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Broadening Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Education

Debra Reinhart and Tony Waldrop



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The world is experiencing a knowledge explosion; new information is estimated to be created at a rate of more than 18 exabytes (10^{18} bytes) per year (Lyman and Varian, 2003). Norm Augustine's prelude to the "Rising Above the Gathering Storm" report (Committee 2007) for the National Academy of Science asked the question, "Is the USA falling off the flat Earth?" His answer was a resounding "YES!" The Gathering Storm report points out that America's youth are not pursuing higher education in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), at rates necessary to manage the exploding knowledge base. The report says that the public at large is disconnected and uninformed about the simple fact that our economy, security, and position in the 21st century are tied to a knowledge-based economy. The Gathering Storm report identifies this as a coming crisis for our nation.

Compounding this crisis is the ever-increasing complexity of issues facing the public such as climate change, controlling oil spewing from the bottom of the ocean, alternative energy choices, etc., that affect our lives, our safety, and our national competitiveness. Elected officials often make policy decisions that are politically expedient but not necessarily based on good science. Further, the public may be losing trust in STEM professionals as a result of recent events such as "Climategate," inaccurate reporting of autism risks associated

with inoculations, and other public research misconduct cases.

Threats also exist to our global competitiveness as a result of our STEM workforce pipeline. Although there is some controversy over exact numbers, the U.S. continues to significantly lag behind China and India in the number of STEM college graduates each year. International student assessment tests in 2006 showed that U.S. 15-year-old students' average mathematics and science literacy scores placed them in the bottom quarter of participating Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) nations, a relative position unchanged from 2003 (<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/44/62/37864252.pdf>). OECD also reports that the U.S. ranks 27th in the proportion of students receiving undergraduate degrees in science or engineering (OECD, 2009). These circumstances have led to shifting of jobs to overseas markets.

There are a number of important groups studying these trends and recommending strategies to federal bodies, including the National Academies of Sciences and Engineering. Some specific solutions that UCF is actively engaged in include:

- improving K-12 STEM education programs to ensure the number of STEM teachers is adequate and STEM teachers are retained in school systems,

- increasing representation of women and racial minorities in STEM fields to provide a broader perspective on technological solutions and to expand the number of STEM college students and graduates,
- improving communication among STEM professionals, students, and the public to enhance understanding of societal problems, and
- broadening STEM higher education to ensure graduates have good professional attributes (such as communication, leadership, and management skills) in addition to strong analytical skills.

The authors here are principal investigators on a National Science Foundation grant, along with Michael Georgiopoulos (CECS), Bruce Furino (CECS), and Theo Lotz (CAH), called ICubed: The UCF Community Embraces the Knowledge-Based Economy. The project vision is to create integration and synergy among STEM research and education activities at the University of Central Florida to increase the ability of the UCF community to meet the challenges of today's knowledge-based economy. The project includes multiple tasks that bring STEM researchers and educators together, that promote communication of STEM issues to the public, that work to increase the number of under-represented students in STEM, and that provide better education of STEM students at all levels. For example, STEM student and faculty researchers are interacting with faculty in the School of Art and Design and their students. Art students have created science-inspired pieces based on the STEM researchers' explanations of science concepts and possibilities. Together they are imagining new aesthetic and creative applications of STEM discoveries. It is anticipated that the art and design pieces will be exhibited in the Orlando Science Center, UCF library galleries, the UCF College of Engineering and Computer Science atrium, the UCF Art Gallery, and the UCF Center for Emerging Media gallery as well as displays on the ICubed web site. For more information visit the project website at <www.icubed.ucf.edu>.

Funds from the grant will be used to sponsor faculty attending this year's Summer Faculty Development Conference who are interested in integrating STEM education and research. For more information visit the FCTL site at <<http://www.fctl.ucf.edu/Events/SummerConference>>.

STEM education strategy must address the need for citizens to be prepared for grand challenges of the 21st century. It must also ensure that STEM professionals are able to reach out to their communities and effectively share their science.

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Implementing Guided Inquiry as a Way of Teaching and Learning Chemistry Through Collaboration with Graduate Teaching Assistants Erin Saitta



Erin Saitta is a Postdoctoral Associate at the Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning where she serves as the science education coordinator. She received her Ph.D. in Materials Chemistry from the University of Central Florida in 2010. Erin's position is partially supported by the Department of Chemistry and College of Sciences.

Overview

With the amount of information constantly increasing and the type of knowledge required for research becoming more specific, it is vital that students develop critical thinking skills and strong reasoning abilities while learning their course content. Science education reformers have been pushing for a more inquiry-based approach to teaching and learning, which requires students to develop broad concepts through experimentation and data analysis before being prompted to apply concepts to specific examples. This differs from the more traditional "verification" labs that give students step-by-step instructions to recreate predetermined experiments intended to verify a concept. This past year, I have used the guided inquiry methodology to transform the chemistry department's general chemistry laboratory for science majors in collaboration with graduate teaching assistants (GTAs). Each semester, GTAs participate in hands-on guided inquiry workshops before they begin teaching and continue with weekly meetings that serve as a source of support, feedback, and additional exposure to learning theory and education pedagogy. I have found that this type of collaborative implementation can be valuable on many levels.

Benefits to TAs

The graduate students who participate in the curricular implementation benefit from the additional teacher training, support, and science education content provided throughout the semester. GTAs in the STEM majors are often expected to teach as soon as they start graduate school despite having little to no content-specific instruction training and very diverse

learning experiences as undergraduate students. Interestingly, a chemistry department survey recently revealed that more than 85% of GTAs would like to learn more about how students learn and want to improve their teaching. Despite their initial differing views of education, when surveyed after one semester of participating in the guided inquiry teaching activities, the GTAs' views of how students learn became more similar to each other and more aligned with the guided inquiry methodology (compared to the GTAs who taught the same course with no teaching support). The GTAs also changed how they viewed their roles and reported seeing themselves as mediators and not all-knowing providers of knowledge.

Another benefit of their participation is based on evidence that teaching problem-based laboratory courses, like a guided inquiry lab, can improve GTAs metacognitive and epistemological development (Sandi-Urena et al., 2011). The act of engaging in research-like teaching provides an opportunity for GTAs to refine their own understanding of knowing and develop metacognitive strategies. Chemistry GTAs have often used our weekly meetings to discuss how they look at their own research differently now that they have taught guided inquiry and how they feel it has made them better researchers as well as better teachers.

In addition, considering that approximately one third of chemistry graduate students will go on to work in academia, the GTA inquiry training may benefit future professors (Heylin, 2005). These graduate students will go on to have an increased awareness and understanding in chemistry education and chemistry education research and may be more likely to incorporate inquiry based teaching methods in their classroom (Roehrig & Kruse, 2005).

Benefits to Undergraduates

As for the undergraduate students who are in the inquiry based laboratories, it is well documented that guided inquiry can serve as a method to encourage their understanding and cognitive skills (Abraham & Renner, 1986; Berg et al., 2003; Lewis & Lewis, 2005; Lawson et al., 2002; Eslinger et al., 2008). Each week, the undergraduate students who participate in the chemistry inquiry labs develop their own procedures to solve a key question and make claims about chemical concepts based on their experimental evidence. They are required to communicate their findings through journal-style lab reports and oral presentations. Although they are not required to get the "right" answer experimentally, they are expected to learn the correct concepts through further reading as emphasis is placed on the process of science.

Benefits to Faculty

The guided inquiry training for the GTAs can also benefit faculty. Many professors feel like they lack the time and knowledge needed to modify their curricular materials and therefore keep their course design constant (Beck, Czerniak, & Lumpe, 2000). Engaging GTAs in the implementation of a new methodology allows for faculty to use the unique talents and strengths of the graduate students, some of whom may already have teaching as a career goal. Combine that with the GTAs' interests in improving their own instructional methods and a collaborative implementation team emerges. Regarding the guided inquiry labs in chemistry, I have continually used GTAs to provide support for instructional materials, assessments, and curriculum development. Since they are the ones in the laboratories with the students, they often have feedback, observations, and insights that are critical to the success of the implementation. GTAs experienced with the method have also gone on to lead training activities and act as peer mentors for new graduate students.

At a large university, like UCF, the use of graduate students for reform based curriculum implementation can be beneficial to everyone involved, especially the GTAs.

At a large university like UCF, the use of graduate students for reform-based curriculum implementation can be beneficial to everyone involved, especially the GTAs. As the science education coordinator at the Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning, I would be

happy to speak further with anyone interested in this topic. Feel free to contact me at <erin.saitta@ucf.edu>.

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The Art of Note Taking

Barry Mauer



Barry Mauer is an Associate Professor in English, where, as a generalist, he devotes much of his time to work with film, digital media, simulation, drama, and sociology. His research is aimed at inventing new media practices for the academy and beyond, approached through a program based on grammatology and heuristics.

It wasn't until graduate school that I learned how to take notes on a book. Since I was required to read three dense books of theory every week in graduate school, plus literary texts, and then write 20-page papers about them, I learned to take notes on my readings and then scan the notes when writing the paper. I still keep and use my notes from those years. Now that I teach undergraduates how to read and write at a professional level, I make sure to introduce them to the note taking lessons I learned.

Some classes require more note taking than others. One such class I teach consistently is ENG 3014: Introduction to Literary Theory. The readings for this class are difficult for students because of all the terminology they are required to learn. Within a single semester, we cover formalism, psychological criticism, Marxism, feminism, queer theory, reader-response theory, structuralist theory, post-structuralist theory, new historicism, postcolonialism, and multiculturalism. Each of these theories uses its own terms and concepts. The language of theorists can seem nearly impenetrable to students reading it for the first time. Here is an example: the opening passage from "Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences," by Jacques Derrida:

"Perhaps something has occurred in the history of the concept of structure that could be called an 'event,' if this loaded word did not entail a meaning which it is precisely the function of structural—or structuralist—thought to reduce or to suspect. But let me use the term 'event' anyway, employing it with caution and as if in quotation marks. In this sense, this event will have the exterior form of a rupture and a redoubling" (see *The Language of Criticism and the Sciences of Man: The Structuralist Controversy*, p 223).

What students read: "Blah blah blah blah blah. Blah blah."

Without taking notes, students will be totally lost. To prepare students to read theory, I warn them about its difficulty and tell them that the only way they can process it is through writing. Here are the instructions I give them:

1. Please do not try to remember a book, especially a scholarly book, in your head; our brains are not made to process and store information with the kind of density found in this kind of writing.

2. Think of your notes as your personal reference for the book. Mark page numbers before each note so you can find your way through the book again later, using your notes as a guide.

3. If you see a key term, jot it down. You can usually identify key terms because they repeat. Sometimes a book will identify its key terms, sometimes not. If you see a term you don't know, jot it down. If you see a word you know but it's being used in an unfamiliar way, jot it down. Figure out the meaning from the context before you look it up in a dictionary. Various disciplines and authors use words in a specialized way and we must be careful to keep their sense of the term, not the dictionary sense.

4. Do not add comments, criticize, or "figure out" the author's ideas in your notes. The purpose of the notes is to keep a faithful index of the book; if you refer to your notes later, it should be clear which ideas are the author's and which are not. Your comments, questions, and criticisms can be made in a separate column if you choose.

5. Don't take too many notes. A map of Utah is useless if it's the same size as Utah. The purpose of note taking is to have the information in usable (i.e. reduced) form.

6. Take at least one note per page.

7. A note does not have to be a full sentence; fragments are fine.

8. If possible, write your notes in the form of an outline; it helps to keep track of the parts of an argument including its thesis, sub-claims, evidence, opposing arguments, etc.

Note taking involves compression and expansion. A theorist may use a term without explaining what it means since he or

she is writing to other theorists who are already in the know. Students must expand such terms in their notes to include an understanding of the concepts the terms represent. When a theorist explains a concept, students must be able to compress it into a usable shorthand, such as “superego = internalized authority figure.”

I encourage note taking by allowing students to use their notes, but not their books, for quizzes and exams. The more successful students develop a system of note taking that they will use for the rest of their careers.

Teaching Spanish Language and Literature in Study Abroad Programs

Martha Garcia



Martha Garcia is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Modern Languages & Literatures. She is a UCF alumna and returned as a faculty member in 2005 from Vanderbilt University where she earned her Ph.D. She teaches Spanish language classes and courses related to her areas of research in medieval and Golden Age literature and theater. She is currently working on her third book manuscript and several other academic projects.

Study abroad programs have increased in many subjects across numerous disciplines. As a result, some universities have included study abroad as a requirement for graduation, as part of an honor program, or as a way of enhancing the curriculum. In the case of Hispanic courses, study abroad programs offer unlimited opportunities and most of the Hispanic countries have embraced this concept in order to accommodate the expectations and demands of college students from around the world. We must realize that the main purpose of a study abroad program must focus on academics and knowledge acquisition. On this occasion, I would like to present the advantages that, in my own experience, may be beneficial to the institutional stakeholder and to the acquisition of a second language.

Second Language Acquisition in Study Abroad Programs

Research studies show a gain in second language proficiency and cultural awareness after students have been part of a study abroad curriculum. In the large majority of the cases, students may have the choice of living with a local family whose members are willing and trained in hosting international students. Students will not only be able to practice the target language, but also experience first-hand the customs, traditions, and styles of life by interacting with members of the community. Therefore, they learn to deal with situations that require language and cultural skills, which is impossible

to recreate or perform in a vivid way within the classroom. However, it is important to mention that the results will be more satisfactory if students rely on and acquire introductory language skills and a cultural background before they travel. Consequently, the language skills and cultural knowledge will increase in a more visible manner if the students have taken at least one or two semesters of courses in the target language at their home institutions. Students who are motivated to study abroad are willing to devote one or two semesters of language training prior to their travel, and the results in these cases denote a higher rate of success and retention in Spanish majors and minors.

Upper Division Courses in Study Abroad Programs

One of the best ways to integrate study abroad courses into the Spanish curriculum consists of offering courses that connect with what the site has to offer, such as field trips to museums, libraries, local theatres, and concerts. Some of these events may be free of charge or relatively inexpensive and they can be included as part of the course syllabus. In addition, each student may prepare a portfolio—in print or an electronic version—recollecting not only the class materials, but also the extracurricular activities in which he or she has been involved. The portfolio may include a journal that registers the student’s experiences, self-discoveries, and reflections. Students may prepare assignments that include their interactions with other students and faculty at the host institution that may contribute in forming a better understanding of the culture of the country. Regarding literature, activities such as visiting libraries, book fairs, and attending theatrical performances may enhance the comprehension of the text and context taught in a literature course. Another direct benefit of this practice may be the formation of networks with other students and faculty, which can become a centerpiece for the students’ endeavors.

Some Pre-departure Considerations

It is very important to take into consideration some pre-departure measures and precautions in any study abroad program. We must not overlook the fact that students will be living and studying in a new community for them, in a country with different legal systems and customs, and, in many cases, the student will be subjected to a different cultural code besides the possible languages barriers. Therefore, any initiative that prepares students before their travel would never be unnecessary. Some of these measures include the implementation and administration of study abroad programs, taking into account the length and specific aspects of the program involved (such as the identification of appropriate courses at the host institution where students will be placed). Organizing several pre-departure meetings during the semester prior to travel encourages interaction among faculty and students for cultural, linguistic, and advisory preparation. At UCF these mandatory orientations

have been taking place in collaboration with the Office of International Studies since 2010, as the result of the success of this implementation procedure as part of Spain's summer program in 2009. I met with students three times as a group throughout the spring prior to this trip to get students to know each other and myself. I presented information about the host country, the hosting institution, and the Hispanic customs and expectations. Reading and becoming familiar with the study abroad programs at your institution and the hosting institution is highly important. Perhaps one of the most significant aspects would be the need to communicate and follow academic and disciplinary roles that are clear to the students by creating a plan of action to respond to unexpected situations, having in place a mechanism to assess and document possible incidents, and being ready to provide appropriate follow up.

Conclusion

Based on my own experience and practice, it has been rewarding to meet with students regularly throughout the program to discuss topics like cross-cultural adjustment, acceptable social and cultural decorum within the host country, and their personal academic expectations and concerns. These sessions have built group cohesiveness, and they have alleviated possible preconceptions and misconceptions. As a measurable result, this transferable practice in any discipline may assist in obtaining more reliable data about post-conceptions. These evaluations demonstrate the curricular benefits and worth of this kind of institutional experience.

Upcoming Events at the Faculty Center

Summer Conference, May 3-6: Check our website for the program; all are welcome to attend.

Faculty Forum on Academic Excellence: Join Provost Tony Waldrop and colleagues from across campus for this conversation to be held on May 4 from 2 to 4 p.m. in Classroom Building 1, Room 121.

Faculty Writing Club continues over the summer. Join us at FCTL on Fridays from 10 a.m. to noon. Set aside this time to focus on your research and connect with colleagues. Everyone is welcome.

Join the FCTL listserv: Don't miss out on FCTL activities this summer, including book clubs, workshops, and other events. To join, send an email to listserv@listserv.cc.ucf.edu with only this in the body of the email: subscribe fctl First Last (substitute your own first and last name).

If We May Please Offer a Comment on Civility?

Kristin Leigh Davis, Gregory Thompson, and Alisha Janowsky



Kristin Davis is an Assistant Professor in the Nicholson School of Communication. She is a mediator with a background in both facilitative and transformative mediation principles. She joined UCF in 2006 after she received her Ph.D. from Arizona State.



Gregory Thompson is an Assistant Professor of Spanish in the Department of Modern Languages. His research includes the areas of language pedagogy, bilingualism, and service-learning in the language classroom.



Alisha Janowsky received her Ph.D. in social and personality psychology from Florida Atlantic University in 2004. Since then she has held lecturer positions at both Missouri State University and Florida Atlantic University before coming to UCF in the Summer of 2006.

If asked to provide an example of incivility at the university, any one of us could quickly chime in with a recent experience of student discourtesy or disrespect. Unfortunately, uncivil behavior is pervasive in society and in academia. In the recent past, civility has become an important topic not only on university campuses, but also in the scientific literature (Boice, 1996; Burroughs, Kearney, & Plax, 1989; Connelly, 2009). Robert Connelly cited a study on civility at Indiana University (Center for Survey Research, 2000), wherein faculty voiced concerns on a number of uncivil behaviors in which students engage. Some of these behaviors include harassing comments directed to faculty both in class and outside of the classroom, students belittling other students, inappropriate e-mails, and cell phone or laptop misuse in class. In addition, studies document "student perceptions of faculty incivility," which include "condescending remarks...acting superior and arrogant, and criticizing students in front of peers" (Clark & Springer, 2007, as cited in Connelly).

In December we attended the Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning's (FCTL) Winter Conference 2010. We were

randomly assigned to a group to discuss how these issues are affecting us here at UCF. In discussing these issues, we felt that UCF's greatest strength is its focus on the importance of diversity and integrity (so much so that it is in our creed). This promotion of diversity in and of itself can contribute to more civil behavior on our campuses through helping students become more aware of the diversity that exists in their community and helping them develop greater cultural and societal sensitivities. Learning to work and interact with others helps us appreciate different points of view and adopt new ways of communicating. Moreover, UCF provides many support services for students, including the Student Academic Resource Center (SARC), Transfer Knights, and the Office of Diversity Initiatives, to name a few.

In fact, the Office of Dispute Resolution began a Civitas campaign in 2009 and had their 2nd annual event in November 2010. This campaign generates awareness about being civil to our fellow community members. Throughout Civitas week, many individuals spoke on varied topics related to civility. For example, Dr. Kristin Davis, from the Nicholson School of Communication, presented on Constructive Communication and on Narcissism. Ms. Jennifer Wright, from the Student Academic Resource Center (SARC), spoke to students about Classroom Etiquette and Asking for Letters of Recommendation. Additionally, in the FCTL Winter Conference in December 2010, several presentations were given on civility and student/teacher interactions. This topic was addressed in depth by the provost and other administrators and faculty during a question-and-answer forum during the conference.

Despite the number of services available to students, faculty, and staff, we have our struggles. Many commented, and research has supported, that the most recent generation of students seems to understand expectations of civility differently. Perhaps technology plays a role as well. The immediate gratification this technological revolution brings, such as text messaging and Internet browsing on one's phone, creates an environment in which students may expect their professors to be on call, responding to their requests 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The technology also offers an impersonal buffer where students do not always have face-to-face interactions with each other or their instructors and thus may feel less concerned and responsible for appropriate behavior and communication. In other words, the technology can dehumanize the student/teacher relationship.

The immediate gratification this technological revolution brings ... creates an environment in which students may expect their professors to be on call, responding to their requests 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

But where there are challenges there are opportunities. We believe that UCF should consider creating small learning communities for students during their orientations and focus on developing better mentoring programs so that students feel more connected and in touch with others. With over 56,000 enrolled during the 2010–2011 academic year, it is easy for students to feel lost and disconnected. This can lead to anxiety and frustration, which can promote incivility.

Ultimately, we believe that education is the best way to help others become civil. One of the ways we thought we could

help students learn to be more civil is to include a section in our syllabi that promotes both civility and community and helps make students aware of the conscious need to consider their behavior as they interact with their peers and faculty members. We include the proposed syllabus language here as a template, in case any readers would like to incorporate the same

or similar language into their syllabi.

* * *

Proposed Syllabus Language on Civility and Community:

We are a classroom community. As such, we wish to have a collaborative, civil, and professional environment in which to learn and exchange ideas. A supportive learning environment incorporates...

- Active listening. Listen to what your classmates and instructors say and respond to the content (vs. attacking the person). In other words, consider the Golden Rule: listen and respond to your community members as you wish to be treated. Your instructor pledges to do the same.
- Active learning. Learning occurs not only from teacher to student but student-to-student and student-to-teacher. Your instructor and classmates pledge to actively participate in class activities and discussion. Active participation implies full engagement, which means phones and laptops will not be used for non-class related activities.
- Respect diversity. We must be willing to be open to and considerate of the thoughts and ideas of others in the classroom. Because we are each unique individuals, we have different perspectives and experiences upon which to draw. Although you may not agree with the views expressed by

others in this course, we all agree to respect each individual's right to have and share his/her own experiences.

- Be responsible. Recognize that our class policies apply to all students, including you.

To ensure that we are all meeting these standards, you may be asked to evaluate the class on these issues periodically throughout the semester.

* * *

Tip: On the first day, ask your class to discuss other issues they would want to include on this list and update your syllabus accordingly. You may also want to have students "sign" (literally or via an Assessment in Webcourses) an agreement that they will uphold these guiding principles.

Overall, each and every one of us could respond with just a little more courtesy toward others. When we consider the big picture, we are all interconnected; we all breathe the same air. We are all trying to survive, be happy, and serve a useful purpose. We are social creatures, and we need to get along to have a well-functioning civil society. We could all take a few deeper breaths, smile more often, and forgive more easily.

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E-Portfolios: Uses and Perceptions Across the Disciplines



Steven Berman, Martha Garcia, Mary Ellen Gomrad, Kastro Hamed, Jeff Kaplan, Jane Moody, Suha Saleh, Blake Scott, and Linda Walters

Faculty Center Winter Workshop, 2010

In universities and colleges across the country (if not the world), electronic portfolios (or e-portfolios, for short) are becoming the latest "buzz word" in academic fashion. With the advent of numerous technological tools and the onslaught of more and more online courses, college educators and students alike are downloading their academic writing and projects into portfolios housed on the Web. The intent, naturally, is to allow participants to store and retrieve, easily and safely, their academic pieces and to present a culmination of their good work in a convenient, labeled, and, perhaps, thematic form for storage.

Specifically, e-portfolios can provide opportunities for 1) students to present and contextualize their work, both product and process; 2) student learning and growth through reflection; 3) evaluation of student success and academic growth; and 4) authentic program assessment. Several major universities, including Florida State and Penn State, require all undergraduates to create an e-portfolio. At UCF, the Interdisciplinary Studies and Teacher Education programs require e-Portfolios, and other programs are considering a similar requirement.

For many disciplines, the strengths of using e-portfolios are obvious and direct. E-portfolios encourage student ownership, learning through reflection, validating professionalism by providing continuity for their coursework throughout their college career, enhancing computer skills, collecting student work for research and assessment, and networking within and across disciplines and institutions.

Similarly, the weaknesses associated with e-portfolios are many and real as well. E-portfolios can be time consuming; troubling with regards to design and interface limitations;

lacking connection, credibility and quality control with other college programs; and they require training, guidance and finances for both technology and e-portfolio pedagogy support.

Naturally, the content and use of e-portfolios will vary from discipline to discipline. Writing teachers can prompt students to provide a catalogue of their best work; science instructors and lab technicians can collect and store experimental reports and laboratory findings; and art historians can ask budding artists and critics to share their artwork and personal impressions. The uses of e-portfolios are infinite and this brief article will highlight how specific disciplines across the UCF campus might adapt the use of e-portfolios to their own subject matter.

Linda Walters, Biology

In the Biological Sciences, e-portfolios would be very useful for students to create “enhanced” curriculum vitae that are supplemented with poster and oral presentations from professional conferences as well as pictorial representations of their research designs and results. However, it is unlikely that a content class would be able to devote sufficient time needed to create and assess an e-portfolio. E-portfolio creation would be very appropriate for an undergraduate or graduate research methods course.

Jane Moody, Honors College

The Burnett Honors College has initiated a reflective e-portfolio project over the next three years designed to enhance student learning through reflection, engagement, and critical thinking. Using the SharePoint e-portfolio system currently in development by Honors IT staff, students will create e-portfolios that take them on a journey of learning, discovery, and engagement that culminates in a presentation that will enhance a student’s graduate school application or future career.

Suha M. Saleh, Health Sciences

E-portfolios can be of value to Health Sciences students who plan to apply for admission to graduate programs. Students with this interest can use e-portfolios to collect, organize, and present their academic preparation and achievements. These portfolios can be used as part of or a supplement to their graduate application.

Martha Garcia, Modern Languages & Literatures

E-portfolios may be a useful tool in composition courses because students are able to collect and organize their writing materials electronically; consequently, faculty can use them as part of the student’s assessment process. At the same time, faculty may use e-portfolios to evaluate and revise their lesson plans and to present successful approaches used in a specific term.

Steven Berman, Psychology

In Clinical Psychology, an e-portfolio might include such things as a statement about their theoretical orientation toward diagnosis and treatment, training experiences (with links to internship website pages), sample case conceptualizations, workshops attended, therapeutic activities developed, and reflections on what they gained from each course and placement and how it contributed to their development as a therapist.

Blake Scott and Mary Ellen Gomrad, Writing and Rhetoric

In Writing and Rhetoric, students are asked to use e-portfolios to showcase and reflect on their academic and community-based writing: both in print and multimedia. This electronic

medium enables students to demonstrate how they engage in the writing process and explain how they will adapt their writing to various audiences, purposes, and contexts. E-portfolio development gives students the opportunity to build on and connect the knowledge and skills they learned in courses both within the major and across disciplines. As students can use

e-portfolios during their job search process, they learn to select materials appropriate to the job requirements of each prospective employer.

Jeff Kaplan, Education

In the College of Education, students are required to complete an e-portfolio, there known as Live Text, in fulfillment of their undergraduate and graduate degree in teacher education. Into this portfolio, elementary and secondary education students download specific course assignments. Assignments are graded by their respective instructors and then used as documentation that teacher candidates have met state standards for teacher accreditation. Live Text also serves as a repository for examples of student accomplishments for state and national college accreditation requirements.

Conclusion

Helen Barrett, School of Education, University of Alaska, Anchorage, says quite rightly that “portfolios can serve multiple purposes.” E-portfolios, she noted in an interview with Education World, can “support learning, play an assessment role, or support future employment. The purpose of the e-portfolio dictates the structure and contents of the portfolio.” To be sure, as technology improves instruction and students become more accustomed to saving their assignments in a systematic manner, their academic lives will become even more documented for their own edification, enlightenment and enjoyment.

E-portfolios encourage student ownership, learning through reflection ... and networking within and across disciplines and institutions.

Intertextuality and the Research Process

Dan Martin



Dan Martin is an instructor in the Writing and Rhetoric Department and has been teaching composition courses at UCF since 2004. His research interests include writing studies, composition pedagogy and classroom instruction, writing across the curriculum, and writing about literature.

Teaching students how to enter an academic conversation is something I have struggled with as a writing instructor for years. What is the best way to teach students how to engage scholarly texts? How can we teach students that texts are connected to larger conversations, and how can we teach them to be a part of that textual conversation? These questions are not easy to answer, and we've seen these concerns with undergraduate research and writing expressed in articles by Barbara Fister, Mike Kleine, Stuart Green, and Richard Larson over the years. But I don't see enough pedagogical remedies for these problems.

When students complete my composition courses, I want them to be able to read and comprehend academic texts and to increase their ability to synthesize those texts with other texts and their own ideas—in both small and large writing projects. I also want them to be able to transfer what they learn in my course to other courses, in other disciplines, since writing and research are foundational to many curriculums here at UCF. My attempts at answering these questions have been mildly successful, but one particular article I stumbled upon opened new possibilities for teaching students how to enter an academic conversation.

In “Intertextualities: Volosinov, Bakhtin, Literary Studies, and Literacy Studies”, Charles Bazerman argues that rhetoric and composition scholars need to teach students how to be more intertextual in their approaches to writing and research if they want to give students a skill they can take across curriculums. Perhaps James Porter defines *intertextuality*, the term Julia Kristeva coined in the 60's, best when he writes that intertextuality is the idea that texts refer to and rely on other texts, the idea that all texts are connected to one network of communication—all texts contain fragments of

other texts. Bazerman writes that “Understanding how we use intertextuality as writers and readers can improve our practice as individuals and as collectives. . . . We can become more deft and precise in invoking texts that we want the reader to see as relevant context and in excluding those intertexts that might distract the readers from the vision we wish to present.” Intertextual research approaches and intertextual mapping create an objective distance to trace, outline, and evaluate the various texts that create an academic conversation. These approaches ask students to examine texts critically for relationships between content and the rhetorical situation, teaching them that texts are connected to other texts and that academic conversations are comprised of textual relationships that shape how and why some texts are interconnected and some texts are not.

After digesting Bazerman's ideas, I created a series of assignments (research reports and proposals) that ask students to use intertextual approaches to research, especially in the discovery stage, to enter an academic conversation. Students locate scholarly articles on a writing studies topic of interest and conduct an intertextual explication of these articles to identify

intertextual components: key authors, texts, terms, dates, ideas, influential theories, claims, and connections among any of these. Students are then asked to conduct a surface level search of these components to help them map out their next research move and develop a clearer understanding of the conversation they wish to enter, which they explain in a research report. Students piece together a broader picture of the conversation using an intertextual map that identifies the major players

in the conversation and their textual contributions—and more of the intertextual components noted above. The assignment also asks students to identify how authors and texts in the conversation are connected to each other, how they build off of each other.

Using an intertextual lens to understand research, conversation, exchange, discourse, audience, and synthesis can enhance a student's understanding of how to locate and fill a gap within a particular conversation with more clarity and comprehension. They can use the map to track key ideas and questions that the conversation needs answered. Intertextual theories also provide students a concrete foundational theory to frame the way they think about research and textual evaluation.

Teaching students why certain authors made specific textual decisions about where they wanted the conversation to move,

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while teaching them to read, comprehend and write about difficult and dense academic texts is the primary exigence of implementing intertextual approaches to research and writing. All texts, in any course or field, are intertextual and contain key components that, if critically traced, lead to a richer, more poignant understanding of any given conversation.

The results of these assignments show that students are capable of more than we think they are; we just have to find the right pedagogical approach. And as I develop, implement and revise these ideas and assignments, I see a future when undergraduate students are capable of finding connections between scholarly texts that allow them to construct a more holistic understanding of the academic conversation they wish to engage. I see students who can read difficult, academic texts and find holes and gaps to fill. I see students who view the research process as a connection among ideas, and the texts that present those ideas, and not the insertion of random quotations into a paper that takes the place of the original thinking we want our students to do.

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A New Set of Commandments I Give You....

Harry S. Coverston



Harry Coverston is an instructor of Humanities, Religious Studies and the Philosophy of Law. He is a member of the Florida Bar and practiced juvenile and criminal defense law in Orlando five years before moving to Berkeley, CA, to become an Episcopal priest. He earned a Ph.D. in religion, law and society from Florida State University

in 2000 and has taught at UCF since 2002. Harry is the pre-law advisor for the College of Arts and Humanities and faculty sponsor for Students Against Slavery and Alpha Phi Omega.

Encountering the Humanities, HUM 2020, is an entry level course required for humanities majors and designed to introduce students to the study of humanities. The text used for the course, *The Art of Being Human*, reflects the interdisciplinary nature of the humanities beginning with recurrent themes—myths, happiness, death—and closing with disciplines of the humanities— theater, cinema, music and dance, art and its conflicts. One of the biggest challenges for students in this course is framing traditional ideas and beliefs within the historical and cultural context in which they arose.

In the chapter on morality the authors compare the Ten Commandments of Hebrew Scripture to other codified ancient laws (e.g., Hammurabi's Code which precedes the Commandments by about seven centuries and contains six of the 10 provisions found in the Hebrew version) while noting aspects of the Commandments that make them unique. The text challenges students to consider these questions: What are the chief concerns facing human beings in 21st century western culture today? Why are they concerns? To whom? And where do we find them expressed in the humanities? To assist students in formulating responses to these questions, I developed a three part assignment.

The Assignment

Part 1, Reflection—Students must identify the five most pressing concerns facing humanity today, listing them in order of seriousness of concern and identifying at least one example of the expressive humanities where we observe this problem being presented. (e.g., 1. Ecologically exploitative lifestyles—Spielberg, film, *A.I.*, Artificial Intelligence [2001]).

Part 2, Writing—Students produce a short paper addressing these points:

A. Introduction—Do we need new commandments? Why? What considerations go into creating commandments for

human beings?

B. Concerns—Lay out your five concerns and where we see them in the expressive humanities today. Explain why you chose each one and the order in which you listed them.

C. Commandments—Craft a commandment to deal with each of your five concerns.

D. Results—Write a 1-2 paragraph conclusion discussing the difficulty human beings may encounter with following your commandments as well as what our world might look like if they are successfully followed.

Part 3, Discussion—Students are broken into six groups charged with discussing their proposed commandments, coming to consensus on 10 Commandments, then transcribing the commandments onto the provided poster board cut into tablet shape. Half the class is used for group process with each group presenting its consensus commandments to the class in the remaining half of the class.

Students are graded on both their individual papers (2.5 points for writing skills, 7.5 for content) as well as receiving a group grade for their reports.

The New Commandments

Fall 2009 was the first time this exercise was used in class. The discussions were very animated, sometimes even heated. From the six groups, the commandments fell into five categories ranked by frequency of inclusion in the group consensus. The categories, commandments and an example follow:

The most popular category of commandments (8 versions from six groups) reflected a concern for character and Personal Responsibility. They included ancient proscriptions (Do not lie) as well as some targeted at university life (Thou shalt not cheat thyself into success; Thou shalt not be led blindly by others).

The second most popular category, loosely defined as Duties to Others, included three themes which all six groups addressed in their top ten including Care for the Environment (Thou shalt respect our Mother Earth; Thou shalt not believe that humanity is the pinnacle of creation); A prohibition on Excessive Consumption (Consume what you need, not what you want; Thou shalt exercise control over thy caloric intake); Duties to Neighbors, Second Great Commandment (Thou shalt not allow the hunger of neighbors when food is plenty; Thou shalt meditate daily on the interconnectedness of human life).

The third tier was comprised of three themes in which five of the six groups included a commandment among their 10. These included Prohibitions against War, Terrorism, Excessive Nationalism (Thou shalt not commit terrorist actions); A Duty to Become Educated (Thou shall not only seek out education but also embrace it once found); Variants on the Golden Rule (Thou shalt treat others as you would want to be treated).

The fourth category found four of the six groups including a

commandment that fit into one of the following four themes: Valuing Humanity Over Technology or Money (Thou shalt think before thou facebook); Restrictions upon Sexual Expression (Thou shalt not have unprotected sex unless thou plan on providing for a child); A requirement of Religious Tolerance (Deem what is appropriate when it comes to your spirituality and allow others to do the same without coercion or discrimination); Prohibition of Killing (Thou shalt murder nothing, but thou art given the right to kill in preserving thy life, thy neighbor's life, thine own property or to feed thyself).

Finally, three of the six groups included a commandment that would Prohibit Discrimination (Do not discriminate against anyone at any time).

In the discussion, students noted that several of their commandments replicated ancient codes such as Hammurabi's and the Hebrew Scripture's Decalogue. Some moral concerns transcend culture, place and time. Murder, lying and abuses of sexuality are constant concerns in all human cultures.

Conversely, while Hammurabi and Moses may not have worried much about the environment, technologies that have come to dominate human users or a duty to become educated, modern crafters of moral commandments rank them high on their concerns. Moral concerns are comprehensible only when considered in their own historical and cultural context.

Finally, concerns for religious tolerance and the problems of discrimination in societies striving to be egalitarian reflect sea changes in understandings of self and society. Ancient tribal societies in which state and religion were most often interconnected produced purity codes designed to separate "the people" (always self-referential) from everyone else (to the Greeks, *barbarians*; to the Hebrew people, *abominators*) and rigid caste and class systems ordered their societies.

In multicultural, information age democracies, religion and state are often separated to prevent potential oppression of minority views, and cultural diversity is often seen as a strength even as it proves an ongoing societal liability. Clearly, some aspects of ancient moral codes would not only be incomprehensible in modern societies, they would be seen as counterproductive if not destructive.

Information R/evolution

Martha Marinara and Hank Lewis



Martha Marinara, Associate Professor of English, is the Director of the Quality Enhancement Plan/Information Fluency Initiative at the University of Central Florida. Dr. Marinara earned an M.A. in Creative Writing from Southern Connecticut State University and a Ph.D. in Rhetoric and Composition from Lehigh University.



Hank Lewis is the Coordinator, Academic Support Services for the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) at UCF. He holds both a bachelor's degree and a master's degree in Business Administration from Georgia College and State University.

Even as Florida's legislature seeks ways to make more cuts in education funding to balance the state budget, with a staff of two and a reduced budget, UCF's Information Fluency Initiative/Quality Enhancement Plan continues to support faculty, staff, and students who research and teach in the areas of information and technical literacies. The Information Fluency/Quality Enhancement Plan staff, required as part of the reauthorization of accreditation for UCF, is busy collecting assessment data for its five-year reporting period and, at the same time, reaching out nationally and internationally to increase its impact on student learning.

Part of the mission of our office is to provide "a focused foundation for an emerging culture of information fluency at the university" (QEP Detailed Task and Assessment Plan). To provide this foundation the QEP/IF office has worked diligently to educate both students and faculty on the concepts and principles of information fluency including information literacy, technology literacy, and critical thinking—among other related concepts including working with the planning committee for the new Technology Commons.

The key to changing a culture in a university setting is to empower faculty to embrace and deliver information fluency content in their courses. Faculty development has been a significant part of the Information Fluency Initiative since its inception. Examples of how we support faculty can be seen in the box below. The benefits from all of these projects have far outweighed the investment.

In developing the QEP Strategic Plan for 2011 we decided to align IF with Goal 3 of UCF's Strategic Plan—"provide international focus to our curricula and research programs—and further develop our outreach to the national and international community" (President's Overview of UCF Strategic Planning). The QEP/IF has had a strong group serving on our national advisory board and we decided to utilize their skills and expertise to reach out to the larger academy as we planned the 2011 Information Fluency Conference.

The conference planning committee consisted of participants from UCF, University of California-Irvine, Washington State University, John Jay College of Criminal Justice, The City University of New York, University of Illinois-Springfield, Mount Royal University in Canada, and Umeå Universitet in Sweden. We were helped in planning and implementing the conference by the Office of Continuing Education, Office of Undergraduate Studies, the UCF Student Union, and the Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning.

The theme for this year's conference was "Information R/evolution"; presenters discussed the changing landscape of information in the academy and how we use the information in classrooms and in administration. By the deadline established in the call for proposals, all 30 spaces for presentations were filled. Each proposal was peer-reviewed by a minimum of two faculty and professional staff at UCF. We are grateful for these reviewers' support.

Over 125 participants came from 19 colleges and universities in the U.S., and 12 participants came from countries including India, Croatia, New Zealand, and Canada. Participants toured the Knowledge Commons area in the UCF Library and the conference also offered time for networking. We

are now working on the 2012 Information Fluency Conference scheduled for March 14-15, 2012, at UCF.

At a Glance: Information Fluency Support

InfoLit Modules

- Funded by IF and developed jointly by the Center for Distributed Learning and University Libraries
- Used by 149 faculty members in 472 unique courses, with students completing 23,182 assessments

IF Track at the Summer Faculty Development Conference

- Over 130 faculty members have participated through 2010

6 Engagement Grants to departments with major projects

- Impacting over 100 faculty members and 14,000 students

75 Enhancement Grants

- Awarded to faculty and professional staff in over 30 different departments/colleges to include IF skills in a course or program
- Impacting approximately 5,000 students.

Another part of sustaining IF at UCF and focusing attention on UCF from the international community has been the formation of the *Journal of Information Fluency*. The editorial and peer review board for the journal include representatives from ten universities including those in Canada and Sweden. The first edition of the online journal will be published in April 2011. We welcome submissions from UCF academic and library faculty. For more information, go to <www.if.ucf.edu> and click on the JIF logo.

As information evolves, and as we all participate in the revolution that is occurring in research and pedagogy, the Office of Information Fluency/QEP will continue to assist in shining the spotlight on the innovative work being done by UCF's faculty, staff, and students.

Adventures in Emerging Media: An Experiment in Online Course Design

Jon Friskics, Robb Lindgren, and Rudy McDaniel



Jon Friskics is Instructor of Digital Media in the School of Visual Arts and Design. He has taught a variety of Web programming and sound design courses in the Digital Media, Film, and Music departments at UCF. His current research interests are mobile application development and technology for online education.



Robb Lindgren is Assistant Professor of Digital Media in the School of Visual Arts and Design. He conducts research on how emerging media technologies help people learn. He received his Ph.D. from Stanford University in 2009 in Learning Sciences and Technology Design.



Rudy McDaniel is Assistant Professor of Digital Media at UCF. His research interests include narrative theory, video game technologies, knowledge management frameworks, and XML. As a consultant, he has designed Web-based applications for clients such as the IEEE. Rudy is currently director of the PROSE lab at UCF.

You are on your way to interview for your dream job. You have been invited to an exclusive meeting on a private island in Greece with an eccentric, multi-billionaire technologist who is as brilliant as he is mysterious. You walk down a seemingly endless hallway framed by large, thick glass

walls and ornate marble floors. Finally, you reach a frosted glass door emblazoned with a triple helix—the headquarters for Tri-Helix Media. You reach to turn the handle and the door automatically swings open, revealing an elderly man in a suit who is surrounded by technologies that don't yet exist in the eyes of consumers. You step inside...

This scenario opened the School of Visual Art and Design's Adventures in Emerging Media (AEM) course to 99 undergraduates in fall 2010, introducing these students to the world of Nelson Von-Berners and his media empire. The course, developed and offered as part of UCF's Undergraduate Education Pilot Program (UEPP), was designed with a singular objective: to effectively engage students in large, fully online class sections.

In developing the course, we identified three elements that we believed would increase student learning and engagement: 1) choice, 2) storytelling, and 3) adaptive testing.

In AEM, students choose from a set of 3-4 learning modules each week. All modules are comprised of a video lecture, supplemental readings or activities, and an assignment that requires students to creatively apply learned concepts. Students complete one module per week, but they are free to view any additional modules that also capture their interest. The modules in any given week are thematically related, but can vary greatly in their specific subject matter. For example, one week's topic was the history of emerging media; individual modules for this week included History of Video Games, History of Animation, and History of the Internet.

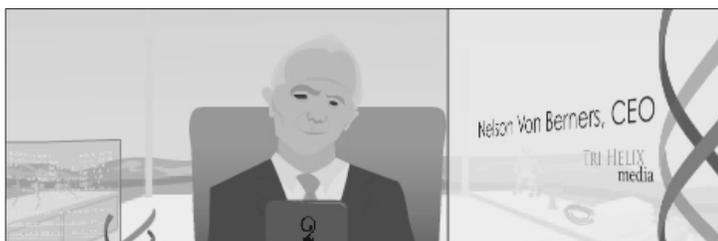
Another aspect that makes AEM unique is that student choices are subtly guided by story elements that appear every few weeks before course modules. This technique is similar to the use of videotaped or animated cutscenes in commercial video games. One chapter of the story (described at the opening of this article) introduces the student as the protagonist following their path to a dream job. Before they embark on this quest, students identify their career goals from a set of potential jobs at the beginning of the semester (e.g., game designer, creative director). The skills learned each week in modules relate to the different job descriptions, and are intended to be a motivator; if the student learns the necessary skills, the student gets the job!

In keeping with the media-rich module content, stories are presented as short, 30-90 second animations from the student's point of view as they receive information from Von-Berners. These animations were produced in the summer of 2010, and feature professional voice acting, character animation, and detailed environmental backdrops for Von-Berners including his office in Greece, a jeep ride in Dubai, and even some golf putting practice on the surface of the moon!

As we designed this course, we realized that since students were choosing their own learning paths, we needed a system for assessing student learning that adapted to these choices.

This system needed to test students only on the material that they selected. It also needed to allow them to designate a module as their “primary” or testing module for weeks in which they also completed optional videos and assignments. To meet these requirements, we built and hosted our own learning management system that tracked student choices each week and delivered custom browser-based exams.

In order to measure the effectiveness of our new approach to online instruction, we administered pre-, mid-, and post-semester surveys to students in the AEM course and three other fully online courses of similar size in fall 2010. A total of 366 unique students submitted at least one survey, and many of these students completed all surveys, allowing us to track their perceptions of the course across the semester. In comparing the responses of AEM students to the other courses, we found some encouraging trends, such as the finding that



Above: Multi-billionaire Nelson Von-Berners, a character in the online course Adventures in Emerging Media (AEM), waits at his desk to interview students for their dream job with his company Tri-Helix Media.

more AEM students felt the course was having an impact on their career goals.

When we asked only the AEM students about the unique features of the course, students had a very positive response. On features such as the ability to choose the module and the adaptive exams, over 80% of students in the AEM course indicated that they had either an “extremely positive” or “mostly positive” response. Self-assessed skill competencies rose across-the-board from pre- to post- surveys. We also conducted a focus group after course grades were submitted. These students reported a generally positive response to the experimental elements of the course, and also gave us some useful suggestions for how to improve the next iteration.

We believe Adventures in Emerging Media is the first step towards a more engaging model for teaching large, online sections. In designing the pilot offering, we paid extra attention to developing clear assessment plans, building a technology infrastructure for adaptive learning, and streamlining a pipeline for lecture production and delivery. Our goal in this UEPP-funded project is to disseminate this knowledge and help other faculty members create similar experiences for students in other majors. We hope that someday soon other departments will begin implementing Adventures courses of their own. In the meantime, Von-Berners is looking forward to a new crop of students to challenge in the fall....

STUDENT PERSPECTIVES

(a new feature for the *Faculty Focus*)

In Praise of UCF Faculty

Zachary Walker



Zachary is a Ph.D. student in the College of Education. He is a Project LEAD Scholar in Exceptional Education as well as the recipient of a Provost Fellowship. He received his B.S. from Penn State University, his M.B.A. from Pittsburg State University, and his M.Ed. from the University of Alabama-Birmingham.

As a recipient of the Order of the Pegasus award, I am thankful to have taken part in so many opportunities here at the UCF. These have included performing innovative research, teaching both face-to-face and virtual classes, and the chance to work and study internationally. These opportunities for growth have been invaluable to my education. The most important lessons, though, have come through the people I have been able to work with and who have supported me.

Dr. Bill Wienke, Dr. Suzanne Martin, Dr. Lisa Dieker, Dr. Eleazar Vasquez, and Dr. Rebecca Hines have all provided me with an inordinate amount of their time and I have often needed their guidance. Ms. Linda Alexander keeps all of the performers in this circus of doctoral study in line and, without her, none of us would be successful. Dr. Anne Culp, Dr. Rex Culp, Heather Junod, and Rich Sloane have been very helpful in finding ways to take advantage of many of the opportunities I have been granted. Dr. Gillian Eriksson, Dr. Karen Biraimah, Dr. Judit Szente and Dr. Jeffrey Kaplan have all provided support and counsel. Finally, the members of the Obojoko Cohort, with whom I have the pleasure of studying, have been incredibly instrumental in my success. Jessica Hunt, Tracy McKinney, Selma Powell, Jacqueline Rodriguez, Carrie Straub, and Krista Vince Garland are all smart, talented, and capable professionals and my studies and my life have been enriched by their presence.

In short, UCF does stand for opportunity. All of the resources at UCF are outstanding but none more exceptional than the faculty, staff, and students who make this campus a place of growth and learning. To all of the faculty, staff, and colleagues who have molded us, thank you for your time, energy, and wisdom.

Submissions

The *Faculty Focus* is a publication for all instructors at the University of Central Florida. This includes full-time and part-time faculty and teaching assistants at all UCF campuses. Its purpose is to provide an exchange of ideas on teaching and learning for the university's community of teachers and scholars. It is envisioned that this publication will inspire more dialogue among faculty whether in hallway discussions, departmental meetings, or in written articles. This represents an opportunity for faculty members to reach their peers throughout the growing UCF community. The *Faculty Focus* invites you to contribute your ideas on teaching and learning in a short essay.

See the guidelines for submission online at <<http://www.ftl.ucf.edu/Publications/FacultyFocus/submission.php>>. Please send your submissions to ftl@mail.ucf.edu.

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