and the cities of Beverly and Salem. Choose one element of your reflections that you are interested in researching more, including the questions you said you would want to pursue. Next, just as was modeled for you in the readings assigned for your Beverly and Salem explorations, locate three articles from reliable sources (journals, newspapers, magazines; not blogs, websites) that help you answer the questions you have about that topic. Then, in 2–3 pages:

1. Describe how your topic became of interest and what your questions are.
2. Read and summarize the three articles in a way that you could share it with others who are interested in the same topic.
3. Describe how the articles answered your question (or perhaps they didn't, in which case explain why not).
4. State what additional research you would do from this point to learn more about the topic or about another topic that caught your interest during the research process.
5. Cite your sources according to APA format in the body of the paper AND in a reference section at the end.

CONCLUSION

As Bernice Braid writes, the

> power of probing any city, place, or region yields transformative results when students engage with place directly, see themselves as investigators, and reflect on their role in creating their sense not just of the place but of themselves as they interact with it. As students participate in this process, they change the way that they know places. (10)

Through a sequence of specific CAT assignments that link exploration with written reflection and ask students to find personal connections to the places they explore, City as Text pedagogy changes not just the way students "know places" but the way they know themselves and, more often than not, the way they know themselves as agents and actors in the civic spaces that they inhabit.

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Reading the Local in the New Now: Mapping Hidden Opportunities for Civic Engagement in the First Virtual City as Text™ Faculty Institute

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In spring 2020, with the COVID-19 pandemic in full force, the National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC) Place as Text (PAT) Committee reimagined its longstanding City as Text™ (CAT) Faculty

Institute model as an experimental virtual training titled "Reading the Local in the New Now" (RLNN). With the cancellation of two scheduled CAT Faculty Institutes because of the pandemic, the committee quickly shifted gears to develop and offer a fully online version of the program. Shorter in length, with participants joining from their homes across the country, the Institute was designed with key CAT principles as its foundation (Braid and Long; Long; Machonis). In this chapter, the RLNN facilitators outline how we conceived of and created the Institute, and we describe the participants' processes of engaging with it. In retrospect, we realized how closely both groups—facilitators and participants—practiced mapping, observing, listening, and reflecting as an integral part of our co-engagement, illustrating how well these time-tested CAT strategies stand up to the challenges of our contemporary moment.

At the same time, the historical context of this Institute meant that Reading the Local in the New Now Institute could not be identical to the Faculty Institute structures offered for over thirty years through NCHC. Necessitated by government-imposed restrictions, CDC and state health guidelines, higher education and K–12 policies, and personal and familial precautions, we were essentially called home to protect our communities. As a result, facilitators needed to adapt the well-established methods of place-based exploration to new strategies for exploring places as text.

The changes strikingly revealed new possibilities for civic engagement. In *Civic Responsibility and Higher Education*, Thomas Ehrlich defines civic engagement as "working to make a difference in the civic life of our communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values and motivation to make that difference" (vi). Feeling some connection with a community is a first step to becoming engaged enough to "make a difference" in it, but what happens to civic engagement when individuals are forced by a global pandemic to isolate from one another and their community spaces? What strategies might help people stay connected with their communities given health and safety mandates that require isolation and physical distancing? Such questions were

foundational in the development of the experimental virtual CAT Institute.

What the Reading the Local in the New Now Institute revealed, as participants scouted their own routes and created multimodal maps to capture their experiences, was a new kind of cartography. Their collections of observations, interpretations, and reflections organically documented the need of all of us to participate in civic engagement as a developing theme of the Institute. As RLNN participants conducted their walkabouts, some were fearful of how their movements would be perceived. Participants moved, often on their own, along silent streets, cul-de-sacs, and campuses void of commotion. They explored open spaces in pairs or, most frequently, alone, or they mindfully observed their suburban backyards, ranches, or farms as if seeing the familiar for the first time. The transect of the internal and external landscape cut sharply through the walkabout, and new maps were literally drawn that emphasized the unseen systems of place, where people were excluded, and points for civic deliberation and action. In the absence of others and of the foundational CAT strategy of sending participants out in small groups, where routes within a centralized location could not be scouted in advance, the most poignant thread in the group conversations turned to race. Inclusion and access led to a broader, resounding question of how everyone could engage in CAT explorations as the Black Lives Matter protests and social injustices loomed large.

DESIGNING READING THE LOCAL IN THE NEW NOW CITY AS TEXT INSTITUTE

While facilitators were planning the RLNN virtual CAT Faculty Institute, we were also adjusting to new ways of connecting digitally and noticing the impact these changes had on ourselves, our colleagues, and our students. With the spring 2020 pivot to remote learning and nationwide shutdowns of colleges and universities, we found that we were both more separate from and more connected to our communities because of our reliance on applications like Zoom. The quick shift to secure public health by isolating, wearing masks, and maintaining six feet of physical distance only

briefly preceded a wave of unrest as city streets surged with protests against social injustice, sparked (this time) by George Floyd's death at the hands of Minneapolis police officers. The racial unrest that plagued the nation during the summer of 2020 and beyond did not leave us immune. In living these moments, we noticed that we *see*, now more than ever, into the private lives of others. The new digital landscape that slammed the traditional classroom door at the start of the pandemic also flung open a new window that forced us to move beyond our own intellectual comfort zones and begin to rethink what it means to engage civically from our mostly privileged position within honors colleges and programs across the U.S.

We *see* our students attend synchronous Zoom sessions from the front seat of their cars with what looks like a back seat full of their belongings. We *see* our students, who are clearly exhausted from their overnight shifts monitoring protests, attending to those with COVID at the local ER, and restocking nearly empty grocery supply shelves. We *see* most of them work just as hard to submit their homework in a timely fashion. All of us have been confronted by the two-inch square digital boxes that move into our intimate spaces (Zoom, GoogleMeet) and put our formerly private places on display for all to witness. In theory, this forced move to online honors education provides us the opportunity to attend to the often-invisible systems that construct our students' and colleagues' personal landscapes. Living ever more presently in this ever-expanding digital realm, we realized the potential for civic engagement begins even before we cross the threshold of our own front door into the greater world.

With this context in mind, we designed RLNN to mirror, though not replicate, the foundational elements of CAT Faculty Institutes: daily explorations, written assignments, and a workshop focused on helping participants develop their own projects at their home institutions. RLNN was held over three days with approximately three hours of synchronous Zoom meetings per day. On day one was a required "Initial Impressions" walkabout and, on day two, one longer "Exploration." An additional "Exploration" was designed and offered as an optional opportunity. Instead of working in teams,

participants were sent out individually to locations of their choice near their homes and colleges, and then they Zoomed into the daily debriefs and discussions. Reflective assignments were key to the Institute and included “Initial Observations” and “Turning Point” assignments. Participants were encouraged to use multimedia platforms to create these assignments, combining text, image, sound, and technology in a variety of ways. The opportunity to workshop participants’ own CAT projects was included on the third day.

As the facilitators planned RLNN, we imagined how the fabric already uniting City as Text pedagogy with civic engagement might be woven anew to better serve the contemporary moment. In fact, the term “New Now” was specifically selected for the title in order to represent the pandemic era’s demand for physical distancing, the shutdown of many communities across the country, and how, unlike typical CAT Faculty Institutes, participants were likely going to be unable to interact with other people while conducting the observation assignments. The “New Now” also prompted participants to relate the explorations of familiar spaces with larger questions of civic engagement, public health, and social unrest as other lenses for understanding the complexity of place.

INITIAL IMPRESSIONS: MAPPING, OBSERVATION, AND RADICAL CARTOGRAPHY

In-person CAT Institutes have long relied on maps and cognitive mapmaking as an essential part of the experience. At the beginning of Institutes, participants are given a map—usually one from the local tourism office—and asked to use it to plan routes to their exploration sites and around the location. They are explicitly directed not to rely on their phones for turn-by-turn directions. When participants work to situate themselves and navigate without using GPS, they engage their hippocampus, which is the part of the brain that helps people orient themselves spatially, recall past events, and imagine themselves into the future. To imagine oneself into the future includes not only literal and spatial imaginings (“If I turn right on this block, I’ll end up at the park in three blocks”) but

also an understanding of self-awareness, choice, and consequence. For example, in a recent op-ed, M. R. O'Connor, a science journalist and author of *Wayfinding: The Science and Mystery of How Humans Navigate the World*, connects this exercise of the hippocampus with creating a love of place, which is an essential step in fostering civic engagement. O'Connor writes:

> Practicing navigation is a powerful form of engagement with the environment that can inspire a greater sense of stewardship. Finding our way on our own—using perception, empirical observation and problem-solving skills—forces us to attune ourselves to the world. And by turning our attention to the physical landscape that sustains and connects us, we can nourish 'topophilia,' a sense of attachment and love for place.

Conventional Institutes are always pre-scouted by CAT facilitators who engage with routes in advance, but in the RLNN Institute, members were on their own. We had to address not relying on any single paper map. In fact, since many participants were exploring neighborhoods and landscapes already familiar to them, the use of maps at the outset of each exploration would have been significantly less useful than during a regular Institute. Instead, facilitators simply distributed the "Initial Impressions" and "Exploration" assignments and left it up to individuals to decide how to navigate the terrain. Oddly enough, in contrast to past Institutes, many colleagues created their own maps of their locations and turned these maps in as assignments. Thus, maps surfaced in a new way as an artifact of participants' reflections, replacing the typical written reflection of Institutes with a multimodal one.

Part of the popularity of mapping as the artifact of the "Initial Impressions" assignment in RLNN was that facilitators offered Geographic Information Systems (GIS) mapping platforms as a potential technology to create multimedia reflections. Computer-generated maps, such as Google Maps, gave geographic reference points (streets, parks, rivers, shopping malls) in a simplified aerial view onto which participants could layer their observations and experiences. In effect, many participants created their own "story

maps" by enhancing a computer-generated map with written statements, photographs, videos, and audio clips to create an interactive archive of their neighborhoods and town centers. Such maps helped latch the known world to their experiences of it, effectively combining personal experience and knowledge and revealing a deeper sense of place.

Through these maps, participants also challenged the most common narratives of the places they explored as they engaged in defining underlying power structures and systems. In a sense, this engagement is a form of radical cartography, which can be defined as "the practice of mapmaking that subverts conventional notions in order to actively promote social change" (Bhagat and Mogel 6). Through inquiry and engagement, this form of cartography asks creators to make maps that marry issues to place, whether the issues are land use, migration, surveillance, or something else altogether. For instance, one participant mapped self-made videos onto a public garden, revealing a complex history of socioeconomic class and access in his town. Many others mapped flags and street-facing displays supporting Black Lives Matter, presenting rainbows, or suggesting other beliefs and political views tied to neighborhoods. A participant in Alabama mapped signage related to the Civil Rights Movement and the Confederacy, finding that many of these signs were located in the same few city blocks and leading to a fruitful discussion about the significance of conflicting messages sharing space.

During the virtual CAT Institute, several participants who made their own maps using free technology realized that the base layer of their maps came with information that they did not want to highlight. While important navigational features are often named on these maps, some platforms also highlight businesses that have paid for advertising. Some of these businesses, mostly big box stores and chains, were more visible than the street names of the business location. In designing their own maps, participants realized that many of the things they wanted to make visible—things they noted during their reflections—were not necessarily represented on the free institutional maps. Once tied to colonialism and now tied to capitalism, cartography is not as neutral as it may appear.

This realization highlights one way that maps can be used as a rhetorical tool in our own honors classes to help students pinpoint their values. As the Institute for Applied Autonomy points out in an essay on tactical media and cartographies:

> maps don't merely represent space, they shape arguments; they set discursive boundaries and identify objects to be considered. When individuals make their own maps, they offer an expression of what they consider important, what they consider to be 'of interest,' and for what they are willing to fight. (35)

By tying issues to place, the increased use of mapping in this Institute has provided another pathway to consider CAT's role in civic engagement.

EXPLORATION I: OBSERVING, LISTENING, AND AUTO-ETHNOGRAPHY

A key element of CAT pedagogy is asking participants to engage with people who live and work in the location where the Institute is being held. In part for this reason, many CAT Institutes have been held in urban areas where human interaction is readily present and accessible. Densely populated cities like Chicago, Boston, and Las Vegas lend themselves easily to the types of explorations for which CAT is best known, implicitly inviting participants to connect with the built and human communities. Even when CAT Institutes are held in non-urban spaces—Yellowstone National Park, for instance, or Harlaxton, England—there is an expectation that interaction with other people—rangers, tourists, and servers at the local dive—will be a central part of the daily explorations. In the case of RLNN, however, because participants were staying home, some in rural areas, we needed to construct an experience that was true to the spirit of CAT even though participants might not see another person during their walkabout nor have the opportunity to engage in or eavesdrop on conversations. If a participant cannot speak directly with another human on the walkabout, can he or she,

alone, converse with the landscape instead and still draw meaningful conclusions about culture and society? To address this question, the facilitators created a series of alternative "rural" assignments that guided Institute participants to make connections between the physical and cultural constructions of landscape.

The rural alternative assignments took the traditional CAT prompts and added considerations that might be useful for participants exploring spaces where there could be little to no face-to-face human interaction. Assignments asked participants to home in on sensory description rather than interpersonal interactions and then to consider the descriptions in associated reflections. For example, in one of the Exploration assignments, participants were asked to do the following:

> Listen to the landscape mindfully using all of your senses: sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch, movement, and muscle memory. Are there visual observations you haven't already considered? Perhaps find a place to sit quietly and close your eyes as you attend to each of these senses individually. What do you hear (animals, leaves rustling, mosquitos, traffic, machinery, voices)? Describe the quality of the sound. What do you smell (manure, exhaust, rain, berries, grass)? Go for a walk. What do you taste (fruit or vegetables growing, a scent so strong you can taste it)? Touch something and describe that sensation. Consider how the landscape directs your movement. Do you move differently in certain areas of the landscape than in others? When does muscle memory take over (scooping feed, weeding a garden, avoiding a known obstacle)?

Sensory awareness and description are fundamental components of CAT and essential tools of observation. For the RLNN Institute, we welcomed the collection of sensory imagery as a conversation that could be heard when no other human voices could be found.

It turns out that, while one of the facilitators owns a rural horse-property, most of the thirty-seven facilitators/participants lived in urban or suburban areas. Because of state and local social

distancing guidelines, however, many members still chose to combine elements of more traditional CAT prompts with the alternative rural guidelines to explore parks, forests, or neighborhoods with which they had intimate connections. As a result, CAT explorations reimagined for rural spaces became a way for colleagues to connect to the community they were exploring whether it was urban, suburban, or rural. All had the opportunity to deepen their understanding and empathy for those spaces and for the people, animals, and plants that exist there.

Much scholarly energy has been dedicated to conceptualizing landscape as larger than our surroundings because considering landscape requires active engagement on the part of the explorer. Lucy R. Lippard, a visual artist-academic, argues that "landscape can only be seen from outside, as a background for the experience of viewing. The scene is the seen" (8). Here, she uses language from the perspective of an ethnographer, a lens generally adopted to conduct traditional CAT explorations. The researcher looks from the outside to the inside with the aim of bringing together observations about human interaction in an ethical manner. The RLNN facilitators' task was to translate this ethnographic approach to an auto-ethnographic approach and create a scenario wherein participants on their own could explore their home and neighborhood spaces as others might so that, as in traditional Institutes, they could reflect on and draw conclusions about place. The participants' challenge was to explore their daily settings not as settings but as landscapes. Could they actively make seen the hidden-in-plain-sight connections between their own lives and intimate spaces and the greater socio-cultural picture?

An example of "making seen" was captured in a participant's YouTube video that served as the Turning Point essay. This individual described walking beside a fence near her home and wondering what purpose it served: "curious if it has to do with the 'undesirables' from the shopping plaza nearby, as there is a fence on that side of our neighborhood but not on the other." She recoiled at the sound of a shopping cart, out of place and alarming, as a man rolled toward them, "mumbling questions about food and money." He was

not wearing a mask. "Sorry," she said multiple times, admitting that "sorry means I do not feel safe, please go away." This participant both described her observations and referenced the broader socio-economic landscape reflected in her awareness:

> The second I step outside of my problematically cloistered subdivision, the second I begin really questioning its origin with no small amount of judgment as to the isolationism of suburbia and how it is tied up in white flight and all sorts of other problematic aspects of American history. Two minutes after I question the fence, I stand examining my own choices, my own vulnerability and fear, saying sorry, sorry, sorry.

Not only was the man pushing the cart seemingly out of place, but so, too, was the noise generated by the cart itself. Julia Corbett articulates how noise (person-made sound in excess) is "utterly undemocratic because the amount of exposure is biased by social class and species. Who lives in a gated community versus next to a jam-packed highway?" (101). The participant's discomfort with the shopping cart was self-admittedly a response in part to the (homeless?) man pushing it, but it was also due in part to noise that crossed the literal boundary constructed to protect those of a higher-class status from the cacophony of the shopping plaza parking lot.

As this extended example illustrates, perhaps more useful than the Institute's optional focus on actual rural land was the close alignment of the alternative rural assignment descriptions with auto-ethnographic interpretive methods. Participants were prompted to attend to their sensory experiences to interpret human-made objects as representative of the culture in which they were observed. The philosopher Gilbert Ryle coined the phrase "thick description" in the 1960s to distinguish between a simple factual observation of a behavior or object (thin description) and the complex context in which that behavior or object is situated (thick description) (480–96). Anthropologist Clifford Geertz expanded Ryle's conceptualization of "thick description" into an approach to ethnographic research that is still used by practicing

ethnographers and auto-ethnographers today. Geertz writes that "man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun[;] I take culture to be those webs" (5). As in the RLNN example, most participants in Faculty Institutes begin to connect their simple observations (thin description) with their fields of expertise and their developing insights about the culture studied, weaving ever more complex webs of understanding. The resulting "thick description," according to Geertz, aims "to draw large conclusions from small, but very densely textured facts; to support broad assertions about the role of culture in the construction of collective life by engaging them exactly with complex specifics" (28).

Lippard similarly observes that "as we walk or drive through any landscape, paying attention to its details and contours accentuated by light and shadow, we can fantasize (or hypothesize) about all the fences, lumps, bumps, furrows and tracks that cross it" (125). Even from their own backyards, campuses, parks, or city streets, RLNN participants used such hypothesizing to challenge their preconceived notions and expectations of their communities and to "draw broad conclusions" about society (Geertz 28). This participant described the walkabout experience as follows:

> I began by turning left out of my garage when I normally would turn right. I looked—really looked—at the fence that separates our complex of townhomes from the fire department and shopping plaza nearby. I noticed that the slats in the fence were different colors. Some were clearly newer. I both wondered about the cause of the removal of the old slats and marveled at the ombre effect that was created. I also began to think about the history of planned communities and HOAs, and what it meant that there was a fence on one side of our complex and not the other.

How does one see, in a broader and deeper context, a place we think we already know? What can we begin to uncover when we examine these landscapes and the social, cultural, political, economic, and geographic strands that weave together within a complex network of systems? These intersections are usually unseen—the stories within a story of place.

Can creating a thick description and engaging in the autoethnographic process lead us toward civic engagement? If we are willing to listen, this process can certainly highlight our assumptions, motivate us to learn more, and potentially prompt us to take action. As Lippard notes, "looking at land through non-expert eyes, we can learn a lot about our own assumptions and about the places we live in and pass through" (125). In the Turning Point reflection assignment, another RLNN participant revealed the following:

> I was struck by the awareness—and sensitivity—among participants in this workshop to topics of identity (race, class, nationalism, etc.) in the spaces/places we navigated. On a personal note, I've seen my "local" change: my home town has been transformed to a place of escape for the privileged. People with places to stay here are "escaping" (I presume) from Florida, Georgia, Texas, and other "hot spots." Second homes, family, friends, friends of friends. For me, it's been an exercise in being non-judgmental/unbiased. I've been thinking lots lately about Native American populations as well (historically and currently). My ancestors colonized America, what is my responsibility today? How does one decolonize during a pandemic?

EXPLORATION II:
REFLECTION, RACE, AND THE WALKABOUT

Honors education in this country has long struggled with questions of race and inclusion, and as one of our premier pedagogical activities, CAT is not immune. A fundamental element of CAT pedagogy and practice is the "Initial Walkabout" assignment, wherein facilitators ask participants to explore in groups a preassigned territory, which we would usually walk ourselves to prepare for the exercise. We then encourage these groups to get lost among the streets, alleyways, fields, and monuments of a given place. We encourage them to talk to strangers and to ask questions about the community. Historically, many CAT facilitators intentionally send students out in small groups to places we have previously explored.

But for RLNN, faculty and staff were largely exploring in isolation, which—combined with the sociopolitical moment in which the Institute was situated—prompted facilitators and participants alike to reflect more on the intentional design of explorations than we might have in previous iterations of CAT.

The careful design of the walkabout, with a new eye toward all members being safe, became an undercurrent of much of our discussion at the RLNN Institute. Not only were we in the midst of a global pandemic that made interaction with other people a health risk, but RLNN was also hosted in the immediate wake of the racial unrest that arose in the weeks following May 25, 2020, when a white Minneapolis police officer, Derek Chauvin, killed an unarmed black man, George Floyd, during a routine arrest. While we engaged as a community of learners, this tragedy was absolutely on our minds. We found ourselves wondering how we might best facilitate "wandering," which is a central component of the walkabout, when some of us were not free to wander. How do facilitators prepare for the different realities that members of our honors community face when they participate in a walkabout, especially a walkabout completed alone? The seemingly simple act of exploring a neighborhood is categorically different for people of color and women than it is for our white, male students and colleagues. A participant of the RLNN Institute asked this precise question of how NCHC has considered the experience of black, indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) during a CAT walkabout. This consideration carries with it the urgency of the present moment.

Race is a complicated concept, and, like gender, largely a social construction. Stuart Hall argues, "I refer to 'race' here as one of those master concepts (the masculine form is deliberate here) that organize the great classificatory systems of difference that operate in the human sciences. Race, in this sense, is the centerpiece of a hierarchical system that produces differences" (32–33). In this decidedly Foucauldian definition, Hall articulates a systematic and deliberate social construction intended to provide a hierarchy in which White is seen as superior while Black is seen as inferior. Achille Mbembe goes further and ties race to neoliberalism: "It would be a mistake to believe that we have left behind the regime that began with the

slave trade and flourished in plantation and extraction colonies. In these baptismal fonts of modernity, the principle of race and the subject of the same name were put to work under the sign of capital" (13). The link between race and class has been formulated countless times and by various scholars, yet the arguments put forth by Hall and Mbembe constitute a real advance not only into how these concepts are entwined but also into how we think of ourselves and our place in the world.

Black is often problematically conceptualized as a threat, something lurking in the midst. This so-called threat to societal order is indispensable to the construction of the supposed superiority of White. In addition, this threat connotes a nomadic ontology wherein those without a home, without a sense of stability, threaten the stability, the home, of the dominant race. Of course, one of the pedagogical strategies of CAT is to deploy participants to various neighborhoods to map and explore. The walkabout encourages students to "become lost" as they explore in hopes of making the strange less strange. For people of color, though, particularly for black males, this well-intentioned act of "becoming lost" could become a serious problem. While we may empathize, those of us who are white never tangibly experience the potentially life-ending reality of our skin color being perceived as threatening while we walk down the street or into a store. This innate sense of security and safety is white privilege at its most basic level.

Writing for the *Washington Post* in 2016, columnist Christine Emba defines white privilege as

> the level of social advantage that comes with being seen as the norm in America, automatically conferred irrespective of wealth, gender or other factors. It makes life smoother, but it's something you would barely notice unless it were suddenly taken away—or unless it never applied to you in the first place.

The systemic racism that has informed this country from before its beginning has created a system in which change is nearly impossible as long as we fail to confront that embedded racism. As Zadie Smith argues in a recent essay, "real change would involve

a broad recognition that the fatalist, essentialist race discourse we often employ as a superficial cure for the symptoms of this virus manages, in practice, to smoothly obscure the fact that the DNA of this virus is *economic at base*" (81). The economic differences to which Smith alludes often reveal themselves when we go out into neighborhoods that display stark differences, even if those differences are only a street away. When a global pandemic is added to the mix, we can see how these economic inequalities affect entire populations differently. That CAT facilitators remember that not all participants in a walkabout are equal is critical.

To date, the romantic notion of the *flâneur* (an idle or wandering person) does not apply to BIPOC people. The word can apply to women and some LGBTQ+, but they also take additional risks when venturing out to explore. To people of color, though, the simple act of exploring any space without support can have negative and sometimes harmful consequences. Although participants in walkabouts are not necessarily *flâneurs*, the spirit of that concept as it has attached itself to explorers of the city or rural countryside is undeniable. The walkabout exercise—indeed, the whole of the CAT pedagogy—is an intellectual exercise that refuses to abandon the imaginative and whimsical nature of lostness even when we ask our students to engage in the serious work that is the ethnographic process. The RLNN Institute took the walkabout and, out of necessity, gave it a solitary spin, a spin that one might associate with the *flâneur* as a solitary observer of the landscape.

We learned from facilitating the first-ever NCHC Faculty Institute walkabout in social isolation that there are unforeseen challenges of doing CAT in the "new now" and that future facilitators will necessarily need to consider them along with some new questions and issues. When participants cannot do the walkabout exercise in small groups in pre-visited neighborhoods and places, how do we adapt? How do we conduct the walkabout amid the civil unrest that plagues this country? With faculty participants of the RLNN Institute, we felt confident that we could leave the judgment of how to best conduct the solo walkabout in their hands. When preparing to conduct CAT exercises with students, however,

facilitators will likely want to have a more defined plan. What better way for honors to lead the way to a more diverse, inclusive world than by experimenting with one of our standout pedagogical practices to embrace the new now more fully.

As honors educators, we have a civic duty to consider the new now in the choices we make moving forward. "The call for public conversations on race and racism," declares Angela Y. Davis, "is also a call to develop a vocabulary that permits us to have insightful conversations" (88). Attending to the well-being of CAT participants has always been of utmost importance, and what has arisen from the present moment is how much we have to learn from acknowledging and rethinking the plight of people of color. Higher education must search for a new vocabulary with which to combat the systemic racism that plagues our pedagogical practices. Davis elaborates: "if we attempt to use historically obsolete vocabularies, our consciousness of racism will remain shallow and we can be easily urged to assume that, for example, changes in the law spontaneously produce effective changes in the social world" (88). Honors has historically been at the forefront of cutting-edge thinking and is now the place where we must take a stand against the refusal to challenge historically determined concepts of race. Considering the lived experiences of all participants during the CAT walkabout exercise in the present moment is an especially meaningful place from which we may cultivate a new way of seeing, hearing, and, ultimately, knowing.

TURNING POINT

CAT carries within it a sense of idealism. The facilitators wholeheartedly believe in this pedagogical approach, and our combined experiences with CAT practices span nearly a hundred years. We see innate value in a traditional, face-to-face CAT walkabout, wherein we interact in small groups with communities in meaningful and productive ways. We present bright and curious minds to members of these communities, engage in discussion and intellectual exchange, and learn a bit about the places we are exploring and about ourselves along the way. Partnerships can be formed

while participants are asked to see the world through new eyes. What do we do, however, when the world confronts our ideal and requires us to explore in new ways rife with unexpected challenges? In spring of 2020, the main unexpected challenge was the growing civil unrest in our nation and the ways that hosting a walkabout in isolation would keep this challenge at the front of our minds while we also confronted the expected technological challenges: access, bandwidth, skills, and distractions.

Iris Marion Young's *Inclusion and Democracy* centers on notions of democracy and on what inclusion means and looks like. As CAT facilitators, we are well aware that the cost to attend CAT Faculty Institutes can be prohibitive for many faculty who might like to attend but who simply do not have the travel or professional development funds to support their participation. Offering an Institute virtually meant that we could reach a potentially broader audience, and we found that participants indeed "attended" from all over the United States to take part in this new kind of CAT experience. Being virtual meant that people did not have to leave their homes, families, and other responsibilities. The distance to travel in order to participate shrank to the literal steps one had to take to turn on the computer and join a Zoom call. While this virtual environment might be more democratic in terms of opening up opportunities to attend, many of us found ourselves distracted or pulled in multiple directions. By not escaping the everyday environment of work and home, some participants were pulled away from the Institute and into unrelated meetings or assignments. Some needed to attend to household, childcare, or other familial responsibilities. The distractions ever more common in our contemporary work/study-from-home lives interrupted the active involvement so central to the enterprise of civic engagement. Still, seeing faculty and staff grappling with these distractions helped us to better understand the present lives of our students, which are equally filled with all types of activities that divide their attention.

Alhough the pandemic forced people to be apart, technology brought people together in a different way. The virtual Institute asked participants to incorporate multimedia platforms to bridge

the gap of isolation during the walkabouts as they mapped their observations and reflected on the connections they were making. Combining various technologies into the time-tested CAT strategies created both opportunities and challenges. Internet bandwidth, along with the level of comfort different participants had using digital platforms without adequate technical training, revealed unseen systems of access and education. Still, the decision to add multimedia technology for the daily assignments opened up a whole host of creative approaches to CAT not previously explored (as far as we are aware). That much of the technology was new to all of us created a greater sense of collaboration and cooperation to complete the work at hand.

Other critical elements related to the civic nature of the CAT walkabout were highlighted by our required isolation, and in this space the civic aspect of the CAT walkabouts aligned closely with our obligation as facilitators and educators to deliver responsible programming and educational practices. Let us remind ourselves of Bernice Braid's original call to action:

> NCHC Honors Semesters [of which CAT plays a prominent role] provide American higher education with a model worth adapting, in whole or in part, to local circumstances. In their pedagogy, they demonstrate the efficacy of providing the impetus to engage in the construction of a sense of place. In their lingering impact on former participants, they validate the transformative nature of active learning. (6)

The term "engagement" demands reconsideration in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and the Black Lives Matter movement. What does it mean to engage actively and civically in a world where physical isolation is necessary and even mandated? How do we support BIPOC students when they face challenges unknown to the majority of students who make up our honors communities? City as Text is built on notions of engagement with ourselves and with others, so how can we use this pedagogy to engage further with these important questions of the new now?

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Doubling Back on the City as Text™ Walkabout

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I had been hearing about City as Text™ (CAT) for some time from my honors dean, Sara E. Quay, and from faculty members who had participated in CAT programs around the nation and internationally. So when Sara asked if I would like to participate in the Rotterdam City as Text Faculty Institute, I was prepared—in a broadly conceptual sense. Needless to say, Rotterdam was fabulous, the Institute was eye-opening, and I was converted.

Bringing that energy and set of ideas back to my own honors foundations class was a way of preparing the students to look with new eyes, not just through a disciplined or focused gaze. Honors students often arrive at a critical moment; they have demonstrated maturity and purpose, resolve and dedication, but they are not yet locked into a unidirectional pattern of task and completion. They can still be encouraged to wander off-script and appreciate aspects of the world that, under usual circumstances, they might regard as distracting or insignificant. And where better to start than in their own small college town, which they likely know only in terms of its supermarkets and quickest ways to the interstate highway.

Taking the ideas that I had engaged in Rotterdam into the classroom, I greeted my HON200 students with the news that their first assignment would be an exploration—a walkabout in CAT terminology—in downtown Beverly, Massachusetts. Too well-mannered to groan, they listened attentively as I explained the walkabout (as an Australian, I found particular resonance in this term), organized them into groups, and encouraged them to "notice as much as you can, filter nothing." I had become particularly concerned about the reach of television shows such as *The Amazing Race*—with its encouragement of American contestants to see the world not in its complexity but as the shortest route between an entry and exit point: the world as a gameboard, with prizes for avoiding "distractions" such as local culture, routines, and people—or worse, *Survivor*, which looks like a Dickensian study abroad program with its "eat or be eaten" social Darwinism and tokenized representations of "exotic culture." CAT might well be the antidote; its prize was deliberate encouragement to stop, get lost, read, make connections, chat, or taste, reshaping individual expectations in a new (or old) location. I did not want our students to think of "place" as a set of boxes to be checked before returning with a completed worksheet but as a multidimensional set of realities with social, physical, historical, political, infrastructural, and commercial layers.

Beverly, a small but historically significant coastal town north of Boston, offers exactly the right combination of suburban elements and lived complexity for our honors students to explore in nuanced and conscious ways. Beverly is locally famous for its enormous nineteenth-century shoe factory. The factory itself closed long ago, but its giant footprint now supports an equally giant set of commercial complexes, a micro-Beverly with businesses, restaurants, cafes, and professional offices. When the shoe factory was at its peak, Beverly was a largely working-class town with a set of beachfront mansions. When "the old shoe" ceased operation and eventually became several acres of white-collar activity instead, Beverly's demographics experienced a sudden shift. The town's working-class families—hitherto employed, housed, and organized largely by the shoe factory—lost their clear role in the community. Many found work in other Beverly operations or moved away, but

the coherent working identity disappeared. Beverly mutated into a middle-class community. The building of the Cummings Center on the old shoe site meant that Beverly's income remained stable; instead of taxing many working-class salaries, Beverly now taxed a solid number of middle-class salaries. With this demographic shift in identity, Beverly started to attract or strengthen other services; colleges, small businesses, real estate developments, restaurants, and big box stores all moved in to cater to Beverly's now up(per)-market citizens.

The remaining working-class families now worked not for a single giant industry but for a variety of smaller organizations across a larger physical space. Their share of Beverly's housing space remained largely the same; they lived in the triple-deckers that fringed the old shoe's campus. They had once walked to their jobs in the factory, and their children had walked to the nearby state-run schools. The middle-class, white-collar workers who moved into the new Cummings Center offices bought the houses closer to the ocean or in the leafy, well-heeled parts of the town once owned by industrial barons. Beverly still had its working-class community, but it no longer dominated the town's routines or rhythms. It was not a case of gentrification—the incoming middle classes were not buying up and occupying working-class housing—but the end of Beverly's manufacturing era altered the town's social and economic profile in profound ways. These strata of old and new, working class and middle class, are discernible if one takes the time to notice them.

The divide between the old and the new Beverly can be seen in Beverly's two arteries: chic, elevated Cabot Street and dowdy, sunken Rantoul Street. Cabot Street has always been the town's literal and figurative "high street." Elevated above the flatter area that housed the shoe factory campus, Cabot Street supports Beverly's churches as well as the Town Hall and the major banks; it shares its physical elevation with the larger, wealthier houses that occupy the leafy streets between Cabot and Beverly's spectacular and well-maintained oceanfront. Rantoul Street, by contrast, parallels the railway line and marks the low-income, light industrial area of the town's lower reaches. Its waterfront is the broad, muddy mouth of the Bass River. The side streets that connect Rantoul and Cabot

typically begin with low-income, multi-family houses at the Rantoul end and then give way to larger, more elaborate single-family homes and smarter retail or service operations up at the Cabot end.

The contrast between what has remained working-class territory and the more recent wave of middle-class residents becomes clear in a walkabout. My students are aware of Cabot Street, with its hipster coffee shops and boutique retail stores, but despite likely crossing or even driving along Rantoul Street on their way to Stop & Shop or Salem, they cannot bring it to mind or name it during discussions about their CAT project. Some of them are surprised that they are being sent to walk around the Rantoul Street part of the town. “Why are we going there?” they ask; “What do you want us to look at?”

At this point, I invite them to tell stories about their own towns and what they have discovered through the years. What parts of their town are promoted? How? I ask them to describe their towns to their classmates: where do they begin and what do they emphasize? Why? And then I ask them to tell the reverse story: think about what you did not mention. Why did you choose not to include the commuter rail station, the strip malls, the car repair, and the construction businesses? Now tell your neighbors about *those* aspects of the town. How do they connect with the parts that you did mention? Who lives/works there? How do you get to these parts? How do these parts identify themselves? What sorts of signage, infrastructure, vehicles, bumper stickers, or social interactions do you see in these parts? Once they have absorbed the idea of the city as a multi-dimensional operation, with its high- and low-profile identities as well as its interstices, alleyways, and liminal sections, they are eager to “get lost” in the eight-block Cabot/Rantoul section of Beverly.

Before the pandemic, I would anchor our walkabout at a comfortable Cabot Street institution, the Atomic Café. I would give the students their final instructions and send them out for an hour’s walk. Meanwhile, surrounded by the Atomic’s reliable internet, soft alternative rock playlist, and extensive choice of chai teas, I would set up my laptop and wait for them to return. As they filed back in, they would be full of excitement about their adventure. They

would show me photos of urban curiosities and immediately want to recount their richest observations, conversations, brushes with temporary housing or poorly monitored parking areas, changes in garden size as they walked between the streets, and contrast between the elegant Belgian waffle house on Cabot and the down-at-the-heel Chinese restaurants on Rantoul. This initial debrief would take place in the Atomic rather than after we had returned to campus so that the freshness of the experience was more available to us.

Back in class, we would talk about City as Identity: what does Beverly *think* it is? What, when you also consider what is off the beaten path, is Beverly *actually*? We would examine the town's web presence and discuss exactly who gets to decide what Beverly's public identity might be and how that identity is sustained. What aspects of Beverly's identity are missing from the town's "official" story of itself and why? Did they see inequalities in resources between the two street levels? What was needed? Where could one report these needs or sponsor remediation? Where did they see abundance? What did that abundance look like? Did the different locations have a gender identity? Did they see differences among how individuals used or operated in these spaces according to gender identity? The students then presented analysis of the observations they had collected on their walkabout, and their CAT experience set us up for other examinations of lived experience, including a Major-Furniture-Showroom-as-Text project later in the semester.

This last "pandemic" fall, the students still did their CAT projects, but they completed their walkabout on their own time, without setting out from or meeting back at the Atomic afterwards. I was sad not to be sending them off in person from the Atomic, but the circumstances also allowed me to reflect on my role in the process and ask some questions about the assumptions that I might have inadvertently stitched into our CAT project. I am now rethinking the "anchoring" aspect of the walkabout experience. Why, for example, did it seem natural for me to start, wait, and finish at the comfortable, familiar, middle-class, and well-resourced Atomic Café? Was I confirming for my students that, in returning to this upscale coffee shop on the smart street, they were venturing

away from and returning to normal space? Did setting out into the complex world from this point suggest that the other side of this exercise was the obverse of normal, that the well-groomed Atomic was "us" while the low-budget eateries on Rantoul were "other." Why didn't we start on Rantoul and treat Cabot as the figurative bottom of the walkabout exercise? Asking the students to spend some time discussing what they had experienced around the plastic tables in the Beverly Jade or China River restaurant might help to destabilize the implication that middle-class Cabot was Beverly's public face while Rantoul was its service entrance. Pointing out to my students that Beverly residents do more business on or near Rantoul (for the supermarket, clothing alterations, major pharmacies, gas stations, Dunkin' Donuts, Post Office, commuter rail, take-out restaurants, and liquor store) than on Cabot (the picture framing place, gift shops, real estate offices, museums) might also indicate that Beverly's self-promotion as a "garden city by the sea" with historical links to General Washington and at least two U.S. presidents is more socially and historically complex than they might first realize. By encouraging the students to find evidence of their town's social history, our exercise teaches students that they need to start by recognizing Rantoul Street as central to, and not the outer edge of, the "real" Beverly.

I have come to recognize in this space between fully immersive walkabouts that I should still think of myself as a student of CAT, always available for new insights and inspirations. If I want to impart some of the wonder that I felt on Rotterdam's Nieuwe Binnenweg or in the corridors of its city hall or in the narrow indeterminant space between its beautifully preserved fifteenth-century port and the twenty-first-century low-income apartment blocks behind it, I need to be able to still get lost in my own neighborhood. I, too, still need to walkabout, look, chat, feel, taste, hear, and think about the never-static complexity of human spaces.

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Transforming Community-Based Learning through City as Text™

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Honors students at Elizabethtown College have used City as Text™ (CAT) strategies to address the racism they experienced in new student orientation programming, to transform volunteerism opportunities into sustained civic engagement experiences, to prepare for study abroad and study away, and to strengthen their applications for prestigious scholarships and fellowships. Their research projects have enabled them to publish scholarship informing federal, state, and local historic preservation public works projects; to improve town and gown relationships; and to partner with local stakeholders in community economic development initiatives. Drawing on City as Text pedagogy, they have introduced new courses and academic programs into our curriculum, in the process making our co-curricular programming consistent with the values, mission, and heritage of the college (Long; Braid and Long; Machonis). City as Text has proven an effective vehicle through which our honors students have demonstrated inspirational leadership: a tale of multiple success stories that have evolved from their own imaginative uses of a productive framework.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT THROUGH CITY AS TEXT

For seven decades the local tourism industry has been a major contributor to the economy of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. The number of direct jobs in that industry makes tourism the county's sixth largest private sector, non-farm category in our local economy. In 2018, some 8.85 million visitors came to Lancaster, up 2.25% from the previous year. The tourism industry highlights rural communities of the Historic Peace Churches: Amish, Mennonites, Brethren, and Quakers. Chief among these religious sects, driving local tourism, are the Amish. Lancaster's Amish population reached 33,143 in 2018, up 3.2% from the previous year. In 1899, one of the Historic Peace Churches—the Church of the Brethren—founded Elizabethtown College. The college hosts an international center for scholarship about the Amish, Mennonites, Brethren, and Quakers. Ten miles from campus is Hershey, Pennsylvania, another prime tourist attraction. The Hershey Company funded the creation of the Elizabethtown College Honors Program in 2000.

City as Text is a perfect fit for a campus located in Lancaster County, a destination where people come to explore. The campus is located within one of Lancaster County's eighteen boroughs. These eighteenth-century small villages are perfect for exploring a local community on foot and experiencing community culture. The cities of Lancaster, Lebanon, Reading, and York introduce students to small urban experiences near campus. Easily accessible via the nearby Amtrak train station, just a mile from campus, are Harrisburg, the state capitol, just twenty miles away, and Philadelphia, the largest urban center, ninety miles away.

The Elizabethtown College motto "Educate for Service" is expressed in community-based learning courses that have been integrated into the curriculum. City as Text has given purpose and structure to our honors program's version of community-based learning courses and civic engagement opportunities. In its broader campus application, CAT has been a transformative experience for the majority of our students, most of whom have grown up in the suburbs that exist between one to one hundred miles from campus. As suburbanites, many of them have never thought of exploring the

quaint villages of Lancaster or the hamlets between Elizabethtown and Philadelphia along what we call "The Main Line." Most of our students have only been to Harrisburg, Philadelphia, or Baltimore to attend professional sporting events, and their entertainment, recreation, socialization, and even introspection have mostly occurred in the suburban mall. The mall has been the hub of their community: mall hallways are their main streets, the mall's food court their restaurant row, and the intersection of the mall anchor stores their own square or village green. Despite our emphasis on civic engagement, for many of them just crossing the street—leaving campus, going into the local town—is entering a new universe. For most of them, flying to a major U.S. city to attend NCHC's annual conference is a significant experience; thus the leadership they have demonstrated in integrating City as Text into their own curriculum is deeply impressive.

Initial success with City as Text contributed to our college's receipt of a Mellon Grant: "Confronting Challenges with Confidence: Humanities for Our World Today." Given the campus context, located among historic communities drawing millions of visitors who contributed $2.91 billion in tourism in 2018, an important component of the grant is "Regional Heritage Studies." CAT has been the approach students use to explore their local region. To date, the Mellon Grant has funded three honors courses with community-based learning components whose foundation is CAT pedagogy.

CURRICULUM TRANSFORMATION THROUGH CITY AS TEXT

Campus-wide curriculum has also benefited from applications of CAT. For more than thirty years, incoming students have been required to enroll in a First-Year Seminar. Based on scholarship and best practices identified by the National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience and Students in Transition at the University of South Carolina, we developed a First-Year Experience program to assist students in making a smooth transition from high school to college. The Mellon Grant's Regional Heritage Studies focus has added an Honors First-Year Seminar entitled "Landmarks and Legends: Learning Local History." Here, students learn about the history

of our campus, the local community, and the region. We want them to understand the context but also the role that their college and local community play in the region's contribution to a growing, lucrative tourist industry. Students are challenged to think critically about why people from around the nation and the world travel to Lancaster County to learn and explore and why so much scholarship has been generated about the region's Historic Peace Church communities.

Specifically, in the Landmarks and Legends: Learning Local History seminar, students are assigned historically significant people from the campus, community, and region about whom they author a biographical sketch. CAT inspires our students to develop and lead walking tours of campus and community. They design an ArcGIS map where they regularly publish their research findings with photographs from CAT explorations. These ArcGIS maps have opened a dialogue between students and alumni, faculty, staff, administrators, local residents, local government leaders, and community activists. An expression of the college's motto, "Educate for Service," is demonstrable civic engagement: first-year students' learning context uses CAT as a framework to engage with the heritage of the surrounding region.

CAT has also provided students with context for their service learning experiences and raised several questions: What does "Educate for Service" mean? What does it mean to be a member of a residential community? How is one part of a local community? How does one contribute to town and gown relations? How does City as Text inform understanding of civic engagement beyond volunteerism?

The positive impact of CAT practices has also led to the establishment of a Certificate in Public Heritage Studies, a new academic concentration in the history department for students pursuing graduate degrees and careers in public history. The required introductory course for this certificate is Honors 201: Elizabethtown History: Campus and Community. Students in this course are assigned a historically significant property in the local community. They conduct National Historic Preservation Act (NHPC) Section 106 Reviews of the properties. Their research involves extensive deed searches;

identification of historically significant people who have lived, worked, and worshipped on these properties; interpretation of the historical significance of architectural details; and investigation of the role, function, and purpose of the properties as they relate to the region's heritage.

Each year, honors students present their research findings on campus at the Scholarship and Creative Arts Day (SCAD) academic conference; at a similar one called the Summer Scholarship, Creative Arts and Research Projects (SCARP); at NCHC annual conferences; and at historic preservation conferences sponsored by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission. In every conference presentation, students reflect on how they made use of CAT in their own research for their regional heritage studies projects. In addition, the ArcGIS maps documenting the campus, local community, and regional heritage caught the attention of Pennsylvania's Department of Transportation's (PennDOT) Architectural Historian for District 8-0. CAT has since been used to facilitate a community-based collaboration between the Elizabethtown College Honors Program and the Architectural Historian for the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation.

Our first collaborative community-based learning project involved honors students enrolled in our local history research methods course using CAT interactive skills to conduct NHPC Section 106 Reviews for a historic preservation project sponsored by the Federal Department of Transportation. Elizabethtown Borough has a new bridge on Market Street designed to retain and preserve parts of one built in 1910; it was constructed on the remains of earlier bridges built in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Honors students published their findings on an ArcGIS map, and their scholarship was used by the Pennsylvania and Federal Departments of Transportation in filing the NHPC Section 106 Review necessary for this project. The community approval of the bridge design was based in part on the positive relationships students forged with local residents; of course, CAT was integrated into this community-based learning collaboration between town and gown.

Our second collaborative community-based learning project called on honors students enrolled in the same course to bolster a

grassroots campaign to save a local landmark from being razed. On the town square stands an enormous building that sets the architectural tone for its community. Built in the 1920s, this classic example of Colonial Revival Architectural style was home to the local lodge of the national fraternal organization the Loyal Order of Moose. For decades, this private space served a public function; it housed the headquarters for the local lodge but also featured a movie theater, ballroom, and retail space. The building's architect was Cassius Emlen Urban (1863–1939), a native of Lancaster County who designed more than one hundred buildings in the region and most of the structures in Hershey, Pennsylvania. Elizabethtown boasts the borough with the most buildings and homes he designed. Over ten of Urban's buildings are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Urban's Moose Lodge was slated for sale, with the intention of razing it to build a parking garage in the heart of this historic community. Honors students conducted NHPC Section 106 Reviews of this property and others Urban designed. Their scholarship was used by the Historic Preservation Trust of Lancaster County to launch a grassroots campaign to save the building. This historically and architecturally important property, purchased by the Church of the Brethren (the founding denomination of our college), is now being carefully restored to its original 1920s design and will serve a function once again that is true to its history and open to the public. CAT provided students with a strategy to explore this private-public space, informed their research, and helped them establish relations with community partners through carefully orchestrated civic engagement.

Our campus is located a few miles from the Susquehanna River. The town of Marietta, Pennsylvania, sits along the banks of this river and the former Pennsylvania Canal. Marietta is itself a National Historic District. For several years honors students have been working with thirteen community partners: the Lancaster Economic Development Company, the Lancaster County Planning Department, the Lancaster County Redevelopment Authority, the National Main Street Center, the Pennsylvania Downtown Center, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, Preservation Pennsylvania, the Marietta Restoration Associates, Our Marietta, RiverStewards, Susquehanna

Riverlands, Marietta Area Business Association, and the Marietta Borough. These efforts cultivate viable working relationships among local government and business leaders, residents, community-based organizations, and regional agencies, and this engagement benefits the community and the future economic development of Marietta Borough. Through exploration skills begun with CAT, our students are contributing to Marietta's asset-based planning process, which identifies and mobilizes existing as well as unrecognized resources that include physical, human, social, financial, environmental, political, cultural, and historic assets.

Based on their success with CAT applications connected to local opportunities, our students are introducing a "This Place Matters" campaign in Marietta. This Place Matters is a national campaign, created by the National Historic Preservation Trust, that encourages people to celebrate places meaningful to them and to their communities. Since 2015, participants in the Marietta campaign have shared more than ten thousand photographs of themselves and their favorite places on social media, using the hashtag #ThisPlaceMatters. The Trust provides a toolkit for communities to launch their own campaign. People around the world are sharing photos of places of historic significance. The campaign is not just public awareness through photography and social media; it tells the stories of why these places hold historic significance. Through This Place Matters, the Trust encourages and inspires an ongoing dialogue about the importance of place and preservation.

STUDY AWAY AND CITY AS TEXT

This level of community-based learning and civic engagement gained from structural application of CAT strategies is the basis of our first Honors Study Away program. Honors 170, a new course funded by the Mellon Grant, uses CAT structures for field exploration in the District of Columbia to learn about historic preservation; it is a laboratory in which students probe the complexities of protecting, preserving, and providing public access to American history. Because of COVID-19, the course did not run in May 2020, but when it runs post-pandemic, it will challenge students to think

critically about who determines what is a national, state, or local historic site; who decides which historic properties are worthy of preservation; how historical museums, sites, monuments, homes, battlefields, cemeteries, libraries, archives, and historical societies are established, governed, funded, and staffed; and what role these institutions play in educating the general public about history.

Honors students will spend the May term living and learning in Washington, D.C. They will learn about the politics of historic preservation past and present through mapping the city and studying with historians and professionals in related fields at historic sites. They will gain practical field experience and get a sense of potential careers in historic preservation, archival science, oral history, museum curatorship, and other related fields. During this process, they will begin to consider how their undergraduate experiences in community-based immersion projects can serve as preparation for a life of civic engagement that exemplifies "Educate for Service."

ORIENTATION AND CITY AS TEXT

An application of CAT and its implications that is closer to home for our students has to do with everyday campus life and events such as Orientation Day for newcomers. Although no one can remember why or when, for decades a component of fall orientation has included an event called "The First-Year Walk." First-Year Seminar Groups, led by their First-Year Seminar Peer Mentors, walk double-file off campus into Elizabethtown. They walk into town along Market Street (the main street) and continue back onto campus.

In the past, there has been no expressed purpose for this exercise except futile attempts to spur students to patronize local businesses. The greatest challenge experienced by incoming students with the First-Year Walk has been hazing from other students and verbal harassment from neighbors and passing motorists. Most recently, students of color and particularly women have been targets of racial and sexist bias incidents during this First-Year Walk. The population of Elizabethtown Borough is 11,445, 96.32% of whom are Caucasian. Student enrollment at the College is 1,622, 86.6% of whom are

Caucasian. Unfortunately, racial macroaggressions and microaggressions on and off campus are common.

In the fall of 2018 and 2019, honors students serving in the Student Senate and working as First-Year Peer Mentors introduced reforms in the First-Year Walk. They integrated City as Text into orientation planning. An honors student who participated in CAT at NCHC-Seattle and another who took part in NCHC-Boston's CAT sessions reinvented the First-Year Walk, running it like City as Text at NCHC. Incoming students in groups of three to four explored the entire borough, not just main street, interacting with local business owners and residential neighbors, learning about the local community, learning from each other, and engaging in self-reflection about what they saw and heard.

Instead of over four hundred students filing into town en masse, becoming targets for racial/ethnic harassment, students strategically integrated into the local setting. For the first time in decades, there was not one report of a racial harassment incident. Proprietors of local businesses, borough council leaders, community leaders, and residents described positively their interchanges with students and remarked that town and gown relations improved through this new design, which the honors student leaders proudly claimed as their version of NCHC's City as Text.

The next year during fall orientation, CAT provided the context for students to learn about the local community while engaging in service learning informed by the *Center for Community and Civic Engagement at Elizabethtown College: Community-Based Learning Faculty Handbook*, which has the following mission:

> In keeping with Elizabethtown College's educational philosophy of 'Educate for Service,' the Center for Community and Civic Engagement provides opportunities to strengthen scholarship and leadership beyond the classroom, in order for students to learn actively through practical experiences and civic engagement. (1)

While working on orientation programming with the college's Center for Community and Civic Engagement, honors students spearheaded

integrating service learning opportunities into the First-Year Walk while practicing City as Text methodology to introduce students to our local community. Proprietors of local businesses and others were impressed with how the students were exemplifying the college's motto, "Educate for Service." For the second consecutive year, there was not one report of a racial harassment incident, incoming students embraced City as Text strategies as they returned to the local community throughout the academic year to engage in their service learning projects.

Student Senators and First-Year Seminar Peer Mentors for whom City as Text and civic engagement were not part of their First-Year Walk experience, however, expressed opposition to these innovations. They demanded a return to the First-Year Walk of over four hundred students marching into town aimlessly, despite reports of harassment, arguing that it was "tradition." The Student Senate then announced that in the fall of 2020, City as Text and civic engagement would be removed from the First-Year Walk, so student leaders on the Honors Council responded by integrating City as Text formally into honors pre-orientation, a domain over which they had direct responsibility. Honors newcomers arrive two days ahead of the incoming class. They go off campus to nearby Gretna Glen to participate in an Honors Outdoor Orientation Trek (HOOT), engaging in a ropes challenge course. When they return to campus, they spend part of the day exploring their new local community. In the past, this local exploration operated with little intentional structure, but the Honors Council leaders who brought City as Text home from NCHC planned to integrate it into the post-ropes course challenge to explore the local surroundings in depth.

COVID-19 resulted in planning for 2020 taking place remotely. HOOT, facilitated by Zoom, focused on the leadership development typically achieved through the ropes course challenge. So as not to cause Zoom fatigue among students, the Honors Council decided to offer CAT remotely to begin the spring semester in 2021. Weaving students into their network of support as they returned to campus for spring 2021, a hybrid approach to CAT that was both online via Zoom and in person with social distancing was planned to kick off the second semester of the academic year for honors students.

Yet another way that CAT has transformed our orientation programming involves an academic advising program with a pre-orientation component called Momentum. The college created this program, funded by a grant from the Council of Independent Colleges in Washington, D.C., for first-generation students from racially/ethnically diverse underrepresented socioeconomic populations. Key components of the program have involved teaching students about the history of the campus, civically engaging in the local community, exploring local urban centers, and studying abroad. Momentum is tied to the college's key values, expressed by benefactor Mennonite Elmer Esbenshade (1881–1967), who wrote in 1967 that he believed "every youth, regardless of race, creed, or color, ought to prepare themselves for life by securing an education that will qualify them for some worthwhile vocation," adding that the world needs individuals who "will influence not only their own destiny, but also serve the interests and welfare of human kind." City as Text has been integrated into the curricular and co-curricular programming of Momentum, helping students gain confidence in living on campus, become part of the local community, develop as leaders on and off campus, and work as agents of change to make town and gown more inclusive. Momentum students believe CAT is in part responsible for their ability to have positive, transformative, cross-cultural experiences when they study abroad. Indeed, many Momentum students who have been awarded prestigious scholarships and fellowships attribute their success to CAT, explaining that it has provided them with the necessary tools and skills to navigate living abroad and has facilitated opportunities to practice citizen diplomacy.

Walt Whitman wrote in "Poem of The Road" from *Leaves of Grass*:

> You rows of houses! you window-pierc'd facades! you roofs!
> You porches and entrances! you copings and iron guards!
> You windows whose transparent shells might expose so much!
> You doors and ascending steps! you arches!
> You gray stones of interminable pavements! you trodden crossings!
> From all that has been near you I believe you have imparted to
> yourselves, and now would impart the same secretly to me,

> From the living and the dead I think you have peopled your impassive surfaces, and the spirits thereof would be evident and amicable with me. (225)

The poem's message is the same as City as Text's: get outside, take notice of the built environment, get inside the community, learn to know the people, dig deep, explore the neighborhoods and subcultures, then integrate and become civically engaged. Make a positive contribution to the place, and practice peacemaking: this is how City as Text has been a transformative experience for the Elizabethtown College Honors Program.

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Acts of Interpretation: Pedagogies of Inquiry

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> [T]he world is not given, it is not simply 'there.' We constitute it by acts of interpretation.
>
> —Jonathan Z. Smith, 1988

In Nadine Gordimer's 1970 novel *A Guest of Honour*, the central white figure, diplomat James Bray, is asked by a newly installed Black president to shift from the diplomatic sphere to organize educational structures for a newly minted Black national constituency. Intelligent, sensitive, and empathetic, Bray considers his own sophisticated background in the context of this semi-literate Southern African country and thinks: "What was needed was perhaps someone with a knowledge of the basic techniques of learning. Someone who could cut through the old assumptions that relied so heavily on a particular cultural background, and concentrate on the learning process itself" (109). Although not himself an educator, he addresses his assignment with a deep respect for the mass of needy people around him—for their keen observational skills, capacity to survive in their unpredictable surround, untapped abilities, and genius at reading innuendo.

Bray's attitudes and expectations are not so different from those of Paulo Freire. In his *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire argues forcefully against the European educational model that has shaped education in the new world for more than a century, a system that results in what he calls "the banking concept." This concept rests on a social structure that presumes student ignorance versus faculty knowledge; it presupposes a shared and self-validating or self-undermining cultural grounding in class, and it rests on "the assumption of a dichotomy between man and the world" (62). Freire argues that a pedagogy embodying so deep a hierarchical divide both expresses and enforces a power structure that militates against critical thinking. He advocates as a counteraction "the posing of the problems of [men] in their relations with the world." "Problem-posing education, responding to the essence of consciousness—INTENTIONALITY—rejects communiqués and embodies communication. . . . Liberating education consists in acts of cognition, not transferals of information" (66–67). Problem-posing methodology, Freire says, shifts the student-teacher relationship, which in turn shifts the entire learning/teaching enterprise: "The students—no longer docile listeners—are more critical co-investigators in dialogue with the teacher" (68). For him "the form of action [men] adopt is to a large extent a function of how they see themselves in the world" (71).

When I began working on City as Text™ (CAT) as an integrative strategy that would realign the classroom in order to build a problem-setting ambience for the kind of change Freire envisioned, the thinking of Parker J. Palmer was reaffirming. The dominant ethos of the academy in the1970s and 1980s, and in some ways still, posited a dichotomy between the campus and world that is antithetical to the problem-posing approach of Freire. Palmer urged students instead "to intersect their autobiographies with the life stories of the world" in his persuasive article "Community, Conflict, and Ways of Knowing" (22). Mapping and ways of knowing were a starting point.

City as Text, designed from its inception as a vehicle of integrative learning, offered the chance to provide a seminar cum field

laboratory in which students brought into discussion readings from social sciences, science, and literature (all focused on a theme chosen for its richness in the specific locale of a Semester) even as they grew familiar with that site in extended field explorations; students integrated the expertise of others into their own direct investigation undertaken almost weekly. Writing up their field notes for use as additional texts in seminar catalyzed rounds of questions about what was observed, by whom, and how. Inevitably the issue of "lens" came up. For example, when three or four students wrote about the same event or location, the puzzle of their seeing differing dramas unfold through multiple lenses moved to the center of discussion.

Student's lived experiences, reiterated and written up as texts for weekly classroom discussion, became additional information allowing entry into a new reality. Progression from reported text to innuendo, metaphor, nuance, and voice moved every session to questions of context and interpretation. The increasing emphasis on voice and perspective was powerful to professors in NCHC Honors Semesters and, as all of us veterans now know, transformative as well. Class discussion became almost immediately a "conversation among interpretations," in Jonathan Z. Smith's formulation (11). Just as quickly, discussion turned to the need for evidence: Whose eyes, what context, what words or tones? What made you think so?

An emphasis on evidence arising from explorations and from the discussions that ensued distinguishes CAT methodology as one among several sources of information and analysis in field-based seminars. The more a CAT seminar is embedded in a site-specific cluster of courses that represent varying domains of inquiry, the more effective is this approach to field-based pedagogy. Organic design enables integrative insights and nourishes skills of mapping, observing, interpreting, and reflecting to shape independent investigation and intellectual and emotional growth. (See Braid, "Field-Based Education.") The more various the disciplinary cluster, the more powerful the integrative dynamic of CAT.

The cumulative effect of repetition is a powerful promoter of students' sense of being in the moment and of connecting to an unfolding drama. Exploring and reporting back produce an

exhilaration that spurs motivation to redo it all autonomously and in self-selected destinations. Even the miniaturized versions of a preliminary CAT experience at NCHC conferences evoke an evident exhilaration and a desire to go out again independently, as our CAT colleagues always report at conference debriefings.

The emergence of interpretation as a key element in discovery—of place, of process, of self—is central to an understanding of how all of this CAT apparatus works. Students presenting their written summary respond to questions; queries about significant detail; considerations of that detail as support for the speaker's conclusions about meaning; and prolonged discussions of evidence to support those conclusions. As the discussions recur, students become increasingly aware that interpretation of events must be based on convincing evidence, and since the experience being reported is unique to the student presenting it, there is pressure to pinpoint precisely which aspects of the scene in question could provide that evidence. The unravelling of a scene so viscerally present in the mind of the reporter requires answers to questions about lens, context, tone, and preconception that undergird the overall question: "What makes you think so?" In turn, the sequence described here triggers some insight that surprises students even while they are leading a discussion about their own processes.

A need for specificity, for citing a range of detail including emotional content, rests on the metamorphosis of data points into patterns that shape meaning and interpretation. Witnessing their own thought processes, students who are far more accustomed to what they think of as "objective" reporting (often of other people's data points) react in powerful ways. The power of surpise may reside in their harvesting of what their own senses have revealed to them, which they now hear in their own voice. When their exploration of place incorporates material gleaned from scholarly readings as well as from their own insights, this laboratory exercise becomes an exemplary and adaptable instrument of integrative learning.

Examples of the process described here can be drawn from each of the more than thirty NCHC Semesters and more than forty Faculty Institutes sponsored by NCHC that have been designed and

facilitated by the Honors Semesters/Place as Text Committee. (In acknowledgment of the range of territory explored, from cities to farms to national parks to jungles, the name has morphed from City as Text to Place as Text.) Two kinds of assignments in all of them consistently reveal the power of perspective in the interpretive process: 1) an initial "Private Use of Public Space" exploration, timed to serve as an introduction to place; and 2) events/happenings/interactions written up by each of several observers who witness the same scene together, in which impromptu interviews of strangers, eavesdropping, and careful observation play an important part.

The subdivisions of these assignments include some version of Setting (Where, when, who is being watched, and who is with you?) Description of event (Who? What? Where? When?); Interpretation (What do you think is happening?); Analysis (What makes you think so? Is this included in any of the above?); Reflection (What did it feel like to witness this? Why?). Often there is an afterword: were you to see a scene like this again, would you behave or react differently? Why? Why not? This addition has been particularly revelatory in international study explorations.

One example of the Private Use of Public Space occurred when a small team of CAT participants explored NYC's Grand Central Terminal, where they listened to a guitarist playing for contributions. Most of the team reported on the entertainment value of the scene, responding with the voice of the entertained. One student, however, was struck by the way that a woman "intruded": she lectured the musician about how to save his soul and not waste time playing the guitar. This student was also bothered by the chatter that made it hard to hear the guitarist. To this student, the event was about interrupting his performance with demeaning comments and rude behavior. The woman interrupted the artist to engage in a competitive and paradoxically private exchange. Group discussion was lively and included considering issues of whether the performance is private use in the first place. The student who objected to the interruptions, however, took a strong position that spectators who chose to stand in the circle close to the player violated his space if they spoke loudly. They had no right to be so insensitive

to a performer. What the entire seminar moved into was a serious discussion of perspective, of what it means to take a stand on a committed attitude or to take a position and then use that lens to read events that evolve from that position and attitude. "Eyewitness Testimony," in short, became a concern of these pilgrims to New York City, especially since they felt called upon to witness so much during their explorations and because they thought of themselves as "objective" and therefore as "innocent bystanders."

From there to framing their own discussion of insider/outsider status in all human interactions, or just what being a participant-observer feels like, was a short step. Moving through the varied versions of the same incident as the team members each presented the experience was both traumatic and deeply revealing. They all had begun by feeling like innocent bystanders, objective reporters on a simple scene, witnessing events with no viewpoint, and ended by having to explain multiple interpretations of a now not so simple or singular scene.

If listening to street music is so complicated, imagine a small CAT team attending a nighttime street fair in a poor and unstable neighborhood in the 1980s when New York was teeming with hostilities. Or picture this scene: American students and faculty are in Guatemala City on the first day of City as Text, visiting a museum and witnessing a small family group of ethnically clothed women and children sitting in a circle having lunch on the grounds; they try to take a photograph of the group and realize that the mothers were turning their backs on them in an attempt to protect their children from the gaze of strangers. A young man with camera in hand wrote in his Afterword that he would never use his camera on people again after having felt "shut out" by using it to capture people.

The act of interpreting is the act of constituting the world. Speaking of writers who observe but who also live in a contested time, South African Nadine Gordimer states: "One thing is clear: ours is a period when few can claim the absolute value of a writer without reference to a context of responsibilities" (*Essential Gesture* 288). The responsibilities of which Gordimer speaks extend to

citizens, witnesses, and participants in society, and it is what our students pick up and live with once they have finished their studies and have their lived experiences to count on when they travel through new spaces.

When the student reacted to the scene in Grand Central as though she were in a formal concert hall, not at a street performance, she constructed a metaphor that clarified elements of the scene for her, but the clarification itself conferred complicity on her, making her feel uncomfortable with both her colleagues and the guitarist. A moment in a public station—described, interpreted, and analyzed—carries with it a blindingly complex image that captures a profound ambiguity in social interactions. Witnessing it while being part of it confers a distressing realization of what insider/outsider really means, and the attempt to see patterns in the fast-shifting drama begins to amplify an emerging significance in the scene. As students extend their explorations into neighborhoods, schoolyards, and parks, and as they return to these places multiple times to develop a sense of how people actually live in this location, they invent symbolic language to reflect what they see more clearly, what they begin to see as more complex and elusive.

This use of language manifests itself during semester-long courses because the students write three extended essays, one at the end of each section of the course: 1) Introduction, 2) First Module, and 3) Second Module. For these assignments students are given a prompt to review explorations with differing concerns. In the first they look for patterns to analyze, like architectural facilities that they think say something about the history of this place. In the second, they examine aspects of social structure that might reveal relatively hidden dimensions of life, like signs of wealth or poverty, community or estrangement: clues to the pace of life in this site and pressures that might shape life here. In both instances they can pull evidence for their discussion out of their own exploratory accounts and their readings. The third essay is different; it is an invitation to reread all their written work, especially their responses during the CAT course; review the prior Turning Point Essays very carefully; and answer one of these questions: 1) Do you understand or see the

theme of this semester more clearly or differently now than when you arrived here? OR 2) Do you understand or see your own way of thinking more clearly or differently than when you arrived here? In either choice, students need to describe the event(s) to which they attribute this shift and why.

The analysis students undertake in these three essays, particularly the final one, reveals the power of their own words to students; they see what results from articulating how and why they developed the lenses at work in the critical or turning point moments that might account for an emerging sense of responsibility. The analysis is an invitation to examine critically the building of a personal vocabulary, to think about where it came from, and to pinpoint what preconceptions, events, or reactions gave it shape. They tend to see exposed both their language and their effort to express the ambiguity in social interaction, to witness in themselves the weight of complicity arising from their growing empathy for people in places that have become their "lab space." Almost always, they record a moment of surprise once they note some "change" or insight taking shape on the pages of their essay, one that is pivotal to their acute feeling of discovery.

Their discovery of a self-in-process might be simply the identification of a distaste. For example, a student from Omaha wrote that he realized he "hated the subway in New York" and then several years later showed up at the door of my New York office, saying, "I'm here because I miss the subway." NCHC has always offered its Honors Semesters as adventures of discovery, but increasingly what has emerged is a cohort of alumni who demonstrate that the Semesters are also an immersion in feeling connected to the world, a chance to grow the conviction that wherever they stand, they occupy a spot in which they have become, perhaps in spite of themselves, actors in other people's dramas while making them their own. Above all, they show us that they have learned to trust their insights and to articulate their interpretations of the world; they have learned that without acts of interpretation, they remain outsiders in their own lives.

The students have left behind a trail of their efforts to keep in touch with their cohort with, for instance, private links to internet accounts to facilitate cohort communication, and they have staged reunions, at the site of their Semester, such as Prague and New York City, if possible. As a result, we know how many have undertaken significant activities to enhance social justice: Peace Corps; public sector careers; advocacy paths in chosen professions. We also see, even in the four- to six-day Faculty Institutes that we have hosted, that the surprises revealed in the Turning Point essays simmer over time and percolate into the realization of what Parker J. Palmer meant when he wrote: "The WAY we know has powerful implications for the WAY we live. I argue that any epistemology tends to become an ethic, and that every way of knowing tends to become a way of living" (25).

One provocative illustration of the integrative push inherent in City as Text/Place as Text methodology is the following Turning Point Essay from the 2008 Metropolis: BERLIN Institute, in which we can see that the methodology is a means to overcome intellectual habits of separating ourselves, of disengaging the self from world, in order to figure out what our observations might actually mean. The Berlin Institute, a collaboration between NCHC and the International Institute of Education, was set in the heart of the city. Faculty participants had read historical articles and literature of the pre-WWII era and spent several days interrogating monuments that Berliners had created to represent their troublesome history. Faculty also explored neighborhoods ranging from high-end to immigrant areas, great cultural institutions, open markets, and centers of political power. Participants represented the globe, half from the United States and half from elsewhere, and included several local educators as well. Both lodging and meeting rooms were in the former Eastern sector, but explorations of both sides of the former Wall were among the focused assignments already completed before Jesse Peters wrote about his Berlin experience. Like most of the Seminar participants, Peters was a newcomer to Berlin. This is his response to Assignment #3, the Turning Point essay:

"BERLINER?"

I can't say what I want to say. Perhaps I don't even know what that is. I have moved deliberately through the streets of Berlin for four days, and I am tired. The city has felt deliberate to me, as if every action and decision has a purpose and there is no rest here, nothing that is decadently meaningless. But still, there has been laughter around me, and pride, moments that let me know that not everything is completely planned and metered out. I have been to the flea market, the Turkish Market, Kolwitzplatz, Alexanderplatz, Potsdamerplatz, the memorial to the murdered Jews of the Holocaust, Brandenburg Gate, the topography of terror exhibit, the Neue Nationalgallerie, and many points in between. And yet, if someone asked me to describe Berlin, it would be a difficult task.

I have seen many faces of the city and many packages of the "Berlin 'experience.'" None of them have defined the city for me, and I am sure I have packaged it myself a hundred times over. Perhaps that is the most valuable result of this experience; it forces us to look beyond ourselves and to become aware of who we are in the context of where we are, to start to define ourselves as we consciously engage with others. Identity is not stagnant, nor should one want it to be. It depends upon how we imagine, articulate, and evaluate ourselves. The City as Text experience can help us do that.

For me, Berlin has been a particularly fertile ground for these experiments. It seems one of the most complex cities in the world, one that is steeped in intricate history and has been labeled by drastic events occurring over a relatively short period of time. As an outsider, it has been difficult, and even felt a bit impossible, to accurately grasp and describe Berlin. I know that the struggle for meaning and the terrible task of putting that meaning into language are a valuable endeavor, one that we hope our students learn to

accept as part of what it means to be human. At the same time, it is an activity that demands a lot of self-reflection, and we all know that the mirror is rarely kind.

I will say that I have enjoyed the experience. It has been especially beneficial to draw upon the kindness and openness of the German participants. I hope I speak for many of us when I thank you for your generosity. I for one learned much from you. And as I sit here tonight, thinking over the days I have spent with you all in this magnificent city, I find myself at a loss for words and still grasping for answers. If pressed, I would probably say that maybe "fatherland" does describe Germany best. Sometimes it feels that it is like a land that has known no mother, has felt no gentle hand stroke its hair, to hold it and help it through those most terrible darknesses.

That is the best I can do right now and that is certainly neither a fair nor complete description. So having nothing else, I give you this poem and hope that you see something in it that means something to you.

"Sprechen Sie"

The text of Berlin opens quickly,
as if there are no secrets,
no walls between
what I want to know and
what there is to know.
German words, German sounds
fill me up, but I can only manage
a quiet "bitte,"
not nearly enough.

I ride the Spree, claiming it
with camera and beer
taking something away from the isolate
Black clarinet player, his tune bouncing
off the bright Bundestag

with its deep blue seats
and silent silver eagle—

"For the People who Live in Germany,"
they tell me, with the glass
newly washed and the sun reflected down,
chambered for the people.
Will the garden cover the words?

On the roof, the city shifts,
cranes swing, buildings fall
only to be built again, glass and steel
rise from Alexanderplatz, Potsdamerplatz, Freidrichstrasse,
the streets narrow and people walk
fast in chic sunglasses, drinking
Starbucks coffee.

I look for what I can.

I see a swan nesting
beside the Boden museum,
a boy playing accordion under a tree,
Polizei guarding a synagogue,
a blue-eyed Turkish girl smiling in the market,
the U-bahn ticket police interrogating a Korean man,
a man on the S-bahn singing "der leiben,"
signs for Sony, Hyatt, Bentley,
men who love architecture,
starkly gray stones on the ground,
the trees Jews hung from.

Is this what I am supposed to know, to feel, to read?

Berlin has not answered me.
It does not march forward,
or pulse with light and dark.
The green man does not stay
bright for long at the crosswalk.
The bicycles will run you over.

Berlin writhes around
right in front of me, disturbingly
attractive, forbidden.
I walk the streets, wanting to hear
its rhythm, feel its breath.

I bend down low,
listening close,
hoping it might
speak to me.

What stands out from this reflection, written only five days after arrival at an unfamiliar place, is an emerging sense of being situated, contingent, and implicated, all at the same time. The writer has sought out repetitions, contradictions, and patterns that might bring together information from political and historical readings, artifacts that clearly speak—eloquently and loudly—of a disturbing political past, and attitudinal information derived from the voices of a discussion group so composite and diverse. A good ear has resulted in notes of dissonance and defense; a good eye has recorded evidence of defiance and distress in the stones of the city.

The importance of working in a cohort of explorers, whose intention it is to collect information from the sights, sounds, smells, and touches these explorations provide (Bundestag session vs. Turkish Street Market); the discomfort of reporting on all of this in a seminar with people who respond with diverse perspectives and the attempt to write about early impressions as they become confusing experiences: all are part of the interpretive process. Usually that process remains implicit and may remain tacit, but in the seminar structure of this pedagogy, people begin to articulate it, and in that effort they discover the "power of their own words" (Gordimer, *Essential Gesture* 293).

For students, engaging in these complex activities helps them overcome their dualistic thinking and over time buffers anxiety about seeing social activity as deeply ambiguous. They learn, in their repeated observations, often undertaken with partners and always with a focus on fully public activity, that to detect what Clifford Geertz calls "blurred genres" requires that they engage in what

he calls "thick description," a term of art pivotal to his thinking and writing. (See "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture," pp. 3–30, in *The Interpretation of Cultures*.)

> The point for now is only that ethnography is thick description. . . . [A] multiplicity of complex conceptual structures, many of them superimposed upon or knotted into one another, which are at once strange, irregular, and inexplicit, and which [the ethnographer] must contrive somehow first to grasp and then to render. (Geertz, *Interpretation* 9–10)

The process involves observation, description, interpretation, analysis, and reflection, and it culminates as practices in City as Text always do with the sharing of written records and engaging in full discussion of them. It is the interchange of comments that reveals multiplicity of analysis and that fosters further and deeper reflection.

This entire sequence commits students to ongoing acts of interpretation, which they engage in as they develop their ability to observe themselves observing and succeed in "intersecting their autobiographies with the life study of the world," as Palmer urges us all to do (23). The full sequence, especially when practiced multiple times, leads students to experience themselves as connected to events around them, and a feeling of complicity and responsibility confirms that connection.

The ultimate accomplishment is to foster a habit of mind. Data, theories, and hypotheses from a variety of disciplines, such as history, political/economic theory, science, and aesthetic expression, collide. The world as revealed by synthesizing a composite of patterns perceived in lived experience and seen through the lens of those perceptions—what Jonathan Z. Smith calls "acts of interpretation" (8)—cuts across realms of inquiry and contested experience; it is anchored in self-awareness in context and enables commitments on which civic action and social engagement are based for alumni of "as text" adventures.

The field laboratory is the indispensable component of cross-disciplinary, problem-setting inquiry that connects students to themselves; it sharpens observational skills and creates a taste for interrogating impressions drawn from existential insights, for

discovering what being situated but contingent feels like. The lessons are provocative and lasting. The empathy emanating from these complexities, once analyzed and reflected on, enhances a sense of being-in-the-world and triggers, for many, action culminating in civic engagement.

The crucial step is to synthesize, to assemble disparate images and points of information into patterns whose meanings contain apparently contradictory or divergent information. City as Text inspires students and faculty who juggle their observational, lived experiences and—by acts of interpretation as Smith asserts—discover their world and their contested place in it. They are not onlookers. They discover themselves as participants, responsible for what they see, say, and do.

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ABOUT THE NCHC MONOGRAPH SERIES

The Publications Board of the National Collegiate Honors Council typically publishes two to three monographs a year. The subject matter and style range widely: from handbooks on nuts-and-bolts practices and discussions of honors pedagogy to anthologies on diverse topics addressing honors education and issues relevant to higher education.

The Publications Board encourages people with expertise interested in writing such a monograph to submit a prospectus. Prospective authors or editors of an anthology should submit a proposal discussing the purpose or scope of the manuscript; a prospectus that includes a chapter by chapter summary; a brief writing sample, preferably a draft of the introduction or an early chapter; and a *curriculum vitae*. All monograph proposals will be reviewed by the NCHC Publications Board.

We accept material by email attachment in Word (not pdf).

Direct all proposals, manuscripts, and inquiries about submitting a proposal to the General Editor of the NCHC Monograph Series:

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Assessing and Evaluating Honors Programs and Honors Colleges: A Practical Handbook by Rosalie Otero and Robert Spurrier (2005, 98pp). This monograph includes an overview of assessment and evaluation practices and strategies. It explores the process for conducting self-studies and discusses the differences between using consultants and external reviewers. It provides a guide to conducting external reviews along with information about how to become an NCHC-Recommended Site Visitor. A dozen appendices provide examples of "best practices."

Beginning in Honors: A Handbook by Samuel Schuman (Fourth Edition, 2006, 80pp). Advice on starting a new honors program. Covers budgets, recruiting students and faculty, physical plant, administrative concerns, curriculum design, and descriptions of some model programs.

Breaking Barriers in Teaching and Learning edited by James Ford and John Zubizarreta (2018, 252pp). This volume—with wider application beyond honors classrooms and programs—offers various ideas, practical approaches, experiences, and adaptable models for breaking traditional barriers in teaching and learning. The contributions inspire us to retool the ways in which we teach and create curriculum and to rethink our assumptions about learning. Honors education centers on the power of excellence in teaching and learning. Breaking free of barriers allows us to use new skills, adjusted ways of thinking, and new freedoms to innovate as starting points for enhancing the learning of all students.

Building Honors Contracts: Insights and Oversights edited by Kristine A. Miller (2020, 320pp). Exploring the history, pedagogy, and administrative structures of mentored student learning, this collection of essays lays a foundation for creative curricular design and for honors contracts being collaborative partnerships involving experiential learning. This book offers a blueprint for building honors contracts that transcend the transactional.

The Demonstrable Value of Honors Education: New Research Evidence edited by Andrew J. Cognard-Black, Jerry Herron, and Patricia J. Smith (2019, 292pp). Using a variety of different methods and exploring a variety of different outcomes across a diversity of institutions and institution types, the contributors to this volume offer research that substantiates in measurable ways the claims by honors educators of value added for honors programming.

Fundrai$ing for Honor$: A Handbook by Larry R. Andrews (2009, 160pp). Offers information and advice on raising money for honors, beginning with easy first steps and progressing to more sophisticated and ambitious fundraising activities.

A Handbook for Honors Administrators by Ada Long (1995, 117pp). Everything an honors administrator needs to know, including a description of some models of honors administration.

A Handbook for Honors Programs at Two-Year Colleges by Theresa A. James (2006, 136pp). A useful handbook for two-year schools contemplating beginning or redesigning their honors program and for four-year schools doing likewise or wanting to increase awareness about two-year programs and articulation agreements. Contains extensive appendices about honors contracts and a comprehensive bibliography on honors education.

The Honors College Phenomenon edited by Peter C. Sederberg (2008, 172pp). This monograph examines the growth of honors colleges since 1990: historical and descriptive characterizations of the

trend, alternative models that include determining whether becoming a college is appropriate, and stories of creation and recreation. Leaders whose institutions are contemplating or taking this step as well as those directing established colleges should find these essays valuable.

Honors Composition: Historical Perspectives and Contemporary Practices by Annmarie Guzy (2003, 182pp). Parallel historical developments in honors and composition studies; contemporary honors writing projects ranging from admission essays to theses as reported by over 300 NCHC members.

Honors Programs at Smaller Colleges by Samuel Schuman (Third Edition, 2011, 80pp). Practical and comprehensive advice on creating and managing honors programs with particular emphasis on colleges with fewer than 4,000 students.

The Honors Thesis: A Handbook for Honors Directors, Deans, and Faculty Advisors by Mark Anderson, Karen Lyons, and Norman Weiner (2014, 176pp). To all those who design, administer, and implement an honors thesis program, this handbook offers a range of options, models, best practices, and philosophies that illustrate how to evaluate an honors thesis program, solve pressing problems, select effective requirements and procedures, or introduce a new honors thesis program.

Housing Honors edited by Linda Frost, Lisa W. Kay, and Rachael Poe (2015, 352pp). This collection of essays addresses the issues of where honors lives and how honors space influences educators and students. This volume includes the results of a survey of over 400 institutions; essays on the acquisition, construction, renovation, development, and even the loss of honors space; a forum offering a range of perspectives on residential space for honors students; and a section featuring student perspectives.

If Honors Students Were People: Holistic Honors Education by Samuel Schuman (2013, 256pp). What if honors students were people? What if they were not disembodied intellects but whole persons with physical bodies and questing spirits? Of course . . . they are. This monograph examines the spiritual yearnings of college students and the relationship between exercise and learning.

Inspiring Exemplary Teaching and Learning: Perspectives on Teaching Academically Talented College Students edited by Larry Clark and John Zubizarreta (2008, 216pp). This rich collection of essays offers valuable insights into innovative teaching and significant learning in the context of academically challenging classrooms and programs. The volume provides theoretical, descriptive, and practical resources, including models of effective instructional practices, examples of successful courses designed for enhanced learning, and a list of online links to teaching and learning centers and educational databases worldwide.

Internationalizing Honors edited by Kim Klein and Mary Kay Mulvaney (2020, 468pp.). This monograph takes a holistic approach to internationalization, highlighting how honors has gone beyond providing short-term international experiences for students and made global issues and experiences central features of curricular and co-curricular programming. The chapters present case studies that serve as models for honors programs and colleges seeking to initiate and further their internationalization efforts.

Occupy Honors Education edited by Lisa L. Coleman, Jonathan D. Kotinek, and Alan Y. Oda (2017, 394pp). This collection of essays issues a call to honors to make diversity, equity, and inclusive

excellence its central mission and ongoing state of mind. Echoing the AAC&U declaration "without inclusion there is no true excellence," the authors discuss transformational diversity, why it is essential, and how to achieve it.

The Other Culture: Science and Mathematics Education in Honors edited by Ellen B. Buckner and Keith Garbutt (2012, 296pp). A collection of essays about teaching science and math in an honors context: topics include science in society, strategies for science and non-science majors, the threat of pseudoscience, chemistry, interdisciplinary science, scientific literacy, philosophy of science, thesis development, calculus, and statistics.

Partners in the Parks: Field Guide to an Experiential Program in the National Parks by Joan Digby with reflective essays on theory and practice by student and faculty participants and National Park Service personnel (First Edition, 2010, 272pp). This monograph explores an experiential learning program that fosters immersion in and stewardship of the national parks. The topics include program designs, group dynamics, philosophical and political issues, photography, wilderness exploration, and assessment.

Partners in the Parks: Field Guide to an Experiential Program in the National Parks edited by Heather Thiessen-Reily and Joan Digby (Second Edition, 2016, 268pp). This collection of recent photographs and essays by students, faculty, and National Park Service rangers reflects upon PITP experiential learning projects in new NPS locations, offers significant refinements in programming and curriculum for revisited projects, and provides strategies and tools for assessing PITP adventures.

Place as Text: Approaches to Active Learning edited by Bernice Braid and Ada Long (Second Edition, 2010, 128pp). Updated theory, information, and advice on experiential pedagogies developed within NCHC during the past 35 years, including Honors Semesters and City as Text™, along with suggested adaptations to multiple educational contexts.

Place, Self, Community: City as Text™ in the Twenty-First Century edited by Bernice Braid and Sara E. Quay (2021, 228pp). This monograph focuses on the power of structured explorations and forms of immersion in place. It explores the inherent integrative learning capacity to generate a sense of interconnectedness, the ways that this pedagogical strategy affects professors as well as students, and instances of experiential learning outcomes that illustrate the power of integrative learning to produce social sensitivity and engagement.

Preparing Tomorrow's Global Leaders: Honors International Education edited by Mary Kay Mulvaney and Kim Klein (2013, 400pp). A valuable resource for initiating or expanding honors study abroad programs, these essays examine theoretical issues, curricular and faculty development, assessment, funding, and security. The monograph also provides models of successful programs that incorporate high-impact educational practices, including City as Text™ pedagogy, service learning, and undergraduate research.

Setting the Table for Diversity edited by Lisa L. Coleman and Jonathan D. Kotinek (2010, 288pp). This collection of essays provides definitions of diversity in honors, explores the challenges and opportunities diversity brings to honors education, and depicts the transformative nature of diversity when

coupled with equity and inclusion. These essays discuss African American, Latinx, international, and first-generation students as well as students with disabilities. Other issues include experiential and service learning, the politics of diversity, and the psychological resistance to it. Appendices relating to NCHC member institutions contain diversity statements and a structural diversity survey.

Shatter the Glassy Stare: Implementing Experiential Learning in Higher Education edited by Peter A. Machonis (2008, 160pp). A companion piece to *Place as Text*, focusing on recent, innovative applications of City as Text™ teaching strategies. Chapters on campus as text, local neighborhoods, study abroad, science courses, writing exercises, and philosophical considerations, with practical materials for instituting this pedagogy.

Teaching and Learning in Honors edited by Cheryl L. Fuiks and Larry Clark (2000, 128pp). Presents a variety of perspectives on teaching and learning useful to anyone developing new or renovating established honors curricula.

Writing on Your Feet: Reflective Practices in City as Text™ edited by Ada Long (2014, 160pp). A sequel to the NCHC monographs *Place as Text: Approaches to Active Learning* and *Shatter the Glassy Stare: Implementing Experiential Learning in Higher Education*, this volume explores the role of reflective writing in the process of active learning while also paying homage to the City as Text™ approach to experiential education that has been pioneered by Bernice Braid and sponsored by NCHC during the past four decades.

***Journal of the National Collegiate Honors Council* (*JNCHC*)** is a semi-annual periodical featuring scholarly articles on honors education. Articles may include analyses of trends in teaching methodology, articles on interdisciplinary efforts, discussions of problems common to honors programs, items on the national higher education agenda, and presentations of emergent issues relevant to honors education.

***Honors in Practice* (*HIP*)** is an annual journal of applied research publishing articles about innovative honors practices and integrative, interdisciplinary, and pedagogical issues of interest to honors educators.

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—*Bernice Braid*

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