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## Reinventing Long Distance Learning for Multidiscipline Excitement

John Shafer



John Wayne Shafer is a member of the Dramatists Guild and has served as a regional liaison for *How to Be a Working Actor*, 4th edition by Mari Lyn Henry. John is an alumnus of Rutgers University's Mason Gross School for the Arts and is currently an Assistant Professor of Theatre at the University of Central Florida.

Because of the excellence of our faculty and the long distance learning resources available at UCF, many of our students have benefited from a nontraditional learning environment which incorporates instructors and opportunities that used to be out of our physical reach. Today, we can digitally link our classrooms with students or faculty from across the nation while working out of Orlando. These new tools are making a difference in how we transmit knowledge, information, and skills to students.

We also have the added resources of the Faculty Center and the Office of Instructional Resources, whose mission it is to aid our faculty in creating cutting-edge approaches to the delivery of education. Support is clearly available to instructors wishing to incorporate the enhanced technologies available to us as we teach our classes.

However, many of us do not take advantage of the new tools. Some are intimidated, but I believe most of us find it difficult to imagine uses for the new opportunities that make it a different and dynamic experience for ourselves and our students. This makes sense considering most of us learned how to teach in environments that did not include technology, and the idea of learning a new system feels akin to switching disci-

*"My venture into the long distance environment has been challenging, surprising, and rewarding to myself, my students, and my colleagues."*

plines and going back to school ourselves. Plus, it seems reasonable to ask, "why bother?" After all, a classroom environment is still a classroom regardless of the space between the instructor and the students, right? Wrong. Uses for these new technologies are limited only by our imagination.

What about the potential for a cultural diversity class that is team taught with faculty and students from Florida, Vermont, Washington, DC, New York, and Iowa? Certainly the potential for regional differences in perceptions will be uncovered through personal contact. A state like Vermont which has comparatively few minorities would suddenly meet people face to face. African Americans may discover what it is like to need to travel to Quebec in order to buy shampoo for their hair. Myths become expelled.

How about a French class taught, shared, and augmented by native speakers from Paris? International studies become alive with possibilities when you imagine sharing the learning experience in a truly international environment without actually leaving Orlando.

Have you always wanted to bring in a nationally noted specialist in your field? Budget and scheduling can limit your access. What if you can arrange time for the person to address your class without the time and expense of travel?

I once saw a tomb opened in real time while linked on the internet. Archeology and anthropology certainly become a lot more visceral when students and faculty alike may ask questions and involve themselves directly.

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One of the strengths in using the technology available to us is that it makes opportunities accessible that did not seem possible only a few years ago. But, in my opinion, the biggest advantage is the charge of excitement it provides to the students and to me as a teacher. Using these tools makes me re-think how I teach. I gain new skills. I become more effective as an instructor and invigorated by the knowledge that what we are doing is cutting-edge and unique and my students share this excitement and become far more involved than in traditional classes.

I am a theatre professor. I just ended a collaborative project with Bradley University in Illinois. It was called the Bradley University/University of Central Florida Joint Dynamic Media Project. George Brown, Chair of Theatre at Bradley University, and I collaborated to produce a piece of live interactive theatre that made use of existing LDC's and teleconference facilities and technologies on both campuses. We chose to take one of mankind's oldest stories and see if we could tell it in a new live performance environment. An Illinois newspaper described it like this:

"This unique collaboration between Bradley's theatre department and the University of Central Florida attempts to push theatrical boundaries. It raises questions about how the theatre of the future might depart dramatically from the theatre of today... The 2,500 year-old tragedy receives a 21st century spin thanks to high speed Internet access which enables live actors and audiences in Peoria to share performance time with virtual actors and audiences from Orlando."- *Journal Star*, July 31, 2003.

For a learning environment, I really could not ask for more. The project was beneficial in ways I had not foreseen. Positive surprises and relationships continue to blossom out of our experiment.

Students, colleagues, and businesses volunteered to participate both on our campus and on Bradley's campus. Collaborations arose with colleagues from all over. Associate Professors of Theatre Be Boyd and Mark Brotherton became involved in the performance. Dynamic Media's Jeff Wirth and Mike Moshell, the Director of CREAT, contributed ideas. Patsy Moskal from the Office of Research Initiative for Teaching Effectiveness aided us in creating research documentation of the project. Dr. Ruth Marshall, Director of the Office of Instructional Resources, provided invaluable access to equipment and knowledgeable personnel like Don Merritt. Dr. Alison Morrison-Shetlar, Director of the Faculty Center, aided us in communications. One of the UCF students involved (Danielle Marino) earned a Burnett Honors College Grant.

Nationally, Innoventive Software of California asked me to serve as a pre-consumer tester for their new story board software called Frame Forge 3D. I was later asked to write a review of the product and a description of our Bradley/UCF project for *e-Zine* magazine. And Bradley has become a Beta

Tester site for the Apple release of Frame Forge 3D. We will be presenting at the *Internet II* conference in Indianapolis in October and at the *South Eastern Theatre* conference in Tennessee in March. We have been invited to the *Next Art* conference at the *Florida Film Festival*.

Internationally, Bradley's Professor Brown is (at the time of this writing) in Athens, Greece with a DVD of our joint project. He is presenting us to an international conference on theatre whose theme for the year is digital media and its applications for theatre.

The data we have collected is unique and will guide future projects. There have only been a handful of live, long-distance-performance projects from multiple locations. An estimated cost of the hardware used in one of the more successful (*Dancing Beyond Boundaries*) is placed at around \$250,000. Bradley and UCF have created a paradigm for theatrical interaction that makes use of existing facilities and low budgets. This opens the door to other institutions to create in this new performance medium while using existing teleconference and long-distance learning facilities with our work as a potential model.

My venture into the long distance environment has been challenging, surprising, and rewarding to me, my students, and my colleagues. I learned to be flexible and unafraid of a changing educational environment. The work has inspired other ideas and given me skills I did not possess before. It is my hope that you will consider imaginative ways to grow your classes in the rich world of new technologies.

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### **Relationship Relief is on the Way** Stacey Tantleff Dunn



Dr. Stacey Tantleff Dunn is an Associate Professor in the Psychology Department. She joined UCF in 1996 from the University of South Florida where she received her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology. Dr. Dunn's primary research activity is in the areas of body image and eating behavior. In addition, she is greatly interested in the scholarship of teaching. Dr. Dunn has won both a College of Arts and Sciences Graduate Teaching Award and a TIP award, and she is honored to currently serve as a Faculty Fellow of the Faculty Center for the College of Arts and Sciences.

For many of us, having the opportunity to nurture the intellectual and personal development of others is what makes teaching such an important and rewarding endeavor. To me, teaching is as much (if not more) about developing relationships with students and embracing their desire to learn as it is about providing access to information and facilitating students' acquisition of knowledge, skills, and abilities.

The quality of our relationships with our students can have a major impact on how we feel about teaching, how students perceive us, and how effective we are as educators. When I think of some of the highs and lows in my teaching career, they are often related to particularly good or bad relationships with or feelings about students. I don't often reflect back on a wonderful PowerPoint® presentation I pulled together, but I am likely to recall how appreciative a student was for an explanation or advice I offered during office hours. It's not likely that I'd stress about fumbling a brief class demonstration, but it's quite likely that I would be concerned about a student who perceived being treated unfairly in some way.

***"However, the reality is that teaching involves so much more than conveying the information we have mastered."***

Given the large numbers of students we teach through the years, the odds are that all of us at some point will encounter challenging and sometimes disheartening interactions with the very individuals we are trying to help grow and learn. Depending on our own personality styles and the nature of our classes, this may be a weekly occurrence or a very rare event. However often, disputes with students can be stressful, distracting, and can eventually chip away at our confidence, competence, and love of teaching.

So what is a professor to do? Fortunately, there are many steps that each of us can take toward preventing conflicts with our students and effectively addressing difficult interpersonal situations that arise. Some examples of these include:

- ♦ Taking a closer look at our own attitudes, beliefs, and values regarding higher education and working toward understanding how these ideas may play a role in how we approach our relationships with students.
- ♦ Reviewing and learning to apply basic communication and conflict resolution skills that seem obvious but are often forgotten when we are upset, angry, or frustrated in our attempts to deal with unhappy or difficult students.
- ♦ Talking with colleagues about our struggles in the interpersonal domain of the classroom—a topic often ignored and overshadowed by somewhat safer discussions about course content or grade distributions.

As a clinical psychologist, I have found that many of the skills I use in therapy, such as reflecting, empathizing, and clarifying, work well in dealing with a variety of challenging situations with students. Careful never to blur the line between professor and therapist, through the years I have applied some of the principles for developing strong working alliances with clients to creating mutually understanding and respectful relationships with students. I also have conducted empirical research on faculty-student conflicts, and have been surprised (usually pleasantly) by the results. I will present this research in a future workshop at the Faculty Center, but the upshot is that students generally crave better communication with their professors. For them, effective resolu-

tions are not reliant upon higher grades, extra credit, or greater leniency.

If you ever find yourself in difficult situations with students, please accept my invitation to come to the Faculty Center to talk with us about the challenges you are facing. There is no reason to face them alone. Sometimes just talking about them can diffuse the negative feelings that arise, and other times finding effective solutions is just a conversation away.

Expertise in our academic domains is what so many of us have relied upon in becoming competent educators. However, the reality is that teaching involves so much more than conveying the information we have mastered. Taking some extra time to explore and hone our relationship skills with students can make an enormous difference in our teaching—helping us find greater fulfillment, and giving our students the best educational experiences we can offer.

## ***Database of Teaching Resources***

**Kathy Hohenleitner**



Kathy Hohenleitner is Senior Faculty Fellow at the Faculty Center for the 2003-2004 academic year. In 1998 she received her Ph.D. from the University of Notre Dame and began teaching in the UCF English Department. She teaches World Literature, British Literature and Composition and her research interests include Irish literature, postcolonial theory and Composition pedagogy. At the Faculty Center she works on providing resources, both online and face to face, to support faculty success.

It has become part of my job this year to answer the question: why, when so many wonderful resources are available to us through the Faculty Center, do faculty find it difficult to access these resources? Time seems to be a key obstacle for faculty every semester. We try to schedule our workshops to straddle TR and MWF schedules, and to happen at various hours of the school day. And at any time of the day you can stop in, have coffee, use a computer, or engage in casual conversations about teaching. Still if you are someone whose schedule never finds you near CL1-207, we are compiling resources for you into a database accessible through our website. So consider yourself invited to visit the website online, and more importantly, to contribute to this developing database.

Here are some ways we envision the database being useful to faculty:

- ♦ You are sitting at your computer at 10:30 in the evening wondering how to engage 80 students in the topic of supply and demand economics for tomorrow's class. Get online and see what strategies your peers have used that you might adapt, whether discipline-specific or not.
- ♦ You have heard that group work is a pedagogically acclaimed method to engage learners who don't respond well to lecture, but you are worried about assigning one grade to the work of four students. Find rationales for group work, rubrics for assessing it, step by step advice on how to train students to perform successful group work and advice for troubleshooting, without ever leaving your office.
- ♦ You are designing a new multiple choice test for a class you are teaching for the first time. This is a pivotal moment in your course development; a well designed test can be useful for a long time to come. See what approaches others have used, what advice they can offer and what research exists on assessment that you can employ.

Ideally, you will come to the center and actually discuss these methods with other faculty in a workshop, a teaching circle discussion, in an electronic Faculty Forum chat <<http://forum.fctl.ucf.edu/forum/>> or in a one-on-one consulting situation. But if you are at a regional campus, an adjunct who teaches at odd hours, or simply under severe time constraints, you can still be part of the conversation by using and contributing to the teaching resource database.

What in-class strategies have worked well for you? How have you succeeded in creating community in your larger classes? What success have you had incorporating service-learning into your course? What advice can you share about test construction? What should a tenure-earning professor know about portfolio development? What issues are pedagogically interesting to you that the Faculty Center has not addressed yet?

We have a cache of instructional strategies, assessment rubrics, class activities and workshops developed by UCF instructors at various summer conferences and winter conferences and it's all available to you. Search our database. You may find your own contributions to the Faculty Center research as well. All our data is credited to the source where possible, so add your contribution to your C.V. and portfolio. Please help us make this database an effective toolbox for the learning community at UCF.

*"good teaching cannot be reduced to technique; good teaching comes from the identity and integrity of the teacher."*

*Parker Palmer*

## ***Building Community on the Web Through Service Learning***

**Melody Bowdon**



Melody Bowdon is an assistant professor in the UCF Department of English and coordinator of the Graduate Certificate in Professional Writing. She is a Faculty Center Faculty Fellow and an active member of the UCF service-learning community. She and colleague Blake Scott are co-authors of *Service-Learning in Technical and Professional Communication*, part of the Allyn and Bacon technical writing book series. Melody holds office hours in the Faculty Center each Wednesday from 2:30 to 4:30. She invites anyone interested in exploring or developing ideas for service-learning course to stop by during those hours to discuss ideas and share resources. Also, feel free to email her at [mbowdon@mail.ucf.edu](mailto:mbowdon@mail.ucf.edu) for more information.

In 2001, the UCF Department of English decided to make our Graduate Certificate in Professional Writing available entirely via the web in order to serve students throughout the state and region. Since that time, our enrollment has increased exponentially, as a group of "new" kinds of students have joined us. They include business people who travel frequently for work or who have unpredictable schedules, individuals who face physical limitations that make it hard for them to attend class, parents who want to be at home with their families as much as possible, students who live around the region and don't have access to a similar program in their local areas, and many other students who appreciate the opportunity to learn via the Internet. They live in Tampa, the Keys, the Treasure Coast, southern Georgia, throughout central Florida, and beyond.

Students who inquire about the program frequently express concern about the online format. They wonder if they'll feel isolated and alone as they work in solitude at their computers miles away from their classmates and professor. I understand their concern. When I started teaching on the web I was worried that I wouldn't get to know my students, that I wouldn't feel like I was actually teaching, which, for me, involves connecting with students as individuals. What we've learned together, though, is that the web-based format, when used in strategic ways, actually allows us to feel more connected and more a part of a community than traditional classroom interactions have in the past.

One key to this community development in my classes is the use of service-learning, a teaching approach that Diane Wink describes in her article in this issue of *Faculty Focus*. Following this model, my professional writing students produce a wide range of documents, including proposals, brochures, web pages, press packets, manuals, and style

guides for nonprofit agencies, public schools, and government organizations in their own geographic areas. Then the students collaborate via the web to help each other develop and revise their texts. This allows a public school teacher in Oviedo to help an office manager in a poverty-stricken community in south Georgia to develop funding for a nutritional information program. It allows a technical writer in Naples to help an artist in south Florida to acquire state funding for a community crafts project. It allows a businesswoman in Orlando to help a community college professor raise funds for a women's halfway house in Osceola County. The examples are endless, but the idea is simple. Service-learning allows students in a web-based course to become invested in their local communities, but it also challenges them to consider issues in the communities they don't see every day. When they are connected with each other through hard work, intense study, and civic action, they form a community bond that is rare even in face-to-face classes. More importantly, this experience helps them to become better writers, as they recognize the power of excellent writing to bring about change in a complex world.

One of my former students captures this phenomenon eloquently when she writes:

The most important benefit I have observed from my online service-learning experience is that it breaks down barriers—not just time and distance barriers, but, most importantly, social barriers. Because I did not have to worry about impression management, the supportive environment allowed me to risk being more honest than I would have dared in the traditional classroom setting. The online format gave me the freedom to express my joys and fears more honestly than I have ever dared to before—and to my surprise, I was not ostracized for taking the risk—I received more support than I have ever experienced in any other professional or academic setting.

I'm proud to work with the smart and committed students who take our online professional writing courses, and I feel privileged to be a member of the community they have created and continue to develop through their collaborations.

#### Practical tips for community building in web-based courses:

- ♦ Take advantage of WebCT's chat function to hold informal office hours on a weekly basis. This helped my students and me to get to know each other. We were often able to work through questions and concerns quickly in this format, leaving time to connect philosophical issues and current events to our class work.
- ♦ Develop at least one class activity that requires students to draw on resources in their own geographic areas. For example, in my class last summer we created a graphic that represented the "impact zones" of our class efforts. The students were able visualize the impact of their shared efforts throughout the region and this joint project gave them a new outlook on their work.
- ♦ Use a variety of group structures. Most of my students appreciate the opportunity to participate in both large and small group discussions. My students like to get to know a small group of classmates very well through focused joint effort on a project, but they also enjoy learning from other members of the class.
- ♦ Invite students to create a joint identity by developing a resource that people outside of the class can use. Students in my proposal writing course created individual resource pages for people working on grants and other similar projects. This shared objective helped to cement their sense of community.

### Using Computer Technology and Artificial Intelligence to Generate Unique Cases and the Associated Solution

Paul Goldwater



Paul Goldwater teaches cost and managerial accounting courses at the undergraduate and graduate level. He continues to research in the areas of managerial accounting and management decision making. He has consulting experience in microcomputer-based systems and local area network systems. These systems experiences are all to do with managerial accounting topics (uncertainty analysis, activity-based costing, activity-based management, balanced scorecard, Visual Basic programming and COM/Automation of MS Office). Before joining academia

he worked for Arthur Young & Company in the consulting practice.

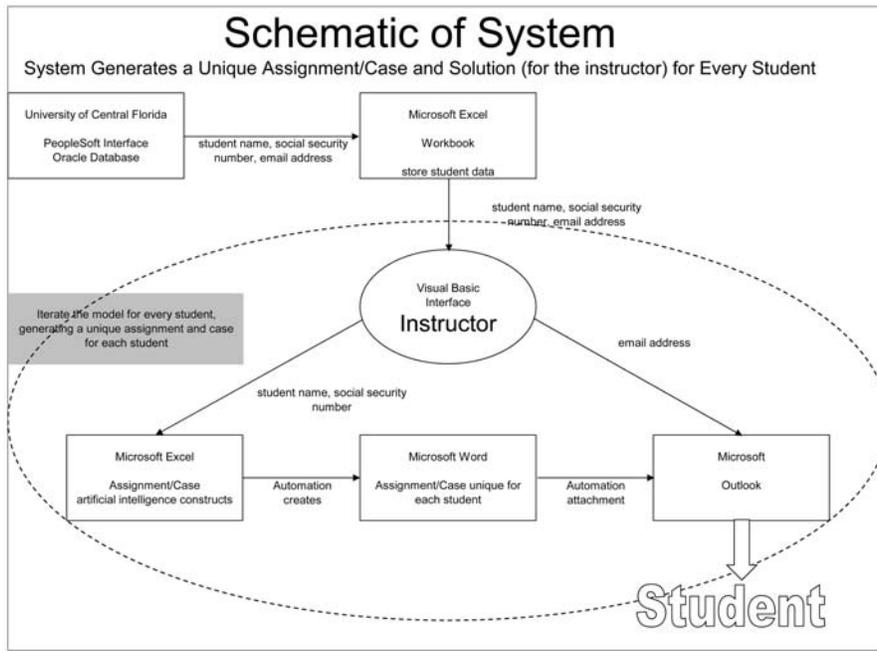
Students at all levels (undergraduate and graduate) are presented assignments/cases that contain text and values. These cases tend to generate "canned" solutions which, when passed between students, jeopardize the accountability of individual efforts and the educational value of the assignment. Modern information technology, for all its benefits, tends to exacerbate this problem.

Modern information technology has facilitated students' efforts to share "canned" solutions by email, etc. I wanted a pedagogical innovation that leveraged the power of modern technology to generate a unique assignment for every student, and one that would generate for the benefit of the instructor the unique solution for each student assignment. Effectively the innovation will foil the "canned" solution.

The following innovation has leveraged the power of modern technology—specifically PCs, artificial intelligence, analytical modeling and simulation. Every assignment is assembled using Microsoft Excel, algebra, the appropriate artificial intelligent (AI) constructs and then using analytical modeling and simulation generates the

assignment such that the AI constructs are upheld. The AI constructs are coded using "if-else-then" constructs which are different for every assignment. The AI constructs are also coded using the inherent capabilities of Excel. The assignment/case is sent to students by email. A schematic of the system is presented.

The purpose of the system is to prevent students sharing homework, both between semesters and within the semester. All students are now forced to work their own assignments. The system is also being used for examination purposes and therefore every student has a unique exam assignment.



The system has been tested over the last 6 semesters. It has only been the last two semesters that the prototype, initially developed three years ago, could be used as a template to develop more assignments. The system is currently being used for both undergraduate level cost accounting students and for masters' level students (MBA).

### Service Learning at UCF

Diane Wink



Diane Wink is a Professor in the School of Nursing, COHPA. She helped develop the UCF community-based nursing education curriculum and helped refine the service-learning component of the graduate nurse practitioner courses. She is currently a Senior Faculty Fellow in the Office of Academic Affairs where the focus of her work is expansion of service learning activities across the campus.

Although formal efforts to bring service-learning (s-l) to UCF only began last year, this exciting teaching modality, which uses community involvement to help students apply course content to projects which meet community needs, is taking place in all the colleges. A cadre of faculty who have long used this approach has been joined by a growing number of faculty who are adding service-learning activities to their courses.

Service-learning is a teaching method that uses community involvement to apply theories or skills being taught in a course. Service-learning furthers the learning objectives of the academic course, addresses community needs, and requires students to reflect on their activities in order to gain an appreciation for the relationship between academics and civic life. Service-learning is a method by which people learn and develop through active participation in thoughtfully

organized experiences that:

- ♦ meet community needs
- ♦ are coordinated in collaboration between university and community
- ♦ are integrated into academic curriculum
- ♦ provide structured time to think, talk, and write about the activity
- ♦ provide opportunities to use academic skills and knowledge in the community
- ♦ enhance what is taught in the classroom by extending learning beyond the classroom
- ♦ help foster ongoing development of a sense of caring for others.

(Adapted from: UCF definition of service-learning and statements of the Alliance for Service-Learning in Education Reform, 1993.) Service-Learning activities are not paid. They generally occur over a single semester but multi-semester projects can occur.

In 2002, the Service-Learning Committee received a grant from the Florida Campus Compact to expand s-l activities at UCF. Two workshops were presented and the grant supported presentations at the Faculty Center, including an s-l track in the Summer Faculty Development Conference. In addition, Dr. Melody Bowdon, Assistant Professor in the Department of English, offered consultation to faculty developing s-l courses.

There are multiple initiatives to support s-l this year. The first is the development of a central support site for faculty using s-l activities in their courses. Ms. Linda Hargreaves (mailto:lhargrea@mail.ucf.edu) is working with Dr. John Schell, Assistant VP and Dean for Undergraduate Studies, to set up

a central resource site. The service-learning web page, first developed by students in one of Mary Ellen Gomrad's tech writing courses as a s-l activity, (<http://www.undergraduates-tudies.ucf.edu/service/index.html>) is being expanded. Links to sites which help students and faculty contact community agencies appropriate for a particular course are being reviewed for inclusion. In addition, Linda has multiple informational workbooks and is working on flyers and poster displays to bring information on s-l to faculty, students, and the community. A service-learning newsletter for the UCF community and our community partners is under development.

The second initiative is ongoing education of faculty. Dr. Bowdon continues to offer consultation each Wednesday from 2:30-4:30 at the Faculty Center. In addition, Dr. Diane Wink, a Senior Faculty Fellow, has development and support of s-l courses as the major focus of her assignment. She offers consultation and support and can be reached at [wink@pegasus.cc.ucf.edu](mailto:wink@pegasus.cc.ucf.edu). Presentations will address s-l at the upcoming Winter and Summer Faculty Development Conferences and additional education programs are being developed.

A third initiative is an inventory of all courses offered at UCF which have service-learning activities as a component. If you teach one or more courses or course sections with service-learning activities, please contact Dr. Wink to be included on our inventory. (Put the phrase "service-learning" on the subject line of your email.) Because there are a wide variety of course-related community outreach/partnership programs at UCF (e.g. s-l, internships, co-ops, clinical practice assignments), brief descriptions of each are provided in a handout which can be found at (<http://www.fctl.ucf.edu/tresources/learning.htm>). If you are not sure if your course(s) would be classified as service-learning, please reply anyway.

Additional initiatives include an evaluation of current s-l initiatives and outreach to students to increase their awareness of s-l course options. We will provide more information as the year progresses.

We hope all faculty will examine their courses to determine if s-l is a teaching modality that would help their students to achieve learning goals. The resources to support this initiative are in place and we welcome requests for assistance.

### S-L in an undergraduate course

This example of integration of s-l activities in an undergraduate course is provided by Dr. Elizabeth Rash, Visiting Assistant Professor in the School of Nursing. The course is PAF 3930H, Honors Research Methods in Health and Public Administration.

Students are partnering with community organizations (ESTEEM, Inc., Blood Bank, WP Community Liaison Police Officer, Humane Society, Nemours Pediatric Diabetes NP, Teen Xpress, Harvest Food Bank) cooperatively determining community partner needs and challenges, reviewing the current literature related to these needs, and developing research proposals that address these needs. Students will then present their proposals to their community partners for their review and adoption, or adaptation.

Student reflection on the service-learning process, thus far, reveals some reticence to initiate contact with (willing and eager) community partners. However, the enthusiasm of the community partners has been encouraging to the students. I believe that, for most of the students, this is their first college exposure to service-learning.

## Women Studies in Action: Seeds of Revolutions Blooming Wild

Leandra Preston



Leandra Preston received her B.A. and M.A. in Literature at UCF. She taught Composition in English for two years, and currently teaches Women's Studies full-time. She is the first ever full-time Visiting Instructor in Women's Studies and her research interests include theories of activism, third-wave feminist theory, and Italian-American women's writing. She is a feminist, an activist, and is reveling in her position with Women's Studies until she pursues her Ph.D. in 2004.

Amazing things happen in a room of committed individuals, and in a little room big things happened one evening when at least thirty individuals gathered to discuss feminism, Women's Studies, and possibilities for change. The Feminist Majority Leadership Alliance hosted a feminism workshop on September 18th, where I joined them to talk about feminism—its many definitions, concerns, and potential. During the two-hour workshop we smashed stereotypes, debunked myths, and worked toward practical solutions to a myriad of problems. We thought

both big and small—big in the sense of big plans, small in that the efforts are grassroots, happening on campus, dealing with issues that directly affect our faculty, students, and community.

The foundation of the audience and discussion was not only feminism, but Women's Studies; there were Women's Studies minors, students of Women's Studies classes, women from the President's office, the Director of Women's Studies, Lisa Logan, and myself, teacher of Women's Studies. The dynamic of the workshop reflected both the power and necessity of the Women's Studies program, in its work to foster academic development around women's issues, and its attempt to provide a center for so many different concerns, intellectual and otherwise, but more than anything, it reflected the

strong presence of individuals committed to change and the effectiveness of academic programs that reach beyond the classroom, engaging both students and the university with the community.

As a full-time Women's Studies instructor, I found the success of the workshop was an articulation of all I work for, a moment that reassured me that my work is alive. Education clearly promotes action, and in Women's Studies, that action is tangible: a range of Women's Studies-affiliated organizations, including FMLA, NOW, GLBSU, and BFDC, are visible on campus, hosting workshops and protests, writing letters and lobbying. The Women's Studies office is consistently buzzing with activity—handling academic and activist loads, promoting partnerships, and looking for new ways to expand and reach more individuals. In Women's Studies' classrooms, theory becomes practice, as interdisciplinary courses include activist or service learning components, and instructors are as much a part of the community as they are the classroom. It's a holistic approach to teaching, what bell hooks calls "engaged pedagogy," pushing knowledge outside the classroom, decentering one's authority as an instructor, engaging students with the material and connecting that to the larger context that is their world. This is the richness of Women's Studies—its ability to be academic and activist, theoretical and practical, challenging and worthwhile.

Continuing to broaden and strengthen the Women's Studies program at UCF must be a top priority if we are to fully harness the power such programs foster. Part of this includes bringing Women's Studies to regional campuses, and as the program expands to regional campuses, the demand for such courses is clear. In Summer B, sixteen students signed up for an Introduction to Women's Studies course in Cocoa, most of them unable to finish the Women's Studies requirement without it. In order to give our students the opportunity to pursue whatever they desire, we must continue to provide Women's Studies support at all campuses. As a new coordinator and advisor for the Women's Studies program at regional campuses, my primary goal is to make Women's Studies an option for all students, not just for those with access to the Orlando campus. And with Women's Studies courses comes Women's Studies energy—my regional students have so much passion and so many plans; the activist component calls them to many causes and discoveries, invites them to explore ground they wouldn't otherwise, like those individuals in the workshop were doing—exploring ground, embracing possibilities, sharing voices.

The success of the workshop indicated that feminism is thriving on our campus, and that Women's Studies courses are driving students into the world, equipped with knowledge, passion, and most importantly, the motivation to work for social change. Students taking what they learn from the classroom into the world is a revolutionary practice indeed, and in that workshop I saw the seeds of revolutions blooming wild.

## Hangin' at the Faculty Center

Ali Korosy



Ali Korosy has taught Spanish and Humanities at UCF and FSU for eighteen years. Her main concern is keeping the material interesting for her students (and herself), which is why she can be found at many faculty development workshops at the Faculty Center, Course Development, and other locations as a presenter and participant. She is currently analyzing the effectiveness of information technology in learning and student engagement.

So, what has the Faculty Center got that my office hallway doesn't? That's easy: a juggler, a missionary English teacher, a new art owner, a quiet person, a former student whose mission is to help me, none of my current students, pastries, books and articles for reference on a wide variety of topics and, best of all, lots of ~~alien~~ human beings. And those humans all have ideas, knowledge and skills that I don't have ... yet. Kind of gives me a warm feeling, like I might be able to ward off senior dementia for a few more months.

Of course, those of us who hang out at the center a lot would almost prefer that the rest of you didn't find out how great a place it is to be. We sort of like being a group with a secret weapon.

Never mind that the research convincingly demonstrates that feeling as if you are part of a community, feeling supported at work, spending time with good people, and taking a moment during your day to relax are good for your physical and mental well-being. After all, who would want to feel better, be less likely to suffer an illness and appear to be more psychologically healthy? It's not going to help your career, your relationships, or your ability to enjoy life, ...or is it?

Dropping by during a session on assessment, professional portfolios, teaching with technology, or grant-writing for just 10 minutes will get you a very warm welcome, cookies, and usually invaluable insight and information, an opportunity to gain a new perspective on everything from classroom behavior to bringing in grant monies to everyday living. And that's just 10 minutes. Think what you could get if you were able to stay longer! And it doesn't matter how long you've been at it, if you can't learn something new and fresh, you're not among the living. (Oh cool! A zombie! Add it to the list.)

A sample of the various skills I have proudly acquired (I've left out a lot): from Jay, the knack for juggling ice; from Norma, the art of getting others to eat a lunch you don't really like; from Eric, the joy of speaking only in polysyllabic words; from Alison, the talent for being unassuming while holding an important [sounding] title; from Shari, the talent for creating a professional PowerPoint presentation while

captivating the audience with one dysfunctional slide; from Bill, the art of cracking up an auditorium of teachers while looking deadly serious. I'm still waiting to see what Kathy has up her sleeve. All of this is applicable to teaching, and sometimes research, but the only way you could possibly find out what any of this means and how to apply it is to hang out at the Faculty Center and learn it for yourself.

### Workshop Opportunity

Are you using Brown vs. Board of Education as a theme in your classes?

Are you thinking of incorporating the Common theme or using the Common Reader in your classes for upcoming semesters?

Come and hear strategies, assignments and approaches from faculty who have expertise across the disciplines on this theme. They will share their approaches and then allow time for questions and collaboration on ways to better incorporate discussion of Brown v. Board into the university curriculum in history, education, composition, speech, literature, sociology and Diversity Initiatives.

There will be workshops on Wednesday, October 1st, at 10:30 and Tuesday October 14th, at 10:30 in the Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning, 207 Classroom 1 Bldg. All are welcome!

### Winter Faculty Development Conference 2003

December 15, 16, 17, 2003

RFP: Due 5 p.m., Friday, November 14, 2003

The Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning will provide forty \$500/person grants for faculty members who are transforming their courses. Faculty will receive assistance for the completion of a project that modifies their face-to-face or web-enhanced courses for the purpose of improving teaching, learning, and evaluation. Faculty members from all colleges are invited to apply.

This year's themes include:

- ♦ Assessment and the documentation of teaching and learning
- ♦ Active and collaborative learning
- ♦ Problem-based learning
- ♦ Service Learning
- ♦ Employing new technologies in the learning environment
- ♦ Teaching in a studio classroom
- ♦ Interdisciplinarity or linked courses

Final decisions will be provided to all applicants by November 21, 2003.

### University of Central Florida Division of Graduate Studies UCF Program Announcement

#### *Awards for Excellence in Graduate Teaching and Research*

The Division of Graduate Studies is pleased to announce the availability of new awards for excellence in graduate student teaching and for excellence in thesis and dissertation research. Specifically, four new awards have been established for graduate students, as follows:

- ♦ **Award for Excellence by a Graduate Teaching Assistant:** This award recognizes excellence by Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) who are responsible for a laboratory or other similar teaching assignment under the direction of a faculty member who serves as the instructor of record. It focuses on the quality of the assistance provided by the GTA to the lead instructor and students in the class.
- ♦ **Award for Excellence in Graduate Student Teaching:** This award recognizes excellence in teaching by Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) who have independent teaching responsibilities. It focuses on the quality of the student's teaching activities and the academic contributions to those activities.
- ♦ **Award for the Outstanding Master's Thesis:** This award recognizes excellence in the master's thesis. It focuses on the quality and contribution of the completed master's thesis.
- ♦ **Award for the Outstanding Dissertation:** This award recognizes excellence in the doctoral dissertation. It focuses on the quality and contribution of the completed dissertation.

These recognitions will be awarded for the first time within the current academic year. Application materials must be submitted by Friday, February 6, 2004, and award recipients will be announced at the Research Forum to be hosted by the Graduate Student Association and the Division of Graduate Studies on March 22-23, 2004. University-level award winners will receive \$1,000 cash awards.

Detailed information regarding the eligibility requirements, application processes, submission materials, and deadlines will be forthcoming from the Division of Graduate Studies soon. Watch for this information on the graduate website at [www.graduate.ucf.edu](http://www.graduate.ucf.edu).

## **Announcement: "The Laramie Project"**

The University of Central Florida's Theatre UCF and the Sands Theatre of Deland will open separate productions of *The Laramie Project* that will open within 24 hours of each other. The two productions are under the direction of a husband and wife team. Theatre UCF's director is University of Central Florida's Associate Professor of Theatre, Be Boyd. The Sands Theatre's director is University of Central Florida's Assistant Professor of Theatre John Wayne Shafer. Both productions will offer separate panels on hate crime featuring distinguished speakers, following the performance.

Theatre UCF's *The Laramie Project* opens on October 9th and runs October 9-12 and October 15-19. Curtain times are at 8:00 except for October 10, which begins at 7:30 and matinees on October 12th and 19th which begin at 2:00 p.m. The box office number is 407-823-1500.

The Sands Theatre *The Laramie Project* opens on October 10th and runs October 10-12 and October 16-19. Curtain times are 8:00 p.m. except for the Sunday matinees on October 12th and 19th which begin at 5:30 p.m. The box office number is 386-736-7456.

The Sands Theatre's panel will take place on the fifth anniversary of Matthew Shepherd's death after the Sunday, October 12th, 5:30pm matinee performance. Among other noted speakers, Allison Bethel, Director of Civil Rights for the Florida Attorney General's Office will discuss how hate crime is defined, recorded, and prevented.

Theatre UCF's panel will take place on Friday, October 9th, following the 8:00 p.m. performance. Among other noted speakers, Orlando Commissioner Patty Sheehan will discuss the impact of hate crime on our communities.

- ♦ The Theatre UCF production will feature a cast of eight
- ♦ The Sands Theatre's production will feature a cast of thirty
- ♦ Clear Channel radio interviews are scheduled for October 1st
- ♦ NPR *Arts Connection* interviews are scheduled for September 28th
- ♦ A photo shoot opportunity is scheduled for the Sands Theatre production on September 23rd

### **Congratulations to Nancy Stanlick**

The Faculty Center is proud to congratulate Dr. Nancy Stanlick, Assistant Professor of Philosophy, who has received our award for "Excellence in Teaching with Technology." She will receive the award at the International Conference for Teaching and Learning at Jacksonville in March.

## **Connecting the UCF Community: Brown V. Board of Education**

Gary Orfield addressed the UCF and Orlando community on Thursday, September 11, as part of the Connecting the UCF Community Initiative. Orfield, a highly esteemed political scientist at Harvard University, is a national expert on the Brown vs. Board of Education decision and its implications for American education. His talk addressed the issue of desegregation in the South following the landmark decision and assessed that segregation is still often the norm in American public schools. The American South had virtually mandated educational apartheid before the Brown vs. Board decision, but the Johnson administration enforced desegregation, so that today, the military and the public schools are two of the most desegregated populations in the country. However, in metropolitan areas around the country, where 80% of schoolchildren live, school populations are determined largely by geographic situation, so poorer students attend less well-funded schools.

Orfield observed that Americans don't worry about unequal housing, job opportunities or healthcare access to the same degree as we value education because we assume that if education offers opportunities for economic advancement to all, then it follows that those who succeed in getting an education will have access to other economic advancement.

Orfield's research indicates that the outcomes of desegregation for minorities in desegregated schools include increased test scores, increased comfort level in a diverse work setting and in diverse neighborhoods, and enhanced critical thinking skills to accommodate multiple perspectives in problem solving. Because the value of desegregation has been proven, he encouraged the Orlando community to continue to seek out ways to support equal educational opportunities for all people.

This lecture was exceedingly well attended (standing room only), and promised great success for the continuation of the community conversation about Brown vs. Board throughout the year. The other upcoming distinguished speakers on issues of race and school segregation are Rebecca Walker, Cornel West, Stephen Carter and Henry Louis Gates, Jr.

### **Faculty Forum**

Don't forget to check out the Faculty Forum, our online faculty discussion board. This month, Faculty Fellow Dr. Stacey Dunn from the Psychology Department will lead a discussion about coping with disruptive students in the classroom. Sign on and join the discussion!

<http://forum.fctl.ucf.edu/forum/>

## **Teaching Related Conferences**

**28th Annual POD Conference  
Vision, Metaphors, and Images  
Professional and Organizational Development Network in Higher Education**  
October 8-12, 2003  
Denver, Colorado  
<http://www.podnetwork.org/conferences/2003/index.htm>

**EDUCAUSE 2003  
Balancing Opportunities, Expectations, and Resources**  
November 4-7, 2003  
Anaheim, California  
<http://www.educause.edu/conference/annual/>

**8th Annual Conference on Learning Communities and Collaboration  
Student Learning and Engagement in Learning Communities**  
November 5-7, 2003  
Indianapolis, Indiana  
<http://lcc.uc.iupui.edu/>

**The Ninth Sloan-C International Conference on Asynchronous Learning Networks (ALN)  
The Power of Online Learning: Implications for Teaching and Learning**  
November 14 - 16, 2003  
Orlando, Florida  
<http://www.aln.ucf.edu/>

**23rd Annual Lilly Conference on College Teaching  
The Art and Craft of Teaching**  
November 20-23, 2003  
Oxford, Ohio  
<http://www.units.muohio.edu/lillycon/>

**Syllabus Fall 2003**  
December 8-10, 2003  
Cambridge, Massachusetts  
<http://www.syllabus.com>

**The Hawaii International Conference on Education**  
January 3-6, 2004  
Honolulu, Hawaii  
<http://www.hiceducation.org/>

**Teaching for Wisdom  
The Collaboration for the Advancement of College Teaching & Learning**  
February 19-20, 2004  
St. Paul, Minnesota  
<http://www.collab.org>

**Association for American Colleges and Universities:  
The Network for Academic Renewal Conference  
Valuing General Education and Assessment: Campus-Wide Collaboration for Engaged Liberal  
Education**  
March 4-6, 2004  
Long Beach, California  
<http://www.aacu.org/meetings/generaleducation/index.cfm>

**2004 AAHE Learning to Change Conference  
Learning in 3-D: Democratic Process, Diverse Campus, Digital Environment  
American Association for Higher Learning**  
April 1-4, 2004  
San Diego, California  
<http://www.aahe.org/convenings.htm>

**2004 AERA Annual Meeting  
American Educational Research Association**  
April 12-16, 2004  
San Diego, California  
<http://www.aera.net/meeting/>

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## **Submissions**

The *Faculty Focus* is a publication for all instructors at the University of Central Florida. This includes full- 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. Toward this latter goal, the *Faculty Focus* will lead to an annual "Best Practices" edition where some of the ideas that were generated in the bi-semester editions will be expanded and developed into full articles. The annual edition will be peer-reviewed and disseminated regionally. This represents an opportunity for faculty to reach their peers throughout the growing Central Florida 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 <[www.fctl.ucf.edu/focus/guidelines.htm](http://www.fctl.ucf.edu/focus/guidelines.htm)>. Publication dates will be the middle of the first and last full months of each semester, and submission deadlines will be the Friday of the week prior. MLA format is preferred. Please send your submissions to *Faculty Focus*, [fctl@mail.ucf.edu](mailto:fctl@mail.ucf.edu).

Faculty Center  
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***Check us out Online!***



**[www.fctl.ucf.edu](http://www.fctl.ucf.edu)**

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