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Introduction

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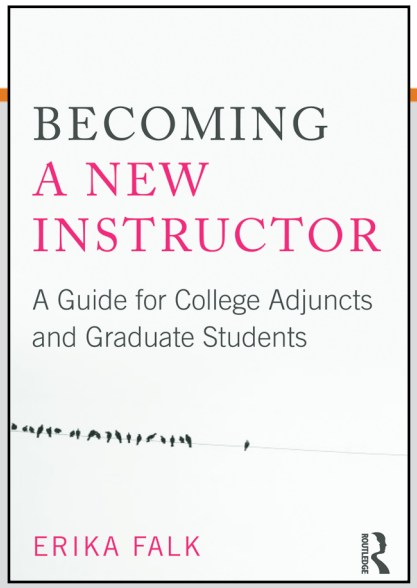
CHAPTER

1

PUTTING TOGETHER THE SYLLABUS



This chapter is excerpted from

Becoming a New Instructor: A Guide for College Adjuncts and Graduate Students

by Erika Falk.

Learn more

PUTTING TOGETHER THE SYLLABUS

Excerpted from *Becoming a New Instructor: A Guide for College Adjuncts and Graduate Students*

Now it is time to compile the work you have done so far into a single document. I like to divide my syllabi into three main sections. On the first page, I put basic information about the course such as contact information, class policies, and my expectations. In the second section, I put a detailed list of each assignment, and in the third section I put the calendar, which explains what will be covered each week and when assignments are due.

The two most common mistakes that new instructors make in putting together a syllabus are not including enough information and changing the syllabus mid-semester. The most successful classes provide more information in the syllabus and not less. This means expectations, assignments, grading criteria, and even rubrics are included in the syllabus.The syllabus gives the student a road map for the class. Putting more information in the syllabus reduces the number of questions and disputes.

One of the most common complaints from students involves changes to—or incomplete information on—the syllabus. Do not plan to change your syllabus mid-class unless something is going dramatically wrong. Instead, it is usually better to make a copy of your syllabus and make the changes to that version so that you remember, but only put them into effect the next time you teach.You may want to think of the syllabus like a contract.The more complete and clear it is, the less likely that disputes will arise.

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR ADMINISTRATOR

Before you begin putting the final touches on your syllabus, you will need some more information from your department administrator. Now is a good time to set up another meeting. Here are some questions you may want to ask.

- What information (if any) is required in the syllabus?
- What is the department/university policy about how to handle
- students with disabilities?
- Do I need to hold office hours? Where, and how many?
- Can I give out the syllabus in advance to students who request it?
- Does the syllabus need to be submitted somewhere by a certain date?
- What do I do if I know I will be out of town for a class meeting?
- How do I order my books?
- How do I order book chapters or articles for my students?
- Where do students go to get the course books, bulk packs, or scanned articles?

PUTTING TOGETHER THE SYLLABUS

Excerpted from *Becoming a New Instructor: A Guide for College Adjuncts and Graduate Students*

WRITE THE COURSE DESCRIPTION

Once you have your topics, reading, and assignments in place, you will be in a good position to write your course description.This is a one-paragraph description of what the course will cover. It is usually a good idea to make the course sound interesting and fun. The university usually lists course descriptions online or in the course catalogue, so this is likely to be among the major factors students use in determining if they will take your course. Here, as with the title, it is important to convey accurately the actual contents of the course to ensure you will meet the students' expectations. Do not forget to come back to the course description after you have finished the whole syllabus to make sure it accurately re.ects the contents of the course.

THE HEADER

At the top of your syllabus, you will want to put a header.This includes the name of the university, the course title and number, contact information for you (usually both telephone and email), and your of.ce hours. If you are teaching under -graduates, you may want to consider whether you want to give them your home phone number. They may call you at inappropriate times. If you do give under -graduates your home or cellphone number, consider also giving them clear guidelines on the appropriate times to call.

Most universities require faculty members to hold office hours.This is a time each week when you will be in your office so that students can see you. For this reason, you may want to put the location of your office in the header as well. It is important to check with your department to find out if they require you to hold office hours, for how long, and how often.

Following this basic information, you will put your one-paragraph course description followed by the course goals and objectives you wrote earlier. Here is a common format for this information, followed by an example from one of my classes.

PUTTING TOGETHER THE SYLLABUS

Excerpted from *Becoming a New Instructor: A Guide for College Adjuncts and Graduate Students*

University
Course Name
Course Number

Instructor:
Email:
Phone:

Office:
Office hours:
Class meeting:

Term:

Course Description:

Course Objectives:

PUTTING TOGETHER THE SYLLABUS

Excerpted from *Becoming a New Instructor: A Guide for College Adjuncts and Graduate Students*

Example

Johns Hopkins University
Research and Writing Methods
(480.600.51)

Instructor: Dr. Erika Falk
Email: My-email@jhu.edu
Phone: 202-XXX-YYYY

Office: 104-V
Office hours: Wednesdays 3:00-5:00 p.m.
Meeting: Wednesday 5:15-7:35 p.m. in room 100B

Term: Fall 2006

Course description: Sophisticated communication professionals need to understand how to create and evaluate knowledge. This course is designed to increase critical thinking skills, particularly with regard to understanding how science can inform communication practice. This course will expose students to the logic and conduct of research that is aimed at producing generalizable knowledge about human communication so that students can find, read, understand, and use scientific studies in communication in their daily work. Toward that end, students will be exposed to the logic of scientific investigation, different research methods common to the field of communication, and how to read and understand statistics. Topics covered include how to use library resources to inform communication practice, and how to conduct focus groups, interviews, surveys, and experiments. Many class meetings focus on how we know what we know and what methods are best used to answer different kinds of communication questions.

The goals: After completing this course students should be able to:

- find, read, and understand peer-reviewed primary research studies;
- critically and skeptically analyze claims to knowledge that they encounter;
- create a plan for conducting a study to answer a question about communication;
- understand the strengths and weaknesses of different methods of primary data collection used in communication;
- employ proper citation in their writing.

PUTTING TOGETHER THE SYLLABUS

Excerpted from *Becoming a New Instructor: A Guide for College Adjuncts and Graduate Students*

UNIVERSITY OR DEPARTMENTAL POLICIES

Following the heading of your syllabus, you may want to include university-wide or departmental policies. For our department we require each syllabus include a standard-language ethics policy and disability policy.You will want to check with your department to find the requirements.

Many departments require that students who have documented disabilities go through a centralized office. They are required to provide proof of their disabilities to this office and this office determines what accommodations the student receives (if any). Most universities do not allow teachers and students to negotiate accommodations for disabilities outside of this formal structure.You may want to check with your university so that you understand the disability policy. Here are examples of some common language your university may require.

EXAMPLE 1 Disabilities

> If you are a student with a documented disability who requires accommodations or if you think you may have a disability and want to inquire about accommodations, please contact Joe Smith, Coordinator for Disabilities at xxx-yyy-zzzz or joesmith@myuniversity.edu.

EXAMPLE 2 Ethics Policy

> The strength of the university depends on academic and personal integrity. In this course, you must be honest and truthful. Ethical violations include cheating on exams, plagiarism, reuse of assignments, improper use of the Internet and electronic devices, unauthorized collaboration, alteration of graded assignments, forgery and falsification, lying, facilitating academic dishonesty, and unfair competition. Report any violations you witness to the instructor.

CLASS POLICIES

Your syllabus should also include other policies or expectations that you want to establish. It is best to make these expectations clear from the beginning. For example, if you want students to use a specific style manual, you should state that in the syllabus.You will want to articulate your attendance policy in the syllabus. You will want to make your late policy clear as well. Do you allow make-up exams, and if so, under what conditions? Do you award extra credit, and for what? To ensure that you enforce the policies fairly and equally, it is important to think

PUTTING TOGETHER THE SYLLABUS

through and make a decision on these policies before the semester begins. Remember also that you should adhere to the policies you establish in your syllabus.

Students who performed poorly in your class will often approach you toward the end of the class, or even after it is over, to request extra credit. Because you want to create a learning environment that is fair, you will want to have an extra-credit policy that is the same for all students.You do not want to create a situation where extra credit is reserved for students who have performed poorly and who happen to ask for it. That is not fair to the other students who would have benefited from it but did not think to ask.

CONCERNS SPECIFIC TO ONLINE INSTRUCTORS: DISCUSSION GUIDELINES

In addition to other guidelines, your online syllabus should include general guidelines for the discussion. Here is an example of discussion guidelines.

EXAMPLE

1. Posts should be a minimum of one paragraph and not more than two paragraphs.

2. Your post should advance the discussion with new reasons or examples; avoid postings limited to "I agree."

3. Posts should address the question and not stray from the topic.

4. Limit any quotation to three lines and always cite the source. A quotation is not a post; you must add your own analysis.

5. Make sure you proofread and edit all posts.

6. Use proper etiquette:

    a. Avoid using all caps because it comes off as shouting.

    b. Avoid acronyms that people might not understand.

    c. Always use full sentences and proper capitalization.

Here are some examples of some classroom policies.

EXAMPLE 1 Work

All work for this class should be typed, double-spaced, spell-checked, have 1-inch margins, and use 12-point font. Use APA format. Extra credit is not

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available in this class.

EXAMPLE 2 Late Policy

Late work will be dropped 1 point for each day it is late. If you have extenuating circumstances or need special accommodations, please see me before the due date, and I will be happy to accommodate you. Work is due at the beginning of class on the assigned date.

EXAMPLE 3 Attendance

Attendance is mandatory. If you need to miss class, it is your responsibility to make sure any assignments that are due reach me on time to receive full credit. It is also your responsibility to get the lecture notes from a peer. Regardless of the reason for missing class, you will not be able to make up participation points for missed classes.

Fraudulent Excuses

Caron, Whitbourne, and Halgin (1992) interviewed 261 undergraduates to see if and why they made fraudulent excuses to their professors. Almost 70% of the students said they had made up an excuse to a professor at least once during college. Students most frequently made up excuses to get more time on an assignment. Fraudulent and legitimate excuses were equally common; however, students said they were more likely to make a fraudulent excuse when they perceived the professor as lenient. Students with higher GPAs were less likely to make fraudulent excuses.

Caron, M. D., Whitbourne, S. K., & Halgin, R. P. (1992). Teaching of Psychology, 19(2), 90–93.

FINDING CLASS READING

If you have assigned whole books for the students to read, you will want to list the books that the student must buy and where they can buy the books. If the students are reading book chapters or articles, most universities now have electronic reserves.These reserves allow students access to electronic (scanned) versions of the articles or book chapters.At Johns Hopkins, the library is in charge of this, so six weeks before the semester begins I send a list of articles and book chapters to the library. The librarian clears the rights and scans the documents. The students then go to a specific page on the library website where they can read, download, or print

PUTTING TOGETHER THE SYLLABUS

the assigned reading.You will want to give the students the URL for the electronic reserves in the syllabus.

The old-fashioned way to get the book chapters and articles to the student was to create a bulk pack. Instructors would print out the reading and drop it off at the local copy center.The copy center would clear the rights and then the student would buy the copied articles. If you use this method, make sure you say in the syllabus at which copy center the students can buy the bulk pack. Here is an example of how this might look on your syllabus:

EXAMPLE Required Reading

- Full books: Available at our online Campus Bookstore: <URL> and Telephone.
- Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (6th ed., 2009). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Cialdini, R. B. (2009). Influence: Science and practice (5th ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.
- Articles and chapters: Available on electronic reserve at <URL>.

CONCERNS SPECIFIC TO ONLINE INSTRUCTORS: READING

If you are teaching in a completely online program, students will not be able to drop by the campus bookstore or local copy center. Make sure any books you require are available for purchase online.Tell them where the books are available.

DETAILS ON ASSIGNMENTS

In this section, you will list a detailed account of each assignment. Include a description of the assignment, length, points, and the grading rubric. See Step 2 for detailed instructions on how to write up your assignments.

CALENDAR

After all of this introductory material, you will want to provide the course calendar. List the topic for each class meeting and the date. Under each heading, you will also list the reading that is due that week and any assignments that are due. Be sure to con.rm with your department administrator when any holidays and breaks are scheduled. Here are examples of the weekly calendar for in-person and online classes. Please see Appendix A at the end of the book for some sample syllabi and a template you can use in setting up your own syllabus.

PUTTING TOGETHER THE SYLLABUS

EXAMPLE 1 In Person

Week 4: Emotional Appeals (September 17) Read for this week:

- Witte, K. (1992). Putting the fear back into fear appeals: The extended parallel process model. Communication Monographs, 59, 329–349.
- Weinberger, M. G., & Gulas, C. S. (1992). The impact of humor in advertising: a review. Journal of Advertising, 21(4), 35–59.
- O'Keefe, D. (2000). Guilt and social influence. Communication Yearbook, 23, 67–101.

Due this week: A two-page reaction paper about the reading.

EXAMPLE 2 Online

Week 4: Emotional Appeals (September 17–September 23) Read for this week:

- Witte, K. (1992). Putting the fear back into fear appeals: The extended parallel process model. Communication Monographs, 59, 329–349.
- Weinberger, M. G., & Gulas, C. S. (1992). The impact of humor in advertising: a review. Journal of Advertising, 21(4), 35–59.
- O'Keefe, D. (2000). Guilt and social in.uence. Communication Yearbook, 23, 67–101.

Due this week: A two-page reaction paper about the reading.

Post for this week: Please post twice this week. Your first post should be a question from the reading. Your second post should be an answer to someone's question.

CONCERNS SPECIFIC TO ONLINE INSTRUCTORS: SEMESTER CALENDAR

Most university calendars are set up for in-person classes, and the administrators who set the calendar may not be thinking about your fully online course. As you are planning your online course, make sure you know how many weeks the in-person classes last (e.g., 15).

If you have an in-person class, when the administrators schedule your class, they will tell on which date it meets, but they will not do that for an online course. Usually you will be able to pick a day during the .rst week of classes in which you start your course. Be clear to your students at what day and

PUTTING TOGETHER THE SYLLABUS

time each week the new lessons will start (e.g., each Wednesday at 12:01 a.m. Eastern Time). Once you think you know what day you want to start your class, take out a calendar and mark the first day of the semester and count and mark each week on the calendar until you have all your weeks of content planned. Make sure your plan .ts into the university calendar. There is no easy way to do this; you must page through a calendar and count out content weeks. Depending on the calendar, there may be better days on which to start your course.

Here is where there can be problems. If the semester is 15 weeks long and begins on Wednesday, June 1, and I am teaching an in-person class, by Wednesday, June 8, I have had two class meetings. However, if my class is online, I will start my unit on Wednesday, June 1 and finish that unit on Tuesday, June 7. On Wednesday, June 8, I am just starting my second lesson. If you extrapolate this problem through the end of the semester, you may find that you do not have time for a full 15-week semester. Now is the time to pull out the calendar, count, and mark the period each unit of your class will last. Make sure you plan to complete all of the material by the last of.cial day of the semester.

The second calendar problem that occurs with a fully online class has to do with holidays. If the university has a full week off (as in spring break) you can simply stop the class for a week. If the university has a one-day holiday (as in Presidents Day) you can ignore it and plan for a full week of instruction (though I would not make anything due on the holiday).Thanksgiving tends to be a problem for online courses. Universities often give half a week off to in-person students. There is no easy solution to this problem for an online course. You can stop instruction for a full week or you can plan a mini-week of instruction with less content. Regardless of what you do, it is important to check the calendar and integrate it into your syllabus.

CONCERNS SPECIFIC TO ONLINE INSTRUCTORS: WEEKLY CALENDAR

Online courses are not self-paced courses (though they can be). In most universities, your online course will follow a traditional semester and there should be specific content that the student must complete each week (readings, lectures, class discussion, and assignments). In a class that does not meet at the same time every week, as an online class, due dates can be

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more confusing. Online classes will typically have more than one day a week when things are due. For example, to keep the class discussion vibrant, students must post at least once by Saturday midnight and again by Tuesday midnight. All of my written assignments are due on Tuesday midnight. To aid your students in keeping organized you will want to use the same due date each week even if there is more than one deadline each week.

ORDERING BOOKS AND REQUESTING READING

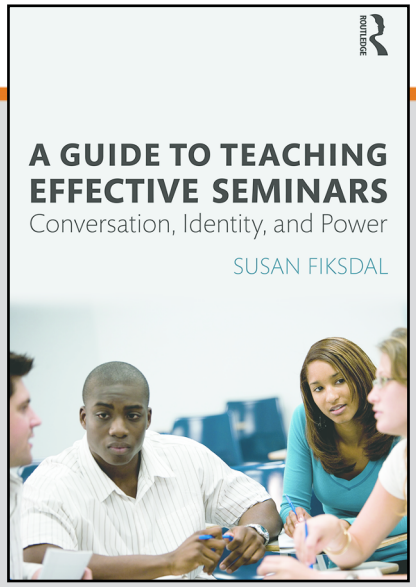
The last step in setting up your syllabus is to order your books from the campus bookstore, request any electronic resources you are requiring be scanned and put online, or drop off your bulk pack at the copy center. Most universities will require you to order your books about four to six weeks before the semester begins.You will have to contact your university administrator to find out how to order your books. If you are requesting that the students read articles or chapters from a book (but not the whole book) usually you must provide the library with a list of citations of all of the reading to be made available on electronic reserve.

By the end of this chapter, your syllabus should be in final form. Take a last check to make sure the plan you have devised meets your course goals and objectives. Make sure the course delivers the content as promised in the course description. Proofread it to make sure you .x any typos. If you can, show it to someone for a final check to make sure it is ready to go. In the next chapter, we will begin planning how to spend your in-class time.

CHAPTER

2

MOVING FROM LECTURES TO SEMINARS



This chapter is excerpted from

A Guide to Teaching Effective Seminars: Conversation, Identity, and Power

by Susan R. Fiksdal.

Learn more

MOVING FROM LECTURES TO SEMINARS

Excerpted from *A Guide to Teaching Effective Seminars*

Seminars open a new world to students when they discover that each text generates multiple interpretations. They also discover that there are debates in the academic community about the facts and concepts presented in them. Learning the strategies of academic inquiry is usually a new experience for students in college. It can come as a surprise to them that there are so many unanswered questions. In addition, students discover that evaluating a text is a very complex process that requires reflection about what they have learned within their own framework, as well as what other class members find important.

LEARNING IN SEMINAR

Seminar becomes a community of practice and students learn to work together and move from peripheral participation to a central role. During that process, students need to learn what counts as a valuable contribution and how to fit it into a free-flowing conversation. Over time seminars become more collaborative and students become more proficient in understanding their collaborative nature. In (1) a student addresses these points in the following quote from a student survey:

> (1) I'd say I have respect for seminars now much more than I used to. I mean I definitely came here kind of still acting like I was in high school in the sense that I didn't see the benefits of seminar. I saw it more as something like a requirement that I had to find something to talk about and now I see it as something where I can, you know, hear 10 to 30 different types of opinions and viewpoints on one subject and get a much more rounded view than you can get just from a professor or yourself and I really enjoy that aspect of it.

This quote highlights the student's development as a collaborative learner, understanding that learning is about listening and not just talking. For many faculty and students who have no previous experience with seminars, the idea of talking to learn may seem strange. Inexperienced students seem to focus first on the necessity of talking without taking into consideration that the content of that talk matters more. In (2) one of my colleagues discussed his approach to a seminar on a book that all new students read during orientation week at my college:

> (2) Once I opened the forum for discussing our common text [. . .] one of the students immediately diverted our group's attention away from the text and towards a simple discussion of opinion. I was able to intervene and bring the discussion back to the text at hand, and remind people that seminar is not simply a free-for-all, but is, in fact, a self-disciplined consideration of a text, with the purpose of deep discussion and learning.

MOVING FROM LECTURES TO SEMINARS

Excerpted from *A Guide to Teaching Effective Seminars*

Introducing students to on-going academic conversations and encouraging them to engage in them is not just a matter of starting a conversation. This work requires a facilitator who is aware of all the dimensions of what is going on in seminar. One of these is to recognize the type of comments students offer. For example, statements of belief stop the conversation because they cannot be discussed. If a student claims that the medical establishment is a conspiracy or that green is better than blue, students are not discussing the structure of a text or its impact on a discipline, culture, or reader; instead, they are stating personal beliefs that are sometimes deeply held. By stating that seminar is a self-disciplined consideration of a text, the faculty member emphasizes that not all possible comments are relevant or useful to collaborative learning about a text.

The connection between thinking and speaking is integral to human development, and if we want students to become lifelong learners, part of their education in college needs to take that fact into account. Kenneth Bruffee (1999), in an influential book about collaborative learning, argues that we can think because we can converse. He draws from Vygotsky's theory that reflective thought is internalized conversation, and points out that we have learned to think because we are all part of communities beginning with our families, and this social nature of thought is fundamental. Conversations, then, are a central time for learning; consequently, facilitating them effectively is crucial. Bruffee writes, "If ethnocentrism, inexperience, personal anxiety, economic interest, and paradigmatic inflexibility (tunnel vision) constrain our conversation, they will constrain our thinking" (p. 134).

Understanding more about their internalized conversation is a metacognitive activity that is important for students. Part of the learning in seminar is that students reflect on their own thinking, as the following comment in (3) illustrates:

> (3) If I had an idea about what we read and how that fit into something else, to a larger thought, I could present that. This was a group of people who didn't owe me anything one way or the other, who were going to be critical of that thought. They would either say, "Oh you know, you've got holes here, here, and here," or "Hey that's good and you know maybe it could fit in to this, that, or the other." So I was able to see how my thinking was. In a lot of environments you don't get to see how you are thinking—whether or not your thinking is clear because you don't get the feedback.That was really important to me. (McCann, 2001, p. 362).

MOVING FROM LECTURES TO SEMINARS

Excerpted from *A Guide to Teaching Effective Seminars*

This reflection comes from a student who discovered that seminar members could teach him how to present a coherent argument. The way he explains his discovery is through reported speech, or quoting other students as they commented on his ideas.Their words support his claim and they also indicate that he listens and learns from others. He effectively demonstrates the sort of conversation I encourage in seminars, a conversation that is collegial but also critical. In (4), during a focus group discussing seminars at my college in 2012, a student focuses on everyone's work rather than her own:

> (4) I feel like things, after probably the first week in fall quarter, the material we were dealing with stopped being controversial. We just developed a sort of mutual understanding within the class that this is a communal effort [. . .] and we thus have to be very patient with each other. I think that maybe humility is what I'm trying to get at.The more communal, relational approach that we took to this inquiry allowed us to develop our own understandings as individuals, but also bounce that off our classmates constantly and be vulnerable with each other [. . .] and thus develop even more.

These two statements indicate different perspectives on learning. In (3) the male student focuses on his own development as a thinker. In (4) the female student focuses on the group's approach to seminar as communal. Both describe collaborative learning and they reveal slightly different conceptions of seminars based on gender, which I consider further in Chapter 8. They also point out important outcomes. Learning to evaluate the ways we think is how we become better thinkers. Part of being patient with each other, mentioned in (4), has to do with encountering and working with diversity in terms of hearing from students from other socioeconomic backgrounds, race, gender, abilities, sexual orientation, nationality, and age. Learning to listen to voices that are different from one's own is not easy because they can challenge the assumptions we bring to a text. They can also bring discomfort and tension. Students often mention that working across differences is hard work, but they feel that their own sociocultural awareness broadened as a result. Many begin to realize that their circles of friends and the news outlets they choose to read result in surrounding themselves with like-minded opinions. Most students begin to understand the link between learning and social interaction in a new way.The students quoted in (3) and (4) value seminar as a place for sharing tentative ideas: this is a communal effort. Just as important, both quotes also reveal the importance of listening.

MOVING FROM LECTURES TO SEMINARS

Excerpted from *A Guide to Teaching Effective Seminars*

Seminars as described in this book are free-flowing conversations that are student-centered. By student-centered, I mean that students generate the questions and determine the topics as they work collaboratively to understand a given text or problem along with the faculty members. At my college these are two-hour weekly or bi-weekly sessions involving around 25 students and one faculty member. While size may vary quite a bit, logistics are important. Participants sit in a circle or rectangle so that they can see each other, and it is best if they have a writing surface where they can also place the text under discussion. The faculty member sits with the students in the same sort of chair or desk. Arranging the room in this way illustrates the value of each person's voice.

Valuing all of the voices helps to create a community of practice where students learn to appreciate each other as thinkers and make intellectual friendships. Seminars provide an opportunity to explore their questions, learn from their peers, and gain motivation to study texts closely. It also provides a structured way to consider their prejudices, stereotypes, and values. From a cognitive perspective, students learn new ways of evaluating texts that promote analysis and synthesis. From a communications perspective, students learn to articulate their ideas in a persuasive way in order to be heard.

Feeling engaged does not come only with weekly seminars; students need to feel that their voices are valued. In a study I conducted on metaphors students used to describe seminars, many referred to the underlying metaphor IDEAS HAVE VALUE: I put in my two bits. She contributes a lot. That was a valuable idea. What a worthless discussion. I shared my opinion. All of these metaphorical expressions indicate that good ideas have worth, and some are worth more than others.

The students' understanding of a good seminar based on worthwhile ideas comes from practice, of course, and part of that understanding is based on informed facilitation. Effective facilitators ask for evidence from the text, they ask questions leading students to focus closely on important parts of the text, and they help students deepen the conversation, formulating new questions and new knowledge. Some people might argue that student-centered conversations take away valuable time from lectures and providing students with more information, but, in fact, learning to ask good questions is precisely the skill that all faculty members have gained in order to be part of the academy. And learning to ask good questions takes practice.

MOVING FROM LECTURES TO SEMINARS

In addition, quite often the questions students raise in seminar reveal how well they understand the concepts under discussion, so they can serve as an assessment of learning. What is perhaps most startling about students' questions for the faculty member new to seminars is that almost no one expects the faculty member to answer the questions: questions are truly meant as departure points for the group to move more deeply into a text or problem or issue. In fact, many of the questions do not get answered. Open-ended inquiry can move from one question to another and that exploration is what draws us to these conversations.

A DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH IN HONG KONG

Interactive Lectures

When the cultural model for school is not discussion but listening to a teacher talk, seminars may seem quite radical. This was the case when I taught in Hong Kong and gave workshops for faculty on collaborative learning.The most common question faculty members asked me was how to get students to talk when they had learned, through all of their other classroom experiences, to be passive and listen to their teachers. Most classes in Hong Kong universities follow the British model of lecture and tutorials (seminars). Because students did not talk much in tutorials, faculty members used these times in a wide variety of ways including student presentations and watching films.This situation made me reflect on how to inspire students to speak during my own class, Introduction to Sociolinguistics. I decided on a developmental approach to introduce them gradually to active participation in seminars, beginning with interactive lectures.

Part of my developmental approach included a consideration of language. I knew that the students' English was excellent because the admission to universities in Hong Kong is highly competitive. Still, English was not their first language, so I used slides containing the outline of my lectures. On the first day of class, I asked a question about an issue I had raised four minutes into my lecture. When no one volunteered to answer, I rephrased my question so that it would require a simple yes or no. When no one answered that question, I asked for a show of hands. I was amazed at how few students participated even then, and so I took a few minutes to explain that their participation in class really mattered and I was truly interested in their answers. My goal was to motivate them to engage in the class along with me. Besides articulating my expectations, I realized I would need various techniques to help all of the students feel comfortable speaking.

MOVING FROM LECTURES TO SEMINARS

Excerpted from *A Guide to Teaching Effective Seminars*

Although many students in Hong Kong universities characterize themselves as shy, I was fairly sure that their shyness was at least partly a product of the cultural model of what a student should be—silent. In every class after that first one, I mentioned at least one tip that would help them become better learners.

For example, I showed them how our textbook was organized and how to find what was most important. In the third week I raised the question of whether Cantonese was an endangered language given the power of Putonghua (Mandarin) as the language of the government and schools in mainland China. Several students offered opinions and two entered into a spirited conversation. I saw that asking questions that impacted their lives helped students have a good conversation even when they had gained very little theoretical background. Finding issues close to students' lives is not always possible, so I gave brief explanations about my pedagogy for all class activities to help students see that critical thinking and gaining a voice was central to our class. By the end of the 13-week semester, students were engaging in seminars. Over the course of the semester, they came to realize that there were some right answers given the research so far in linguistics, but what I wanted was something more. I wanted their critical thinking about the questions I asked based on their understanding of linguistic processes. I also wanted them to realize that there were many ways of looking at those questions, so they needed to produce a good argument based on linguistic evidence for their point of view.

Students at my college know that seminars are an integral part of the interdisciplinary classes they take so they come into our classes with curiosity about the process and some trepidation. In Hong Kong, I found that telling students that we would be having seminars in the last weeks of class produced the same effects. By designing brief interludes in my lectures when I regularly asked students to evaluate information and apply it to real situations, they could discuss the questions among themselves before hearing answers from other groups. Having regular opportunities in lectures to evaluate or apply information helped them learn the material.They were also better prepared to ask themselves questions or hypothesize about the issues. If you use this approach, my advice is that students should be allowed freedom to think. The goal is not the "right" answer; instead, it is coming up with one that seems plausible given the information they have learned so far.

MOVING FROM LECTURES TO SEMINARS

Excerpted from *A Guide to Teaching Effective Seminars*

Before explaining a few techniques that will inspire critical thinking during lectures, it is important to think about the reasons for lecturing. Most faculty members who lecture believe that they are conveying information directly to a student: ideas from the faculty member's brain will go directly into the students' brains. This is a common way to think about teaching: it is the transfer of knowledge. Our language reinforces this idea through common metaphors: I didn't quite catch that idea, but I'll get it eventually. That one went right past me. The teacher didn't give me an idea of what she meant. We didn't quite grasp that concept. These metaphors indicate our understanding of ideas—IDEAS ARE OBJECTS. Ideas can thus be caught, thrown, given, and grasped, and these actions are fast, slow, easy, or hard. If all goes well, ideas flow from brain to brain. The nature of the object (idea) can change from a ball that can be thrown (They bounced around so many ideas I was confused) to a sort of wall (You hide behind your ideas).

This notion that ideas that can be transmitted like objects is part of a larger conduit metaphor explained by the philosopher John Reddy (1979): COMMUNICATION IS A CONDUIT. As Reddy pointed out, the conduit metaphor is complex. We use it for understanding a text, communicating with each other, and writing. All metaphors highlight certain aspects of an object or activity, and this metaphor highlights the difficulties we have sometimes in finding the main point in a piece of writing or putting an idea into words. But the metaphor can limit the way we think about ideas and teaching and reinforce lectures as a primary teaching mode. Even if students grasp the ideas in a lecture, what do they retain? Research shows that students only retain about 10% of a lecture after three weeks if there is no review (Bligh, 2000). Instead of the conduit metaphor, we can use a builder metaphor—SEMINAR IS A BUILDING. When building, students need to find ways to build on, extend, or grapple with ideas. Asking them to do this in collaboration with others helps them realize that they can learn from each other and that more perspectives are useful.

One way to show students that SEMINAR IS A BUILDING can be a useful construct for learning is to ask them to consider what they already know about a topic before and after a lecture in order to analyze how students build on what they already know. When researchers begin with a priori notions of the content they want to see in student responses, they are often disappointed, but by beginning with the ways that students construct knowledge in their writing, they find multiple ways that students do this. In one study, researchers put students in small groups and asked

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students to explain online what they already understood about a topic or a question that was going to be presented by the faculty member. Researchers in psychology who have done this emphasize that students should express their beliefs or their personal experiences as ways of activating their prior knowledge (Lester & Paulus, 2011). The students post again after the lecture, contrasting what they have learned in the lecture to this prior knowledge. By working in groups and responding to each other's blogs, students can see their own thinking transformed.The lecturer can also skim these to see what students have learned. I discuss metaphors and how they can inform our practice more extensively in Chapter 5.

In the first weeks of my class in Hong Kong, I interspersed five types of activities into my lectures:

- "Think-pair-share." This is probably the most well-known activity for large lectures. The faculty member poses a question for students to consider in a brief period of time, say one minute. Next, they turn to the student next to them to discuss their ideas for another minute. Finally, a few students self-select to report out. The advantage of this sort of pause in the lecture is for students to verify their understanding of the material, and the lecturer can modify the lecture to match this understanding.

- An activity I have named "Ask-don't-tell" can be used as a sort of priming activity. Instead of stating reasons for a phenomenon, steps in a process, or problems with a theory, ask the students to do this in small groups (three to four students) first.This is called priming because it has a sort of memory effect.You are asking students to consider what might come next in your lecture, and then after they report out from brief small group discussions, they will see their own hypotheses confirmed, elaborated upon, or rejected. In short, they will care about what comes next in the lecture. They may remember it better as well.

- Brainstorming is another activity that is actually a generative device. It is useful for finding creative ways to solve a problem, list solutions, next steps, or generate research questions. In this exercise students in pairs or small groups work together to list as many possibilities, solutions, or next steps as possible, and to do so very quickly. One student volunteers to record the results as well as participate in the brainstorm. The recorder writes down all responses and no one is allowed to evaluate or question any of them. It is only a listing activity.

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After doing this for one to two minutes, the group can select one or two of the responses and develop them further either in the small group or in the larger class.

- Problem-solving tasks. These can be useful when students already have background information about a particular issue. You can ask students to work in groups of two to three and divide the class into five sections. Each section considers a single aspect of the problem, namely what resources, data, skills, environments, or stakeholders may be necessary to solve the issue. This is a useful exercise as preparation for reading a case study and helping students apply theory to real world problems.

- The one minute note card. Students get a note card where they write one important thing they have learned and, if they wish, one question. By reviewing these note cards, which takes very little time, I tailored my next lecture to review concepts that were difficult. When I did this, students were thrilled to have their questions answered, and they signaled to those around them that they had provided the question. I used them in part to assess class participation because the comments indicate what they found "important." If it is a minor point or something you mentioned only in passing, that could be an indication of poor preparation or poor listening skills. Students learn to write succinct statements that link ideas they are reading and hearing in lecture.This practice helps them prepare for seminar as well.

Most lecturers include some discussion, and this can be for student's questions or the faculty member can provide a number of questions. But what happens in discussions? Researchers have found that faculty members talk more than students, and they tend to filter the talk so that they direct and orchestrate the conversation. They take more frequent turns and these turns are longer than students' turns (Kramarae & Treichler, 1990). By directing the discussion, lecturers maintain control over the content. This is useful in some ways because the lecturer can reiterate points or provide alternative explanations for a point already presented. It is possible not to fully appreciate a student's question, however, unless it is well formed or based on the lecture in some clearly defined way. In addition, students may feel less inclined to speak in a public forum where each person's question or answer is immediately evaluated by the faculty member. Students who are shy, unfamiliar with academic discourse, or are nonnative speakers of English may not feel they can express themselves clearly.These factors

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can reduce the number of students who participate and the topics that are addressed.

Workshops

Transforming discussion periods into a time for student-centered learning where students are interacting with each other rather than with the lecturer, can be done through workshops. Workshops, in the sense I am using the term here, are structured experiences created by the faculty member and designed to test students' understanding of a text or concept in a collaborative way. The faculty member provides questions, listing a period of time for the students to respond, and then the students take over.They form groups of five to eight, and designate a recorder so that at the end of the workshop, at least one person in each group is prepared to summarize the group's discussion on each question for the whole class. I taught students how to conduct field work in sociolinguistics using this method. First, I gave them an assignment to survey people about their attitudes about Cantonese, Mandarin, and English. I included a list of questions for the survey and explained research questions. Instead of lecturing about all the issues students would need to consider as they administered the survey, I handed out questions and students worked together in small groups to come up with the best procedures.

Here are the questions I asked:

1. Who should you ask to take part in your study and why?
2. Why should you tell your participants that their answers will be confidential? Give at least three reasons.
3. Why should you ask the same questions in the same order and in the same way?
4. What might be the best method for writing down the responses? Explain why your method is the best.
5. What sort of location would be best for the informant when you ask these questions? Think about public and private spaces.
6. Why is it important to tell your participants that you will not keep their responses to the questions after we complete our survey?

Students had a time limit of 20 minutes, so they realized that they needed detailed, thoughtful responses. Each group worked on the same questions. At the end of the

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20 minutes, I called on one group to answer each question. Students who wanted to add information in that final discussion period were free to do so. Even though students were familiar with several field research methodologies, they had not yet conducted a survey. Considering the factors that contribute to a good protocol in the workshop helped them see that, as researchers, they needed to adhere to that protocol in order to gather valid data. Because they were involved at the beginning of the project, they raised important questions throughout the process.The students were very good at tallying their results, but what was more exciting to me were their reflections about how to improve the project. They were learning to evaluate methodology and seeing its relevance to researching questions.

Workshops are also useful for understanding difficult concepts and they require careful consideration of learning goals. "Conceptual workshops" ask students to define concepts, apply them to various situations in the text or in their lives, and then compare these different situations in order to refine their understanding of the concept. To explain this approach further, I will draw on Finkel (2000, pp. 98–100) because he introduced this type of workshop to our college. He provides an explanation of a conceptual workshop on Socrates' way of responding to "aporia," a philosophical puzzle or impasse. The workshop begins by asking students to define aporia through an inductive process. To do this Finkel first provides six passages from Plato's dialogues where aporia appears, and asks students to describe what the similarities are in each passage.The goal in this first step is to define aporia by seeing how it is described in different ways.The second step is to ask students to find out what Socrates does in each of the six moments he has listed. In one case, for example, Socrates just goes on with the argument. In the third step, Finkel asks students to compare and contrast Socrates' way of responding to aporia.The workshop ends with another quote from the Symposium that students analyze in light of this work. Finkel explains that his goals were for students to identify aporia in the texts and demonstrate how these moments functioned dramatically and psychologically.

Another type of workshop I have developed is not based on a task or major concept; instead, it is designed to unpack a number of complex ideas in a textbook. For years I have used Eckert and McConnell-Ginet's (2003) Language and gender in undergraduate classes at all levels, although it is best suited to upper division work. Unlike many textbooks, there are no discussion questions. I created workshops on each chapter with questions that asked students to define and compare concepts, and to find examples from their own experiences. I place

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students in small groups for about 50 minutes to answer four questions. I circulate among the groups to hear their progress and note who is contributing. Then, in the whole group we listen to each group's findings, summarizing as we go through the questions.These weekly workshops set up expectations that students will need to define concepts in their own words and test them with theory and their own experiences. They become astute observers and listeners in their daily lives; in short, they become budding linguists.

Workshops promote a noisy atmosphere of inquiry and collaboration, where students have the opportunity to work together to understand complex questions their faculty members have written. They are tightly organized by the faculty member, and particularly well suited to testing hypotheses and guided inquiry. To create them, you transform lectures into questions based on the texts in your class. Students understand that they are directly engaging the concepts and they are challenged and sometimes stumped. In all my years of teaching, however, I have found that they persist until they have come up with a response.They know other students are working on the same questions and they can see the work proceeding around the room, which provides motivation.

After completing two or more of these workshops, many students understand that each of them have perspectives to offer and that these can be valuable. They learn to trust their peers to have information or insights and they learn to build on each other's ideas. They also begin to know each other as thinkers because small groups permit each student to contribute. These points are critical in seminars where the faculty member is primarily a facilitator.

Seminars

Like workshops, seminars may not be orderly and rational and student's comments may not always be well phrased using academic discourse.With many possible voices, you will hear overlapping voices, half-formed ideas, quickly changing topics, tangents, and some confusion. On the other hand, you will also hear perceptive comments, sudden inspiration, excitement, and novel ideas. Some students will feel very comfortable speaking and some may be silent; some will express controversial or offensive opinions; some may be afraid to raise an opposing point of view.These are issues I focus on in later chapters, and they are not easy to resolve or even recognize. What I focus on is helping students gain a voice.

By voice I mean two things: the literal definition of saying something out loud and the metaphorical one of offering a particular perspective as a result of personal

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experience, intellectual preparation, and critical thinking in the context of what others are saying.Voice has to do with the content of a comment, the way the comment fits into the conversation, and the way the comment is shaped. Part of developing a voice, then, is learning strategic and persuasive ways of offering ideas. It is not enough to have the ideas in the first place. Because seminar is an improvisation, timing a comment is essential. Because students are getting to know each other, they are negotiating their identities with each other. And, because they are learning collaboratively, they are negotiating power and solidarity.

Part of this negotiation has to do with making sure everyone's voice is included to avoid the sense of marginalization some students have in seminars. This is a primary job for the facilitator. Being marginalized is not part of the peripheral participation in a community of practice; instead, it is a feeling of being silenced and having no power to affect the conversation. Researchers examining silencing find that students' perception of how their ideas will be received has long-term effects on their participation in class and in their lives. In one study, students' reports of their own political identification in relation to their instructors' were examined for effects on classroom climate. When students perceived that their instructor had dissimilar political attitudes and opinions, they did not feel that the classroom climate was unsupportive of their views unless the instructors were perceived to engage in silencing behaviors. There were no significant differences between students who were left or right on the political spectrum (Henson & Denker, 2007). Although silencing behaviors were not listed, these could include cutting students off, joking about particular views, assuming a common point of view, and making disparaging comments. In my experience, some students perceive they are being silenced even though they have contributed major points because they want to convince others.

In workshops, questions are written by the faculty. In seminars, students generate the questions. Upon hearing this, faculty members ask how they can inspire their students to have in-depth, exciting conversations about the texts. The first step in creating effective seminars is to help students see that the conversation is not about winning a debate or an argument, nor is it mere speculation; instead, seminar is a collaborative search for understanding a text within the context of your class. For a seminar to be an effective learning experience, everyone needs to participate in some way. Merely inviting students to have a conversation without some sort of structure, though, can be disastrous. In Hong Kong I began by dividing my class into small groups and providing them with the same five questions.These

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were open-ended questions and I emphasized that there were many possible perspectives. I set a time limit so that we could review each of the questions together. Not surprisingly, in those groups students raised other questions, and sometimes those became more central to their conversations than the ones I had posed. I encouraged this practice.

PREPARING TO TEACH SEMINARS

In a study I conducted on my campus, I found five basic elements necessary to teaching effective seminars: (1) choosing appropriate texts, (2) deciding on an explicit goal, (3) helping students prepare, (4) developing seminar rules, and (5) using an appropriate assessment method (Fiksdal, 2001). The best seminar texts have depth and enduring importance because of the topics or themes they address. Textbooks are self-contained with their own objectives and explanations, so unless you are studying them from a particular perspective, they may be less useful. If you assign an advanced or complex text, students need to be well prepared to address it. If they are not well prepared, assigning key parts, or creating a workshop to cover some of the essential concepts might be more appropriate. In interdisciplinary classes when students are using a number of genres to understand a problem or question, having a seminar on a single history text, for example, can pose difficulties for students because students tend to believe that the text tells them everything they need to know. Unless they are exposed to the complexity of the historical events in terms of the social, economic, and cultural background of the time, they may find it difficult to discern a point of view. Films can also be difficult to use as a text if students have no background on how to "read" a film.

The text you choose should be complex, multi-layered, perhaps controversial, and open to interpretation. If the text is too long, many students will not complete the reading. I usually assign no more than 200 pages for a seminar. If the text is longer, you can ask students to focus on particular sections or have more than one seminar on the book. Another approach is to select multiple texts (or parts of one text) and announce a "jigsaw" seminar. In this type of seminar, students assemble an understanding of the text(s) from the parts. You divide students into reading groups, each of which will read a different text. Seminar begins with differnt groups composed of at least two students from each of the reading groups. Their job is to explain what they learned from their text and to learn from each of the other students about their text. Then, in larger groups of 10–15 students they can

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generate questions and begin to discuss themes, concepts, and ideas they generated in the small groups. Finally, students can report on their most important findings to the whole group.

Announcing a goal for seminar helps guide the conversation.This can be a very broad goal, such as understanding the author's argument and how it relates to other readings in your class. Another goal can be to study a topic collectively by specializing. Specializing in this case means that students choose an area or topic in which they will become an expert.A colleague in literature at my college asked each student what was most important to them in reading a piece of literature. If they chose characterization, he asked them to prepare for seminar focusing on that aspect. Each student had a focus for seminar and each gained an expertise in the area that interested them most over the academic term. Some colleagues have used this idea in scientific seminars as well. If students are studying water quality, they may specialize in various aspects such as research methodologies, public health, or microorganisms and when they discuss research articles or a book, they present their ideas using their expertise. Seminars can be venues for creative work as well, so if the goal is to understand a play or dialogue, students could role play for a period of time and then reflect on that experience.

Helping students prepare for seminars is a key part of teaching effectively. Many students find it hard to finish the reading and even if they have, they feel unprepared for an in-depth conversation. Faculty members can provide students with some guiding questions as they read, and these can be the first questions to discuss in seminar. Possibly the best preparation I have found is to give a writing assignment. Writing a one paragraph summary and a one paragraph response about a topic that is important in the text can help students reflect on what they have read. I assign these two-paragraph essays and require students to post them on our class webpage by midnight the day before seminar.This allows most students time to read a variety of responses before they come to seminar. Some students complain that they changed their ideas in seminar, and they don't want the pre-seminar assignment to be their last word on the text. I make sure to give other, integrative assignments in which they can provide a more sophisticated point of view about the text after seminar, which helps them demonstrate their learning.The point of writing prior to seminar is to help students reflect on what they've read and articulate ideas. Writing prior to seminar prepares students to link their ideas to the text in seminar, and it helps them respond more readily to other students.

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Excerpted from *A Guide to Teaching Effective Seminars*

The next part of the preparation is to create the rules for seminar or a seminar covenant. In our first seminar, I like to ask students to generate rules as a group while I write them on the board. I try to use the words students offer and prompt them to make a list of eight to ten rules to guide our collaborative work. I put the rules on the class webpage, and hand them out in class. It is useful to ask students to look over the rules from time to time. In a recent team-taught course, one of my colleagues suggested that we ask our students to choose one of the rules and practice it. At the end of class, we asked students to comment about which rule they followed. This provided students an indirect way of paying attention to the rules they created and to deepen the social contract they created by making the rules. Some students reported that because we wanted to hear from everyone, they spoke up rather than remain silent. More talkative students were also careful to monitor their comments because of the same rule.

ASSESSING STUDENTS IN SEMINAR

Assessing students can be difficult because if you are facilitating and joining the conversation, it is easy to focus on content alone. I emphasize that each student has a responsibility towards collaborative learning. I make a practice of taking notes about the topics with the student's name and the nature of their comments. That means that most of the time I am writing. Students looking to me to answer a question or provide commentary soon give up because I'm busy.They learn to rely on the group. I do not subscribe to the idea that talking a lot should be highly valued; instead, I emphasize to the students that seminar is about careful listening. I focus on whether or not students are making substantive contributions to seminar, and how they are doing that. Some, for example, are good at probing ideas and helping to deepen the conversation, some are good at asking questions, some are good at applying concepts to real world problems. Some help draw others into the conversation. Some are excellent summarizers. Ideally, students learn all these skills.They can assess their own seminar work if you provide them with a rubric.

CONCLUSION

It is important to remember that in seminar students are preoccupied with sorting out their own analysis of a question or problem, understanding other students' perspectives, and creating a coherent understanding of all of these ideas. Faculty members are often most concerned with the quality of the ideas and when faced with unfocused notions, hazy intuitions, and cloudy connections, they may despair. By focusing on what is going on rather than what we wish would go on, it

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is easier to assess students' work. That is, be aware of the students as learning the practice of academic discourse over time with each text presenting new difficulties. Besides this struggle with content, students are also aware of the group and they are presenting various identities and using power and solidarity to achieve their own goals as a member of an on-going community of practice.

BEST PRACTICES

In your first seminar, take the time to let students introduce themselves to the group.

■ Explain that together you are creating a learning community so it is important to know each other. I encourage students to learn each other's names, and I learn everyone's name as well. Create seminar rules so that everyone knows the ground rules. I ask the students for suggestions, and I add one or two if necessary. I then type them up and post them on our website. Here are the rules from one of my recent seminars:

- Come prepared.
- Respect other people's opinions.
- Have tolerance for others—it's a learning community.
- Speak in a way that is not demeaning.
- Try not to interrupt.
- Stay on task.
- Try not to monopolize the conversation.
- Encourage quiet people to voice their thoughts.
- Be open-minded.
- Questioning or disagreeing is okay.
- Show that you are listening by referring to comments made by others.

■ Some students are unfamiliar with academic conversations. You can hand out this list of ways to participate (Marshall & Roland, 2013). Emphasize to your students that with practice, they will develop more approaches, particularly if they are good listeners.

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– Listen closely most of the time. Contribute one idea that you have reflected on, or a piece of information.

– Attempt to paraphrase what another student has said to make sure you understood them.

– Ask questions that begin with Do you mean that; What do you think about; Why?

– Express support for another student's idea and explain why you find it useful.

■ Providing a structure for each seminar will help develop a sense of community and trust in the work of inquiry. I always divide students into groups for at least 15 minutes, making sure they work in groups of different sizes each week. Assigning students randomly is my choice, but it can be useful to divide students into talkers and non-talkers or those who have finished the text and those who have not. Usually, I only have to divide them once in groups of those who have prepared and those who have not, because students in the unprepared group see that they are in a very small minority. Recently, I did this and worked mostly with the students who had not read the text. We worked on some passages by doing close reading, and they found this very productive because the text was too difficult for them. The groups need a clear assignment or focus and time limit.

■ If students have not prepared questions prior to class, you can ask them to work in groups of three to write open-ended questions (not those that can be answered with yes or no) for discussion in the first 10 minutes of class. One person in each group writes their question on the board whenever their group is ready. I nominate a student sitting close to the board to read all of the questions. Then, I ask students to choose one to start our conversation, and I wait for a first comment.

■ When I divide students into groups, I visit the groups to listen to the conversation for three to four minutes each, taking notes about the topic and who is talking. My colleague, Toska Olson, notes that if students do not seem to be working well together, it is important to ask how they are doing. If you do not hear a clear response, it is a good idea to speak with the students individually after class. Some may not have read the text, or a student may be disrupting the work. Typically, students will be forthcoming if you speak with them individually.

■ In my studies of seminars, students emphasize that the faculty member should play a clear role. Some reported faculty members saying, "This is your seminar, so I

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won't talk." This is a very poor technique because the students want to hear from the faculty member. Students also criticize faculty who give mini lectures during seminar. This practice implies that the students are not capable of working with the text. Giving your students time to work through their ideas and questions sets the stage for deeper learning. Teaching a seminar means being a member of the group and offering comments or asking questions from time to time. Try to limit your substantive questions to three at most.Your participation should model an effective, academic approach to the conversation.

■ Most important to effective teaching in seminars is exploring the text in some depth. It can be hard to find a balance between tangents and ideas directly focused on the text, but allowing some exploration is worthwhile so that the group can make new connections and find new perspectives. For this reason it is very important not to comment after each student's comment. Allow students to work on ideas together and enter the conversation to help them dig deeper. One way to do this is by asking the group to make an idea more precise and to connect it to other class materials: How can we state this idea in one sentence using the terminology we've been learning? This idea seems related to last week's lecture on X and Y. What do you think?

■ Students can be facilitators after they have some experience with seminars. Some of my colleagues create teams of two to three students who plan the structure. In a smaller class, individual students can facilitate. This practice does not mean that the faculty member can or should remain silent. There are times when student facilitators may not have the power or authority or expertise to move students out of a dead end, an argument, or a tangent. When I need to do this, I always use us rather than you. For example, I might say, we seem to have wandered far afield. Let's move to our next question so that we continue exploring the ideas in the text. This use of we indicates that faculty member and students alike are responsible for seminar.

■ One way to help students prepare for seminar is to show them how you do it. I have shown students how I mark the text and how I take notes for seminar. You can ask them what practices they use as well.

■ In our final 10 minutes of the conversation, I often use a round robin in which each seminar member briefly states a conclusion or a point they wanted to make earlier. The round robin allows each student to speak in turn around the circle and they can pass if they wish. I encourage passing if a student has already contributed

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a lot. I encourage quiet or silent students to contribute rather than pass. If seminar is new to students, using the round robin to ask students to comment on process can be useful.

■ At the end of seminar it may be useful to provide a brief summary of the topics and ask students to write for three minutes about what they learned. If you do this regularly, students will be thinking about their learning during seminar—a good focus.

■ Using a rubric to assess students in seminar can be useful. As shown in Table 2.1, a rubric outlines each element of your assessment and provides a quick way to chart their progress. I learned to create rubrics only recently when I team-taught with Sunshine Campbell, a colleague in education. For her, every move we made in our class needed to be intentional and planned. After a couple of weeks of relentless questions about our assignments, I finally grasped the point. Intentionality is important because if students question your methodology or try to revolt, you can explain very clearly why you are asking them to do something. Rubrics force you to think about learning outcomes and articulate the ways you will conduct assessment. Giving the rubric to your students at the beginning of your class helps them understand the conversational moves that are valued in collaborative learning. I suggest assessing each student twice during the term. Use one copy of the rubric and write the student's name in the comments box for each element you notice.This can be done using just one copy of the rubric each time if you don't have too many students.You can also ask students to evaluate themselves by handing out the rubric and using the last five minutes of your time period. In this case, they should provide paraphrases of the statements or questions or observations that they made so that you have the evidence for their achievement. By using a rubric, you focus your students' attention on learning and you clarify the process.

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Excerpted from *A Guide to Teaching Effective Seminars*

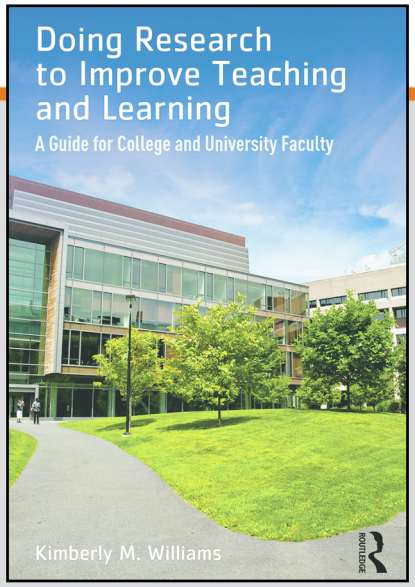
Table 2.1 Rubric for Seminar Assessment

Level of Proficiency	Category of Idea	Comments/Evidence
Proficient	— Brings theory from text or other class materials to bear on ideas — Contributes a new idea or asks a fruitful question based on good analysis — Comments indicate some original synthesis of ideas — Listens carefully and summarizes ideas or makes connections between them — Disagrees showing respect for other students' points of view — Expresses ideas clearly and succinctly — Consistently shows responsibility for learning	
Meeting Minimal Requirements	— Provides some analysis of the text — Tests understanding of a theory in the text by explaining it — Provides evidence from the text for ideas presented — Listens to other students and builds on their ideas — Asks for clarification or explanations of major points — Most ideas and comments are well explained	
Beginning	— Agrees or disagrees minimally with the author or another student — Asks a question which indicates superficial reading of the text — Participation varies widely from seminar to seminar — Contributions are not always clearly stated — Silent but some learning is apparent in other forums	

CHAPTER

3

USING ASSESSMENT DATA AS RESEARCH EVIDENCE TO IMPROVE TEACHING AND LEARNING



This chapter is excerpted from

Doing Research to Improve Teaching and Learning: A Guide for College and University Faculty

by Kimberly M. Williams.

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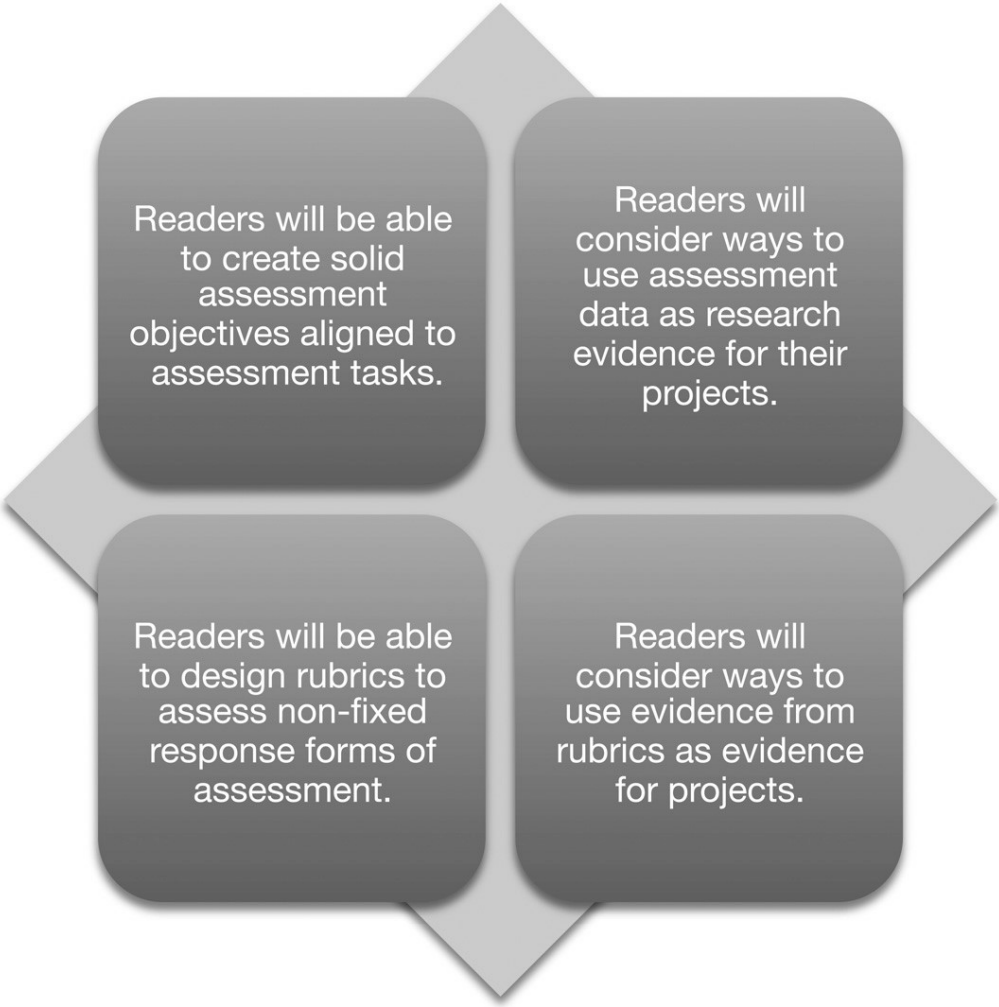
USING ASSESSMENT DATA AS RESEARCH EVIDENCE TO IMPROVE TEACHING AND LEARNING

Excerpted from *Doing Research to Improve Teaching and Learning*

In this chapter:



The language used in the boxes above is based on the language of constructing learning outcomes/objectives. In these boxes you, as the reader, are being told early in the chapter what the learning outcomes for the chapter are. Ideally we do this in our courses on our syllabi.We state the learning outcomes and explain these to our students.We then construct assessments to determine if our students (or the degree to which our students) have learned what we stated in our learning outcomes/objectives.

Using assessment data as classroom research evidence is incredibly beneficial. Why? Because good assessment data should provide us with good evidence about

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what is happening in our courses.We collect assessment data on students regularly. These data should be linked to what we want students to gain from their involvement in the course (our stated learning outcomes/objectives). We can collect and analyze these data purposefully to better understand what is happening in our course(s). Professors have these data as part of the classroom experience, so using them as part of data analysis in classroom research projects can be quite useful and add an additional level of engagement with our data.

We are all engaged in the act of assessing every day. We assess whether our clothes fit, whether we have enough food in the house, how much time a particular task will take, and so on. In the classroom, we collect information and make a judgment and typically act based on that judgment.The same is true with classroom assessment. We collect information, typically in the form of student work; then we provide a judgment on that work and then act accordingly. We provide feedback to students throughout the course of a semester or term (formative assessment), and we are expected to provide some kind of grade or feedback at the end of the course/semester (summative assessment). Both formative and summative assessment can be very useful in classroom research.

Selecting from the myriad of possible assessment strategies can be overwhelming—should we give a traditional test? Should we assign a paper? Should we have students give a presentation? How can we best get students to show us what they have learned/mastered as a result of our learning event(s)?

Before determining which assessment strategy or task to select, one must determine what we should assess. We must clearly state what our outcomes are for a particular learning event (in the case of formative assessment) first.The next consideration is what we ultimately hope students to master as a result of taking the course. That is, what do we hope students will be able to do or know as a result of the learning experience? Do we expect a level of mastery? If so, what do we want them to retain as a result of this experience beyond the day, week, month, year?

FORMATIVE VERSUS SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT

1. Formative assessment asks: How will we assess students along the way to see how they are progressing on our stated learning objectives/outcomes?

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2. Summative assessment asks: How will we determine at the end the degree to which our students have met the stated learning objectives/outcomes for the whole course?

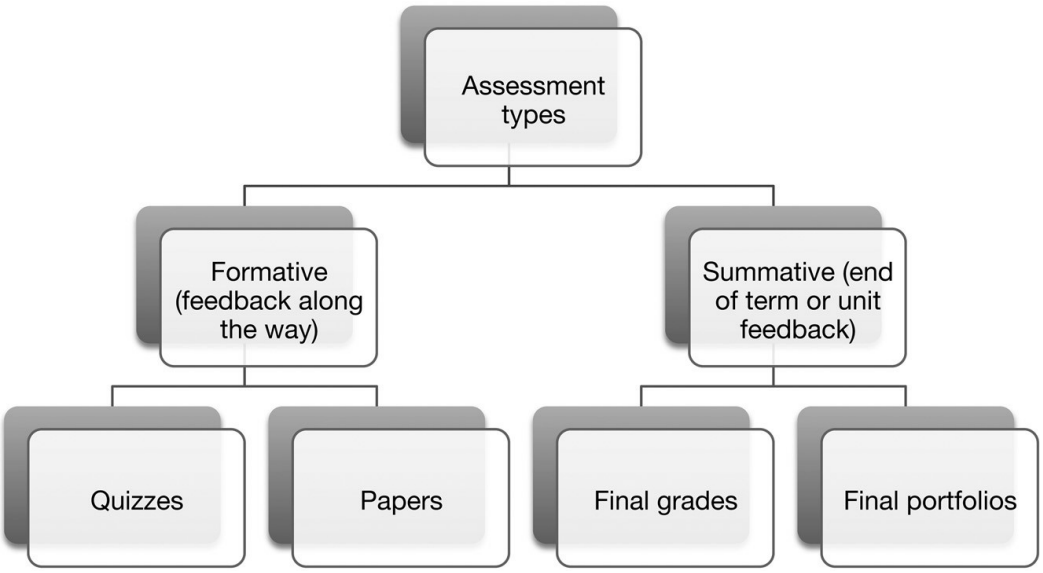

Figure 5.1

How Can We Assess Students Formatively and Summatively?

Traditional versus authentic assessment

Traditional assessments have typically involved outcome-testing methods such as multiple choice, matching, and "fill in the blank". We use traditional methods in the classroom for both formative and summative assessments. In addition, these methods are useful for comparing large groups of students—such as the case with state or local exams, including high stakes tests.

Authentic assessment (also known as alternative assessment) uses non-testing forms of assessment including observation and what are known as the "4 Ps": Process, Performance, Portfolio, and Production.

Process—students engage in a process and are assessed based on this. For example, to get a drivers' license, young drivers must be assessed using a driving exam where they actually drive a car. Evaluators have a checklist of

behaviors of successful drivers that they use to determine whether a student passes or fails.

Performance—students engage in a performance and are assessed on the quality of the aspects of it. For example, many musicians must engage in performances and are assessed on how they do. In some classrooms students must do oral reports or engage in debates where they are judged based on their performance.

Product—students often create tangible products that teachers judge or assess. For example, students create products for the science fair or they create work products of all sorts, including original written pieces or clay structures.

Portfolio—there are a variety of types of portfolios to choose from depending on what the assessment outcomes are. If your outcome is to examine growth over time, you may want to have students create a process portfolio—with samples of work that show progress over time. If you want more of a summative portfolio, then you'll want to have students gather artifacts that represent their best work. There are also electronic portfolios that may be used to examine progress over time or best work samples.

Regardless of the type of authentic or alternative assessment, to be consistent in assessing student performance on these measures, one must create clear guidelines and have these guidelines match outcomes, and ultimately match the criteria outlined in an assessment rubric.

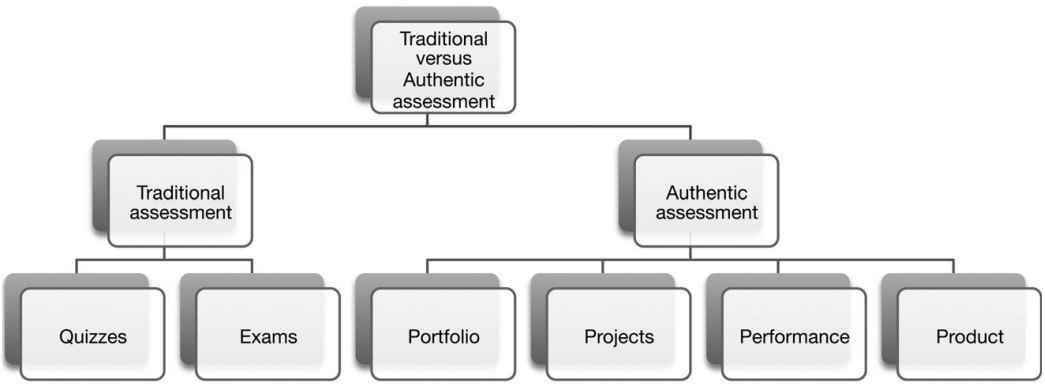

Figure 5.2

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Excerpted from *Doing Research to Improve Teaching and Learning*

Angelo and Cross, in their book Classroom Assessment Techniques: A Handbook for College Teachers, provide detailed examples of possible classroom assessment strategies. Below is a non-exhaustive list of some of the examples they provide:

Content understanding/knowledge/skills

- Background knowledge probe
- Focused listing
- Muddiest point
- Misconception check
- Memory matrix

Analysis and critical thinking

- Categorization grid
- Defining features matrix
- Pro and con grid
- Analytic memo

Creative thinking and problem solving

- One sentence summary
- Analogies
- Problem recognition tasks
- Documented problem solutions

Learner attitudes and self assessment

- Class opinion polls
- Ethical dilemmas
- Self-confidence surveys
- Autobiographical sketches
- Self assessment

Many more assessment strategies exist, but before choosing the correct assessment tool from the toolbox, it is important to figure out what you want to assess and the kind of information you need.

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Excerpted from *Doing Research to Improve Teaching and Learning*

Start with Outcomes

Before designing assessment, we must first figure out what our learning outcomes are—that is, what do we want students to be able to know or do as a result/outcome of the instructional experience we are designing. These should:

- be student-centered
- have a measurable, action, learning-related verb
- be related to the instructional experience.

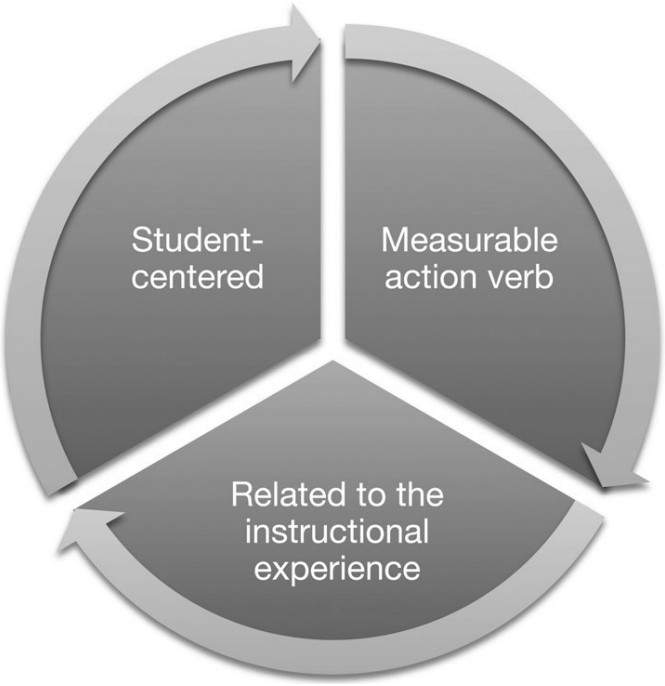

Figure 5.3

For example, perhaps for one of your learning outcomes you want students to be able to provide some substantiated explanations for global warming at the end of your instructional time. If this is the case then your learning outcome could be as simple as: "Students will be able to provide substantiated explanations for global warming."

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To create an assessment objective/outcome from this learning outcome, you need to include:

1. The task under which you will observe the performance.
2. The criteria for acceptable performance (or, ideally, mastery).

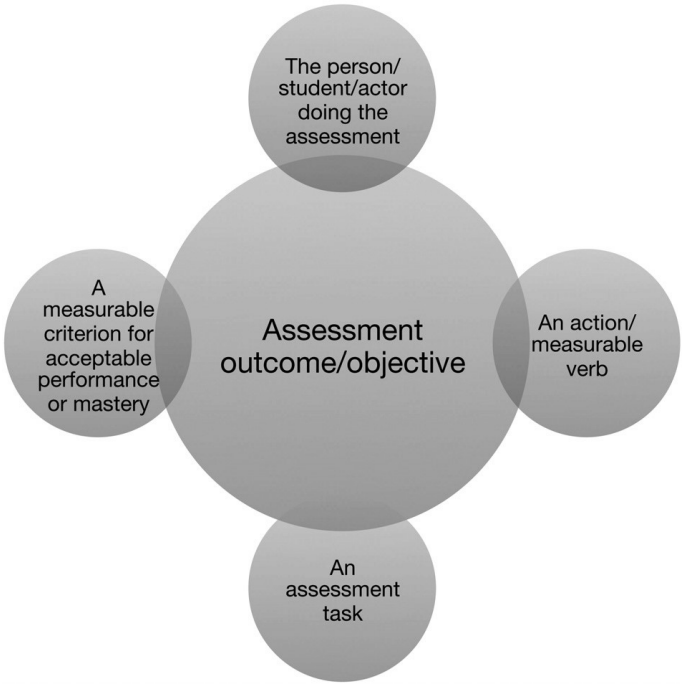

Figure 5.4

So an assessment objective/outcome contains:

1. The subject/person/student/actor who will be doing the assessment/performance. In most cases for teachers writing outcomes, this will be students.

2. An action or measurable verb—ideally one that works at higher levels on Bloom's taxonomy (see Figure 5.6 below for ideas—also consider what kind of THINKING the student being asked to do, e.g., causal reasoning, categorizing, describing, etc.).

3. An assessment task (performance, exam, paper, etc.) during or after which you will observe or can measure whether the outcome has been met (that is, the strategy the student is using to represent his/her cognition/understanding).

4. A measurable criterion for acceptable performance or mastery.

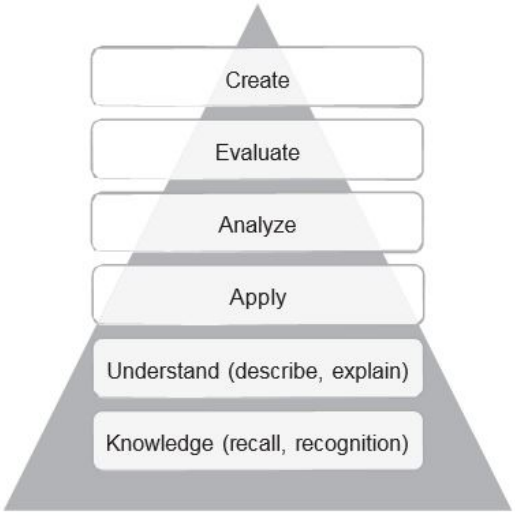

Figure 5.5 Bloom's revised taxonomy (based on an adaptation of the American Psychology Association from Anderson and Krathwohl 2001).

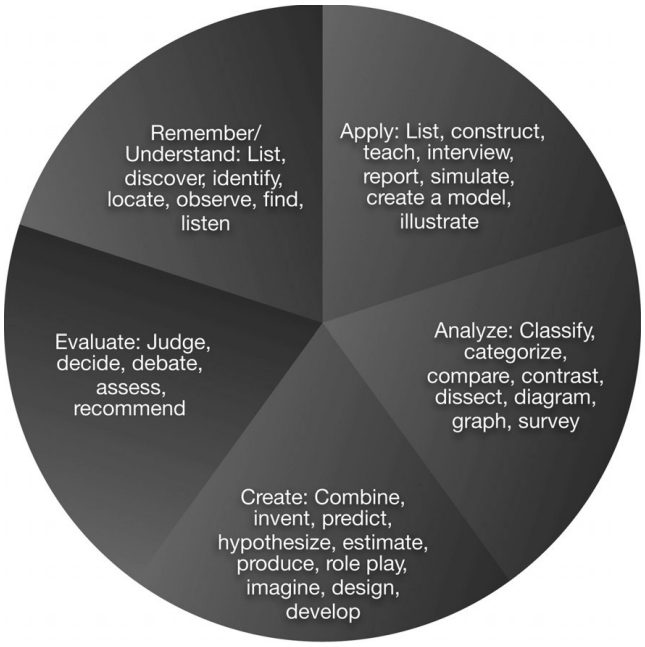

Figure 5.6 Bloom's wheel of words for creating outcomes/objectives.

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Within the "wheel" we see the thinking/outcome type in the middle and then some verbs that may help in the design of the outcome/objective, and then some possible assessment tasks or "products" you may assign to achieve these.

In our first example we stated that we wanted students to be able to provide some substantiated explanations for global warming at the end of the instructional time. How will we know if students can do this? We could ask them to write a short paper. We could have them take a quiz? We could have them submit a lengthier paper or report for homework that incorporates more evidence they must find on their own. Many options are possible. So, let's say we choose to simply have students write a short paper at the end of class and we expect that they can provide at least three substantiated explanations for global warming. Now, our outcome becomes clear: "Students will be able to provide at least three substantiated explanations for global warming in a short essay."

The "at least 3 substantiated explanations" is our "criterion" for acceptable performance. The "short essay" is the assessment task, during which they will show the degree to which they have learned these explanations. So, our rubric may be brief but should be aligned with the outcome and the criterion.

	Needs improvement = 1 point	**Acceptable = 2 points**	**Exceptional = 3 points**
Provides substantiated explanations for global warming.	Provides one substantiated explanation.	Provides two substantiated explanations.	Provides three well-substantiated explanations.

Let's say we also want students to include evidence to back up their explanations. This would require another outcome: "2. Students will cite credible evidence to support each of their explanations of global warming." This assessment objective assumes that the ideal is to provide credible evidence to support all three examples. Then we need to add it to our rubric:

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	Needs improvement = 1 point	Acceptable = 2 points	Exceptional = 3 points
Provides substantiated explanations for global warming.	Provides one substantiated explanation.	Provides two substantiated explanations.	Provides three well-substantiated explanations.
Provides credible evidence to support explanation.	Provides credible evidence for one explanation.	Provides credible evidence to support two explanations.	Provides credible evidence to support all three explanations.

TYPES OF RUBRICS

There are different basic categories of rubrics, including analytic and holistic. Generally, so far, this chapter has focused on analytic rubric development. If you are engaged in more summative assessment you may want to create a holistic rubric that addresses levels of mastery to help determine a student's final grade as a representation of a percentage of mastery of your stated outcomes.

Generally, a holistic rubric yields a single score/number/grade with all criteria for mastery included. So, for example, a holistic rubric might be created to help with the determination of a final grade for a course—or a final grade on a more summative-like assignment. The result is a single score/grade that represents perhaps many ideas in one final grade. The rubric makes clear what is being considered in that number or grade.

Example Holistic Rubric for Class Participation

A: Attended every class session; completed all in class assignments and tasks with at least a check-plus; group members rated as participating/helping/sharing in small group regularly.

B: Missed 1–2 class sessions; completed all but 1–2 in class assignments; group members rated as generally helpful and participative in small group activities.

C: Missed 3–4 class sessions; completed all but 3–4 assignments in-class assignments; group members had some positive rankings of participation in small group.

D: Missed 5–6, completed all but 5 assignments; lacked group positive rankings.

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E: Missed more than 6 class sessions, completed fewer than 5 assignments, group members gave negative feedback about participation.

USING ASSESSMENT IN CLASSROOM RESEARCH PROJECTS

One of the ways we can use classroom assessment is to help us determine if our objectives/outcomes for student learning have been met. Our assessments provide evidence about student performance on outcome measures.Assessments also allow us to see how groups of students are performing on particular issues.

For example Emily Pollina was teaching a first-year writing seminar in the natural sciences and a more advanced "writing in the majors" course. She used rubrics for both courses and wanted to determine (among other things) the degree to which students were able to engage with scholarly sources. She engaged in a series of workshops with her students and then examined the themes that emerged from her comments on student papers, as well as student performance, using the rubrics she created to assess her students' writing. She found the following themes that emerged based on her analysis of student assessment and her feedback.

Examples of Research from the Classroom

Instructor evaluations of student writing

Emily Pollina

The difference between the two sections of my writing courses in terms of student comfort with primary literature was evident in student writing assignments. Nonetheless, students in both sections were able to make important gains in the sophistication with which they used primary literature. Examples of what constituted an increase in sophistication varied between students, partially because some students had much more trouble using primary literature effectively at the outset. Below are some examples of ways students used primary literature more effectively in secondary drafts than in early drafts, as demonstrated by their performance on the rubrics I created for the assignment grounded in the outcomes for the course.

Paraphrasing rather than quoting: In formal scientific writing, quoting is rare and stylistically eccentric. Students would be encouraged to paraphrase and cite, rather than quoting directly.This represents a challenge, however, as effective paraphrasing requires a solid understanding of the technical work one is paraphrasing. Students who were able to effectively paraphrase demonstrated

their ability to summarize the important points of an article in their own words.

Amassing a greater amount of primary evidence: Some of the student gains in writing sophistication simply meant delving deeper into the body of knowledge on a particular topic—finding and citing a wider variety of literature on a particular subject. While this seems like a simple task, realizing that you need more information and doing additional research is actually a challenging skill for some undergraduates (Sommers 1980), and willingness to do this represents an increase in skill for some students.

Organizing more proficiently the evidence used: Many students struggled with the organization of their written pieces, and were citing similar information in several paragraphs. Through discussions, in-class writing responses, and comments, several students were able to re-organize information to group themes and improve the flow of their argument.

Synthesizing articles rather than simply listing their information: Several students, distributed across the two classes, struggled to put their articles together into a coherent argument.Their papers read like a series of summaries on the previous literature on their topic. Through repeated drafting, one of these students did an excellent job at pruning the summaries and integrating the information in them into his own argument.

The other student who struggled with this also made some progress, including more of his own analysis, although there were still many "summary paragraphs" in his final report.

Using a broad range of primary scholarship, including non-science (e.g., anthropology, economics, ethics): Many of the students were studying topics that had a social, ethical, or economic component. These students were able to locate primary sources from the appropriate discipline and cite these studies.While this does not indicate greater comfort with primary scientific literature, it does suggest a respect for primary intellectual scholarship—the source of original scholarship that is a crucial part of any field. While the previous types of gains in student writing and primary literature use were distributed across both classes, certain types of sophistication gains were only seen in the WIM class.

Using papers as models for technique as well as sources of background information: Several students realized that they could bolster their proposals by citing methods that other people had successfully used to answer related

questions. This type of citation moves past using scientific articles merely for background information, to realizing that scientific articles can contain models for how to practice science.

Including a wider variety of justifications for studies: Most students' work was very application focused.When asked to explain why their proposed research was important, most students discussed things that their research would help make or build. For example, my student studying genes conferring salt tolerance discussed the possibility of genetically engineering salt-tolerant plants. Through discussion, students broadened the focus of their justification to include the joy of knowing the answer. Students began to realize that for the scientific community, answering a question that has never been asked is justification itself.

Pointing out articles that disagreed with each other and proposing research to resolve the dispute: One student noticed inconsistencies in the published literature on the effect of wild dog pack size on prey capture efficiency. She therefore proposed her study to (among other things) resolve this dispute in the literature. Identifying scientific debates from reading and synthesizing a body of literature is a crucial skill—one practiced by many scientists looking for their next project.

Disagreeing with published articles' methods: Several students criticized the methods of published studies, either in their writing or in class. Willingness to disagree in this way represents a major intellectual gain for students, as most students see themselves as inexpert and are reluctant to criticize published works. This type of robust critique is an important part of scientific dialogue (it happens at every journal club I've been in), and becoming familiar with it helps students to practice a key part of scientific thinking.

In Joel Anderson's humanities-oriented first-year seminar course "Medieval Books in the Digital Age" (also a first-year writing seminar class), he worked to analyze his comments and feedback on student writing. He looked for themes that emerged based on his feedback, including his comments in the margins of student work. He gathered together all of his handwritten marginalia and examined these for themes—what were the kinds of comments he made regularly.

In my own experience in teaching graduate students in my course entitled "Theories of Learning and Cognitive Development," I have analyzed my comments

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and found consistently the following themes: I tend to focus on pushing students to "use good evidence" and to "critique evidence" in their papers. This theme of evidence is a bias that I know I have. I do consistently tell students that becoming critical consumers of information is perhaps one of the most important skills they can learn as teachers in the information age, so this can help students gain these skills.This is one of my stated objectives in the course. My feedback is connected to this overarching educational goal that I have and comes through in my feedback. It is also reflected within the rubric:

Rubric for Assignment 3	1–3 points	4 points	5 points
Thesis and conclusions	Thesis and/or conclusions are limited.	Thesis and conclusions are somewhat grounded in research and are relevant or compelling.	Thesis and conclusions are grounded in the research literature and course content—relevant and compelling.
Research literature used	Studies included are dated or it is not clear that they are from peer-reviewed sources.	Some good contemporary studies included—3–4 from peer-reviewed sources.	Good contemporary studies included—used a minimum of 5 from peer-reviewed sources.
Analysis of research literature	Lacking good analysis and few connections.	Some good analysis of evidence with limited connections.	Carefully analyzed evidence and critique of evidence—connections made between and among studies.
Inclusion of other course readings/ materials/ concepts	Lack of connection to course content.	Makes some good connections to course content.	Makes several clearly considered connections to multiple course sources.
Application to personal or professional life	Provides limited application of topic to personal or professional life.	Provides some good applications.	Provides strong applications of topic to personal and/or professional life grounded in the research.

Some of the terminology used in my rubric emerged from analysis of my margin comments. In addition, I have made adaptations to assignments and assessments

based on the consistent feedback I find myself giving students. I do recognize when analyzing the above rubric that terms such as "good" or "relevant" or "compelling" are highly subjective. I typically counsel faculty to take ambiguous or subjective terms out of a rubric because it can lead to inconsistent judgments (unless you can explain to students what you mean explicitly). I will tell students that words such as relevant and compelling are subjective and that I expect they will defend why they found particular issues/evidence/topics relevant and compelling and why they are considered so in the contemporary research literature.We must be mindful of the ambiguous, highly subjective terms we use in rubrics and I would advise, particularly if you are new to rubric development, avoiding them and staying as concrete and measurable as possible. Doing this can be very challenging.

Rubric to Assess Classroom Research Projects

There has been a push to create rubrics that have gradations of performance listed categorically (like the one above). However, sometimes a checklist-style rubric is more appropriate—particularly if there are not really levels of performance, but rather clearly articulated components of an assignment that must be present, and if missing result in poorer quality work.

This is a rubric that I developed to assess classroom research projects for doctoral students and faculty:

RUBRIC TO ASSESS RESEARCH PROJECTS

Adapted from Gay, Mills and Airasian

Note: This rubric will be used during the drafting process and for self and peer formative and summative assessment

Abstract

- Is the problem restated? ____/1
- Are the number and type of subjects and instruments described briefly? _____/1
- Is the design used identified? ____/1
- Are procedures described? ____/1
- Are the major results and conclusions restated? ____/1

Total ____/5 points

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Introduction

- Is the problem stated? ____/1
- Is there a hypothesis statement (for quantitative research) and objectives listed (for qualitative research)? ____/1
- Is the problem able to be researched? Can data be collected or analyzed or can the topic be investigated as stated? ____/1
- Is background information presented and is the importance described? ____/1
- Are variables or issues clearly defined and described without use of jargon where possible? ____/1
- Does it set up the paper and what exactly is to follow? ____/1

Total _____/6 points

Comments:

Review of literature

- Is the review comprehensive (involving a variety of substantive original research)? _____/1
- Are references cited related to the research question? _____/1
- Are most sources primary (that is, they are original research articles, not summaries of research)? ____/6
- Is there a critical analysis of the literature included and relevance to the study explained? _____/1
- Is it well-organized and does it flow well? _____/1
- Is there a conclusion paragraph that summarizes the literature in general? _____/1
- Does the literature review logically set up the hypothesis or objectives that follow? _____/1
- Is APA style used to cite references appropriately within the text? _____/1
- Is APA style used appropriately in the reference section? _____/1
- Is the hypothesis or objectives clearly stated? Are important terms defined? _____/1

Total _____/15 points

Comments:

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Method

- Are participants' characteristics described? Nature of the participants (gender, race, socio-economic class, special characteristics relevant for study)? _____/1
- Number of participants? If a small number describe in greater detail. _____/1
- How were participants selected or chosen? Are potential biases issues of power, etc. described if appropriate? _____/1
- For quantitative: Are instruments used/created/or selected described in terms of their validity, reliability, purpose, and content (sample questions, how created, etc.)? _____/1
- For qualitative: Are strategies use appropriate given the objectives stated? _____/1
- Is the research design appropriate to address the objectives OR adequately test the hypothesis of the study? ____/1
- Are the procedures described in enough detail that another researcher could replicate them? _____/2
- Are procedures and hypotheses OR objectives linked appropriately? 2 points _____/2
- Is the context of the study described in detail? (The school? The classroom? The program, etc.) _____/1

Total _____/11 points

Comments:

Results

For quantitative:

- Are appropriate statistics chosen given the nature of the study and the data? _____/1
- Are statistical significance levels given? ____/1
- Are tables or figures appropriate and easily understood? ____/1

For qualitative:

- Is there an explanation of how data were analyzed (constant comparative or some other method of analysis)? ____/1
- Are themes logically derived from the data? ____/1
- Is there more analysis than description? _____/1

For both:

- Are results clearly stated? ___/1
- Do data provided and results make sense? _____/1

Total _____/8 points

Comments:

Conclusions/discussion/recommendations

- Do conclusions logically flow from the data provided? ____/1
- Is the discussion based on original hypothesis or objectives presented in the beginning? ____/1
- Generalizability issues described? ____1
- Limitations discussed? ____/1
- Future research or action needed? _____/1

Total ____/5 points

Total ___/50 points

As you write up your own classroom research projects, this rubric can serve as a way to self-assess your project. I have classroom researchers use this rubric to self-assess before submitting their final project.The point values are for computing final grades, but certainly the rubric could be used without points, and just to provide feedback.

Rubrics to Assess Values and Creative Work

Often when working with faculty or future faculty on rubric development, I hear the desire to assess qualities that are difficult to articulate in rubric form, such as "creativity" or a "positive feeling about the subject matter" or in group work "working cooperatively." These are possible to measure using rubrics. The Association of American Colleges and Universities has created some examples of rubrics designed to assess values. They have created and posted several VALUE rubrics. VALUE stands for Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education, but the rubrics focus on assessing areas that are not a demonstration of content understanding, but more about values, teamwork, creativity, and other aspects of student performance that are often difficult to assess. These VALUE

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rubrics are available to download from their website www.aacu.org/value/rubrics/index.cfm.

The rubrics cover the following domains: intellectual and practical skills (e.g., inquiry and analysis, critical thinking, creative thinking, written communication, oral communication, reading, quantitative literacy, information literacy, teamwork and problem-solving); personal and social responsibility (e.g., civic knowledge and engagement both locally and globally, intercultural knowledge and competence, ethical reasoning, foundations of skills for lifelong learning, global learning); integrative and applied learning.

Teamwork is a task that many professors require but few have strategies for assessing. Often we have stated outcomes that we want students to work well in groups, but we lack ways to measure that. A rubric like the one available from AAC&U may be useful—and modifying it to meet your individual task-specific needs may be even more helpful to align the rubric with your own expectations for student outcomes.

Another difficult educational outcome to assess is "creative thinking." I have often heard from faculty members reluctant to design rubrics that they are concerned they will limit student creativity and creative thinking.Admittedly, this is a genuine concern. As I have heard "whatever I put in the rubric is all that I'll get—students won't go above and beyond." To that I often say "then make sure your rubric truly covers everything you want students to address in their project/paper/assessment task." We can include aspects of creativity in our rubrics. Consider using examples from the AAC&U rubric that is focused specifically on creative thinking. Some of the categories considered in the "creative thinking" rubric are solving problems, embracing contradictions, innovative thinking, and so on. They offer specific behaviors that represent these such as "integrates alternate, divergent or contradictory perspectives or ideas fully," and "extends a novel or unique idea, question, format or product to create new knowledge or knowledge that crosses boundaries." The rubrics are available to download for free from the AAC&U website and can be used to develop your own that address affect and values. These rubrics, along with others on the website, provide some suggestions for ways that creativity and collaboration can be assessed.

It is possible to assess aspects of student development that have previously been so subjective that we have not been able to truly assess them effectively.The AAC& U rubrics give a starting point for consideration of purposefully examining

more carefully how our students are meeting our stated outcomes in these particular areas.

Grades as Representing Percentage of Content Mastery: A Useful Source of Evidence

A complicated, often misunderstood, but critical part of student assessment is assigning grades. As faculty members, we assign grades for formative kinds of work, such as individual student projects, tests, papers, or other project work.

We also assign summative or final/overall grades for a unit, quarter, semester, or year. The general rule of thumb is that the grade should reflect a percentage of the content that the student has mastered.This, however, is much easier said than done. When one has good lesson and unit outcomes that are measurable with clearly stated expectations, this task becomes easier. However, creating a grading strategy that clearly articulates the relative percentage of mastery for different concepts can be very useful.

Much like the creation of the rubric in the examples on the previous pages of this chapter (which should represent a percentage of mastery for a particular project or lesson), to create a final summative grade that represents a percentage of mastery for a final grade, we need to expand the same idea further.That is, we need to determine the relative weight of each assessment and make sure that these weights truly represent the weight of the assignments in relation to the stated outcomes and content of the course.

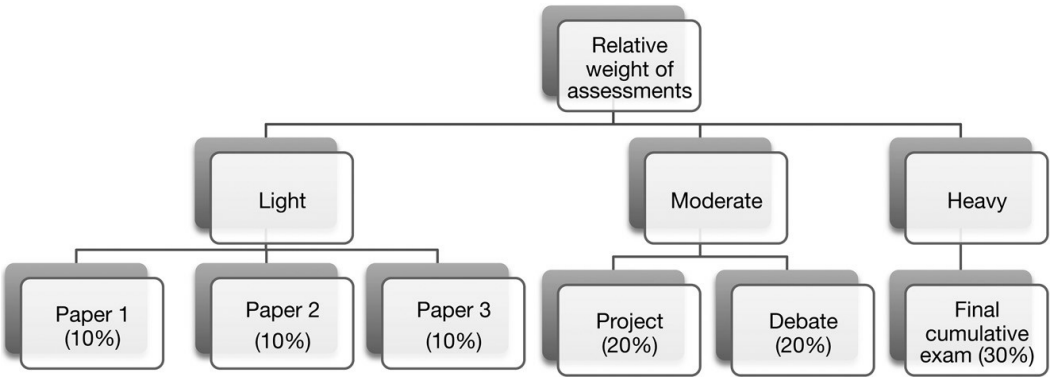

Figure 5.7

Now, rather than having four assessments, each given a grade of A, B, C, D, F or some percentage and the mean/average for all assessment represents the final grade, the grade will represent the relative weight of each task in relation to the

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stated course outcomes and content. A short paper that covers content from only a few weeks of the content for the semester, should reflect a percentage of the material covered (e.g., 10 percent). A formal debate that relies on the student drawing from about 20 percent of the content material should reflect that as a percentage of mastery. A good end-of-term exam or culminating project should require students to engage with all the major content/concepts of the course, and thus may weigh more heavily than smaller assignments combined. Consider the degree to which different assessments reflect a percentage of mastery of the course content, so the summative grade reflects what students have learned and achieved in a course.

Using Assessment Data to Inform Practice

When you have good formative and summative assessment data that accurately reflect instructional outcomes and carefully and explicitly examine student mastery of content, you can analyze this evidence both qualitatively and quantitatively to inform and improve instruction.

Students and teachers doing data analysis

We learn a great deal from our mistakes. However, we learn more from our mistakes if we are allowed time to reflect and process the mistakes we make. As students and teachers, we are naturally self-reflective about our performance, but we can improve our practice, and improve our content understanding and performance if we go through a purposeful strategy to analyze student performance on assessments, and perhaps even encourage students to go through the process too.

The following is a strategy that we might consider encouraging our students to complete to get them to use their own feedback on assessments as data:

1. Student engages in assessment task
2. Student reflects on performance of the assessment experience

specifically considering:

- What did I do well?
- What did I not do well?
- What needs more work?

3. Student considers: What can I do to improve and gain mastery on these

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concepts?

4. Student creates a specific action plan to improve/gain mastery.
5. Student may redo the assessment or similar assessment to see if s/he has improved.

See Figure 5.8 below, which shows this process for students (but the same process can be used for anyone, including teachers reflecting upon their lessons).

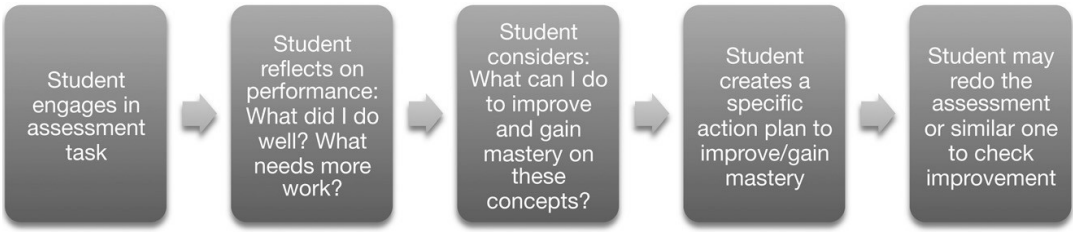

Figure 5.8

As college and university professors, we use a similar process when reflecting on assessment data and consider using assessment data in our classroom research projects:

1. Collect assessment data for all students.
2. Analyze the data for themes and consider the following questions:What did students do well? What did they do poorly? What kinds of mistakes did they make? What still needs to be done for them to achieve mastery?
3. Brainstorm possible strategies that could help—based on the data (perhaps what has worked well in the past, what specific issues students are having, etc.).
4. Create a specific plan to improve students' mastery.
5. Redo the assessment (or similar one) to determine improvement.

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Excerpted from *Doing Research to Improve Teaching and Learning*

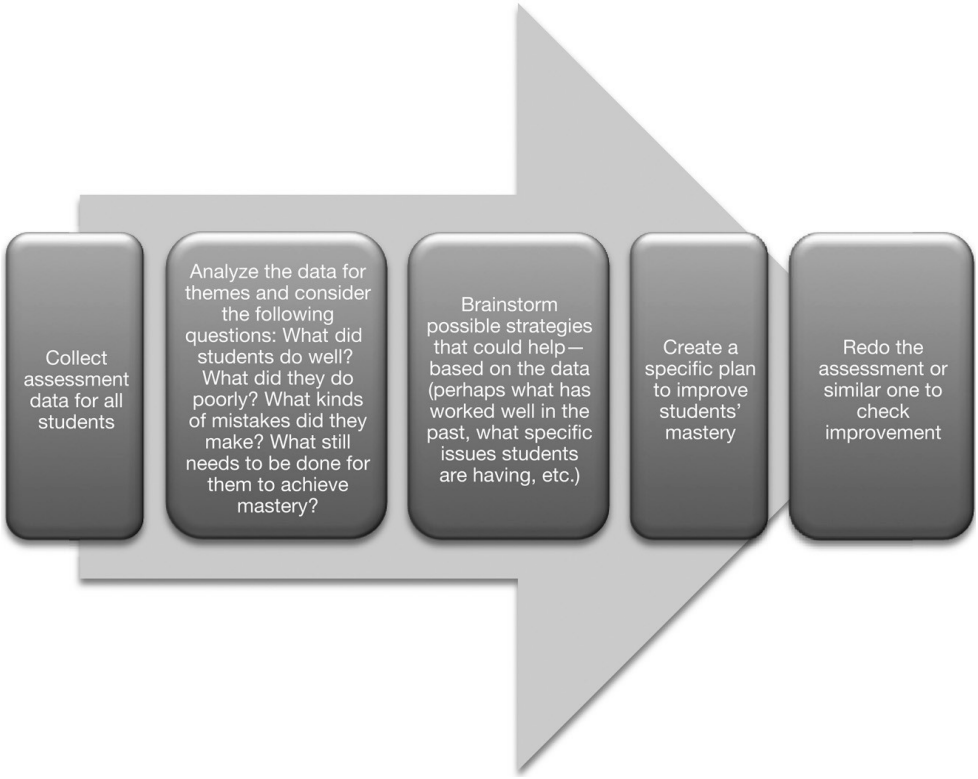

Figure 5.9

Students and teachers alike can go through this reflective process of using assessment data to inform and improve teaching and learning.This process can be used with exams, papers or any assessment task.Too often we see students get an exam or paper or project feedback and shove it in their backpack without ever looking at it again. In order to improve, helping students process the feedback they are given in a meaningful self-reflective way can be wonderfully instructive and lead to long-term learning. If we as professors use data from our assessments as feedback about our instruction, we can use the data to improve our teaching and student learning as we work toward student mastery.

Using good assessment for classroom research

Once one has created good educational outcomes and then designed good assessment grounded in those outcomes, using the evidence obtained from those assessments to inform the research project can be very useful.There are a variety of ways to examine this assessment evidence:

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- Analyze for common themes that emerge from your written feedback and feedback using rubrics.
- Track scores numerically on rubrics to include the nature of the mistakes, topics mastered by most, column and row totals for analytic rubrics.
- Use "question analysis" from exams—that is what questions were most often missed? Is there a common topic area that students missed? How were questions missed? By which students?
- Pay attention to the written feedback you give students and what you say to students in class and out, in one-to-one meetings during office hours, and before, during and after class. What kinds of questions do students ask about assessments? What kinds of answers do you provide?
- Make keen observations of the kinds of questions students ask about their assessment feedback and your responses (in class, during office hours, etc.)

When tracking student performance over time using a rubric for a writing task or writing improvement (as in the case of Emily Pollina's example) you may want to examine both qualitatively and quantitatively—that is, looking for themes as well as actual numeric scores as they shift and change over time. Make sure that your rubric is solid enough to reflect the kinds of changes you expect to see, and you let students know that they should see improvement and they will not be penalized as they are making improvements.This notion of mastery learning can be useful in the classroom—to encourage students toward mastery of skills or concepts and allow multiple chances to build mastery over time. This requires a shift in our traditional ways of teaching that allows students one opportunity to show what they know. If your goal is to work toward student mastery of class content, then providing feedback that allows students to learn from mistakes, grow, learn and aim toward mastery requires us to give thoughtful, regular, consistent and immediate feedback and student opportunities for revision and resubmission.

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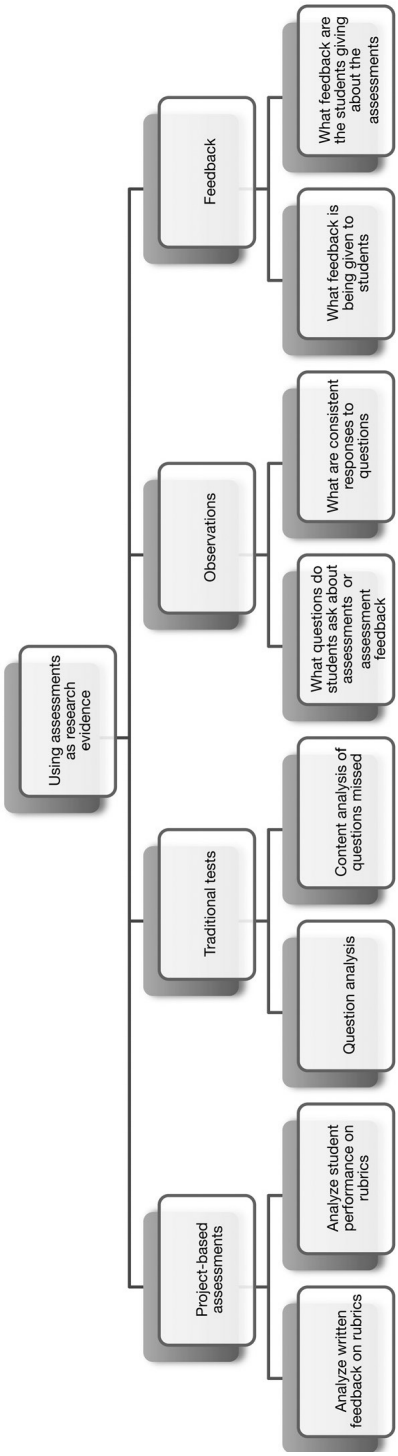

Figure 5.10

USING ASSESSMENT DATA AS RESEARCH EVIDENCE TO IMPROVE TEACHING AND LEARNING

If we use the data from these assessments and analyze them using qualitative and quantitative strategies identified in previous chapters, we can also revise and hone our courses to meet the needs of our learners.

In an interesting example of using student assessment data in the form of student compositions, Adem Birson in the Music Department explains a course he was teaching and the evidence he used to determine whether teaching composition alongside theory in music would help inform both.

Examples of Research from the Classroom

Engaging with Mozart: Using composition to teach music theory

Adem Birson

What I did and why

Most college students learn music theory from textbooks and are assessed for their musical aptitude based on written exams and homework assignments. My theory course was designed to help music majors engage with theory through practical application in performance, composition and improvisation at the keyboard. Since music theory in college specifically refers to European Classical music, a genre with which most current music majors are not very familiar, I believe that this form of active learning is essential for cultivating and maintaining student interest in music theory. Through performance, students would develop a familiarity with the Classical repertory their textbook only describes; through composition in the Classical style, they would begin to appreciate the creative process of this music, as well as take creative ownership over the quality of their musical work; and through improvisation, they would learn to conceive of music theory in terms of musical language in a stimulating real-time setting, my ultimate goal for the course. Since the keyboard was traditionally the theoretical instrument of the Classical period, and all composers trained, composed and improvised on the keyboard, I felt it most appropriate to focus on developing the aforementioned skills through the medium of the keyboard. As opposed to the traditional textbook model, I hypothesized that using music composition as the focal point around which the course revolved would not only be a more logical approach to the study of music, but also would enable the students to generate their own questions or aid in unexpected solutions to problems that are not necessarily addressed in theoretical textbooks.The students for my sections totaled five, and ranged from one to nine years of prior keyboard training.

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The repertory I selected consisted primarily of Classical-era keyboard minuets by the three most important composers from that period: Joseph Haydn, W. A. Mozart and Ludwig van Beethoven. I chose to use minuets, one of the most popular and widely- composed dance pieces in eighteenth-century European courts, because many eighteenth- century musicians and theorists (including Mozart himself) described the minuet as the most basic form for practicing composition, and recommended that beginners start by composing them. Having the students learn using these minuets was crucial in providing a constant source of reference for their own creative activity, as well as a crucial aid to the effectiveness of my teaching. Any time a student was having difficulty composing or improvising, we were able to refer to one of the minuets we had studied over the course of the semester to work out theoretical issues. The students asked meaningful questions, and I was able to offer them meaningful answers using an active learning model.

Using minuets also enabled me to provide the students with a simple mold into which they could pour their musical ideas, so to speak. A generic Classical minuet would normally consist of two sections, each eight measures in length, corresponding with what modern theorists have termed "binary form." Each of these two sections, moreover, is further divided into two sub-phrases of four measures each. I was thus able to use these small, subdivided sections to gradually build my students up to composing an entire minuet, step by step. Over the course of the semester I devised a series of ten, weekly composition assignments/assessments, which increased in complexity, from the smallest units of composition to complete musical forms such as the minuet. I gave students feedback on their pieces and analyzed their progress on these assignments. The advantage of this approach, however, was that it did not limit us to composing minuets alone. By the end of the semester, I had already got them to comfortably compose in other mediums, such as the theme and variations and the rondo, two types of composition that use the same building blocks of the minuet, yet extend well beyond the sixteen measures of a simple binary dance form.This practical framework, built on a foundation of repertory and the building blocks of musical form, also structured the improvisation element of the course, as students could think in terms of small phrasal units while being asked to invent their own music on the spot.

What I found

Over the course of the semester, I was able to gather data through empirical

observation/assessment of their in-class improvisation and performances, analysis and assessment of their weekly composition assignments, and a mid-semester evaluation I conducted just prior to spring break.The biggest obstacle to their achieving total musical fluency through the medium of the keyboard was their prior experience at the keyboard. The most advanced performers of the Classical minuets and the best improvisers were the students who had the most prior experience at the piano. The mid-semester evaluations provided further supporting evidence that those with less keyboard training seemed to enjoy the performance and improvisation course components the least, as the two students with less than one year of piano lessons ranked those two methods as a neutral three on a Likert scale survey ranging from one to five. The composition assignments were the most successful course component, as the students could take a week to work on their compositions without the stress of in-class improvisation or lack of keyboard skills in performance.These assignments took on a life of their own, as the students identified with and took pride in their creative work.The class became fun for them because they looked forward to sharing their music with their fellow classmates and me. In a free-response question on the mid-semester evaluation, four out of five students mentioned the composition assignments as one of the most effective aspects of the course. Furthermore, I was able to better assess whether they had satisfactorily understood a musical concept based on their ability to replicate it in composition than had they only been asked to define it on a written exam.

How these findings have informed/will inform my practice

I have been convinced that an active learning approach to music making in the music theory classroom is the most effective and engaging way to teach Classical music theory that I have experienced so far, both as a student and as a teacher. While music theory textbooks can be useful as a reference for vocabulary and terminology, the use of music, both pre-composed masterworks and spontaneous improvisation and composition in the Classical style, offered a more fertile learning ground for these undergraduate music majors. By semester's end, not only were they able to define all the theoretical terminology contained in music textbooks on more traditional assessments, they could perform a handful of Classical minuets, draw from a portfolio of their own compositions, and even attempt improvisation.These results, in my opinion, are outcomes far preferable to paper analyses of musical scores and written responses on examinations. In the future, I would hope to see more of an emphasis on creative musical production

from music majors in theory courses at the university level, and less of an emphasis on written definitions and traditional exams. Not only is it more effective as a pedagogical tool, it is something the students seem to appreciate and look forward to.

However, the range in prior keyboard experience was a factor that the course design was not able to overcome. The students who could already play piano performed far better in the repertory and improvisation course components, in spite of my efforts to get them all playing at a high level. That being said, all the students improved their theoretical understanding at the keyboard, and even those with little prior experience were able to use the course as a training ground for establishing their physical keyboard technique. In the future, however, I would have to reconsider how much emphasis I place on keyboard for the performance and improvisation components. Some of the students indicated other instruments, such as violin, flute, voice and guitar, as primary and I may find it more fruitful to allow them to utilize their more comfortable medium for more stressful activities like performance and improvisation. I would also weigh more of the total grade towards the composition exercises, since all students enjoyed and excelled at these assignments similarly.

We can see in Adem's example above that the assessments were useful sources of evidence: the compositions, the traditional assessments, and the student performances (including improvisation). This example is useful because it is important to see that not only are more traditional assessments useful, but so are more authentic performance measures and those where students are given opportunities to be creative. Even without rubrics, Adem was able to see what kinds of themes emerged from the student work. Sometimes when developing a rubric, allowing students the opportunity to complete a "trial" or pilot example of the assignment (without a rubric) can provide useful information about what students will do on their own without a specific grading rubric.This information can be useful when generating the rubric for the assignment for later groups. In Adem's case, students were asked to craft particular kinds of compositions, and he wanted to see what they would be able to do. He learned a lot in this pilot project about some of the challenges and what students could accomplish. This understanding may influence his development of a rubric in the future as he refines the assignment.

USING ASSESSMENT DATA AS RESEARCH EVIDENCE TO IMPROVE TEACHING AND LEARNING

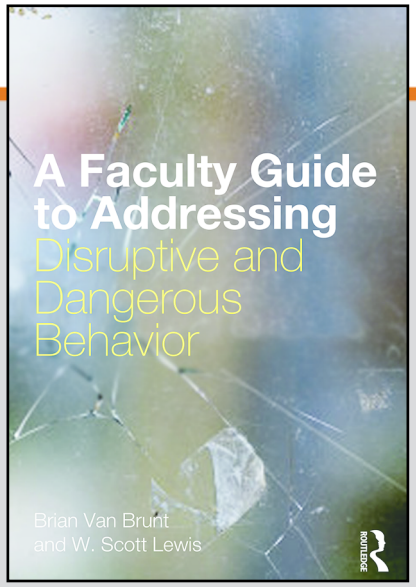
Excerpted from *Doing Research to Improve Teaching and Learning*

In conclusion, classroom assessments can provide rich data from which to conduct our classroom research projects—both the student performance on the assessments themselves and the feedback we provide on assessments. To be as effective a measure or evidence tool as possible, assessment should be linked to educational outcomes/objectives of the course. For example, rubrics should be aligned with task-specific outcomes and can be used to grade papers/essays/longer response answers on exams and provide feedback on presentations, projects, and performances. Good rubrics can show our feedback to students, and using these rubrics can provide useful data about the nature of feedback given, as well as an examination of student performance. More traditional assessment strategies, such as exams, should also be aligned with course outcomes and can be useful forms of data/evidence for classroom research. Comments on student work or observations of student interactions/discussions can provide useful evidence for classroom research as well, and the evidence from assessments can be analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively. In the next chapter, we will discuss ways of doing both qualitative and quantitative research strategies within the same project, and why this can be beneficial.

CHAPTER

4

HOW TO HANDLE AN EMERGENCY



This chapter is excerpted from

A Faculty Guide to Addressing Disruptive and Dangerous Behavior

by Brian Van Brunt and W. Scott Lewis.

Learn more

HOW TO HANDLE AN EMERGENCY

Excerpted from *A Faculty Guide to Addressing Disruptive and Dangerous Behavior*

WHAT IS THE NATURE OF AN EMERGENCY?

Imagine you are on fire.

This would be a good example of universal emergency, right? Pretty much everyone, regardless of gender, race or nationality would agree that being on fire would be an emergency. Unless, of coarse, you happen to work for Walt Disney World's Lights, Camera Action car chase stunt show and your job is to ride a motorcycle through a fiery oil slick and then run around in a flame retardant suit for the camera.

Talking about emergencies and crisis first requires a discussion about context, individual skills and experience. Take, for example white water rafting. White water rafting is best described as a kind of controlled chaos, as the river itself is never the same any two days you run down it. Varying water levels change the contours of the rapids; as do underwater rocks, holes and tree branches.

Despite the first rule of white water rafting, "do everything you can to stay in the boat," occasionally a participant may fall out of the raft on a particularly knarly hole or after coming over a house-sized wave. This event kicks the rafting guide into emergency mode. If the person who falls out is close to the boat when their bright orange life vest pops them back up to the surface, they are grabbed by the shoulder loops of the vest and yanked back into the raft. They often end up in a wet, panicked lump by the guide's feet. This kind of rescue typically inspires a more personal understanding of the first rule of rafting as well as surprising new loyalty and reverence for their savior, the rafting guide (they don't linger on the fact that it was often the guide's fault for hitting the wave at a slightly wrong angle that caused the person to be ejected like a cork out of a champagne bottle).

Sometimes the ejected person floats a bit further than the guide's arms can reach. In this case, the guide flips over his paddle to reach them. If they are still too far, the guide can throw an emergency bag (which holds 35 feet of rope).

If the guide still can't reach them, it's up to the training the participant learned early in the day about the importance of staying in the middle of the river with their feet up away from underwater entrapments until the boat comes closer.The simple act of falling out of a boat has a number of responses based on the severity of the event.

The process of rescue starts with a very important and very active decision on the part of the river guide. This is the moment where they identify that 1) something

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has gone wrong and 2) this something requires immediate attention. Everything else is secondary to the current emergency or crisis that is unfolding in front of us.

In the same way, the first step for a professor to handle a crisis or emergency in the classroom is to acknowledge that 1) something has occurred that is outside the normal process of teaching and 2) this something requires immediate attention.

One of most common and egregious mistakes professors make is failing to acknowledge the behavior in front of them constitutes an emergency. One reason for this may be shock. Another may be that the professor is overly focused on finishing the lecture or worried about getting all the material covered prior to the next test. Another common reason is that they may not be sure what they are supposed to do and they simply ignore the problem. A common reaction is to get upset and overly reactive to the crisis in front of them.

Imagine Mark is a student in your Art Theory class. Mark begins to publicly challenge you about a grade you have given him on his most recent assignments. Mark shouts to you in front of the class, "You don't have any idea what you are talking about, otherwise you would be out there being an artist instead of teaching at this two-bit community college. My work deserved more than a C, given the amount of work I put into it." After calmly telling Mark you would talk with him after class, he stands and continues "I'm not going to stop anything until you change my grade right now or explain to me what the hell you were thinking when you gave me this shit grade!"

A mistake many professors make in this scenario is to further engage Mark in a conversation about his frustration around his grade. This is a mistake for two reasons: one, because the professor is now arguing with Mark—this is never a good idea, as it allows the student to now control the context of the class for the day; and two, the professor has not yet acknowledged that Mark's frustration has shifted from discussing a grade to a conduct violation and threatening behavior. This scenario has shifted from a normal, everyday class discussion to a significant disruption, a potential crisis and emergency.

By not seeing this scenario as a potential or evolving "crisis," a professor may be tempted to engage Mark back and say, "I gave you that grade because . . ."; we trail this sentence off because any explanation of why the grade was given while Mark is escalating and in front of the rest of the class doesn't really matter, and was not on the syllabus as the topic for discussion for the day. The central issue that needs to be addressed is Mark's escalating, disrespectful and rude behavior.

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This is the same kind of behavior that parents must address first when their child is having a fit in the clothing store.

This is similar to the situation with Mark. Any intervention with him needs to focus first on ending the disruption and acknowledging the fact that the behavior is unacceptable. In some cases, the safety of the professor, the class and Mark himself would be more paramount—if the outburst gave indications of threat. This is followed with calm and clear directions to Mark to stop his behavior. If he refuses, the class should be dismissed and further steps taken, starting with calling the police/security (if necessary, e.g., the student won't leave or waits outside for the professor), and leaving a voicemail as well as an incident report for the Student Conduct Office.

Before moving on, however, let us be very clear and direct with you. If a student is escalating (and we will talk more in a moment about what that looks like), everything else needs to be put on hold until the disruptive behavior is addressed. Faculty must shift their focus from grades, class attendance, the content of the current lecture, etc., to the current disruption and potential crisis unfolding in front of them. All of these other concerns become secondary until the situation in front of you is resolved. This is not any easy process.

Some professors fall into bad habits when faced with a disruption. They automatically meet the student's aggressive, rude or entitled behavior with poor behavior of their own.They may freeze or ignore the behavior with hopes it will disappear. This is perplexing, as we know the behavior will not just "go away" if ignored. They may even overreact and involve the police or Student Conduct Office too soon or as their only response to disruptive behavior. We will discuss the "hows" of responding later in this chapter. But first, we need to insure that we are all on the same page about the importance of identifying the timing for the shift between a normal classroom experience, a disruptive situation, and an evolving crisis situation.

As we've mentioned earlier, we know people like lists.The problem with lists, however, is they rarely can contain all the possibilities. The list below gives you some examples of behaviors that require immediate attention from the professor. This attention requires the professor to shift from everyday lecture and teaching to making an active decision about managing the behavior in front of them. The intervention may require a direct approach or it may require a side (or future) conversation with the student. It may be something that is addressed as soon as it

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is observed (e.g., bleeding or screaming) or it may require a more subtle approach (observing a weapon in a student's backpack).The common thread for the list is each behavior requires an active decision on the part of the professor on how to handle the situation in front of them.

For example, a student upset with a grade expresses their desire, in no uncertain terms, to discuss this problem on the spot. They are told calmly but directly: "Jon, I understand that you are frustrated with your grade, but this is not what we are going to discuss today. I am happy to discuss this with you after class or during office hours." His response, as he sits back down, dejected and tears welling up: "Fine. But failing this test means I am done here. No scholarship, no job, and no home to go back to." He then puts his head in his hands and is clearly trying to hide his crying. The last part, combined with his demeanor and emotional response, tells us the situation is escalating. This also lets us know that waiting for him to contact me was no longer an option. A professor could take a "recess" and speak to him in the hall or opt to wait and catch him after class. A simple casual and clearly caring statement might work well to keep Jon together and redirect the conversation to a better time, "Jon, can you come up here for a sec before you head out? I have an opportunity for you that I think may help."

FACE TO FACE: SIGNS OF IMMINENT DANGER

Why is it important to focus on this switch from everyday life to the extraordinary situation in front of you? Identifying this point of transition allows the faculty member to more quickly establish the proper mindset in order to quickly respond and properly address the behavior presenting in your classroom. Faculty who are not able to transition from everyday teaching skills into the skills required to intervene with disruptive or dangerous behavior will not be as effective in achieving the desired outcome.

When training faculty across the country, we stress the importance of "being right, but also being punched in the head."These are the times when an instructor says "Well, Dylan . . . I am sorry you are upset, but it clearly says right here in the syllabus—that you have had since the beginning of the semester—that you cannot miss more than four of my classes and expect to still have a passing grade in this course . . ." While the instructor is certainly correct making these statements to the student, they may be missing the subtle changes in the student's behavior such as clenched fists, shifting back and forth and glaring eyes that signal an impending attack.

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Excerpted from *A Faculty Guide to Addressing Disruptive and Dangerous Behavior*

Likewise, a key to preventing disruptive behavior in the classroom from escalating requires that professors bring their attention and focus to bear on the existing behavioral problem. Too often, classroom management becomes a nuisance and frustration for the instructor and key questions are not considered in deference to getting back to the content lecture ASAP. When confronting disruptive behavior, some questions to ponder include:

- "Why is this student acting out right now? What might be some causes of their inappropriate behavior (talking out of turn, misuse of technology, rude or entitled response)?"
- "What are my goals for an intervention from this student? What is the desired outcome of my intervention?"
- "What kind of intervention with this student will bring about the desired effect?"
- "Is this a behavior I should address now or something I should address after class privately with the student?"

CLASSROOM BEHAVIORS THAT REQUIRE IMMEDIATE ATTENTION

- A student threatens the professor or another student in the class.
- A student brandishes a weapon or threatens to get a weapon.
- A student raises their voice or yells at another student.
- Disrespectful or rude behavior such as misuse of technology (texting, making or taking a cell phone call).
- A student is clearly intoxicated or appears under the influence of drugs in class.
- Writing and displaying to others obscene or inappropriate artwork.
- A student falls asleep in class.
- A student engages in self-injurious behavior such as cutting or punching themselves.
- A student pushes, hits or shoves the professor or another student in class.
- A student exposes himself or herself in class.
- A student engages in an odd, strange, delusional or psychotic rant or action

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(e.g., standing up and writing on the white board everything the professor says, talking to people who aren't there, etc.).

- A medical emergency such as fainting, a seizure or vomiting.

STUDY HABITS

I have an extensive background in teaching undergraduates. I have taught psychology courses related to abnormal psychology, testing and assessment, and mental health hygiene. I have also taught courses aimed at freshmen to help them make the transition to college life. In many cases, these courses are offered to "at risk" students and focus on adjustment, study skills, stress management, test anxiety and time management.

In my experience, most of the "at risk" students appreciated the tips and coping skills gained in the class. It helped them to successfully manage all the demands of their college experience through learning about campus resources as well as internal resources. Most students left the course with increased academic and personal confidence, including a higher level of maturity. However, some students were overwhelmed by their first year in college and the course provided them with little comfort.

Joel was considered one of these "at-risk" students. Joel was a first generation college student and entered the university after attending an alternative school for students with psychological and behavioral problems. Joel's participation in the class varied.

Sometimes Joel was actively involved, witty and charming, providing the class with much needed insights. Other days Joel was irritable and detached, refusing to participate in class.

While Joel generally got along with his fellow students, there were some very competitive students in the course. While returning exams to students, I put Joel's test on his desk. He had made a low "C" on the test. Being very boisterous, he vocalized his displeasure at the score. I asked him to talk with me after class if he was concerned about his grade. This seemed to appease him. However, one of the more competitive students mumbled something under his breath. While his words could not be understood it was clear that he was responding to Joel's outburst.

"What did you say, asshole?" Joel asked.

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Excerpted from *A Faculty Guide to Addressing Disruptive and Dangerous Behavior*

The offending student looked around to find everyone staring at him. He responded with, "If you would study for the tests you would make an 'A,' I bet you don't even try."

Joel slammed his book shut. "I did study," he said, adding "how much I study is none of your damn business."The other student escalated the situation by adding a comment suggesting that Joel was not smart enough to attend college.

This comment infuriated Joel and he stood up. "If you don't shut up, I'm gonna kick your ass," he said. The offending student, realizing that he had antagonized an unpredictable person cowered at his desk. The rest of the class sat silent and wide-eyed, watching me for my response.

"Joel," I said. "I can see you're really upset. Let's step out of the room and talk about this." Glaring at the other student, Joel followed me outside the classroom. My goal was to de-escalate the situation by building a sense of rapport with Joel and helping him put the other student's comments in perspective.

I began by informing Joel of the potential consequences of threatening or harming another student. I shared with him that the student made inappropriate comments and that I would discuss this with him. I also reiterated Joel's value to the class and added that I appreciated his participation and perspective. He agreed that he did not want to jeopardize his status with the university.

We then discussed his difficulty with anger. Joel sighed heavily and seemed to calm down. He explained that he did not know how to express anger and was following the example set by his father. I suggested that he see a therapist at counseling services for anger management therapy.

Joel suggested that he was almost too embarrassed to return to the classroom. I told him the issue was resolved and that I would communicate that to the class. My final action was to talk to the offending student after class and remind him that he acted inappropriately and must refrain from denigrating his classmates in the future. He nodded and left the classroom, his face red. I sighed in relief, thankful that the incident did not lead to a physical confrontation.

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HOW TO HANDLE AN EMERGENCY

Excerpted from *A Faculty Guide to Addressing Disruptive and Dangerous Behavior*

SIGNS OF ESCALATING AGGRESSION: WHAT TO LOOK FOR?

Now that we are ready to shift from everyday mode to emergency mode, let's talk about the process when a student moves from being calm, cool and collected to throwing things and punching people.While these behaviors are certainly more rare in the classroom, they do occur. Developing a more detailed understanding of how a student may escalate will provide faculty with a broader foundation to understand crisis events and potential dangerousness.

As a student becomes increasingly upset and escalates, they display a pattern of consistent behaviors and observable characteristics that faculty should develop a familiarity with in order to better identify a potentially violent episode in their classroom. John Byrnes (2002) coined the term Primal Aggression. This is an adrenaline-driven process and occurs as part of a biological reaction to aggression, the production of adrenaline, the increase in the heart rate and the resulting body language, behavior and communication indicators that we can identify and measure.This is similar to the concept of affective (reactive/impulsive) violence outlined by Meloy (2000, 2006).

Dr. Howard (1999) in The Owner's Manual for The Brain: Everyday Applications from Mind-Brain Research writes:

> A potential aggressor channels his appraisal into some form of coping. The strength of the reaction is a direct function of the validation of the threat and the degree of certainty that the threat will thwart an objective or a goal. It is the emotion of being threatened and the inability to cope with that threat that initiates aggression.The common thread throughout this process is the release of adrenaline. (pp. 353–354)

Drs. LeDoux and Amaral believe based upon their research that:

> learning and responding to stimuli that warn of danger involves neural pathways that send information about the outside world to the amygdala, an almond-shaped gray area in the roof of the brain's lateral ventricle. This area, in turn, determines the significance of the stimulus and triggers emotional responses like running, fighting, or freezing, as well as changes in the inner workings of the body's organs and glands such as increased heart rate. (Laur, 2002, p. 6)

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Threat and fear drive Primal Aggression and affective violence—it is the "fight" in "fight or flight."

Grossman and Siddle (2000) have conducted landmark studies, including peer review, on how aggression induces adrenaline's (or Epinephrine's) influence on the heart rate and its resulting body language, behavior and communication indicators. Let's see how this works.

Remember our example of Mark. He has already shouted once at you in front of the class and insulted your choice to teach at this school.You calmly intervene and invite him to talk to you after class. Mark shifts back in his seat and closes his textbook, fidgeting with his pen. He then pushes back from his desk, standing up taking a step forward into the aisle. He yells in a loud and harsh tone, "I'm not going to stop anything until you change my grade right now or explain to me what the hell you were thinking when you gave me this shit grade!" His face is flushed and his neck vein bulges. He clenches his fists as he rocks back and forth. He mutters to himself and his eyes dart around the room looking for other students who may support or challenge him.

Another male student says, "Dude, shut the hell up and sit down."

Mark responds by facing the student and paces back and forth between him and his desk. He swats his book to the floor. He stares fiercely at the other student and growls, "Do you have something to say to me, bitch?"

The other student lowers his head and mutters, "I will if you don't sit down and shut up." Other students in the class shift about nervously. Some nod and express support for the student who challenges Mark.

The adrenaline rushing through Mark's system has been well studied by Hart (1995) who has conducted significant work relating stress and anxiety to adrenaline. He illustrates that when an individual cannot cope with their anxiety, their mind perceives this anxiety as a threat. Coinciding with Dr. Howard's (1999) statement above, Dr. Hart concludes that at this point an individual starts to produce adrenaline, which triggers Primal Aggression.

Primal Aggression, in its extreme state, is a complete loss of control along with an accompanying rage or panic. This violence is fueled by the perception of frustration, threat, anxiety and fear. It is adrenaline driven, predictable and typically represents a progressive loss of control. Imagine a different student, Patti, who is frustrated about a parking ticket, or in conflict with her roommate about how to

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keep the room organized or what time they should wake up in the morning. She yells at the parking enforcement officer or she smashes the alarm clock against the floor.The resulting violence is reactive, immediate and often not well planned out. She did not plan to yell at the parking officer or smash her roommate's snooze alarm. This is the result of a progressive, biologically driven path towards physical violence. This is Primal Aggression. But, it is still a "path" (albeit a quick one)—one that can be tracked.

Luck, Jackson and Usher (2007) presented some interesting research in this area related to emergency department behavior and patients who subsequently became violent. They created a model, called S.T.A.M.P. that describes some of the same behaviors that accompany the primal aggressor prior to an attack.These include "Staring and eye contact, Tone and volume of voice, Anxiety, Mumbling and Pacing" (p. 14). They found these elements of observable behavior indicated the potential for physical violence. Mark demonstrates almost all of these.

Primal Aggression is based upon the primal instinct of fight or flight, fueled by adrenaline and characterized by someone losing control and ultimately attacking a victim. Caution should be practiced when responding to such an aggressor, since it is likely our own adrenaline will spike when faced with this threat. Faculty should control their own escalation as their aggression rises in response to a threat. A faculty member who simply responds with in-kind aggression will make the situation worse and find it quickly escalating.

Need a first-hand example? At the publication date of this book, there are dozens of videos of college students engaging in disruptive behavior in the classroom. Some of these video clips show students crossing over from disruptive to dangerous as police become involved in subduing the students. On March 18, 2010, Robyn Foster, a 24-year-old student at the University of Wisconsin- Milwaukee, was arrested in class following an argument with a professor about a grade. A student posted a You-Tube™ clip of the disruptive behavior and following arrest in the classroom (Esser, 2010). Jonatha Carr, a 24-year old from Florida Atlantic University, flew into a rage of yelling threats, punches and was eventually tased following a lecture on evolution.The behavior was also recorded and posted on You-Tube™ (Huffington Post, 2012).

HOW DOES THAT MAKE YOU FEEL?

Clara was counseling a male client during her Internship in Counseling that triggered her own experiences with ex-boyfriends.The client demonstrated an

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angry and defensive demeanor when talking about his romantic relationships with women that Clara responded to in her own defensive way.This response from Clara created an escalating, argumentative dynamic between her and this client that was not helpful or healing for him. I witnessed this dynamic through live supervision, and by viewing her tape in Internship class. I pointed this dynamic out to Clara. She agreed with me that this dynamic was occurring between her and this client, and disclosed that his anger reminded her of ex-boyfriends.

When I gave Clara a suggestion about how to handle this in an experiential, here-and-now way, she gave me reasons why that would not work with this client. I had experienced Clara responding to me this way several times before. She would hear my suggestion, and talk through the suggestion ten steps ahead and figure out a reason why it would not work. I thought the current issue with the male client was critical, so I continued to stress the importance of interrupting this dynamic. Clara became argumentative with me. A parallel process was occurring with the counseling relationship and supervisory relationship. I then felt a need to address the dynamic between me and her, of me giving her suggestions and her coming up with reasons it would not work before she tried it. Clara agreed with my observation of our relationship.The next session she had with that particular client, she addressed the dynamic between them in the experiential, here-and-now way. It went very well, and I believe it released the two of them from continuing in this pattern. I also believe it gave the client some perspective on how someone in a relationship with him may experience his anger. In my mind, a cool, parallel process occurred with not only the unhelpful dynamic, but with the addressing and releasing from it as well in both the counseling and supervisory relationship.

Clara's mid-term evaluation was scheduled for later this same week. Clara broached the relationship between her and me during this evaluation. She verbalized feeling there was a power struggle between us. Although I was surprised to hear her call it a power struggle, I too felt there was something between us that we needed to talk about. She also said she felt that my challenge to her in our last supervision was personal. I explained to her that it was not personal; rather it was part of supervision. I also told her that I tend to be non-hierarchical, and view supervision as a relationship, but that if anyone had the power, it was me who had it. This was a very difficult conversation to have, and Clara spoke to me in a way that I have not had any other student speak to me before. It felt disrespectful, but also felt very raw and honest. As difficult as it was, I was glad that we were able to both be open and honest about how we

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experienced each other. I felt like it was important for me to simultaneously communicate caring for Clara and establish my own credibility and power, since apparently that was in question with her. I shared with her that in order to successfully complete internship, and ultimately grow as a counselor, she would need to be receptive to feedback from myself, as well as other supervisors and her peers. It turns out Clara has a tendency and a desire to work independently and only ask questions when she feels she needs something. I explained that in the process of becoming a counselor, the feedback is ongoing, honest, and unsolicited, that she will not always know what it is that she needs at this point in her development.

Clara and my relationship improved. She became more open to feedback, and I learned to give her some time to process a session on her own before I would approach her to process it with me and give my feedback. At Clara's end of the semester evaluation, she told me she needed for me to challenge her in the way that I did in order for her to feel safety and respect in our relationship, and for her to grow as a counselor. I realized with Clara that the students I struggle with the most are often the most rewarding and growth producing experiences for them and myself.

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KEEP YOURSELF SAFE FIRST

Did you ever take a flight on an airplane where the flight attendant gives that little speech at the beginning about what happens if there is a change in cabin pressure? You know the one. It goes like this "In the event of an unexpected change in cabin pressure, an oxygen mask will drop from the ceiling. Attach the mask to yourself by pulling here and here. Then help others with their mask."

One of the first rules of emergency response is to keep yourself safe. No professor is being paid enough to tackle a disruptive student or wrestle a dangerous student to the floor. What's more, these courageous behaviors, while noble and likely altruistic in nature, are not part of a professor's scope of practice or job duties. We are not trained to disarm students or restrain them until the police can respond. Our first goal is to keep ourselves safe. Then we keep the other students safe. Then we keep the student causing the disruption safe. In that order.

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Excerpted from *A Faculty Guide to Addressing Disruptive and Dangerous Behavior*

A professor may offer up that they have some kind of advanced training in martial arts or self-defense. Perhaps someone reading this book right now has advanced military training in self-defense. Maybe someone has seen enough Star Trek episodes to master Mr. Spock's infamous Vulcan neck pinch and feels confident in its application. That is well and good. These skills, training and knowledge have no place in the classroom and are not part of an instructor's job duties. There are many reasons to not touch your students. Keeping yourself physically safe is an important one.

So, how do you keep yourself safe in a potentially dangerous situation? This can be easier to accomplish if faculty develop the proper mindset to manage the situation at hand. This has to be done prior to entering the crisis situation. It is better to approach the crisis in a calm, cool and collected manner.This allows the faculty access to the full range of options to manage the situation. When we allow a student to "push our buttons," we restrict our ability to manage the crisis at hand and limit the kind of interventions we creatively can bring to bear in the situation—a lot of times this starts with faculty taking the disruption or the statements made personally. Remember, even if they are saying personal things about you, they don't mean it. You just happen to represent whatever they are frustrated with at the moment. It may not even have anything to do with you.

John Byrnes (2002) suggests that as we allow ourselves to become escalated by the crisis in front of us, we go through a series of cognitive and biological changes. These changes make it harder to think of creative solutions and potentially lead us to reactive and poorly thought-out responses.

Byrnes suggests the process of cycle breathing to control the biological changes that occur when a student begins to escalate us.This involves breathing in slowly to the count of four, holding your breath for the count of two, breathing out slowly to the count of four and holding your breath for the count of two. The process can then be repeated (or cycled) several times to lower blood pressure, heart rate and allow the faculty member the ability to remain calm, cool and collected to better manage the situation at hand. It can even be done very subtly, so it doesn't look like you are trying not to come unglued (When done "too overtly," it can look—frankly—a little creepy; hence the importance of the next paragraph).

Breathing exercises and calming messages to focus your thoughts will work better if they are practiced prior to dealing with a potentially dangerous situation. These kinds of cognitive rehearsals are practiced by sports players before the big game,

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by professional speakers before an important presentation and musicians and singers before a performance.These methods are more likely to be successful if they are practiced and incorporated into ritual or tradition. Faculty can practice cognitive rehearsal prior to an emotional interaction with a student by practicing cycle breathing and the introduction of calming thoughts and normalizations. A student begins a long, off-topic, statement in the guise of a question during one of your lectures.You know you have a lot of material to cover and this student is notorious for making long, off-topic ramblings that frustrate you as well as other students in the class because they prevent you from covering all the material in that day's lecture.

Apply cycle-breathing:You remind yourself that the best way to address this student's off-topic statement is from a position of calmness.You take a minute to let them talk and quietly slow your breathing as you prepare to redirect the student with a relaxed, "I'm sorry to interrupt, but we do have a lot of material to cover today. Let's come back to this point if we have time." It is also better if you have covered this at the beginning of class.We let the students know that they never "have the floor," and that we may need to tell them to stop talking. Not because we disagree with them or don't value what they say, but that we may need to get on with the material, and we are more cognizant of the pace than they are.

Find calming thoughts: This process can involve the interjection of calming or peaceful images into your mind that are unrelated to the topic at hand.These can be images from your latest vacation or something that you are looking forward to in the future. This can also involve the interjection of calming, mantra or habitual phrases that help center your thoughts and allow you to remain calm in the face of adversity ("I should not take this personally . . ."). One of our favorite words is equanimity: the ability to have a sense of calm and patience in the face of adversity and chaos. Simply focusing on the term equanimity and what it means can be helpful in achieving some peace.Take a second to let the student vent, this often allows us to hear what the frustration is, and lasts only about 10–20 seconds (though it might feel longer).While we are listening, we practice cycle breathing, assess the behavior and situation, and tell ourselves what we need to do next. To be honest, we also are assessing escape routes, other "allies" in the room, etc.

Remember to normalize: Another approach to keep calm when facing a disruptive or dangerous student is normalizing their behavior. Imagine the student's behavior within the context of their background or experience. While it is reasonable to

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expect graduate students to have figured out the basics of common classroom courtesy, first year undergraduate students may have a bit of a learning curve when it comes to acclimating to the college classroom. Perhaps the student in question has just received some upsetting news and their behavior would be more reasonable if you fully understood the context of it occurring.This technique does not excuse the student from responsibility for their poor behavior. It is designed to help the professor understand to help defuse an emotional reaction to the student.

Mark is an example of this behavior when he yells at the professor and begins to escalate. The professor may start from the assumption that there is more in this situation—Mark is upset about or threatened by something besides a grade on an assignment. Perhaps Mark feels this grade is an insult to him as an artist. If that is the case, his reaction can be better understood as a response to an external threat to his ability as an artist, not just a poor grade on another assignment. Mark may, in fact, see this C as a final condemnation on his work and a vote of no confidence in his future career. This does not excuse his poor behavior or remove the need for an appropriate intervention by the professor. However if his behavior can be normalized and seen as a reaction to a direct threat to his ability to have a career in art, the professor will be better prepared to more calmly intervene.

It's easier for the professor to keep himself safe when he can approach the situation calmly with the full range of interventions to draw from. If the faculty member becomes flustered, has "his buttons pushed" and responds emotionally, he limits his ability to address the situation. This is true whether the professor is addressing a student who is speaking out of turn, underprepared for class or a student who is escalating threatening behavior.

PORN 101

You read it correctly. Who wants to openly discuss the life of a porn producer as an opening exercise (may be the opposite of "ice" breaker for sure) in the very first meeting of a graduate class? Not me, and perhaps not the rest of the class as well.

I have been teaching graduate school for over 25 years, encountering just about everything that happens to students while juggling the roles of student, worker, family member and, yes, now an aspiring porn producer.

Typically an easy exercise in which students identify their occupational "daydream" without the cumbersome restrictions of having the money or talent to do so, many aspire to acting, dancing, becoming athletes, curing cancer, being entirely

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philanthropic. And the list went on for a smooth 20 plus years until my porn producer showed up. Ouch.

"Does anyone in here watch porn, and how great would it be to be a producer of films? That's what I would be, think about it." All eyes rolling or now looking at the floor, and I can do neither . . . it's my class. Ignore? Engage? Challenge? Most likely, at that moment, it would be like stepping in quicksand, sinking slowly, and no one's around with a branch to pull me out.

Enter in all my savvy training in crisis response (stay calm); how to work with disruptive and offensive students in class (alleviate any escalation of topic that incites or creates danger); and assess the reality of the situation.

OK—it deserves a reality check—two word answer "for real?" I ask Mike (not his real name). "Yeah, for real, and I just wanted to get a rise from the class, get it?" Quicksand, I jumped in. Silence in the class.

Utilizing all my skill sets in teaching, I made direct eye contact (we are sitting in a round circle) with him and profoundly said "Thanks Mike" and moved to his neighbor and asked, "what's your daydream?" Disaster averted, but you had to know not for long.

Indeed, I could have confronted the issue of it being inappropriate, sexist, degrading to women and the danger that lurks for relationships—but a vacant look and challenge let me know it simply was not "to get a rise" but to satiate some other need.

It was the beginning of a long, arduous relationship for Mike, the class, and I. The consistent off-beat comments, inappropriate discussion in small group work and generally bizarre behavior are clearly not acceptable in class. Beginning with the very first class, I connected with Mike to meet with me during office hours. I engaged the department chair to join us as well. Trying to help educate Mike as to acceptable classroom decorum went nowhere—so the paper trail began after the second meeting, ultimately having Mike removed from the class and eventually the program in which he was enrolled.

It's clear we have to at least attempt to support any student's quest to complete their education. Assist with what we can, and then the issue becomes, in the end, a matter for student conduct, and sometimes with police involvement on your campus.

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Excerpted from *A Faculty Guide to Addressing Disruptive and Dangerous Behavior*

That being said, we need to remain prudent in how to manage classroom activities and protect the integrity of all students, at times at the expense of their fellow students. It was important for me to remember that; and to engage others (faculty colleagues, chair, dean, student conduct, etc.) so the road I take with students will be well traveled.

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PREPAREDNESS, SELF PRESERVATION, BACKUP

It's the Scout motto. Be prepared. Don't wait until the crisis is happening to make sure you have the basics down when it comes to being prepared.To that end, here are some merit badges instructors should have lined up before facing an emergency in the classroom:

1. Location, Location, Location:While helpful in selling real estate, finding a good location within the classroom is also essential to handling an emergency. Don't get yourself blocked into a corner with no exit. Be aware of the exit to the classroom and avoid creating a conflict in front of the exit. Know where the "geographic center" of the room is. Know where the exits are— all of them—to the room and the building.

2. Know Your Backup: Know who you need to call for backup. If a situation goes chaotic in your classroom; who are you going to call? Do you have the number for campus safety on your phone? Is your phone charged? Does calling 911 reach campus safety or the state police dispatch 30 miles away? Are police on campus the same for a class at 2 p.m. on a Tuesday afternoon when compared to 8 p.m. during a Wednesday night class? Is there another classroom or instructor close to assist in the situation? Do you know how to reach your Student Conduct Office? Do you know how the BIT and/or Threat Assessment Teams (TAT) work and how to best report to them?

3. Mental Health Resources: Who can you call on campus for advice or consultation related to mental health problems—and not on your campus do you know the community resource? The community emergency access points? What is the phone number(s)? When are they available? Can you walk a student over to their office or will they come to you? As with any

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emergency situation, these are things you need to know prior to the crisis event. Take the time to get to know your local mental health resources, either on campus or in the larger community.

4. Enlist a Confederate: Early in your class, choose a student or two to assist you in the event of an emergency. This conversation should take about five minutes after your first or second class. It could go something like this:

Given all of the worry about campus violence, I wanted to pick you two students in my class to leave and call the police in the event an emergency situation occurs. If I need you to do that, I will give you a nod or ask you to bring this file out to my car. Either of these is a sign to go get some help. Are you OK doing this for me?

This may be difficult and take more than the first class to choose two responsible students—be sure you connect with someone trustworthy.

5. WhoWill Make ThisWorse? Assuming you have had some time to get to know your class, assess who may make a crisis situation worse. This could be a student who is prone to overreaction and hysteria. It could be a student with mental health problems who doesn't deal well with stress. It could be a student athlete who challenges the disruptive student back that escalates the situation violently. Identify these factors in your classroom and attend to them as you address the disruptive/dangerous behavior. And remember, prevention, prevention, prevention: lay out expectations and how to manage frustration at the beginning of the term. This is critical, and will serve you well.

6. Who Will MakeThis Better?What students in the classroom will have a positive impact on others during a crisis? Who can you lean on for support, agreement and to move the situation toward a more positive outcome? This may be a student who you can engage in a conversation to calm down the disruptive/dangerous student.This could be someone you could leave in charge of the discussion while you talk with the disruptive/ dangerous student alone in the hallway (assuming you are able to do this safely). This may also be someone you know to be the student's friend or colleague; all the more reason to get to know your class.

"Being prepared" means thinking about crisis response and emergencies in the classroom prior to their occurrence. The best time to find the counseling center phone number isn't when you are sitting across from a suicidal student after class.

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Faculty should find emergency numbers and give thought about whom they would call or contact before the problem behavior occurs. While this may seem like common sense, many faculty become overwhelmed with course preparation and getting ready for a new semester and may neglect this.We encourage faculty to spend time checking in with the student conduct officer, campus police, health or counseling services to make sure they have the emergency numbers entered into their cell phones. We encourage instructors to have the campus or comMunity resources listed on the syllabus.

This concept of being prepared is even more important for faculty who are teaching after-hours, in an adjunct capacity or at a community college. Resources may be even more limited in these scenarios, requiring more investigation and research to determine who to call and how to access help in an emergency.

At the risk of preaching to the choir, another useful aspect of being prepared is both thinking and reading about classroom crisis, disruption and dangerousness before you encounter these events in your classroom. Luckily, you have an excellent resource in your hands right now. Another approach may be faculty development workshops, conferences or simply having conversations with an experienced faculty member who may have advice for newer faculty when addressing disruptive or dangerous behavior.

Consider developing tabletop exercises and discussion topics to be included in faculty orientation and in-service trainings.These scenarios and exercises need not be long or wordy. Some examples of discussion topics are provided at the end of the chapter.

WHAT MAKES THEM TICK? MOTIVATION AND CRISIS

We alluded to this concept a bit in the previous sections on normalization, but wanted to clearly stress the importance of understanding the motivation of a student who engages in disruptive or dangerous behavior as a central tool in the selection of an intervention technique to address the behavior.

DON'T EAT THAT

I was in a master's level class with a professor who taught in an adjunct capacity for Salem State College. The professor also happened to work in the local high school guidance department. One night, as I rushed from work to my 6:30 pm class, I stopped to grab a salad and bring it to class. I remember about fifteen minutes into class the professor become increasingly upset at me, glaring at me (with what

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Mr. Potato head from the movie Toy Story might call his "angry eyes") and then proceeded to embarrass me, saying "I can't believe you are eating in this classroom. How dare you." Everyone was silent and you could hear a pin drop.

My response was one of immediate shock and shame. I threw away the rest of the salad and sulked back into my chair. Others whispered under their breath about the professor, "What's his problem?" This occurred early in the semester and the incident contributed to the entire class losing faith in the instructor. This led to many students writing letters to the department head and the complete breakdown in the usefulness of this class.

While this is an extreme example of what can happen when a professor publicly embarrasses or is seen attacking a student, I think there are several lessons that can be learned from this. The first is his overreaction to me eating in class. This most likely comes from some expectations that he feels extremely strongly about but had not clearly expressed. He undoubtedly saw me eating in his class as an extremely disrespectful action. From my perspective, most night professors in this non-traditional master's program allow food in their class. They understood students were often leaving working and coming to class without first stopping at their homes. In my case, this incident occurred early in the course and his rules about eating in class were not mentioned in the syllabus or during any of our class meetings.

Regardless of my intentions, I can imagine his initial reaction was "I shouldn't have to tell students not to bring food into the classroom. It is common sense." He might think this way since his primary job working with high school students had firmer boundaries in terms of where and when food was allowed in the classroom, what could be worn in class or that people need to raise their hands to ask questions.

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Director of Counseling and Testing Western Kentucky University

The professor in Van Brunt's From the Trenches story would have been much more effective if he had simply talked to him at break or asked him to stay after class to discuss his feelings about food in class. It is likely the event would still have been upsetting for Van Brunt, but he likely would have felt less embarrassed and attacked and responded with apologies or perhaps attempted to explain why he had brought the food (e.g., rushing from work to class, assuming it was allowed because it had been in other classes). He would have respected his approach and the situation could have led to a closer relationship in the future.

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The problem is twofold on the part of the professor. First, he had a clear and strong belief about classroom etiquette that he had not communicated to the class. Whatever his feelings about food in the classroom, wearing of hats in the high school or raising your hand if you had a question, they are better explained in the syllabus.The second problem was an assumption that the student was intentionally disrespecting him and made this choice in direct opposition to his expectations. Neither of these assumptions was correct.

TECHNIQUES OF MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING

Motivational Interviewing, or Motivational Enhancement Therapy (MET) was developed by Miller and Rollnick (2002) and used primarily with mandated alcohol treatment to help people change addictive behavior. Their approach is useful when there is disconnect between the goals of the therapist and client, or in our case, between the professor and the student. It is an adaptable approach to working with those who haven't yet recognized their behavior needs to change. Five key concepts make up the foundation of motivational interviewing.

We will discuss five techniques that exist within the MI toolbox. These are meant to be used based on need and do not have a hierarchical application.

The expression of empathy involves a conversation with the student that attempts to both understand his perspective (empathy) and communicate an understanding of that perspective (expression of empathy). This expression of empathy respects the student's point of view, freedom of choice and ability to determine his own self-direction. Suggestions for change are subtle from the instructor and the ultimate change is left up to the student.

Imagine a student, Marceline; frustrated with a grade in class, she stays after to talk with the professor about her experience.

> Marceline [rageful]: "There is no WAY that I answered this question wrong. I clearly answered this based on the material YOU told us to study in class. I am so angry I could spit!"
>
> Professor: "I can see you are upset. I remember how frustrating that can be, studying really hard and not getting the answer correct.What part of the grade do you feel was inaccurate?"
>
> Marceline [shaking the paper]: "Right here!"

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Professor: "Oh, I see. You answered this without correcting for the error. That was covered during a previous test. I know for me, I sometimes become so focused on the new material, I can overlook something I learned before."

Marceline [sullen]: "You said this exam would only cover the material in current chapters."

Professor: "Well, like I said, I can certainly remember what it was like to have to juggle all of these things. It's early in the semester for you and you'll have a chance to pull your grade back up. In fact, this one section you got wrong really didn't pull your grade down very much at all."

Marceline [defeated]: "I suppose."

Professor: "Well, how about this. Take your test home with you over the week. Explain which answers you got wrong and what the correct answer was. If you do that, I'll give you some extra points to help make the hole you are in not as deep."

Marceline [hopeful]: "Really? That would sure help. Thanks."

Developmental of discrepancy is the process by which a professor helps a student understand that their current behavior won't help them achieve their desired goal. The professor explores with the student the consequences of their actions in a neutral manner avoiding sarcasm or a condescending tone. The student should become aware of their choices and begin to explore the advantages to choosing a different way to interact.

Imagine Jake, who looks upset.The instructor asks him to step into the hallway during a group study session and asks what is wrong.

Jake [explosive]: "I can't even tell you how freakin' pissed off I am right now at you! My resident advisor just caught me for underage drinking . . . which is total bullshit, by the way . . . why can I go off to war and kill someone for my country and I can't freakin' have a beer is beyond me. But then I just got this letter telling me I have to go to an eight o'clock alcohol and drug class for six hours each day this Saturday and Sunday? Are you kidding me? How am I going to study for your exam and deal with all of this?"

Instructor: "Well, let me see if I understand what's going on first so I can try to help? OK? Can I see the letter you have there?"

HOW TO HANDLE AN EMERGENCY

Excerpted from *A Faculty Guide to Addressing Disruptive and Dangerous Behavior*

Jake [still upset]: "Here. I just don't get this place. Half my friends are from England and they can drink when they are eighteen. It just makes no sense to me. And this class! [escalating again] There is no way I'm going to that. No freakin way!"

Instructor [takes the letter and pauses]: "Listen, I want to help you. I hear what you are saying about the drinking age in this country. I really do. But it's hard for me to read this and take the time to try to help if you keep yelling at me. Also, I have the whole class going on in the other room. Can you let me try to help you?"

Jake [looks down]: "Yeah, I'm sorry. I just have so much to do and I don't know where to start."

Instructor: "No problem, I just want to try to help you out. From this, it looks like from this the process was pretty quick and they aren't giving you a lot of notice about the class. While I don't have much I can do about you having to take the class—it should be pretty easy to request another date since you only had two days' notice. Maybe they thought they were doing you some kind of favor getting the class out of the way sooner, I'm not sure. Another option for you is to appeal the class altogether if you think it isn't fair or an overreaction for what happened. I can help you with that and the request for the date change if you want."

Jake [less angry, more optimistic]: "Well, that would sure help. I didn't know I could appeal this. I mean, I was drinking, so I get that I broke the rule. I just thought it was too quick to force me into the class. I have so much going on right now."

Instructor: "I get that. It makes sense."

Jake [grateful]: "Yeah, that would be great. Thanks. Sorry I lost my cool with you."

Instructor: "No worries, why don't you call their office or send the Dean an email and ask them for an appointment and explain your situation and that you want to take the next available class. I am happy to go there with you if you would like or you can copy me on the email in case they have questions about how this might affect your work in my class. Until then, why don't you settle back into your study group and I'll be right back in."

HOW TO HANDLE AN EMERGENCY

Excerpted from *A Faculty Guide to Addressing Disruptive and Dangerous Behavior*

The third technique of motivational interviewing is called avoiding argumentation. This is probably the easiest technique to understand, but the most difficult to put into practice. When you argue back to the student who is arguing with you, neither of you are listening to each other. Let's say that again, if a student is arguing with you and you argue back, they are not listening to you. They are thinking of a retort to what you are arguing. So, don't do that. It doesn't help. Be clear about your expectations and follow through with consequences of the student's behavior.

A student, Ward, uses his cell phone in class.The professor confronts him after class.

> Ward [defiant]: "I needed to check my cell phone in class. I'm sorry about that. I didn't have any choice. It went off and I had to check the text message. It's not like I could do anything else."
>
> Professor [BAD RESPONSE]: "Wha ? Are you serious? There are so many other options you had to avoid this problem from happening. First you could have turned off your phone, as I require in the syllabus you received during the first day of class. If it did go off and you had some kind of emergency like someone was in the hospital, you could have excused yourself from class and checked the phone in the hall so you didn't disturb everyone! And given that you didn't get up and leave class after you texted back to whoever it was that called you, I'm guessing there wasn't some kind of earth-shattering event you had to attend to, right?"
>
> Professor [GOOD RESPONSE]: "I'm sorry, Ward. But I'm pretty clear on my cell phone policy in class. I don't want to argue with you about it. If you have your phone go off in class, I deduct ten points off your next quiz. If there is an emergency, you should let me know about the possibility if you can and, after I know, you can leave your phone on so you could see it, and then, if you needed to, check it in the hall."

The fourth technique is called roll with resistance. Faculty are encouraged to avoid meeting a student's resistance to change head-on. Instead, they should try to engage the student in new ways of thinking about the situation. Perhaps trying to evoke new solutions to the conflict from the student. Lack of motivation or an unwillingness to change and be positive are understood as normal developmental responses and interventions are designed to avoid becoming mired down in the students' lack of developmental growth and personal responsibility to change.

HOW TO HANDLE AN EMERGENCY

Excerpted from *A Faculty Guide to Addressing Disruptive and Dangerous Behavior*

Finn [demanding, yelling]: "I need to talk to you about your viewpoints. I am furious that you shared your political views with the class. I think that is total bull.You used your influence to share your views with the class. [bangs hand on desk] And I'm here to hold you accountable!"

> Instructor: "Well, I'm glad you came in to talk with me today about it. Many times students get upset or frustrated about a problem with something I said in class and end up just keeping it to themselves. I'm glad you came in and are giving me a chance to deal with it. I want to be able to help you today. Can you calm down and let me do that for you? If you need to take a moment to step outside and calm down, I would understand completely. I will still be here when you get back."
>
> Finn [mad, but slightly calmer]: "I don't need to go outside.You can't do anything to fix it. The election is over and you already spread your thoughts out and changed how students thought about this. I'm not OK with that and I don't see what you are going to do to fix it."
>
> Instructor: "Well, for what it's worth, I hear what you are saying.You feel like the cat is already out of the bag. And you are right. I can't do anything to change the course of the election; that is over. But what I can do is listen and try to understand your point of view. Perhaps that will help me see things the way you do and I can change my behavior in the future."
>
> Finn [quieter, embarrassed]: "Yes. Sorry . . . I just got upset."
>
> Instructor: "That's OK. I've been upset before and I understand. Now why
>
> don't you tell me more about what I said that got you upset?"

Once Finn calmed down it would be advisable for the staff to continue the Conversation privately—even in email—with Finn about his behavior, raising his voice and banging his hand.This behavior could be forwarded to the conduct office if it was a concern or Finn began to escalate more. In an ideal situation, Finn would apologize again for his behavior and perhaps express some remorse and consider ways to behave differently when upset in the future. If Finn begins to escalate again, it would be advisable for the staff to end the conversation quickly to avert another crisis and report the incident to the conduct office or BIT/TAT. Here there may be some kind of further meeting or intervention with Finn around his behavior.

HOW TO HANDLE AN EMERGENCY

Excerpted from *A Faculty Guide to Addressing Disruptive and Dangerous Behavior*

The final technique of motivational interviewing we will discuss is supporting self-efficacy. This involves helping the student understand that change is possible and there is the opportunity for a better outcome in the future. Staff and faculty encourage and nurture growth in the student, finding times and opportunities to "catch them doing well" and praising this behavior with hopes of shaping future positive behavior.

Professor: "Pendelton, can you stay after and speak with me for a moment."

Pendelton [worried, he stays]: "I'm sorry I was talking to Jessica again, she just started dating a guy in a Fraternity and wanted to talk to me about it. I know you've talked to me before about my attention in class."

Professor: "Actually, I didn't notice you talking to Jessica. So you must be hiding that better than you think. [both smile] What I wanted to say was that I appreciated you getting to class on time all this week. I know I talked to you last week about coming in late and interrupting the lecture and I wanted to thank you for taking my concerns to heart and making an effort to be here on time. I appreciate it."

Pendelton [a bit surprised]: "Oh, well . . . oh. Thanks. I mean you're welcome. Thanks. I'll keep it up."

Professor: "Thank you. I'll see you at our next class."

QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION

Here are some additional questions about keeping yourself safe, being prepared and using motivational interviewing techniques. These questions are useful for self-reflection or to assist in facilitating a group discussion during a faculty training or orientation session.

1. Think about a time you felt threatened or unsafe around a student. What kind of steps did you take to ensure your safety? The safety of other students in the classroom? What could you have done differently given the advice in this chapter?

2. We mention five techniques useful in the application of motivational interviewing. Which do you find most helpful in your day-to-day interactions with students? What are some ways you have persuaded students to behave differently in your classroom?

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3. It can be helpful for professors to understand their own motivations as well as assumptions they may make about a student's behavior. What are some of the misconceptions you have had about students? What kind of past behavior from other students impacted your thoughts on the student you had misconceptions about?

4. Consider using some of the following scenarios to begin a discussion with your fellow faculty and brainstorm how you might handle the situation at your campus.

- A student continues to use their cell phone for text messaging in class despite several requests over the past weeks for them to stop. How might you handle the situation? What are the benefits to having a private conversation with the student after class? What kinds of technology rules are included in the syllabus at the start of class to get out ahead of this problem?

- Several students engage in cross talk during your lectures in the back of the classroom. They are not talking about the lecture material and continue to engage in this behavior despite being asked to stop. The course is in introductory psychology and about half the students in the class will not take another psychology course in the future. What are some ways to engage the students who might not be interested in psychology? How could the entire class discuss this kind of crosstalk at the start of the semester?

- A student in your class shares some upsetting comments related to race and/or gender. The comments enrage others in the class. The scheduled topic is left behind and several in the class are escalating their behavior. How would you handle (e.g., clam down) the acute crisis unfolding?

- A student shows up to class smelling strongly of alcohol, trips as they sit down at a desk and then pulls a hoodie jacket over their head as you begin your lecture. How might you handle this behavior in the classroom?

- A student shares during a class discussion that they frequently cut themselves to deal with their anxiety, take several anti-depression

and mood medications and have suicidal thoughts everyday. How do you handle this disclosure made to the entire class? What steps might you take to ensure their safety in terms of talking to them after class and potential referral?

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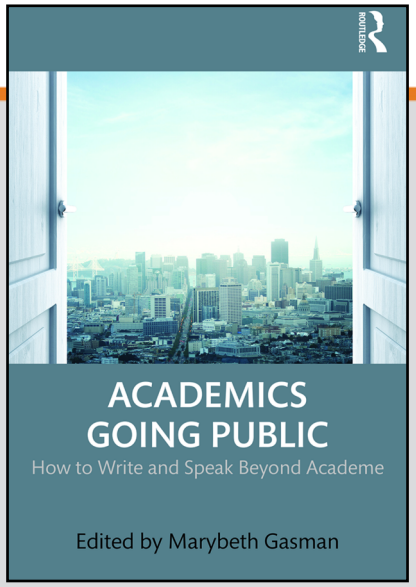
- A student decides to share their HIV positive status in classroom introductions. How do you handle this disclosure made to the entire class? How may this impact your next class lecture? What if other students no longer want to remain in the class? How will you manage parents' inquiries?

CHAPTER

5

USING SOCIAL MEDIA TO PROMOTE SCHOLARSHIP

AMPLIFY, MAGNIFY, CLARIFY



This chapter is excerpted from

Academics Going Public: How to Write and Speak Beyond Academe

Edited by Marybeth Gasman

Learn more

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Excerpted from *Academics Going Public*

In the computing world, scientists often talk about the singularity – the concept that technological advances take place at an exponential, rather than linear, rate. Regardless of whether you work in technology or not, you've witnessed this – and it's the precise reason why your computer or smartphone is obsolete much faster than it was ten years ago. Perhaps this is best observed in the arena of social media. When a classmate of mine at the Harvard Graduate School of Education suggested I join "the online Facebook" back in 2004, I thought it was a neat idea but not terribly practical. A decade later, Mark Zuckerberg's creation boasts 1.32 billion active users – that's one sixth of the world's population! And while many Facebook users spend time posting Internet memes and sharing pet photos, there are robust intellectual communities emerging on a daily basis. Simply put, a social media presence is a 21st century literacy, much like having access to traditional media was in the late 20th century. Too often, however, scholars are on the periphery of this phenomenon. The intent of this chapter, therefore, is to provide insight regarding how academics can utilize social media to draw attention to their scholarly contributions, highlight when one's research is shared in traditional media, and contribute to robust conversations on topics of note. Or, in a Twitter-friendly 140 characters or less, how to amplify, magnify, and clarify scholarship via social media.

The Lay of the Land

It's often said that the worse reason to do something is because everyone is doing it – but social media might be an exception. In 2014, 74 percent of online adults used social media. With the exception of age, usage is fairly consistent across gender, educational attainment level, and income level. When it comes to race, Blacks and Latinos actually lead Whites in their use of social media on mobile devices.

What social media sites are most utilized by online adults? The figure below illustrates that Facebook is the runaway favorite, followed by a fairly equal distribution among LinkedIn (a business-oriented networking site), Pinterest (a visual discovery, collection, sharing, and storage site), Twitter (a microblogging service), and Instagram (a mobile photo-sharing, video-sharing and social networking service). Of these top five, the oldest is LinkedIn, established in 2002, and the most recent are Instagram and Pinterest, established in 2010. In other words, nobody reading this in 2016 "grew up" with these social media sites – they literally became part of the media fabric overnight.

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Specifically, what is the impact of social media on the academic community? It is very similar to online adults generally. In 2013,

70.3 percent of faculty reported using social media for personal purposes, and 55 percent reported using social media in a professional context – a portion that has grown 11 percent from 2012. To drill down deeper, let's take a look at Twitter, one of the top 10 most visited sites on the Internet, sometimes labeled as "the SMS of the internet." A 2009 survey of 2,000 faculty members revealed that 30.7 percent of faculty surveyed use Twitter, while 56.4 percent did not, with most reporting that they used Twitter for news/trends and networking with colleagues. A more recent study on a sample of 1,600 researchers revealed that only 15 percent reported using Twitter; 28 percent used YouTube, and 39 percent used Facebook.

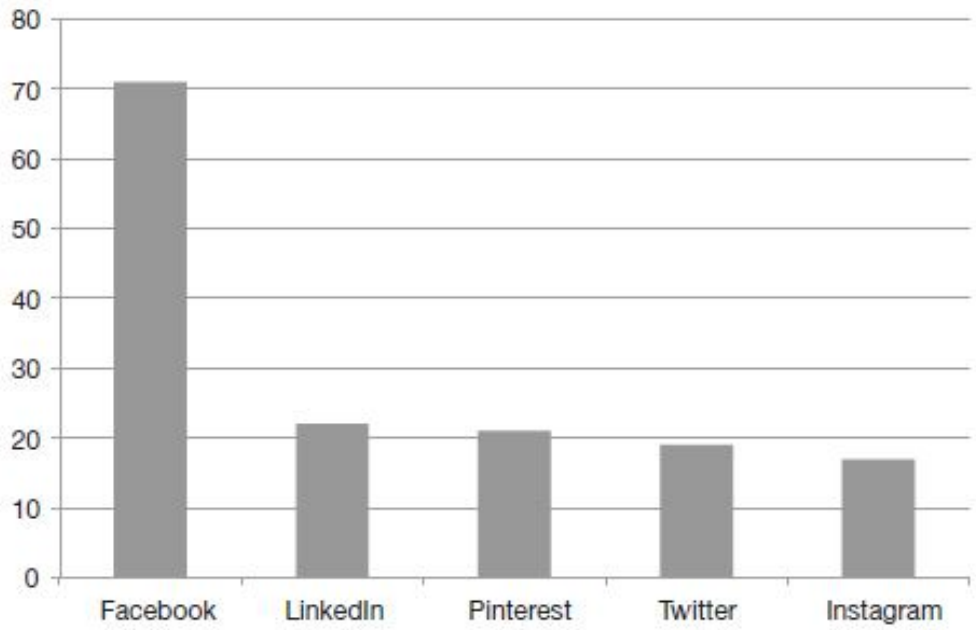

Figure 5.1 Social media usage of online U.S. adults, 2013

Source: Pew Research Internet Project, "Social Networking Fact Sheet," http://www.pew internet.org/fact-sheets/social-networking-fact-sheet/ (accessed October 24, 2014).

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The Hazards of Social Media Engagement

What this reveals is how the academic community seemingly dichotomizes social media use. In their personal lives, scholars seem to embrace social media at similar rates to other online adult populations – but when it comes to using social media for professional purposes, academics seem to be hesitant to engage with these platforms. There are undoubtedly manifest reasons why, but I'm certain one has to do with very public misuses and missteps with social media, and Twitter in particular. Geoffrey Miller, a University of New Mexico professor, found himself in the middle of a media firestorm for sending a fat-shaming tweet in June 2013; he was eventually censured by the university for claiming the tweet was part of a study. Perhaps most famously, in the summer of 2014 Steven Salaita, a Virginia Tech professor, was offered an appointment at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, but later was notified by the university chancellor that his appointment would not go to the university's trustees – after he had resigned his position at Virginia Tech. The speculated reasoning for the revocation of the offer centers on Salaita's Twitter account, which contained tweets critical of Israel's government, deemed by some to be anti-Semitic. While the Miller case, and in particular, the Salaita case, raise interesting and important questions about academic freedom beyond the scope of this chapter, it is evident that the permanence of statements on social media that can be archived and redistributed ad infinitum should reside in the minds of scholars using social media. In Salaita's case, he argues that many of the messages were taken out of context. In short, given the various issues that scholars engage in en route to tenure and promotion, and in the public intellectual space – why risk having one's career, or research trajectory derailed with an ill-conceived or misconstrued Facebook post or tweet?

Reconceptualizing Scholarly Identity and Privacy in the Age of Social Media

Returning to the dichotomy I mentioned earlier, I think scholars typically categorize their social media engagement in two silos: private and public. This is simply an extension of how many of us engage in life: some of us are uncomfortable sharing aspects of our day-to-day activities outside of our scholarly output (if you cringe when students or colleagues see you at the supermarket or the gym, this might be you), while others feel that the role of a scholar is to operate visibly in the public sphere (if you have more than ten bumper stickers on the back of your car, this might be you). While these categories might work well in the real world, they are somewhat difficult to manage in the realm of social media. In fact, I would argue

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that the age of social media has ushered new conceptualizations of what is public and what is private. The idea that social media blurs public and private boundaries has been explored by others; in fact Katz and Rice describe the Internet as a "panopticon," using the metaphor of the 18th century prison design in which one warden could observe all prisoners without their knowledge.

Social media, by its design, has created a hybridized social status. While Facebook and LinkedIn require the user to confirm friendships and connections, Twitter and Instagram, for instance, allow any user to "follow" another. Hence, messages on matters of great societal import – such as sharing the latest research on educational inequity – are visible to everyone. As is one's opinions about fashion or the latest episode of Scandal. One must be comfortable with this blurring of private and public to engage in social media deeply. However, there are ways to participate in social media that ameliorate this somewhat: you can opt to participate in sites that allow some control over how you connect to others, or you can connect to only close friends and colleagues. Yet other scholars maintain "public" social media accounts, slotted for research finding and academic discourse, and "private" accounts for their friends and family.

While these approaches may provide some level of comfort and control, my personal experience conveys that there are "seepages" that make maintaining these boundaries difficult. For instance, many professors do not allow students into their social media networks. But the student-professor dynamic is temporary, so at what point would a former student be an eligible Facebook friend? I think the appropriate analogy for social media is the coffee shop/food court: certainly, it is possible (and desirable) to engage in discussion in this context. However, the people sitting next to you can hear you, and due to the acoustics of this particular building, even someone across the room can pick up on your conversation.

Such a conceptualization of identity is useful, and in a policy context in which the societal impact of academics is openly questioned, there is a need for scholars to engage in the marketplace of ideas beyond academic conferences. New York Times columnist Nicholas Kristof recently made this point in a February 2014 opinion column. Noting that "some of the smartest thinkers on problems at home and around the world are university professors, but most of them just don't matter in today's great debates," Kristof further stated:

> Professors today have a growing number of tools available to educate the public, from online courses to blogs to social media. Yet academics have

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been slow to cast pearls through Twitter and Facebook.

The last exhortation from this column should cement the academic's commitment to engaging in scholarly discourse via social media: "So, professors, don't cloister yourselves like medieval monks – we need you!"

Using Social Media to Promote Research – Magnifying

Perhaps the easiest way to leap into the social media fray is to utilize these networks to announce when scholarship is published. Most journals offer previews of published manuscripts (abstracts, introductory paragraphs, etc.) via their web portal, so a Facebook post or tweet announcing the arrival of one's most recent work is a simple way of directing people to one's scholarship. (Note that it's wise to test links from a non-university network, to ensure that the link is publically accessible to all – links that are behind firewalls won't allow followers to view your work.) Some of the more social media savvy publishers (journals, publishing houses, etc.) have Twitter accounts and a Facebook presence; it's logical and wise to connect to them so they can endorse your message as well via a "like" or retweet.

As a general rule, I use Facebook and Twitter to announce my publications. This isn't simply flaunting success: through those two social networking sites, I can reach over a thousand people – many of whom will find the information interesting, and perhaps share with people in their networks. As a scholar wedded to seeing my research impact people in the communities that I research, it's imperative that I spread the word outside of the ivy walls of academe.

There is also a bevy of social media sites directed at academic audiences that one can utilize to announce papers, chapters, and other scholarly output. Academia.edu, mendeley.com, and bepress.com are all sites that allow researchers to easily create pages detailing one's work. Most of these sites operate in the manner of Facebook, so one can follow and link to researchers in similar fields and institutions. In some cases, publishers allow authors to post manuscripts to these sites so other members can access full articles: this is entirely dependent on the publisher's policies, so it is wise to inquire about posting a manuscript before doing so. An additional virtual homestead is Google Scholar (scholar.google.com), which allows researchers to create a homepage, link to co-authors and collaborators, and even perform rudimentary scholarly impact statistics (number of citations, citations by year, etc.).

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Excerpted from *Academics Going Public*

There are rules of thumb and good "netiquette" to follow. Always mention collaborators in social media messaging, and many sites allow one to tag colleagues to draw their attention to research that is of interest. Many of the links to scholarly articles are lengthy, so consider using a URL shortener such as bit.ly to make the links shorter (and fit into the message window on social media sites). I always find it polite to mention the publisher in the message as well. Occasionally other people may use social media to share your work; it is a good idea to retweet or like these messages. On Twitter, for instance, most clients have a search function so one can easily use keywords to see if others are discussing a topic. With this information, it is easy to use appropriate hashtags or signal users who are interested in the topic.

Reaching Invested and Interested Parties – Amplifying

To this point, I've discussed scholarship in the narrowest sense: works published in journals or by presses, and the utility of using social media to share this research. Many scholars are increasingly seeing their work circulated in the press and other media venues (blogs, websites, etc.). These information streams are another way to bring one's research to a larger audience. Researchers in fields like political science, economics, and education, to name a few, are often sought out for their perspectives on news stories. Social media is a terrific way to circulate and broadcast interviews and news stories, for instance, in which one is the subject or expressing an expert opinion. In the present day, with omnipresent news and information, it's likely expert analysis can sink to the bottom of the pile – unless, of course, scholars find ways to keep their work at the forefront of one's networks.

Posting about upcoming media appearances seems obvious, but I would additionally emphasize archived interviews, news stories, and the like. Regarding audiovisual media, it is typically a good idea to ask for a digital copy of the interview for personal use and archiving – many news organizations keep these media for a short time only on their sites. With archival media sites like YouTube and SoundCloud, these appearances can be kept and referenced to well after the original airdate.

I would also offer another suggestion with a small caveat – visiting the comments section that allows readers, listeners, and viewers to opine on one's perspectives. At times, other experts and commenters of note (public figures, other academics) will join the discussion – providing another opportunity to link to their thoughts (and even connect to them via social networks such as Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter).

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However, there is a reason that the comments section is oft-referred to as the cesspool of the Internet. Some level of discernment is wise; I personally do not suggest engaging in "flame wars" and other tit-for-tat commentary. First, it's rarely productive – some people seem to spend all waking hours debating on the Internet, and such discussions infrequently end up changing perspectives. Second, it's an incredible time sink, and can become annoyingly addictive – the temptation to see what "tempest9817" has to say after one's last witticism is ultimately an enemy of productivity.

I learned this firsthand when my professorial colleague and Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Incorporated brother Gregory Vincent, vice-president of the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement at UT-Austin, and I collaborated on an op-ed in the Austin American-Statesman reflecting on our work with 100 Black men of Austin. We thoughtfully wrote about the policy and practices that led to the death of Michael Brown in Missouri, and many other young men of color. We were proud of our work and grateful for the opportunity to share our perspectives with the community at large. Greg called the morning the op-ed was published, congratulated me for a strong editorial, and ended the call with, "Don't look at the comments section." So of course, I did: it was sobering to see our reflections answered with bon mots such as, "This is literally the dumbest thing I've ever read" (a moderator removed the comment shortly after I read it).

On occasion, however, a provocative media appearance may spark others to use their social media platforms to respond. After an appearance on National Public Radio's Talk of the Nation where I discussed the upcoming Black Marriage Day, one blogger took me to task for noting that Black families exist in many forms, not simply heterosexual marriages. I didn't have the time to respond to his thoughts, but it was good to know that my research with my co-author and mentor Charles V. Willie sparked a debate. This exchange demonstrated that our work was impacting people outside of academia. In a time where it is becoming more and more imperative that scholars find ways to partake in "academic engagement" with communities and the public at large, social media is a lever that people in the academy can use to magnify their contributions outside of the sometimes narrow confines of scholarly venues.

Just the Facts: Using Social Media as a Means of Clarifying

One of the consequences of the constant data cycle we now live in is that social media is the bleeding edge frontier of (mis)information. While there are

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undeniable advantages to using social media as sources of news, there are many times when rumors and mis-information have been fueled via social networks: perhaps most notably, Reddit, Twitter, and Facebook users contributed to the misidentification of missing Brown student Sunil Tripathi as a suspect in the Boston Marathon bombing in April 2013 (sadly, Tripathi was found dead later that month). Such an example illustrates the downside of depending on social media as the solitary source for information. Conversely, academics can use social media to bring clarity to a discussion.

One particularly adept clarifier on social media is Ivory Toldson, associate professor of counseling psychology at Howard University, editor-in-chief of the Journal of Negro Education, and deputy director for the White House Initiative on Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). Toldson leveraged social media to debunk one of the most enduring mistruths in higher education research with a column that appeared on TheRoot.com in February 2013 entitled "More Black Men in Jail than in College? Wrong." The column itself is worth a read, not only for Toldson's admission that he, too, had repeated this erroneous statement and his precise analysis of statistical data, but also for this incredibly funny yet telling introduction:

> What does the line "There are more black men in jail than in college" have in common with the Jheri curl? Answer: They were invented by white men (Jheri Redding and Vincent Schiraldi, respectively) and adopted enthusiastically by black people, and they left a nasty stain on the shoulders of millions of black men. It's been more than 20 years since the Jheri curl faded away into infamy, and I'm proud to say that even in the 1980s, I never sported a curl. Unfortunately, I can't say the same about the line "There are more black men in jail than in college."

Indeed, Toldson's TheRoot.com column includes a Twitter exchange, where he engages a Twitter user that challenges his data. Using state figures, Toldson reifies that in the state of New Jersey, there are more Black men in college than prison, signing off, "My numbers aren't pretty, but they're real." Toldson has leveraged social media to bury this myth in recent months: on January 2, 2014, he tweeted a YouTube link to over 3,000 followers. This is an example of using social media to not only to clarify misinformation, but also to keep pertinent research findings in the marketplace of ideas.

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Scholars can also leverage social media to redirect conversations that spiral out of control in the virtual marketplace of ideas. During the emotionally charged aftermath of the shooting of Michael Brown, an unarmed Black young man at the hands of a White police officer in Ferguson, Missouri, the Twitter hashtag #Ferguson became a way that academics, activists, and concerned citizens communicated the facts about the situation – many times clarifying misinformation about peaceful protests portrayed by the media as "riots." Social media, in fact, helped clarify that police forces often escalated tensions by tear-gassing and arresting members of the media from organizations such as Al Jazeera and the Washington Post. Some of the clarification aspect of social media has certainly affected students, faculty, and staff in my community at the University of Texas at Austin. The 2011–2012 academic year was a nadir for the College Republicans chapter on campus, particularly in regard to the irresponsible use of social media. In November, the president of the organization, Lauren Pierce, tweeted the following:

> Y'all as tempting as it may be, don't shoot Obama. We need him to go down in history as the WORST president we've EVER had! #2012

Social media acted quickly. Many blogs immediately posted these comments, and Pierce stepped down. Ironically, however, the next president of the organization, Cassie Wright, found herself in hot water a month later when she tweeted, "My president is black. He smokes a lot of crack. Holla. #2012 #Obama." Again, the reaction was swift, with scholars such as Boyce Watkins using the blogosphere to respond:

> Both the University of Texas and Texas A&M are well-known for the racism being spewed by their College Republican organizations. What saddens me as an educator is the fact that these students are peculiar reflections of the learning environment from which they came . . . Given that the students at the University of Texas are continuously making national news for producing a multitude of creative manifestations of ugly racial hatred, one has to wonder what the university is doing to stop the flow of this kind of pathetically [un-American] language.

In fairness to the UT community, there were many tweets condemning these exchanges and clarifying that these comments did not reflect the perspectives of the community as a whole. Texas Exes, the university's alumni association, tweeted, "Embarrassing: a second @UTAustin College Repub prez fails at Twitter http://

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AMPLIFY, MAGNIFY, CLARIFY

txex.es/rwhwsl @cassienwright @laurenepierce #fail." UT alumnus Chad Stanton responded by tweeting comparative data regarding the impact of President Bush's and President Obama's policies. These clarifications demonstrated that as much as the irresponsible use of social media has the ability to inflict pain and harm, responsible clarifying statements can be empowering and more accurately convey public sentiment.

If we liken social media to Pandora's box – an apt metaphor, considering the reluctance of scholars in general to engage in scholarly discourse via the medium, as well as the prominent missteps of scholars – some readers may feel it's best to keep the social media box nailed shut. Doubtless, a modicum of caution is advised to avoid the pitfalls of social media misuse. However, academics are potentially missing out on an opportunity to engage with an expanded audience of colleagues and the public at large. It is ironic, in a sense, because academics have so many ways to enter the marketplace of ideas, as Kristof noted earlier in this chapter. Social media can be a key lever in bringing research to the public sphere, and it is possible to maintain one's dignity and scholarly presence while doing so. I also believe social media engagement can help to bring the personalities of academicians to the fore – and that's not a bad thing. In many ways, when we engage in thoughtful discussions on issues of societal importance, perhaps sprinkled with observations about our favorite sports team's performance, or exhorting our colleagues to bring their scholarly observation to a film we watched, I believe we are unveiling and opening academia to not just the public at large, but to young people in particular – many of whom never interact with professors and researchers unless they are on the receiving end of a lecture in a large hall on a college campus. Frankly, we are missing a golden opportunity to demonstrate the worth of the life of the mind if we only communicate with others in the academy.

Let's commit to use social media to magnify, amplify, and clarify discourse on our passions and predilections, and urge our colleagues in the academic realm to do the same. Rudyard Kipling might have best expressed the value of social media engagement in a Twitter-friendly 140 word couplet in 1895: "Scholars, If u can talk w/crowds & keep ur virtue, Or walk w/Kings-nor lose the common touch-then Urs is the Earth & everything that's in it!"

Quick Tips List

1. Create an online social media presence – even if you don't think you have anything to say or post at the moment. When you do have something to say,

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you don't want to have to scramble to get a presence up and going.

2. Partner with your institution's communications or public relations department, as well as publishers, conferences, and organizations you are affiliated with. Ask them to endorse your posts. In this community, find a social media mentor – perhaps a colleague or fellow scholar/ practitioner. Observe how they engage in the use of the media. Repost, reply, or retweet their work (so they will do the same for you).

3. Decide how you want to handle personal opinions – will you share them on social media, or not? Will you set up a "private" account (in quotes because in the world of social media, there is no such thing as true privacy) for friends and peers? Or will you incorporate personal perspectives along with your professional and academic views. This is a personal choice with significant consequences – consider the impact of your decision.

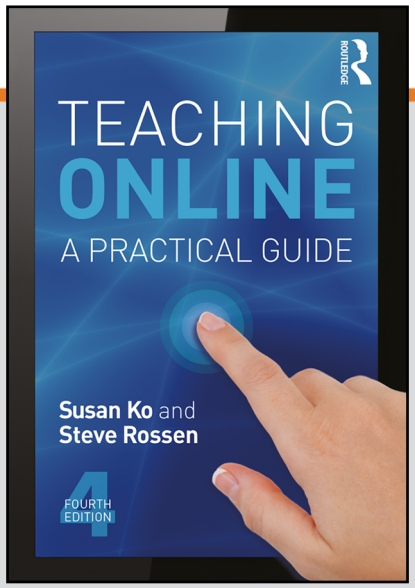
4. Follow and link to media (news agencies, bloggers, websites) that you are interested in participating with. Think of these social media presences as local, regional, national, and international, and tag or mention these accounts when sharing your research.

5. Be very cautious of posting to social media when you are experiencing high levels of emotion. There is no true "eraser" on social media. Outbursts or regrettable statements can be captured with screenshots. Also, be careful about who you friend, follow, and retweet/respond to. Resist the temptation to get involved with "flame wars" and instead use your research and scholarship to opine on policy and political issues.

CHAPTER

6

BUILDING AN ONLINE CLASSROOM



This chapter is excerpted from

Teaching Online: A Practical Guide, 4th edition

by Susan Ko and Steve Rossen.

Learn more

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BUILDING AN ONLINE CLASSROOM

Excerpted from *Teaching Online*

Now that you've done the necessary design, planning, and development work on your course and fleshed out your syllabus, it's time to actually build your course.

This means that it's time to put your work online—compose web pages, set up discussions, post assignments, create quizzes— in short, start learning more about and working with the software you will be using to run the class.

EDUCAUSE Center for Analysis and Research surveying over one hundred institutions in more than a dozen different countries reported in 2014 that while nearly all institutions have a learning management system in place, the greatest use faculty make of their LMS is just to push out content. Granted, only one-third of those in this faculty survey had taught an online course within the last year of responding to the survey, but the report highlights that a majority of the surveyed faculty admitted that they did not have a deep knowledge of their LMS features and agreed "that they would be more effective instructors if they were better skilled at integrating LMS technology into their courses." (See www.educause.edu/library/resources/study-faculty-and-information-technology-2014.)

While you can make a start with basic knowledge of your LMS or other tools available at your institution, a deeper familiarity is only gained from actual use. If you have only a hazy grasp of your LMS or other tools you need, consider signing up for some additional training at your institution that will cover those features beyond the fundamentals you already know. Once you have an overview of their potential and understand a few of the functions, you can try out and then practice using a few of those features and tools that interest you.

With some training and practice under your belt, and a greater awareness of the capabilities of your software, you can then begin to build out a sample unit, generally a week, for your course, based on whatever course development planning documents you have already put together to map out the units of your course (as recommended in Chapter 3). You will want to build out a sample of each of the different tools or areas you propose to create. As you begin to build or perhaps even later as you move to the implementation or teaching stage, you may find that some of the features you planned to incorporate don't work as well as you thought they would. You may also find a few new functions in your software that you didn't know existed. The fact is that the initial stage of preparation and the first time teaching the course involves a bit of trial and error. As you experiment with sample units to create a prototype for your course, you will soon learn how to get the most

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out of whatever learning management system or other software tools you are working in—whether it be a fully developed and integrated set of tools or some combination of blogs, discussion forum, social media, or online testing. In fact, as you become more familiar with the particular software environment you will be using, you may find that you want to go back and revise your original course plan (before you start teaching or when you revise the course after the first time teaching it) to reflect the opportunities or limitations that you have discovered.

In this chapter we will be discussing the various types of functions and features available in some of today's software and how best to exploit these features. In doing this, we will use examples from a variety of different existing software platforms, both learning management systems as well as some of the standalone types of tools or mobile apps.

The good news is that those instructors whose institutions do not have a learning management system will have little problem finding free tools and remote servers on which to set up their online and blended classrooms. Even those who have a learning management system available may choose to supplement what they do with the some of these free tools. As you examine the features of learning management systems or tools, be aware that this is a rapidly changing field. When we wrote the first two editions of our book, there was intense competition among many different learning management systems. By the third edition of 2010, there had been many acquisitions, consolidations, as well as a few new systems that really caught on, like Canvas, and Schoology, but there had also emerged open-source systems like Moodle and Sakai, new versions of existing software like BrightSpace (formerly Desire2Learn) as well as a wildly proliferating set of Web 2.0 tools that could be used in conjunction with others for online education. Our descriptions of particular features for software correspond to the versions existing at the time of this writing. Our purpose is not to tout one software platform or tool over another, but to show 1) the opportunities presented by certain types of features and 2) how you can adapt and implement your favored teaching strategies.

This is not to say that a particular software or learning management system may not be better suited to your pedagogical needs than another or seem more pleasing to you in terms of ease of use. But there is scarcely an existing LMS nowadays that doesn't possess sufficient tools for you to adequately teach your online or hybrid course so it is best not to get too obsessed with a quest for the perfect LMS but instead to focus on how to exploit the strong points and work

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around the deficiencies of any LMS or set of tools. The trend in recent years is for an institution to be able to swap out one tool for another while still using the basic features of a learning management system. For example, an institution might be able to substitute a different chat or discussion board for the one that comes with the system—either by having its own technical staff write a program or adopting a tool from a software vendor whose products are designed to be compatible with a particular system.

Another trend is for the LMS itself to provide integration with tools from outside vendors so that the full or partial functionality can be captured within the LMS. For example, Pearson, Wiley, and McGraw Hill offer labs and texts with interactive resources and quizzes from which scores can be rendered in the grading areas of various learning management systems by partnering with Blackboard, Canvas, Moodle, and others. Other external application tools may also have this LTI (Learning Tools Interoperability) functionality within an LMS without full partnering—this allows tools to be more easily integrated with an LMS so that in some cases, the need for a separate access login is avoided. This new flexibility and interoperability of tools may make it easier for your institution to find the right mix it needs for its online classrooms without inconveniencing the student by requiring separate registrations and sign-ins. However, we do recognize that many instructors will not have the final say (or may not have any say at all) about which system or tools are chosen for the institution, so our intention is to help you make the best choices for your needs and make the most of whatever you have available.

So, by all means take advantage of any special features afforded by your software system, but don't feel that your system must dictate your choice of teaching methods and approaches. Generally, if you have the desire to include a particular kind of activity, you can find a way to implement it in almost any system.

If you were fortunate enough to receive special training on the software system you are going to use, you probably learned some tips and techniques for exploiting that system. If you haven't received this type of training, and it is not available from your center for teaching and learning or instructional technology or LMS training staff on your campus, we recommend that you join a user's group online or find an online resource guide devoted to users of that software. You can also share information and strategies informally with colleagues at your institution who may already have had some experience with the system. You may discover that a

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colleague at your own institution—or at one half a world away—has found a new approach to solving the same problems that you face.

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Templates

Some institutions or programs have developed specific templates for the layout of an online course. A template for an LMS may be thought of as ready-made formatting or preselected functions to which you will add content. Templates for an LMS may go beyond a set of default settings in a new, blank LMS course site and may determine not only the general names and placement of menu item links in the LMS course site, but may also go so far as to determine the "containers" (folders, files, tables) in which that all content is organized and arranged. While set templates are to be expected for standardized or team-built courses (see Chapter 4) they may exist, albeit to a more limited degree, for otherwise non- standardized programs as well. So you will want to find out if your academic program has preferred or required elements for the layout of your course site. While you might feel a bit constrained by mandated templates, console yourself with the knowledge that while faculty often yearn to put their own stamp on course site design, the majority of online students commonly express a desire for more consistent templates in their online courses. Students like being able to figure out where everything is located from the start of a course so when site layouts vary greatly within an academic program or institution, students often grumble that this means they are constantly having to reorient themselves and find their bearings. Keep this in mind and make sure that however creative you may want to be, that the logic of your course organization is evident, and at the very least, be prepared to explain the course site "geography" to your students on the first day and remind them as needed thereafter.

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Dividing Up and Organizing Your Material and Activities

In building your course, no matter which system you use, you will have to make decisions about organizing and dividing your materials. A basis for many of these decisions will have been worked out already during your design and course planning phase, but others must be adjusted to fit into the framework of the actual software structures within which you are creating your course site(s).

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For example, in terms of your overall organization, do you want to divide the course into units according to week or topic or some combination of both? Your ability, based on the way you have divided up material, to receive student tracking data reports from your LMS for a particular piece of content or activity might be one consideration. Such a consideration might cause you to separate rather than group together particular items of content. Other, more obvious factors include how many topics you will cover each week, how large your documents or media files are, and whether the portions you create will be easy to digest (and, if necessary, download) for your students.

Another basic question must be whether you want all presentation materials to be housed in areas apart from discussion and conferencing areas and, if so, what coordination you wish to have between these areas. For example, if you present a "lecture" in Unit 1, do you want to create a discussion forum that will match it and provide direct reference to it? Will your LMS allow you to then create a direct link to it? Or do you want to post mini-lectures directly in the discussion forum thread, culminating in questions to which students must respond?

Perhaps you have units of content and assignments that must be completed before allowing students to move on to the next unit of study. In this case you would want to make use of any forced sequencing of content that your LMS permits.

How many assignments are to be delivered to you alone, and how many are to be shared with the class as a whole? Do you want students to work in small groups? If so, you need to give them a space to work as a team and a place to present their work to the entire class as well if desired.

Important! The overall guideline here is to create or make use of a space for every activity you devise and to find the best space for every activity.

Timing of Access

Before you actually begin to build your course, find out exactly when students will first be able to access your classroom and whether they will have access to the entire course at that time. For example, will they be able to enter your course site two days or even two weeks before the class officially starts? At that point, will they have access to an outer web page or "front door" but not to the discussion area, or to the announcements and syllabus only?

Also, find out if and how your software allows the instructor to work on a section of the course without making it available for students to see. Most learning

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management systems allow you to set specific dates for the release of a section or document or simply to toggle an on/off switch to determine the availability of a specific area. But if you have no way to control the timing of your students' access, you should consider laying out and arranging your course on paper or in a practice course shell, and making all changes in your word-processed and HTML documents prior to posting the final version.

This will prevent students from becoming confused if you need to revise your materials at the last minute. However, no matter your situation, do post at least an announcement or syllabus for students to access on the first day available to them, and remember to give detailed guidance about how and where to proceed. There's nothing more discouraging to students than entering an empty, unattended online classroom!

How much of your course materials should you actually make available to students at one time? This is a tough question to answer, because there is no one response that will suit all teaching situations and approaches. If you post all the presentation materials for all the weeks of your course so that students can review all content, this does offer two advantages:

1. Students can gain a more detailed understanding of what the course involves.
2. If they choose, students can work ahead.

The disadvantages are that, in an asynchronous class, even one with defined start and stop dates, you may be detracting from the sense that the class as a whole moves and learns together. If you also allow students to post in discussion forums as many as two or three weeks ahead, you further lose the sense of class cohesiveness. Such an approach would also prevent you from adapting to the class's needs with timely supporting materials and feedback. You may find, too, that simultaneously keeping an eye on two, three, or four discussion forums adds significantly to your work-load and frustrates your students' ability to follow class conversations. Therefore, this is not an approach we recommend.

Often, a good compromise is to restrict the advance posting of materials and the opening of new discussion forums to no more than one or two weeks ahead of the time when you expect the class as a whole to be ready for them. Or allow students to see all materials and discussion questions, but if your system permits you to do so, set the discussions to read-only status so that while students can read

materials, they can only participate in the current week's discussion. If you have a lot of students working over the weekends, you can set the upcoming week's discussion to be accessible at the end of each current week—for example, if your class week runs Monday–Sunday, you can open Week 2 discussion for participation starting on the Friday of Week 1.

A different set of circumstances is present when your LMS offers the option to set up lessons in an adaptive release format. This means that you can set up a series of rules by which lesson units or tests are released only after certain triggering or qualifying actions—for example, students must make their own post before they can read discussion posts by others, students must score at a certain level on a quiz before they can access the next lesson, unit, or quiz, etc.

Pacing Considerations

A final important consideration is the method of pacing your students in your course. Everything takes longer online. Even if your students all enjoy high-speed internet or ubiquitous mobile access, you will still find that you must factor in the "click time"— the time it takes to open and close documents, to download and access documents and web pages, or videos and simulations. If the class is a very active one, or one in which there are twenty-five students or more, it will take time for your students to pick through the numerous discussion postings that accrue each week.

Even though you want your course to be as rigorous as its on- the-ground equivalent, you don't want to overload students with materials and tasks for which the payoff isn't worth the time expended. Leave students enough time to delve deeply into the material. Presumably, you will already have factored in these considerations when composing your online syllabus. However, these matters often become more apparent once you begin to lay out the course within your LMS software or web pages. In that case, don't be afraid to go back and make adjustments to your syllabus or schedule.

Presumably, if you have already done a particular activity in a previous face-to-face class, you will have some idea of the minimum amount of time needed to perform it. Then you need to factor in the additional time that might be needed to do the activity online. For example, students in a face-to-face class working in a group may be able to make their first group determinations in a few hours or to brainstorm their ideas in just an hour. Online, you will want to consider the

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asynchronous access and likely allow at least two days for the back and forth it may take for all to register their opinions.

If you are unsure how long it will take for students to complete an assignment that involves online work, we suggest that you try out a discrete portion of it and time yourself. For example, if you want to ask students to visit a particular internet resource with a view to answering certain questions and then to write a report based on the visit, you can surely time yourself as you undertake each step of the visit and jot down responses to the questions. Given that you probably have more expertise or are more familiar with the resource than your students, you can factor in the additional time you think students will need to achieve the same results. In the end, beyond finding out whether you have calculated a correct estimate of the time needed for students to do this, you may also discover that your instructions should be revised for greater clarity!

If you have little experience with online discussion, you might ask to visit a colleague's online class and time yourself on how long it takes you to read through and compose a meaningful response based on that class's weekly participation requirements.

Again, while you may have already factored in some of these considerations when composing your online syllabus, matters often become more apparent once you begin to actually lay out the course within your learning management software or web pages. If you discover that your estimates were wrong, don't be afraid to go back and make adjustments to your syllabus.

Now let's look at some of the structures, features, and built-in functions that are available in learning management systems and Web 2.0 tools.

Content Presentation Areas

Presentation areas are where you deliver your basic course content, lectures, and so forth. Web pages or content areas within an LMS are the most obvious presentation format but perhaps you also make use of a blog, wiki, or multimedia format.

If you are using LMS software, you will find that in some systems, presentation or content areas are clearly defined and set apart from other functions, while in other systems, multiple areas can be made to serve the presentation function. The presentation areas allow one to type or paste in text or to upload your text or media files into what is, in effect, a document storage area. This storage area,

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which can be filled by instructors only, may be entirely separate from the discussion forum and other areas where students can post or upload documents.

Learning management systems are increasingly sophisticated and nearly all now offer the option of built-in editors or plug-ins that permit elaborate formatting or conversion to HTML without you having to know any code. Many LMS also provide different options to create sequenced learning content, and such templated and sequenced content are often able to be reused and replicated in subsequent classes. There are also free cloud-based LMS systems (albeit with limitations as to file space or number of users) such as Blackboard CourseSites, and free services like Google that can offer a variety of substitutes for LMS features to present your content, with the ability to upload many different types of files. If your institution has no LMS, find out if it provides Google Apps for Education—this institutional version of Google applications provides many advantages over the publicly available Google programs but with equally rich functionality. For the many readers of this book who are not native English speakers, Google also supports a great number of different languages.

If, however, you are using software which has a limited number of areas in which you can present content, you may need to designate certain portions by name to serve as your presentation spaces. You might set these off by using special titles, bold text, or some other distinguishing marks, depending on what your software system permits. For example, if you wish to post materials in a discussion area, you might designate one forum for "Syllabus," another for "Lectures," and so on.

If you do not have learning management software, there are many free or low-cost versions of easy-to-create websites, blogs, or wiki software that can provide an adequate solution for your needs. All allow for copy-and-paste methods and include built-in formatting and templates designed to set your content off to best advantage. Some will allow you to set up discussions related to your content presentation.

One issue you may need to consider as you proceed to look for tools you can add on your own is that many of the free online tools incorporate advertising. While you may feel that advertising on these sites does not provide the most appropriate atmosphere, as long as your institution does not object, you will probably find that many of your students seem unbothered by the ubiquitous commercial features of free online services. Nevertheless, if you do want to use only non-commercial, advertising-free websites, look for resources designed specifically for educators, or

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those that offer special versions for educators like Edublogs (www.edublogs. org), PBworks (www.pbworks.com/education.html), Wordpress.com (https://wordpress.com/classrooms/), or Weebly (http:// education.weebly.com/) which have either limited advertising or none. All of these resources allow you to create materials without having to know HTML or possess special technical skills. Increasingly, these services provide a suite of tools or capabilities beyond just creating a website or blog or wiki, allowing you to customize the type of functionality you prefer. Note that beyond the free services offered there are often "premium" or "pro" subscription levels available at many of these sites. In those versions, a generally small fee allows users more features, more control, or more storage space. Let's look at just a few examples of these services and what you might be able to do with them, depending on the version selected.

Edublogs offers hosted blogging software for educators, whether K–12 teachers or university instructors. The service offers some simple how-to videos, and they also feature discussion forums where educators can post inquiries, help one another, and offer tips. Once you have set up a blog for your class, you will find that you have these capabilities, among others, depending on your service level:

- You can control who accesses your blog and who doesn't and moderate student postings.
- You can create course materials by uploading documents or simply copying and pasting your content into the blog.
- You can allow students to post their responses in discussions related to your content and receive emails letting you know when students have posted in the discussion, thus cutting down on the number of times you must log on to see if students are responding.
- You can allow students also to be notified when someone has posted a comment to the same piece to which they have responded.
- You can set up blogs for your students to create their own presentations.

With Weebly or Wordpress.com, you can create a website or blog, a place for your students to collaborate on a project or research and contribute resources or simply post responses for a series of different class topics. Such services like Weebly and WordPress. com are continually adding features, but you may find that you are able to:

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- post your course materials by copying and pasting;
- use ready-made templates;
- add discussion forums;
- set up blogs;
- track statistics on student use of your site.

Through using one of these free tools, you may discover that you are able to use the online environment to enrich learning for your students and, after an initial investment of time in planning and creation of material, to relieve some of the burdens of teaching as well.

Adding Multimedia Content

Perhaps you want to present content via audio and/or video. Many learning management systems will allow you to upload such content for presentation. Perhaps your institution will allow you to upload a video lecture or demonstration to a site like YouTube and then you can simply provide a link to or embed the video so that plays within the site. Some free websites, blogs, or wikis will also allow for the direct uploading of files or embedding of external multimedia content.

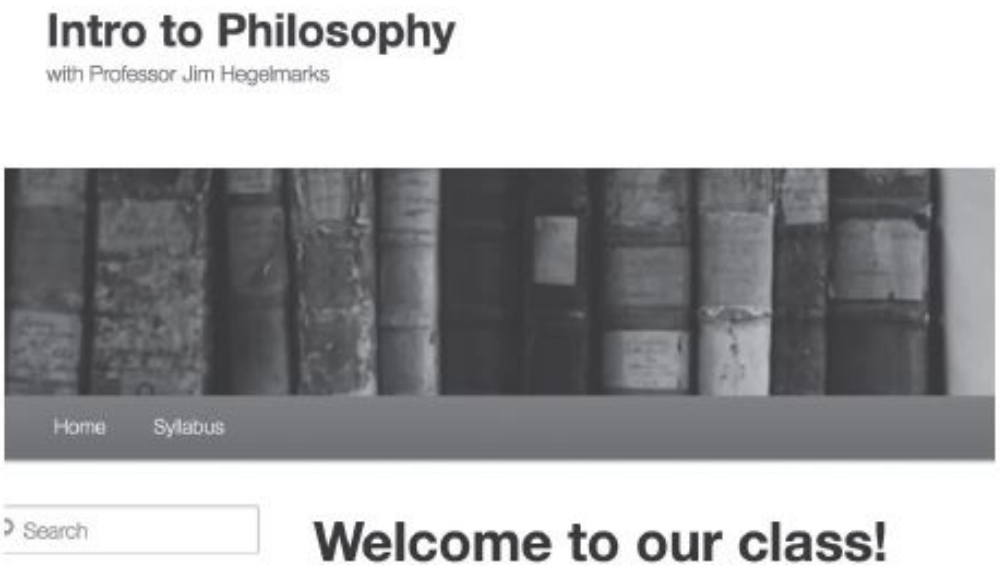

Figure 6.1 Jim Hegelmarks experiments with creating a blog on Edublogs. Source: Edublogs.org.

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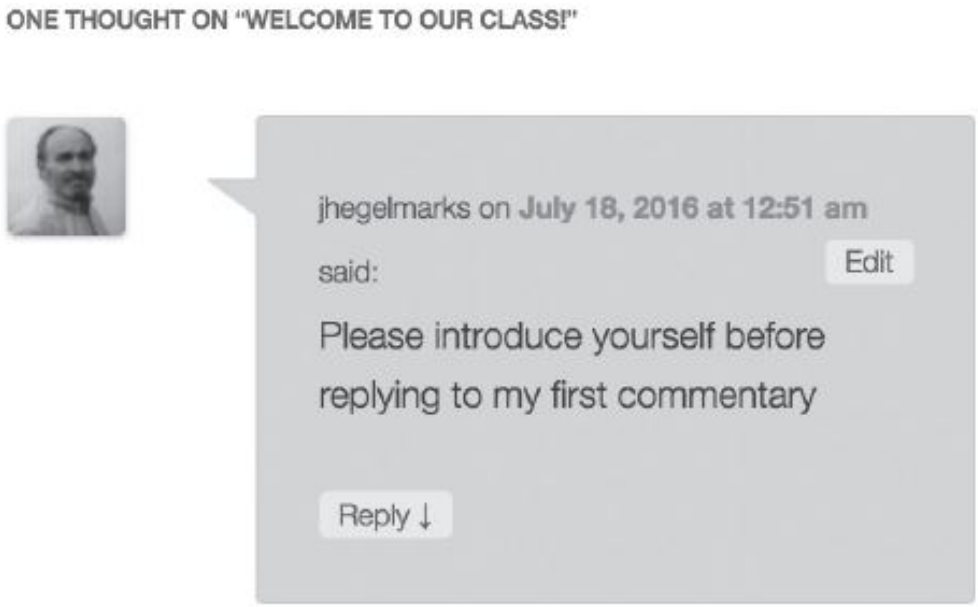

Figure 6.2 Hegelmarks invites students to participate by adding their comments to the class blog. Source: Edublogs.org.

If video is crucial to communicating your presentations, your first step is probably to contact your instructional technology or multimedia staff. It may be that video is easily inserted into your learning management system or is hosted on a special institutional server. There may also be staff who can help you create your video. Many institutions now maintain a channel on YouTube to host their video content or use a paid service like Kaltura, Ensemble, or Panopto. This underlines the point we have previously made that it is a good idea to find out what is available to you and how it is made available to you on your campus.

However, instructors who have no support at all for creating or hosting video materials are increasingly able to find ways to do this on their own. Chapter 9 discusses some of the available methods for accomplishing this.

Podcasting (or the video version, sometimes called vodcasting) has remained a very popular option for providing content as everyone from politicians to comedians and self-styled experts on every subject have offered audio commentary and made it available to an audience who can subscribe to receive automatic downloads of these commentaries. Mobile access to podcasts from smartphones and tablets has enlarged the audience and appeal of this format. Many educators have taken this approach to offering weekly lectures and

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commentary to their students who can download such materials to their mobile players for listening off-campus. Some learning management systems have built-in podcasting tools, enabling instructors (and/or students) to easily create and publish such audio presentations. A large number of institutions had grown accustomed to using iTunes U as a repository for their instructors' podcasts and, in 2015, Apple introduced a classroom- like suite of tools, designed for the iPad, to allow instructors to add discussion, assignment submission, and to post materials.

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Announcement Areas

Some systems have a marked-off announcement area, that is, a special form of presentation area that students see as they enter the online classroom or even without entering the online class site, for example, on a home page of an LMS. The announcement may appear on the main entrance page of the course site or on an LMS home or landing page, or it may simply be a link to a document storage area that can be named by the instructor and accessed by students. There may be options to send announcements to students or for students to opt to receive announcements in other formats as well—via email, Twitter, or even RSS feed.

For the instructor, the announcement area offers a quick method of typing in announcements and updates for the course. Even if it is set up as a separate document storage area, students will know to consult it each time they enter the classroom. If you don't have a learning management system, you can always carve out your own announcement area set off from the rest of your content pages.

You can think of the announcement area as being like standing at the front of the room in a face-to-face classroom. Online, this is the stage upon which you call the class to attention, remind, cajole, encourage, and update students. Email, text messaging, and other communications may reinforce but cannot really replace classroom announcements. Therefore, plan to make full and regular use of this area if it is built into your software or to rig up an equivalent area in whatever you are using as an online class-room to serve this function. And keep in mind that announcements do not need to be limited to text and the occasional image—you can easily make your own short "on-the-fly" videos to serve as an announcement, embedding or linking such video announcements.

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Excerpted from *Teaching Online*

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Syllabus and Schedule Areas

Depending on your software, you can post a syllabus and schedule in a document storage area, or you can create separate web pages for this purpose.

Important! Make your syllabus available in a downloadable or easily printable document, because this is the "map" students will follow in your course.

This means that, if you use graphics in your syllabus or if the syllabus is divided up into a group of hyperlinked web pages, you should also make it available in a text-only, scrollable document. This will permit students to print it out readily. Whether students print it out or just download it to their computing device, it provides a helpful reminder about upcoming assignments, and keeps them on track when they are offline or online, but not immediately accessing the online classroom.

In some learning management software, the syllabus area also serves as the chief organizing tool, the "home page" or outline for the course content. For example, each item on the syllabus may become a clickable link to respective sections of course material. If you have this sort of arrangement, make sure your headings accurately indicate the topics or content to which they provide links.

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Threaded Discussion Forums

We will cover the management and facilitation of asynchronous and synchronous discussions in Chapter 11. Here, we will note that the asynchronous discussion areas in various software programs are structured in different ways, have different options for student use, and allow messages to be viewed or sorted in different ways.

Structure of Discussion Areas Many systems have a hierarchical architecture. Forums, conference folders, or message groups form the highest level, with each containing a number of subordinate threads that together make up the discussion. In this case, it is important to decide how you want to divide up your forums—by week, by topic, by unit, or by some combination of categories. For example, you may decide not only to have weekly forums but also to create a forum that can serve as an open discussion or socializing area, a sort of "student lounge."

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Excerpted from *Teaching Online*

Take note of the arrangement of threads and responses within the system you are using. Within the limitations of a particular discussion software, the way you structure your discussion forums will probably affect your decisions about the number of topics you wish to introduce each week, whether to break down larger topics, and the instructions you need to give students about procedures.

User Options In some discussion software, both students and instructors may initiate new topics; in other systems, only instructors may start new topic threads. Still other platforms may allow the instructor to set the options, using a switch that enables or prevents students from starting new topics.

Other user options in some systems include being able to add HTML files, use attachments, and change the subject line without having to create a new thread. Another user option you will need to investigate is whether or not students can edit or delete the messages they have posted (and see if this is something an instructor can set) and whether the instructor can intervene to do the same for student postings or their own. In some cases, a message may only be edited if a reply has not been posted to the message. In other cases, edits may be made but the system will indicate that an edit has been made on a certain date. Some institutions may even restrict use of the delete function because of their concerns about preserving the class record.

A feature that allows students to anonymously "rate" (for example, awarding a number of stars or thumbs-up to a posting) and/or comment on discussion items of their peers has increasingly become available in many learning management systems. You may want to use this feature to stimulate interest in discussion by allowing students to recommend and draw attention to the best postings. This can be a great feature in a large class with an abundance of postings.

Therefore be sure to familiarize yourself with user options in discussion software. As indicated above, these may influence the design of course activities, facilitation of discussion, as well as record-keeping and even strategies for handling student netiquette problems!

Viewing and Sorting of Messages How are conversations viewed in your software? Do the messages have to be opened and shut one at a time in order to be read? Is it possible to open and read all messages in a linear fashion, one following the other in a scrollable page? Many systems have moved to a dual capability, allowing conversations to be viewed as both individual messages in threads and continuous conversations.

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It is common for systems to also allow multiple ways for users to sort messages for their own viewing. For example, messages may be sorted by date, by topic, or according to the people who posted them. (This has substantial utility for classroom and time management, as explained in Chapter 11.) Some systems allow one to subscribe to receive email copies of new postings. While this can be useful for low-traffic discussion areas, it could obviously become overwhelming if one subscribes to email for a highly interactive forum. However, it is very useful for an instructor to be able to subscribe to a Q&A or Ask the Professor forum so that he or she is quickly alerted to questions posed by students and instructors should generally allow and may want to recommend that students subscribe to such a central Q&A area as well.

Blogs and Comment-Based Discussion

Traditionally, blogs are structured with text entries arranged in reverse chronological order, with the ability for the reader to post comments. Because comments were originally conceived of as comments on the blog posts, not on the comments of others, blog comments are sometimes displayed as a series of postings without threaded arrangement. If there is only a flat or continuous display view, it can be difficult to follow an intricate series of comments in which those posting are actually commenting mostly on each other's posts. Most blog software allows the author to choose between a flat or threaded view. If you are planning to use a blog for discussion in which responses among those posting is an important feature, you will want to use a blog structure that allows for threaded views. Another feature that can be helpful is when the blogging software allows the blog author's comments to be displayed with some sort of indicator that differentiates the comment of the author or administrator from those of the blog readers—this can be a different color font, a different color background for the name, a special icon, etc.

Other Types of Discussion

VoiceThread (http://voicethread.com) is a software tool that allows discussion to be centered on a visual element such as an image, video, or slides. (VoiceThread can also be thought of as a presentation tool.) Michelle Pacansky-Brock found this tool invaluable for facilitating discussion in her Art Appreciation course for Sierra College in California. Pacansky-Brock noted that before she began to use tools like VoiceThread, she had been "frustrated with my inability to truly engage my students with images. Their ideas and interpretations were distanced from the

works of art. Using VoiceThread as a tool for discussions changed all of this." Using VoiceThread, students are able to draw (called "doodle") on top of an image as they leave an audio comment, and the resulting "doodle" is synced to the recorded comment in playback. Pacansky-Brock asked her students to "doodle" to circle examples of techniques or point out examples of key terms as she displayed images of artworks. Comments can also be made as text or by webcam, and photos of students may be uploaded to display alongside their comments. While no longer available in a free version, there is educator pricing available for both single instructor as well as campus. You may want to explore the Digital Library on the VoiceThread site for examples of faculty use in different disciplines. VoiceThread can now be integrated with some learning management systems. You may want to inquire about whether this tool is available at your institution.

The explosion of Web 2.0 tools has meant that instructors with access to little or no instructional technology support can easily find and apply tools that fit a specific pedagogical need. Pacansky- Brock comments about her approach to using such tools in an effective manner without overwhelming students, "I find that, first, it's critical to be knowledgeable about using the technologies before I introduce them to my students. More importantly, it's critical to explain to my students why they will be using the technologies."

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Other Communication Tools

Internal Message Centers, Internal Tools for External Email

Some systems allow for their own internal message centers which is basically a private asynchronous messaging system which does not need to go to an outside email address. Students and instructors can use this mailbox exclusively for all correspondence within the course, sometimes by just typing in or selecting the name of the student or instructor. Another benefit of these systems is that instructors can maintain a full record of course communications. However, bear in mind that in most cases, students need to log in to the classroom in order to access this sort of message system. Unless there is an option for students to subscribe and receive these messages in their external email addresses as well, this sort of email can't be used to send reminders to students to log in to the class. Most learning management systems provide a convenient email roster, which allows students to send mail to all or part of the class from a central area that lists

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the addresses of all class members. These email tools also allow the sender to receive a carbon copy of sent mail at the sender's home email address.

Because many younger students tend to avoid email, it is important for institutions and instructors to remind students in online classes that they are required to regularly check their institutional email (or the email with which the online LMS account is associated if that is different) to keep updated about their online courses.

Instant Messaging and Texting

Instant messaging (IM) and SMS texting are two ways of communicating that are well known to all of us who possess smartphones and are particularly popular with younger students. IM may be a feature already bundled into your learning management system but if not, you can incorporate instant messaging by asking all students to sign up for a free IM service.

Be aware that you will need to set rules for interacting with students in this way—generally you can log in or out as you prefer, or you can leave it open on your computer but post messages indicating your availability status. IM apps allow for sending messages to single or multiple users, wherever they may be, and increasingly also allow for video or audio conversations.

There are a growing number of tools that allow instructors to send an SMS text message to all their students' phones or email addresses. Some instructors like to use Twitter for this purpose instead. Many universities have been experimenting with software programs that allow them to send text messages in a crisis situation, while others have also enabled instructors to use such software for instructional purposes. Because SMS messages are generally limited to 160 characters, they are not useful for imparting instructional content, but can readily be used for reminder notices and last-minute changes or corrections to class assignments and schedules. Most such software allows students an option to subscribe via email or to log in to a web page if they choose not to use text messaging or do not have a cell phone or a suitably inexpensive text messaging package plan for their cell phone or other mobile device.

Privacy issues related to use of SMS can be mitigated through use of a free application like Remind (remind.com) which allows instructors to set up unidirectional text messages to students without anyone having to share their phone numbers with the class.

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Excerpted from *Teaching Online*

Chat, Whiteboard, and Other Collaborative and Screensharing Tools

While IM is a form of chat, and like chat, a synchronous communication tool, the term chat is more often used these days to indicate that chat is used to talk with people on the same site, for example, to talk with others within your LMS or on another website. Also chat tools generally have the expectation that multiple people will be able to access and participate. There may be one or more chat "rooms" or spaces available for a particular class, depending on the software. As mentioned in Chapter 3, chat is sometimes combined with a whiteboard. There are also whiteboards that permit students to assume the role of presenter in order to share their work with classmates or that grant all students in a defined group the ability to collaborate on a project. If you have not included chat sessions in your course plan and syllabus, you still have the option to inform students that they are free to use chat for their social or group-project needs.

Synchronous tools like chat rooms and whiteboards are particularly appropriate for your class if your students live in the same time zone or are logging on from campus locations. If your students live in disparate time zones, careful schedule accommodation is required to make this a worthwhile and attainable learning experience.

If your software allows you to save and archive whiteboard and chat sessions, and make them available to view later, this can be a major asset. This feature enables students to refer to and reflect on chat and whiteboard activities, thus considerably increasing their value to your class.

Check, too, to see what options your software affords for student direction of whiteboard activities. If you can hand over the reins to students, this will allow you to arrange for individual student or group presentations in real time.

Depending on the nature of your course, you may find that past successful sessions that have been archived can be reused for future classes. For example, you may have used such software to demonstrate how to create a spreadsheet. Once you have archived it, you can share it with a new classroom as part of course content. If you teach a blended class, you may have access to a smartboard in your on-campus classroom that allows you to mark up, save, and upload content for later reference on the internet.

One usage that makes these meeting programs worth consideration is for holding office hours (Skype might be sufficient for this) or providing a student with extra

help. So even if you do not intend to offer any instructional use of these tools, you may want to explore them for those potential purposes.

Tools like those in collaborative software such as Adobe Connect or Blackboard Collaborate allow instructors or students in online classes to meet in real time, using chat and/or audio/ video and slides, share and interact with documents on another's desktop, etc. These are sophisticated tool sets and it is essential that you get some practice and familiarize yourself with their workings before you decide to include them in your course plan. We recommend that you avail yourself of training provided by your institution or the software vendor if such instruction is avail-able, and also consult with colleagues or even instructors from other institutions who may already have used the software.

For those whose institutions do not provide collaborative software tools that allow for screen sharing, we recommend that you try out one of the free or inexpensive tools that fall into this category such as free versions of Join.me, Zoom, or Go-to-Meeting.

There are continually new entries into this category of tools (try doing a web search for free screensharing, meeting, collaborative, or conferencing applications) and the features of any particular software also vary over time, so you will want to try these out to see if they actually have the particular set of tools and capabilities you are seeking.

Group Activity Areas

Groups may be formed online when an instructor wishes to divide up the class for the purpose of certain tasks. Group activities may range from simple discussion to peer review to collaborative projects and cooperative learning activities, as explained in Chapter 7.

If you are using an LMS, you will probably be able to take advantage of its built-in group areas, each of which may contain its own asynchronous discussion, real-time chat, or document- sharing capabilities. This means that the members assigned to a particular group can engage in discussion and document sharing within their own small, private group environment, apart from other members of the class. Some learning management software includes built-in small group blog and wiki options.

If you are using software that does not have built-in group functions, you can still find ways to carve out group areas. For example, you can simply designate and

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label a particular discussion forum as a group area for asynchronous communication. To accomplish the document-sharing function, group members will attach or paste in documents in the appropriate discussion area. If you are using a system that consists mainly of web pages plus a discussion messaging system, you can assign topic threads within the system for use by particular groups. For example, you might name one threaded topic (or perhaps a whole forum) "Group A Discussion" and indicate to the class that this is only for a particular group of students to use. Students in that group can then post, read, and respond in that area.

Some software has additional special features, like randomization, that may be of value to you in setting up groups—such a feature has obvious advantages for trying to divide up students in large classes into small groups.

Again, if you do not have access to an LMS with group functions, there are free software resources outlined in this book that can provide the ability to create such set-aside areas for small- group activity. A social networking site like Facebook also offers opportunities to create private group sites that can include a number of different communication tools.

Any of the free wiki software sites will allow you to create an area in which students can collaborate as a group. One advantage of using wiki software for group projects is that it provides the instructor with a clear "page history" of all edits made, in order of most recent to oldest, noting who made each edit and when the edit was made. This means that you will be able to track the contributions of each student to the overall group project and it also gives you a sense of the direction and decisions that the group took in their collaboration. Being able to review this history might enable you to give better guidance to students about errors, missed opportunities, or even suggestions for more effective collaboration. To get a clearer picture of how this works, call up any page in Wikipedia and click on the View History tab or see the detailed explanation at https://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/Help:Page_history.

Internet Resource Collections and Curation

Some software provides places where you can organize a reference list of relevant websites, making it easier for students to find and retrieve them as the course progresses. Curation means to not only collect but critically select and annotate resources, whether this curation is done by you on behalf of your students as part

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of course content, or whether you ask students to perform this activity as part of their research and analysis of sources.

Depending on your LMS software's options, you may want to organize your links according to each week of the class or in a topical fashion. Some systems allow both instructors and students to add web links in the resource area, while others limit this capability to instructors.

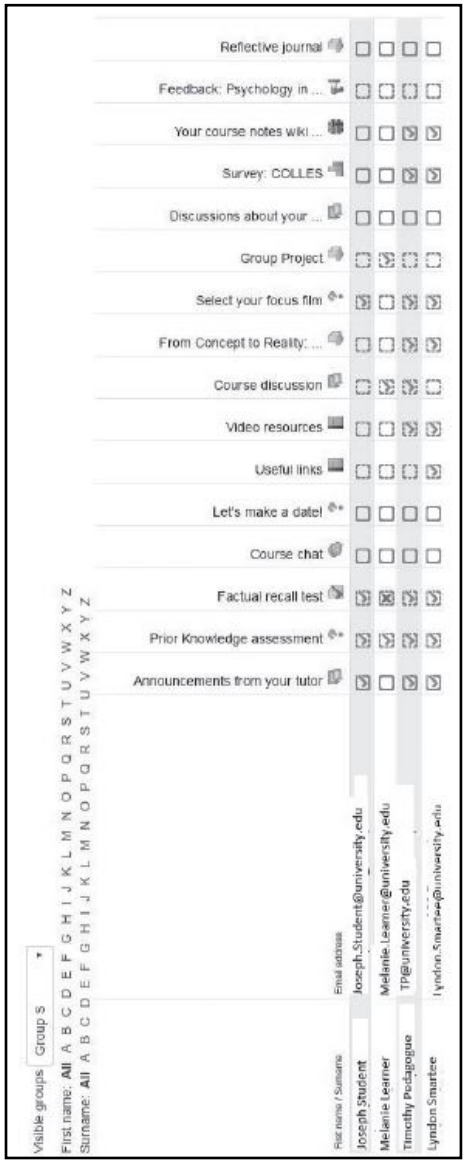

Figure 6.3 Tracking a group's activity in Moodle. Source: https://moodle.org/demo/

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Or, you may prefer to use a third-party social bookmarking service like Diigo, previously discussed in Chapter 3, which allows for tagging and sharing with "friends" or the formation of groups within which internet resources may be shared. Such a social bookmarking tool may be used as part of a research project. Other such curation and sharing tools which vary greatly in regard to features and emphasis but which have free versions available are Evernote (for text, internet resources, and private resources but which can be shared as well), Storify (good for curating from Twitter and other public social media sites, Pinterest (oriented to visual material), Padlet (padlet.com, similar to Pinterest but more oriented to education), and Scoop.it (topical, curated news sources).

ePortfolios

An ePortfolio is a way to create a portfolio online so that students can be assessed by carefully selected samples or evidence of their work, and may also serve as a way to showcase their work in one or more classes. Another way these can be used is to encourage students to evaluate their own work as part of the process of selecting which artifacts of their work they will choose to highlight in the ePortfolio. Increasingly, educators are looking to ePortfolios as a way that lifelong learning or student learning from multiple institutions or sources might be demonstrated. While ePortfolios may be used with fully online courses, they can be particularly attractive options for both blended and web-enhanced courses. Some portfolio software is integrated with an LMS, while others are untethered from an LMS. Digication (www.digication.com) is one of the better known, established platforms for ePortfolios.

Some instructors forego the sophisticated features of ePortfolio software and simply also use programs like WordPress to house student ePortfolios.

The ePortfolio provides a way to have students curate their own work, and it also permits students to use approaches other than papers and tests to demonstrate their learning. A student might display a paper next to photos, video, or music—most ePortfolio software allows for multimedia artifacts.

There is a rich history in the use of ePortfolios as a way to assess students. Those interested in the pedagogy and best practices of ePortfolios may want to browse through a free online journal like the International Journal of ePortfolio (www.theijep.com/about.html). Or check out the activities and resources of an international organization that is dedicated to ePortfolios and other evidence-based and experiential learning, AAEEBL (www.aaeebl.org/).

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Searching Capabilities

Some LMS platforms provide extensive search capabilities. These can be very selective—for example, allowing users to search only in the discussion section. Or they can be comprehensive, allowing you to choose whether to search all sections of the course or to limit your search to a single area.

Search functions mainly come into play during the course, and can be useful not only for your students but for you as well. They permit you to find that one passage or comment you only dimly recall or to quickly find all postings on a topic or from a particular user. This can be particularly helpful for efficiency when grading discussion participation.

Quizmakers

Some systems make available multiple-choice, short-answer, and true/false exams. Even if you don't normally use this type of test, you may want to consider creating some assessment instruments that make use of the feature. For example, you might create self- assessment quizzes to help students review the material at the end of each unit, or you might ask students to take a diagnostic quiz at the start of your course. Such "low-stakes" quizzes can be helpful in reinforcing retention of content, keeping students engaged with material on a weekly basis and especially when provided with automatic feedback, assist students in identifying areas of knowledge they might need to review before progressing to the next unit of the course.

Important! It is recommended that you rely on more than one form of graded assignment.

From a security standpoint, it is better to be able to compare several different types of samples of a student's work than to base all the grades on a single type of assignment. Also, from the standpoint of multiple learning strategies, it is best to give students the opportunity to display their achievement and comprehension in a number of ways.

To increase security, find out the capabilities of your quizmaking system. As noted in Chapter 3, various features can help increase the security of an exam—for instance, timed, one-time access; password-protected access; and the ability to create pools of questions that permit individual randomization. There are many different approaches to quiz security issues. Some systems can limit access to a quiz to a certain IP address, thus allowing the instructor to control the student's

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point of access. Others may offer a posttest analysis that looks for similarity among student answers.

Another option available in some systems is the ability to give students automatic feedback. For example, in many quizmaking programs, students who answer a question incorrectly can receive automatic instructions for remediation: they can be told to review pages 10–15 in the textbook or to reread the instructor's Unit 1 lecture. Another handy feature of some software is the ability to postpone access to a quiz (for example, by withholding a password or blocking access) until the student has finished a particular section of the course.

Finally, there are options that permit an instructor to insert images or sounds into an exam. With these features, the instructor can pose questions based on graphs, charts, or bits of music and language. Depending on your subject field and teaching methods, these may be important features for you.

If you do not have access to a quizmaking tool, you may want to explore some of the free or low-cost (depending on the features you want, you may have to pay a small fee) online testing software sites. These sites allow you to create and will host the test-taking as well. As of this writing, some of the services include Zoho Challenge.com, SurveyMonkey.com (for surveys only), ProProfs Quiz School (www.proprofs.com/quiz-school), ClassMarker (www. classmarker.com) and EasyTestMaker.com. Each service varies in features offered, and the free versions will usually include advertisements on their sites. Some services may allow one to circumvent this by embedding the quizzes on your own website. In evaluating these quizmakers, you should consider the following:

- ease of use and reuse, templates available;
- types of quizzes one can make—multiple choice, fill in, essay, etc.;
- what kind of automatic feedback is it possible to add for test- takers?
- what types of media—images, video, audio—can be used in conjunction with test-taking;
- scalability—how many users can accommodate?
- can you create groups for each class of test-takers?
- how scores are reported, what data are available;
- ability to embed the quizzes into one's web page or LMS;
- how readily quizzes can be saved;

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- time limits or security measures that are possible;
- are the quiz products you create automatically made available to others to use?
- does the site or the free version only include advertisements or non-educational materials that might be objectionable?

Student Progress Reports, Tracking and Alerts, Learning Analytics

Progress reports that can be accessed by the students themselves allow them to keep track of their own accomplishments. This is particularly helpful in courses in which the assignments may be accomplished in any order. If this feature exists, you won't have to be as vigilant in reminding students of their progress in the course. But you may also want to keep track of how students are faring in the course so if your LMS allows you to set up "alerts" to let you know if students have missed submitting by a deadline or have not accessed the course that week, this can allow you to intervene in a timely fashion. Remember to set up your "rules" for alerts before the class begins.

Student tracking by instructors—that is, obtaining statistics about when students log on, how long they remain in a specific area of the course, which specific documents or messages they have read, and so on—is increasingly recognized as an important feature for any learning management software suite. This ability to collect and review data on student use of the course may be referred to as learning analytics or performance dashboard or similar terms. Some systems allow tracking by the number of browser "hits" in a specific area of the course. Some give the duration of time spent in each area or reveal whether an area or item has been opened. A comparison of one student to others in regard to time on task or other measures may also be available. These tracking abilities can be valuable data in helping you assess participation. You will want to find out what portion of this data is available to you as instructor.

Bear in mind that these indicators are not always accurate, because they can sometimes be manipulated by students. For instance, a student can open an area of the course and simply let the clock run. This will give the appearance of the student having spent a great deal of time studying that section of the course.

However, if statistics reveal that the student hasn't even entered a certain area of the course that will tell you that he or she hasn't read the material contained within it. Or, if the student has spent only five minutes in an area of relative

complexity, this is a sure sign that he or she hasn't dealt adequately with that portion of the course.

Finally, data may be relatively meaningless without analysis and evaluation of quality. Thus the best way to use tracking functions is as a contribution to a more comprehensive evaluation, including student assignments, student postings in discussion, student presentations, and objective quizzes and essays. Online courses do permit you to know a great deal more about a student's attend-nce and participation than is possible in an on-the-ground course but a true picture can only be compiled in the context of the student's entire record and with regard to the actual content of the activity being tracked.

Adapting to Your Software's Tracking Functions

If tracking is available in your software system, it's important to find out exactly how it functions, For example, if you can track the responses a student makes in discussion but can't tell whether the student is reading the topic messages you post, you might want to require a specific number of postings in specific threads each week. As another example, assume you can track students' access to your presentations, but only on a unit basis; that is, you can't tell whether students have read individual documents within a unit. In this case, you might want to place the most important documents in their own individual units.

If you have little or no tracking capability, then student work submitted to you directly by email or posted in the classroom will assume greater importance, as will quiz questions that test comprehension and familiarity with material.

Online Gradebooks

An online gradebook is a tool that allows you to record and compute grades for students and permits students to access their own grades. Just a few of the learning management systems that offer such gradebooks are Blackboard, Moodle, BrightSpace, and Canvas.

If you have an online gradebook available to you, we highly recommend that you consider using it and learn how to use it well. Online students really appreciate being able to track their own progress. Make sure that you take the time to access a gradebook in your LMS from the student view so that you will be aware of how much students can perceive of the record. There are often different options available to the instructor, such as setting a due date that will not permit late submissions without notification of the instructor, or areas in which feedback may

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be offered to the student. If the software permits, it is a good idea to build out your entire gradebook at the beginning of the course so that students are able to get a picture of the whole that complements what they will learn from the syllabus.

Whether or not you have an online gradebook as part of learning management software, you can create your own electronic gradebook in spreadsheet form for your own benefit. Even though you may feel that you can always refer back to the online classroom for a record of activity, it is easy to lose track of individual students in a busy class. Thus it is no less important to keep detailed records of student activity in an online setting than it is for the traditional on-the-ground class. See Chapter 11 for more information on record-keeping strategies.

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Other Course Areas and Features

If your course is conducted completely online, think about creating an asynchronous "student lounge" discussion area—a place where students can socialize. Another useful discussion area is a forum designated something like "Q&A" or "Ask the Professor"— one in which students can address questions to you throughout the course, questions that are about the course as a whole, about some aspect of accessing a section of the course, are perhaps either "off topic" or concern ongoing procedural matters. These two types of messages—purely social and course related—can be combined into one area but are usually better separated. Having such areas available benefits the students, many of whom need the added interaction and feeling of camaraderie with classmates, as well as one central place where they know they can address urgent questions about the course.

Other helpful devices for personalizing a class include a discussion forum where students introduce themselves during the first week of class and student web pages where students provide some brief biographical information about themselves. Besides helping to break the ice, these areas provide an important service by allowing students to refer back to identifying details about their classmates as the course progresses. This is advantageous even in a blended class because it assists students in getting to know each other without having to continually ask, "What's your name again?" or "Where did you say you were from?" When using blogs or web pages for this purpose, always inform students whether web pages are open only to the class or can potentially be accessed by the public on the internet.

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Excerpted from *Teaching Online*

Most learning management systems, blogs, and social networking spaces make it easy for students (or you) to upload a photo to the classroom and, in many cases, a self-introduction video. Uploading photos or video of the self should always be voluntary. There are many reasons not to insist on this option. Although it does help give each student an identifiable face in the classroom, it under-cuts the egalitarian advantages inherent in an online classroom. Not knowing the race, ethnicity, age, attractiveness, or even gender of a student—except by that individual's own choice in self-identifying—often allows students (and you) to pay more attention to the ideas and words of class members without all the assumptions and subtle biases that we all harbor. We recommend that if a student does not want to upload a photo, that you suggest creating a cartoon avatar (there are many websites that offer this service) or using an image that the student considers characteristic of his/her interests or simply suggest the student use a photo in which he or she appears as a small figure in a favorite landscape.

Another desirable area to carve out is a technical support area or link to help. For instance, you may set up an area of the classroom or web pages that contain downloadable programs and plug-ins (or hyperlinks by which one can access software), plus either a simple FAQ for the learning management software or a link to the instruction manual or "user guide." If support staff are available, they may monitor requests for help. In the absence of a full student orientation, a support area plays a vital function in providing self-help to students or a connection to support materials or staff. As a backup to these technical support areas, provide, via an initial email or message, some instructions for getting started and any other relevant information, such as phone numbers for support in the event that students have trouble logging on to the class.

Mobile Apps

If provided with the option for accessing the LMS via a mobile app, for smartphone or tablet, many students will choose to do so at least part or even a majority of the time. Therefore, it is important for you, as instructor, to become thoroughly acquainted with the mobile version of your online course site from both instructor and student roles. What we want to point out here is that the mobile app and the internet version of your course site are more likely to differ than not in many respects. So even if you, the instructor, do not normally use the mobile app version of your software to access the class, you will want to see what your content looks like in the mobile app, test out how easy or difficult it is for students to download,

upload or access a portion of the course, and to see exactly what options in posting discussion or submitting assignments are available in the mobile version.

Connecting to Social Networking Sites

While many students might prefer to keep their Facebook or other social media accounts as a private realm apart from their classmates and schoolwork, many institutions have been taking advantage of the popularity of these social networking sites to give students an option to link up with what is happening in a course. Surmising that many of their students spend more time at these sites than they might be consulting their email, some institutions have arranged so that students can receive updates and reminders or notifications about what happens in the LMS class site from within Facebook.

Some instructors have also encouraged students to use Facebook as a way of presenting their self-introduction at the beginning of a class (or have presented their own self-introductions in this way) or to encourage social interaction among the entire class or small groups engaged in projects.

Finding the Right Tools and Keeping Informed

An assortment of tools has been mentioned in this chapter in conjunction with various course areas that one can utilize or improvise.

Because these tools are constantly in development, appear and disappear, it is necessary to find a way to keep up with the appearance and availability of these tools, as well as to take advantage of critical commentary on such tools from an educator's perspective so that you can quickly evaluate their suitability for your needs. A selection of blogs and other resource sites by educators devoted to evaluating new tools are included in the Guide to Resources. Depending on your interest, your favorite source might be the technology section of The Chronicle of Higher Education or Inside Higher Ed, it might be a personal blog from an online educator, or the instructional technology site of your own university.

Once you find some sources that you value, you may find it convenient to add these as "bookmarklets" to the toolbar of your internet browser for easier access. Most recent versions of browsers also have built-in RSS (Really Simple Syndication) feed readers, also known as aggregators. These permit you to subscribe to a blog, podcast, or other resource site so that you can receive the latest news or installment from that site without having to actually visit it each time. You may also find some of the previ- ously mentioned curation tools useful as a way to

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collect and annotate resources and tools—since they are available on the internet or via mobile apps, it is easy to be continually updated on all your devices. Or you might try a popular personal aggregator like Flipboard which is designed to allow you to find and save resources or to subscribe to RSS feeds, or Feedly, which is mainly intended to provide for fast updating of those sites to which you subscribe. One thing to keep in mind when selecting an aggregator or curation tool—the default on some of these sites is public sharing so make sure that if you want to keep things private that such an option is available.

Virtual Worlds

Educators have been experimenting for many years with various types of virtual worlds, that is, online 3-D immersive environ- ments that simulate reality and in which participants interact by using avatars, that is, representations of themselves (these can take the form of animals, cartoon-like characters, or images more closely based on their own appearance). Second Life for a time became perhaps the most widely known program for virtual world educational use. More recently, some institutions have been using an open source product, OpenSim, to create virtual worlds while K–12 teachers have been using an educational version of Minecraft, called Mindcraft Education edition (see http:// education.minecraft.net/) which is a combined game and virtual world environment and includes special class management con- trols for teachers.

Reasons for using a virtual world for educational activities range from simple curiosity, the coolness factor, and the desire to inject some fun into education to exploiting the virtual environment for role playing, interaction with objects, game-based learning, or complex simulations which involve danger or would incur prohibitive expense in the real world.

If your university or school is involved in using virtual world environments, and your subject matter seems to lend itself to this type of environment, we recommend the following steps as part of the planning, design, and development cycle:

- Assess your students' likely ability to access the virtual world environment. Students who do not have access to the latest computer equipment are unlikely to be able to access these environments. Try out any student instruction manuals your- self to judge if they provide adequate directions for your stu- dents or whether you might need to augment the existing guides.

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- Allow sufficient time to practice your own skills in the virtual reality environment before you even decide to use the environ- ment for instructional purposes. Clearly the time needed will vary according to the particular virtual world software, and the individual instructor. Even if you are not creating anything within the virtual world, allow sufficient practice time to feel comfortable in mastering the basic skills that enable you to move and communicate, and another dedicated period to be able to learn how to facilitate activities for your students.

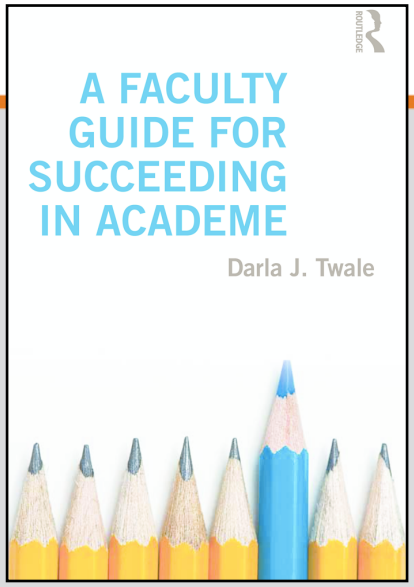
- Find out what materials are available from your university to assist students and run a required orientation for students to practice before you initiate any instructional activities in the virtual world.

- If you decide to use the virtual world environment, draw up a detailed explanation of what students are expected to do there. Be prepared for the eventuality that some students may have difficulty or even dislike participating, and offer an alternative activity that might accomplish the same goals.

CHAPTER

7

CONFERENCING AND PUBLISHING



This chapter is excerpted from

A Faculty Guide for Succeeding in Academe

by Darla J. Twale.

Learn more

CONFERENCING AND PUBLISHING

Excerpted from *A Faculty Guide for Succeeding in Academe*

INTRODUCTION

Not only does the road to tenure include conference presentation and article publication, but yearly merit pay and promotion to full professor also require a professor to continue to generate presentations and publications. Ironically, little scholarly research, presentation, or publication exists on these essential academic functions. Boyer (1990) brought the issue of expanding acceptable forms of publishing and scholarship to the forefront with his Scholarship Reconsidered. His pivotal work spawned thousands of articles and perhaps an equal number of discussions at faculty meetings and conferences.

Many authors penned guides to writing technically and facilitating book and article publication; however, studies on faculty perceptions of researching, conferencing as it relates to professional development, the effects of rejection on their subsequent publication, or ethical issues related to journal writing, submission, and contributions and authorship remain sparse in the scholarly literature. Significant scholarship exists on the merits of faculty research collaboration, conference networking, and mentorship as effective means of encouraging new faculty presentation and publication but not the more personal aspects of conferencing and publishing.

The following vignettes depict situations that stem from the lack of strong publication and conference guidelines in faculty departments due in part to the absence of similar information presented to new faculty and doctoral students preparing for academic careers in professional fields. Ironically, research universities grant tenure and rank on successful attempts in publication and presentation, but often new faculty must determine on their own how best to accomplish that.

John, Joe, and Austin Manipulate the System

Having retired as a school superintendent, John thought his work credentials spoke for themselves so he had done little research and writing during his first three years in his new academic position. As crunch time approached and he needed publications and presentations to present for his pre-tenure review, he sought advice from a senior colleague, Tim, who had done little publishing himself. Tim suggested that John simply change the title of his last presentation and submit it to another professional conference. John felt he had a new lease on life.

During his years before tenure review, Joe coasted along taking flying lessons,

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enjoying his grandchildren, and traveling to many conferences with his spouse, also an academic. But, he rarely presented any research. Joe's wife worked in an unrelated department as a tenured faculty member in another university. When the faculty reviewed Joe's dossier for graduate faculty status, his articles featured him as second, third, or fourth author. Joe's wife appeared as first author on one of them and second and third author on the other two. Although the articles appeared in second-tier scholarly journals, none were in Joe's area.

Austin expected to take an early retirement but following the unexpected death of his wife, he decided to stay on the faculty. However, in anticipation of retirement, he failed to publish any articles the previous two years and needed at least one to be reappointed to the graduate faculty in order to chair several dissertations he still had in the queue. He overheard a conversation between two of his younger colleagues who were completing an empirical research project. Austin had worked with each of them in the past. He asked if they would put his name on their manuscript if he edited the piece for them before they sent it off to a journal.

Perhaps department chairs/heads presume that new faculty know how to write and submit manuscripts for conference presentation or journal review. Getting their research agenda on track as well as knowing how to properly format a conference proposal or submit an article for publication seems to be information that administrators should convey to their new faculty recruits and that dissertation chairs may share with their students. Subtleties such as submitting the same proposal/article to two different conferences, submitting a published article to a conference for presentation, adding one's name to an article that one did not write but only edited, and/or tacking one's name to a spouse's work should be discussed with new faculty. Obviously, lack of knowledge or lack of integrity explained Tim suggesting that John resubmit his paper under a different title, and Joe's spouse and Austin's colleagues allowing their names to appear on works they did not do. On the other hand, the competition to acquire slots at conference proceedings, inclusion in prestigious journals, and/or tenure in a department may cause new faculty to accomplish goals by whatever means possible in the absence of consistent information.While they may presume these acts are of marginal integrity, faculty may truly not know the rules of the game and resort or fall prey to the tricks of the trade instead.

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Excerpted from *A Faculty Guide for Succeeding in Academe*

If at First You Don't Succeed, Yell at the Editor

As a newly appointed associate provost, Mary Kay sprouted her peacock feathers and danced a victory lap. While most administrators tended to have little time to publish, she set time aside to continue her research agenda. Mary Kay had just finished an article of which she was quite proud. Typically, faculty select an appropriate journal to which to send their manuscript and write a cover letter highlighting its alignment with that journal in hopes that the peer reviewers and editor will look favorably upon their manuscript.

Normally Mary Kay spoke with the editors personally in order to laud the contents of her article. She tended to select initially only top-tier journals as outlets for her scholarship. Even though she schmoozed one editor of a particularly prestigious journal before she submitted her manuscript, she could hardly contain herself when her rejection letter appeared in her mailbox weeks later. Acceptance rate for this journal, at only 10 percent, should have prepared her for possible rejection, but then again Mary Kay never thought that her work would fall outside of that percentage point. Furious, Mary Kay phoned the editor again to express her disappointment and perhaps plead with her to reconsider. The editor listened to her 10-minute rant, name calling, and uncivil display before terminating the conversation.

Senior faculty members and administrators should know better than to prime the pump in order to get published.While it is perfectly acceptable to contact an editor by phone or email to discern if one's manuscript topic would be one that would be of interest to the readership, the inquiry should not be construed as a strategic move to increase one's chances for publication.

At one time or another, every faculty member has received a rejection letter from a scholarly journal. Good journal editors use reviewers' comments to offer suggestions to assist the author. That letter from the editor should be written to ease the pain of rejection and support the author rather than engender feelings of animosity or disdain that affect their writing subsequent publishable works. By the same token, civility dictates that authors receive rejections with grace, realize the reviewers dislike the piece, not them, and that the article needs work before it is resubmitted to another journal. What caused Mary Kay to disrespect the journal editor remains a mystery, but ego, position, and desire to be published in a premier journal may surely have played a role. Regardless, her behavior was inexcusable.

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Articles should be written for a particular journal such that it captures the interest of the readership, falls within the confines of the space allotted, follows empirical research preferences, and adheres to the expectations set forth by the journal's board.The tendency to seek inclusion in prestigious, top tier journals is laudable, but it may be unrealistic for early career faculty who publish infrequently or have no mentors to critique drafts of their work. Carefully selecting the journal, graciously accepting the outcome, and then reading reviewers' comments to help enhance their work tends to create more success than Mary Kay attained. Had she contacted the editor to discuss how she might have improved the piece and/or thanked the editor for the comments in the face of rejection, Mary Kay would have preserved her professional reputation rather than tarnished it. Perhaps her subsequent work on another topic would have met the expectations of this top tier journal.

Invisible Colleagues at the Conference

Everyone in the department looked forward to their national professional conference each fall. So did the departmental administrative assistants because the entire faculty, and the chair would be gone all week. Some faculty presented papers while some served as discussants or did both. Ronda was excited because her family lived in the conference destination city.

The department paid for banquet tickets for all faculty members this year. Even the dean attended. Everyone presented at least one paper or served as a discussant except for Ronda and Danny. Tongues wagged when it became conspicuous that Ronda's seat at the banquet table remained empty. Danny loved to play golf, chat with old friends, and dine at fine establishments when at conferences so he missed the event as well. No one saw Ronda or Danny attend any of the sessions either. In fact, since the trip in from the airport, no one had talked to or seen Ronda. When Ronda and Danny returned to their offices, they submitted their travel vouchers along with their colleagues.

Some reasons to patronize local, regional, and national conferences include: furthering the profession by introducing the latest cutting-edge research to the field for colleague critique before submitting it to a journal; discussing the future direction of the profession; introducing and nurturing new entrants into the profession; and positioning one's university as a major player in research venues. In addition, conferences market themselves as furthering professional development and colleague networking and as offering leadership opportunities for colleagues

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to fulfill professional service obligations.Years ago academic departments provided ample travel money for faculty to pursue these opportunities in enjoyable locations across the country. As budgets tightened, travel monies declined and faculty gradually either attended fewer conferences per year or opted to spend their own money to further their careers.

This particular department splurged in order for all members to attend the big banquet. Ronda and Danny were obligated to attend. Attending some of the sessions to further their professional development would not be out of the question, especially considering the fact they were neither presenters nor discussants. The presence of the dean and the department chair should have signaled to them the importance of the conference and their participation in it. Professional organizations, especially the smaller regional ones, struggle to survive amid system-wide budget cuts coupled with the rising costs of hotel and food service. Not patronizing conferences places them in jeopardy of extinction. They serve a vital mission to their respective professions and disciplines that in their absence would surely create a major void. Ronda and Danny seem to have lost sight of the vital role an association plays, not to mention their attendance.

DEBRIEFING CONFERENCING AND PUBLISHING

Blasycyznski, Scott, and Green (2009) noted that conference attendance positively correlates with faculty vitality with regard to scholarly publication. In other words, if vetted through a peer-review process with concomitant feedback offered, a conference presentation tends to be something worth submitting to a scholarly or practitioner journal. Not all presentations will result in publications; however, a CV with myriad conference papers but only a few publications indicates a problem that should be detected by chairs during annual performance appraisals.

By contrast, multiple and sole authorships indicate well-rounded academics who satisfy norms for research collaboration as well as fulfilling the commitment to a coherent research agenda. Spouses collaborating on publications could have negative repercussions for either party. Because the topic of the articles appeared to be out of Joe's area of expertise, it may lead peers voting on his status to conclude that his wife did the work and simply added his name. Such practices may be collaborative but these articles fell outside of his research agenda. Intellectual autonomy needs to be made clear to peers, and in this instance, it was not (Creamer, 2006).

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Excerpted from *A Faculty Guide for Succeeding in Academe*

Similar to a Darwinist natural selection process, faculty put forth effort to see their scholarship published in prestigious journals (Blasycyznski et al., 2009; Bray

& Major, 2012). It would not be unusual for faculty like Mary Kay to submit to these journals first but it may be counterproductive for many new faculty who need more confidence in their writing ability. Valle and Schultz (2011) found that senior faculty tended to publish in top-tier journals for several reasons:

(a) in order to establish a research agenda; (

b) knowledge of their readership;

(c) supported by doctoral students;

(d) likely to receive incentives or rewards to publish; and

e) it honed their ability to write over their career.

Junior faculty may not be privy to these at entry but must gradually build up capital over time. In other words, senior faculty, especially those in research institutions, accumulate and use to their advantage the social, cultural, and political capital needed for researching, presenting, and publishing. This same study found a positive correlation between faculty productivity in top-tier outlets and journal editorial board membership.

Burke and James (2010) questioned the inter-rater reliability of peer review. They pondered factors that influence ratings of peers' research performance, a factor that may preoccupy tenure committees. They determined that peers' assessments indicated they favored objective rather than subjective or political factors when rendering a decision of accept or reject. This should be good news to those submitting manuscripts in that the process espouses fairness and rejections are more common than acceptances.

Above all, faculty need to pay close attention to publishing norms in their department/college as well in their field/discipline (Minton, Fernando, & Ray, 2008). They must not only be cognizant of how much they need to publish but also where. Specifically, colleagues may establish a set number of peer-reviewed articles with expectations for them to be in specific journals or in the top tiers. Journals may be selective of what types of empirical research they will accept as representative of what the field/discipline regards as significant (Blasycyznski et al., 2009). New faculty need to also be aware of the audience for which they write and the value placed on that in the department/college. For instance, journals read

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by practitioners may not be a suitable outlet for one's research and may not be valued by tenure committees.

THE REST OF THE STORY

John did as his mentor Tim suggested. By tenure time, however, the P&T committee realized that John's presentations had a peculiar similarity.The faculty saw through Joe and he failed to achieve graduate faculty status and departed at the end of the semester for non-academic pursuits.Austin's colleagues regrettably put his name on their paper out of deference to his senior status and personal loss. Mary Kay learned little from her encounter with the journal editor and continued to push her agenda on the next unsuspecting editor. Ronda decided to leave the institution before her tenure time and take a position outside academe. Danny retired shortly after this conference. Neither the dean, the chair, nor the attending faculty inquired of or admonished Ronda or Danny for their conference faux pas.

BEST PRACTICES

Conferencing and publishing remains an area that needs to be mined in the scholarly literature. Aspects also need to be addressed in professional development seminars.

- If new faculty did not have strong graduate school mentors who published prolifically or received degrees from institutions other than Research Intensive/ Extensive, then stronger mentoring needs to exist for these faculty novices. Indeed, the earlier concept of pushing for a new faculty cohort class could cover the expectation for conference protocol in depth and then concentrate on translating presentations into publications by selecting the best scholarly outlet.

- The annual performance appraisal meeting should also be a time to encourage faculty to seek developmental options on how to convert a presentation to a manuscript. New faculty may need to ask their chair about their best hope for publication. They need to realize it lies in peer-reviewed presentations. A lopsided CV consisting of many presentations and few publications indicates faculty resisting writing for publication. Junior faculty need to be told by chairs or seek professional development opportunities on their own.

- Graduate department faculty should illuminate their doctoral students preparing for academic careers on conference presentation and journal

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publication protocol. Conferences typically include a session or two on getting published. PhD candidates and junior faculty should attend. Faculty need to shepherd their PhD students to conferences.

RESOURCES

- Numerous books exist to assist doctoral students and new faculty. Pat Thomson and Barbara Kamla's (2012) Writing for Peer Reviewed Journals offers a perspective on successful writing for publication. Patricia Goodson (2013) adds another practical approach with her book, Becoming an Academic Writer.

- For faculty sitting on P&T committees and judging colleagues' work, several library reference texts offer assistance: Cabell's Directory of Publishing, which separates disciplinary journals into several guides; Thomson Reuters Web of Knowledge (http://thomsonreuters.com/products_services/science/science_products/a-z/isi_web_of_knowledge/); Journal Citation Reports; and the Google Scholar Search Hirsch Index (http://code.google.com/p/citations-gadget/). Readers must be cautioned that not all journals in which articles are published are referenced in these resources but it gives committee members and faculty a comparative indication of scholarly work (Hodge & Lacasse, 2011).