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JNCHC

JOURNAL OF THE NATIONAL COLLEGIATE HONORS COUNCIL

Fall/Winter 2009

Vol. 10, No. 2

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JNCHC

**JOURNAL OF THE
NATIONAL COLLEGIATE HONORS COUNCIL**

A PUBLICATION OF THE NATIONAL COLLEGIATE HONORS COUNCIL

HONORS IN THE DIGITAL AGE

JOURNAL EDITORS

ADA LONG

DAIL MULLINS

UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA AT BIRMINGHAM

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EDITORIAL POLICY

Journal of the National Collegiate Honors Council is a refereed periodical publishing scholarly articles on honors education. The journal uses a double-blind peer review process. 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. Submissions and inquiries should be directed to Ada Long at adalong@uab.edu.

DEADLINES

March 1 (for spring/summer issue); September 1 (for fall/winter issue)

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Cover design by Dail Mullins.

CALL FOR PAPERS

The next issue of *JNCHC* (**deadline: March 1, 2010**) invites research essays on any topic of interest to the honors community.

The issue will also include a Forum focused on the theme “Honors and Athletics.” We invite essays of roughly a thousand words that consider this theme in the context of your campus and/or a national context.

Questions to consider might include: Is *mens sano in corpore sano* a concept relevant to honors? Are intercollegiate athletics an asset or disruption to the honors community? In what way have intramural sports added to or subtracted from the honors community? Is the analogy between honors and athletics a useful tool for gaining special privileges for honors students such as priority registration? Is this analogy apt, and are these privileges ethical? Are the honors director and sports coach natural enemies or allies? Does the special attention given to athletes help justify special attention for honors students? Does the brouhaha that surrounds high-profile athletics help or interfere with recruiting and fundraising for honors? Are scholar-athletes an important benefit to honors?

Forum essays should focus on ideas, concepts, and/or opinions related to “Honors and Athletics.” Examples from one’s own campus can be and usually are relevant, but the essays should not simply be descriptions of “what we do at our institution.”

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

We accept material by e-mail attachment. We do not accept material by fax or hard copy.

The documentation style can be whatever is appropriate to the author’s primary discipline or approach (MLA, APA, etc.), but please avoid footnotes. Internal citation to a list of references (bibliography) is preferred.

There are no minimum or maximum length requirements; the length should be dictated by the topic and its most effective presentation.

Accepted essays will be edited for grammatical and typographical errors and for infelicities of style or presentation. Authors will have ample opportunity to review and approve edited manuscripts before publication.

Submissions and inquiries should be directed to Ada Long at adalong@uab.edu or, if necessary, 850.927.3776.

DEDICATION



LOTHAR L. TRESP

Professor Emeritus of History at the University of Georgia, Lothar Tresp has not only studied history but participated in and—within the context of the NCHC—made it. Born in East Prussia in 1927, Dr. Tresp’s high school education was interrupted by the war. In 1945, he was wounded in combat while serving in the German *Wehrmacht*. Subsequently, he finished high school and then college, later earning his Ph.D. from the University of Würzburg. Having already been a Fulbright Fellow at the University of Georgia, he immigrated to the United States in 1952 to begin his teaching career, returning to the University of Georgia in 1957 and remaining there until his retirement in 1994. After serving as Assistant and then Acting Director of the fledgling UGA Honors Program, Tresp became Director in 1967, a position he maintained for over a quarter of a century. While building his own program, he also was instrumental in the early development of the NCHC, serving on the Executive Committee and then becoming Vice President and President (1974-76). He was also the co-founder and first president of the Southern Regional Honors Council. Throughout most of the 1980s (1981-87), Tresp was Executive Secretary/Treasurer of the NCHC, and throughout his honors career he served as consultant to over thirty honors programs and gave countless presentations at national and regional conferences. His many accomplishments were acknowledged throughout his career

by, for instance, his selection as a Ford Fellow in Academic Administration, numerous teaching and service awards in and outside of honors, and the Honoratus Award, shown in the photo above. Lothar Tresp has had an incalculable influence on the NCHC and on honors education in this country, dignifying it with his indomitable commitment to excellence in education. We proudly dedicate this issue of *JNCHC* to the historian from East Prussia who helped shape the history of honors in the United States.

Editor's Introduction

ADA LONG

UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA AT BIRMINGHAM

Two decades ago, most honors directors and deans were not yet using email, nobody was hooked up to the Internet because it did not exist, and the NCHC conducted all of its business by mail. Those of us with computers used MSDOS and said “F9” as a synonym for “delete”; our desks were buried under heavy machines attached to a mesh of cords that kept us hogtied. The telephone (I’m talking landline) was the most important communication device on our desks at home or on campus. Our waste baskets bore heavy loads of paper messages and memos. Now we have entered the world of wikis and word clouds, of Flickr and Facebook, of Wordle, Scratch, and Clickers, where CPR stands for a strategy not of resuscitation but of Calibrated Peer Review. In addition to its intrinsic interest, this particular JNCHC Forum may be a curious artifact in the not-too-distant future, when we might look back at terms like Flickr and Wordle with the same amused nostalgia we now feel for MSDOS and the Commodore 64.

My guess is that, while virtually all of us have adapted to the rapid digitalization of our scholarly, administrative, and personal lives, the classroom is another matter; it is a contested site where tradition meets innovation, happily or unhappily, with a range of attitudes from skepticism to enthusiasm. Honors programs and colleges, with their history of both innovation and one-on-one interaction between teachers and students, have a special place in the convergence of new and old pedagogies.

Thus, the time is ripe for a *JNCHC* Forum on the theme “Honors in the Digital Age.” We invited essays of roughly a thousand words that consider this theme in the context of a single campus or in a national context. George Mariz of Western Washington University provided the lead essay for the Forum in an essay titled “Honors in the Electronic Age.” Contributors to the Forum were invited to respond to his essay or take an independent approach.

Mariz begins his consideration of “Honors in the Electronic Age” by balancing the virtues and pitfalls of technology in any intellectual pursuit, especially within academia. Then, after a general comparison of how honors and non-honors students approach their education, Mariz contrasts the ways they typically make use of technology in their studies. He concludes that honors students, as they do and always have done in all their intellectual pursuits, tend to put the tools available to them—in this instance, digital technologies—to

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

the best uses in their research and self-education: "They now have new tools that allow them to produce work that differs from what most other students produce in about the same way as before the electronic revolution." At the same time, all students—honors and non-honors—can now perform at a higher level given the new tools available to them.

Four of the essays in the Forum respond directly or indirectly to the issues Mariz raised, considering the broad context within which digital transformations have taken place in the academic world and in honors education.

We begin the responses with "Postmodern Prometheans: Academic Libraries, Information Technologies, and the Cut-and-Paste Aesthetic" by Emily Walshe of Long Island University, C. W. Post Campus. Walshe gives us an exceptionally witty, sophisticated, and insightful analysis of the academic and cultural differences between our students and ourselves. Accustomed to the "act of viewing" rather than the "act of reading," to horizontal skimming rather than vertical understanding, and to abstracts as a replacement rather than a starting point for reading texts, students take in and produce materials in the mode of wikis, blogs, and RSS feeds. Online information providers are attuned to their needs, not to the needs of the traditional scholar. The mandate for honors teachers and administrators, Walshe writes, is not to acquiesce to the culture of their students but to "teach our millennial learners to honor the sovereignty of original thought, especially their own, by resisting the popular impulse to pare down and stuff. . . ." The particular relevance of "pare down and stuff" requires a reading of the whole essay.

Richard Badenhausen of Westminster College (Utah) makes a different kind of interesting observation about students and their teachers in "Immigrant Song: A Cautionary Note about Technology and Honors." He distinguishes between technological natives (virtually all of our students) and "digital immigrants" (almost all faculty members). A consequence of when we were born, this distinction signals a significant contrast in culture. While teachers, like all immigrants, struggle to adapt to a new, fast-paced, multi-tasking, technologically challenging culture, they would be wise also to use the honors classroom as a place where their students can experience an intellectually challenging culture, one in which they have time to rest and reflect.

In "Digital Deliberations," Stephen A. Yoder of the University of Alabama at Birmingham acknowledges some of the concerns expressed by Walshe and Badenhausen while also echoing Mariz's point that, although the digital era provides a new context, the basic issues remain the same. Yoder considers the pitfalls of any deliberative process and suggests that digital forums such as blogs and wikis magnify these dangers. Addressing Cass Sunstein's insights and terminology in *Infotopia: How Many Minds Produce Knowledge*, Yoder describes ways that honors faculty can provide their

students with the analytical tools necessary to successful deliberation, both on- and off-line.

Richard Ira Scott and Donna Bowman of the University of Central Arkansas have an upbeat perspective on the beneficial uses of technology in their essay “It’s the Pedagogy, Stupid.” They suggest that online technologies such as blogs and podcasts add new pedagogical opportunities for term projects such as collaborative writing where peer-to-peer learning can supplement and enhance traditional educational strategies. These new technologies can transform the educational process, empowering students to interact not just with the teacher and each other but also with a larger audience beyond the classroom. These technologies also open up opportunities for external evaluation of student work in a manner similar to juried art competitions and athletic events.

The remaining six essays all echo the arguments of Scott and Bowman as they provide examples of particular digital technologies that have improved opportunities in their honors programs or colleges.

In “Building a Better Honors Learning Community through Technology,” Melissa L. Johnson acknowledges that technology can be a distraction, but she contends that, especially given the small size and high interest level of honors classes, it can substantially strengthen the sense of community. She describes the way she used blogs, wikis, and word clouds to enhance student participation and cooperation in her freshman honors class on professional development at the University of Florida, and at the end of her essay she provides information on how to initiate these strategies.

Addressing the benefits of some of the same technologies that Melissa L. Johnson described, Frances A. Kelleher and Susan Swartzlander write about the opportunities opening up for them in their new high-tech classrooms, called “Learn Labs,” at Grand Valley State University. In “Action, Connection, Communication: The Honors Classroom in the Digital Age,” the authors explain how Wordle and Scratch and CPR (Calibrated Peer Review), for instance, have transformed their students’ learning into active, connected, and public participation in a broader historical and geographical context than ever before.

In the same vein, Philip L. Frana—in “Implementing Wikis in Honors Courses”—writes that MediaWiki has changed the way he teaches his honors course on oral history at the University of Central Arkansas. Through MediaWiki, he now involves his students in a collaborative project called “Little Rock Renaissance,” in which they build on what honors students have done in previous classes and add new experts to an impressive list of collaborators from the Little Rock community. Thus, Frana demonstrates that new digital technologies can “transform, enhance, and broaden the quality of honors education.”

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

Laura A. Guertin of Penn State Brandywine and Courtney L. Young of Penn State Beaver, in their essay “Using Flickr to Connect a Multi-Campus Honors Community,” demonstrate how social networks can create academic communities that had not been possible before. Honors directors at multiple campuses of Pennsylvania State University have set up a collaborative project on Flickr so that all their honors students can connect with each other. Their first photo project, launched this year, focused on the two-hundredth birthday of both Darwin and Lincoln, with students posting images, responding to them, and creating a virtual community among honors students from different parts of the state. Similar projects will take place in future years.

Deborah Gentry of Heartland Community College contributes “Clickin’ in the Honors Classroom: Using Audience Response Systems to Facilitate Discussion and Decision-Making.” Gentry describes her use of Audience Response Systems (ARS)—or clickers—in an honors seminar to make students more comfortable in starting to express their opinions. This technology also helps her assess her students’ progress and discover where they need more work. She outlines some of the benefits and limitations of clickers in the honors classroom.

In “Making Connections: Technology and Interaction in an Honors Classroom,” John J Doherty and Kevin Ketchner of Northern Arizona University describe an idea for an icebreaker that can be implemented on Blackboard Vista and then followed up in class. They saw this strategy jumpstart connections and community among their new honors students, enlivening the classroom experience and enhancing student learning.

We conclude the challenging ideas presented in the Forum on “Honors in the Digital Age” with a lagniappe: a delightful poem by Debra K. Holman of the University of Northern Colorado called “IM Riff on the IT Overload,” which can be enjoyed both vertically and horizontally by both digital natives and digital immigrants.

In addition to the Forum, this issue of *JNCHC* includes three research essays, the first of which is “Assessing Student Learning in Community College Honors Programs Using the CCCSE Course Feedback Form” by Laura O. Ross and Marcia A. Roman of Seminole Community College. Surveys developed by the Center for Community College Student Engagement were administered to a range of 829 students and to 260 honors students at SCC. Based on the survey results, Ross and Roman provide data suggesting that, in all significant areas other than career counseling, the honors students are more engaged in their honors classes than students generally are in their regular classes. According to the authors, the data demonstrate the added value of honors education.

In the second research essay, “Evolution and Human Nature: Comparing Honors and Traditional Pedagogies for the New Science of the Mind,” Scott M. James and Katherine E. Bruce describe three formats for teaching evolutionary psychology. This inherently interdisciplinary topic, they contend, benefits especially from multiple faculty perspectives in the classroom. Using evidence based on three courses in evolutionary psychology that they have taught at the University of North Carolina Wilmington, James and Bruce argue for the greater value of interdisciplinary team-teaching in comparison to single-teacher or lecture-style formats.

We conclude this issue of *JNCHC* with “Thesis as Rhizome: A New Vision for the Honors Thesis in the Twenty-First Century” by Kaitlin A. Briggs of the University of Southern Maine. Briggs draws on the work of Gilles DeLeuze and Felix Guattari—especially their metaphor of the rhizome—to recommend alternatives to the traditional honors thesis. Rhizomes, Briggs writes, “operate according to principles of connection, heterogeneity, and multiplicity” rather than moving “hierarchically in pre-established channels.” Another image that Briggs adopts from DeLeuze and Guattari is the map as a model for textual production, reminiscent of the mapping characteristic of *City as Text*TM. The thesis as the capstone experience in honors should encourage such mapping of new and unknown territories along with experimentation, “dynamic inventiveness,” and “subjective engagement.”

One stimulus toward this kind of mapping, Briggs implies, is the multiplicity of digital technologies, and so we come full circle in the exploration of “Honors in the Digital Age,” which—as Briggs suggests—entails major changes in the way we think about what and how we teach our honors students. We hope that this issue of *JNCHC* offers useful ideas to honors administrators and faculty about changes occurring in our academic culture and how to adapt to them.

**Forum on
“Honors in the Digital Age”**

Honors in the Electronic Age

GEORGE MARIZ

WESTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

No blessing comes unmixed, and this is certainly the case with the plethora of opportunities that the new electronic world presents to higher education and to honors programs. For some this electronic revolution threatens to undermine established values and traditional academic practices, while for others it represents unprecedented ease and access to information with even greater benefits on the horizon. Both sides are right, if not completely right. Electronic innovations have certainly disrupted the academy, but new means of research and communication have enhanced academic life significantly and will continue to do so. The trick, obviously, is using these new tools to greatest effect and simultaneously avoiding the dangers that they bring with them. As this brief essay argues, what will, indeed does, distinguish honors in the electronic age has less to do with this new world *per se* than with the way honors students and faculty use its tools.

We are now overrun with electronic gadgetry of all kinds, and this essay will not deal with everything that impinges on academic life and honors. I will not discuss services such as YouTube or cell phones, which have become a good deal more than phones, save to note that both have transformed and will continue to change the nature and scope of audiovisual communication. Higher education and honors must confront the new electronic world; if they do not, then Wiki, Flickr, and all their cousins will come rushing in uncontrolled and do serious damage while their potential for good may be vitiated.

Both faculty and student opinions of the electronic revolution seem divided: proponents vigorously promote the virtues of this brave new world of culture and research while adversaries see only disruption, degradation, and trivialization in its wake. The middle ground seems to have few occupants. Many in the academic community initially react to electronic technology with hostility. Visualize the faculty member proctoring an exam who sees a student in the back row texting, perhaps to another student in the class, an all-too-common occurrence today. Imagine another instructor who receives a paper she suspects has been purchased from one or another Internet service: Is Joe, who has failed both tests in this class miserably and who has yet to utter two consecutive coherent sentences, actually capable of writing so forcefully and eloquently?

HONORS IN THE ELECTRONIC AGE

On the other hand, the electronic age has brought with it a host of innovations. Instructors can now expect serious revisions of papers from students, and students themselves now think multiple drafts of papers are routine. Computing has transformed data manipulation in the sciences and the social sciences, and operations that once took weeks or months now require nothing more than a keystroke. From the standpoint of the academy more generally and honors as well, the present and future are rich with promise in the electronic age, but, as with all new technologies, care and open-mindedness are necessary to take full advantage of the possibilities that the new world of technology opens up to higher education.

While the electronic realm offers exciting new forms of social networking, some are meretricious. Twitter, for instance, is generally limited to the most trivial communication (Basho's achievement of satori in sixty characters doesn't really hold in this realm). Such options are inadequate to communication between students and faculty in higher education, serving primarily social and commercial possibilities. Among the investors in Twitter, for instance, are Jeff Bezos (of Amazon.com), Benchmark Capital, and Institutional Venture Partners, all anticipating a hefty return on their investments. Nonetheless, I think it would be a mistake to dismiss Twitter or other options such as Facebook or MySpace out of hand. If nothing else, they are a promising means to communicate with potential students, and they are the primary means of communication for many students nowadays. For many of them, e-mail is sooo 2005!

Some educational products and practices are already proven, and others that are still in development hold enormous promise. Most instructors now use Blackboard, which allows communication with an entire class at the touch of a key as well as instantaneous syllabus revision. Blackboard has allowed many faculty members in honors to go paperless, shifting duplication costs to students, who at some institutions have a printing and copying allotment included in their regular fees.

The Internet is, of course, already well established as a research tool. Search engines are now the choice of first resort for virtually all research projects, and Google receives over two hundred million hits per day. The number of electronic tools available for researchers in all fields is large and growing all the time. Just on the electronic horizon are new aids that promise to enhance research efficiency and effectiveness even more. Web crawlers, also known as spiders, are now in the early stages of availability, and others are in development; they allow metadata searches, simultaneous searches of multiple sites with similar kinds of materials, e.g., nineteenth-century European literature or censuses, that aggregate the results into very large searchable databases. Web crawlers harvest these results and make them directly available to

the user. BOSS and SearchMonkey are two such services, and BOSS predicts that it will receive one billion hits per month in 2009. Others such as PubMed will provide similar benefits for medical information once they come online.

In thinking about honors in the electronic age, it makes sense to start not with what is new but with what is traditional in honors programs and colleges. Let us begin by answering a question that all honors directors or deans, not to mention advisors and others in the honors community, have heard countless times from prospective students: "Is honors harder than regular work, and does it take more time?" The answer we typically give is something like the following: "Honors work is not harder than other work; it's different work." A long, amplifying explanation generally follows. Here is mine.

Virtually every year I teach a non-honors history class that deals with the ancient Western world. The students have reading assignments in a large, standard text, supplemented by primary source reading that includes ancient epics, the most prominent of which is Homer's *Odyssey*, a Greek tragic play, and some ancient philosophy and prose. In this class I lecture three days per week, and students listen, absorbing the information. On Fridays they attend smaller discussion sections led by graduate students. Class work consists of several short papers on the readings, quizzes, an hour exam, map exercises, and a final examination.

I also teach an honors class that covers the same time period. In the honors class, students read virtually the same sources, save that there is no required textbook for the class and they normally read entire works rather than selections. I lecture perhaps six days during the term (comprised of forty class meetings) to provide background information on the composition of the works they are reading. The other class meetings are devoted to discussion of the readings. Class work includes two major papers, with a minimum of two drafts each, the second of which is graded and which students can resubmit in revised form for a better grade. There is also a comprehensive final essay exam in the course.

Obviously the honors class can and does work differently for several reasons. First, the students have more than the normal amount of curiosity, and they seek understanding on their own. Second, they are able to work independently and need not be nursed along with lectures that provide a guiding framework. Third, they have a high tolerance for intellectual frustration; rather than surrendering when they don't understand a text, they continue to read and to grapple with difficult material. I believe this last characteristic most clearly defines honors students. Rather than yield to problems, they look for solutions, even when the solutions are slow to come and difficult to determine. Moreover, they understand that data and knowledge differ from one another in fundamental ways, that the former are the basis of the latter, not a

synonym for it. They seek the reality, the “how this works,” behind the appearance. This difference is apparent in all honors offerings. Our honors math sequences emphasize the importance of understanding the mathematics underlying solutions, not with getting the right answer, and as a consequence students emerge from these classes with a more comprehensive grasp of theory, i.e., the way mathematics works, not merely with the ability to manipulate figures. Chemistry, sociology, and other honors classes on my campus, and I am certain on virtually every other one, work the same way. Honors classes can work at this level because the students are more intellectually independent than the average college student and react positively to a challenging environment.

In academic pursuits, students use the Internet more than any other electronic medium, and here again I think honors students use it in ways that emphasize the differences between the two groups of students. Students can buy pre-written papers from online services. More prevalent is the paper that results from cutting and pasting material from a number of sources, each of which may provide some piece of the information necessary to the paper. Such papers can be well done, but typically they bear telltale signs of how they were composed, e.g., tense shifts, lack of transitions, differences in writing styles (passive voice in one section and active voice in another), and changes in narrative perspective, to mention but a few. Students can learn important skills in these exercises: where to find information and how to create a crude synthesis. Such papers, however, often border on or immigrate entirely into plagiarism, and, given how easy it is now to detect plagiarism, cutting and pasting can lead students into disastrous temptation.

In general, honors students use electronic resources quite differently from other students. I do not wish to suggest that they do not do their share of texting and blogging; no doubt they do. When they do research or creative work, however, they understand and use these media differently from most, though not all, other students. For example, an honors student knows that the Internet is a tool and a source of information, indeed a very useful tool and a very good source. It allows the researcher to compile large amounts of primary and interpretive material in a way that eliminates the drudgery of old-fashioned searches. Those of us who spent the earlier parts of our academic lives in card catalogs and endless bibliographies, often with scant returns, welcome these developments. However, honors students, indeed all good students, understand that this phase of research is data gathering and that data are the building blocks of knowledge, not knowledge itself. They constitute the basis from which papers are written and scientific work proceeds. The Internet provides students in the visual arts with images to study, not the study itself. In other words, honors students use electronic media differently

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from most non-honors students in about the same way that they function differently from other students more generally. They are curious, self-starting, and independent. In this new environment they distinguish themselves by making full use of the resources available to them, and they use them to greater advantage than most other students. They now have new tools that allow them to produce work that differs from what most other students produce in about the same way as before the electronic revolution. In fine, they differ from their contemporaries in about the same ways they always have, but all students, both honors and non-honors, are functioning at a higher level. The late major-league pitcher Dan Quisenberry, at least as well known for his comic sense as for his athletic ability, once noted that he had seen the future, and it looked to him very much like the past, only longer. In the same way, honors students will function differently from their peers in this new world in pretty much the same way that they always have, only more so.

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Postmodern Prometheans: Academic Libraries, Information Technologies, and the Cut-and-Paste Aesthetic

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Last year, my sister-in-law served a Turducken for Thanksgiving dinner. I suspect that most people have yet to hear of it. It is a partially de-boned turkey, stuffed with a partially de-boned duck that has been stuffed with a partially de-boned chicken.

I am sitting behind the reference desk at our university library and thinking about that Turducken: how it was presented, how it tasted, and how it was consumed.

A student researching technological progress in the Romantic age approaches. She mentions Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and hands me her syllabus. I find the assignment nestled within a nexus of embedded applets and threaded discussions. The e-textbook contains a companion website provided by the publisher with dynamic links to template assignments and tin-can pedagogy.

She asks for abstracts; she prefers the bastardized texts (of course, this adjective is not hers). From an intuitive database, she clicks *MLA* and dumps an inestimable number of citations into her *Works Cited* page.

The current buzz in higher education about merging information technology departments with university and college libraries has me thinking about the postmodern mash-up and its effects on the research experience of undergraduates.

A mash-up is an optimal mix of commodity.

In a technical sense, it is hybrid software, like MapQuest, that overlays content from one source onto another. In an artistic sense, it is a re-mix of efficiencies (Lewis Carroll's *portmanteau* or Frank Zappa's *xenochrony*). In a cultural sense, the mash-up blends and blurs identity to the extent that the part can no longer be extricated from its whole: Branjolina on the newsstand or Turducken on the dinner platter.

In academe, we camouflage our mash-ups with phrases like *synergistic learning* or *edutopias*. For these paradigms, we imagine the epitomes of authority, taxonomy, and perpetuity somehow coalescing with laxity, proximity, and expediency.

I cannot help but feel that, apart from its nebulous economy, the push for integrated informational support within the university is driven by the hope that technology will somehow become “the living animal that animates the lifeless clay” of the library.

Librarians understand how dusty, decaying books can be enlivened by digitization and relegation. Students, who no longer have the time or the training to confront long monographic forms, prefer instantaneous access to abbreviated surrogates that basically do the trick. In the classroom, too, our lectures are often clipped and stitched in modular fashion, the power of PowerPoint, to fabricate for them a corporal semblance of ideas.

Honesty demands this acknowledgment: although academics know that only a piddling portion of the world’s recorded knowledge is on the web, it seems to be sufficient for students enamored of speed.

As our students, who are highly acculturated to wikis, blogs and RSS feeds, struggle to comprehend the notions of intellectual property or the principles of attribution, database vendors race to market postmodern-Promethean portals that mash up and map ideas for them. Libraries, in turn, are obliged to subscribe and, in so doing, repeatedly surrender ownership of the material in the name of access, which is ethereal.

More and more in higher education, educators are called upon to design and deliver technology-enhanced courses that seek the perfect operational mechanism to tie the student experience with the whole of human knowledge. We are emailing and texting our students and boldly keeping pace with new media literacies by Facebooking and Twittering and YouTubing our curricula. The dilemma is: to what end?

As a librarian, I have puzzled over this in recent semesters, observing both compelling changes in the information-seeking behavior of undergraduates and an indiscriminate rise in unintentional plagiarism.

How are our information technologies transforming the ways we conduct library research and understand intellectual property? Perhaps Web 2.0 and its culture of collaboration have unleashed new readership skills that we do not yet fully understand or even recognize.

Never before in human history have we experienced such an exponential growth of information production and distribution. Each month across the globe nearly a million new users join the Internet, adding to the 750 million already connected. Most of these users are generating their own content in the

form of wikis, blogs, digital video, and podcasting, thereby blurring the once-critical distinction between content-producer and consumer.

This situation poses major conceptual problems for the undergraduate researcher. Apparently, something in the technology leads to a default behavior, and we are just beginning to see its cognitive effects.

Sadly, the view from behind the reference desk appears increasingly peripheral and predetermined. Amid the fast-flowing streams of ubiquitous content, students often defer to the abstract, the immediate, or the prominent. The widespread cultural preference is for highly concentrated, digestible chunks of information; and this is precisely what information suppliers are providing.

Rather than examining material slowly and deeply, students have adapted the large-scale practice of power-browsing, where the act of *viewing* routinely supplants the act of *reading*. Online researchers, students and faculty alike, are searching horizontally rather than vertically, in a kind of skimming activity: they view one or two pages from a site, or one or two lines within a page, and then bounce out to glance elsewhere.

Researchers spend at least as much time flitting across the digital landscape as actually engaging what they find there. And when they do find valuable material, they squirrel away large amounts of it, especially if it is free, in the form of dumps, downloads, and prints that they never revisit, read, listen to, or use.

This flicking and hoarding, this consumer-like behavior, is leading to the development of new intellectual capacities that are terribly difficult to assess. What is clear, however, is that online information providers have answered the researcher's need for greater simplicity by developing highly circumscriptive portals that codify information for them. Content aggregators, like RSS feeds, eliminate the need to search for information. Instead, it shows up naked, mechanically stripped of its context, in our inboxes, courtesy of a favorite website or e-publisher.

Federated searching mechanisms, which cluster and tag information to provide unified searching over multiple data sources, further reduce the burden of the researcher by normalizing natural language with the language of the discipline. Thanks to swift and sophisticated taxonomies in indexing, students no longer need to learn, adapt to, or negotiate the language of their discipline. In true student-centered spirit, these processes forever accommodate them.

Google's massive indexes, which rank search results by an algorithmic measure of incoming links from other pages, have basically become a popularity contest where the skilled manipulation of metadata all too often overrides the precepts of information authority, relevancy, and impartiality.

The hallmark of web 2.0 technology, we must remember, is the separation of form and content; in the library world, this has led to an inexorable rise in the abstract and annotative.

To abstract means to extract or withdraw. In research, this practice describes a document's content to assist in determining relevancy within a specific course of inquiry. Now, however, the abstract functions as the document's surrogate, serving as the lone point of reference and often supplanting the complete text.

With the proliferation of periodical databases, students have immediate subject access to journal literature online and, curiously, are not going any further than the descriptive surrogate. Even with numerous full-text databases, providing not only instantaneous access to articles but also intellectually appealing mechanisms with which to search and manipulate their text, students continue to point and click and cite the abstract. In this practice, I remain perplexed. Instead of *directing* a course of inquiry, abstracts are *eclipsing* it.

This emerging preference for the surrogate has put a whole new spin on library work. Time and again, students exploit the abstract, the *part*, in an attempt to apprehend the *whole*. Anything analogous, fluid, or extended in the research experience is lost in pointed digital delivery. In the worst cases, research papers have become cut-and-paste assemblages of the abstract and annotative: Turducken-ized overstuffings of de-boned ideas. Students never consult nor conceive of original thought in the process.

Too often, web-mediated instruction offers myriad variations on the Frankensteinian theme of blended identities, leaving faculty to wonder why students cannot effectively develop and situate their ideas in an academic context. Professors look for trace hints of humanity in their students' papers and yet fail to provide the conceptual foundation for research and information literacy that they so desperately need.

Like Frankenstein's monster, these newly formed info-archipelagos within the academy may have proportional limbs and brilliant features, but they are, in essence, just unhallowed progenies of the cut-and-paste aesthetic, strung along the wide and disparate sea of knowledge.

The academic library is the original place where information and presentation converge to allow for novel forms of reuse. If libraries must merge with IT, and if our classrooms must harmonize with the greater blogosphere, then we must avoid the mistake of Victor Frankenstein, whose arrogant endeavor, instead of contributing to human knowledge and broadening humankind's experience, led to capitulation and limitation.

Throughout our honors programs, professors must teach our millennial learners to honor the sovereignty of original thought, especially their own, by

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resisting the popular, Turduckenist impulse to pare down and stuff and pare down and stuff and pare down and stuff.

Because we are not in the business of stealing fire: our business is sparking it.

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Immigrant Song: A Cautionary Note about Technology and Honors

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In an influential 2001 essay, Marc Prensky discusses the vast divide that exists between two generations, what he terms “digital natives” and “digital immigrants.” The former group consists of students who have lived their entire lives with computers, cell phones, video games, “and all the other toys and tools of the digital age,” whereas the latter group is made up of everyone else, those adults who have adopted these new technologies as they have come online (“Digital” 1). While “natives” like our current students move seamlessly among the many devices of the digital age and appear entirely comfortable employing such paraphernalia, immigrants (a group that includes the majority of faculty currently involved in honors education) learn to operate these tools along the way but never fully shed their immigrant status, using the technologies in slightly improper, awkward, or gauche ways, like printing out a document rather than editing it onscreen, for example. Prensky designates such clumsy behaviors “accents,” markers that make the discourse of immigrant instructors seem almost like a foreign language, and then alarmingly proposes that “the single biggest problem facing education today is that our Digital Immigrant instructors, who speak an outdated language (that of the pre-digital age), are struggling to teach a population that speaks an entirely new language” (“Digital” 2).

Oddly, after delineating this divide, Prensky’s solution turns on asking immigrants to behave more like the natives—moving faster through material, coming at ideas more randomly, and even inventing computer games to deliver content (“Digital” 4). If educators would just learn to speak the language of the natives, he suggests, most of our problems would disappear. Yet this is where Prensky’s analogy seemingly breaks down, for an immigrant can never fully shed his non-native status no matter how vigorously he seeks to erase his past. In fact, the harder he tries, the more ridiculous the immigrant looks when trying to assimilate. No less than T. S. Eliot became a cautionary example when he turned his back on his country and family by emigrating to England, where he dressed in a three-piece suit, carried an umbrella, joined

the Church of England, and eventually ended up speaking in a clipped British accent. Many observers have commented on this get-up with a particularly cutting backhanded jab, calling Eliot “more British than the British” (Kenner 58).

I would like to argue that the majority of current honors faculty and staff will always be immigrants, and, in trying to “keep up” with our native students, we run the risk of looking slightly silly; more importantly, we might end up endorsing (tacitly or overtly) a shift of priorities in honors education that is distracting, costly, and damaging. In a later essay, Prenskey seems to admit the futility of such attempts at cultural adaptation when he asserts that the natives “will continue to evolve and change so rapidly that we won’t be able to keep up” (“Listen” 9).

Much of Prenskey’s original argument concerns accommodating new learning styles, making the educational experience easier, more approachable, and more accessible for the natives. Yet I wonder if following such a path is not defeating the very purpose of honors education. After all, George Mariz makes the valid point that part of what attracts honors students to the honors classroom is the challenge they find there, especially in a classroom that emphasizes active learning, interaction with other students, and struggles with the material. Digital technologies, on the other hand, often cultivate passivity, lack of awareness of the larger world, and the type of cocoon-like isolation that honors education attempts to overcome. I find it hard to believe that the New York teenager who recently fell into a sewer because she was walking and texting at the same time is somehow emblematic of progress—unless you happen to be the lawyer representing the teen’s parents, who rather predictably have threatened to sue the city over the consequences of their daughter’s idiotic behavior (Cavaliere). Indeed, recent neurobiological research demonstrates that one of the underlying motivators of an apparent need to surround ourselves with digital playthings is that the use of such devices delivers what Harvard professor of psychiatry John Ratey calls a “dopamine squirt,” much like a shot of narcotics into the bloodstream (Richtel). This culture of immediate gratification is an insidious ethos that the honors classroom directly challenges in its demand that students slow down, read and think carefully, and actually engage the ideas of their professors and classmates.

I’m no Luddite. I love technology as much as the next person. I have three different PCs running during any given day, keep up two webpages, and have hosted sessions on technology at NCHC’s annual meeting. But I would like to steer us back to what we do and know best in honors: teaching, learning, thinking, and writing. It is possible to do these things—and do them very well—without making the latest technologies the centerpiece. I think it is

especially important to make this point in an era of shrinking budgets, when faculty and administrators will increasingly be asked to identify their educational priorities in allocating scarce resources.

There is no way around the fact that technology is enormously expensive. To take one representative example, the University of Kansas has increased its information technology budget in the past two decades from \$11 million to \$26 million annually, with over \$1 million of that amount devoted to IT security and services (Blumenstyk A12). Technology also operates like a multi-headed Hydra, mysteriously breeding a succession of heads that make the beast even more ravenous. The digitization of archival materials in libraries, for example, has required *additional* electronic tools, training, and staff. Richard Ovenden, associate director of the Bodleian Library at Oxford University, points out that resources devoted to digital curation must come from somewhere, most likely from “more traditional areas” (Kolowich A8).

The increasing budgetary demands associated with the explosion in IT spending have been satisfied primarily through higher tuition revenues and a curbing of instructional costs due to the insidious practice in the past thirty years of retiring full-time tenure-track positions and farming out that work to itinerant part-time labor in the form of adjuncts, teaching assistants, and other contingent instructors. Marc Bousquet notes that tenured and tenure-track faculty made up only 25% of the faculty population in fall 2007, down from 33% just a decade early. He predicts that twenty years from now, that percentage will fall to the single digits if current trends hold (Bousquet B24). Such diminution of faculty resources has a direct, negative impact on student learning, especially the types of learning undertaken by honors students, who tend to be more engaged with their professors and require a higher level of interaction during their education. In other industries, technology enables the achievement of enormous efficiencies, but these advances occur less commonly in higher education where the primary costs revolve around labor. Some gains have no doubt been remarkable, especially in the areas of content delivery and access—digitization of information and its availability through search engines—as well as in the ability to communicate efficiently with students through tools like email, chat, texting, blogging, Blackboard, etc. Computer modeling, data crunching, and like practices have also opened up almost limitless possibilities in fields like math, engineering, business, and the sciences. But overload and redundancy also occur, as in the case of Boston College’s experiment with using college email addresses in 2009–10 simply as forwarding devices because students were being digitally overwhelmed by the plethora of communication forms (Young A9).

What are some of the other costs of devoting too much time and too many resources to technology? In one recent book, Carl Honoré identifies a

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range of different effects on children who have made the toys of the digital age essential tools of their lives: drastically increased rates of obesity, a decline in basic motor skills and physical stamina, a decrease in amounts of time spent sleeping, an upsurge in rates of social isolation, and a disturbing trend of narcissistic behaviors (95–9). He also cites studies performed at a neuroscience laboratory at the University of Michigan that reveal the decreased quality of work performed while multitasking, the very type of behavior that digital immigrants typically imagine natives excel at. In fact, the part of the brain that facilitates multitasking actually develops fairly late, suggesting that children in particular are less adept at juggling multiple activities (Honoré 106–7). Now more than ever, the honors classroom should provide a sanctuary from this 24-7 technological assault on the senses, the non-stop connectivity that seems increasingly tied to detrimental psychological outcomes, especially in light of research demonstrating that “the human brain needs moments of quiet and rest to process and consolidate ideas, memories, and experiences” (Honoré 107). The honors classroom can provide a refuge from this digitized world, a place where students might have ninety minutes twice a week to breathe, to reflect, to be at peace. We seem to have arrived at a point where the technological tail is wagging the dog of learning; schools are experimenting with initiatives like “A Day without Email,” and teachers are asking their students to suffer through twenty-four hours without using any electronic devices and then to reflect on the difficulty of the experience. Surely such developments signal a need to step back slightly from the promises of technology and take a closer look at its costs.

Oh, and if you were wondering whether or not you’re an immigrant, just glance once more at my title—if you caught the Led Zeppelin reference (circa 1970), then you’re definitely not a native.

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Digital Deliberations

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As I write this essay, Google has just announced that it will begin offering a new computer operating system (“Chrome OS”), competing with Microsoft and Apple. Both the form and substance of Google’s announcement are noteworthy. The company chose to make its announcement via the “Official Google Blog” rather than more traditional means such as a press release or press conference. As for substance, the new operating system will be “open source,” meaning that the source software programming code will be freely available to all who use it.

Google’s announcement can be seen as a sign of “the earliest stage of a massive social development” described by Cass Sunstein in *Infotopia: How Many Minds Produce Knowledge* (xii). Sunstein says that blogs, wikis, open-source software, and YouTube are all examples of emerging Internet-based, collaborative mechanisms for “deliberating,” supplementing more traditional forms of group deliberation such as focus groups, committee meetings, and legislative bodies.

The *Oxford English Dictionary* (2nd ed.) defines “deliberation” as “long and careful consideration.” As educators of honors students, we strive to teach them the skills necessary for deliberation, including research, debate, and exposition. Arguably, their talents will make them more likely to be deliberators. For example, some honors students will use deliberation skills as scholars creating new knowledge. Others will use these skills as leaders guiding social, political, and business organizations through inevitable uncertainties. All honors students can be expected to use their skills in deliberation to influence others within groups, perhaps as “indirect” leaders through the creation of their works, as described by Howard Gardner in *Leading Minds: An Anatomy of Leadership*.

Regardless of the exact context of their future group deliberations, there is much for honors students to learn about the digital forms of deliberation that are emerging so that the deliberations can have desirable outcomes. In particular, Sunstein’s *Infotopia* cautions us to manage the risks inherent not only in traditional group deliberations but also in the new digital forms. He notes the following about all forms of deliberation:

- They amplify errors of their members;
- They do not elicit the information that their members have;
- They are subject to cascade effects, where the blind lead the blind; and
- They show a tendency toward group polarization, where groups can go to extremes. (Sunstein, 75)

Each of these risks creates opportunities for educating our students. As George Mariz notes in his lead essay for this Forum, honors students seek “the reality behind the appearances.” The new digital forms of deliberation create new “appearances” behind which even more risks can hide. Building on our honors students’ natural skepticism, we should help them appreciate these risks and not be blinded by the glitz of the new technologies.

AMPLIFICATIONS OF ERRORS

The product of deliberations, digital or otherwise, should be good decisions. Unfortunately, research has shown that certain “rules of thumb we use to make decisions” (Sunstein, 75), also known as heuristics, can lead to bad decisions. Among the first to identify such flawed decision-making processes were the Israeli psychologists Amos Tversky and Daniel Kahneman. Their 1974 essay “Judgment under Uncertainty: Heuristics and Biases” described the “representativeness” heuristic, which causes us to ignore important realities such as sample size when data conform to our stereotypes (Tversky and Kahneman, 1124–1127). Applied to digital deliberations, this kind of error might cause students to assume that a viewpoint they agree with on a particular blog is widely held in the general population even though relatively few bloggers are on the site.

Honors students might be more likely than other students to have views that are not mainstream because, as noted above, they are more likely than other students to seek the “reality beyond appearances.” In forming their personal views they may well have begun to move away from more mainstream Internet sites in favor of blogs or wikis that reflect their own voices but not those of the population at large. A potentially useful teaching tool might be to ask students to choose a topic (say, Sarah Palin) and then seek out as many blogs as possible that reflect a view different from their own on that topic. Many might be surprised to find other voices out there.

Another heuristic called “framing” can also lead to bad decisions. “Framing,” which refers to the context in which a decision is made, might be partially responsible for the decision by employees of Ford Motor Company in the 1970s to forego an \$11-per-car fix on the Pinto after concluding that it would cost more to the company than would the deaths and serious burns

resulting from not making the fix. Perhaps if the project had been framed as an ethical decision involving the value of human lives, the decision would have been different. For a discussion of the heuristics of business ethics decisions, see Robert Prentice's "Teaching Ethics, Heuristics, and Biases."

Some business organizations, such as accounting firms, have begun using internal wikis (software applications that allow multiple users to create and edit a document) to deliberate and develop knowledge on particular projects. Employees at all levels might be invited to participate. How the wiki project is framed can have a strong influence on the work product, a valuable lesson for students who might lead such projects in their careers, in business or otherwise. A project framed as the polishing of a boss's work product might have a very different result from one framed as a brain-storming exercise.

A potential class exercise might be for two groups to address the same issue in two separate, private online forums such as Discussion Boards on Blackboard, each framed in a different way at the start, and then to compare the progression of thought and final result. For example, one group might be assigned a forum to address the ethical issue of a pharmaceutical company pursuing unprofitable research into a drug that might benefit a relatively small number of mostly toddlers. The other group might have the issue framed in their forum as research into a drug aimed at a disease only affecting a comparably sized population of mostly elderly people.

FAILURE TO ELICIT INFORMATION

A second risk in group deliberations is the "hidden profile," a term used to describe an accurate understanding that a group avoids in favor of a consensus that might be based on inaccuracies (Sunstein, 81). *Infotopia* cites the 1961 decision by the United States to invade the Cuban Bay of Pigs as an example of how pre-digital deliberations could fail to produce a good result. President Kennedy's advisors deliberated fully but were reluctant to speak up about their private doubts for fear of being labeled "soft" (Sunstein, 47).

Fear of incurring other group members' disapproval can motivate the continuation of "hidden profiles." For example, an individual may feel social pressure not to inject unique information that most group members lack (Sunstein, 87). Many of my honors students have failed to speak up in class discussions because they fear not appearing to be "one of the crowd," even in classes of only honors students. Fast forward a few years and it is easy to imagine a former honors student who is now a junior employee in a large organization not wishing to contribute to an internal wiki deliberation for the same reason.

As teachers, we can discourage “hidden profiles” by ourselves noting the “elephant in the room” during class discussions (or following discussions on online forums such as Blackboard Discussion Boards) and providing positive reinforcement to students who do the same. Another exercise might be to ask students whether they have ever deliberately withheld information from a class discussion or other group deliberation and, if so, why. Chances are that many would cite social pressure.

CASCADE EFFECTS

Closely related to the problem of hidden profiles, Sunstein says, is the problem of information cascades, where group members follow the crowd on inaccurate information, contributing to an inaccurate group understanding of an issue. Sunstein cites tonsillectomies in the 1950s and 1960s as an example of a widespread medical practice that was “adopted initially based on weak information” (90), referencing John F. Burnum’s article “Medical Practice a la Mode: How Medical Fashions Determine Medical Care” (1220). It is likely that many patients, particularly children, were subjected to this relatively invasive and expensive surgical procedure when they could have been treated successfully with less risk and lower cost.

In addition to surgical procedures, Burnum’s pre-digital-age article gives some examples of drug treatments that reflected more “the desire to be stylish” than good science. He cites treatment of pneumonia at Johns Hopkins with various drugs when “ordinary penicillin would have sufficed” (1221). Burnum explained this herd behavior as resulting from the fact that “physicians tend to pick up their prescribing habits more from one another than from the scientific literature” (1221).

The doctors’ lounge has no doubt been supplemented (and perhaps superseded) by the Internet as a way for physicians to deliberate about patient treatment. Honors students considering careers in medicine can learn from this example that even well-educated professionals can deliberate in an ineffective way. They can also learn that no amount of digital deliberation can substitute for “reading the literature.”

Another pedagogical tool for studying the cascade effect and other pitfalls of digital deliberations might be to examine the decision by Wikipedia, the free on-line encyclopedia, to limit in certain situations its regular policy on open editing. For example, entries such as those on George W. Bush and Abu Ghraib prison became the subject of so much disinformation that Wikipedia instituted a policy of “blocking” certain users from editing entries in order to prevent damage or disruption to the site. Such attacks of disinformation can be exacerbated by the cascade effect. Students might also observe

the same “piling on” in online forums, including one developed as part of an honors class using tools like Blackboard’s Discussion Board.

GROUP POLARIZATION

Infotopia describes a final problem with all deliberations, including the digital variety, when members of a deliberating group “typically end up in a more extreme position in line with their tendencies before deliberation began” (Sunstein, 92). Numerous blogs illustrate this “echo chamber” effect that Sunstein describes (97). In one of my honors classes, for instance, a student in a group presentation cited, as an authority for his research on a particular company, an unofficial and highly critical blog written by a disgruntled former employee. The blog’s viewpoint was similar to the student’s own initial views and contributed to a strengthening of his negative position. This episode provided a good vehicle for group discussion not only of the potential for polarization in a blog but also for the heuristic risk of ignoring the representativeness of the blog’s viewpoint. The search for blogs with contrarian views that are similar to a student’s own views, described above under “Amplification of Errors,” might also illustrate the “echo chamber” effect of the student’s choice of Internet sites.

CONCLUSION

Honors students will be deliberators in many groups over their lives, probably more than other students because their abilities make them more likely to be asked to find answers amid uncertainty. As scholars, for example, they will gather, assess, share, and reach conclusions about information in order to create new knowledge. As leaders, direct or indirect (Gardner), they will deliberate in order to shape decisions affecting an organization’s future. Students will benefit from seeing wikis, blogs, and other digital collaborative mechanisms as new forms of an established process of deliberation, and we will all benefit if we can help them recognize and overcome the possible impediments to deliberations that yield successful outcomes.

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It's the Pedagogy, Stupid

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Fifteen years ago the University of Central Arkansas (UCA) hired a technology consultant and asked the science dean to gather information for him about the best technology for each academic unit. Eager to boldly go where we had not gone before, we met with the dean and were surprised to learn that technology was mainly about distance education, and since we taught “up close and personal” we had no need of it. It was years later before the “duh!” moment arrived.

We had asked the wrong question—not which technology was best, but which pedagogy. Like most honors settings, we use multiple models, including student-questioning (roughly speaking, the Socratic method), lecture and discussion, and team projects, and we see the latter becoming ever more strategically critical. Recent articles about trends in honors colleges (Cobane, 2008; Scott and Frana, 2008), assessment of honors courses (Lanier, 2008), experiential education (Machonis, ed., 2008), active learning (Clark and Zubizarreta, eds., 2008), and the place of pedagogical innovation in honors programs and colleges (Bell, 2008) underscore the growing importance of project-based courses. In this paper we distinguish among three pedagogical models before turning to examples of student projects that use appropriate educational technology. We conclude by discussing benefits projects provide.

Socratic methods, the oldest pedagogical model, have us ask students questions, in turn eliciting dilemmas or contradictions and revealing fallacies previously taken for granted. A master of critical thought encircled by deeply curious and articulate students is what the dean imagined honors courses to be, participants face-to-face, cross-legged on the floor, practicing the art of inquiry.

Lecture and discussion approaches, probably the most common pedagogy in higher education, have us present an original essay comprised of inter-textual connections to students who listen, take notes, ponder, and reply to our questions when oration ends, practicing the art of contextual conversation. If honors seminars had enrollments of fifty and up, the dean might have proposed PowerPoint. They do not, so he did not.

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Team projects, the most interactive form of pedagogy, have us enable students to generate a product by dividing labor and working together, negotiating their roles and tasks, peer-to-peer, within expectations we structure, practicing the art of collaboration. The dean did not envision active learning located beyond the honors classroom or service projects or transactions with clients. Further, it was difficult at the outset of the Internet revolution to understand how technology could enable instructors interested in project-based, student-centered learning to pursue aims that are arduous or impossible with traditional methods.

Collaborative writing is one form of team project we now use. Instead of having each student write essays on a final exam, the class can be divided into groups who work on essays together, supplementing scarce in-class time when everyone is together with asynchronous collaboration on a simple service like Writeboard or a more complex web-based writing tool like Google Docs. After a small team drafts each essay, other teams or the entire class can be given access to edit, revise, extend, and polish.

The instructor can easily control access to shared online writing and editing spaces, taking into account each student's roles at any particular time. Without the possibility of asynchronous group work, and without a single interactive document that can be accessed and changed by multiple, shifting groups of people, the collaborative production of a text would be far more daunting. An example of a collaboratively written final exam (spring 2008) by eight UCA honors students using 123writeboard.com is at http://homepage.mac.com/donnadb/Honors_Pulse2.pdf. We do not suggest that collaborative writing *replace* individual assignments through which each student learns well-rounded writing skills. Instead, collaborative writing is an opportunity to *add* project-oriented skills to the student's writing experiences—for example, negotiation, editing, and management—and to *practice* a different way of producing a text, one with many real-world analogues.

We are intrigued by a pedagogy that makes classroom walls porous so that student work becomes a communication not to the instructor but to a larger public, an audience who can potentially hold students accountable, and current Internet technology makes logistical hurdles trivial. We have students keep course blogs and record podcasts on class discussions, practices that open up their understanding of and response to class material to the larger world. If the instructor takes the next logical step and promotes these class activities through links on social networking sites, then students quickly find that people they do not know are reading, listening, and responding. They are not primarily jumping through a hoop prescribed on a syllabus; they are communicating to people unseen and are responsible in a new way for clarity, comprehensiveness, and thoughtfulness. Blogs kept by students in

recent UCA honors seminars can be found at <<http://everyonesacritic.wordpress.com>>.

The barriers to these pedagogical benefits are not technical but psychological. Instructors must be able to commit to the kind of transparency this openness brings to their courses. And they must themselves be active participants in online communities so they can promote students' work within their circle of influence online, lest the blogs and podcasts go largely unnoticed.

Sharing coursework with outside audiences was possible before the Internet, but it could not be done so freely and thoroughly. If the pedagogical aim is to infuse curricular activities with significance beyond the academic transaction of assignments and grades, then communication to extramural participants must be pervasive, repeated, and student-initiated. Blogs and podcasts enable pursuit of a valuable aim that otherwise might be impossible offline.

The goal of project-based pedagogy is to produce principal investigators (PIs) who can lead task-oriented teams. Arguably, this role subsumes skill-sets produced by question-based and lecture-based pedagogies. For honors curricula that are developmental with sequenced courses, it makes sense to incorporate more project-based work in upper-division courses, providing increasing occasions for maturing students to perform as PIs and team leaders.

Projects make possible one other leap: incorporating extramural evaluation of course assignments. This kind of evaluation may well be a final frontier of collegiate honors education, where instructors break free of the role conflict between coaching students and evaluating them. Examples on campus abound, ranging from athletic contests to juried art and music competitions to business internships to student-teaching apprenticeships. Through online technologies, honors seminars too can be open to off-campus evaluation, judging not only students' projects but, by implication, our instruction.

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Building a Better Honors Learning Community through Technology

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During the first week of classes this semester, I showed a YouTube video to my professional development classes for honors freshmen. “A vision of students today,” created by Michael Wesch (2007) and his Introduction to Cultural Anthropology class at Kansas State University, depicts a realistic yet frustrating view of the learning taking place (or in this case, not taking place) in the college classroom. Students sitting in a large lecture hall bemoan the purchase of expensive but “useless” textbooks and the fact that only 18% of their professors actually know their names. One student claims that, while she will only read eight books this year, she’ll read 2300 web pages and 1281 Facebook profiles. Another student notes that she will write 42 pages for classes this semester and 500 pages of emails. Finally, a student notes that he spends 3½ hours per day online while another says she spends most of her class time on Facebook.

Although almost all of my students had just started their first week of college classes, I saw heads nodding in agreement with the scenario presented in the video. I asked about their classroom experiences thus far; almost all my students have a class with at least a hundred students, and a third to a half of them have at least one online class. One student questioned how she could get a grade for participation in one of her classes when the professor explicitly stated that she would not be learning their names. Many of the students had noticed their peers Facebook-ing or working on other assignments in class instead of paying attention to the lecture.

George Mariz, in “Honors in the Electronic Age,” notes the differences between the honors classroom and the non-honors classroom, the honors student and the non-honors student. I had presented the YouTube video to my students in the first week not only to spark discussion about their classroom experiences thus far but also to note some of the differences between their honors and non-honors classes. With most of our honors classes limited to 25 students or less, I explained to my class that their honors professors most

assuredly would know their names, that readings and assignments would be purposeful, and that Facebook-ing in class would not be an option.

I have been incorporating technology into my honors courses ever since I started working with our honors program in 2005. I coordinate the professional development course for honors freshmen, which introduces students to academic and leadership opportunities outside of the classroom. Since our class only meets once a week for fifty minutes, it can be difficult to establish a sense of community among our twenty-five students. I started using blogs in 2005 as a way for students to initiate or to continue discussions with each other outside of the classroom.

During the spring semester of 2008, I began using an electronic platform for students to submit class assignments. Looking for a way to make our course as paperless as possible, I quickly found that, while it did take a substantial amount of time at the beginning of the semester to set up the course on Blackboard, the amount of time saved later in the semester was well worth it. Students could submit assignments online as soon as they were ready instead of having to wait until the day they were due. Likewise, I could grade assignments as soon as I received them instead of waiting to grade everything all at once. The Blackboard site helped the students keep track of assignments and grades, and it helped me as the instructor to do the same.

As I continue to refine the professional development course, I constantly stay in tune with emerging technologies and how they might be used to create a more dynamic learning experience. In previous semesters my students have been required to partner up to explore one aspect of the local community together, whether it be a restaurant or cultural attraction. The students have then written a review of the location and submitted it on the Blackboard site. While the students would present their location to the class, only the instructor received the review paper. The purpose of the assignment was to help the students get to know their home for the next four years. How could they do that if I was the only person to receive the review?

Now students are building a class wiki site for all of their explorations. Each pair of students gets a page to upload pictures, link to the local attraction on Google maps, include external reviews of the site from the local newspaper or dining guides, and then post their review of the location. Students also are required to use the comment section on each wiki page to comment on other pairs' pages, asking for more information about the site visit or posting their own site review.

For another assignment, students are required to submit drafts of their resumé for refinement in class. The transition from the high school resumé to the college version can be confusing and challenging for many students. To help our students better visualize how they are presenting themselves in

their resumé, I have asked them to paste the text of their drafts into a word cloud developer such as Wordle. Word clouds demonstrate the frequency of words used in text, with the more frequently appearing words displayed as larger in the cloud. After creating their resumé word clouds, students can get quick feedback on the main focus of their resúmes from the instructor and their peers.

These few examples demonstrate how we have incorporated technology into the honors classroom without compromising the integrity of that experience. It could be easy to dismiss technology in the classroom as another avenue for cheating or as a distraction as in the case of the Facebook-ers in the video. On the other hand, it could be just as easy to consider technology as a tool for building a better learning community, one in which students can feel connected and engaged . . . just the intention of our honors courses.

For the uninitiated, here is some more information about the (free!) technology sites mentioned in the essay.

BLOGS

Blogger.com and WordPress.com are two excellent blogging sites. Blogger is hosted by Google and is the first blogging site I ever used. The interface was simple and easy to use. My students introduced me to WordPress a few years ago, and I liked the format of their blogs better. With both sites, the TA and I would post discussion questions, class announcements, and pictures from class assignments. Students could use the comment feature to respond to each of those postings.

EXAMPLES

- Blogger: <<http://honorsfyf94.blogspot.com>> (honors class blog from fall 2005)
- WordPress: <<http://professionaldevelopmentwithkelvin.wordpress.com>> (honors class blog from fall 2007)

WIKIS

Fall 2009 is my first teaching experience with wikis. I have found that PBWorks.com is an easy-to-use site for new wiki builders. Just as with the blogging software, you create content on the wikis just as though you are developing a Microsoft Word document. No special knowledge of HTML or other Web-speak is needed. With wikis, the focus is on building a collaborative workspace, and students should have opportunities to contribute to the

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content of the space, not just respond to postings. As the coordinator, you have the ability to control who has access to edit content on the site.

EXAMPLE

- PBWorks: <<http://honorsprodevwed8th.pbworks.com>> (honors class wiki from fall 2009)

WORD CLOUDS

Wordle.net is the word cloud generator site I am using in my fall 2009 class when we discuss the messages presented in my students' resumé. The site also could be used to visualize the focus of a personal statement. All you need to do is paste the text you want to use onto the site, and a word cloud will be generated. Students then can adjust the font, add colors, change the format, etc., to personalize their word cloud. Examples are provided on the website.

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Action, Connection, Communication: The Honors Classroom in the Digital Age

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For more than a decade, the two of us, an historian and a literature professor, have co-taught a 12-credit European Civilization sequence for first-year honors students. Last year Grand Valley inaugurated an impressive new living and learning center, which includes two innovative classrooms dubbed “Learn Labs,” Steelcase’s effort to bring twenty-first century design to traditional classrooms that may have met the needs of the nineteenth century but have lingered long beyond their usefulness. In the Learn Lab, five conference tables, arranged in a star shape, supplant regimented rows of desks. At the head of each table, pillars provide electrical and projector connections. Three large screens placed around the room can project a monitor from anyone’s laptop or from the instructor’s station tucked in a corner. We can walk around the room and still operate the interactive “Walk and Talk” board. Document cameras allow us to save the day’s work by recording marker-board scribbles or individual documents.

The Learn Labs’ impressive array of technology and design symbolize well the promise of the digital age along with its challenges. As the philosopher and mathematician Seymour Papert argues, merely adopting technology into old models of education is akin to strapping a new, powerful jet engine to the horse and buggy and then expecting great accomplishments. The Learn Lab provides an environment where we can easily dispense with old educational models as we implement three main principles that guide honors education in the digital age: learning should be active, connected, and communicated.

ACTIVE LEARNING

One of the hallmarks of honors education is course work that challenges students to engage materials and methods directly and substantively; many new technologies make this more possible today. As Professor Mariz notes,

newer electronic tools for researchers provide unprecedented access. Just a few years ago we would need a trip to a scholarly archive to see unique primary documents that can now be in the hands of undergraduates with a mouse click. When we build assignments leading to these sources, students experience the thrill of scholarly exploration and discovery. To introduce the Victorian era, we distribute contemporary artifacts—toys, images, announcements of events, accounts of accidents or notable inventions, prints or articles, some satirical, others serious, from nineteenth-century publications—sending students to find information and situate the artifacts in their historical context. Electronic resources—sites such as the **Victorian Web**; digital archives of magazines like **Punch** or **Godey’s Ladies Book**; accounts in historical newspapers—are invaluable as students construct proposals for an exhibition on Victorian England and present their discoveries to the class.

In the classroom, new web technologies help students discover for themselves what we might in decades past have described for them. For instance, a site called **Wordle** lets users input a text, and with the click of a button a “word cloud” emerges which renders the passage visually with the more frequently used words represented by bolder and larger fonts. **Wordle** is a useful starting point for discussing tone, style, or symbolic patterns in poetry or prose. A computer coding program called **Scratch** allows students easily to create multimedia animations and games. Developed at MIT to teach younger students about object-oriented coding, the free online program works well as an “illustration tool.” Within an hour, our students worked in teams to create impressive illustrations of assigned scenes from Isak Dineson’s **Out of Africa**. In the process of grappling with the novel and the historical context in order to create their multimedia animations, the students learned much more than if we had just discussed the scenes or lectured about them.

As we teach writing, we use a free online program called **Calibrated Peer Review (CPR)** for draft workshops. Students apply evaluation criteria to writing samples we created. Once proficient enough at evaluating those samples, students then critique their peers’ work using the same criteria. Upon completion, CPR provides writers with comments on their own papers from three peers as well as a “grade” of their own performance critiquing others’ work, comparing their assessments to those of the others who evaluated the same papers. A student can discover if she or he is an outlier as an evaluator; in addition, instructors can watch over the whole process from their own computers and intercede with help at any time.

CONNECTED LEARNING

In many ways, the activities we have already described also embody connectedness. Students need to be proficient at working with others; their

professions require this skill, and our society needs it. We model this teamwork ourselves when we talk about our own communities of scholars, showing what scholars have accomplished together. Not only do we help our students build connections to the past and to each other, but we also help them forge connections between their own passions and the past. For example, our semester-long project this fall is an assignment we call “the avatar project,” a name we selected for its evocation of computer avatars, alternative identities that users create for electronic games and sites like Second Life. Each student receives an individual assignment, one tailored to his or her interests and career aspirations. A pre-med major might become a barber-surgeon in the seventeenth century and a physician in the nineteenth; a nursing major might become an eighteenth-century midwife and an associate of Florence Nightingale in the nineteenth century; an art major, an advisor to Louis XIV in his quest to design and decorate Versailles and then an early impressionist in the nineteenth century. Students create a persona for each of their essays, situating their avatar in an accurate historical milieu. When students can see the connections between the past and their own passions, they value history.

COMMUNICATED LEARNING

When we were students, we typed papers and submitted them to our professors for grades. Perhaps one or two of our peers exchanged papers with us for “proofreading,” but by and large we did not see the work of the rest of the class, nor did we imagine a wider audience for our writing. Technological tools now make possible a grand electronic “show and tell,” further reinforcing both active and connected learning. Our Learn Lab design means that we can accomplish a task in class or for homework and then project the work for the class to see and discuss. We have also encouraged students to envision a deeper purpose and wider audience for their work by creating websites. For example, an honors junior-seminar website on “Hemingway in Michigan” features primary documents, tour videos, and the performance of a song written by Hemingway’s mother about their cottage, “Lovely Walloona” (1901). What the students have created provides new material for both Hemingway fans and experts.

Students who put their work out for a wider audience sometimes have stunning consequences. One of our students in European Civilization decided to learn more about her grandfather’s experience as an Army Air Force gunner in World War II. She knew he had been shot down over Austria and spent time as a prisoner of war, but not much more. Military records told her about the reconnaissance missions her grandfather had flown and the fate of his final flight. She created a website to tell her grandfather’s story, and she connected with the one surviving crew member of the doomed flight and, to

her amazement, the Austrian farmer who had found the downed airmen in 1944. The electronic age made those connections possible!

Technologies will continue to emerge and to disappear. Many students are already abandoning Facebook and Twitter because we old codgers have taken it up. In fact, the 60s motto of “don’t trust anyone over thirty” may for this generation become, “don’t trust any technology used by anyone over thirty.” We do not need to rush to embrace every latest technology. We just need to take our own advice to be lifelong learners because, when we know what possibilities are out there, we can harness the technology that works best to promote our goal of providing high-quality education to honors students. If we do that, we will create extraordinary classrooms where action, connection, and communication rule!”

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Implementing Wikis in Honors Courses

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Recently I have been thinking a lot about how to get from “me” and “you” to “we” in undergraduate honors courses. Typically in a collaborative learning activity students must demonstrate individual accountability, task commitment, and role fulfillment. Students are judged by their ability to grasp intellectual tools of the trade, share learning goals and outcomes, and reflect on peer or instructor performance, all of which constitute a valuable learning process.

My preference, however, is to teach project-oriented honors classes grounded in constructivist epistemology, where knowledge is assembled and transformed by students working with resource persons. In such courses, innovations emerge from collaboratively organized projects, and students accept primary leadership roles. Until the introduction of new digital technologies, this kind of collaborative process was limited in time and space to one semester, the confines of a classroom, and the class members themselves. The process was restricted and incomplete. Wikis provide a means to break away from these restrictions.

In 2006 I faced a dilemma. My class had ended, and the principal project we had created for ourselves still was not finished. *Honors Seminar in Oral History Methods and Practice* was designed to give students training and experience through interviewing a well-established “local leadership group.” I had left “group” undefined in my course syllabus, and, as honors students are wont to do, they proposed a highly ambitious project: conducting interviews with former President Bill Clinton’s leadership circle. In particular, they proposed interrogating the people who helped to create Little Rock’s Clinton Presidential Library and thus to breathe life back into the city’s crumbling downtown warehouse district.

Tapping honors alumni connections, we invited the former chairman of the Clinton Foundation—currently dean of the Clinton School for Public Service—to a meeting in our newly developed ethnography laboratory and peppered him with questions. Following this meeting, which revealed the complexity of our task, we wrote letters to key interviewees and lugged digital video recorders all over the city to gather first-hand accounts. We grumbled

through the painstaking transcription process and dumped everything into a poorly structured digital archive consisting of posts in forum threads.

By then it was May, and we were still a long way from the fully up-and-running, user-friendly archive we had envisioned for ourselves back in January. My hard drive bulged with 1,202,000 characters of information collected by the students in their background research. Several dozen potential interviewees were left untouched. We hadn't even interviewed Bill Clinton yet, though some of us had managed to press the flesh at a volunteer gala.

What to do? Not surprisingly, the students did not want to continue the class into the summer, and I soon found myself wondering: Is it possible to instantiate the complex knowledge base produced by an interpretive community of oral history interviewers, digital filmmakers, and photographers? Can you capture and provide good structure to past student experiences so that a different group of collaborators can continue to transform the research previously conducted? What online tools allow collective authoring over time so that knowledge creation is discursive, relational, and conversational?

In the midst of such queries, I stumbled across MediaWiki, a stripped-down, freeware version of the online application used by the folks who run Wikipedia. MediaWiki requires PHP 5.0, a web server, and a database server implementation of MySQL 4.0 or PostgreSQL 8.1. MediaWiki is easy to install, and, if Blackboard is available, built-in wiki software already exists inside the course shell.

In 2008 I had another opportunity to teach my oral history honors seminar. I built the course syllabus and my electronic textbook ("e-text") directly into the wiki's community portal. This time students chose to interview business leaders responsible for creating Little Rock's River Market, a revitalized urban district located next door to the Clinton Library. They then transformed the academic loose ends left by the previous class into a valuable set of linked wikipages. Fortunately, you don't need coding skills to edit a wikipage; you just hit the edit button and type. If you want hyperlinks to other pages (connected knowledge), you add `[[double brackets]]` around words. Then you press the save page button. That's it.

A wiki is not by definition a crowd-sourced, open-platform free-for-all. FranaWiki is password protected, and only those collaborators formally approved by the site administrator (me) are allowed to edit the pages. Students are prevented from editing the electronic textbook by an easily applied lock-out mechanism while some editable "current event" pages for organizing notes on future interviewees are reserved for student use. We eventually chose not simply to interview former contributors to the library and revitalization projects but also to engage them as collaborators at a distance, using them as a *de facto* advisory board and means for extramural evaluation. Our site,

recently renamed the Little Rock Renaissance Wiki (honors.uca.edu/wiki), currently has sixty-four collaborators, among whom are local urban planners, architects, and developers.

MediaWiki offers an elaborate built-in content-monitoring system that supplements and makes transparent the critical reading and revising of wiki pages by peers and advisors. Every author's contributions and modifications are logged and can be undone. If a page is moved, a redirect to its new location is automatically left behind. Users can communicate with one another by leaving messages on a special discussion page associated with each content page. These process-oriented aids enable students' grasp of the content, structure, and style of the resource as it develops from the bottom up; they also facilitate negotiating and taking responsibility for what gets written.

Today what was once just a byproduct of oral history interview preparation is now a stand-alone cultural resource. At 2,557 articles, Little Rock Renaissance Wiki is nearly as large as the state-funded *Encyclopedia of Arkansas History & Culture*. The goals of the two resources are dissimilar but complementary. The *Encyclopedia* favors tertiary articles by professional historians and centers on problems of race, class, gender, and ethnicity. Little Rock Renaissance tries to build public knowledge by making new knowledge public. In future years I will be able to update the course textbook while wiki software automatically stores copies of each previous version for posterity.

The wiki way reduces barriers to group participation and makes projects scalable and sustainable so that several generations of my students necessarily work both with each other and with extramural evaluators in solving authentic puzzles. Wikis are one example of the way that digital technologies expand the honors classroom, creating a new and different kind of time and space for collaborative learning projects. The digital age can thus transform, enhance, and broaden the quality of honors education.

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Using Flickr to Connect a Multi-Campus Honors Community

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PENN STATE BEAVER

Web 2.0 tools that facilitate social connections are popular among today's college students. Our students use social networks to stay connected with friends and family members. However, the networks can be more than just social; while maintaining their personal and community-building value, they can at the same time facilitate intellectual and artistic discussions on a common theme.

The Pennsylvania State University is a large geographically dispersed, multi-campus institution. Twenty of the twenty-four campuses provide undergraduate programming, and each campus has its own honors program under the umbrella of the Penn State Honors Consortium. The consortium focuses its mission on establishing guidelines and common requirements across all honors programs. The campus programs offer a variety of similar activities for academic engagement in honors at the campus, including honors-designated courses, honors travel-abroad opportunities, speaker series, etc. Although the consortium acts to bring together each of the campus honors coordinators, it does not connect the students across programs.

One area on which we have recently decided to focus our efforts is creating a sense of community among the honors students across all the campuses. As the campuses are located across the state of Pennsylvania, with some campuses as much as seven hours away from one another, it is not feasible to coordinate face-to-face student meetings. Therefore, we have turned to online tools to forge the connections, specifically the use of the photo-sharing tool Flickr <<http://www.flickr.com>>.

Inspiration for a cross-campus photography collaboration came from an email message posted on the NCHC listserv in fall 2008 by the Macaulay Honors College at The City University of New York. Macaulay Honors

College was looking for other honors colleges to partner with them for their “Snapshot NYC” program. The program asks every first-year student to take a picture related to a common theme. A faculty and student curatorial team then selects photographs for a student exhibition. The Penn State Honors Consortium thought that we could also use photography to connect our own university students on separate campuses.

At our fall 2008 Honors Consortium meeting, we discussed the NCHC posting and decided that we would use Flickr to pilot a university-wide honors program student collaborative project. Flickr is an “online photo management and sharing application” that allows us to create a community to which authorized members contribute images viewable by the general public. We were excited to show students an academic use of Flickr rather than just posting and organizing personal photographs for social networking.

The honors coordinators decided on a theme for the students to frame the project. The term “EVOLVE” was selected to represent historic tributes and events in early 2009, such as the two-hundredth birthday of both Charles Darwin and Abraham Lincoln as well as the inauguration of the first African American president. Students were encouraged to consider what the term “EVOLVE” meant to them and how to represent that meaning through a photograph. Each student was required to provide a title and description for the photograph contributed to the Flickr group. The deadline to post the photographs online was February 12, the birthday of Darwin and Lincoln. The key to the “EVOLVE” project was not just taking and viewing photos but using the Flickr website to social network around an image.

Overall we were pleased with our first attempt to create a cross-campus honors community. The “EVOLVE” project provided a new opportunity to incorporate active learning and Web 2.0 technology for a virtual academic dialogue. The twenty-five images contributed by students were in essence the starting point for twenty-five conversations that normally would not take place during the semester. The project also facilitated conversations among the honors students at the local campuses, inspiring them to have a local peer-to-peer dialogue about the project and submitted images. Some of the students provided thoughtful comments, such as:

- “There are several different expressions of evolution, mostly of the human nature. For example, materialism and consumerism were expressed in at least three of the photographs. . . . One group talked about how people were evolving to the fastest possible thing, citing fast food as preferred over regular food. A topic for other photos was what I would like to call meta-evolution, or evolution in the things that people use, such as televisions and newspapers.”

- “I found it quite interesting to see many pictures which were associated with the changing of the seasons since I myself had never thought of evolution that way.”
- “The images captured lots of meaning, which was entirely unique to the person who was viewing them. My view was hardly ever identical to that of the person who submitted them. It shows how our individuality [a]ffects the way we view everything. Our perspective of our own realities define[s] the images we see in our own ways. This seems to me like an evolution of our minds.”
- “I’m glad someone took the negative approach to evolve as well, because sometimes evolution isn’t good—especially when we hurt the environment doing so. The critique of consumerism, the advent of technology, and the fall of the written newspaper and other low-tech forms of news-gathering were all mentioned and all a significant part.”

The project was also a success for the coordinators. It provided us an opportunity to collaborate on a project in a way we had not in the past. To build on the limited success of the project, we will develop a set of best practices for coordinators and students; this will include strategies for incorporating the project into regular honors coursework and advertising methods for students earning honors credits in non-honors designated courses. We will broaden the leadership in the project by asking students to assist in all phases of development and post-project assessment, thereby allowing students to take some ownership of the collaboration.

We have decided to continue with the Flickr project in spring 2010, connecting the project with the Winter Olympic Games under the theme “COMPETITION & CITIZENSHIP.” We will ask our students to submit their photos during the same dates as the Olympics, from the day of the opening ceremonies to the day of the closing ceremonies. We will have a gold, silver, and bronze medal winner for the top three photographs and descriptions submitted.

The large, fragmented nature of a multi-campus university can be offset by the integration of Web 2.0 technologies such as Flickr. Although some people question how personal online communication can be, the Internet is allowing us to create connections between individuals that were formerly a challenge to establish and were thus rare in our community. We look forward to continuing to use Flickr as an online social-networking tool to foster collaboration and innovation in a virtual academic community.

To view the spring 2010 Flickr project, please visit <http://tinyurl.com/psuhonorscc>.

USING FLICKR TO CONNECT A MULTI-CAMPUS HONORS COMMUNITY

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Clickin' in the Honors Classroom: Using Audience Response Systems to Facilitate Discussion and Decision-Making

DEBORAH GENTRY

HEARTLAND COMMUNITY COLLEGE

In his 1988 book entitled *The Media Lab: Inventing the Future at MIT*, Stewart Brand makes the following observation: “Once a new technology rolls over you, if you’re not part of the steamroller, you’re part of the road” (9). One focus of this Forum on “Honors in the Digital Age” is the degree to which honors faculty and students are part of the steamroller or part of the road. Instructional technologies can be both boon and bane, and I will address both aspects of using “clickers” in the honors classroom. “Clickers” is the common or slang term for what is more formally known as interactive, computer-based Audience Response Systems (ARS) or Group Response Systems (GRS), which allow members of an audience/group (e.g., classroom learners) to respond to questions posed to them by “clicking” their preferred answer out on a hand-held device or response pad. Those posing the questions (e.g., teachers or discussion facilitators) can, within seconds, prompt the system to tally, summarize, and display results in a chart form (e.g., pie, bar, or graph) for all to view and consider.

Given a particular instructional technology, perhaps one factor that contributes to the user’s becoming part of the steamroller rather than the road is thoughtful, appropriate application of the technology for the context in which it is being used. The honors context for which I have found clickers most appropriate is a seminar course where issues are analyzed, viewpoints are fleshed out and compared, and ideas are exchanged. Levels of faculty-student and student-student interactivity and engagement in seminars should be high. Often, however, when the issues are controversial, the discussion can be overly value- and attitude-laden. Most honors students are no different than non-honors students in being hesitant, at least initially, to speak up in class. “While curious about the beliefs and practices of their peers, some students

resist sharing insights about their own due to concerns about how their peers will react to such revelations. Lack of knowledge or experience, as well as feelings of fear, shame, embarrassment, or anger, often underlie such resistance” (Gentry, 43, in reference to Ramos & Blinn-Pike). When I use audience response systems to pose questions to my students that inquire about values, attitudes, beliefs, and behavioral tendencies, their ability to maintain anonymity when answering is helpful in reducing passivity and generating higher levels of interactive discussion in reaction to the poll results.

Like many forms of technology, ARS has changed considerably since it was first conceived and used for military training contexts in the 1950s (Horowitz). Instead of requiring wires and cables, modern applications for educational and other settings are wireless. The size of response pads has shrunk, as has cost. Today’s “clickers” or “zappers,” each with a unique registration number, are the size of a small hand-held calculator or a credit card and cost between \$30 (used) and \$70 (new) each. With proper treatment and care, such as replacing batteries from time to time, clickers can be used repeatedly. ARS-specific software is typically free, easy to install on a computer, and well integrated with other software programs such as Microsoft’s PowerPoint. For an additional \$100, an instructor, presenter, or meeting facilitator must also acquire a radio frequency receiver, which looks similar to a jump drive or memory stick and plugs into a computer’s USB port; it captures responses made by audience members on their keypads and transfers them to the ARS software program in the computer for analysis and eventual reporting.

When teaching an honors seminar course, I combine the use of clickers with various teaching-learning strategies or methods such as case studies, cooperative group problem-solving exercises, “think-pair-share” activities sprinkled throughout brief lecture-type presentations, or simulations. For example, students work in small groups to research a societal issue such as those found embedded within the current Phi Theta Kappa seminar, “The Paradox of Affluence: Choices, Challenges, and Consequences” (see <http://www.ptk.org/honors/seminars>). Next, students plan and moderate a simulated town hall forum related to the selected issue, thus practicing public deliberation skills (see Matthews & McAfee). They present trends and facts associated with the issue at hand and guide the audience (their fellow students and invited guests) through a process of analyzing the issue and assessing the suitability of various solutions or courses of action. With my guidance during their planning of the forum, the students formulate a series of questions to be posed in clicker fashion to the audience at the beginning and close of the forum. An optimal set of questions will vary in nature or type (e.g., knowledge-based; attitude- or belief-oriented; reporting behaviors or experiences; soliciting preferences). During the debriefing after the simulated forum, when

students compare pre-forum and post-forum polling results that have been tabulated and graphed by the ARS, they come to realize how powerful a balanced, holistic forum can be in presenting new information, dispelling myths and misconceptions, changing attitudes and opinions, and inspiring a willingness to take action.

While I have not used clickers as a means of administering quizzes or tests, I have used them to pose questions that help me assess the degree to which students have attended to assigned readings prior to class. I have also used them to pose questions at the close of a lesson to help me determine what aspects remain muddy in their thinking on a topic and could benefit from further clarification or study. On occasion, when class members need to arrive at a consensus on a matter (e.g., which community organization to volunteer service for, which cultural event to attend together, or which community expert to invite to speak to the class), polling with clickers provides anonymity and efficiency. Though some instructors employ clickers for taking attendance, I have never opted to do so.

Positive outcomes for students and teachers occur when polling practices are neither under- nor over-utilized. Students are resentful of purchasing clickers they seldom put into action, and their interest wanes when confronted with too many questions in too many polls, particularly ones that provoke little thought or curiosity. Positive results are also more likely to occur for students and teachers when both parties appreciate and accommodate the learning curve that accompanies the use of an unfamiliar instructional technology. System and software failures happen from time to time. Clickers can be damaged, forgotten, or lost. And, when clickers are used for purposes of administering tests and taking attendance, cheating abuses can surface, particularly when audience sizes are large. These challenges can be minimized with forethought about remedies (e.g., stated expectations, policies, procedures).

If the ARS “steamroller” has made its way to your campus and academic unit, you may be wondering whether you and your students will become a part of the movement or the pavement. Just as other instructional technologies have been unable to cure all teaching-learning ills, clickers and zappers offer no panacea either. Nonetheless, education-based research studies increasingly demonstrate beneficial outcomes (Abrahamson; Judson & Sawada). These benefits include increased levels of audience interest, engagement, interactivity, and understanding of concepts covered, all of which are central to honors contexts. As for teachers/presenters, findings point to their increased ability to recognize in a timely manner the nature of learners’ difficulties in processing content and to remediate them through clarification and other means. As honors faculty can surmise, particularly those who favor the Socratic method, the secret to such outcomes is rooted in

asking a given student audience the right questions at the right time (Beatty, Leonard, Gerace, & Dufresne; Bruff). Engaging teaching and active learning in the honors classroom can be just a click away.

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Making Connections: Technology and Interaction in an Honors Classroom

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INTRODUCTION

The adoption of educational technology tends to be based on the technology itself as opposed to the pedagogical needs it can serve—what we like to think of as a solution in search of a problem. In this paper we contend that appropriate application of educational technology to produce certain face-to-face outcomes in a composition seminar can improve the student experience in the course. We frame our discussion in Mishra’s and Koehler’s TPACK theoretical framework (2006), where the quality teacher becomes the content expert who knows *what* to teach and *how* to teach to the novice learner while also understanding *how* a non-pedagogical technology can facilitate learning. Our discussion shows how we used online discussion to build a community of learners in a busy first-year honors seminar.

THE PROBLEM

We teach first-year honors courses that fulfill the university writing requirement. One of the program-level requirements is that instructors choose texts and films that cover a broad chronological range in order to give students an historical context for the reading materials, to make connections between past and present, and to suggest the thematic, conceptual, literary, historical, cultural, and philosophical roots of their reading materials. Essential to success in this course and any honors course is student-instructor interaction. Garrison and Anderson note that technology can support and enhance even traditional interactions such as the lecture. For example, educational technology can help instructors sign off on high-impact interactions so that they can focus their time and instruction in ways that more effectively use their time. Technology also can take us back to the future, to a learning theory framed on communities of inquiry or, as Garrison and Anderson note, a “community where individual experiences and ideas are recognized and discussed in light of societal knowledge, norms, and values” (4).

Such a community is difficult to create. One of the goals of our honors program is to explore the opportunities presented by a liberal education, especially in the light of William Cronon's humanistic definition of liberal education as a place for students to begin making connections among themselves and with their texts. Such connections necessitate a classroom of trusting students—not, in and of itself, a specified learning outcome but nevertheless essential to successful learning in our honors courses. The dilemma we faced in designing our course was how to meet the intrinsic need for community and connection without unduly sacrificing the programmatic outcomes in the process.

A (NOT THE ONLY) SOLUTION

We have tried a variety of ways to build communities and connections. Our university made the decision to deliver all electronic readings through our course management system (initially WebCT Vista, then Blackboard Vista) a few years ago, thus necessitating that all courses have a Vista shell each time they are delivered. In other words, even though we taught in-person, face-to-face classes, we still needed to have our students access Vista in order to get some of the supplemental readings. We saw this necessity as an opportunity to rethink our pedagogy by re-tasking some face-to-face activities to Vista, enhancing the quality of face-to-face interaction in class, and giving more time to focus on required learning outcomes.

One strategy we employed was introductory icebreakers, which are important to the establishment of a learning community and climate (Knowles). We encountered a problem with icebreakers, however: students are resistant when they are experiencing them for the umpteenth time. We also wondered if icebreakers need to happen in, and only in, the first class. A community cannot form in one day, never mind one 50- or 75-minute class.

Technology, however, can help here. We adapted an icebreaker described by Conrad and Donaldson and moved it to Blackboard Vista. Following some brief peer-led introductions during our first live meeting, we assigned students a Name That Movie activity in a Vista-based discussion. The assignment was as follows:

By the end of Wednesday, August 26th:

Post a 2–3 sentence discussion response to the following: If you were to write the score to the movie of your life, which two songs would you pick and why? Please pick one song that represents your life as a whole and another that gives a more recent picture.

By the end of Sunday, August 31st:

Based on the answers to 1 above, suggest a movie title for each person, followed by a one sentence explanation of why you chose that title. Do this by responding to their initial posts.

By the beginning of class, Tuesday, September 2nd:

Consider all the suggested titles for your movie (by reading all of your responses). Select the one title that would best fit your movie and note it in your discussion thread, followed by a 1–2 sentence explanation of why you chose it. Also, bring this response to class.

This assignment was not graded, but it promoted phenomenal interactions. It generated 307 messages in one class of 18 students over the course of the five days between our Thursday and Tuesday meetings. Our only adaptation to this activity was to have the students come to class to discuss their final responses. Walking into the Tuesday class after this activity was a different experience from the week before; the room was noisy as students visited with their neighbors and discussed their movie titles and music tastes. Students were referring to each other by name and moving about the room to share movies, songs, and ideas with each other. Connections had been made, and a community was forming.

CONCLUSION

Adoption of technology needs to be a purposeful endeavor. In our example, we identified the need to build community and sought out some solutions with the available technology. The success of such uses of educational technology in honors or any other courses shows up both in classroom performance and end-of-semester assessment. Educational technology can support student learning by allowing us to meet the needs of a large seminar class without compromising our pedagogy and by allowing the instructor to focus on one-to-one interactions with and among students at all levels of academic ability.

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IM Riff on the IT Overload

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I am . . .
a Star Trek-loving
Tron-remembering
Matrix-following
member of Gen X
who has known Big Blue, TI, Commodore, and Apple
and vividly recalls the first time
I ever sat at a Mac
and opened a
window.

I miss
Word Perfect.
I use MS Word.
I think EndNote is the best thing
since the invention
of word processing
itself.

I have scanned
card catalogs,
library databases,
gophers,
search engines,
and
Google
and yet still know when
to visit with a
reference librarian.

IM RIFF ON THE IT OVERLOAD

Most days
I'm on my
iPod, Palm Treo, a Mac, and a Dell.
I run Snow Leopard, XP, and Vista.
I follow message boards,
review FAQs,
maintain listservs,
blog, chat, text, and tweet.
You won't find me on MySpace,
but I am on Facebook and Flickr.

I am not IT—in spite of what you think—
so don't IM me.
I'm downloading a podcast
and headed off-grid
just to hear myself think.*

* With inspirational acknowledgement to George Carlin and his standup routine on *A Modern Man, A Man for the Millennium*.

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Research Essays

Assessing Student Learning in Community College Honors Programs Using the CCCSE Course Feedback Form

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INTRODUCTION

Academically talented students with impressive placement scores are enrolling at community colleges in increasing numbers. The economy has certainly played a role in this migration to two-year institutions, where students can commute from home and pay lower tuition rates, but other factors have also contributed to the change. Community colleges have expanded their mission to meet the academic needs of this population (Marklei; Boulard), and articulation agreements between community colleges and universities have improved over the years (Kane).

More two-year institutions are offering honors programs for the academically gifted students who will eventually transfer to four-year universities (Beck). The benefits to community colleges of developing and sustaining honors programs are many; according to Bulakowski and Townsend, they include: (a) greater learning potential for strong academic students; (b) higher retention of well-prepared students; (c) higher transfer rates for honors students; (d) enhancement of the institution's public image; and (e) increased respect from four-year institutions (Beck; Bulakowski and Townsend; Boulard).

However, not all community college administrators and faculty approve of honors programs in the community college setting. Opponents claim honors programs are elitist, diverting resources and the best professors to the academically gifted students. They argue that community colleges—known for open and equal-access education—should be identifying methods and resources to help all students learn better, not just a few (Boulard; Evelyn; Outcalt; Selingo). While these arguments may always exist, as budgetary pressures become increasingly difficult, these voices become louder and often more persuasive.

COMMUNITY COLLEGE HONORS PROGRAMS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Enrollments have increased at community colleges during the economic downturn. Unfortunately, this increase has occurred at the same time that states such as Florida, New Mexico, Rhode Island, and many others have reduced their financial support for higher education; even though their enrollments are up, community colleges have been forced to cut expenses and eliminate programs (Bushong). Now more than ever it is important to have valid and concrete methods of assessment for honors programs (Lanier).

In *Assessing and Evaluating Honors Programs and Honors Colleges: A Practical Handbook*, Otero and Spurrier state, "Evaluation and assessment provide an opportunity for Honors Programs and Honors Colleges to demonstrate their strengths, address their weaknesses, generate institutional support, and gain outside validation of their accomplishments and goals" (p. 5). They suggest a two-phase evaluation process: a self-study and then an external study by a team of NCHC-recommended Site Visitors. In the self-study report, Otero and Spurrier recommend that the honors program or honors college develop goals and objectives, gather evidence of accomplishing those objectives, and identify strategies for improvement. For many programs, the gathering of evidence is a precarious part of the self-study. Whipple encouraged well-conducted self-assessment of programs but cautioned, "Assessment, poorly planned and executed, wastes time and money, and may misinform, leading to faulty conclusions" (p.41).

The Art and Phyllis Grindle Honors Institute at Seminole Community College (SCC) in Florida has more than doubled in size over the last four years. The program has enhanced its curriculum, expanded to two campuses, hosted the Florida Collegiate Honors Council Conference, and had four consecutive Jack Kent Cooke Scholars and one All-USA Community College Academic Team Member. Despite its impressive record, the SCC Honors Program is scrambling, along with every other worthy program, to develop measurable student-learning outcomes, gather evidence, and assess student learning for accreditation self-study requirements and for its administration. The program has written goals, objectives, and methods of assessment in place, but had to search for a valid and relevant assessment tool to understand how students are learning in the honors classes compared to traditional classes. By knowing this information, the program could better document evidence of student learning, determine curricular or pedagogical changes, improve or maintain strong retention rates, and perhaps justify the budget resources directed to honors.

For several reasons, the SCC Honors Institute decided to adopt the Center for Community College Student Engagement (CCCSE) Course Feedback Form as an assessment tool. First, the CCCSE Course Feedback Form was cost-effective (free) and could be downloaded from the CCCSE website. Second, our college already recognized the CCCSE Community College Student Report (CCSR) as a valid instrument and used it as an assessment tool, and the CCCSE Course Feedback Form was based on questions from the CCCSE Community College Student Report (CCSR). Finally, the questions on the CCCSE Course Feedback Form solicited responses from students about their learning experiences and engagement in the classroom.

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

Research has shown that the more actively engaged students are—with faculty, staff, other students, and the subject matter—the more likely they are to learn and to achieve their academic goals (CCSSE *Institutional Report*, 2004; Astin; Pace, as noted in Kuh; Pascarella and Terenzini).

The Center for Community College Student Engagement (CCCSE) was launched in 2001 under the name of the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) as a project of the Community College Leadership Program based at The University of Texas at Austin. Grants from The Pew Charitable Trusts, the Lumina Foundation for Education, the MetLife Foundation, and Houston Endowment supported the effort. The purpose was to stimulate dialogue about how quality is defined and measured, to provide an appropriate assessment tool, and to raise public awareness about the work of community colleges.

Considered the “daughter” of the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), which is used by four-year institutions to obtain information about learning practices and student engagement, the CCSSE addresses the unique mission and student characteristics of community colleges (Ouimet, p. 8). The purpose of the instruments is to provide information about effective educational practices and promote practices demonstrated to improve student learning and retention (McClenney, p. 138).

The CCCSE and NSSE survey instruments are based on the work of many researchers, including Pace’s seminal 1984 work on student effort, Astin’s work (1984, 1993, 1999) on student involvement, and Chickering and Gamson’s 1987 landmark publication on good practices of undergraduate education (Kuh, p. 2). The seven principles of good practice were developed by a task force of scholars of policy, organizational, and economic issues in higher education as well as others who had conducted research on the college experience (Chickering and Gamson, 1999, p. 76). The principles or “engagement indicators” (Kuh, p.1) include: encouraging student-faculty contact;

reciprocity and cooperation among students; active learning; prompt feedback; time on task; communication of high expectations; and respect for diverse talents and ways of knowing (Chickering and Gamson, 1987, p. 3).

The CCCSE survey instrument, the *Community College Student Report* (CCSR), is a research-based tool that can be useful for benchmarking performance and monitoring progress of improvement efforts by comparing results not only to other institutions but within an institution from one administration to another (Ouimet, p. 8). CCCSE cautions institutions in their use of data and advises that comparison for purposes of ranking is inappropriate.

While CCSR results provide institutional assessment data that can be disaggregated by demographic factors such as ethnic groups, first-generation college students, and developmental or college-preparatory students, CCCSE's Course Feedback Form provides a vehicle for individual course and program-level assessment. The Course Feedback Form was developed in response to requests from community colleges with the assistance of a CCSSE advisory group and is closely aligned with the CCSR (McClenney, pp. 140–41). The Course Feedback Form is password protected and available free of charge to any former or current CCCSE-member college in the Toolkit found under Resources on CCSSE's web site at <<http://ccsse.org>>. The University of Alabama has collaborated with NSSE to develop a classroom-level adaptation of their survey instrument, called the Classroom Survey of Student Engagement (CLASSE) for use by four-year institutions. It also is available free of charge to past and current participants of the NSSE. Information is available at <<http://assessment.ua.edu/CLASSE/Overview>>.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

A key question is what assessment resources are available to improve curricular programs, including honors programs, that strive to improve student learning. A growing body of research shows that student engagement is related to improved student learning and persistence. An exploratory study conducted by Long and Lange demonstrated statistically significant differences between honors and non-honors students in academic focus, student interaction, and student activity. But while these students may already be more engaged and exhibit higher retention rates than non-honors students (Long and Lange), the question remains how to assess and improve the educational practices of these students and honors programs.

Anchored in research, and with our institution already examining the CCCSE data in order to make improvements in student learning and retention, the SCC Honors Program believed that the CCCSE survey and the CCCSE Course Feedback Form could be used to specifically target assessment and improvement of honors classes. Although the SCC Physical

Therapy Assistant program used the CCCSE Course Feedback Form in its self-study in preparation for re-accreditation by the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education, it has not been widely adopted across the College.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study was guided by two research questions:

1. How do SCC honors students' responses on the CCCSE Course Feedback Form compare to the general SCC college-credit-student population's responses to the institution-level *Community College Student Report*?
2. Based on aggregated student responses to the CCCSE Course Feedback Form, what areas might the honors program consider addressing to improve student engagement and therefore the student learning and retention of its honors students?

DEFINITION OF TERMS

- *CCSR* is the *Community College Student Report*, which is the survey instrument used by CCCSE for institutional assessment.
- *CCCSE* is the Center for Community College Student Engagement. It was launched in 2001 under the name Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE).
- *CCSSE* is the Community College Survey of Student Engagement and was launched in 2001 as a project of the Community College Leadership Program at The University of Texas at Austin. The name was officially changed to the Center for Community College Student Engagement (CCCSE) in spring 2009.
- *CCCSE's Course Feedback Form* is an end-of-course evaluation instrument developed with the assistance of an advisory panel to provide a tool for course-level and program-level assessment. The instrument shares thirty-nine questions with the *Community College Student Report* and contains additional questions that pertain to the specific course. It is intended for local administration and analysis (Retrieved 6/7/08 from <<http://www.ccsse.org/publications/toolkit.cfm>>).
- *Engagement* is the quality of effort students devote to “educationally purposeful activities that contribute directly to desired outcomes” (Hu and Kuh, p. 555).

DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

The CCCSE survey, the CCSR, was administered according to survey protocols in spring 2007. The surveys were sent to CCSSE for data compilation, and Seminole Community College received its results by fall 2007. CCCSE provides participating colleges with an extensive dataset of their institution's results, including the mean scores of student responses to each survey item.

The Course Feedback Form was administered in all honors courses at Seminole Community College in summer 2007, fall 2007, and spring 2008, totaling seventeen sections. The honors courses cut across various disciplines including composition and literature, economics, psychology, sociology, speech, humanities, history, and biology. The college's Institutional Research Office compiled the data and provided mean scores of student responses to each survey item for each honors course as well as an overall mean score of all honors courses for each survey item.

The authors developed a cross-walk between the CCSR and the Course Feedback Form in order to identify the survey items that were the same and those that were unique to the Course Feedback Form. Thirty-nine survey items were found to be the same, including five questions pertaining to College Experience and Demographics. These five questions were not examined in this study, so the study consisted of examining mean scores from thirty-four of the survey items.

In order to establish whether the honors students were similar as a group across semesters, the mean scores (by semester) of each item on the Course Feedback Form were examined to determine if there were statistically significant differences in student responses to each item between terms. Few or no statistically significant differences between terms on the thirty-four items examined would imply that honors students across all terms were similar and would support the plan to examine all honors students' responses to the Course Feedback Form in this time period as a group.

The mean scores of students' responses to each item for each of the honors classes, as well as the overall honors mean score on each item, were compared to the mean scores of student responses to the institutionally-administered CCSR. Although the student population in honors courses is different from the population of students who responded to the CCSR, it seemed a valid comparison conducted in a cursory manner to determine if the data did, in fact, show honors students to be more engaged in honors classes than students in other courses. The mean scores of the individual items on the Course

Feedback Form used in the honors courses were also compared to the overall mean score for all honors courses as part of the honors program assessment.

RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

CCCSE's instrument, the *Community College Student Report*, has its genesis in NSSE's instrument, the *College Student Report*, and shares a number of common survey questions. The score reliability and validity of the NSSE have been extensively explored and demonstrated (Kuh, 2002, as noted in Marti, 2004, P. 1).

The score reliability of the CCSR and its component benchmarks were measured through use of Cronbach's alpha (Marti, 2004, p. 14). Cronbach's alpha values for the five survey benchmarks are strong despite not all exceeding the "gold standard of .70" (Marti, 2009, p. 11).

Test-retest reliability was evaluated by comparing students' responses to the survey administered in more than one of their classes although only one survey from each individual was included in overall analyses (Marti, 2009, p. 11). Year-to-year comparisons between 2003, 2004, and 2005 indicate that the instrument is measuring the same constructs across time and that differences between subgroups are due to real differences in means, variances, and co-variances as opposed to problems associated with the instrument (Marti, 2009, p. 14). A major validation research study of CCCSE's survey was recently completed that demonstrated a relationship between student responses to survey items and student outcomes (McClenney, p. 140).

Nearly seventy percent of the survey items on the CCCSE Course Feedback Form are the same as items on the CCCSE *Community College Student Report*. The reliability and validity of NSSE and CCCSE institutional surveys lend credence to the reliability and validity of the CCCSE Course Feedback Form.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The CCCSE Course Feedback Form provides a means of research-based course-level and program-level assessment. By collecting data through CCCSE's Course Feedback Form across all honors classes in summer 2007, fall 2007 and spring 2008, the authors were able to examine not only course-but program-level data for the honors courses. The CCCSE Course Feedback Form provides a research-based means to assess individual classes and a program to provide a basis for continued improvement and gains in student learning.

Using CCCSE's CCSR and the Course Feedback Forms together, an institution can assess student engagement and thereby student learning at the institutional level as well as by individual course or program.

RESULTS

Frequencies were conducted on both the *Community College Student Report* and the CCCSE Course Feedback Form. The CCSR had $n=829$ with 447 female and 294 male responses. There were 72 Black students, 127 Hispanic students, 461 White students, and 73 students who reported other race and ethnicities. Course Feedback Form frequencies indicated 260 responses from honors students across the 17 sections surveyed. For the students who included demographic information, 161 were female, 80 male, 15 Black, 22 Hispanic, 112 White, and 71 students who reported other races and ethnicities. The “other” category was large for the Course Feedback Form because the summer session forms failed to include a category for Hispanics. All survey results were included in the analysis of Course Feedback Forms and no attempt was made to use only one survey per student across all 17 sections.

In order to establish whether the honors students were similar as a group across semesters, the mean scores (by semester) of each item on the Course Feedback Form were examined through an analysis of variance conducted by the authors to determine if there were statistically significant differences in student responses to each item between terms (see Appendix). Statistically significant differences were found through the omnibus F -test in 9 of the 34 survey items, or 26% of the items examined. Multiple Comparison Procedures indicated that there were more differences between the responses of honors students from summer 2007 to fall 2007 than there were between other groups examined. Despite these differences in their initial examination of CCCSE Course Feedback Form data, the authors chose to examine the honors student responses from all three semesters as a group in the comparison with institutional CCSR results. The authors also included all Course Feedback Form responses. Since a number of honors students were in several different honors classes in which the survey was administered, more than one Course Feedback Form per student is included in the results. The CCSR survey protocol requires that only one survey per student is included in institutional results.

Although the student population in honors courses is different from the population of students who responded to the CCSR, we could make a rough determination if the data showed honors students to be more engaged in honors courses than non-honors students in other classes. The results would also show if and how honors students were less engaged than the larger student population at the college. Such information could serve as the basis for improvement of the honors program.

One of the research questions guiding this study was: How do SCC honors students' responses on the CCCSE Course Feedback Form compare to the

general SCC college-credit-student population's responses to the institution-level *Community College Student Report*?

To answer this question, the researchers examined 34 questions on the CCCSE Course Feedback Form that are the same as questions on the institution-level *Community College Student Report*. The mean scores of SCC honors students' responses to the CCCSE Course Feedback Form (n=260) as compared with SCC students' responses to the CCCSE *Community College Student Report* (n=829) indicated more engagement with faculty, students, and learning activities on 29 of 34 identical questions from the CCCSE Course Feedback form and the *Community College Survey Report*. The survey items are categorized by CCCSE into three groups, which are presented in Tables 1, 2, and 3.

In order to answer the second research question, the researchers more closely examined the survey items in which honors students' responses to questions on the CCCSE Course Feedback Form indicated less engagement than other students' responses to the same question on the CCSR. Five items indicated less engagement by honors students surveyed in the honors courses (see Table 4).

CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

Despite the following types of limitations of this study, the CCCSE Course Feedback Form, used in conjunction with the CCCSE *Community College Student Report*, seems a promising tool for assessing courses and programs given its ability to measure learning gains made after curriculum adjustments based on assessment data. Limitations include:

1. CCCSE's survey, the *Community College Student Report*, asked students to consider their experience over an entire academic year and across all of their classes while the Course Feedback Form requested feedback on a specific course within a given term.
2. Only one survey per student is used in analyses of the *Community College Student Report* while all student responses to the CCCSE Course Feedback Form administered to different honors classes, including those by the same student in different classes, were used in the analyses of the Course Feedback Form.
3. Data from CCCSE's *Community College Student Report* and the CCCSE Course Feedback Form are self-reported.
4. Honors students applied and were selected for admission into the honors program while students who responded to the institution-level *Community College Student Report* are subject to open admissions policies and not selected according to academic performance.

Table 1: Mean Scores of Academic, Intellectual and Social Experiences (CCSSE, 2007) for Honors Students and Non-Honors Students

CCSR 2005–2007	Course Feed- back Form	During the current semester, how often did you do the following?	SCC Mean 2007 (CCSR)	SCC Honors Mean (Course Feedback Form)
Question #				
4a	1a	Ask questions in class	2.89	3.05
4b	1b	Make a class presentation	2.25	2.31
4c	1c	Prepare two or more drafts of an assignment	2.53	2.64
4d	1d	Worked on papers that require integrating ideas or information from various sources	2.90	3.29
4f	1e	Work with other students on projects during class	2.34	2.75
4g	1f	Work with classmates outside of class to complete an assignment	1.82	2.41
4i	1g	Participate in a community-based project as part of coursework	1.26	1.68
4j	1h	Use the Internet to complete an assignment	2.89	3.45
4k	1i	Used e-mail to communicate with your instructor	2.52	2.40
4l	1j	Discussed grades or assignments with your instructor	2.54	2.42
4m	1k	Talked about career plans with your instructor	2.05	1.76
4n	1l	Discussed ideas from your readings or class with your instructor outside of class	1.77	2.18
4p	1m	Worked harder than you thought you could to meet your instructors standards or expectations	2.43	2.70
4r	1n	Discussed ideas from the readings or class with others outside of class (students, family members, co-workers)	2.54	2.85
4u	1o	Skipped class	1.69	1.15
4o	1p	Received prompt feedback from your instructor about your performance	2.63	2.95

Scale: 1 = Very little; 2= Some; 3= Quite a bit; 4=Very much

Table 2: Mean Scores of Character of Mental Activities (CCSSE, 2007) for Honors and Non-Honors

CCSR 2005–2007	Course Feed- back Form	During the semester, how much have your courses emphasized the following?	SCC Mean 2007 (CCSR)	SCC Honors Mean (Course Feedback Form)
Question #				
5a	2a	Memorizing facts, ideas, or methods from your courses and reading so that you can repeat them in pretty much the same form	2.76	2.36
5b	2b	Analyzing the basic elements of an idea, experience, or theory	2.84	3.22
5c	2c	Synthesizing and organizing ideas, information, or experiences in new ways	2.72	3.21
5d	2d	Making judgments about the value or soundness of information, arguments, or methods	2.62	3.21
5e	2e	Applying theories or concepts to practical problems or in new situations	2.65	2.90
5f	2f	Using information you have read or heard to perform a new skill	2.65	2.69

Scale: 1 = Very little; 2= Some; 3= Quite a bit; 4=Very much

Table 3: Mean scores of items pertaining to Knowledge, Skills and Personal Development (CCSSE, 2007) for Honors and Non-Honors Students

CCSR 2005–2007	Course Feed- back Form	During the current semester, to what extent did this course help you develop in the following areas?	SCC Mean 2007 (CCSR)	SCC Honors Mean (Course Feedback Form)
Question #				
12c	3a	Writing clearly and effectively	2.66	2.70
12d	3b	Speaking clearly and effectively	2.60	2.74
12e	3c	Thinking critically and analytically	2.86	3.23
12f	3d	Solving numerical problems	2.62	2.17
12g	3e	Using computing information technology	2.58	2.62
12h	3f	Working effectively with others	2.55	2.87
12i	3g	Learning effectively on my own	2.83	2.89
12j	3h	Understanding myself	2.53	2.68
12k	3i	Understanding people of other racial and ethnic backgrounds	2.29	2.84
12l	3j	Developing a personal code of values and ethics	2.27	2.59
12m	3k	Contributing to the welfare of the community	1.88	2.52
12n	3l	Developing clearer career goals	2.49	2.39

Scale: 1 = Very little; 2= Some; 3= Quite a bit; 4=Very much

Table 4: Mean Scores Indicating Less Engagement for SCC Honors Students

CCSR 2005–2007	Course Feed- back Form	During the current semester, how often did you do the following?	SCC Mean 2007 (CCSR)	SCC Honors Mean (Course Feedback Form)
Question #				
4k	1i	Used e-mail to communicate with your instructor	2.52	2.40
4l	1j	Discussed grades or assignments with your instructor	2.54	2.42
4m	1k	Talked about career plans with your instructor	2.05	1.76
12f	3d	Solving numerical problems	2.62	2.17
12n	3l	Developing clearer career goals	2.49	2.39

Scale: 1 = Very little; 2= Some; 3= Quite a bit; 4=Very much

5. Honors students are required to take a one-credit orientation course that is a modified type of First-Year Experience while the general college population does not take such a course.
6. Data analyses of the CCCSE Course Feedback Forms were conducted by the College's Institutional Research Office and the authors.

National CCCSE data show that honors students are already reaping some of the greatest benefits of what community colleges have to offer and are highly engaged (Arnspargar, Slide 25). Honors students' responses to 29 of 34 questions on the CCCSE Course Feedback Form administered in this study indicated that they were more engaged in honors courses than non-honors students in general courses. Honors students responded that they asked more questions in class, prepared more drafts of papers, worked harder than they thought they could, and discussed ideas from the class with others outside of class. Honors students also indicated through the Course Feedback Form that their honors courses emphasized critical thinking skills, such as analysis, synthesis, argumentation, and problem solving, much more than the traditional courses. This evidence from the Course Feedback Form will help the SCC Honors Program to document the high-level learning that is occurring in honors classrooms. The data will also help to assess the program's new student learning outcomes, which coordinate with the Course Feedback Form's critical thinking questions 2b, 2c, 2d, and 2e (see Table 2).

The mean scores of honors students' responses on two items are noteworthy because a lower mean indicates a higher level of engagement. A lower mean score of honors students' responses to item 1o on the Course Feedback Form, which pertains to skipping class, indicates a higher level of engagement. Likewise, a lower mean score of honors students' responses to item 2a on the Course Feedback Form, which pertains to mental activities involving critical thinking, compared to all student responses to item 5a on the CCSR, indicates a higher level of engagement. Responses are based on a 4-point scale (see Tables 1, 2 and 3).

However, there were five responses on the Course Feedback Form indicating less engagement for SCC honors students. The authors chose to focus initially on two of the five items for program improvement. These were items 1k and 3l on the Course Feedback Form which pertain to career plans and goals (see Table 4). These items were given priority because of the important association of career decision and persistence (Sandler, p. 564).

Honors students reported on item 1k of the Course Feedback Form that they discussed career plans with instructors less frequently than the general population reported in the CCSR. While the general population responding to the CCSR included students in career and technical programs, such as

nursing, criminal justice, and computer technology, the honors students' responses were still of concern.

A second item indicating less engagement by honors students according to the CCCSE Course Feedback Form pertained to whether the course helped students develop clearer career goals. Honors students indicated that honors classes were not helping them develop clear career goals to the extent that the general population experienced in their classes. That there were two items pertaining to career plans and goals in which honors students seem less engaged was noteworthy. Because honors courses often provide opportunities for exploration, careers may be an area where SCC honors could work to improve engagement. While professors certainly are not the only source of career information, they may find ways to connect their subjects with various disciplines or careers. Students can also be encouraged, perhaps in the honors orientation class, to seek advice from faculty about academic paths and career choices. The Program is also considering a series of one-hour seminars for honors students to spend time with guest speakers from different professional careers.

While the SCC Honors Program will continue to examine a variety of data on honors students and courses, including demographics, course completion rates, grade point averages, retention rates, and graduation rates, the Course Feedback Form is helpful because it addresses the learning occurring in the classroom. In addition, the Course Feedback Form provides a way to compare the honors students' responses with the responses of the general population in the college. The data can also be benchmarked with aggregated data from the state and national levels.

Of course, the data from the Course Feedback Form are student-reported; therefore, the Course Feedback Form results need to be examined in conjunction with the many assessment methods used by faculty and the data collected by the SCC Institutional Research Department. These assessment methods assist in determining student engagement and student success, but they also document the added value of an honors program and provide justification for the budget resources allocated to honors, which is especially important during a difficult economic time.

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APPENDIX

**MEAN SCORES TO DETERMINE IF HONORS STUDENTS IN SUMMER, FALL, AND SPRING TERMS
WERE SIMILAR AS A GROUP**

ANOVA results of CCCSE Course Feedback Form mean scores between Summer, Fall and Spring results for Honors students.

CCSR 2005–2007	Course Feed- back Form	Question	F Test
College Activities: Academic, Intellectual and Social Experiences			
1. In your experiences <i>with this class</i> during the current semester, how often did you do the following?			
4a	1a	Asked questions in class or contributed to class discussion	.310*
4b	1b	Made a class presentation	.000
4c	1c	Prepared two or more drafts of an assignment b4 turning it in	.002
4d	1d	Worked on papers that require integrating ideas or information.003
4f	1e	Worked with other students on projects during class	.002
4g	1f	Worked with classmates outside of class to complete the assignment.	.004
4i	1g	Participated in a community-based project as part of your coursework	.020
4j	1h	Used the internet to work on an assignment	.000
4k	1i	Used e-mail to communicate with your instructor	.000
4l	1j	Discussed grades or assignments with your instructor	.200 *
4m	1k	Talked about career plans with your instructor	.339 *
4n	1l	Discussed ideas from your readings or class with your instructor outside of class	.289 *
4p	1m	Worked harder than you thought you could to meet the instructor's standards or expectations	.120 *

* Indicates statistically significant with $p > .05$

CCSR 2005–2007	Course Feed- back Form	Question	F Test
College Activities: Academic, Intellectual and Social Experiences			
1. In your experiences with this class during the current semester, how often did you do the following?			
4r	1n	Discussed ideas from the readings or class with others outside of class (students, family members, co-workers, etc.)	.010
4u	1o	Skipped class	.016
4o	1p	Received prompt feedback from your instructor about your performance	.267 *

* Indicates statistically significant with $p > .05$

CCSR 2005–2007	Course Feed- back Form	Question	F Test
Character of Mental Activities			
2. During this current semester, how much has this course emphasized the following?			
5a	2a	Memorizing facts, ideas, or methods from your courses and reading so that you can repeat them in pretty much the same form	.000
5c	2c	Synthesizing and organizing ideas, information, or experiences in new ways	.013
5d	2d	Making judgments about the value or soundness of information, arguments, or methods	.000
5e	2e	Applying theories or concepts to practical problems or in new situations	.003
5f	2f	Using information you have read or heard to perform a new skill	.008

* Indicates statistically significant with $p > .05$

CCSR 2005–2007	Course Feed- back Form	Question	F Test
Educational and Personal Growth: Knowledge, Skills and Personal Development			
3. During this current semester, to what extent did this course help you develop in the following areas?			
4a12c	3a	Writing clearly and effectively	.153*
12d	3b	Speaking clearly and effectively	.002
12e	3c	Thinking critically and analytically	.000
12f	3d	Solving numerical problems	.047
12g	3e	Using computing information technology	.557
12h	3f	Working effectively with others	.043
12i	3g	Learning effectively on my own	.048
12j	3h	Understanding myself	.008
12k	3i	Understanding people of other racial and ethnic backgrounds	.000
12l	3j	Developing a personal code of values and ethics	.045
12m	3k	Contributing to the welfare of the community	.589*
12n	3l	Developing clearer career goals	.555*

* Indicates statistically significant with $p > .05$

Evolution and Human Nature: Comparing Honors and Traditional Pedagogies for the New Science of the Mind

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A class on evolutionary psychology can take many forms but always involves an interdisciplinary approach because of the subject matter and topics covered. In this paper, we describe and compare three different pedagogical techniques we have used to teach the topic of evolutionary psychology; two are honors seminars and one a traditional lecture-style course.

Very roughly, evolutionary psychology is the study of the human mind as a product of evolutionary forces. Proponents argue that our understanding of the human mind should be guided by the very same biological consideration that guides our understanding of human physiology, namely, that a great many of our extant traits are in fact *solutions* to recurrent adaptive problems that confronted our hominid ancestors tens of thousands of years ago (see Buss, 2005; 2007). “Our modern skulls,” as Cosmides and Tooby (1997) note, “house a stone-age mind.”

INTERDISCIPLINARY HONORS SEMINAR

In spring 2007, one of us (KEB) offered a new honors seminar entitled “Evolutionary Psychology/Sociobiology” as a prelude for the upcoming 2009 campus-wide Evolution Learning Community <<http://library.uncw.edu/web/outreach/evolution/index.html>>. In addition, Edward O. Wilson had been invited to campus that spring as a speaker. The combination of these two campus-wide events provided an opportune time to offer the seminar. All honors seminars are limited to twenty students, and this one enrolled nineteen in majors that included psychology, biology, finance, chemistry, film studies, and education. The class was one of several that could fulfill an honors requirement for an interdisciplinary seminar. Students ranged from freshmen to senior-level.

EVOLUTION AND HUMAN NATURE

The required text for the class was *On Human Nature* by E. O. Wilson (1978/2004). Other readings included a chapter from Buss's (2005) *Evolutionary Psychology* and several review articles from the Sigma Xi's publication *American Scientist*. The first half of the class introduced background topics in ethology, genetics, psychology, and evolutionary biology and on reading *On Human Nature* together. The second half of the course included class presentations and discussion of topics from the *American Scientist* articles and from students' individual research. All students led class discussions, both as a team (*American Scientist* articles) and solo, describing at least one current empirical study from primary-source journals in the field of evolutionary psychology and facilitating class discussion of the reading.

Students reacted to readings in "Daily Paragraphs," which emphasized critical reaction to specific points in the reading for the day. For many students these paragraphs were a chance to develop perspectives far afield of their chosen majors. Even for biology and psychology majors, the assignment required that they think outside their own disciplines. Tests, one of which was take-home, were in an essay format. The final was in-class, but students were given test questions to review before the exam date so they could develop their answers. On one exam, students evaluated a recent empirical study in the field, and on both exams they analyzed why certain Gary Larson cartoons would be funny to an evolutionary psychologist.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Class objectives were both topical and skill-related, and they included the following: mastery of basic topics and definitions related to evolutionary psychology; appreciation of studying the same topic from different perspectives; practice with critical evaluation of scientific articles; effective presentation of topics to peers and facilitation of discussion of readings; effective short written reactions that included analyzing readings rather than just summarizing them. These objectives are common for honors-level classes (West, 2000) and emphasize student engagement with the material. Student comments, as well as grading by the instructor, indicated that the majority of students in the seminar met these objectives.

COURSE EVALUATIONS

Instead of using standardized rating scales, the course evaluations in the UNCW honors program use an open-ended format for students to give feedback to the instructor. In general, students' comments about the seminar were positive. The majority of students felt that the class met their expectations of an honors interdisciplinary seminar and that they would recommend the class to others. Two students felt that the workload and writing were excessive, so

they would not recommend the class. One student noted that s/he felt at a disadvantage not being a science major, and two felt that a textbook should be required. However, all students noted that the class made them think in new ways and consider behavior from multiple points of view; some commented that the assignments helped them develop skills important for critical evaluation, especially related to reading primary source material.

OUT-OF-CLASS OPPORTUNITIES

An important component for the class was the campus lecture by Wilson in March 2007. A couple of the students participated in the campus-wide group that was reading *The Creation*, a more recent book by Wilson (2006), to prepare for his lecture, which focused on the need for conservation. Students were invited to an informal Q-and-A session with faculty and students from across the campus before the lecture. They attended the lecture, and several attended a meal with Wilson after the lecture. Meeting the author of one of their books was an important experience for them, and they all appreciated that he is a founder of the field of evolutionary psychology.

TRIAL SOPHOMORE-LEVEL CLASS IN PSYCHOLOGY

To support the campus-wide Evolution Learning Community that spanned 2007–2009, faculty were encouraged to develop new classes on topics related to evolution. Because of the success of the honors interdisciplinary seminar in spring 2007, one of us (KEB) proposed a trial class in psychology entitled “Evolutionary Psychology,” the purpose of which was to offer a traditional, primarily lecture-oriented overview of evolutionary psychology using the textbook *Evolutionary Psychology* by David Buss (2007), a leader in the field. The class enrolled thirty-three students, mostly junior and senior psychology majors or minors. While each student was required to complete two written critiques of empirical research on evolutionary psychology from primary-source journals, the class emphasized in-class lecture, with frequent small group interactions to facilitate discussion of controversial topics. We also read and critiqued together two primary-source articles. The three required in-class tests mostly used objective questions with some short-answer comparisons of terms.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The learning objectives in this class were similar in some ways to the seminar described above but did not stress critical analysis, discussion facilitation, and effective writing skills to the same degree as the seminar.

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Students were expected to master basic topics underpinning the study of evolutionary psychology and to develop an appreciation for the variety of topics studied in evolutionary psychology. They were also expected to apply what they learned about hypothesis testing and methodology in evolutionary psychology to their own evaluation of current published research in the field.

COURSE EVALUATIONS

Evaluation of these objectives was based primarily on student performance on tests, papers, and in-class participation and discussion. Student comments on the university-required Student Perceptions of Teaching instrument were mostly positive and were based on Likert-scale responses (strongly agree to strongly disagree) to a set of feedback items. Student perceptions were that the course matter was “interesting” and that the instructor was “enthusiastic” and concerned with their learning. Most felt that the concepts and objectives were clear; some suggested a different organization of topics for the syllabus although few students wrote open-ended comments.

OUT-OF-CLASS OPPORTUNITIES

An important feature of this class was the incorporation into the syllabus of a campus visit by Richard Leakey. We used the text discussion of the evolution of hominids to highlight the work of Leakey, and all students were asked to find “fun facts” about Leakey before his talk and to present them to the class. One student joined a campus reading group to prepare for Leakey’s visit by reading his work. Most class members attended Leakey’s campus-wide, sell-out lecture. I also incorporated a campus lecture on the life of Darwin by noted Darwin scholar Niles Eldredge as an optional activity in the class. Further, because David Buss was invited to the campus a few months after the class ended, students were advised about the opportunity to hear him lecture.

TEAM-TAUGHT HONORS INTERDISCIPLINARY SEMINAR

The two classes described above were taught by one professor of psychology who has graduate training in animal behavior, ethology, psychology, and sociobiology. Even with this multidisciplinary perspective, some areas of evolutionary psychology are beyond the instructor’s expertise, and thus in-depth discussion of some topics was limited. By its nature, evolutionary psychology is a complex and controversial field that encompasses many disciplines. The third approach to teaching the subject—a team-taught honors seminar—brought together scholars from biology, psychology, and philosophy,

thus exposing students to the complexity of the emerging field of evolutionary psychology. The need for collaborative teaching was driven by two forces.

First, evolutionary psychology is a synthesis of diverse research. It synthesizes, for example, core assumptions in evolutionary biology (including neurobiology and biological anthropology) and traditional cognitive psychology while drawing heavily from paleontology, cultural anthropology, and economics (viz., Game Theory). At the same time, the field makes critical philosophical assumptions about the standards of explanation and, more importantly, of theory confirmation. Moreover, little attention has been paid to the *implications* of evolutionary psychology. *If* evolutionary psychology truly explains much of human psychology, it raises a host of difficult philosophical questions: If my behavior is ultimately (and largely) the result of genes selected for thousands of years ago, to what extent do I act *freely*? To what extent can I be morally responsible for my actions? Is it unrealistic to expect humans to be anything other than selfish? Is a realm of moral facts necessary to explain our tendency to think in moral terms if we need only appeal to the biological advantages of cooperation? Hence, a thorough and critical study of evolutionary psychology requires the collaboration of biologists, psychologists, and philosophers.

A second force driving a collaborative approach is the benefit to both student and teacher. For example, faculty at Brigham Young University participating in team-teaching formats found that “the synergy of the collaboration promotes increased teacher effectiveness and enhanced student learning,” since, according to one professor, “when it is possible to have faculty members interacting with each other in the classroom, the conversation is enhanced by their expertise and perspectives; and, as a result, faculty learn and are reinvigorated as learners and teachers by interacting with each other and with students” (Conderman & McCarty, 2003). And, as noted by Conderman and McCarty, faculty excitement inevitably radiates to students: “Overwhelmingly the students perceived the benefits of the way the course was taught. They recognized that we care a lot about teaching and learning and that we are genuinely interested in students and their learning.”

What distinguishes this pedagogical approach from other approaches is just this reliance on interdisciplinary expertise, an important principle in honors pedagogy. The full scope of evolutionary psychology cannot be gleaned from, say, evolutionary biology alone for the simple reason that evolutionary biologists may not be aware of the established theoretical commitments of cognitive psychologists—*mutatis mutandis* for psychologists, anthropologists, and so on. Without the nuanced input of these specialists, students risk missing a range of relevant details—details necessary in order to evaluate critically the explanatory success of evolutionary psychology.

EVOLUTION AND HUMAN NATURE

The team-taught honors seminar enrolled seventeen students in majors that included psychology, biology, management, chemistry, English, political science, communication studies, and education. Again, it was one of several courses that could fulfill the honors requirement for an interdisciplinary seminar. Students ranged from freshmen to seniors. In all, six faculty members were involved with the class—two in philosophy, three in psychology, and one in biology. The two key teachers for the entire semester were professors in philosophy and psychology, and these two faculty members attended all classes. The other four faculty members were responsible for two lectures each and assigned readings for the material they covered. While these professors were invited to attend all class meetings, demands of the semester were such that they attended at most one or two other class meetings. All readings were in a course packet, either electronic or hard copy, and no specific textbook was assigned. Classes were a combination of lecture and discussion, and students were encouraged to participate actively in the discussion each day.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The aim of the honors team-taught seminar, stated broadly, was to introduce students to the emerging field of evolutionary psychology and to explore the implications for moral theory. Not only would students study the theory itself, they would also explore the hypotheses it generates about human nature. Students would also evaluate criticisms of evolutionary psychology. Finally, students would explore hypotheses within the field of evolutionary psychology about the origin of the human moral sense and how they bear on the nature of right and wrong.

COURSE EVALUATIONS

Student feedback about the class was quite positive overall. Students felt that they learned a good deal about the complexity of evolutionary psychology and the evolution of morality in particular. They also appreciated the interdisciplinary nature of the seminar. A majority of students felt that the team-teaching approach was very effective and that the four additional guest lecturers added an important dimension to the class. However, three students commented that having a two-professor team-taught class was effective, but having six was too many. One student noted that “meeting the requirements of *one* professor is hard enough.”

OUT-OF-CLASS OPPORTUNITIES

To complement the material in the course, students were encouraged to participate in the campus-wide Evolution Learning Community events that

were in full swing during the semester. The highlight was the interdisciplinary “Darwin’s Legacy Conference” that featured student research presentations and four keynote speakers: David Buss, Peter Carruthers, Kevin Padian, and David Mindell (see the conference website at <http://library.uncw.edu/web/outreach/evolution/conference>). Most relevant to the honors class were the public lectures by Buss and Carruthers. To offer students a chance to meet these speakers, we invited them to a luncheon on the day of the lectures. In addition, one of the students was an active participant in the campus-wide reading group that discussed books by each of the speakers before they came to campus.

COMPARISONS

All three classes shared some features that enhanced presentation of the material. Students and faculty valued the interdisciplinary nature of the topic. Students commented on the positive experience of learning “outside the box” and thinking from multiple angles about a subject unfamiliar to them. Faculty in the team-taught seminar commented on how much they learned from each other.

However, as expected, it was clear that the honors seminars afforded the opportunity to delve much more deeply into the subject matter than the traditionally-formatted class. The traditional class offered a survey of the topics in evolutionary psychology while the seminars stressed more criticism of the field and presentations of current research. Also, while students in the traditional class used a current textbook, the students in the seminar read a collection of essays, publications, and text chapters, thus experiencing many different authors and viewpoints. Further, in one of the seminars, students were able to read and discuss the Pulitzer Prize-winning book *On Human Nature* and meet the author. Finally, the team of instructors, possible only in the honors seminar format and not the traditional class, added a special learning dimension.

CONCLUSIONS

Interdisciplinary courses are not uncommon in interdisciplinary curricula; many honors seminars are interdisciplinary and, when possible, team-taught. A course like evolutionary psychology, which relies on details from multiple disciplines, especially benefits from team-teaching and high-level discussion of the type that can be offered in smaller honors seminars. While both single-instructor and team-taught models are effective approaches to this interdisciplinary topic, team-teaching—if affordable—is a preferable approach for several reasons.

First, in the field of evolutionary psychology the risk is high of misrepresenting or misunderstanding details outside one's area of expertise. It is unlikely that a professor can be familiar with the fundamentals and recent developments in evolutionary biology, cognitive psychology, cognitive ethology, biological anthropology, philosophical psychology, psycholinguistics, and moral philosophy, to name just a few relevant fields. Without this familiarity, students receive a distorted portrait of what evolutionary psychology comprises. A seminar format with multiple instructors reduces this distortion.

Second, evolutionary psychology sometimes takes radical stands on controversial subjects. One example that we discussed in the team-taught honors interdisciplinary seminar was the claim that rape is a conditional mating strategy among most male humans (see Thornhill, n.d.). When passions are raised on such subjects, so are the chances that the view will be misunderstood (see discussion in DeWaal, 2002; Estep & Bruce, 1981); misunderstandings can be dangerous when the subjects are as inflammatory as rape or jealousy or murder. Evolutionary psychology may well prove to be mistaken, but it should not be dismissed out of hand for reasons that have nothing to do with what the view claims (cf. Geher, 2006). Students in the seminar read and discussed each of these references as we presented this point. In a team-taught seminar, instructors are able to present, explain, and, if needed, defuse emotional reactions to the arguments; they also provide checks and balances for each other.

Team-teaching has a third virtue of increasing the odds that different learning styles will be accommodated (see discussion related to differing learning styles among honors students in Rinn, 2008). Different faculty members inevitably present their research in the style they find most comfortable, and teaching styles are not identical. Student evaluations of the course reflect an appreciation of this phenomenon. Approaches to the material stay fresh and somewhat unpredictable. Of course, not all students appreciate unpredictability. Team-teaching carries the risk of complicating student expectations, putting an extra burden on teachers to coordinate their expectations for students. They might need, for instance, to standardize assessments and homework assignments or to designate one faculty member to grade all the assignments. Given the benefits of team-teaching, however, these extra burdens seem well worth bearing.

Perhaps the major challenges to team-teaching are the administrative costs and concerns. For example, if two faculty members teach a course and both are compensated, the increased cost must be both available and justified. Our campus policies do allow both faculty members to be fully compensated. However, in the team-taught interdisciplinary seminar described above, we had the advantage that the second full-time faculty member was the

honors director, who elected to teach the class as an unpaid overload. The other full-time faculty member taught the honors seminar as part of his expected departmental teaching load and had additionally been awarded a small, competitive, university-wide teaching stipend for the summer to develop the multi-instructor component of the class. The four faculty members who taught for two lectures each received a pizza lunch and a complimentary book. In most cases, team-teaching is an expensive and challenging administrative concern. For example, current budget reductions at our university may make our policy more difficult, and the same is probably true for honors program at other institutions. A different model is to have the team members split one stipend; this model, however, undervalues the full level of commitment required for team-teaching. Another possibility is working with department chairs to “bank” teaching overloads or to offer other types of workload compensation (e.g., decreased advising or committee service).

Despite the challenges, interdisciplinary and team-taught approaches to evolutionary psychology can and do exist on college campuses. One example is the ambitious model at SUNY-Binghamton (see Wilson, 2007; EvoS, n.d.), where the teaching and discussion of evolution are incorporated across the campus in many different disciplines at once in a unified university curriculum. Since that level of ambition is not practicable at all institutions, we hope that the team-taught, interdisciplinary honors seminar that we have described here, including its benefits over two more standard courses, might provide an example of how to create communication across the disciplines on a complex topic such as evolutionary psychology.

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CLASS WEBSITES

- Honors Interdisciplinary Seminar—Evolutionary Psychology/Sociobiology: <<http://people.uncw.edu/bruce/hon%20210/hon%20210%20index.htm>>.
- Regular Lecture Class—Evolutionary Psychology: <<http://people.uncw.edu/bruce/psy%20292/292syllabus.htm>>.
- Honors Team Taught Interdisciplinary Seminar—Mind, Morals and Evolution: <<http://people.uncw.edu/bruce/hon%20210/mme.htm>>.

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Thesis as Rhizome: A New Vision for the Honors Thesis in the Twenty-First Century

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CHANGING CONTEXTS AND THE HONORS THESIS

Richly diverse, the collective undergraduate thesis work that students produce across the United States in our honors programs and colleges is cause for celebration of their individual achievements. Generally considered the founder of honors education, Frank Aydelotte centered his honors program model at Swarthmore in the early twentieth century on individual achievement (see Rinn, 2003), which has thus defined honors from the beginning; it is a cardinal honors value, and the thesis is its primary manifestation.

According to Charles Lipson's 2005 guide to thesis writing, a thesis is characterized by formal language (152), infrequent personal referencing (152), and a tight line (146). Reasoned argument structures the thesis, supported by logic and evidence (110). Lipson recommends that students choose a subject that matters to them (11) and emphasizes the process of reaching one's own conclusions (3). However, the form of the thesis is predominately expository; thus thesis writers need to maintain distance in their writing between themselves and their subjects. Furthermore, the thesis as described by Lipson quintessentially embodies the signifiers of traditional academic discourse: objectivity, rationality, the need for evidence, and coherency. The "creative" theses that students produce also fall into conventional forms such as plays, musical compositions, and photographs. At the University of Southern Maine (USM), for example, students producing a creative thesis must also write analytically about their work.

Over recent decades, however, the undergraduate curriculum at large has changed. New work in the social sciences, including forms such as auto-ethnography and performance ethnography, calls for the tracking and inclusion of subjectivity (e.g., Wall; Denzin). Along with these new

ethnographic methods, interdisciplinary studies have increasingly become an accepted feature of the undergraduate curriculum. Less linear than traditional disciplinary writing and scholarship, interdisciplinary work often includes a range of perspectives and different kinds of evidence and methodologies. In order to make the writing cohesive, the author maintains a stronger presence on the page, in the process suggesting a closer relationship between narrative and analysis. Carolyn Haynes, Professor of Interdisciplinary Studies and Director of the Honors and Scholars Program at Miami of Ohio, explains that “. . . interdisciplinary studies fundamentally entail a movement away from an absolutist conception of truth to a conception of truth that is situated, perspectival, and discursive and that informs and is informed by the investigator’s own sense of self-authorship” (xv).

Writing across the undergraduate college curriculum includes numerous genres, and scholars continue to contest the very existence of a universal academic discursive practice (“the paper”). In their attempt to re-imagine first-year composition as an “Introduction to Writing Studies,” Downs and Wardle explain that “more than twenty years of research and theory have repeatedly demonstrated that such a unified academic discourse does not exist and have seriously questioned what students can and do transfer from one context to another” (552; see also Petraglia, Russell). Nevertheless, most undergraduate students produce papers across disciplinary areas that closely resemble one another in form and reflect the thesis characteristics described by Lipson.

In addition to changes in the way we think about academic discourse, literacy itself is changing from “literacy” to “literacies,” and in the face of rapid technological advances, these literacies are multiple, overlapping, and simultaneous. But within the larger context of change, how have these shifts and this proliferation of literacies influenced the traditional thesis? The questions students want to pose, the nature of their interests and concerns, and the kinds and varieties of subjects and methodologies in which students want to engage demonstrate these changes. But has the thesis changed in response, and, if so, to what degree?

Central to this essay, given the shifting landscape, is a search for a new vision for undergraduate thesis work, both in theory and in practice, in process and in product, a vision that invites and incorporates recent changes rather than resisting or ignoring them. The thesis represents the culmination and synthesis of honors education from both faculty and student points of view, and, as Gregory Lanier points out in his essay about honors assessment, the thesis capstone experience can provide the opportunity to assess student learning objectives in aggregate (108). Guidelines, systems, and rubrics are necessary, yet I find myself ever vigilant against reduction to the formulaic in this complex work. Against this backdrop, I attempt in this essay to practice

the self-reflexive analysis we now ask of all students at their thesis defenses at USM. We ask them to reflect on their projects, to articulate new insights, to consider their learning on multiple levels, and finally, because we are an interdisciplinary program, to examine the disciplines and methodologies they have drawn from and why. In this spirit, I set out to push into new areas of thought; to explore the tension between mastering existing bodies of knowledge (expertise) and taking intellectual risks (imagination), between constraint and freedom, the critical and the creative, the past and the future; to argue for the thesis as a site of experimentation rather than reproduction; and ultimately to pose questions about the fundamental purposes of honors education.

NOMAD THOUGHT: THE RHIZOME

To develop a new vision for the honors thesis, establishing a theoretical framework is critically important, and for that theoretical framework I explore Deleuze and Guattari's work. They describe the tree structure that has "dominated Western reality and all of Western thought" (*Plateaus* 18). But in our cultural era, characterized by upheaval and change, many overlapping social and political forces are at work—and have been at work for some time—to challenge this tree structure. In order to tackle their monumental task of offering alternatives to this structure, Deleuze and Guattari create a detailed cosmology with its own topographical vocabulary, meanings, and imaginings.

"Arborescent thought," the term Deleuze and Guattari use to destabilize Western thought, is structured, like a tree with its root, trunk, and branches, by points and positions that move hierarchically in pre-established channels. This structure is not open-ended, experimental, or creative, nor is it critical of its existing form, content, or method. Although this critique is far from new, Deleuze and Guattari both elaborate on previous imaginings, such as Foucault's "outside thought" (xiii), and break through the boundaries of their own disciplinary histories, practices, and thinking to articulate and embody a new model: "nomad thought." Rather than immersion in and defense of entrenched positions, nomad thought moves freely in open space, negotiates difference, and thrives on connection. Rather than placidly and neutrally claiming to mirror the world, nomad thought "is immersed in the changing state of things" (xii).

Within their model of nomad thought, Deleuze and Guattari anchor their challenge to arborescent thought and its tree structure by constructing and enacting a new operational metaphor: that of the rhizome. In botany a rhizome is an underground rootstalk, tuber, or bulb, horizontally elongated, that under the right conditions will produce stems above and roots below: continuous outcroppings that can split off and become new, dividable plants

in turn. Deleuze and Guattari expand on this botanical definition so that rhizomes, in their terminology, can also be animals that live in burrows, packs, or mounds, such as rats or ants. Like weeds such as crabgrass and like musical forms with their “ruptures and proliferations” (12), for Deleuze and Guattari the rhizome is a network, “an endless pattern in which everything is linked to everything else” (*Kafka* xxvi).

These linkages, however, are not hypothetical nor are they formal, clear-cut pathways between discrete units; rather, they traverse domains of reality and subject matter as “lines of flight” coming and going, arriving and departing in the conjunctive spaces between species, modalities, disciplines, and forms of life. Creating exchanges “between semiotic chains, organizations of power, and circumstances relative to the arts, sciences and social struggles” and among “very diverse modes of coding (biological, political, economic, etc.) that bring into play not only different regimes of signs but also states of things of differing status” (*Plateaus* 7), rhizomes operate according to principles of connection, heterogeneity, and multiplicity. To understand the interactions of these diverse modes, Deleuze and Guattari point to, for example, the symbiotic relationship between a wasp and an orchid, parallel formations that imitate one another yet remain distinct, one moving and one stationary, one desiring and one the object of desire but together maintaining and expanding their local reality (10).

MAPS VERSUS TRACINGS: THE HONORS THESIS AS A SITE OF EXPERIMENTATION

Deleuze and Guattari criticize traditional linguistic forms and psychoanalytic models for producing analyses that are ready-made and preconceived products of our dominant, Western tree structure. They use cartographic metaphors to highlight the differences between arborescent thought with its tree structures and nomad thought with its rhizomatic manifestations. The textual products of our culture—books and also by implication the papers produced in university settings, which include not only the thesis statement so essentialized in academic discourse but also the honors thesis itself—are “tracings” because they tend to review the same material and to use the same approaches. Deleuze and Guattari call instead for the creation of “maps.” Maps have multiple entryways, allow for open-ended connections between fields, and foster applied experimentation. This feature of Deleuzian and Guattarian cosmology resembles that central mapping component of honors pedagogy we are all familiar with, *City as Text*TM, described by Bernice Braid as “. . . a living laboratory in forging connections . . . [f]rom social links essential to communal life, to intellectual links fundamental to integrated thought . . .” (5).

An important distinction between tracings and maps is that tracings emphasize “competence” (13)—under an evaluative and comparative gaze, here is what has been done—while maps emphasize “performance” (12)—an evolving process of subjective engagement and enactment. Moreover, lurking within this distinction is insight into desire as a motivating force. Arborescent thought can subsume a rhizome and flatten its cartographic possibilities. Deleuze and Guattari warn us that: “Once a rhizome has been obstructed, arborified, it’s all over, no desire stirs; for it is always by rhizome that desire moves and produces. Whenever desire climbs a tree, internal repercussions trip it up and it falls to its death; the rhizome, on the other hand, acts on desire by external, productive outgrowths” (14). Rhizomes are acentered, non-hierarchical systems that grow, like weeds, in the spaces between cultivated areas and existing trees of thought. Rather than treading and retreading over established ground in expected patterns, like “the paper” that students learn to produce and reproduce throughout their high school and college careers, rhizomes and the maps they configure in their paths freshly project unconscious material, activate underground, subverted desire, and create new statements in their wake. In terms of carrying out and completing the work of an honors thesis, Deleuze and Guattari point to the importance of desire in sustaining and completing such a complex piece of work. And their suggestion resonates with Lipson’s: students should choose thesis topics that matter to them. Without activated desire, achieving a quality piece of work is akin to stage actors performing in deadpan mode, going through the script lines and actions without embodying their characters.

The function of lines in mapping and tracing is another critical point of difference between the two. In mapping, lines demarcate territory, giving it shape and texture (topography); but like a photograph and its negative, these delineations also draw attention to the dimensions of space circulating outside the boundaries. Deleuze and Guattari use the terms “territorialization” and “deterritorialization” to capture these dimensions and to accentuate motion in any direction, lines of flight, comings and goings, from any initiating point. Foregrounding the importance of leaving the marked territory, the cartographic element of deterritorialization represents the frontier. In tracing, however, lines function reiteratively. As traced lines move around a template or a text, they center on structure, the form around which they circulate—not on travel into uncharted territory. Unlike a structure, a rhizome possesses no central unity around which it pivots (8). Rather, a rhizome is all lines, and these lines “operate by variation, expansion, conquest, capture, offshoots” to produce “a map that is always detachable, connectable, reversible, modifiable, and has multiple entryways and exits and its own lines of flight” (21). With implications for honors programs and colleges and the thesis work we are charged to

carry out, this list of modifiers points to perhaps the most significant feature of rhizomatic mapping in Deleuzian and Guattarian cosmology: “that it is entirely oriented toward. . . experimentation in contact with the real” (12).

As listed on the NCHC website, a characteristic of fully developed honors programs and colleges is that they serve as laboratories for faculty to develop prototypes (read: rhizomes) that can be expanded into the larger institutional communities where they are situated. It occurs to me, however, that faculty experience and student experience need to mirror one another. Is there enough space/place in honors curricula for students to create experiments/rhizomes of their own? I pose this question even while I am aware of the abundance of creative and energetic honors study occurring across the United States in all its many forms. A parallel characteristic of fully developed honors students might be that they are able to engage twists and turns of thought, to think critically, experimentally, nomadically, and to climb in and out of rhizomes (messes of thought, messes in our world). But to what degree is the capstone thesis experience a tracing or a map? This concluding experience could become the place/space/laboratory for students to perform experimental thinking and approaches. My questions are an attempt to argue against neither the necessary accumulation of knowledge, ability, and expertise nor their display but rather to argue for the thesis as a site of increased experimentation, a rite of nomadic intellectual passage that integrates learning and transforms students as they are poised to complete their undergraduate education and are ready to graduate.

NEW LINES OF FLIGHT COMING IN

In applying the metaphor of the rhizome to the undergraduate honors thesis, a new and different type of product and process starts to emerge, a type that connects study in the university with the social and political formations outside of it, a type that is more dynamic and uncertain, more organic and less linear—more experimental. Within this site of experimentation, this laboratory, what are some of the rhizomatic thesis approaches and forms that we are starting to see?

THESIS PRODUCTS AS ASSEMBLAGES: EMPHASIS ON CONSTRUCTION

Approached as rhizomes, future thesis products transform into versions of Deleuzian and Guattarian “assemblages” (503–505). Containing a “double-articulation” (504), these assemblages are conclaves that seek to gather together both “what is done” (content) and an extension of that material into a regime of signs, “what is said,” written, and represented (expression) (504). An “a/b” rhythm pervades the rhizomatic; content/expression bend in concert

with process/product, with territory/deterritorialization: “Assemblages act on semiotic flows, material flows and social flows simultaneously” (22–23). The notion of assemblages suggests that rhizomatic theses undergo “construction,” a positive association in that the term signifies skyscrapers, demolition, roadways, equipment, architectural plans, ribbon-cuttings, scaffolding, frameworks, jackhammers, underground systems. Work is under way, and that work is a process where desire circulates, as students fashion themselves into architects, building contractors—cartographers. This emphasis on construction could help students with their expository, analytical writing by suggesting that an argument with its needed evidence is something that the writer must work at, must build (the text as a city).

A thesis as an assemblage under construction spotlights engagement with a process, and this process can be tracked, studied, entered, written, reflected upon in multiply literate formats via technology. Every thesis marks a territory. What are the cartographic elements circulating? What are the lines of flight/thought coming in—and going out? Rhizomatic theses need tools such as ongoing project maps, logs, and diagrams; but more than these, students need us to value these trajectories.

RHIZOMATIC FRAGMENTS, CRITICAL/CREATIVE JUXTAPOSITIONS, AND THE AUTHORIAL “I”

As mentioned above, connection, heterogeneity, and multiplicity are three interlinked rhizomatic principles of operation that bring “into play very different regimes of signs, and even nonsign states” (21). Following these principles, students organize, through their engagement with their areas of interest, subjects and methods of presentation and analysis that are usually kept separate. Rhizomes are “composed not of units but of dimensions, or rather directions in motion” (21). Understanding is not predetermined; rather, as new knowledge is assembled and constructed, and connection/heterogeneity activated and accumulating, understanding emerges, multiplicity erupts, and this understanding in turn produces new statements, insights, lines of flight. But because “the fabric of a rhizome is the conjunction ‘and . . . and . . . and . . .’” (12), these lines of flight need tracking, reflection, and reformulation. Theses as rhizomes point to the necessity of effectively incorporating deterritorializations, excursions into the unknown, into thesis defenses and written presentations. Honors thesis students should not be able to get away with coloring inside the existing territory only. As Charlie Slavin so succinctly reminds us, “taking intellectual risks” (15) is a defining element of honors culture.

During my junior year in high school, I did a thesis on Thomas Hardy, my senior year on Edward Albee. Classic research papers, these theses were

arborescent. I read both primary and secondary texts, took notes, and then consolidated these into a coherent, linear, written presentation. I chose topics that interested me per Lipson's suggestion in his guide to the B. A. thesis. Despite students' commitment to their subject matter and the diversity of thesis topics, the undergraduate honors thesis can often reflect such a standard approach and form. Theses as rhizomes don't have this smoothness and linearity; hybridic and textured, more like collages, they tend to rely on juxtaposition of multiple modes of representation, kinds of evidence, and genres of writing. Below I will present examples from three theses that are in many ways standard but that also contain tendencies, elements that move them somewhat into the rhizomatic. Like palimpsests, these examples contain elements of the old and the new, the traditional and the experimental, the critical and the creative.

Inspired by the work of industrial photographer Lewis Hine, Aaron Wilson—for his 2001 USM honors thesis, "An Internal Perspective on Chemistry"—produced a documentary photography exhibit. Wilson, who went on to complete a Ph. D. in chemistry, did not want to write a scientific paper for his thesis, so instead he produced an exhibit that highlighted the processes and practices of chemistry as well as the physical lab environment in which it is conducted. In some images, the lab is empty, and the bottles, beakers, tubes, and other equipment take on aesthetic dimensions; they appear as beautiful artifacts in a state of repose. These images stand in contrast to those taken in class, which reveal the social side of science disciplines. Other images, taken during a visit to a local middle school, present the magic of chemistry as the younger students sit transfixed by the elemental shifts from liquid to solid and back. The collective effect of these images is that they intervene upon stereotypical, outsider notions about the discipline. The photographs portray chemistry as beautiful, social, and magical.

In her 2004 USM honors thesis, "Methadone Maintenance: Treatment or Tragedy," Linda Jalbert explores the efficacy of methadone treatment from oppositional points of view that she constructs through interviews with two community advocates. Rather than present her material in a traditionally seamless fashion, this thesis opens each chapter with italicized story material. Jalbert herself was an addict, and, with her organizational strategy, she is able to juxtapose, for example, a piece of her withdrawal narrative and an expository presentation of her research on the effects of withdrawal. Creating a jarring effect on the reader and linking narrative and analysis, the particular and the general, these personal inclusions give Jalbert's thesis a sort of double vision, and the visual look of the pages reflects this oscillation as she alternates between italicized and standard typefaces.

Edward Erikson draws on literary criticism, creative writing, discourses of poststructuralism, and new social science ethnographic methods in his 2005

USM honors thesis, “The Author Revisited: A Poetic Ethnography of Ernest Hemingway with a Foucaultian Analysis.” In decoding Hemingway’s *A Moveable Feast*, Erikson appropriates poststructuralist theory to destabilize the canonical in literature and to disrupt the tertiary structure of discourse: the trinity of the reader/the writer/the work. An interdisciplinary project, Erikson’s thesis concludes with a chapter of self-analysis in which he turns back toward his own work, speculates on the impossibility of his living/imitating the life of Hemingway ethnographically as a modern male, and introduces new questions about writing and reading.

Unlike my high school thesis work, these examples use creative fragmentation, deploying multiple modes of representation, genres of writing, and reflective elements. In contrast to Lipson’s instruction that thesis writers should rarely use personal references, Jalbert’s and Erikson’s work incorporates personal features. Students learn, usually sometime during their middle school years, that a key feature of academic discourse is the elimination of the first person pronoun. Although this instruction is presented as a necessary function of mechanics, as a feature of the writing surface, it also embeds positional implications: the call for this absence inserts distance between writer and subject. Courses in college writing as well as the sciences, for instance, generally reinforce this discursive feature. However, in interdisciplinary studies and new social science methodological forms emerging from critiques of positivism, increased authorial presence and more overt subjective participation on the page reverse this directive. The first person pronoun holds the disparate elements together and delivers the synthesis, the meaning, the deterritorializations, the lines of flight into new areas of thought. Subjective engagement is also a feature of rhizomatic construction. In their alternative cosmos, Deleuze and Guattari explain that there is no longer the “tripartite division among a field of reality (the world) and a field of representation (the book) and a field of subjectivity (the author)” (23).

DETERRITORIALIZED EXCURSIONS: LINES OF FLIGHT HEADING OUT

Our task in honors education, many would agree, is to educate tomorrow’s critical thinkers, those future citizens/leaders who can construct a territorial map, lift off of it in a questioning stance, ride lines of flight, and travel into new possibilities, insights, and solutions. Every public and professional sphere beckons creative, critical thinkers. In a policy research brief, “21st-Century Literacies,” posted on their website, the National Council of Teachers of English discusses the teaching of critical thinking as a necessary component of student mastery of multiple literacies; the overload of information now circulating via technology demands the development of critical

thinking as a counter-weight. And implicit in the NCTE discussion is an enhanced role for higher education and certainly for honors programs and colleges as sites of development for multiply literate, nomadically adept, engaged critical thinkers.

At a recent faculty meeting, the director of our graduate program in occupational therapy at Lewiston/Auburn College explained the program's educational philosophy. Instead of memorizing every diagnosis—a pedagogy of tracing—the program instead uses a select few diagnoses to teach students how to critically analyze and assess their future patients, a pedagogy of mapping. The program's emphasis is on developing critical, nomadic thinkers, who can think on their feet, engage lines of flight, move from the known to the unknown, and use clinical reasoning to diagnosis their patients. Since the graduates of this program pass the national exam at a far higher percentage than the average, the certification board supports this pedagogical approach.

With their construction of nomad thought, Deleuze and Guattari attempt to shake us out of our myopic hyperactivity into dynamic inventiveness. "Thought is not arborescent," they declare (15). Although we live and work generally in arborescent contexts, new knowledge production—the move from known to unknown territory—suggests the nomadic. Admittedly, this disjunction between arborescent contexts and nomadic possibilities can work against the outcomes to which we aspire. Breaking out of the classroom while in it is a difficult project; developing and mentoring rhizomatic work are also challenging. Nevertheless, the capstone thesis should provide opportunities to advance rather than retreat. Rhizomatic approaches suggest exciting possibilities moving forward, and the signal, the permission, the modeling, and the commitment for these approaches can and should come first from honors faculty and administrators.

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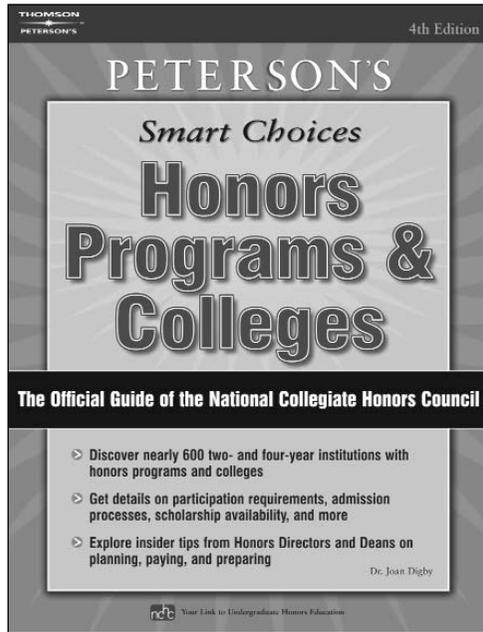
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The Honors College Phenomenon edited by Peter C. Sederberg (2008, 172pp). This monograph examines the growth of honors colleges since 1990: historical and descriptive characterizations of the trend, alternative models that include determining whether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

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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.

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