



Students working in the Wright Emporium, Room S-102

All photos in the newsletter are courtesy of Jon Noriega

Letter from the Chair

Wright College’s General Education SLO #2: read, write, speak, and listen effectively so that the expectations of appropriate audiences in the academic, public, and private sectors are met.

Ever since Dr. Paul Heilker from Virginia Tech invited us during our Faculty Development Week to think of this year’s focus on gen ed SLO #2 in terms of literacy and to recognize how our literacies are our ways of “entering and engaging with our world,” I have noticed around our campus so many places and activities that offer opportunities for our students, faculty, and staff. Free books can often be found in boxes on the first floor. The library staff offers free magazines in the hallway outside of its second floor entrance. The Office of Ministry distributes pamphlets, the Learning Resource Center staff keeps computers available for students who access online databases like EbscoHost and JSTOR, and the Gateway prints aids for students to assist them navigate courses toward the path of graduation and fills the wall opposite its doors with handouts from the many colleges and universities students transfer to after reaching their goals here at Wright. Students gather together in the new Wright Emporium to decipher the teachings of Mathematics textbooks. Writing Center Consultants begin their appointments with students by reading over assignments communicated by the students’ professors. Faculty join together in the Center for Teaching and Learning for book clubs that meet regularly. In many ways, this building is itself one giant Book Club, and we are using the many books and writings that we share to communicate to each other in almost every conversation—What does the CCLOC contract say about overtime?, How does this sign on the wall tell me to find my new classroom?, Which food items offered

today in the cafeteria have the nutritional requirements I am looking for?, Where can I get my bus pass?, What 102 research topics interest me the most?, Why is this Center for Teaching and Learning session being offered?, When is Julius Nadas hosting a lunch for his birthday in the Faculty Dining Room?

The thing I am starting to see from all these ways Wright is engaging us and suggesting ideas to us is that WE have so many choices once we enter this building. And that to me is the real benefit of a real place—hallways, stairwells, computer links, and classrooms are physical realities that show us what we do not expect: an afternoon discussion on the meaning of life in the CTL, a fellow student who understands that piece of the Math puzzle that’s eluding us, a college or university I have never heard of that offers a more affordable program in the field I’d like to study, a free lunch.

Often I think that students see reading for our classes as something that complicates and challenges them—our textbooks are college-level material, right? But they are also worldly opportunities that present them, and all of us, with new ways of living and making our time on this planet worthwhile. So I want to thank everyone who posted a sign, sent an email invitation, shared a textbook, printed a study guide, and bought me lunch!

- Vincent Bruckert



AQIP Systems Portfolio Coordinator and Lead Writer

Next semester, Biology Professor and former Assessment Committee Chairperson Noah Marshall will take on a crucial new role for our College's AQIP work.

Noah has served as co-chairperson of the college's AQIP Category 1 committee focusing on Helping Students Learn. He believes that his experience as a writer and contributor for this category chapter report will inform his role as the faculty lead for this college accreditation report. His service as the college's Assessment Committee Chairperson from Fall 2010 through Spring 2014 has also provided the background and experience to analyze, edit, and write assessment reports that complement the accreditation work that will be addressed in the AQIP Systems Portfolio writing.

Noah will prepare and submit periodic AQIP Systems Portfolio progress updates to the AQIP Steering Committee based around its Spring 2016 semester meeting schedule. In January, 2016 and February, 2016, he will work with each of the college's six AQIP category committees to revise and refine their Fall 2015 draft reports. On or before Thursday, March 31, 2016, he plans to submit a draft version of the AQIP Systems Portfolio for review by President Potash and Executive Director Stephens. He expects to incorporate revisions from President Potash and Executive Director Stephens and submit the final report on or before Friday, April 29, 2016.

C.I.S. and the Flipped Classroom

Over the last year, the C.I.S. department has systematically begun using the practice of the "Flipped Classroom" and department colleagues have been sharing with each other their attitudes towards such teaching practices. This article will not focus on the elements that comprise a flipped classroom, even though this can provide insights. Rather, the emphasis here will be on how we can refine the implementation of the flipped classroom in order to enhance the results. In our estimation there were several important lessons to be learned.

Get Stakeholders to Buy In

Students have been exposed primarily to the lecture format. When we change the classroom paradigm without explanation, students can become disoriented and frustrated. Therefore, we found it a good practice to explain to the students what we were considering doing and why. Then, we asked the students if they would be willing to try the new method.

Fit the Model to the Class

Some instructors rigidly adhere to a specific

interpretation of the flipped classroom model. Instead, they should adapt the model to the material and the classroom dynamic.

The Flipped Model Makes it Easier for the Teacher

Besides feeling slighted students may feel the flipped model is just an excuse to make the teacher's job easier. We found it useful to involve the students in the process of developing and researching materials (YouTube videos) to watch. In this manner, students might realize the amount of work required. Their efforts seem to make the students value the process and the flipped model more.

Lab vs. Mobile Phone

Typically, the flipped model is implemented in a computer lab for both sessions. This is so the students can do Internet research in what had been the lecture session. While computers are not always available, we can take advantage of the fact that many students have Internet access on their cell phones. By working in groups, the students who may not have smart phones can still participate.

- Fred Hernandez

Books That Transformed Us Wright Faculty on the Readings that Introduce their Discipline

Program Coordinator Timothy Andriano:

Gerontology is the study of human aging. To link classroom learning to the real world I recommend that Gerontology students read *Still Alice* by Lisa Genova. The novel, which was made into a popular movie, tells the story of Harvard Professor Alice Howard, who, at the age of fifty, acquired early onset Alzheimer's. The story traces her early denial and downward spiral as she loses more and more of her cognitive ability. The story is not only about Alice but also about the dramatic effects it has on her children and husband when their lives are turned upside down.

The novel is timely as the explosion of baby boomers reach sixty-five. In 2011, the first of the 77 million baby boomers turned sixty-five. For the following seventeen years, 8,000 people will turn sixty-five each day. With advanced medical treatment and technology, people are living longer. It is estimated that 50% of baby boomers will acquire dementia and Alzheimer's for which there is no cure. Every 67 seconds, someone is acquiring the disease. In 2015, Alzheimer's cost the nation \$226 billion. The cost of caring for persons with Alzheimer's will increase exponentially in future years.

It is imperative that Gerontology students have a solid background in the care of dementia and Alzheimer's patients. *Still Alice* provides profound insights into how the disease affects individuals and their families.

Assessment Committee Members

Timothy Andriano - Social Service
Vincent Bruckert (Chair) - English
Jeanette Bruno - Library
Susan Colon - VPA
Paul Croitoru - Business
Helen Doss - English
Matthew Grief - Biology
Adrian Guiu - Humanities
Fred Hernandez - CIS
Ted Jankowski - Math
Andrew Kruger - Physical Science
Adrienne Leyva - OTA
Jane McNiven - Paralegal
Julius Nadas - Math
Krzysztof Ochwat - Physical Science
Neill Sachs - Social Science
Andrew Spiropoulos - Physical Education

Professor Vincent Bruckert:

Many, if not all, English majors and graduate students in the 1980s were assigned Terry Eagleton's *Literary Theory: An Introduction*. This book-length study describes what our professors were doing in their essays and classroom lectures. It provides concise but thorough starting points to understand the various theories that inform ways theory-driven readers make sense of literature, and English Departments in the 1980s were nothing if not theory-driven. If it was as if we had decided reading and noting the artistry of Shakespeare, Wordsworth, and Faulkner were not enough, we had to philosophize on their linguistic choices, socially and politically critique their historical moments, psychoanalyze their unconscious desires, and judge how well they treated women in their writings. This was heady stuff, and Eagleton, an Oxford University Don, explains the practices and practicalities of "theory" quite clearly.

But Eagleton is also one of the theorists. In fact, he happens to be a Marxist critic of literature, and it was one sentence that could only make sense from within his own imagination at the end of the introductory chapter titled "What is Literature" that really struck me and I've never forgotten it: "They (works of Literature) refer in the end not simply to private taste, but to the assumptions by which certain social groups exercise and maintain power over others" (14). This broad and general statement on the function and actual use of "Literature" with a capital "L" suggests that literary works are a game played by empires and its rulers. And for me, in our modern age of free-loving countries and totalitarian dictatorships, this sentence invites me to observe how literary works are used as tools for liberation by some and for oppression by others, which made the job of a writer to me

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intimidating, dangerous, urgent, and sexy. And so I came to believe this preposterous utterance to be true. And still do despite the fact I am supposed to be less naïve now. But it still explains to me why today the common entertainment neighborhood of Chicago, Navy Pier, has a theater funded by the city and named after the Elizabethan genius of British high culture; Eagleton's attitude still enlightens me as to why the Nobel Prize for Literature is awarded to a writer whose work challenges the currently popular despot to despise—for instance, Putin is this year's tyrant, apparently, after the Ukraine annexation, and the Prize winner is Svetlana Alexievich, whose work documents Russians' struggle with its indifferent and cruel government; and the subversive and revolutionary possibilities suggested by this sentence and the book as a whole still promise me that new literary voices will make truly necessary differences that will unseat those who threaten their fellow citizens and all citizens from their thrones and tanks, presidential palaces, and demonic battlefields.

Professor Jeannette Bruno:

Being a librarian is more than sitting in a room full of books. This is especially true at an academic institution where doing research is crucial. It is a fairly common statement (joke?) that students aren't worried about their research because they can just "Google it." Us librarians have heavily sighed many a time at those who suggest Googling something is the same as doing meaningful research. A key part in understanding the difference is understanding how Google works. So, as a look into librarianship, the book I'm recommending is *The Googlization of Everything* by Siva Vaidhyanathan. There have been lots of books published about the internet and search engines and what it all means for humankind, but this is the one I read in library school that made me very wary of our favorite search tool.

The Googlization of Everything reminded me that nothing is free and, if you're not paying for the product, you are the product. When you're in the business of finding information, this book is a good read.

Professor Helen Doss:

There are few resources on composition and literature that I find more useful in engendering productive excitement among my students about writing and reading than encouraging students to participate actively in creating and reading texts themselves. In my experience, students learn to appreciate the challenges and savor the pleasures of writing and reading through experience with

multiple genres and rigorous interrogation of complex works. It is only later, after the development of confidence in their abilities as readers and writers, that students acquire an interest in the discipline as a scholarly pursuit. Nevertheless, upon reflection, there is one work to which I return often, "Poetry is Not a Luxury", by Audre Lorde, to explore literate expression in ways that are both empowering and informative for my students. In this brief essay, through style and content, Lorde communicates the power of language and writing as well as the necessity of imagination and creative production to the struggle for agency and against hegemonic oppression in the contemporary world, all of which is essential for students, many of whom require this kind of awareness for success in their future academic, professional, and personal endeavors.

Professor Matthew Greif:

One book I would encourage all students interested in biology to read is *1984* by George Orwell. Superficially, this book has nothing to do with the study of biology. Set in a dystopian version of London, virtually every aspect of society is rigidly controlled by the government. Citizens are monitored continually for thought crimes and official messages are written in double speak, a language set up to reduce words and hence forms of expression.

Unfortunately, such actions are not limited to fiction. Recently in Canada, the former government rigidly controlled how public servants, including many scientists, spoke to various media outlets. Scientists that studied climate change were often forbid from speaking out about their research to the general public. Additionally, public research collections and libraries were closed and in some cases the books and journals were physically destroyed under the auspices of efficiency, all to limit the ability of the electorate to make informed decisions and question government policy. It is only recently with the last elections that Canadian scientists are again free to speak about their research without government interference. I think it is important for biology students to realize how quickly our freedom to look and speak objectively about the world can be taken away, and therefore we must be able to speak up quickly and loudly when we notice such infringements.

Professor Adrian Guiu:

The book that I think is essential and inevitable for philosophy, religion, and humanities is the Bible. It is a fundamental great book. The Bible should be freed from a religious and denominational context and should be read with an open mind and fresh eyes in order to enter its universe of

characters and ideas. It ultimately constitutes a great mirror into which one can regard oneself and from which one is being regarded.

Besides the Bible, I would add the writings of Plato. In a recent book, *Plato at the Googleplex, Why Philosophy Won't Go Away*, Rebecca Goldstein offers a fascinating conversation between Plato and the Google/Facebook geeks. It shows how actual and relevant Plato's ideas are in a culture taken over by technology and gadgetry but still preoccupied with the perennial issues and questions regarding virtual reality vs. reality, truth vs. artificiality, opinion vs. knowledge, the meaning of life, and the goal of human nature.

Professor Ted Jankowski:

I recommend reading an interesting math book entitled, *Innumeracy: Mathematical Illiteracy and Its Consequences*, by John Allen Paulos. In it, we learn how mathematically illiterate our society has become, as well as the social ramifications involved. We learn how "innumeracy" can negatively affect our lives, our decisions, and even our governmental policies. The author delves into several key math concepts most of us struggle with, and he offers clear mathematical explanations with plenty of examples I found helpful. Some of these misconceptions include our inability to comprehend and deal with large numbers, probability and coincidence, statistics, and how we can fall into believing the validity of pseudoscience. He also delves into the causes of math illiteracy and offers concrete steps we can take to overcome it. It's common for even college students to have trouble with large numbers, especially the difference between millions, billions, and trillions. In fact, I've asked my students to suppose if a millionaire has one million dollars and a billionaire has one billion dollars, how many millionaires would it take to equal one billionaire? The answers I got varied from 10 millionaires to 1000. Many fail to comprehend it takes 1000 millionaires to equal a billionaire, and it takes 79,000 millionaires to equal one Bill Gates. Then, with our national debt now somewhere near \$18 trillion (that's \$157,000 per tax payer) it would take 18 million millionaires to pay it off. These numbers are mind boggling to most of us. How did our national debt get so high? Who is to blame? Should we look in the mirror? Getting back to the book, our author gives a lesson in scientific notation, and offers suggestions on how to better comprehend very large numbers. He explains probability, the multiplication rule, and the way coincidence gets misinterpreted by the

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innumerate. For instance, he gives an example of a brilliant stock market scam in which 32,000 letters are sent to potential customers (i.e., victims); 16,000 predict a certain stock price will increase, and the other 16,000 predict a decrease. The next week, new letters are sent to only the 16,000 who received the prediction of a price increase; 8,000 letters say the stock price will increase again, 8,000 say it will decrease. The next week, the 8,000 who received the stock price increase prediction letters are sent yet more letters; 4,000 with a predicted increase, 4,000 with a decrease. This goes on for 6 weeks, with 500 customers in the end getting 6 correct predictions in a row! They are then sent letters demanding \$500 for the next week's prediction. This is of course an illegal fraud, but it happens all the time. The person who receives 6 correct predictions in a row thinks some sort of magic is happening, when it really is all just due to chance. There are many more such examples in the book, many even more thought provoking. So, it is worth reading. The good news is that mathematical innumeracy can be cured, and the author gives suggestions to those who want to be cured. Also, the mathematical concepts covered in the book are the same we teach in Math 118 General Education Mathematics at Wright College. I'm very happy our curriculum is addressing innumeracy for those who take Math 118, but I am a bit concerned for those who are not. So, I would recommend this book for anyone who is interested in math.

Professor Andrew Kruger:

There are different types books I suggest to my students. Some go deeper into the ideas we cover in class, while others make the concepts more accessible through illustrations or well-written explanations. But the books I recommend the most are those that put the classroom topics into a bigger picture of scientific knowledge, and a historical perspective that explains why the concepts were surprising and revolutionary when they were discovered. By putting the ideas in context, it gives students a better understanding of what they are learning and makes it more relevant. An excellent example is the book *A Short History of Nearly Everything* by Bill Bryson. This book gives clear explanations of what is known in many fields of science, including physics, chemistry, cosmology, astronomy, geology, meteorology, oceanography, biology, and paleontology, with great stories about their history and the significance of their discoveries. With such a large scope, this book creates a great context and overview for a majority of scientific knowledge. Books like

this really make science interesting and accessible to anyone, and are worthwhile reading.

Professor Jane McNiven:

One of the most influential movies for becoming a member of the legal profession, and one which I frequently show in Civil Litigation, is *The Rainmaker*, starring Matt Damon and Danny DeVito. It's adapted from the John Grisham novel of the same name.

The Rainmaker is the story of a recent law school graduate who takes on a large corrupt insurance company on behalf of a dying young man. A typical David and Goliath type of story but with everything that paralegal students see and do on a daily basis and, most of all, it shows the inner workings of a true civil lawsuit--the filings, the motions, the timeline. It's terrific in that it brings a case to life and shows real heart, real people, not just names on a piece of paper, but that what you are doing; the cases you file in court affect people and really matter.

Professor Julius Nadas:

The German mathematician Carl Friedrich Gauss called mathematics the "queen of the sciences" in 1856 because it functions as a consort and helpmate to all of the other sciences. Unfortunately, most of what is taught in math classes has been the use of tools that mathematicians have created to help them to solve problems instead of general methods for problem solving. About a century later, in 1945, George Polya published the book *How To Solve It* which quickly became his most prized publication. It sold over one million copies and has been translated into 17 languages. In this book, he identifies four basic principles of problem solving which can be applied by anyone in any field. These principles can be summarized as follows:

- 1) Preparation: *Understand the problem*
- 2) Thinking Time: *Devise a plan*
- 3) Insight: *Carry out the plan*
- 4) Verification: *Review your solution to make sure it is right*

Professor Neill Sachs:

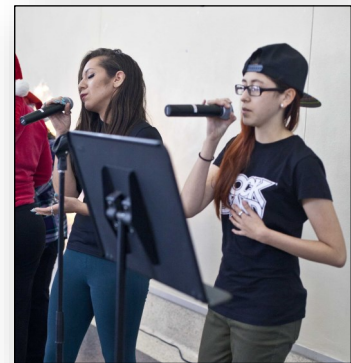
Undaunted Courage: Meriwether Lewis, Thomas Jefferson and the Opening of the American West (1996) by Steven Ambrose is the story of a journey unmatched in its scope of adventure and wonder. The Lewis and Clark Expedition of 1804-1806 paddled their canoes up the Missouri River and literally into the unknown, all in the pursuit of researching and recording, for the first time, the geography of the Louisiana Purchase, the western-most reaches of a still young United States. This rugged and dangerous voyage of discovery is well documented by the author in this history of the expedition.

The principle task of the "Corp of Discovery" was to accumulate knowledge of this strange, new region. To observe and record all they could see, everything from insects to plant species, from landforms to soil types, weather and climate, and, perhaps most importantly, Native American tribes and customs. It is 100% pure geography – both physical and cultural – at its finest. If you finally put this book down and have not become interested in the geography of North America, then you haven't really read the book!



2015 Holiday Potluck

Wednesday, December 9, 2015



CITY COLLEGES of CHICAGO
Wilbur Wright
Education that Works