The Art of Teaching—the Craft of Learning

What do we do as university instructors to encourage our students to acquire and apply knowledge as life-long learners? How do we tackle the various challenges we encounter when attempting to facilitate this kind of development? Four faculty members from the Department of Modern Languages organized a panel for the 2013 Midwest Modern Language Association conference and presented papers which address these and similar issues in unique and creative ways. Together they explored how the responsibility of learning can be transferred to the student (the craft of learning), while the teacher adopts the role of facilitator (the art of teaching). This poster presentation summarizes the results.

Dr. Leece Poulton (French): "The Art of Survival: General Education and the French Major"

**Challenge:** With the increasing demand for “practical” languages such as Spanish, how do we get students interested enough in languages such as French so that they enroll in that first French course? How do small programs such as French and German survive?

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Dr. Jorge Aguilar-Sánchez (Spanish): "The Craft of Writing in the 21st Century Language Classroom"

**Challenge:** How do we address deficits in student learning that are directly related to the implementation of nationwide policies such as “No Child Left Behind”? What effects do these policies have on teachers and how can we better prepare future teachers?

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Dr. Shelley Hay (German): "Vampires, Muggles, and Hobbits: German Thinkers and Pop Culture"

**Challenge:** How do we encourage students to make connections between classroom knowledge/skills and the world beyond the university? How can we use what they already know to understand difficult theories? How can we help students become better readers, writers, and critical thinkers?

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Dr. Darlene Lake (Spanish): "Service Learning and Online Education"

**Challenge:** How can we help students develop higher-level critical thinking skills? How do we encourage student creativity? How can students become better at constructing knowledge?

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Some past paper topics...
- Harry Potter and Jungian archetypes
- Dexter and Freud's theory of the unconscious
- Harry Potter and the Occupy Movement
- Schopenhauer and Pop Music
- Kant, space and time, and the vampires in the Twilight series
- The REAL PROCESS APPROACH

- WRITING is a conversation
- FEEDBACK needs to have a real purpose for the writer
- READING must be a must
- EMPOWER the writer
- PROOFREAD is not the end
- ANALYSIS must be performed
- MANUSCRIPT are written in third person
- MENTORING is providing feedback
- SERVICE Learning is co-operating in a greater good

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Service learning is community service in a national or international context, together with academic work and deep reflection about the experience. It is often called “service pedagogy” or “service learning” because students put to use not only skills learned in the past, but also the skills and knowledge they learn are currently at university. One of the most pronounced benefits of service learning is that it encourages students to ‘construct knowledge’.

Service work gives students that rich context of problems and issues they must solve, because they’re in a real-life setting and drawing on past experience while putting into practice new knowledge. Pedagogically this best practices in education tell us that human beings construct knowledge by “making decisions while learning the facts” (Bain, 2004). In a service learning situation, students must not only apply information they have already learned, but also apply information they are currently learning, and make decisions about how to apply it.

- When students are invested in the subject and engaged, they will ask more thoughtful questions, thus establishing a more solid base for learning (Bain 31). Engagement in community service compels students to ask questions, find answers, to see the relevance of their academic coursework in real life, and to see that what they learn in the classroom can help them answer complex questions and solve problems away from it.
- Caring enough to be able to form ideas or reach a goal (in other word, motivation) helps students construct knowledge. Courses that include service learning in the curriculum have habitually reported high levels of student interest for engagement and cooperation, and "[this] level of interest has been noted to be increased substantially when service learning was coupled with problem/project-based learning (Bresee)

- Service Learning promotes social interaction, and social interaction helps engage students in the learning process. People are motivated by working with others, as well as "verbal reinforcement and positive feedback" (Castle, 113). In a service learning environment, students work with community partners who can range from small children to elderly adults. Every member of the team has an integral role.

The term “C-service” or “Service learning” typically refers to a pedagogy that combines community service with related academic coursework. Service learning provides necessary skills for students in different disciplines or who work, encourages deeper discussions than students might have in person, allows students in different geographic areas to participate, promotes active learning by the student, and diversifies the curriculum.

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