

2015 APSA Teaching and Learning Conference and Track Summaries

2015 CONFERENCE OVERVIEW

Heidi Souerwine, *Director of Meetings and Conferences*

The 12th Annual APSA Teaching and Learning Conference focused on the challenges and opportunities of teaching in the digital age where information literacy is a critical skill and all of us are “plugged in.” This year’s program committee, led by Mark Johnson, Minnesota State Community and Technical College, organized a dynamic program of sessions and workshops around the theme “Innovations and Expectations for Teaching in the Digital Era.” Panels—organized in twelve content tracks and dedicated professional development workshop time slots—presented research on pedagogy and discussed best practices for engaging students and training them to think critically and write effectively as well as evaluate, consume, and generate knowledge of political science successfully, integrating digital techniques and traditional methods.

The program opened with the Keynote Address presented by John M. Sides of The George Washington University. Sides spoke on the challenges of communicating the results of political science research in a public sphere overstimulated by information. Teaching, Sides argued, is essential to bridging the public engagement gap between reluctant academics and laypersons who are interested in politics but not initiated to the norms of the profession. Political scientists, and especially political science educators, must be able to nimbly apply a large body of knowledge to current events in order to make it relevant to their students; refrain from relying on academic jargon without compromising the quality of the conclusions; and present their points as clearly and succinctly as possible. Sides also suggested that public engagement is becoming imperative for political scientists, and should be recognized as a valuable form of service to the discipline.

2015 TLC PROGRAM COMMITTEE

APSA thanks the following individuals who served on the program committee and as track moderators.

- Mark Johnson (Chair), Minnesota State Community and Technical College
- Kimberly Cowell-Meyers, American University
- Audrey A. Haynes, University of Georgia
- Steven Rathgeb Smith, American Political Science Association
- Cameron Thies, Arizona State University
- Sherri Wallace, University of Louisville

We would also like to thank the 2015 meeting attendees and the APSA staff for contributing to success of the meeting. We look forward to seeing you at the 2016 meeting.

TRACK SUMMARIES

Track summaries from the 2015 APSA Teaching and Learning Conference are published in the following pages of *PS*. These summaries include highlights and themes that emerged from

the research presented in each track. The summary authors also issued recommendations for faculty, departments, and the discipline as a whole – providing suggestions for new strategies, resources, and approaches aimed at advancing political science education throughout the discipline and beyond.

The twelve tracks are listed here and the track summaries for eleven of them are featured below:

- Civic Engagement
- Conflict and Conflict Resolution
- Core Curriculum/General Education
- Curricular and Program Assessment
- Distance Learning
- Diversity, Inclusiveness, and Equality
- Graduate Education: Teaching and Advising Graduate Students
- Integrating Technology into the Classroom
- Internationalizing the Curriculum
- Simulations and Role Play
- Teaching Political Theory and Theories
- Teaching Research Methods

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

David C. Kershaw, *Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania*

Eric B. Hodges, *University of South Florida Sarasota-Manatee*

One word could be used to summarize the theme of the 2015 APSA Teaching and Learning Civic Engagement track: Transcendence. Our workshop focused on moving beyond the traditional students, disciplines, boundaries, and pedagogies associated with civic engagement in order to harness innovations for teaching responsible citizenship in the digital age.

Reaching Diverse Communities

The first point of transcendence involves the importance of bringing civic engagement to all students. Most workshop participants explicitly embraced the idea that political science should attempt to reach students often underserved by civic engagement courses. Nordquist and others pointed to the Ferguson protests as a stark reminder that our citizen education needs to be inclusive of the needs of all US citizens. The workshop discussed notable innovations in civic engagement aimed at the following underserved populations: veterans, foreign students, and students outside the social sciences.

Eric Hodges, from the University of South Florida, Sarasota, recently taught a political science course that explored the relationship between military veterans and civic engagement. He utilized Google Hangouts and Skype to invite community practitioners and scholars to the classroom. Those experts explored how civic engagement might be utilized to aid in veterans’ reintegration. Hodges concluded that participating in civic engagement projects both rekindled a sense of purpose within veterans and helped connect civilian students to veterans’ issues.

Forren assessed the effects of the US State Department's Study of the US Institute's (SUSI) immersion programs conducted at Miami University, Hamilton on foreign student attitudes towards democracy. The program consists of a 5–6 week immersion program for 20 undergraduate students and focuses on American government and citizenship. Forren found that the SUSI program on civic engagement increased participant support for democratic values, increased participant support for active government, and expanded conceptualization of the obligations of citizenship among program participants.

To encourage broad participation across disciplines, Blair presented an ambitious program to employ De Montfort University students from diverse academic backgrounds in local governance issues. Blair released a request for proposals to students seeking solutions to domestic policy problems. The program drew upon the ideas and skill sets of 200 students with diverse academic backgrounds (from art to business) to create a report (100 Ideas to Change Britain) that was delivered to government leaders in the House of Lords.

Of note, many of the discussions about reaching non-social science students dealt with mobilizing faculty across disciplines (addressed in the next section). However, a number of participants, including Simpson, Cook, and McCartney, observed that students are often purposefully selected by faculty, or self-select, into courses with an engagement component. Therefore, selection criteria may be one reason why civic engagement efforts fall short of reaching broad audiences. Simpson noted that for these reasons the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AACU) has created an interdisciplinary civic engagement pilot program.

Civic Engagement outside the Social Sciences

The workshop repeatedly stressed the importance of interdisciplinary outreach and strategic framing of civic engagement in order to reach new, often skeptical, and sometimes hostile disciplines. Numerous papers noted that interdisciplinary cooperation presents challenges in reaching out to faculty and students who resist being political. A crucial problem identified by the group is integrating apolitical disciplines into civic education without losing the essential political component of engagement.

Cross-disciplinary interactions at Metro State highlighted these challenges. Cole reported on the creation of a faculty learning circle in which AACU's civic engagement report (A Crucible Moment) was used as a guide to encourage civic engagement. Cole found that nursing and natural science faculty struggled with the term "civic" as though the concept set out to impose an ideology and thus initially failed to embrace the civic engagement efforts. Faculty members at Salisbury University (Pope and Surak) confronted similar objections. It was only when the Metro State faculty saw themselves in the document (once the idea was depoliticized) that they would embrace the approach.

A conceptual challenge for interdisciplinary civic engagement concerns the civic versus community dichotomy. One common suggestion for engaging diverse faculty is to use the broader term, community engagement, rather than the more politically focused civic engagement. Nordquist interrogated this division, and rejected the move away from political involvement. He argued the primary aspiration of civic engagement must be to shape democratic citizens and, as such, is inherently political. Therefore, political science educators must take a core role in civic engagement.

Despite the challenges of interdisciplinary civic engagement, participants identified a variety of benefits in involving diverse faculty members. For example, Pope and Surak discussed lessons learned during an eight week faculty seminar on course design to boost civic engagement across the curriculum at Salisbury University in Maryland. They noted that open space dialogue with faculty from a variety of disciplines helped not only generate ideas but also helped identify and work through challenges in implementation.

Workshop participants continued to follow O'Meara (2009) and others in reiterating the vital importance of institutional support in promoting civic engagement. Many participant initiatives were strongly supported by their universities, as the civic engagement projects directly advanced university missions. At the same time, Speakman cautioned that institutional support should not become institutional imposition. Speakman, in the course of discussing a project supported by Roger Williams University's Community Partnerships Center, noted that the university administration largely took control of selecting engagement projects. As a consequence, the university prioritized and/or attempted to recast projects to fit a client-service model (driven by the center director's discipline-specific knowledge). In the end, the projects primarily served the community partners, not the students. Speakman's experiences suggest that faculty control, with broad faculty input, is integral in achieving student learning outcomes associated with civic engagement projects.

Innovative Techniques

A final point of transcendence that emerged was the need to move beyond well-worn teaching techniques to more effectively engage a new generation of students. In addition to ideas such as De Montfort's 100 Ideas campaign mentioned above, several novel methods emerged.

George Washington University students (Chambers, Smith, Fullop, Warwick, and Daniel) and a representative from the National Defense University (Wilkie) shared their Strategic Crisis Simulation with track participants. These online simulations require students to assume the role of US policy makers and respond to an unfolding crisis to help students acquire substantive knowledge, recognize and cope with uncertainty, build collaboration skills, and practice communicating with real policy makers.

In her course on state and local government, Karjala collaborated with Chickasha government officials to partner students with local political institutions. The students researched how cities track rental properties and how to measure citizen satisfaction with city performance. The students delivered a formal presentation to city officials and wrote an academic paper. Karjala recommended requiring students to interact with municipal employees to create a stronger understanding of the role and needs of the elected officials.

Berg worked with Suffolk University students in community-based research to address three local problems: removal of toxic substances from consumer products, the need for legislation regulating gas leaks, and assessing why local business had not adopted Boston's energy efficiency program. The program moved students from researching the issue to action. As previously noted, Eric Hodges discussed how civic education could be enhanced through the utilization of classroom video conferencing to easily and inexpensively connect students with community organizations and practitioners.

Owen and Riddle reported preliminary findings into whether high school political knowledge acquisition is tied to types of civics courses. Specifically, they compared the *We the People: The Citizen and the Constitution*¹ instructional program with more traditional approaches. Owen and Riddle established that form of instruction is crucial, with higher political knowledge gains found in students with “We the People” instructors. Owen and Riddle also discovered that those students who take civics courses as an elective fare much better in political knowledge acquisition than those for whom civics is a requirement.

Duke presented a comparative analysis of various innovative pedagogies and how they might aid in civic education. Duke suggested that inventive pedagogies such as computer simulations, role-playing, and gamification could all play a future role in teaching students how to implement theoretical concepts in their communities.

NOTE

1. *We the People: The Citizen and the Constitution* is an instructional program on the principles of the US Constitution and the Bill of Rights for elementary, middle, and high school students. The program goal is to promote understanding of the principles and values on which our political institutions are based. The program is administered through a national network of direct coordinators. The program is available to public and private elementary and secondary schools in congressional districts, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, American Samoa, Guam, and the US Virgin Islands.

CONFLICT AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Joseph W. Roberts, *Roger Williams University*

This year, 2015, marks the fourth consecutive year that a Conflict and Conflict Resolution track has been a part of the Teaching and Learning Conference. A small but exceptionally diverse group of scholars participated in a lively and enriching meeting. As in previous years, a consensus emerged that conflict, because it is so multifaceted ranging from the personal to national to state to international and transnational conflict on multiple issues, requires an interdisciplinary approach to the study and teaching of the discipline. Moreover, because the discipline brings teachers from so many disciplines together, it fosters creative and innovative teaching strategies at both the graduate and undergraduate level. Five themes emerged from our discussions.

First, as has been said in previous summaries, and, truthfully, in summaries for every other track, writing and critical thinking skills are essential for students moving forward in the discipline. However, these skills might be redefined as strategic writing and thinking with a corollary that students and faculty must embrace uncertainty. It is important for everyone to know how to deal with knowing too much or, more likely, not knowing enough. Barbara F. Walter recently lamented the findings of a study published in *International Organization* that showed low levels of strategic thinking by policy elites (Walter 2014; Hafner, et al. 2014). If students do not learn to think strategically, nothing will change. When we discussed strategic thinking, our conclusion was that students need to try to understand the cultural, emotional, and political dimensions of a conflict as much as is possible. It is only then that they can bring the full range of analytical tools to their writing and thinking. The goal is to reach better conclusions. These skills will, of course, work in multiple fields, not just conflict and conflict resolution. Paige Berges and Flannery Amdahl discussed the need to understand the differences between position (what do I want) and interest (why do I want it). Professors must try to

develop analytical skills that emphasize the multidimensional nature of conflict. There is often no singular right answer in conflict resolution, and demonstrating the complexities of the process is important. Rick Bailey discussed how strategy is changing in the face of new technology and cyber power as well as how this is creating uncertainty. Bailey argued that strong analytical skills are critical to minimizing the uncertainty and making better decisions.

Second, simulations are useful pedagogical tools for teaching students strategic thinking, especially in situations where there is a high degree of uncertainty (and often hostility, as well). Moreover, simulations will accomplish different learning objectives at different times and professors must be proactive about the goals and objectives of any simulation. Both participants who discussed simulations expressed some frustration with managing simulations in the classroom. Professors must be clear and realistic about their goals for a simulation depending on a number of factors including the size of the class, number of sessions available for a simulation, technology tools, level of interest in the issues, and the free rider problem or other issues of classroom dynamics. James Hanley used a Constitutional convention simulation to encourage students to think through ideas of governance that manage inherent conflicts between people and regions in a post-apocalyptic America. Students must write and argue for positions that reflect their local environment and cannot “win” without compromise. Joseph W. Roberts discussed his simulation of ethnic conflict, which divided participants into key constituencies to settle a secessionist dispute. The resulting debate, dialogue, and negotiations were important to improving conceptual retention and developing practical skills. However, both simulation presentations noticed that there was a significant challenge to keeping students engaged across multiple levels of negotiations over many days. There was often a natural lull in negotiations (say when A and B are negotiating directly leaving C on the sidelines). Professors must be proactive and create enough conflicts that will keep the simulation moving without overwhelming students or veering into the absurd.

Third, there is abundant pressure to teach so that students can “get jobs” rather than teaching simply for higher order knowledge. While many might lament this trend, the truth is that our students do need to learn practical skills for their future livelihoods. Moreover, conflict and conflict resolution studies offer abundant opportunities to provide students with important skills that they can use in any endeavor. Beyond writing and critical/strategic thinking, methodological skills are important to the field, but there is no clear structure for doing so including them. Molly Inman discussed a survey of master’s programs in conflict resolution and found that about half required methods and half did not. A look at the job postings of Peace and Development Collaborative Network showed that almost half wanted research skills. The challenges to methods instruction in conflict research are myriad: data availability, conflict between language requirements and methods requirements in a limited timeframe for a degree program, and student perceptions that methods study is not useful coupled with limited background knowledge.

Fourth, it is crucial but challenging to get students to “widen the aperture.” This means that students must move beyond their biases to think outside the box or to think about the future. As professors, we know the value of learning as a continual pursuit. We continually expand our repertoire of skills, methods,

and tools. We must impart this same passion to our students. Students come to our courses with different skill sets, and they must be encouraged to develop new ones and refine those that they already have. This can be methodological skills, language skills, negotiation or speaking skills, or writing skills. Conflict resolution is a multimodal endeavor and we must encourage our students to expand their research toolboxes. Equally important, the skills and tools available today may be different than those available in the future; therefore, students must look to the future to see what other tools might become available (and to discover what new conflicts might emerge). The recent trend to use satellite imagery to document conflict and to move responders to mitigate said conflict is an important case in point.

Finally, assessments are critical throughout the process of teaching; it is imperative that faculty evaluate and adjust as they move through their curriculum. Berges and Amdahl discussed using backwards design and scaffolding to teach the strategic thinking skills necessary for conflict resolution. Rather than starting with material to be covered, backwards design begins with the end result of what students should know. Scaffolding breaks assignments into manageable and accessible parts. Both Roberts and Hanley discussed using similar processes to encourage student engagement with the simulations, whether through writing assignments or increasing complexity of the negotiations. Inman showed that methods must be practically oriented and evaluative. The skills to evaluate either must be developed iteratively.

Conclusions

Studying conflict and conflict resolution is difficult but exciting work that transcends traditional teaching styles. Teaching about conflict and conflict resolution, at any level, requires an interdisciplinary perspective. Politics, psychology, sociology, anthropology, communications, and the law are all necessary to understand why conflict occurs, how it might be mitigated in the short term, and how, eventually, it can be eliminated in the long term. Teaching about conflict and conflict resolution requires innovative teaching strategies and tools from experiential learning activities to multi-method analysis and beyond.

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CORE CURRICULUM/GENERAL EDUCATION

Craig Douglas Albert, *Georgia Regents University*

Shawna Brandle, *Kingsborough Community College*

Sally Friedman, *SUNY-Albany*

Jonathan Rose, *University of Tennessee, Knoxville*

We begin by highlighting the diversity of institutions represented by our track, the commonalities faced by this diverse set of instructors, and the importance, shared by all, of the ongoing mission of improving core curriculum and general education pedagogical methods. The papers presented for this track were prepared by instructors representing 2- and 4-year institutions; these institutions range widely in terms of a number of

characteristics including type and size (small private institutions to large public universities), the economic status of students served, the readiness of students to embark on a college career, and the consequent average class size. In addition, we note the changing pressures on colleges to admit an increasing number of students, to prepare students for success in a tight job market, and to introduce them to the rigors of college. Given this diversity, the papers presented to our track show significant attempts to better assist a more diverse and sometimes less well prepared set of students to survive in college and beyond, and to help faculty adapt to the challenges of an ever-changing institutional and technological environment. Three broad and interconnected themes emerged from our work: the importance of initial assessment, replication, and adaptability; student readiness; and enhancing student engagement.

Initial Assessment, Replication, and Adaptability

How have a wide variety of instructors adapted specific pedagogies to the variation inherent in our profession? Several papers identified the importance of initial assessment. For instance, Dixon argued that while increasing numbers of students are admitted into college, K-12 standards have declined. Thus, early identification of potentially at-risk students is imperative. Implanting online, interactive platforms such as Cengage MindTap, Dixon presented easy methods to identify which students become at-risk in the political science classroom by including simple procedures such as taking attendance and by using small, early assignments to gauge participation. These methods are used to ensure that "an ounce of prevention" is available to make students aware of strategies to get back on track.

Richards, Gilmore, and Smith, seeking an assessment of a different kind, make it a point to conduct a pre- and post-tests in their introductory American politics classes to pinpoint what students know coming in, how their skills develop as courses unfold, and how in the end a student's propensity for civic engagement is affected by the course. Once it is clear what entering students know, one can decide on the most appropriate teaching strategies.

Finally, John Craig has performed an assessment of a different sort altogether, examining the bibliographic connections among scholars working in the area of teaching and learning/general education. Are academics building a body of knowledge by cross-referencing each other's work? Craig found that connections in this regard are looser than we might want.

While covering a wide variety of topics and as we might expect in light of the paper presented by Craig, these papers actually shared something important in common: the instructors are operating in relative isolation. No two schools, or even two classrooms, are exactly alike. As such, we cannot assume that the results from these studies are broadly generalizable. These studies, and others like them, need to be replicated at institutions across the country of varying sizes and means, and in as large a scope of contexts as possible. Given these results, instructors can then adapt specific strategies to their own needs. This is an area for future scholarship of teaching and learning.

Student Readiness

But how prepared are students for college? Student readiness emerged as an important theme in its own right. What do students know coming into our classes, and what do we want them to learn? How can we ensure that lack of a priori knowledge

proficiency—whether reading or writing skills, course content, or habits of successful college students—does not prevent students from achieving class learning objectives? In this context, Doerschler et al. described a summer writing intensive class specifically designed to improve the writing, research, and citation skills of at-risk provisionally admitted students. Articulating that most students do not understand when they are plagiarizing—especially when patchwriting (slightly changing parts of another’s work to make it one’s own)—the authors discussed improving student writing by teaching the correct use of sources and by demonstrating the proper rules concerning plagiarism. A writer’s workshop with the Director of the Writing Center and as-needed supplemental instruction filled out the picture.

Similarly, Penchek et al. spoke about their involvement in a First Year Experience course, which is a combination of major-specific course content as well as a general introduction to succeeding in college. The authors identified the challenges of integrating these sometimes conflicting goals, and they focused attention on the institutional difficulties—including changing personnel and changing course “ownership”—as the course developed and was maintained over time.

Because unfavorable outcomes (the dreaded D, F, and W grades) are correlated with low levels of student preparation and engagement, Dixon tracked student readiness and student engagement in online course assignments both before and throughout his course, referring students with low scores on either measurement to resources available at the school. Richards, Gilmore, and Smith’s project (described above) addressed the knowledge of student readiness and learning directly by pre- and post-testing students at three different schools to measure their level of course knowledge before and after taking a basic American government course, finding that student learning did in fact increase, even for those with a low level of course knowledge at the start of the course. But once it has been determined where students are coming from, how do instructors hold their interest and engage their critical thinking skills?

Strategies for Student Engagement

Though there is overlap with the papers described above, the final theme of our track centers on the ways active learning techniques in the classroom itself provide the potential to engage students. Thus, Brian Roberts developed a “scaffolded” approach to help students integrate academic literature into their understanding of practical politics. In an academic paper, students applied literature on campaigns to a particular campaign of interest to them and then were expected to further deepen their analysis by serving as college radio commentators on election night, applying their newly learned scholarship in analyzing the same candidates their paper profiled. Results demonstrated that students were more engaged, understood the material better, had more opportunity for application, and increased their oral communication skills.

Suggesting that student engagement can be enhanced through the consideration of big picture ideas, Friedman developed a course entitled *Current Controversies in American Values*; through an examination of philosophical works as well as current issues, students were asked to grapple with concerns of the American creed, including equality, liberty, and tolerance. The class analyzed primary texts on thematic controversies and incorporated in-depth classroom discussion through active-learning exercises.

Brandle focused on creating an e-sourcebook based on primary text documents that would help keep student attention and would improve analytical skills by forcing students to engage more with primary materials. Such an e-sourcebook with primary sources has the additional benefit of a reduced price tag compared to traditional texts.

Finally, in his course on state and local politics, Tucker engaged students by taking advantage of the modern student’s facility with visual images. He developed numerous animations and graphical displays, highlighting changes over time in demographic or political characteristics and the relative positioning of different states on these continua.

An examination of these papers leads one to conclude that professors should continue to encourage active-learning projects to increase student engagement and that departments should continue researching the effects of scaffolding, including developing university-wide efforts. Even in very large classes, these techniques have proved a very positive way to stimulate student interest.

Moving Forward: Strategies for Success

Several findings emerged that may help our discipline engage students better and improve the rigor of pedagogical scholarship. As touched upon above, these focused on collaboration by professors from varying institutions (perhaps through a consortium); replication of single case-studies to assess whether they can be broadly generalizable; adaptability of specific pedagogies to institutional contexts; and perhaps most interestingly, the need to communicate and collaborate with the graduate education track, seeking to improve pedagogical knowledge to graduate students in political science before they embark on educating students.

CURRICULAR AND PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

Kimberly Cowell-Meyers, *American University*

Lisa Argyle, *University of California, Santa Barbara*

Assessment is now a well-established part of higher education. Nearly all universities and academic departments are obliged to carry out some form of systematic assessment of learning by accrediting bodies, state legislatures, or other institutions. Even our students, who are emerging from an education system at the primary and secondary level that emphasizes teacher and school accountability, nowadays routinely expect us to connect assignments to course objectives, provide rubrics for grading assignments, and list our learning outcomes in our syllabi.

The papers on this panel and the subsequent discussions demonstrated that the exercise of assessment provides an opportunity to answer many compelling questions about academia, and teaching itself, in a variety of contexts. Indeed, while assessment in higher education is rarely a completely voluntary undertaking, the variety of approaches and applications suggests that assessment need not be seen as limiting or burdensome and can instead be a very beneficial tool for improving instruction and administration. The scope of topics and methodologies in these papers shows the versatility of assessment and its utility in addressing questions which are of great value to students, instructors, departments, and universities.

Assessment Working for Students

One persistent criticism of assessment is the belief that what really counts in student learning cannot be counted. However, the classroom research presented by Art Auerbach, John Settich,

Chad Kinsella, and Adam Haigh suggested ways to evaluate the real-world impact of instruction on students beyond mastery of course content.

Art Auerbach used assessment techniques to measure the effects of a pre-professional course on the career plans of pre-law students. Responding to an administrative initiative to develop pre-professional courses for non-professional majors, Auerbach designed and co-taught a course with a practicing attorney that used site visits, panel presentations, and mentoring to introduce students to the legal profession. Assessment in this course enabled faculty and administrators to determine whether the exposure students received influenced their decision to stay with pre-law, thus enhancing student satisfaction with the major and student retention.

Chad Kinsella and Adam Haigh also presented a paper that used assessment to evaluate how students understand their own abilities and their connection to other parts of the academic institution. Kinsella, a political science professor, partnered with Haigh, a reference librarian, to deliver multiple instances of library instruction over the course of the semester to two upper-level classes at their small, public university. Their assessment of these experiences indicates that multiple active-learning sessions can improve student comfort level with library resources and the quality of student research and writing in these and other courses.

John Settich's paper also focused on assessing student learning in terms not just of course content but of student engagement. Settich's paper reviewed student self-assessments in a large, survey course in political history taught using a variety of active learning, interdisciplinary techniques. His paper makes a strong argument that universities should assess student satisfaction, accretion of skills and knowledge, and also student "transformation" through the learning process as a hallmark of the college experience.

Assessment Working for Instructors

It is no secret that students who are more engaged in the learning process perform better in their courses. Instructors are increasingly shifting away from lecture-only formats in higher education classrooms, but are often left with little beyond their own intuition to determine which methods actually improve student engagement and classroom learning. Assessments within and across courses can provide a valuable window into which specific changes in classroom practices achieve (or fail to achieve) the greatest results.

Ruth Ediger, Jung Hyun, A.J. Quackenbush and Christen Costello presented papers which used end-of-course surveys to compare the experience of students in traditional and non-traditional courses. Ediger and Hyun were able to use their survey to pinpoint the particular pedagogical tools that transfer well from an "active-learning classroom" (writeable walls, moveable desks, monitors attached to walls throughout the room) into a traditional classroom lacking the innovative furnishings. They find that the most important features of the active-learning classroom are the writeable walls (white-board paint on all walls of the room) and the ability to rearrange furniture for group work.

Quackenbush and Costello taught two concurrent versions of the same class—one in a traditional format, the other "flipped" (lecture via video outside of class, with learning activities in class). There was no significant difference in student performance across the two classes. However, the student survey revealed that

most students would have preferred a traditional class design, and that students in the flipped class did not review the material prior to class and so were less prepared.

In both cases, the application of research principles to create student surveys which directly addressed the instructor's pedagogical concerns allowed for identification of which specific features of the course design work and which do not. Student surveys are low-cost to design and administer and can help instructors and departments identify which changes in instructional approach or physical materials are worth the investment of scarce resources.

Assessment Working for Departments and Universities

Assessment of student learning is increasingly being required as part of the overall evaluations of departments and academic programs. To this end, many universities and departments have articulated learning expectations or programmatic goals, which open the door for requiring demonstrable evidence of student achievement of these aspirational outcomes.

Fletcher McClellan reported on 10 years of assessment of student learning outcomes at a small, private, liberal arts college. In this approach, each learning outcome was matched to one or two data sources which could speak to student achievement. These sources included third-party standardized tests of content knowledge, completion of program requirements (e.g. capstone courses, internships, and study abroad), scoring of required analytical and research papers, and a reflective essay written by seniors. This provided a longitudinal look at student performance from many angles, each suited to the particular learning outcome.

Lisa Argyle, Cecilia Farfan-Mendez, and Margarita Safronova described another method of program evaluation at a large, public, research university. They used a bottom-up approach to evaluation in which instructors identified which program learning outcomes were expected in classes they regularly teach (creating a "course map"). A sample of assignment instructions and submitted student work was then coded to verify the instructors' reports and evaluate student mastery of the learning outcomes, with individual students followed over time. In this approach, all learning outcomes were evaluated on the same scale, and the course map and coding methodology is easily adaptable to the addition or substantial revision of course offerings.

Program evaluation can take many forms, depending on the context of the department, the nature of the learning outcomes, and the available resources (which may include monetary expenses as well as faculty time and administrative effort). The disparate approaches demonstrated by these two papers suggest ways in which departments and universities can (and should) customize the approach so that the final results answer the questions most valuable to their particular situation.

Creating a Culture of Assessment

Even though assessment can be utilized in these different and significant ways, it can be very difficult to engage colleagues in assessment. Instructors are understandably reticent to "teach to the test," and assessment is sometimes viewed as an additional bureaucratic burden which can constrain course design and instruction. Often one or two faculty members are tasked with "assessment" for an entire department, with little buy-in from the remaining faculty members. There was a marked concern

and lively discussion among participants about how to create a culture of assessment and convince others of the utility of the project. The panelists suggested that assessment can often capitalize on readily available information and procedures, avoiding bureaucratic inconvenience and helping keep costs down. In many cases, merely shifting the vocabulary surrounding the project away from a mandated assessment and toward substantively valuable pedagogical research may be able to reduce resistance. Regardless of the outside requirements motivating assessment, instructors and departments should engage their substantial expertise in designing social science research and should use the opportunity to answer questions that are interesting and relevant to themselves and their students.

DISTANCE LEARNING

Audrey A. Haynes, *University of Georgia*

Frank Franz, *James Madison High School*

Chera LaForge, *Indiana University East*

Sara Moats, *Florida International University*

It's Time to Embrace (Or at Least Shake Hands With) the Online Learning Environment

A dedicated group of secondary and postsecondary instructors and administrators involved in online education met to discuss the newest research, to commiserate, and to share advice and suggestions surrounding distance education in this year's Distance Learning Track at the APSA Teaching and Learning Conference. Despite legitimate concerns about the efficacy of online education, it is here to stay. The reality of shrinking budgets and competition for new students requires our institutions to remain competitive. Students also want online education for the flexibility that it allows. The dual push of fiscal necessity and student demand will push universities and their instructors to adapt to a new learning environment.

At its core, the distance learning track discussion focused on answering this question: how can political science instructors create comparable learning environments between our online, hybrid and our traditional, face-to-face courses. What we found is that there are increasingly more tools that allow for the achievement of this goal and that teaching online can lead to positive spillovers in one's traditional courses as well. Our discussion highlighted that online instruction can be innovative and high quality. Learning outcomes and student achievement can be similar; social presence can be mimicked through tools like Skype, GoToMeeting, and Adobe Connect; and it is possible to be an effective and engaged instructor. Instructors who build dynamic active learning courses for their traditional face-to-face courses can translate those activities into the online classroom.

Online Learning Has Its Challenges, but Many of the Challenges Are Fundamentally the Same

So much of the instructional development being done in the online learning environment is focused on making sure that student experiences and outcomes in this environment are positive. Often the research will compare outcomes and experiences in traditional versus an online version of the course or some hybrid version, such as a flipped course. Several papers examined the impact of teaching political science research methods under different

delivery method types. Michael Ault's (California State University) research demonstrated the effectiveness of a "hyflex" classroom. Hyflex allows for synchronous, asynchronous and hybrid approaches. Basically, a hyflex classroom incorporates flexible access and learning content for students. Those who need the traditional face-to-face interaction can get that, but others may connect to the classroom from a distance in real-time or asynchronous time. The instructor creates a classroom that is active and accessible to students who have different access constraints. The end result is a highly accessible and flexible classroom, with an instructor who is skilled in multiple methods of content delivery and assessment. His research suggested that students are quite good at self-selecting what type of environment they need and may utilize different delivery methods for different content.

A pilot study, conducted by Delton Daigle and Aaron Stuvland, at George Mason University, that examines teaching research methods across delivery modalities and types of classrooms (large, small, and hybrid distance learning) suggests that students have different needs and that the new tools available in the online learning environment allow for instructors to serve them differentially. With research methods in particular, students who have greater math anxiety may require models of instruction that incorporate more face-to-face, or interactive help. Students who have strong math skills seemed more comfortable with working through material in an online-only environment.

As we learn more from studies of this kind, we may find that institutions of higher learning will likely offer students instructional options that include traditional, hybrid, and fully online classrooms. The benefits to this flexibility include using technology to remove barriers to access for many students (location, mobility, financial constraints requiring full-time work); meeting the student where they live and interact these days (online); giving instructors new tools to enhance their classrooms in general and increase interactivity, retention, track student progress, generate data on assessment tools; and much more.

Even with the tools available today, instructors still face challenges. Once students are in these classrooms, particularly those that are fully online, instructors find that those things that were challenges in the traditional classroom may also be so in the online learning environment. For example, how does one generate civil engagement in an online learning environment? How does one prevent academic dishonesty in an online learning environment? How can one use web tools that already exist to engage students who may be distracted by other materials online? Two papers and one workshop presented at the 2015 Teaching and Learning Conference addressed these issues. Chera LaForge's (Indiana University East) work on civil engagement demonstrated that students can become engaged. The determining factors were the creation of course materials that utilized tools the students were familiar with combined with well-developed assignments that allowed students to tap into areas that they connected with and cared about. Using the framework of placemaking, students in an urban politics course created personalized community-based research projects. Tumblr, a microblogging platform familiar to many students, allowed these research projects to be displayed to the public. The semester-long Tumblr assignment culminated in an executive summary, which highlighted a potential change the community could make to make it a more livable place to be.

Plagiarism and cheating, in general, are problems that are found throughout classrooms, but in an online learning environment,

they can become more challenging given the larger number of students in the courses, particularly with written assignments, the difficulty in proctoring exams, and the anonymity that some students feel while taking an online course. Terry Gilmore of Midland College researched a number of online exam proctoring tools to ensure the student enrolled in the course is actually completing the exam and all academic conduct codes are being observed. While there are a number of software packages available, the most widely known are Respondus Monitor and Proctor U. Both tools record the student taking an exam through a webcam. Respondus Monitor will capture random screenshots of the student, which are then sent to the professor for review. Proctor U has a live proctor monitoring the exam and will notify the professor if any exam discrepancies occur. Regardless of the software, online proctoring tools are an effective way to maintain online exam integrity. Kristina Mitchell, of Texas Tech University, investigated two methods of deterring plagiarism in online courses: presenting students with a clear definition of plagiarism and a stern warning as to what will happen if they plagiarize versus requiring students to use plagiarism detection software when they submit their written work. These two treatments were compared to a control of a routine statement regarding plagiarism in the syllabus. Both treatments have a statistically significant result compared to the control. In both cases, the number of plagiarism cases was much lower than in the control group. This result suggests that in terms of best practices in online teaching, and perhaps traditional courses as well, taking a proactive approach and utilizing plagiarism detection tools (although they may have limitations) has the impact of deterring plagiarism, an outcome that is positive for both student and instructor. These strategies, developed and tested for online courses, can easily be applied to traditional courses as well and are likely to be as effective. Thus an important takeaway is that strategies that make one a great traditional instructor apply in the online learning environment, and tools that make us more effective in the online classroom, can make traditional courses better.

And there are More Benefits...

While there remain challenges in the online learning environment, there are many emerging benefits. The most obvious benefit is that online instruction meets students where they already spend much of their time: online. Many students are experiencing online learning in their secondary educations. They know Moodle, Google, Blackboard, and Brainhoney. They have used Khan Academy and a host of other online sites and tools. While instructors may resist or doubt the efficacy of online learning, students are already acclimated and proficient.

Several of the distance learning track papers, presentations, and workshops included descriptions of videos delivering direct instruction using tools such as Camtasia or Kaltura or other screen recording software and delivering them via YouTube or some other streaming hub. Usually the videos were “chunked” into smaller units of time, as opposed to hour-long lectures typical of many face-to-face classes. Students report that these focused and short lessons are very helpful. Short lessons followed by an application of concepts, activity, and assessment tend to yield positive learning outcomes. Many students suggest that being able to watch these repeatedly or at a time when they are more likely to retain the information is beneficial and convenient. Traditional courses are utilizing these tools as well. Class lecture

is supplemented by more-in-depth mini-lectures. Flipped classrooms have students watch lecture material prior to class. Utilizing YouTube, Tumblr, Pinterest, and other venues also provides an opportunity for students to produce shared learning. Students involved in creating civil engagement projects are also producing materials that provided a secondary benefit information, inspiration, and advocacy for others.

Another advantage of teaching in the online environment is flexibility of delivery, access, size, and more. Depending on the institution, instructor, and need, the design of an online course can change. Both instructors and students benefit from this flexibility. One benefit in particular is the flexibility of not having to access a classroom space if you have space limitations. Online learning may create new opportunities for those who cannot make the journey to a classroom space, be they instructor or student. It may also yield educational benefits to those studying abroad or from other countries.

Finally, one of the obvious advantages of online learning is the vast number of resources available online that can be easily integrated into political science courses. Brent Anderson’s workshop “Developing Political Science Proficiencies Through Web-based Exercises” featured several online resources, and generated discussion of many more, such as ideology typology quizzes, federalism data, templates to make faux campaign advertisements, as well as simulations in federal budget creation and restricting games.

How to Take the Digital Dive: Models for Developing Online Courses/Programs

Online classes have changed a great deal in a very short time. As a result, the Distance Learning Track focused on these changes and discussed different methods to embrace the technology and improve both the overall student learning experience and the online teaching experience. Developing and teaching an online course can be an overwhelming experience for faculty members. Additionally, graduate students are typically assigned to teach online with little or no training. As a result, online teaching becomes an exercise in “trial and error.” This is also true when incorporating new technologies into traditional courses. However, if a department has proper communication and collaboration among faculty and proper technical support, the process can be much less intimidating, and the classes are much higher quality. Subsequently, the student learning experience is also greatly improved. This section will examine a different approach to online course development and classroom technology.

The Digital Instructor

As mentioned above, the online learning environment can be very overwhelming. This is true whether the instructor wishes to incorporate new technologies into the traditional classroom or develop a completely online course. As instructors begin to examine the various learning tools, they quickly realize they are ill prepared and thus, begin the tedious task of self-teaching. As a result, the finished product is functional, but the course may not utilize the most applicable tools or apply the proper technologies. This situation can be avoided with the strategic hire of a digital instructor. This is a full-time faculty member who has extensive online teaching experience as well as traditional teaching experience in the discipline. This dual experience is critical because an effective online course must merge traditional teaching practices with technology. Thus, the digital instructor is assigned to

develop online courses and teach solely online, but also works in conjunction with the department to assist other faculty members as they convert existing courses to the online format. The digital instructor will also mentor graduate students as they learn proper online teaching techniques and master the technology. Additionally, the digital instructor supports the faculty as they incorporate new technologies into their traditional courses. Because the digital instructor has a teaching background, this individual understands the challenges faced by both students and instructors in today's learning environment. Digital instructors also understand the challenges online learning presents. Thus, they can assist the department in creating a comparable learning environment across course delivery methods.

The Instructional Designer & Quality Matters

While it is extremely important for the department to have communication and collaboration, it is also necessary to have current information regarding new technologies and emerging design practices. This can be accomplished in a variety of ways. For instance, some institutions designate a staff member or faculty member to work with technology services and relay the information back to the interested faculty members. However, this person likely does not have a technology background. Another method is the instructional designer. This is a highly trained individual with an information technology (IT) background. They are familiar with the course learning management system (LMS) and best design practices, including Quality Matters (www.qualitymatters.org). Quality Matters is a unique peer-reviewed certification program. It ensures that online courses are designed to be accessible and engaging, with ensure learning objectives that are measurable. The program utilizes an extensive rubric to evaluate the course, and the instructional designer is trained to help the instructor implement the requirements. The collaboration between the course instructor and the instructional designer merges content and technology expertise. Additionally, when the same instructional designer is assigned to work with all online classes within a department, he or she will become more familiar with that department's individual technological needs.

Mutual Mentoring & Improved Teaching

The increased communication among faculty members, graduate students, and technology support services creates an open exchange of ideas. This discussion not only fosters improved online courses, but also allows for mutual mentoring. Junior and senior faculty discuss teaching styles and techniques, graduate students gain valuable teaching experience, and instructional designers become more acquainted with subject-specific pedagogy.

The Future of Online Learning & Recommendations

The APSA Teaching & Learning Conference is a very unique opportunity for scholars to focus on teaching political science in the twenty-first century. Academia in today's world is more than historic buildings and crowded lecture halls. It is vibrant and constantly changing. The cornerstone of these changes is technological advancement that allows us to convey content, engage students, and assess and track their progress. From the chalkboard to the white board, the grade book to the spreadsheet, each advance has an impact on how we do what we do. Fundamentally, what we do stays the same—we teach. But today's rapid technological innovation can be intimidating. We have all dealt with multiple changes

to our learning management systems (LMS), upgrades in media classrooms, and now the emergence of the hybrid and fully online classrooms. When changes emerge, there is also the inevitable resistance to them. However, as we have discovered, embracing new technological changes can alter the overall educational experience for both students and professors. It also helps a great deal if our institutions provide the support needed to master these changes.

New technologies have merged and continue to interweave the traditional and online classrooms. Techniques that were once reserved for the traditional classroom are now widely used in the online classroom; practices that were at one time only utilized online are now widespread in various classrooms formats. As a result, most would argue that course quality has been improved, learning opportunities have increased, and instructors are finding that their classroom can extend far beyond their physical classroom space. There is much that needs to be done, however. More research is needed in the area to help professors know what works and what does not as well as continued examination of the problems that exist in online learning environments and their potential solutions. And as always, the most important focus must remain with the quality of instruction, regardless of medium. With the continued interaction of traditional teaching, hybrid, and fully online learning, we should find both instructor and student benefiting from the best practices that emerge in all of these categories of course instruction delivery.

DIVERSITY, INCLUSIVENESS, AND EQUALITY

Marcus D. Allen, *Stella and Charles Guttman Community College, CUNY*

Andreas Broscheid, *James Madison University*

Joseph DeLorenzo, *American University*

Paige Price, *University of South Carolina*

While the Diversity, Inclusiveness, and Equality track was small this year, it provided for engaging and insightful conversation, with presentations that focused on gender, race, class, and political theory. The track papers discussed factors that influence female student classroom participation, gaming activities to help students empathize with low-income families, the use of online resources to expand the scope of perspectives in political theory classes, and challenges to traditional political science approaches for studying race and class. An added bonus included the diversity among track participants: conferees came from community colleges, four-year colleges, and research institutions; had different racial, ethnic, and gender identities; and included graduate students as well as early, mid-career, and seasoned professionals with a wide range of research interests and insights.

Two core themes defined the track discussions. The first centered on conceptualizing diversity. A striking component of the presentations and the participant discussions was a pragmatic focus that avoided common definitional controversies. The Stapleton, Price and Kimel, and Betsalel presentations all focused on activities and teaching methods that the presenters implemented in their classrooms and reflected the desire of track participants to rise above definitional controversies and focus on creating positive real world experiences for students. The definitional discussions that did occur, particularly following Hero's presentation, focused on respecting different types of diversity and tying together different manifestations of diversity. The inclusiveness that dominated the presentations and discussions

allowed track participants to focus on identifying the classroom teaching techniques that would be most effective for promoting diversity.

The second theme revolved around bringing different perspectives into the classroom through a number of avenues, such as course content selection, class design, and faculty diversity. Diversifying course content was central to Price and Kimel's and Betsalel's presentations, while class design and faculty diversity were shown to be important in the context of the Stapleton paper as well as Price and Kimel's work.

Stapleton reported on a simulation game that engages students in an activity whose aim is communicating course content as well as higher-level objectives such as critical analysis, empathy development, and the creation of connections between different social spheres. The game here asked students to create budgets for families varying in size and circumstances, income levels, place of residence, etc. Once students had prepared budgets, based on real-life economic data, they received randomized information that affected "their" budget—a lottery win, a job promotion, a major illness, a car breakdown, etc. Students then had to revise the budget accordingly. Since students worked in groups that were in close proximity to each other, they were able to see what life changes different groups received. Though it is unclear whether the game provoked lasting changes in student perceptions or empathy, Stapleton observed that students were engaged and showed affective responses to "unfair" life changes.

The discussion following Stapleton's presentation focused in part on how the budgeting game could be connected to politics and policy-making. Furthermore, the group considered whether changes in student empathy were measurable, or even qualitatively observable, and if strengthening empathy was an appropriate learning objective, as it could exaggerate the distance between "empathizer" and "other." Stapleton showed that instructors could promote diversity through creative class design, such as gaming, simulation, and cooperative learning activities.

Price and Kimel presented a SoTL (Scholarship of Teaching and Learning) study of female student participation in political science classrooms that looked for links between female student participation, instructor gender, classroom makeup, and self-selection of more or less active roles in classroom activities. Using data from seven classes, three semesters, two institutions, and different substantive classes, the authors found that female students were more likely to participate with female instructors and/or if they were in a majority female classroom. However, role selection had no consistent effect on participation. The most interesting, though disheartening, finding was that female students consistently ranked their performance lower than their male counterparts even when their performance was equivalent or superior. This finding held up regardless of instructor gender.

The discussion here focused on the potential causes of the observed outcomes, such as gender differences in motivation, educational experiences, and orientations towards cooperation and competition. The group also considered the impact of these factors beyond the classroom. Female students' undervaluing of their work and attribution of successes to external factors may reinforce the underrepresentation of women in fields like politics and business. This demonstrates the urgency of creating classroom environments that allow all students to develop self-confidence and attitudes that foster success. To do so, instructors should be aware of all of the different manifestations of diversity,

including diversity in terms of emotional habits and emotional experience. More importantly, though, the track participants found that Price and Kimel showed the importance of faculty diversity—here in terms of gender—as a condition for the success of a diverse student body.

Betsalel's presentation placed the focus on diversity of thought and vision and connected intellectual diversity to the diversity of voices and images we encounter in today's globalized world. He began with a take on Dworkin's classic, *Taking Rights Seriously*, by asking what we take most seriously in political theory. Betsalel noted that the root word *thera* was present in both theory and theater; vision was central to teaching students theoretical texts. For Betsalel, the immediacy of the internet allows for a new way of teaching classic texts in political theory, allowing students to engage the text in a forum that is comfortable and relevant but also open to widely different perspectives. Betsalel also raised questions about the role of books in the context of modern technology. Books have challenged readers to interpret the text as well as the world and forced them to make their own connections to the real world; books have also served a central function in preserving human memory. Betsalel suggested that the immediacy and diversity of the internet challenged this central role of the book and raised the question of whether the classic texts were still meaningful and provided vision, *thera* into the world.

The ensuing discussion focused on our understanding of diversity by asking how we can provide students with the tools to navigate the images and viewpoints experienced in the new global media environment. How much guidance do students need to make sense of this world? How can we prevent students from overlooking newly (or repeatedly) marginalized perspectives? How can we lead students towards creating their own understandings that are substantiated instead of haphazard? Betsalel's presentation showed that new media could be a powerful tool to diversify course content, introduce different perspectives, and even replace traditional textbooks. One potential pitfall of utilizing new media is that the instructor inevitably guides students towards his or her own interpretation of events instead of allowing them to come to their own conclusions.

The main focus of Hero's presentation was the ongoing APSA task force on Race, Class, and Inequality in the Americas. Even though the task force itself does not include a sub-focus on teaching, Hero's report on its definitional focus had clear implications for political science education. While political scientists traditionally had studied race and class separately, often with a focus on US race relations, Hero argued for an understanding of the intersectionality of race and class and for a study of US inequality in the larger context of the American continent. Focusing on income inequality, Hero pointed out that the structure of inequality mattered; for example, while racial inequality in the US has remained fairly stable since the 1980s, class inequality has increased more strongly. These findings help address questions such as "what are the implications of structural inequality?" and "do current policy prescriptions adequately address the actual structure of inequality described by Hero?"

While the task force findings challenge instructors and curriculum designers to rethink how they present and discuss socio-economic and racial inequality, the findings also raise questions of how socio-economic groups should be conceptualized. Accordingly, a lively debate on definitions and terminology ensued among

track participants: Should the study of inequality be focused on racial minorities? Does the use of minority terminology reify existing power relations and block empowering re- and self-definitions that help oppressed populations fight for equality? Or, on the contrary, do such re-definitions “whitewash” existing inequalities and suggest that all is well when in fact it isn’t?

INTEGRATING TECHNOLOGY IN THE CLASSROOM

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Monti Datta, *University of Richmond*

Christine Sylvester, *SUNY Binghamton*

How and why political scientists use technology in the classroom prompted 23 participants from 21 institutions to explore research and share practical advice in this year’s “Integrating Technology” track. Several global themes emerged from insightful paper presentations and discussions, including the appropriate integration of technology, pitfalls of incorporating technological tools, resources needed to achieve effectiveness, and the need to understand and evaluate technological trends. Our conversations raised questions about the relationship between professors and their intellectual property, and about how technological applications are transforming the relationships between students and professors as well as between institutions of higher education and state government.

Integrating Technology Appropriately

We defined technology broadly, identifying it as a catchphrase for mostly screen-centered tools and applications software that include course management systems, social media, web-based resources, online games, and digital instruction. Because technology is an ever-changing creature, we determined that that it is more fruitful to look for long-lasting technological trends rather than what the next social media craze might be. Several participants noted that the tools they once used are no longer available, and that it is incumbent upon their institutions to help them identify replacement tools, though it’s clear that institutional resources to support innovative instructional approaches are often lacking. At the same time, it isn’t necessary to use every new tool or approach, but rather, to reconcile what is possible with what is available to integrate those that best serve the defined learning objectives of a course and fit the educational environment.

Possible Pitfalls

Pitfalls in technology do exist. We discussed the fact that technology provides tools for educating, but not tools to replace the educator. We noted that technology isn’t always reliable: websites fail, connections are broken or interrupted, and administrations or Instructional Technology (IT) departments can be ill-prepared to assist in the use of new technology. To that end, we agreed that we need to focus on the sustainability of what we are creating, both for the short-term and in the long-term, and that requires assessing our work diligently.

We also explored questions about the ownership of the intellectual products created for and through instruction. For example: are lecture video clips, such as those that are used in a “hybrid” or “flipped” course, the property of the instructor or institution? Should the institution—or the state—be able to replicate the instructor’s materials at will, even to replace the instructor by broadcasting a recorded lecture to multiple classrooms, or making

it available online? Would a regular salary constitute “just compensation” for multiple uses of an instructor’s materials or videos, or would a small stipend be appropriate? Questions regarding intellectual property represent a “gray area” that is likely to grow as new technologies enable the instant dissemination of information. Still, as we develop new course materials, we agreed that our products and knowledge ought to be shared to the benefit of other educators and students, and in that spirit, a list of web-based resources for classroom instruction that we generated in our track follows at the end of this track summary.

Resources Needed for Effective Instruction

Sometimes technology is easy for students to learn and easy for professors to integrate into courses, but this isn’t always the case. Integrating technology often requires peer and institutional support. How does one become educated about new technology? Is there a benefit to becoming the technology go-to person in your department or at your university? We discussed the need to be part of a “classroom-technology constituency” on campus that can spread ideas, articulate real needs, and advocate for more resources. This would entail disseminating information, such as through tip sheets or brown-bag lunch workshops, and also attracting attention from administrators who have an incentive to meet faculty’s visible and expressed needs—to improve students’ educational experiences—and who have budgeting power. It was also clear that some institutions are investing heavily to expand online instruction, and many professors are feeling institutional pressures to adapt their teaching for virtual classrooms.

Utilizing Technology in the Classroom

Digital presentations, phone apps, simulations, online video collections, and the use of Twitter, Facebook, and other interactive websites are now staples in the political science classroom. As dynamic elements of a course, they can improve and even change the very nature of our relationship with students.

Technology can be harnessed to change the paradigm of the traditional teacher-student relationship, and broaden the time and manner in which students remain connected with a professor’s research and area of expertise. Robert Domanski of the City University of New York, in “The Permanent Professor: How the Long-Term Use of Social Media Transforms the Professor-Student Relationship,” explained that the student-teacher relationship need not formally come to an end when a semester concludes. Rather, Domanski argues that instructors may want to create a long-distance learning community based on current topics to which their former students can relate, centered on asynchronous conversations to which they can contribute and add value. As former students interface with their former professors and develop personal learning environments (PLEs) beyond the classroom, educators have a unique opportunity to serve as public scholars. Those “public” teachers can capitalize on social media such as blogs, Facebook, and Twitter to deepen the educational experience for students and alumni. While Domanski’s approach focuses more on former rather than current students, he provides useful insight into harnessing technology to serve wider educational purposes.

Students’ familiarity with social media can also advance experiential learning. However, obtaining the intended results can be challenging, and professors need to assess their work to

determine whether their course elements are working as intended. David Niven of the University of Cincinnati in “Medium and the Message: Can Twitter Increase Creativity and Engagement in the Political Campaign Project?” found that using tools such as Twitter doesn’t always lead to higher quality student work. For a political campaign assignment, students were asked to either draft tweets or prepare a radio advertisement on behalf of their candidate. Whereas students who used Twitter were engaged and continued to follow their candidates after the project ended, the tweets they drafted tended to lack a clear coherent message or theme—unlike the students who had prepared radio ads.

What happens when a large portion of the educational experience is shifted to Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs)? Ella Hamonic and Nathalie Schiffrino of the Catholic University of Louvain in “From a Written to Digital Culture: How MOOCs Can Change the Way We Teach Political Science” found that MOOCs provide a useful platform for enhanced collaboration among faculty members and peer review, and encourage non-linear teaching. This approach focuses on individual rather than group-centered learning. While a shorter period of time seems to be better for holding a student’s attention in a MOOC, Hamonic and Schiffrino found that the format (either highly graphic or simply lecture-based) doesn’t appear to change a student’s level of retention.

Along these lines, one participant raised the issue of how her state legislators aim to reduce educational costs by consolidating instructional functions through technology. For example, because MOOCs are popularly viewed as a “cheap” way to deliver content, her state legislators have suggested that personnel costs could be reduced by simultaneously streaming one lecture into multiple classrooms. Other participants mentioned that they have received small payments to record their lectures for general distribution, but that some states consider all materials that a professor produces for a class as “paid for,” and therefore the property of the state. As state legislators reconsider the value of brick-and-mortar operations in light of online learning and the cost savings they imply (but certainly don’t guarantee), political scientists need clarification about these boundaries. They should also recognize that systematically evaluating the learning outcomes of various teaching approaches has political as well as pedagogical value.

Thus, integrating technology isn’t just about using the latest tools or reducing costs (because costs to instructors won’t necessarily decrease); how technology is integrated is vital to its success or failure. Thomas Ellington of Wesleyan College in “Redistricting with Real Data: A Classroom Simulation” used an online electoral data tool to run a multi-week redistricting simulation. Through role-playing, meeting in a party caucus, and working through several conflict situations, students learned the ins-and-outs of a complex redistricting process. As Ellington’s work demonstrates, tools well-matched to the learning objectives are essential, but we agreed with his conclusion that “it’s not what tools you end up using, but rather how and for what you use them.”

Studying the Use of Technology in the Classroom

Research on teaching and learning tends to focus on how specific tools or approaches are used in the political science classroom, whereas broader work addressing how the discipline integrates technology is limited. Two papers employed this evaluative approach, and both compared political science literature to other social science and technology-related literatures. Mara Blake and Catherine Morse of the University of Michigan in “How Does

Political Science Evaluate Technology in the Classroom?” performed a content analysis of articles on teaching and learning. They argue that more efforts ought to be invested in qualitative analysis, which would be more useful for drawing lessons about using technology. They point out that most articles do not conclude whether using certain technologies is a positive or negative experience either for the student or the instructor.

How educators use technology is an area of political science literature that contains some noticeable gaps. Seeking to understand the state of our collective knowledge, Kirsten Hamann and Philip Pollock of the University of Central Florida in “What Do We Know about Teaching and Learning Political Science in the Digital Era?” also performed a content analysis of articles on teaching and learning. They noted that there has been continued attention paid to simulations, but a general decline in the study of technology by political scientists over time—a decline that does not correspond with trends they found in other disciplines. Moreover, because some modalities are not commonly used in political science but are assessed elsewhere, Hamann and Pollock conclude that political scientists can look to and learn from abundant research in other disciplines focusing on technology as an educational tool.

Conclusion

The Integrating Technology track provided a welcome opportunity for educators to explore not just new and useful tools for integrating technology in the classroom, but also the foundations of how and why technology should be used in instructional settings. Notably, technology wasn’t the subject of this track alone; all tracks addressed its importance in one way or another. Our participants shared useful websites and tools, but primary value was derived from our rich discussions about how using technology has shaped students’ classroom experience. As scholars and educators, we are in a race to keep up with a constantly changing technological environment and emerging innovations. While literature in the discipline has tended to highlight new approaches, we mustn’t forget that it is equally important to study more broadly how we use technology, and that we continue to refine our assessments of it.

Finally, we were confronted with the ever-present concern of protecting intellectual property. Central to the desire to integrate instructional technology is the growing concern over who owns our work product. As scholars, our creativity and ideas are the basis of our professional life. Do teachers own specific elements of the courses they design, or do their employers (either the state or their educational institution) have the right to control them? This area is ripe for further discussion.

Integrating Technology Track Web-Based Resources

Idealog (<https://www.idealog.org/>): Useful in American Politics to introduce the concept of political ideology; provides a tutorial and a test based on actual public opinion polling questions to help students learn where they fall on the ideological spectrum

The Living Room Candidate (<http://www.livingroomcandidate.org/>): Contains a historical archive of Presidential campaign television ads and includes a useful ad-maker function

Social Explorer (<http://www.socialexplorer.com/>): Data resources that are either paid or free and include ARDA and Census data; provides a map making and measurement tool

Nielsen Norman Group (<http://www.nngroup.com/>): Provides information and explanation on usability studies

CSPAN (<http://www.c-span.org/congress/>): Details voting characteristics and personality traits for members of Congress; provides links to each member's floor speeches

Pew Research-Political Typology Quiz (<http://www.people-press.org/quiz/political-typology/>): Quiz on political typology that serves as an extension for a liberal versus conservative scale; this quiz also provides a useful teacher summary with results from all participants

Vote Smart (<http://votesmart.org/>): Interactive website allows users to search for elected officials by zip code in the 'Political Galaxy' application; provides biographical, votes, positions, speeches, funding, and ratings for each candidate

The Social Rules Project (<http://www.rulechangers.org/>): Describes how institutions work, along with an interactive game; useful for comparative politics courses

Crash Course History (<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLBDA2E52FB1EF80C9>): Video web series produced by the Vlog Brothers that summarizes a wide range of topics, from historic events to current affairs

Films for the Feminist Classroom (<http://ffc.twu.edu/>): Provides film reviews produced by teachers and lesson plans; useful for posting student-written film reviews

270 To Win (<http://www.270towin.com/>): Provides Electoral College outcomes for every presidential election in the form of historical maps

Pro Con (<http://www.procon.org/>): Summarizes and provides pro and con arguments for topical issues

CATME (<https://www.catme.org/login/index>): Free online tool for peer evaluations, building team work, and with surveys that detail team attitudinal characteristics and a team charter tool

Gapminder (<http://www.gapminder.org/>): Provides world data and tools for changing/adapting how data is presented

Reginfo (<http://www.reginfo.gov/public/>) and Regulations (<http://www.regulations.gov/#/home>): Provides the text of current legislation and allows for comments

Matters of State (<https://sites.google.com/a/maine.edu/matters-of-state/>): Faculty website that includes radio interviews with experts in various political fields; also includes lecture notes

Redistricting Game (<http://www.redistrictinggame.org/>): Provides an interactive tool for explaining redistricting

Remind 101 (<https://www.remind.com/>): A text-based messaging app for professors; provides an interface to connect with students' phones while not needing their mobile numbers. Students can opt to receive either email or text notices.

Follow the Money (<http://beta.followthemoney.org/>): Provides state/federal data on candidate funding sources from 2000 to the present; codes funding by business area and provides legislative overviews

Nation States (<https://nationstates.net/>): A simulation game to create a nation-state by answering three to five questions per day

Polling Report (<http://www.pollingreport.com/>): Compiles daily public opinion poll results on American Politics and contemporary issues

INTERNATIONALIZING THE CURRICULUM

William Jennings, *University of Tennessee, Knoxville*

Tara N. Parsons, *James Madison University*

The 2015 Teaching and Learning Conference continued to place internationalizing the curriculum as a priority for the discipline by highlighting it as an independent track. The track was intimate,

and the papers facilitated a lively discussion that settled around three broad themes. Discussants engaged ideas concerning the definition and goals of internationalization, the importance of contextual sensitivity in setting and assessing learning outcomes, and the imperative that the discipline has to "democratize" the international experience.

There is consensus within the academic community that international experiences, particularly those that offer growth in cross-cultural understanding, are a vital part of the college experience. When students leave their comfort zones, opportunities for personal growth and skill development are multiplied. Internationalization prepares students to be productive, engaged contributors in our globalized world.

Traditional methods of internationalization are encapsulated in the study abroad experience. However, Nanette S. Levinson's paper "From MOOCs to M-Study Abroad/Exchanges/Internships: New Trends & Opportunities" exposed the privileged nature of study abroad. In actuality, only a small portion of college students, for a variety of reasons, can afford to study abroad. If we are going to place high value on internationalization, are we not tasked with ensuring that all of our students have access to these benefits?

Levinson's paper capitalizes on the growth of distance learning to offer options that "democratize" the international experience. Massive, open online courses (MOOCs) offer a free opportunity for students to take courses from international professors or courses with a global class roster. M-study abroad/exchanges connect American students with their global counterparts, and through discussion and group activities, students can build cross-cultural understanding without leaving their computers.

Discussants also contributed ideas for further democratizing international opportunities. For example, while teaching courses on conflict or refugee resettlement, one could organize visits to local, international cuisine restaurants and owners could share their stories.

Nina Rathbun's paper, co-authored with Brian Rathbun, "A Survey of International Relations Teaching" offered a clarion call for international relations faculty to become more involved in their communities and to create work that engages the public. Their analysis of TRIPS survey results noted that younger scholars of IR tend to focus more on theory rather than policy issues, while also showing that scholars with more research tend to focus more on teaching about policy issues.

Rathbun's research noted that the most significant variable in the practicality of one's teaching is gender, with women focused much more on active learning pedagogy and less on teacher-oriented lecturing. The paper also notes that IR faculty members who strongly identify with a particular paradigm will overemphasize the paradigms that they identify with, but will also spend more time teaching about other paradigms as well.

Discussants noted that the bigger issue with IR instruction is that the bias of the faculty, not the curriculum, tends to contribute to shortcomings in the IR classroom. Some IR textbooks were criticized for having a complete lack of self-awareness of their biases and lack of relevant policy cases. A call was issued to encourage APSA to facilitate the creation of a bank of IR case studies, similar to the current bank of course syllabi.

Joy Samad detailed the pedagogical challenges and opportunities presented by his "Teaching Israel and Palestine in Iraq"

course, noting that covering the issues of religion, nationalism, and border disputes echoed effectively among his largely Kurdish students at the American University of Iraq. Samad noted that after clearing up myths and misconceptions about Jews and Judaism, he found a high degree of utility in having students do presentations on topics associated with the formation of Israel and its early history.

Samad found that students' attitudes about Israel evolved over the course of the class, with many students expressing overtly Zionist leanings by the end of the course. Samad attributed this in part to the geopolitical events swirling near his campus, with Kurdish students blaming Arab nationalism for the ISIS threat approaching their campus.

Discussants and presenters in the Internationalizing the Curriculum track were exposed to a variety of innovative pedagogical methods for democratizing their classrooms, allowing for students from disadvantaged groups and faculty with limited resources to bring the world to students at small liberal arts colleges, community colleges, and research universities alike. Through MOOCs, person-to-person exchanges, and innovative case studies, there now exists the ability for students to be exposed to fellow students around the world and innovative scholarship at their fingertips. No longer do study abroad experiences and world class pedagogy have to be out of the reach of many—instead technology has democratized access for all.

SIMULATIONS AND ROLE PLAY

Michelle Allendoerfer, *George Washington University*

Casey Delehanty, *Florida State University*

As in previous years, the 2015 Simulations and Role Play track served as an ideal arena for the presentation and discussion of active learning exercises for a variety of classroom environments. Track participants took care to integrate the lessons of previous years into the discussion, so as to build upon previous insights and identify recurring themes.

One of the main themes of the track was the evaluation and implementation of simulations and games. Andrew Schlewitz and Joan Andorfer explored the degree to which substantive learning took hold within a Model OAS simulation and how these outcomes differed based on individual student characteristics. Chad Raymond compared the effectiveness of two different simulations in terms of their ability to cultivate empathy in students. Robbin Smith presented a fantastic US government simulation as well as pre- and post-test assessments of student learning outcomes. Michelle Allendoerfer used follow-up surveys to test the degree to which simulations were more-or-less effective than lecture in terms of increasing student retention.

Generally the results of these attempts at assessment were muddled. Studies of simulation effectiveness are continually plagued by “small-n” problems as well as the lack of true control groups, which poses problems for instructors who seek to “justify” the implementation of simulations and other active learning exercises in the classroom. While empirical analysis has yet to conclusively demonstrate the superiority of active learning techniques, it is generally the case that simulations are not worse for student learning than traditional techniques. Despite this muddled empirical record, track participants generally concluded that the increase in student enjoyment and engagement provoked by

simulations is valuable in and of itself. While it may be difficult to empirically demonstrate the inherent value of active learning, the process in itself can generate positive student outcomes across a range of activities.

Gavin Mount's “Simulating World Politics: Teaching as Research” presented the idea that simulations themselves can be used as sites of inquiry for students. While instructors often think of active learning exercises as delivery mechanisms for knowledge, deconstructing the institutional rules and implied norms of simulations themselves can be a productive method of debriefing students and encouraging critical thinking about political systems. Discussion then centered on the importance of debriefing: whether done as an in-class discussion or through personal reflective essay, instructors should allow students to discover the underlying themes and lessons from active learning rather than “telling.”

Finally, a number of presentations addressed the notion of adapting new or existing simulations to changing learning environments or goals. Gretchen Gee presented a simulation of Chechen terrorism for use in a “blended” classroom (a mix of online as well as classroom meetings), spurring an interesting discussion on the challenges of adapting active learning to non-traditional environments as classroom dynamics change. Nina Kollars, Victor Asal, Amanda Rosen, and Simon Usherwood demonstrated the flexibility of the Hobbes Game in terms of the learning goals it can be structured to evoke, demonstrating the degree to which small changes in simulation structure can beget new learning opportunities or goals.

The Simulations and Role Play track enjoyed a conference filled with rigorous discussions about how to effectively use simulations. Discussions surrounding assessment led to the general conclusion that as long as simulations seem to engage student learning and do not negatively effect learning outcomes, that a shift in the discussion to how to successfully create and execute simulations was in order. To that end, participants discussed how to effectively use debriefing strategies to engage students. Further, participants in the track concluded with a fruitful discussion of advantages and disadvantages of existing simulations that served a very practical purpose.

TEACHING POLITICAL THEORY AND THEORIES

Whitney Ross Manzo, *Meredith College*

The 2015 track participants in Teaching Political Theory and Theories focused largely on two themes within the pedagogy of teaching theory: the best way to communicate theory to students and how to make theory relatable and interesting to students. While the participants sometimes side-tracked into fruitful topics, the main thrust of the meeting was reiterating political theory's importance to the field of political science as well as methods with which to convince everyone, including colleagues, students, and administrators, of the continuing worth of political theory in today's world.

Traditions of Teaching Theory

Benjamin Mitchell began our session on the practice of teaching with an analysis of Michael Oakeshott's essay “Learning and Teaching.” Oakeshott, Mitchell argued, made many contributions to our understanding of the relationship between teacher and student. In particular, this relationship should be conceived

as a partnership, with the teacher instructing information and imparting judgment, and the student becoming an active member of the intellectual community. To implement Oakeshott's ideas in the classroom, Mitchell utilizes a Discussion Leader Model and Commonplace Books. The Discussion Leader Model explicitly embodies the partnership between teacher and student that Oakeshott recommends, while the Commonplace Books encourage "serious and thoughtful engagement" with assigned readings in order to strengthen writing skills and reflection on the knowledge students have gained.

This paper also led into a larger discussion of developing a teaching style. One of the track participants, a graduate student, was especially interested in hearing how others developed their own style, distinct from mentors and role models. Mitchell suggested regular evaluation of one's statement of teaching philosophy, to encourage self-awareness of teaching style development, while others recommended borrowing various well-liked practices from many different teachers, modifying them for your purposes, and keeping what works for you while throwing out what does not. It was clear that all participants agreed that imitation is not a lasting teaching style, however, and being oneself while teaching was of the utmost importance—both for the teacher's sanity and for student engagement. The participants did land on one key component of any good teacher's style: the capacity to listen, which comports with Oakeshott's emphasis on the teacher-student partnership.

In keeping with the overall conference theme, "Innovations and Expectations for Teaching in the Digital Era," one of our papers, concentrated on the challenges of teaching a very traditional subject in a very modern world. Anthony Kammas and Mike Tyszka's paper, "Techne before Technology: How Cognitive Science Confirms What Classical Pedagogy Knew All Along," discussed the importance of returning to the Socratic method for helping students not only learn political theory but also learn how to learn. Kammas and Tyszka argued that, in spite of pressures to incorporate more technology in the classroom, teachers should instead incorporate less. "What might actually be best," they wrote, "is none at all." This allows for greater cognitive development of the student, as he or she cannot rely on Google to answer all questions, and this is especially vital in the study of political theory since there are hundreds of easily found analyses of the classic works all over the Internet. In addition, Kammas and Tyszka noted several statistics that demonstrate the negative effects technology use has on in-classroom learning and student GPA. Track participants agreed that it was important to teach students that technology is a tool, not an end, in knowledge acquisition, though they disagreed as to how much technology to use in the classroom (or if it was even possible or desirable to completely remove it).

Making Theory Relatable and Interesting

Another theme in our track was how to make political theory applicable to modern-day life in order to increase student engagement and interest in the material. Mark Jendrysik and Anne Kelsch recommended using "Reacting to the Past" (RTTP) historical simulations from Barnard College. These simulations ask students to play real-life figures in famous historical situations (e.g., the French Revolution or Greenwich Village at the start of World War I) in order to teach them about history and politics while imparting practical political skills, such as rhetoric

and compromise. Jendrysik and Kelsch documented students' increased awareness of the political process, especially the disappointing realization that all decisions are provisional, as well as how the process often gets bogged down in minutiae. At Jendrysik and Kelsch's university, RTTP simulations are used in First Year Experience (FYE) courses, and have demonstrated the capability to increase retention.

Jendrysik, while very enthusiastic about the simulations, expressed two main concerns. The first, which many track participants heartily agreed was a universal problem in theory courses, was the issue of students "cherry-picking" quotes from texts to bolster arguments with no regard for context. Jendrysik pointed out that often, the students used quotes from authors who would very much disagree with the overall point that the student was making, but because the student carefully edited the author's work, the quote worked in the context of the simulation. This raised concerns about the students' true knowledge and understanding of the historical works they have read. Another issue was integration of the historical time period with the playing of the game itself; when students are well-versed in what actually happened, or how their characters would have really behaved, they can find it difficult to behave in ahistorical ways, which limits creativity. However, when students walk into a simulation blindly, they run right into the previously mentioned "cherry-picking" problem, or can develop solutions which are outside the realm of possibility. Jendrysik recommended making it clear to the students that the simulation can unfold differently than history, while other track participants suggested giving students only enough context as is completely necessary until the end of the simulation, when students can compare what they did versus what their real-life counterparts chose to do. On a final note, Jendrysik emphasized the intense work that goes into RTTP courses, and recommended that, were someone interested in teaching one, he or she should find a co-teacher.

Another method for making theory relatable to students was proposed by Christopher Buck in "Thinking about Contemporary Economic Inequality through Ancient and Early Modern Political Theory." Buck, searching for a way to demonstrate to practically-oriented students how theory relates to modern situations in general and their subfields within political science in particular, developed several assignments comparing the words of Aristotle and Machiavelli on economics and the development of good government to current events. For example, one assignment took a controversial move by St. Lawrence University (Buck's institution) on course registration, a very relevant and upsetting issue to the students, and asked them to contemplate it using Aristotle's definitions of justice.

Buck acknowledged a few risks in his approach. First, which is related to the aforementioned "cherry-picking" concern, was that he was basing assignments on one or two lines from the classic work and leaving out the pages of context surrounding them. Another risk, inherent to his project, was the instrumentalization of theory. Buck worried that this was making theory too much like other subfields within political science, which appealed to his students but did not force them outside their comfort zone.

This comment led to another group discussion on the best ways to engage students in political theory. Some participants felt that learning theory should be difficult, because this contributes to the student's growth as an intellectual. Others believed that teachers should recognize the students they have and gently push the students to recognize the learner they can become. Related to

this discussion was a debate over whether to use solely primary sources, solely secondary sources, or a mixture of both. Most track participants use heavily edited primary sources in class. When others pointed out the utility of secondary sources for explaining what can be old and unfamiliar language—this was especially a concern for those from lower-tier schools—everyone agreed that perhaps the best method would be to assign primary sources as required reading and to offer secondary sources as recommended reading.

Concluding Remark

To end the conference, our track returned to the idea of how to demonstrate the importance of theory in a higher education atmosphere that increasingly prioritizes practical marketplace skills. The participants agreed that, while communication of theory's fundamental ideas is key, encouraging students to actively reflect on passages through online discussion boards or in-class small groups can lead to more fruitful discussion of the material and more discovery of ways students' experiences relate to the readings. In this way, students can discover for themselves the importance of theory. The question of how long they recognize its importance, or if they ever return to these ideas after the course is long over, remains to be answered.

TEACHING RESEARCH METHODS

Lisa Mueller, *Macalester College*

Heather Silber Mohamed, *Clark University*

Stephanie Slocum-Schaffer, *Shepherd University*

The Teaching Research Methods (TRM) track at the 2015 APSA Teaching and Learning Conference addressed many of the themes and recommendations from previous conferences, while also incorporating a number of new topics. As in past years, our recommendations emphasized the need to integrate methods material into the broader political science curriculum as well as the importance of developing strategies to keep course material relevant to students. While previous tracks emphasized the need to assess different pedagogical techniques, our discussion focused in particular on evaluating experiential learning techniques. We also discussed the importance of use technology effectively and selectively, as well as the need to address ethical issues in the research methods classroom.

Participants noted that the ability to demonstrate the relevance of research methods and their application to the “real world” (political or not) seems to enhance the success of methods courses. As few of our students are likely to pursue graduate work in political science, we discussed the ways in which methods courses can connect to other potential career paths. Echoing previous years, we also discussed the importance of information literacy as a critical skill in the digital age, noting that the research methods course lends itself particularly well to teaching this skill. For instance, Slocum-Schaffer and Bohrer (2015) report that by philosophically, rhetorically, and practically embracing the research methods course as a large-scale exercise in improving information literacy for all students, they are able to move students beyond fear and disinterest and toward understanding the usefulness of the material. However, participants felt that the multiplicity of student learning outcomes and goals for the research methods course(s), coupled with the fact that the relative importance of those outcomes and goals will vary significantly from one institution to the next, means that faculty must

be intentional in designing their research methods courses to balance the acquisition of information literacy skills with other skill and content goals for the class.

Defining, Measuring, and Evaluating Experiential Learning

Much of our discussion focused on active and engaged learning techniques. Within this context, we debated how best to define experiential learning and how to evaluate its effectiveness. Recommendations from past conferences underscored the importance of developing strategies to assess different pedagogical approaches. In our discussions, we asked whether any interactive activity counts as experiential learning, or if students must work on projects outside of the classroom to qualify. How do we know when these activities have worked, and how would we define success? In an attempt to address these issues, Petrow (2015) used an innovative experimental design in one section of his methods course to evaluate the effectiveness of experiential assignments. While all students completed the same classroom exercises and exams, he randomly assigned half of the class to conduct original data collection and analysis as well. Petrow's preliminary findings suggest that in some cases, the added time commitment of experiential learning may disadvantage certain students who already have significant schedule obligations. In discussing this paper, we asked whether the effectiveness of experiential learning should best be measured by a course grade, a final exam, and/or through comments on teaching evaluations. Underscoring these measurement challenges, we agreed that many of the benefits of experiential learning are likely to materialize in ways that would be impossible to systematically evaluate, such as sustained student interest beyond the duration of the course.

Teaching and Practicing Ethics in the Research Methods Classroom

Compounding the challenges of evaluating pedagogical approaches, some participants noted ethical reservations about assigning certain students different work than others within the same course. Participants also discussed the increasing need to address ethical issues in the methods classroom. Undergraduates are not just the subjects of experimental research; they are increasingly becoming practitioners. As faculty incorporate units on experiments into their research methods syllabi, we discussed the importance of informing students about the ethical implications of applying treatments to humans. One way to do this is to assign readings that use experimental methods and then ask students to judge the morality of different aspects of the research design—recruitment of subjects, intervention, anonymity, and so on. Faculty may also explain the international review board (IRB) approval process, especially if students will at some point conduct original research for a course project or senior thesis. Until IRBs update standards to reflect the increased use of human subjects in classrooms, instructors have a greater responsibility to make ethically judicious decisions on their own.

The use of big data poses similar ethical concerns. Wilkerson (2015) describes an innovative social media analysis assignment requiring students to collect big data by using a range of software programs (Trackur, Vidia, and RapidMiner). Because many of our students frequently use Facebook and Twitter, this assignment gives them the chance to rigorously analyze social media data with which they are familiar. An unanticipated drawback of the assignment was privacy violations: The data-gathering programs did not mask user names and geographic locations, and many

students identified acquaintances in databases of status updates and tweets. Participants suggested anonymizing data (for classroom use and otherwise) and inviting students to discuss the ethics of big data analysis. Our discussion within the track mirrored an ongoing ethical debate occurring across academia, government, and the private sector about the use of big data and related privacy concerns.

Don't Let Technology Drive Your Teaching

Finally, given the focus of this conference on the challenges and opportunities of teaching in the digital age, the appropriate integration of technology and use of digital techniques in methods courses (for both teachers and learners) also figured prominently in our presentations and discussions. While track participants recognized the critical role of technology in teaching research methods especially, a consensus emerged over the course of the conference that a balance must be struck between too much use of—or even reliance on—technology, and too little. In particular, track participants noted that technology must be carefully selected for its relevance and effectiveness in increasing students' competence in each particular context, and that the integration of new techniques and technologies involves significant costs to both teachers and students. Thus, TRM members developed the recommendation that, especially in the context of research methods courses, one must not let technology drive one's teaching; instead, technology must be used appropriately and selectively as a tool for enhancing students' understanding and learning as well as their overall methodological competence and research skills.

The value of integrating digital techniques with traditional methods in producing these kinds of positive outcomes was highlighted continuously over the course of the conference presentations and discussions. Chambers, Fiddner, and Pavolik (2015) perhaps best encapsulate this idea; their use of a video module to demonstrate the process of developing good research ideas produces the best outcomes for students when paired with the more-traditional method of having students work in groups (semester-long "research roundtables"). Similarly, Slocum-Schaffer and Bohrer (2015) describe the advantages of group work and

the buddy-system when introducing students to statistical software packages such as SPSS. Voicu (2015) advocates for teaching qualitative and quantitative approaches together under the umbrella of research design while carefully limiting the role of technology in the methods classroom. Our discussions also repeatedly addressed the issue of the costs of technologies both in real dollar terms and with respect to the cost to students and to faculty of being educated in how to access and use them. For example, participants noted that students are often quite competent and comfortable in some domains of the digital universe but much less so in others (Excel, SPSS), so faculty must be cognizant of, and prepared for, the difficulties of employing different digital tools in the methods classroom. Similarly, much discussion centered on the pros and cons of using (or changing to) statistical software like R: it is open-source and thus is less expensive in real dollars, and it is also richer in terms of flexibility of application and in the competence and understanding required to employ it. However, R—and other newer tools and technologies—are also costly in the sense that they require that both faculty and students invest significant amounts of time and energy in educating themselves in their use.

Another cost associated with the reliance on technology in the research methods curriculum is the substantial impact that it has on students with disabilities. Indeed, TRM track members were particularly influenced by the final paper presented during the conference weekend, which focused on improving accessibility for visually-impaired students in a technology-rich classroom. Taylor (2015) discovered that visually-impaired students had very poor accessibility in the research methods class and concluded that he was unprepared to provide an equivalent learning experience for them. Drawing on the nine principles of Universal Design in Instruction (UDI), Taylor (2015) developed a proactive approach to curriculum design and instructional strategies that sought to minimize the need for special accommodations and retrofitted fixes. This strategy was universally appealing to TRM members for improving accessibility for students in all courses, though it appears to be particularly useful for research methods courses that rely heavily on technology. ■



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