

Hannah Toney Reflection Paper

Hannah R. Toney

Marshall University

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Prologue

As I approach the reflective paper and attempt to synthesize my development as a scholar and the evolution of my understanding of curriculum in the course of the doctoral program to date, I am struck by an overwhelming sense of transformation and discovery. The teacher I was in the late summer of 2007 is not the scholar who writes this paper today; an epic journey has taken place in self-awareness as a professional and in my development as an intellectual. The significance of the journey metaphor, the epic development of the protagonist through heroic deeds in classical mythology, and the transcendence of obstacles first perceived as insurmountable became the central allegory for my metamorphosis and the guiding theme in this reflective piece.

Through years in theatre I have come to understand that stories represent more than entertainment; they are human histories. Stories are man's method of communicating himself, and the aspects of his culture and environment that he values to future generations. In this fashion, stories are the lessons of teachers told to pupils who then synthesize and pass the stories on to another audience. This curriculum of the story evolved into the rudiments of my early profession, theatrical performance. As tribesmen and shamans acted out histories and hunts or passed on creation and destruction mythology, they initiated the first informal curriculum. The early curriculum of the story transformed into the pedagogy of performance and was used to teach allegorical lessons and the measure of the perfect man.

Before there was formal schooling there was an education. The curriculum became theoretical and formalized, laid down in tested methods, researched, and given quantitative form. The curriculum was argued on the basis of ethics and defended and

condemned in a court of law, but at its most basic, and I would argue best, education is still theatre, a story in dialogue. At its preeminence curriculum is an unscripted epic between the teacher and student that brings each character's experiences to the front and uncovers great deeds, travesties, remarkable feats, questions, and revelations. This epic goes on without an end.

In the summer of 2007 I could not have expressed this concept of curriculum. So the concept of the curriculum story becomes my best means of discussing my growth as a scholar. This is the epic quest leading to the true marathon of the dissertation. In this reflection my epic follows a structure inspired by many great stories from antiquity with theatrical bents all my own.

Act I represents the exposition in which the hero of the epic tale gains the basic knowledge required to face the tasks ahead. Act I presents the facts of the story and provide necessary background knowledge to facilitate understanding of the characters and situations that will follow. The exposition can sometimes be difficult and often feels slow and occasionally even boring, but it is very necessary to understand all that lies ahead. In terms of my epic journey, Act I is program acceptance and foundational course work.

Act II represents the story development and the building of action. It is here the hero learns the depth of the struggles to follow and faces his first tests. The great odyssey begins, and the hero is tempted, tested, meets foes, and gains companions on the quest. For my journey, Act II is representative of my personalization of the course work, first practice of research methodology, and committee selection.

Act III represents the climatic battles which test the hero's skill development and truly assess his strength and wisdom. Act III has moments of great revelation in which the hero's purpose and abilities become clear. Patterns are revealed and the hero completes feats necessary to move to the next leg of his journey, both alone and with heroic companions. For my purposes, Act III represents the development of individual scholarship activities in research, course development, conference presentations, and course instruction.

Act I: Acceptance and Foundational Course Work

The epic began the day I received word of the cohort opportunity. In 2005, as a new teacher, I was the charge of Dr. Teresa Eagle in Kanawha County's new teacher mentor program. An encouraging and kind mentor with a theatrical flair, she put me at ease instantly and helped me survive a difficult first year in a tense position. Near the end of that first year teaching I received an email from Dr. Eagle announcing the cohort program. Having recently completed Marshall's Masters of Art in Teaching program, I was concerned that I would grow complacent if I took a second year off from higher education. I decided on what I considered a whim to accept the summons. Looking at this acceptance now in the allegory of a story, entering the doctoral program was tantamount to the protagonist accepting the summons of destiny, more a leap of faith than whim.

I truly had no concept what it meant to pursue a terminal degree. I was barely out of the Masters program with more years in theatre than in teaching. I knew little of curriculum and nothing of theory, history, law, or ethical foundations. I walked blindly

into the journey with only a sense of duty and the knowledge that this was what I needed to do.

I started the course work in the fall of 2007 along with the rest of the 2007 Marshall cohort. At the same time I began a new position as the theatre director and instructor at Capital high school, my *alma mater* and a school with a reputation for excellence in performance. My first two program courses established the foundation to comprehend and represent much of the work that would follow. The two courses also forced me to face a fear and a weakness. On the one hand, I took CI 677, Writing for Publication. While a decent though not prolific writer, I had avoided publication in the past. As an undergraduate I withdrew from two writing courses when I learned that submission for publication was a course requirement. I had no choice but to tackle what I understood later was only the tiniest of monsters.

While I fended fears of rejection and publication, I was met with another, greater weakness: math in the form of statistics. I had not taken a math course since the most basic quantitative reasoning as an undergraduate theatre major, and blanched at the notion that statistics was a necessary evil for doctoral success. I walked into EDF 517, this test of acumen, ready to fail. To my surprise instructor Dr. Edna Meisel was neither Medusa nor Hera but a very funny, down to earth, and patient instructor. Dr. Meisel taught perhaps the most important of my foundational lessons in the doctoral journey.

Dr. Meisel provided data and analysis that related to issues the beginning students could connect with in a meaningful way. As a health conscious individual who carefully watched calorie intake, I found Dr. Meisel's calorie analysis activities useful and meaningful. While the class provided an understanding of statistics, I also came to

appreciate the foundation and strength for the rest of my journey: really good teachers do not want their students to fail and will patiently walk with their students until they all succeed.

I was able to synthesize what I already understood regarding cross-curricular role playing into a respectable article for CI 677. It was a revelation to find that my background in the performing arts spoke to the needs of adult educators, science teachers, and character educators. I learned to read and understand statistical information in research texts. The data components, graphs, and charts of research articles were no longer sections to be skipped but instead provided valuable information and significant figures to sum up findings. The courses overlapped as I appreciated the value of numerical data in research documents I examined. The information enhanced my writing, and informed the arguments I proposed.

I was slowly learning the language and confidence necessary to continue this journey. As I transitioned into Act II and III of the epic, I was able to synthesize this knowledge of figures to understand and interpret elements of research I once perceived as gibberish. This knowledge of statistics and clean writing would soon allow me to interpret data gathered *via* my own research.

I continued to build upon this foundation with the study of leadership styles in LS 710, Principles of Leadership with professor Dr. Powell Toth. I never considered myself a leader but found myself in leadership roles and was singled out as a group leader in my professional life. It was through LS 710, specifically in reading Howard Gardner, Charles Manz, and Henry Sims (Gardner, 1995; Manz & Sims, 2001) that I came to understand and appreciate the influence a powerful leader can excerpt both for good and

ill. Gardner described leadership in *Leading Minds* as a form of storytelling and said that leaders were those whose stories became legend. Gardner says, "...stories are seen as struggling against one another, with one or the other ultimately prevailing. Some storytellers are so skilled, however, that they are able to create narratives that appear to satisfy both parties in a controversy or to operate effectively at more than one developmental level" (p. 49).

This was the metaphor I needed to approach my role in classroom leadership with a sense of humility and awe. At this stage of the journey I also found myself leading a theatre department of talented but timid high school students into perhaps the busiest and most demanding production season of the school's history. As I read for the course between unloading trucks and focusing lights, I was reminded of my responsibility and opportunity as a leader both by Gardner and by Manz and Sims who stated, "Be a strong, even a charismatic leader and followers will know where to go as long as you light their way. Teach them to lead themselves, and their path will be lighted always. In return, they will illuminate new paths of opportunity that you might have never seen" (p. xix).

These lessons shielded me through what I came to understand during Politics of Education, LS 746, to be a politically charged and contentious school year. I also found strength in understanding my role as a classroom leader to entail more than authority mandated by the Board of Education. Leadership had to encompass all aspects of my existence, not just lesson delivery. At the same time I was involved in LS 710, my theatre program lost a valued student in a car crash on the same day as a production. Before LS 710 I would have thought stoic strength was a function of my title, but now I

allowed myself to shed tears with my students. We dried them together and we went on with the show.

In the foundations of the story the paths of my professional and educational life began to cross. It was not long before the two intertwined and eventually became one. My school principal's consistent focus on cultivating positive character and responsible citizens in our diverse and often troubled student-body lead to my first articulation of a research project in LS 703, Research Design, and laid the foundation for several works to come. In LS 703, I came to appreciate the importance of the question, and the research base necessary to form even the most rudimentary inquiry. As I developed the question and sub-questions inspired by my professional environment, my thought process shifted from working with curriculum to an interest in the development of curriculum. Instead of the curriculum existing as a set of rules in a text, I learned to view the curriculum as a fluid learning dynamic informed by the culture of an institution and all those in attendance.

LS 703 also marked my first interaction with a dissertation as the cohort members were required to examine dissertations as part of the research for the course. I was now able to understand on a rudimentary level the numerical data. I could appreciate the economy and precision of language. I respected the magnitude of focused work that was poured into the paper in my hand. I also began to see how someday I could walk into the lair and vanquish the dragon of the dissertation.

An important section of the exposition was nevertheless absent: an historical understanding of curriculum and a context for education's evolution in our society. Curriculum Development, CI 701, while still expositional would, like LS 703, lead to

future opportunities by empowering me to consider the curriculum as more than content standards mandated by a higher authority. The course also permitted me to examine contemporary curriculum from an arts perspective, and by examining research to scrutinize creative education globally as the foundation for the future of the world.

It was in CI 701 that I was first introduced to the Herbartian method and understood that other educators also felt that education should begin with what the students understand and work toward more complicated materials from this area of comfort. The method provided a structural veracity comforting to a neophyte educator and reminded me during classroom lecture that, “to be wearisome is the cardinal sin of education” (Herbart, Felkin, Felkin, & Browning, 1908, p. 138). Additionally, I found myself drawn to Herbert’s notion of teaching not only content knowledge but also good citizenship and community consciousness. While the Herbartian method could be overly formulated, the ideas expressed resonated with my understanding of education and began to subtly direct my journey.

It was also in CI 701 that I first encountered John Dewey and was grounded by the eloquence and artistry that could be found in curriculum. Dewey’s logical writing and obvious passion for teaching offered direction and reassurance along the early road. While reading Dewey’s works I was also drawn to focus more on the educator’s role in shaping student character through example and practice. I later learned this philosophy was part of the hidden curriculum. Dewey’s creed resonated with and shaped my belief in the role of education:

“I believe that all education proceeds by the participation of the individual in the social consciousness of the race. This process begins

unconsciously almost at birth, and is continually shaping the individual's powers, saturating his consciousness, forming his habits, training his ideas, and arousing his feelings and emotions. Through this unconscious education the individual gradually comes to share in the intellectual and moral resources which humanity has succeeded in getting together. He becomes an inheritor of the funded capital of civilization.” (Dewey, 1897)

As I examined the readings in CI 701, I understood for the first time that teachers were artists, not task masters, and that the curriculum is the story they bequeath to their students. I further understood that the cultures, lives, and influences of students will influence how they perceive the curriculum story. When handling the curriculum effectively educators are influencing the existence of individual students. This fact emphasized the importance of responsible and valid research in curriculum. While the quantitative data may appear as little more than numbers, those numbers represent individuals or factors that have the potential to impact individual lives.

While coming to understand my responsibility and power as an educator I also learned more clearly the requirements of doctoral attainment. The cohort was regularly joined by a colorful cast of characters, a cadre of the doctoral faculty and staff, who explained the Herculean tasks ahead. I learned the vocabulary of my mission and the tools necessary for completion of the quest. Like all great heroes, we needed both a guide and aegis in our chairs and mentors in our committee. I would face the enchanted mirror of the portfolio and reflection, the riddle of the dissertation question, and the Minotaur of the prospectus on the road to the final dragon's lair of the dissertation.

Act II: Personalization of Curriculum, Research Methodology, Committee Selection

I soon faced what many doctoral candidates considered the principal monster of course work, Curriculum Theories, CI 702. A five-headed hydra of traditional, political, phenomenological, poststructuralist, and autobiographical theories, the course pressed my abilities as a writer and a critical thinker. I came to understand the curriculum both theoretically and practically in degrees I did not previously comprehend. As I studied the autobiographical theory and considered with advancing perception the impact of student prior experience, I looked at my own students more analytically and began to tailor lessons to compliment and challenge the experience of the individual students.

Based on my developing understanding of curriculum theories, I was able to examine student reactions and lesson attainment through both qualitative and quantitative means and use the results to inform modification in my curriculum delivery. Test scores were not numbers for a grade book, but methods to determine the weaknesses in my curriculum delivery. These data sets existed not to punish students, but to inform educators of more effective educational techniques and necessary remediation.

I became more aware of my presence in the classroom and the power of my story to affect students' futures. Additionally my increased research and scholarship guided me to understand that teachers must not lead through authority or teach only the lessons at hand but instead guide by being consciously present in the classroom. I realized that every aspect of the teacher and the educational surroundings affect student response. I wondered how the rampant media bad mouthing of teachers influenced the students' respect for and response to their own teachers? How did the media's perception of education, the use of education as a political agenda, and the lack of professional respect

often felt by teachers and mirrored in these realms affect teacher performance and student response?

As I considered the political and social implications of education I worked to expand my students' cultural awareness and to force a level of discomfort and disequilibrium. By infusing the curriculum with some discomfort I hoped the students would be forced to search for and discover answers on their own. At the same time my increased knowledge of policy and laws surrounding classroom politics allowed me to control the curriculum within the realms of the law.

As I completed the final component of CI 702, a statement of my personal curriculum theory, I found myself drawn to the always outspoken political commentaries of Giroux and Apple. I was struck by Giroux's acidic critique of contemporary American culture and the impotence of education in ceasing "aggressive attempts on the part of many liberal and conservative politicians to undermine those public spaces that encourage informed debate, promote a remorseless drive to privatization, and invoke patriotism as a cloak for carrying out a reactionary economic and political agenda" (Giroux, 2002).

In the midst of a responsive presidential election I took a curricular leap bolstered by my curriculum scholarship and research into meaningful, real-world education and encouraged well articulated debate. In class I suspended the academic curriculum of my course to explore American society and politics with open and responsibly mediated dialogue. Only after CI 702 was over and I was able to breathe and reflect on the challenges and accomplishments did I realize that during the course work I began to fashion my own curriculum story in my classroom. For the first time in my career I

taught with a method not exclusively mandated by county standards but formulated upon what my students needed.

I became increasingly disturbed by seemingly under-researched educational mandates, political finger pointing, and the propensity to place blame on teachers. I wondered how much of this was really partisan political proselytizing that did little to help the students or the state of public education. Rather than simply wonder in a vacuum, I also began to formulate broad research questions and to consider the difficulty of collecting the data to determine reliable and valid data. Was placing blame on teachers more rampant now than over the prior decade? Was this having any positive impact on education? While as yet an unexplored path, my course work in research made clear the difficulties such investigations posed.

While more brazen in my adaption and questioning of class materials, I also began to thoroughly incorporate my professional and educational existences, including both my students and my professional colleagues in course work. As a component of LS 711, Survey Research in Education, the cohort members were required to develop and administer a survey. While I had considered questions and their ensuing research implications, this step in both research and scholarship allowed me to hone the questions, develop a concise research plan, and practice the necessary legal and ethical methods required for responsible survey development and analysis.

The professor, Dr. Ronald Childress suggested I continue the research design I began in LS 703, and further explore public school character education. As a homeroom instructor at my high school I was sometimes directed to administer lessons aimed at cultivating positive character in the high school students. I often wondered how effective

these methods were and how other teachers perceived these lessons and their outcomes. How involved are students in video versus guest-speaker delivery methods? Do teachers perceive changes in student behavior after character education courses?

In LS 711 I took these questions and developed a research design and survey to explore the inquiries in depth. I adapted the survey for online administration and received Institutional Review Board (IRB) and Kanawha County School Board approval (Appendix A). For the first time I was not just reading but conducting research, and in doing so combined the school in which I worked with the one I attended. Throwing off fear of rejection by my colleagues and taking a stand as a research scholar in my school was an important and monumental step down the road of growth and recognition as a scholar, as well as a lesson in the difficulties of educational research.

The survey answers (Appendix B) only created more interest and the realization that further research was necessary to discover what works to instill good character attributes in public schools. Through analysis of the numerical data, I found that the teachers surveyed were unclear as to what constituted character education. The aspects one teacher viewed as a lesson in character another ignored. By employing my newfound knowledge of statistical analysis for significance I was able to interpret the data and find there was also disagreement regarding whether character education had any positive impact on student behaviors.

This research development also provided a significant lesson regarding the validity and reliability of data. With a return rate of under 20% how could I confidently postulate that the data was reliable? My study lacked a robust base. As a scholar I wanted to increase the impact of these lessons. Through continued research I hoped to

discover how to better reach the students as well as how to increase teacher buy-in of character initiatives. This experience also did not address my interest in the hidden curriculum found in school politics and media coverage of education.

After taking part in this project my colleagues recognized that I was on an impressive journey. Several colleagues are considering participation in future cohort opportunities and inquire about my experiences and difficulties as they make plans for the future. As my fellow teachers asked advice, sought my insight on research, and looked to me to take the lead in debates on matters of curriculum, I was reminded of the lessons learned in LS 710 and knew to take this role as a leader very seriously. Participation in the doctoral program brought respect and allowed me a degree of influence over colleagues, administration, and students that a teacher in her early career would not usually be granted. The pressure was on, there was no quitting, no straying off course; my associates were watching and counting on me to complete the quest.

In order to finish I knew I had to complete several heroic deeds: to teach, to publish, to present, and to collaborate, but first I needed what all great heroes require, a knowledgeable and capable guide and protector as well as a team of mentors. I needed the Obi-wan to my Luke and the knights to sit at the round table. The chair selection allowed me to consider my strengths as a learner and teacher. I had to honestly admit I needed a guide that would provide consistent, timely and firm feedback as well as unwavering advocacy, and the fear of a firm kick in the rear down the road lest I become tempted by the sirens' song. After undertaking and succeeding in the synthesis necessary for CI 702, and occasionally resenting the meticulousness of the instructor's feedback, I knew the best choice of a relentless guide and advocate was Dr. Calvin Meyer. The

support team came together with relative ease. While completing course work and considering dissertation topics, the feats necessary for portfolio defense lay ahead.

Act III: Course Development, Presentation, and Instruction

I worked with selected doctoral students to complete a module for the Regional Center for Distance Education and Professional Development's Online Professional Development Component. This curriculum development was the first test of my ability to synthesize the lessons learned in prior curriculum courses. The module was also an opportunity to further explore the use of technology for effective curriculum implementation. In this course development I combined techniques, theories, and models learned in curriculum and adult education courses to provide meaningful activities for working adults.

While a minor feat in terms of those to come, it was an important step in autonomous course construction and collaboration within the context of a broader development team. I worked on the module alone, while the group collaborated in module format. We each worked alone to establish a component of a larger whole, effectively writing our own chapters to a comprehensive work. In working this way I was reminded of how educators often work alone in institutions, while ideally working towards the larger goals outlined in the story of the curriculum.

I again gravitated towards questions of character and the continuation of the curriculum outside of the classroom into the community. The work and investigation completed in the research courses guided my selection and development of a module titled, *Using Project Based Learning to Increase Civic Engagement and Awareness*

(Appendix C). At the same time the lessons in authentic learning and constructivist teaching methods garnered in the curriculum courses steered the development of module assignments. I was able to simultaneously reflect on prior courses and look beyond this section of the journey into curriculum as the merging of the academic world and larger society. Keeping the goal of meaningful adult learning at the forefront, the activities I developed were not trite exercises meant to highlight superficial knowledge acquisition, but thoughtful and reflective activities designed to encourage student knowledge construction and critical thinking.

The goal of this module was not to amputate the learning process at the end of the course but rather to continue this learning into the adults' lives. Education cannot stop at the school door or take summers off. As I grew as a scholar and increased my understanding of the research surrounding the field of education, I became convinced of the need for ongoing engagement in both academic and character education in the students, teachers, and community. I understood that the future of my scholarship had to focus on teacher training and on increasing the respect held for teaching as a vocation. I saw that the curriculum story needed to include in the story development that teachers are potential heroes. This could be accomplished by emphasizing the field's intense impact not just academically and economically, but also on social stability.

Edna Thomas, the graduate college's administrative secretary and office sage, sent doctoral participants email notifications of opportunities for presentations and publications around the country and the world. While I dutifully read these treatises, I took no action and remained stubbornly on my singular course. Finally in the summer immediately following CI 702 Edna sent a call for papers and conference participation

for the Hawaii International Conference on Education. I obediently examined the suggested topics and discovered a component of my final paper for CI 701 to be appropriate for the conference's paper session.

With the pressure of a chair and committee, and on the same leap that set me on the odyssey of the doctorate, I discussed the possibility with my chair. I pursued a literature review and discussion titled *Innovative Curriculum: A Case for Interdisciplinary Arts Inclusive Classrooms*, and worked alone to develop, research, and understand the issue (Appendix D). I was not writing and researching for a course, but for myself, an important stride in realizing the drive and dedication necessary for dissertation completion. I was not yet conducting my own research for this paper and presentation. I was employing the critical research skills formed through prior course work to analyze and articulate complex data from a number of sources to support a guiding thesis.

My research drew from multiple sources rich in quantitative data including statistical measures and experimental correlation results. While still far from a confident mathematician, I did feel secure in my interpretation of the data. I put to use the prior course work in statistical methods and research methodology to analyze and reinterpret data for a literature review. The data included multiple functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging Tests (fMRI) that drew strong correlations between the areas of the brain used for complex mathematics and literacy and those engaged during dance, music instruction, and acting. While the data was intriguing and supported my primary stance, it was my ability to read and understand the report that caught me off guard. The breadth of the published studies was staggering, but after the LS 711 research I understood that this was

the magnitude of research necessary for meaningful analysis. The significant correlations drawn between the arts and cognitive development in science and math were significant because the study base was extensive. This new appreciation for, and ability to manipulate, research results was my first scholarly practice in the world of educational research.

Several months later the paper was accepted and a journey of developing scholarship and research transitioned into a true odyssey across country. Excited for the opportunity and the trip, it was only on the plane that I realized I would be presenting my findings before an audience of tested scholars. The revelation of this journey came as I presented articulately and confidently, maintained the interests of my audience, and conversed with authority later on a wide range of educational policies and theories. Not only was I recognized as a scholar in the company of other scholars, but I began to recognize myself as one. Where once I listened in silence and allowed my course to be plotted by others, I now joined the conversation confidently and was unafraid to hold my own course bolstered by research and focused attention to scholarship.

The conference had a decidedly multicultural flavor and I rarely found myself in conversation with other teachers exclusively from the United States. On several occasions I was reminded of my final paper for CI 701, a report on the effects of globalization on public secondary education. I used this prior knowledge to inform conversation and question these new colleagues regarding their hopes and fears for the future of education. To my surprise we were all worried about largely the same things: falling math scores, a lack of interest in the sciences, and an increase in academic dishonesty. Concerns about the deterioration of student honesty and a lack of respect for

the institution of education were repeated again and again. While the issues were disturbing, it was interesting to note that these concerns seemed to be without cultural barrier.

This positive experience led to a return to the same conference with Dr. Childress in the following year (Appendix E) using the research developed from LS 703 and LS 711 to complete the well received study and presentation *A Preliminary Investigation of the Impact of a High School Character Education Program on Student Behavior*. While the 2009 presentation developed my skills as a researcher through interpretation and aggregation of data from others' research, the 2010 work employed my own research design.

This paper represented a return to the research project designed and conducted for LS 711. The data was collected and coded to extrapolate patterns and determine meaning. As mentioned previously, this data lacked a robust base, and significant correlations between behaviors and treatments. While the data lacked a hearty base, the research base did provide enough information to suggest further avenues of investigation. This interaction with the data from the inception of a question, the birth of a design, and the cultivation of mature data gave me a sense of ownership and pride in the research outcomes. It also allowed me to further understand the weaknesses in my question and to learn more efficient methods to transition through the process.

While not extensive, these data provided additional ownership of the work and an enhanced appreciation for well designed, reliable, and valid research instruments. While sharing the results in a small but very diverse session, I was reminded that issues of character are common to many cultures. In ensuing conversations my interest in

continued cross-cultural study of character education techniques and common character components was piqued and I marked a territory to revisit for future scholarship and research.

I was troubled by the collaborative aspect of the doctoral requirements. I was comfortable on the journey alone, and also unsure how my expertise in the arts could legitimately enhance another scholar's travels. At the same time I found the collaboration required in course work highly fulfilling, with collaborators bringing unique backgrounds and perspectives. I understood this as a requirement of life and not just of the doctoral program.

Not long after returning from the first Hawaii conference Dr. Meyer suggested that one of his other charges and cohort member, Joycie Wawiye, and I collaborate on a paper for the National Social Science Association, Las Vegas meeting in April of 2009 (Appendix F). Joycie's field was biology and she spoke with authority on matters of science. I was struck by self doubt and wondered what I, as an artist, could add to the research of a scientist. In the end Joycie's expertise in the sciences, specifically her interest in brain based educational research, combined seamlessly with my prior research in cross-curricular arts instruction. Through online communication we were able to quickly develop and submit, *A Brain Based Agenda to Lower Stress and Engage Students Through Arts Inclusive Content* (Appendix G). Through collaborative research on brain based education and theory, Joycie and I connected arts activities to meaningful and research supported cross-curricular classroom management techniques.

While Joycie focused in on brain science, I integrated the arts into this research. We crossed our areas and both stepped out of our comfort zones to collaborate.

Reporting of these arts methods in conjunction with the findings of neuroscientists and brain based education theorists required both Joycie and I to use our prior knowledge and to develop new research techniques to collaborate and combine expertise.

The data was drawn from a single school with a return rate under 50%. While we preferred a more robust base, this was a far better rate than in my previous experience. In the pilot teacher surveys we found that over 70% of those responding agreed that direct confrontation with a student *often to almost always* lead to an escalation of disruptive behaviors. While stress was a major factor in classroom management, of those surveyed only 31% *sometimes to frequently* explicitly taught stress management techniques in their classrooms. A significant number of respondents agreed stretching, breathing and doodling lowered student stress, yet these same teachers did not instill these techniques in class. Through a combination of this data with data drawn from other sources, Joycie and I were able to make a strong case for the use of stress management techniques common in the arts in all classrooms.

This collaboration was a journey in accommodation and a lesson in the give-and-take of cooperative effort that continues with positive results including a second national presentation at the Association of Teacher Educators, Chicago Conference in February of 2010. In Joyce I found a unique, outspoken, and intelligent comrade along the journey. I was also able to examine the higher education experience through a multicultural lens through conversations with Joyce.

While our presentations flowed seamlessly, it was our conversations off stage that developed my understanding of the various challenges and diverse lives each cohort member brought to the table. I was reminded again of the autobiographical curriculum

theory and humbled by its profound impact on individual understanding of the curriculum as well as autobiography's importance as an approach to research and scholarly development. Again I wondered how a common core of character could be instructed amidst such diversity. What do we all value as positive behaviors?

I was gaining confidence in myself as a scholar and presenter with expert knowledge in a field that had much to offer other aspects of academia. I was also becoming increasingly interested in online instruction. In the Spring of 2009, Dr. Meyer gave me the opportunity to teach Middle Childhood Curriculum (CI 501) in the Blackboard environment. This was a course regularly taught by Dr. Meyer and one I completed while pursuing the Masters at Marshall. I remembered it as both extremely difficult and eye-opening, not unlike CI 702 and 703.

While I endeavored to do justice to Dr. Meyer's technique, I found the sheer scope of course instruction near overwhelming with my teaching duties and doctoral course work. This was when I came to appreciate my growth from graduate student to doctoral student. Only a few years before I was a student in the very course I now co-taught. Reflecting on that transformation, I saw clearly my growth as a curriculum analyst and growing expert in my field. I also understood that what separated me from those who taught my courses were experience and the tenacity to continue. In some corner of my mind I held the belief that those in the professor positions had unique gifts of intellect that precluded my attainment of the title. While teaching CI 501, I realized that only I could prohibit myself from ending this epic. I was also able to put constructivist methods to work in the online environment by allowing students to bring their expertise to the table as well as revise toward mastery. As a lifelong learner I could

appreciate the tremendous outcome. Through teaching I learned my weaknesses as an instructor.

I was unafraid to be constructively critical of my high school students but I was initially timid in my critiques of adult students. The opening student biographies for the course revealed that many of the students had children nearly my age or older. Several also revealed their years of teaching experience, and I found many had been teaching when I was in middle school. The autonomy of the online environment became genuinely important to me as I wondered how these seasoned educators could possibly take instruction from a teacher who could easily have been in their classrooms.

After a moment in the role of brooding protagonist, I realized I had areas of expertise these teachers did not. My focused doctoral work with its attention to detail and intense reading allowed me to make quick sense of research materials and complex curricular ideas that the adult students found difficult to articulate. After months of focus on curriculum theories and correct paper formatting I was able to answer questions and respond to discussions without referring to texts for assistance. Through a professional tone, clear communication, consistent feedback, and clear objectives I found that I was able to function as a respected leader in the online environment.

As I write my reflection paper I am working with Dr. Bobbi Nicholson and other doctoral students to analyze data using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Fellow researchers and I collected data regarding the use of an educational software system. After data collection, I took the control group and my partner took the treatment group; then we systematically coded the data in Excel. We transferred the data into SPSS to analyze the various relationships for significance. Through statistical

analysis our group hopes to discover that the software system will increase student achievement. Through the knowledge gained on the road of course work I am confident in the data analysis and find enjoyment in playing with the data to search for relationships.

During each of these opportunities to travel alone and with valued companions I grew in my understanding of the broadness of curriculum and the tremendous responsibility of educators. Each step on this journey brought new insights and new questions.

Epilogue

The study of curriculum and its theoretical and methodological basis in education provided an map for my endeavors as a doctoral candidate and in my development as a researcher and scholar. I refined my understanding and appreciation for reliable and valid instrumentation through each research interaction. I discovered how to design these instruments to gauge the effectiveness of curriculum development and delivery. Along the journey I was able to personalize the course material to guide my current research, classroom practice, and to establish areas of interest for future scholarship. The scholarly activities, including research, writing, presentation and teaching, have further developed my expertise in the field and humbled me with the knowledge of how much more I have to learn. The program is a voyage of both academic and self discovery through work in research methodology, scholarship and curriculum practice that reminds this traveler that the road does not end.

The journey changed me in the focus and confidence of my interactions with colleagues, and in the manner in which I lead a classroom. I put the research methods I learned in courses and through scholarly work to practice in the classroom as I use both qualitative observations and quantitative assessments to guide the modification of my curriculum and delivery. My observations of student and instructor interactions are more acute and use of quantitative measures meaningful in curriculum development, modification, and student assistance.

Journals and research materials enhance my understanding through analysis of study results and comparisons to similar research. The contrasting data act to inform further research and to support and guide change in education. I see the need for, and my place in, future empirical data collection: to inform the field of curriculum design and development, teacher education, and to make strides in creating effective changes in public education.

While I began the journey with little direction in mind, and no concept of a researchable dissertation question, I am now full of questions. I also have a solid notion of how to answer these questions, and how to examine the data. It is through mistakes that we learn and through weak research designs and poorly articulated questions that I have grown to understand the simplicity and focus necessary for robust research. The knowledge necessary to design research projects and the commitment to develop and analyze the resulting data is within my ability. In addition to this confidence in my ability as a researcher, I want to develop these findings into meaningful information to inform and improve the development and implementation of curriculum.

My developing interest in the question of character education as it functions in the public school has not abated. This interest is enhanced by multicultural experience and study. In a pluralistic society that is only becoming more diverse, finding a common ground of definable and teachable character universals is important for social stability. Even with these defined, determining best practices of delivery and ensuring that these attributes are effectively imparted is necessary for the program's continuation.

How does the school system assess the effectiveness of character programs? How do teachers ensure that students are internalizing the lessons and not simply behaving as expected when convenient? When we teach character whose definition of character do we teach? When considering the global economy and the need for students from rural West Virginia to coexist in the diverse world, I wonder how the programs currently in place in rural West Virginia schools teach appreciation for the diverse aspects of characters throughout the world. Are the students taught to tolerate others or to appreciate cultural difference?

As an arts teacher my thoughts shift from character and culture to focus on cross curricular connections. Are arts teachers in West Virginia using their potentially powerful influence to implicitly instruct core content within the arts courses? The research I have read on this subject suggest strongly that implicit cross curricular connections are powerful student motivators, and have a significant positive influence on material retention. While I know that West Virginia arts teacher are encouraged to teach across the curriculum and core teachers are encouraged to integrate the arts, I am not convinced that this is thoroughly implemented.

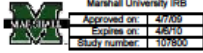
With these interests in mind I believe I am ready to work with my chair and committee on original research and to streamline a singular dissertation topic. The courses have prepared me to face the work ahead with confidence, and a solid knowledge base. I am certain that I have the commitment to develop a complete and thorough question, to finalize the research, and to perform the analysis necessary to realize the completion of this part of the journey. While the road is indeed long and winding I have the confidence to journey where I must alone, the knowledge to plot a course, and the skill to analyze the navigational charts. More importantly I have the wisdom to know I need and value companions on the journey.

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Appendices

Appendix A: IRB and Kanawha County Approval Letters



Anonymous Online Survey Consent

You are invited to participate in a research project entitled “What effect, if any, do Capital high school teachers perceive school initiate character education programs have on student behavior?” to determine Capital high staffs’ perceptions of previous Capital high school initiated character education lessons (CHS SICEL). As part of this analysis the survey will determine when teachers last administered a CHS SICEL, how teachers were trained to administer the CHS SICEL, to what portion of the student body the CHS SICEL was administered, and in what environment the CHS SICEL was administered. The survey seeks to determine the perceived benefits of the CHS SICEL as well as the CHS SICEL strengths and weaknesses as perceived by the staff. The study is being conducted by Dr. Ronald Childress and Hannah R. Toney from Marshall University and has been approved by the Marshall University Institutional Review Board (IRB). This research is being conducted as part of the class requirements for Hannah R. Toney

This survey is comprised of a series of closed-ended questions and a final comment area administered via the Zoomerang online survey tool. Your replies will be anonymous, so do not type your name anywhere on the form. There are no known risks involved with this study. Participation is completely voluntary and there will be no penalty or loss of benefits if you choose to not participate in this research study or to withdraw. If you choose not to participate you may either return the blank survey or you may discard it. You may choose to not answer any question by simply leaving it blank. Once you complete the survey you can delete your browsing history for added confidentiality. Completing the on-line survey indicates your consent for use of the answers you supply. If you have any questions about the study or in the event of a research related injury, you may contact Dr. Ronald Childress at 304-746-1904 and rchildress@marshall.edu or Hannah R. Toney at 304/389-1185 or hrtoney@gmail.com.

If you have any questions concerning your rights as a research participant you may contact the Marshall University Office of Research Integrity at (304) 696-4303.

By completing this survey and returning it you are also confirming that you are 18 years of age or older.

Please print this page for your records.

If you choose to participate in the study you will find the survey title “What effect, if any, do Capital high school teachers perceive school initiate character education programs have on student behavior?” to follow in an email from Zoomerang.com



April 16, 2009

Ms. Hannah Toney
 RR 4 Box 150Q
 Charleston, WV 25312

Dear Ms. Toney,

Your request to conduct research in Kanawha County Schools studying the effect of Character Education classes has been approved by the central office AD-EDUC committee. If you have any questions regarding your request, please feel free to call 348-7720.

Sincerely,

William E. Mallen, Ed., D. Director,
 Testing & Counseling

Appendix B: Character Education Survey Results
SURVEY WITH TOTAL RESULTS

| | | | | |
|---|---|------------|-----------|--------|
| 1. Indicate your primary position within the school. Mark Only One. | | | | |
| Administrator | 0 | | | |
| Teacher or teacher assistant | 17 | | | |
| Professional support staff (counselor, psychologist, social worker, etc.) | 1 | | | |
| Other staff (custodian, cafeteria aide, bus driver, etc.) | 0 | | | |
| 2. In the above capacity do you supervise a homeroom/homebase? Mark Only One. | | | | |
| YES 13 | NO 5 | | | |
| 3. Within your position how frequently would you estimate you supervise students? Mark one for each statement | | | | |
| Statement | Almost Always | Frequently | Sometimes | Rarely |
| In large group settings (30 or more) | 3 | 1 | 7 | 7 |
| In group settings (10 – 29) | 11 | 2 | 2 | 3 |
| In small group settings (2 – 9) | 3 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| One-on-One | 1 | 3 | 8 | 6 |
| 4. Have you ever administered a Capital high school initiated character education lesson (a lesson required by the school and meant to promote good character in the students)? Mark Only One. | | | | |
| YES Please go to the next pages 6 | NO You have completed the survey 12 | | | |

You will answer the following questions for the MOST RECENT Capital high school initiated character education lesson (CHS SICEL) that you administered.

| | |
|---|---|
| 5. In what manner was the CHS SICEL administered to the students? Please check ALL that apply. | |
| The students watched a video about good character. | 5 |
| We had a school-wide guest speaker. | 4 |

| | |
|--|---------|
| The students had a speaker in class. | 0 |
| The students completed worksheets. | 1 |
| We read from handouts as a class. | 2 |
| The students read from handouts alone. | 1 |
| Student groups enacted role playing activities. | 2 |
| The students watched a live scene or role playing activity. | 2 |
| 6. In what class did you administer the CHS SICEL to the students? Please check all that apply. | |
| Homeroom/Home base | 5 |
| English/Language Arts | 0 |
| Math | 0 |
| Science | 0 |
| Art | 0 |
| History | 0 |
| By grade level | 0 |
| As an entire school | 3 |
| 7. Did you receive any instructions prior to administering the CHS SICEL? Mark Only One. | |
| YES 4 | NO 2 |
| 8. How long prior to administering the CHS SICEL did you receive instructions? Please mark only one. | |
| That Day | 0 |
| Less than a week before the CHS SICEL | 3 |
| Over a week before the CHS SICEL | 1 |
| 9. In what manner did you receive the instructions regarding administering the CHS SICEL? Please mark all that apply. | |
| During a full faculty meeting | 1 |
| Through paper materials | 4 |
| Through a video | 1 |
| By information placed in my box | 4 |
| During departmental meetings | 0 |
| Over the announcement system | 3 |
| 10. To what grade level(s) did YOU administer the CHS SICEL? Mark all that apply. | |
| 9 th Grade | 3 |
| 10 th Grade | 3 |

| | | | | | |
|--|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| 11 th Grade | 1 | | | | |
| 12 th Grade | 2 | | | | |
| <p>11. The following question will help to determine how you perceived the students' typically reacted to the CHS SICEL. Please mark one answer for each statement.</p> | | | | | |
| During the CHS SICEL students appeared to be... | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
| Attentive | 1 | 0 | 1 | 4 | 0 |
| Distracted | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| Discussing the CHS SICEL | 1 | 0 | 1 | 4 | 0 |
| Discussing something other than the CHS SICEL | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Doing work for another class | 2 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Embarrassed by the CHS SICEL | 2 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Talking to friends | 0 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| Writing | 0 | 4 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Reading | 0 | 4 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Drawing | 1 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| <p>12. The following section will help to determine the CHS SICEL's weaknesses and strengths as perceived by the staff. Please mark one answer for each statement.</p> | | | | | |
| Statement | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
| I felt well prepared to administer the lesson. | 0 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 0 |
| The lesson content was appropriate. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 0 |
| Statement | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
| The students responded positively to the material. | 0 | 0 | 2 | 4 | 0 |
| The lessons were fun. | 0 | 1 | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| The material was out-of-date. | 1 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| I was not given enough time to prepare for the lesson. | 0 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 0 |
| The students understood what was expected of them in the lesson. | 0 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 1 |
| I understood what was expected of me in the lesson. | 0 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 1 |
| <p>13. The following section will help to determine if the staff perceived any differences in student behavior after administering the CHS SICEL.</p> | | | | | |
| After the CHS SICEL the students were more... | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
| ... on task | 0 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 0 |
| ... courteous to one another. | 0 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 0 |

| | | | | | |
|---|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| ... courteous to staff. | 0 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 0 |
| ... angry. | 2 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| ... likely to fight one another. | 1 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| ... likely to argue with staff. | 1 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| <i>14.</i> The following section will help to determine how staff feels the CHS SICEL could be improved. Please mark one answer for each statement. | | | | | |
| Statement | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
| More preparation for staff | 0 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 2 |
| Material that is more relevant to the students | 2 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| The student groupings should be smaller | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| It should be administered on computers | 1 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| It should be administered more frequently | 0 | 2 | 0 | 4 | 0 |
| It should be developed by the staff. | 0 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 0 |
| <i>15.</i> Please list other comments, concerns, or suggestions you feel are pertinent in examining CHS SICEL's effects on student behavior. | | | | | |
| 0 | | | | | |

Appendix C: Regional Center for Distance Education and Professional Development Module Design

Using Project Based Learning to Increase Civic Engagement and Awareness

| [Introduction](#) | [Objectives](#) | [Resources](#) | [Activities](#) | [Basic Lesson Plan Template](#) | [Rubrics](#)

Introduction

What is project based learning? What constitutes civic engagement? How can project based learning facilitated civic awareness and involvement in students? This lesson provides participants the opportunity to define project based learning and civic engagement and then to develop a relevant lesson to develop these areas using web resources for research and examples.

Objectives

1. Participants will be able to define and identify project based learning and civic engagement and awareness.
2. Participants will be able to develop a lesson relevant to their working conditions that is both project based and encourages and facilitates civic engagement in students.
3. Participants will be able to reflect on the perceived advantages and disadvantages of this type of lesson.

Reading and Resources

As starting points in defining Project Based Learning visit:

- [Edutopia](#)
- [Project Base Learning Home Page](#)
- [Project Base Learning \(PBL\)](#)
- [Project Base Learning for Teachers](#)

As starting points in defining Civic Engagement and Awareness visit:

- [A Cross National Analysis of Political and Civic Involvement among Adolescents](#)
- [Civic Involvement Projects](#)
- [Civic Engagement and Service Learning](#)
- [The Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning and Engagement](#)
- [Edutopia: First-Class Citizens](#)
- [Learning Project Promotes Civic Involvement](#)

Activities

Please be sure to review the rubric below before completing and submitting these activities.

1. After reviewing the sources above as well as performing searches and investigation on your own, develop a comprehensive, one sentence definition of what constitutes project based civic engagement in education. Post your definition to the **Project Based Civic Engagement in Education Discussion** (accessible in the table of contents to the left).
2. Use this definition as well as the definitions of your peers and additional research to develop a basic lesson plan that facilitates project based civic engagement in education by using the following basic lesson plan template. Post your lesson to the **Project Based Civic Engagement in Education Lesson Dropbox** (accessible in the table of contents to the left).
3. After completion of your lesson and review of at least two of your peers' lessons, reflect on your perceived advantages and disadvantages of this type of lesson. Post your two paragraph reflection to the **Project Based Civic Engagement Reflection** (accessible in the table of contents to the left).

Basic Lesson Plan Template

| Lesson Title |
|---|
| Lesson Participants <i>What grades/ages will be involved in the Lesson?</i> |
| Lesson Prerequisites <i>What do your students need to know before beginning the lesson?</i> |
| Desired Outcomes <i>What do you hope to achieve through this lesson?</i> |
| Required Materials <i>What handouts, books and technologies are necessary for this lesson?</i> |
| Approximate Lesson Duration <i>How long will the lesson take to implement as a whole?</i> |
| Standards to Achieve <i>What state and national standards will this lesson teach?</i> |
| Lesson Sequence and Activities |

| |
|--|
| <p>Sponge</p> <p><i>How will the lesson begin?</i></p> <p>Activities/Formative Assessments</p> <p><i>What activities will help the students sequence through the lesson?</i></p> <p>Closure</p> <p><i>How will the lesson reach closure?</i></p> |
| <p>Lesson Assessments</p> <p><i>How will you know the students reach mastery?</i></p> |

Rubrics

| Rubrics | | |
|--|---|--|
| Section | Credit | No Credit |
| 1. Project Based Civic Engagement in Education discussion | The definition is the work of the individual, is grammatically correct, has no spelling errors and exhibits a thorough understanding or project based civic engagement in education. | The sentence provides little evidence of resource review, is very weak in grammatical structure, and may have spelling issues. OR The sentence is not the work of the individual and borrows heavily from outside sources. |
| 2. Project Based Civic Engagement in Education Lesson | The lesson adequately exhibits an understanding of project based civic engagement in education in lesson objectives, standards, activities, and assessment. The lesson addresses all components of the provided template. | The lesson does not adequately exhibit understanding of project based civic engagement in education. The lesson is missing 2 or more components as provided in the template. The lesson's objectives, standards, activities, and assessment are not realistic or conducive to the project based civic engagement in education. |
| 3. Project Based Civic | The reflection mentions the work of at least two other class | The reflection does not mention the work of other |

| | | |
|-----------------------|---|---|
| Engagement Reflection | participants and shows clear thought and understanding regarding the role of project based civic engagement in education. The reflection is two paragraphs. | class participants and does not exhibit clear thought or understanding regarding the role of project based civic engagement in education. The reflection is not two paragraphs. |
|-----------------------|---|---|

**Appendix D: Hawaii International Conference on Education 2009 Abstract
Hawaii International Conference on Education**

Paper Session

Title: Innovative Curriculum: A Case For Interdisciplinary Arts Inclusive
Classrooms

Author: Hannah R. Toney, MA
Marshall University
College of Education and Human Services

Address: Hannah R. Toney
RR 4 Box 150 Q
Good Dog Rd.
Charleston West Virginia 25312

Email: hrtoney@gmail.com

Abstract: Inclusion of the arts in core academic areas increases motivation and retention in students of all ages and abilities, and the implementation of arts-based strategies across the curriculum fosters the creativity and innovative thinking demanded of the 21st century workforce. A recent, intensive study completed by The Dana Consortium provides quantitative data to support the cognitive benefits of arts education. Through models for interdisciplinary arts inclusion provided by The National Arts Education Association I will demonstrate how the arts can be integrated into any classroom. Additionally, I will illustrate methods employed by schools and districts to successfully include the arts throughout the curriculum.

Appendix F: National Social Science Association Conference Registration



NATIONAL SOCIAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATION

2020 Hills Lake Drive, El Cajon, CA 92020-1018
Association Office: (619) 448-4709 Fax: (619) 258-7636
Email: natsocsci@aol.com Website: www.nssa.us

Executive Director
Jerry Baydo

President
Doug Nilson
Idaho State University

First Vice President
Nena Torrez
Cal State Univ., San Bernardino

Executive Council
Bernard Arenz
Cal State Univ., Fresno

Steve Candee
Lane Community College

Don Luck
Austin Peay State Univ.

Ron Tarallo
California Univ. of PA

Rex Wirth
Central Washington Univ.

**NATIONAL TECHNOLOGY & SOCIAL SCIENCE CONFERENCE
APRIL 5-8, 2009 LAS VEGAS HILTON HOTEL
REGISTRATION RECEIPT**

NAME: Hannah R. Toney
SCHOOL: Marshall University Graduate College
Paid: \$ 280 **Check #:** 1061

SPEAKER INFORMATION

Session Time: Session II-d
Equipment: Internet, Computer, LCD Projector

HOTEL INFORMATION

The NSSA meeting will be held April 5-7, 2009 at the:

Las Vegas Hilton Hotel 702-732-5111
3000 Paradise Road
Las Vegas, Nevada 89109

Hilton Hotel Reservation:

Name: Toney, Hannah



NATIONAL SOCIAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATION

2020 HILLS LAKE DRIVE
EL CAJON CA 92020-1018

PHONE (619) 448-4709 FAX (619) 258-7636
E-MAIL natsocsci@aol.com WEBSITE: http://www.nssa.us

National Technology and Social Science Conference Receipt

April 5-7, 2009 Las Vegas

Received from: *Hannah R. Toney*
Institution: *Marshall University Graduate College*
Amount Paid: \$ 280 Check: # 1061

Appendix G: Collaborative PowerPoint

A Brain Based Agenda to Lower Stress and Engage Students through Arts Inclusive Content

Hannah R. Toney
Joycie R. Wawiye

What is stress and how does it affect our bodies?
Can we control stress?

Stimuli (actual/perceived) → Internal → upsets homeostasis
External → upsets homeostasis

Positive Stress → Motivation

Prolonged stress → "fight or flight"
↓ in higher order thinking
≡ instinct

(Palmer and Dwyer, 1995)

Stress can be grouped into three categories:

1. Physical Stress (heart pounding, headaches, sweaty palms, skin breakout, sleepiness and fatigue)
2. Mental Stress (forgetfulness, lack of coordination, poor judgment, lack of interest, negativity, and lack of coordination)
3. Emotional Stress (moodiness, irritability, lack of enthusiasm, nervousness, hostility, and crying)

Stress manifestations

- Objective responses → restlessness, fidgeting, criticizing, quarrelling, lying, and crying
- Subjective responses → anxiety, anger, hate, depression, fear, and guilt

Triune Brain Theory

Intermediate brain (limbic system) - Emotions

Rational brain (neocortex) - Higher order thinking

Primitive brain (cerebellum) - Instinctive behavior, aggression


The Rational Brain

- The first brain (neocortex brain) = cerebrum
 - Higher order thinking
 - Ability to speak, think, problem solve
 - Ability to perform creative activities

★ Praise and security promotes function at this level

The Emotional Brain


- The second brain(mammalian brain) = the limbic lobe
 - Mild stress activated
 - No higher order thinking
 - Controls our emotions and feelings



★ Learning = rote memorization and experiential


The Self-Preservation Brain

- The Third brain (reptilian brain) = the brain stem
 - Severe or prolonged stress
 - Functions via instinct
 - Stimulated when one feels threatened or in danger
- ★ Criticism and fear promotes stimulation = survival brain
- ★ Function by stimulus and response, no thinking involved



(Caine and Caine, 1990)

Educators, do you know this student?



- Student stress is one of the factors identified as a major cause of a non productive classroom behavior (Gootman, 2007).
- Stressors
 - ↳ little adult support
 - ↳ low socio economic standing
 - ↳ few positive adult influences
- This is survival; this is out-of-control stress.

Adolescent period

- period hormonal changes influence student emotional expressions and control.
- Youth identify with role models and become sensitive to their self image.
- Peer pressure becomes more influential and plays a bigger part in student lives.
- As their bodies change, they ride emotional roller coasters that keep them in constant emotional upheaval (Gootman, 2007).

A STORY OF STUDENT STRESS



The collage includes: a classroom scene with a large 'LIFE' poster on the wall; a handgun; a close-up of a person's face; a male gender symbol (♂) and a female gender symbol (♀); and a small portrait of a young woman.

Giving Control – Stress strategies

- Common strategies
 - controlling breathing
 - controlling mind
 - controlling emotions

“Research over the last couple of decades has shown that people who feel they have no control, no autonomy over the job they do in the work place are likely to get a stress related illness (Discovery Health, 2008).”

Arts Inclusive Strategies

- The Stanislavski Method of acting is based upon the control of body, voice, concentration and emotion.
- Stanislavski believed that tension within the muscles and mind interfere with the actor’s ability to perform efficiently on stage (Wild, 2008).
- Relax the body and mind through controlled breathing and focus.

Activities for Anywhere & Anyone

- Object Focus
- Controlled Breathing & Focused Thought
- The Breakfast Drink

Pilot Teacher Survey

1. Students are more restless during quiet time

| | | |
|---------------|----|------|
| Almost Always | 1 | 3% |
| Often | 8 | 23% |
| Sometimes | 19 | 54% |
| Rarely | 7 | 20% |
| Never | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 35 | 100% |

2. Students are more hyperactive when popular music is played

| | | |
|---------------|----|------|
| Almost Always | 14 | 40% |
| Often | 6 | 17% |
| Sometimes | 12 | 34% |
| Rarely | 2 | 6% |
| Never | 1 | 3% |
| Total | 35 | 100% |

3. Students are more calm when classical music is played

| | | |
|---------------|----|------|
| Almost Always | 11 | 31% |
| Often | 12 | 34% |
| Sometimes | 10 | 29% |
| Rarely | 2 | 6% |
| Never | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 35 | 100% |

4. Disruptive students behavior escalates when openly confronted

| | | |
|---------------|----|------|
| Almost Always | 14 | 40% |
| Often | 12 | 34% |
| Sometimes | 9 | 26% |
| Rarely | 0 | 0% |
| Never | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 35 | 100% |

5. Students concentrate more on interactive lessons

| | | |
|---------------|----|------|
| Almost Always | 8 | 23% |
| Often | 22 | 63% |
| Sometimes | 5 | 14% |
| Rarely | 0 | 0% |
| Never | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 35 | 100% |

6. It is easier to deal with disruptive student a one on one

| | | |
|---------------|----|------|
| Almost Always | 19 | 54% |
| Often | 11 | 31% |
| Sometimes | 5 | 14% |
| Rarely | 0 | 0% |
| Never | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 35 | 100% |

7. I give my students plenty of time to complete assignments

| | | |
|---------------|----|------|
| Almost Always | 28 | 80% |
| Often | 7 | 20% |
| Sometimes | 0 | 0% |
| Rarely | 0 | 0% |
| Never | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 35 | 100% |

8. I use exercises to help my students deal with stress

| | | |
|---------------|----|------|
| Almost Always | 1 | 3% |
| Often | 5 | 14% |
| Sometimes | 5 | 14% |
| Rarely | 13 | 37% |
| Never | 11 | 31% |
| Total | 35 | 100% |

9. I answer all student questions and help them understand lessons

| | | |
|---------------|----|------|
| Almost Always | 23 | 66% |
| Often | 9 | 26% |
| Sometimes | 3 | 9% |
| Rarely | 0 | 0% |
| Never | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 35 | 100% |

10. I play music in class

| | | |
|---------------|----|------|
| Almost Always | 1 | 3% |
| Often | 5 | 14% |
| Sometimes | 7 | 20% |
| Rarely | 13 | 37% |
| Never | 9 | 26% |
| Total | 35 | 100% |

11. I encourage discussion about the lesson in class

| | | |
|---------------|----|------|
| Almost Always | 19 | 54% |
| Often | 14 | 40% |
| Sometimes | 1 | 3% |
| Rarely | 1 | 3% |
| Never | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 35 | 100% |

12. I use group work in class

| | | |
|---------------|----|------|
| Almost Always | 3 | 9% |
| Often | 18 | 51% |
| Sometimes | 12 | 34% |
| Rarely | 2 | 6% |
| Never | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 35 | 100% |

13. I feel stressed-out in class

| | | |
|---------------|----|------|
| Almost Always | 1 | 3% |
| Often | 3 | 9% |
| Sometimes | 19 | 54% |
| Rarely | 12 | 34% |
| Never | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 35 | 100% |

14. I feel comfortable in class

| | | |
|---------------|----|------|
| Almost Always | 17 | 49% |
| Often | 12 | 34% |
| Sometimes | 5 | 14% |
| Rarely | 1 | 3% |
| Never | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 35 | 100% |

15. I feel in control in my class.

| | | |
|---------------|----|------|
| Almost Always | 28 | 80% |
| Often | 5 | 14% |
| Sometimes | 2 | 6% |
| Rarely | 0 | 0% |
| Never | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 35 | 100% |

16. I feel out of control in my class.

| | | |
|---------------|----|------|
| Almost Always | 0 | 0% |
| Often | 0 | 0% |
| Sometimes | 5 | 14% |
| Rarely | 17 | 49% |
| Never | 13 | 37% |
| Total | 35 | 100% |

17. Deep breathing relaxation lowers student stress

| | | |
|------------|----|------|
| Yes | 20 | 61% |
| No | 0 | 0% |
| Don't know | 13 | 39% |
| Total | 33 | 100% |

18. Playing classical music during tests lowers student stress

| | | |
|------------|----|------|
| Yes | 12 | 34% |
| No | 1 | 3% |
| Don't Know | 22 | 63% |
| Total | 35 | 100% |

19. Doing stretching activities lowers student stress.

| | | |
|------------|----|------|
| Yes | 22 | 67% |
| No | 2 | 6% |
| Don't Know | 9 | 27% |
| Total | 33 | 100% |

| | | | |
|--|----|--|------|
| 20. Drawing pictures or doodling on paper lowers student stress. | | | |
| Yes | 23 | | 66% |
| No | 1 | | 3% |
| Don't Know | 11 | | 31% |
| Total | 35 | | 100% |

| | | | |
|---|----|--|------|
| 21. Counting backwards from 10 lowers student stress. | | | |
| Yes | 15 | | 47% |
| No | 1 | | 3% |
| Don't Know | 16 | | 50% |
| Total | 32 | | 100% |

| | | | |
|---|----|--|------|
| 22. Playing a musical instrument lowers student stress. | | | |
| Yes | 13 | | 37% |
| No | 0 | | 0% |
| Don't Know | 22 | | 63% |
| Total | 35 | | 100% |

| | | |
|---|----|-----|
| 23. I feel these are the least stressful classes... | | |
| Math | 1 | 3% |
| Photography | 28 | 85% |
| English | 2 | 6% |
| Science | 0 | 0% |
| Chorus | 21 | 64% |
| Computers | 13 | 39% |
| Strings | 10 | 30% |
| Band | 15 | 45% |
| Video Production | 11 | 33% |
| Acting | 15 | 45% |
| Guitar | 13 | 39% |
| Visual Art | 20 | 61% |
| Industrial Arts | 10 | 30% |
| Child Development | 10 | 30% |

| | | |
|--|----|-----|
| 24. I feel these are the most stressful classes... | | |
| Math | 31 | 94% |
| Photography | 0 | 0% |
| English | 17 | 52% |
| Science | 26 | 79% |
| Chorus | 1 | 3% |
| Computers | 6 | 18% |
| Strings | 3 | 9% |
| Band | 2 | 6% |
| Video Production | 4 | 12% |
| Acting | 5 | 15% |
| Guitar | 0 | 0% |
| Visual Art | 0 | 0% |
| Industrial Arts | 2 | 6% |
| Child Development | 4 | 12% |

Conclusion

The arts allow the learner to become engaged with the material in addition to forcing adaptation while allowing for "an element of play" that permits more fearless engagement.

(Webb, 2007)

Synchronous activities such as marching, chanting and dancing – learned control - foster a sense of community among activity participants.

(Heath, Wiltermuth, 2009)

When explicitly applied in stressful circumstances
artistic strategies may
provide significant stress reduction.

Further investigation is needed.

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