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New Technologies: Implications for Higher Education's Democratic Mission



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About Diversity & Democracy

Diversity & Democracy supports higher education faculty and leaders as they design and implement programs that advance civic learning and democratic engagement, global learning, and engagement with diversity to prepare students for socially responsible action in today's interdependent but unequal world. The publication features evidence, research, and exemplary practices to assist practitioners in creating learning opportunities that realize this vision.

FROM THE EDITOR

New Technologies: Implications for Higher Education's Democratic Mission

It's tempting, when contemplating new technologies, to imagine a world dramatically transformed. Over the years, many writers and commentators have done just this, crafting technologically advanced utopias and dystopias that have taken hold in the cultural imagination. But the most durable of these visions arguably fall into the realm of science fiction rather than straightforward prognostication. As 3Com founder Robert Metcalfe learned after forecasting in 1995 that the Internet would collapse in 1996 (Pogue 2012), predicting the future is a practice rife with peril.

Nonetheless, it's undeniable that new digital technologies are changing much about the world, and higher education with it. Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) may be the most prominent recent example, but technological change in other areas—instructional technology, data collection and tracking, and communications technology, to name only a few—is also having significant effects on teaching and learning as well as on student outcomes.

Without making specific predictions about particular technologies, this issue of *Diversity & Democracy* probes how recent technology-driven trends may affect the future of higher education's civic commitments and equity goals, and how these trends already are affecting pedagogy and educational equity. With special attention to the implications of new technologies for higher education's mission of contributing to a vibrant democracy, this issue invites readers to reflect on how technological change in an array of areas is affecting higher education's work to educate all students for participation in the linked spheres of civic and economic life.

This issue's framing topic implies a series of questions. If technological change is inevitable, how can educators direct that change to ensure that it improves instead of degrades student learning, particularly in areas like civic engagement that have traditionally relied on face-to-face rather than digital exchange? What risks do the uses of digital technologies incur, whether related to student learning about complex topics like diverse perspectives or, most critically, to equitable educational outcomes among diverse students? How can technology facilitate students' global and civic learning, and what logistical challenges do faculty members face in crafting new engaged learning opportunities using digital technology?

A single issue of a publication like *Diversity & Democracy* can only begin to explore a select few of these questions. But it can nonetheless help to advance the conversation about such timely and pertinent topics. *Diversity & Democracy's* editorial team hopes that this issue accomplishes that goal.

With MOOCs making headlines across and beyond higher education, the issue opens with articles examining the effect that MOOCs and related technologies might have on colleges and universities. David Scobey distills key questions about the relationship between the rising use of educational technologies and higher education's current "Copernican moment." Shanna Smith Jaggers summarizes research findings about the impact of MOOCs on educational equity. And Dan Butin, positing that change is inevitable, presses educators to keep today's civic priorities at the fore when creating tomorrow's classrooms, whatever they may look like.

Complementing these articles are case studies illustrating how colleges and universities around the country are currently using technologies to promising ends. Contributing authors describe using e-portfolios to support transfer student success, digital storytelling to build professional competencies, and digital communications to bring students together across counties, countries, and hemispheres. They describe video games that prepare students for civic engagement and data collection efforts that keep students on track to their degrees. And they note how technology can both reduce the distance between teachers and learners and widen the gap between well-resourced, tenure-track faculty and their marginalized contingent peers.

Grounded in the present, this issue's contents are oriented toward, but not predictive of, the future. Without, on the whole, engaging in the risky business of divining what's next, the issue's authors put forth practices that support higher education's mission of building an as-yet-unimagined democratic future. They urge faculty and administrators to use new technologies to support an enduring mission: helping all students acquire the knowledge, skills, and capacities they need to contribute to civic life in a diverse and globally interconnected world.

—KATHRYN PELTIER CAMPBELL,
editor of *Diversity & Democracy*

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[NEW TECHNOLOGIES]

Technology, Education, Democracy: Elements of an Emerging Paradigm

■ DAVID SCOBEY, executive dean of The New School for Public Engagement

What are the implications of new technologies for higher education's democratic mission?

It is a dizzyingly good question. Readers of *Diversity & Democracy* know well the complex issues entailed in the academy's commitment to education for democratic citizenship. What civic capacities do we want our students to attain? What practices best support engaged learning? How should academic institutions pursue their own community and civic responsibilities, in teaching and research, internal governance and external relationships? Technological change cuts across all these questions, holding contradictory implications, at once promising and challenging, for both academic and democratic practice. How do we map these implications?

I suggest that we start by thinking historically, by considering why this question has been posed just *now*. Everyone knows that we are living through a time of heightened crisis in higher education: the culmination of twenty years of change in which the economic model of college education and public faith in its value have eroded. What is less well known (or too often forgotten) is that this has also been a time of heightened creativity within the academy, the culmination of twenty years of development of high-impact practices and novel models of educational delivery. I have taken to calling our current situation, with its mix of change, crisis, and creativity, a "Copernican moment"; for it seems to me not unlike the moment of confusion and pause in which the great Polish astronomer observed the

breakdown of the older Ptolemaic system without yet being able to discern the emerging, heliocentric paradigm (Scobey 2012, 45–6).

New technologies are of course at the heart of this story: new platforms for teaching, advising, and course delivery; new pedagogies that use digital tools to flip classrooms or create online learning communities; the growing use of data analytics to shape student behavior and monitor progress. Such technological change has been, if anything, *overstressed* as the sole driver of "disruptive innovation" in the academy (Christensen et al. 2011, 2–3). By contrast, I would argue, current debates have tended to *underestimate* the role of civic engagement as a response to educational crisis and an agent of change. Yet both factors are at play, and at stake, in the Copernican moment, and they are deeply intertwined.

The Crisis: A Cook's Tour

Public commentary on the crisis in higher education has largely focused on three themes. First, it is stressed, the academy's business model is broken; unsustainable tuition hikes and unsupportable debt levels have pushed students to seek low-cost or more convenient alternatives to traditional place-based higher education, such as credential-stacking and online degree programs. Concomitantly, there has been a stark decline in degree completion (most of all, in public and for-profit institutions most accessible to less affluent students). And finally, students who *do* attain their degrees face uncertain economic prospects and a job market for which, it is argued, college has poorly

prepared them.

There is truth to all three critiques, especially the first two. (The notion that liberal education prepares undergraduates poorly for the current economy has been persuasively challenged by the Association of American Colleges and Universities and others; see, for example, Humphreys and Kelly 2014.) Cost and completion are corrosive problems—but they only represent part of the turmoil of the Copernican moment. Indeed, in focusing exclusively on them, we actually *lowball* the challenges facing higher education. For what has eroded is not simply our business model, but also an educational model—a set of assumptions about students and college going—that Americans have taken for granted for decades.

Today only a quarter of US undergraduates fit the traditional image of the recent high school graduate attending a four-year campus on a full-time basis (Greater Expectations National Panel 2002, 2). (That is the same proportion—astonishingly—as undergraduates who are *parents*.) Four in ten undergraduates attend community colleges; over one-third are age twenty-five or older; almost half are enrolled part-time; and nearly one-third work full-time (Center for Postsecondary and Economic Success 2011). Students with some mix of these characteristics—the "new majority" of undergraduates—are not "going away" to college. They fit school into complex lives filled with work, family, and community; they often delay or reduce their studies when the pressures of life, tuition, and debt prove too great. A large majority of those who *do* graduate (whether nontraditional or traditional students) garner credits from multiple institutions (Greater Expectations National Panel 2002, 2), and a majority of their teachers are non-tenure-track faculty (AFT Higher Education 2009). For many commentators, this "unbundling" of educational experiences is the wave of

the future, an entrepreneurial response to the cost crisis that surely evidences the tactical resilience of students making the best of a bad situation. Yet just as surely, these changes tend to undermine the continuity and sense of community so central to great, engaged learning.

And there is another, more basic crisis beneath the fiscal and demographic challenges: a crisis of legitimacy. For, even in its most market-sensitive forms, higher education remains a public good. We may differ about the nature of that good, about whether universities should be in the business of making leaders or training workers, fostering innovation or furthering tradition. Yet no matter the mission, higher education depends on a social compact that justifies its claims to resources and autonomy by the collective benefit it provides. Over the past twenty years, from the culture wars of the 1990s to current skepticism about the worth of a bachelor's degree, that social compact has frayed. The most ominous symptom is the pervasive disengagement of students themselves, evidenced in credit shopping and stopping out, in rising depression rates (Swaner 2005) and declining time spent on coursework (Arum and Roksa 2011).

It is this crisis of legitimacy—a loss of confidence in the public value of higher education, not merely in its value proposition—that makes our current challenges different from those of a disrupted consumer market. No doubt the academy has much to learn from the successes (and failures) of entrepreneurial innovators like Steve Jobs and Jeff Bezos. Yet however nimbly colleges deploy new learning-management systems or capture new enrollment markets, it will not matter if the public's faith in our enterprise and students' engagement in learning are not also renewed.

Focusing solely on high costs and low completion, then, tends to oversimplify the bad news of the Copernican moment. It also misses the good news. For with

the turmoil has come a period of robust innovation, as educators have responded to the challenges of cost, completion, access, student disengagement, and public disenchantment. Arizona State University and Southern New Hampshire University (SNHU), among other institutions, have pioneered low-cost degree programs that meld competency-based assessment, online learning, and aggressive advising to accelerate degree completion. Among more traditional academics, there has been a remarkable efflorescence of curricular and pedagogical innovation: first-year and capstone experiences, undergraduate research programs and study abroad, interdisciplinary fields like neuroscience and liberal-professional hybrids like community health. Such initiatives compose the lion's share of "high-impact practices" that have proven most effective in fostering student engagement (Kuh 2008).

The growth of the civic engagement movement is one of the most consequential outcomes of this era of innovation. The movement had its symbolic debut with the 2012 publication of *A Crucible Moment*, the national call for democratic engagement commissioned by the US Department of Education (National Task Force on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement). Yet this report culminated a quarter century of experimentation and organizing (much of it documented in the report itself). Some thirty thousand faculty now incorporate community-based work into their formal teaching each year, and hundreds of colleges and universities have offices, centers, and programs that infuse community service, civic engagement, or public scholarship across their curricula, their cocurricula, and their research agendas (Campus Compact 2010). This has been a quiet revolution in educational practice.

All these innovations challenge the oversimplified picture of an academy mired in traditionalism and denial. To

be sure, they are not of one piece. There are as yet few places where innovators in the areas of cost and completion, such as SNHU's College for America, work in tandem with innovators in high-engagement practices, like the Imagining America consortium. Yet taken together, the array of experimental institutions and generative practices composes a kind of scatter diagram of change, like the anomalous points of light that Copernicus observed in the night sky. Out of such innovations, a new paradigm of undergraduate education—affordable as well as exploratory, practical as well as reflective, personalized as well as collaborative—just might emerge.

MOOCs and the Contradictions of Technological Change

And did I neglect to say that technological change is at the heart of this tangle of turmoil and possibility? I have deferred mention of MOOCs and e-portfolios and flipped classrooms for a reason. For once technology is mentioned, it tends to captivate discussions of the future of higher education like a shiny object before a cat. No doubt new technologies are powerful agencies of disruption and reform in the current moment. Yet, as I have tried to illustrate, that moment has many causes and multiple paths forward, and the role of new technologies in it seems to me similarly contradictory and up for grabs. Will new technologies enhance (or obstruct or simply reframe) efforts to lower cost and debt, to improve student persistence and academic success, to deepen liberal learning, to clarify and support students' work aspirations, to prepare them for democratic citizenship?

The answer can only be "all of the above." Various stakeholders are mobilizing diverse platforms and practices in the service of disparate visions of the future. In such a heteroscape, there is no such thing as a technological game changer. There is no single game to

change; the very goals of change are contested; and different tools inflect those goals in uneven, contradictory ways. When the goal in question is civic engagement, the implications of technological change seem to me even more equivocal.

Consider, for instance, the shiniest object in the current conversation: the Massive Open Online Course, or MOOC. Its advocates passionately assert the transformative potential of free (or cheap), mega-scaled, online courses in breaking open class barriers attached to cost, access, and geography. Although the dominant MOOC providers pursue different strategies, they share a fundamental goal: to democratize access to the curriculum by dislodging it from the monopoly control of tuition-charging, degree-granting institutions (Shirky 2012).

MOOC pioneers are the first to admit that results are mixed so far. Their booming enrollments are tempered by dismal completion rates, as illustrated by early studies (see, for example, Jordan 2013). (I am one of the army of noncompleters, having enrolled and browsed in two very disappointing humanities MOOCs on Coursera and a more engaging Introduction to Statistics on Udacity.) It would be unfair to over-read these results; early service-learning courses were surely just as uneven. And MOOC providers have been admirably committed to the investigation, discussion, and improvement of their platforms. Five years from now, they may have gone far to solve the problems—low completion, weak discussion threads, uneven production values—that currently hobble them.

Yet even if these growing pains are resolved—especially so—the MOOC experiment has disquieting implications for a publicly engaged academy. It relies on economic and educational hierarchies at odds with its democratizing aspirations. It is dominated by a small number

of omnibus providers, using a deft marketing strategy that associates low cost with the brand capital of star professors from elite universities. These providers seek not simply to enroll individuals, but to position nonelite institutions as MOOC consumers whose onsite faculty deliver what is in effect an off-the-shelf general education curriculum created by high-end master teachers. This market strategy reinforces status hierarchies that have little to do with assuring educational quality. Indeed, the widespread adoption of MOOCs by fiscally strapped institutions would hollow out a core asset of American higher education: the broad diffusion of vibrant teaching and curricular creativity across all sectors.

Ironically, this class divide between MOOC producers and consumers, intact and unbundled institutions, also reinforces the most hierarchical traditions of academic pedagogy. It enshrines the lecture, with its performative transmission of standardized content, as the rising genre of popular education. It is as if the MOOCs' very real innovations in online delivery, multimedia content, and cost structure required (by some weird law of compensatory change) that we forget everything else the past twenty years have taught us about active and collaborative learning.

This online model, in short, offers a disturbingly partial response to the crises and creativity of the Copernican moment. As a *technological* practice, MOOCs privilege one aspect of the digital revolution (the capacity to deliver information in any medium to any location at low cost) but marginalize others (the capacity to foster iterative collaboration). As an *educational* intervention, they lower costs and raise access, but at the expense of student completion and high-impact learning. As a *civic* intervention, they foreground a model of educational democracy that provides student-consumers with customized instructional experience and personal

advancement—but nothing that teaches student-citizens the skills and values of public work.

Both/And

I am mindful that this account may seem dystopian or simply static. We may find that new providers will “jailbreak” the experiment, challenging Udacity, edX, and Coursera with more pedagogically daring offerings. It may be that MOOCs will serve well as multimedia textbooks for hybrid or flipped classrooms, or that they will play the valuable role of offering unaffiliated learners exploratory gateways to new areas of study. Online learning is nothing if not a moving target.

But that is just the point: we are in a moment in which the direction of technological change and its implications for educational change remain unfinished. The articles in this issue offer a remarkable scan of that moment. They point to a myriad of initiatives in which faculty and institutions are deploying new tools to advance student access, student completion, student community, and engaged learning—and equally important, to connect these goals together. Some of the best experiments use online technologies not to “unbundle” the college experience, but precisely to “re-bundle” it, strengthening the affiliations of underserved and nontraditional learners with learning communities. Similarly, the growth of “flipped classroom” pedagogy repurposes online content as preparatory material in the service of collaborative, place-based classes, not as an alternative to them. A new wave of “Civic Engagement 2.0” practices employs digital storytelling, gaming, video, wikis, and social media to deepen student engagement in public problem solving and public culture making.

Such efforts are striking for an approach to technological and educational innovation that is complex and integrated. They draw on *multiple*

capacities of digital technology (cheap information, multimedia frameworks, translocal connectivity, interactivity, collaborative platforms) to address *multiple* aspects of the educational crisis (cost, access, completion, engagement, democratic community). They tacitly resist the notion of a zero-sum game, central to much current commentary on the “great disruption,” between lowering cost and accelerating student completion on the one hand, and enhancing engaged learning, student community, and civic agency on the other. To take but one example: College Unbound offers a low-cost baccalaureate to low-income students in Providence and New Orleans, drawing on e-portfolios, competency assessment, and individually mentored study plans to meld online, classroom, peer-to-peer, workplace, and community-based learning (College Unbound 2011).

Such programs offer a glimmer of a new, “post-Copernican” paradigm that might holistically connect digital learning communities, campus communities, and students’ own work, civic, and family lives. How do we build on such glimmers of integrative change, navigating the contradictory possibilities of the current moment and the zero-sum thinking of much current debate? How, for instance, might we leverage the extraordinary informational power of the Internet without lapsing into the mass-consumer model of education that bedevils the MOOCs? How do we offer new majority students opportunities for engaged learning that fit their complex and pressured lives? How can we use the data analytics in e-advising and learning-management systems to empower our students—without subjecting them as objects of behavioral “nudging,” scripted pathways, and accelerated throughput? In sum, how do we use technology to navigate the crosscutting challenges of the Copernican moment—fiscal and demographic, economic and civic—without losing sight of the core belief that

the goal of education is to emancipate our students?

On the surface, these seem like questions that call for technological answers. But they are actually questions about the meaning of education as a public good—questions about democracy. How do we honor our commitments to both the democracy of open access to which online learning aspires and the democracy of participatory problem solving to which the civic engagement movement aspires? Do we believe that education for democracy requires students to become “stewards of place” (American Association of State Colleges and Universities 2002), actively immersed in face-to-face communities? Or, conversely, do we believe that digital communities offer the experience of freeing students from the hierarchies and inequalities that structure such face-to-face communities? When we monitor students with digital advising platforms, at what point does our Deweyan care for their flourishing become a Foucauldian act of surveillance?

Even the most specific of these technological issues, then, engages the largest questions of democratic theory and democratic values. And we will not be able to navigate the travails of the current moment, to figure out just what kinds of software to order and which new pedagogies to try, until we have answered them. The crucial question is not, then, the one with which I started: what are the implications of new technologies for the democratic mission of higher education? It is rather just the opposite: what are the implications of our democratic commitments for knowing how best to use the myriad, contending possibilities of new technologies? ☐

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[NEW TECHNOLOGIES]

Democratization of Education for Whom? Online Learning and Educational Equity

■ **SHANNA SMITH JAGGARS**, assistant director of the Community College Research Center at Teachers College, Columbia University

With the advent of Massive Open Online Courses (or MOOCs), it is theoretically possible for anyone with an Internet connection to access course materials from elite universities—a possibility that some commentators have hailed as a “democratization” of education. Of course, MOOCs are very new, and it is not yet clear how they will affect postsecondary access or attainment, particularly among traditionally underserved populations. To provide some perspective on how MOOCs and other online delivery methods might affect educational equity, in this article I examine recent research on online college coursework (that is, courses in which most or all of the learning experience takes place online) and discuss potential implications for postsecondary access and learning.

Online Education and Postsecondary Access

Online coursework is thought to improve postsecondary access by allowing some students to enroll in college who otherwise would be unable to do so, and by allowing enrolled students to take more courses than they otherwise could. Unfortunately, there are no empirical studies that address either of these points directly. However, some indirect evidence suggests that these improvements in access benefit only certain segments of the population.

According to large-scale studies of online learning conducted in two

different community college systems, students who enroll in at least one online course are quite different from those who opt for an entirely face-to-face schedule (Jaggars 2012). As one might expect, students in online courses are older, more likely to have dependents, and more likely to be employed full-time. Yet they are also more advantaged: they are less likely to be ethnic minorities, less likely to be low-income, and less likely to be academically underprepared at college entry. In part, these students’ inclination to enroll in online courses could be rooted in their greater comfort with, and access to, computers and technology. The “digital divide” is still very real in the United States. A recent federal study found that only 55 percent of African American households and 56 percent of Hispanic households (compared with 74 percent of white households and 81 percent of Asian American households) and 58 percent of rural households (compared with 72 percent of urban households) had broadband Internet at home (US Department of Commerce 2013, 26).

Moreover, among community college students who take online courses, most take only one or two per semester, filling the remainder of their schedule with face-to-face courses (Jaggars 2012). In qualitative interviews, Virginia community college students enrolled in online courses—many of whom had children and full-time jobs—explained that one or two online courses per semester allowed them to maintain a full-time

college schedule, which otherwise would be difficult or impossible (Jaggars, forthcoming). Still, very few of these students were interested in taking *all* their courses online. Similarly, a recent Public Agenda (2013) survey of community college students taking online courses found that these students were more likely to want to take *fewer* classes online (41 percent) rather than *more* classes online (20 percent).

When we asked online students why they preferred to take some courses face-to-face, their responses implied that they did not learn the material as well online as they did face-to-face (Jaggars, forthcoming). Similarly, students in the Public Agenda survey were more likely to say that they learned less in an online course (42 percent) than that they learned more (3 percent) (2013). These students’ perceptions may accord with reality.

Student Success in Online Coursework

In 2010, a US Department of Education study synthesized the results of dozens of rigorous studies of online learning and concluded that online courses were just as effective as face-to-face courses in terms of student learning (Means et al. 2010). At the time, however, the research on online learning in college was largely confined to studies of well-prepared students attending selective universities who were enrolled in small online courses identified as particularly worthy of study (Jaggars and Bailey 2010). More recently, researchers have begun to consider the wider landscape of online coursework, and to disaggregate results among different types of students.

In particular, Di Xu and I recently conducted two large-scale studies examining outcomes for tens of thousands of students enrolled in hundreds of thousands of courses at fifty-seven community colleges in Virginia and Washington State. In Virginia,

completion rates in face-to-face courses were 81 percent, while online completion rates were 68 percent; in Washington, the rates of completion were 90 percent for face-to-face versus 82 percent for online (Jaggars 2012). Students who completed an online section also tended to earn lower grades in the course than they would in a face-to-face section. For example, in math courses in Virginia, only 67 percent of online completers earned a C or better, compared to 73 percent of face-to-face completers who did so (Xu and Jaggars 2011). Students who took more online courses were also less likely to successfully graduate or transfer to a four-year school (Jaggars 2012).

Proponents of online learning suggest that the relatively high withdrawal rates and poor grades in online courses are due to the characteristics of the students who take them (see, for example, Howell, Laws, and Lindsay 2004). To test this hypothesis, we conducted analyses comparing courses taken by the *same student*, and found that the typical student performs less well in online courses than in face-to-face courses, even after controlling for course subject and difficulty (Xu and Jaggars, forthcoming). We also speculated that a student might choose online coursework during semesters when her life is more complicated—for example, when she is taking a higher credit load or employed more hours per week. Our investigations revealed that this does happen for some students; but even after taking those life circumstances into account, the negative effects of online learning remain (Xu and Jaggars 2013).

Faced with these findings, we wondered whether some types of students perform even better in online than in face-to-face courses, while others struggle. Looking separately at different types of students (based on ethnicity, gender, age, and previous academic performance) and different academic

subject areas, we found that all subgroups tended to perform worse in online courses (Xu and Jaggars, forthcoming). However, some students—in particular, males, African American students, and students with lower levels of academic preparation—had *much* more difficulty in online courses than they did in face-to-face courses. These results are consistent with smaller-scale studies suggesting that the gap between online and face-to-face outcomes is wider among males, students with financial aid, those with lower prior grade point averages, and Hispanic students (Brown and Liedholm 2002; Coates et al. 2004; Figlio, Rush, and Yin 2013; Kaupp 2012).

Researchers have begun to consider the wider landscape of online coursework, and to disaggregate results among different types of students.

Thus the performance gaps that some demographic groups experience in face-to-face classrooms become even wider in online courses—a troubling finding for those concerned with educational equity.

When we turned to student age, we found more nuanced results (Xu and Jaggars, forthcoming). While both older and younger students performed more poorly in online courses than in face-to-face courses, the decline in performance among older students was not as strong as it was among younger students. As a result, the small performance gap between younger and older students began to flip: within face-to-face courses, older students' dropout rates were 1 percentage point *higher* than those of younger students; however, within online courses, older students' dropout rates were 1 percentage point *lower* than those of younger students. While older students still performed more poorly in online than in

face-to-face courses, for this population a slight decrease in performance may represent a rational trade-off for the ability to enroll in more courses overall. For younger students, however, the academic costs may not be worth the added flexibility—particularly if the student is already struggling academically.

Supporting Diverse Students' Learning and Achievement

In an attempt to understand why community college students tend to perform more poorly online, we conducted a qualitative study of twenty-three online courses in Virginia, interviewing faculty and a sample of

enrolled students. Students told us that they received less instructor guidance, support, and encouragement in their online courses; as a result, they did not learn the material as well (Jaggars, forthcoming).

For highly confident, highly motivated, and high-achieving students, this relative lack of interpersonal connection and support may not be particularly problematic. However, low-income, ethnic minority, or first-generation students—that is, most community college students—are often anxious about their ability to succeed academically, and this anxiety can manifest in counterproductive strategies such as procrastinating, not turning in assignments, or not reaching out to professors for help (see, for example, Cox 2009). An array of studies suggest that instructors' caring, connection, encouragement, and guidance are critical to help alleviate these students' anxiety, build

their academic motivation, and support their success (see, for example, Barnett 2011). Accordingly, one might suspect that in order to support diverse students' learning and achievement, online courses need to incorporate stronger interpersonal connections and instructor guidance than most currently do.

How can instructors integrate such connection and guidance into their online courses? Certainly, it helps to keep online class sizes small. Certain technologies may also help. In our qualitative study, when students discussed the value of technologies such as video- or

and then attend small-enrollment face-to-face class sessions to review and apply material with an instructor. To the extent that these flipped classrooms incorporate strong connections between the instructor and students, they could be as effective as—or even more effective than—traditional face-to-face courses. However, college administrators and practitioners must keep in mind that the content and activities that motivate students at the elite universities for which MOOC materials were initially designed may not motivate students at other colleges (see, for example, Bear 2013).

Community college leaders recognize the importance of instructor connection and encouragement for their students, and thus many are skeptical of the “massive” nature of MOOCs.

audio-taped narrations, they mentioned not only the technologies' intrinsic value in building skills (e.g., by visually walking the student through specific activities), but also the fact that the technologies personalized the instructor, allowing the student to see the instructor's image and hear the instructor's voice (Jaggars and Xu 2013). Perhaps most importantly for students who lack confidence in their academic abilities, instructors in our study who expertly leveraged interactive technology tools did so in ways that made clear that they *cared* about their students.

Community college leaders recognize the importance of instructor connection and encouragement for their students, and thus many are skeptical of the “massive” nature of MOOCs. However, some are experimenting with applying MOOC content within a hybrid or “flipped” classroom model, in which students learn material on their own using an online interface,

Overall, recent research on online education suggests that MOOCs might indeed improve access to college-level learning among technology-savvy working adults who hope to upgrade their skills. We do not yet have evidence, however, that such methods of delivery will improve both *access* and *success* among other traditionally underserved populations. ☐

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[NEW TECHNOLOGIES]

There's No App for Ending Racism: Theorizing the Civic in the Age of Disruption

■ **DAN BUTIN**, associate professor and founding dean of the School of Education and Social Policy at Merrimack College and executive director of the Center for Engaged Democracy

Last year, I finally threw away all my maps. They were in the back of my car, about a dozen of them: fold-outs of the entire United States, spiral-bound pages describing a single county, booklets about individual states and their largest metropolitan areas. I loved using them to figure out where I was and how to get to my destination, but I hadn't touched any of them in years. In the age of GoogleMaps and ubiquitous Wi-Fi coverage, it makes no sense to have such twentieth-century relics in the trunk of my car. My iPhone talks me through next turns, always knows where I am, and gives me up-to-the-moment traffic updates. So while seeing those maps brought back some lovely memories of trips long ago, I threw them out with nary a backward glance. It was a no-brainer.

It's an open question, though, whether or not new digital technologies can, on their own, drastically enhance the democratic mission of higher education by transforming or even replacing the traditional classroom. I am dubious. Don't get me wrong: within the next decade, technological innovation will fundamentally disrupt and in many ways improve how we think about and enact teaching and learning. Massive Open Online Courses (or MOOCs) alone may not effect this disruption; but the undergirding technological components that are bundled within many MOOC platforms—components such as cloud-based and networked computing, automated and “stealth” assessment programs, adaptive and personalized learning tools, and data and learning

analytics—will surely have deep effects on higher education. This is, therefore, a critical moment to articulate how it may be possible to embrace technological disruption for the benefit of place-based civic learning and strengthen the relevance and resonance of higher education.

Technology's Promise

Many see technological advancements as enhancing the vision and mission of higher education as a public good and promoting what the Association of American Colleges and Universities

Arguing either for or against technological innovation and disruption misses the point: technology's promise lies in how we shape it to advance the democratic purposes of higher education.

calls “inclusive excellence” (Board of Directors 2013). These observers imagine that new technologies will make higher education available to a much greater population, including those who have been historically marginalized. They see technology as offering the opportunity to personalize instruction—for anyone, anywhere, anytime—in order to meet diverse learners' needs and conditions. In this scenario, technology—colorblind to the user, unmoved by the accent of the speaker, ever-patient and ever-focused—becomes the gateway to a leveled playing field.

It is difficult, though, to uncritically embrace such a utopian vision. Research is demonstrating ever more clearly that MOOCs, for example, primarily serve an already-privileged population. A recent report from the University of Edinburgh found that over 70 percent of enrollees in the university's six MOOCs already possessed a bachelor's degree (University of Edinburgh 2013). Similarly, studies conducted through the Community College Research Center at Teachers College make clear that online learning in and of itself may exacerbate rather than alleviate achievement gaps for student populations most in need of support (Community College Research Center 2013).

Yet, arguing either for or against technological innovation and disruption misses the point: technology's promise lies in how we shape it to advance the democratic purposes of higher education. I threw away those

maps in my car because my iPhone was so much better than any paper-based product at getting me from point A to point B. As a faculty member, sometimes all I want is to get students from *here* to *there*: I want them to understand key principles, learn core knowledge in a particular field, and follow specific professional protocols. In certain situations, technology is excellent at facilitating this kind of learning. An ever-growing body of research, such as a US Department of Education meta-analysis (Means et al. 2010) and a recent follow-up study from Ithaka S+R (Lack 2013), has shown that,

on average, online or hybrid learning is no “more or less effective than face-to-face learning” (Lack 2013, 18). And as the Open Learning Initiative (<http://oli.cmu.edu/>) at Carnegie Mellon University has shown, highly focused and structured online and blended learning can help students acquire content knowledge in some academic areas much better and faster than traditional coursework.

Technology is really good, and will only become better, at teaching content knowledge and supporting instruction when it is aimed at helping students solve problems that are stable, singular, and solvable. It will do so by “modularizing” information, literally breaking down bodies of knowledge into smaller chunks that can be systematically sequenced, organized, and taught. This is powerful stuff that will transform many segments of higher education. But, to be clear, such technological disruption will not somehow destroy and depersonalize higher education, displacing real professors with digital talking heads and scripted lessons. This is a false dichotomy: technology against humanity, robot-driven cost savings versus “real” face-to-face learning. It is a romanticized idealization of an educational system that never was.

Rather, colleges and universities are far more threatened by other longstanding challenges: the shift to a contingent faculty; the abysmal retention rates at many institutions, especially for students of color and low-income students; and the need for many more students to graduate with higher-order thinking skills. The key issue is thus how we use technology’s strengths to support, rather than displace, the larger vision of higher education as a democratic good. For while some of what we want students to learn can be described in “modularized” terms, much of it cannot. Higher education should be an



Residents of Lawrence, Massachusetts, partner with Merrimack College faculty and students in a neighborhood arts project focused on community empowerment. (Photo by Anna Elzer)

apprenticeship into democracy rather than into Wikipedia.

Technology’s Limits

My iPhone does not, and never will, have an app for ending racism. Or sexism. Or homophobia. Or even an app for becoming a more thoughtful and engaged citizen. That is because such issues are immensely complex and contested within our pluralistic society. They are embedded within culturally saturated, socio-historically delimited, and politically volatile practices and policies that raise questions with no single or agreed-upon answers. And becoming different—in one’s perspectives, values, and ways of being in the world—is, to put it mildly, a circuitous process. Technology may help students travel from point A to point B as they acquire knowledge, but there is no definitive step-by-step framework that allows students to simply and easily become idealized citizens of a just republic. Sure, we educators have our own guidebooks: theories of identity development, powerful community-based practices, and important research on fostering

inclusive campus climates. But these are wonderful exceptions to the rule, and even they cannot claim to lead students to a privileged and final endpoint.

Thus, instead of handing students a prefabricated map to guide them on their civic learning journeys, we involve them in a wide range of civic practices—including service learning, community-based research, participatory action research, and project-based learning—that help them close their textbooks, step outside the campus walls, and begin to engage, explore, and collide with the complexities and consequences of issues such as poverty, race, citizenship, and power. These civic practices embody the hallmarks of a liberal education, exactly because they do not provide predefined and singular instructions for moving from point A to point B. Rather, they provide opportunities for unexpected realizations, the “aha” moments that make us understand that our habituated and “normal” ways of seeing and being in the world may not be so “normal” after all.

This is what Wittgenstein was referring to when he noted that the limits of

our language are the limits of our world (1922). In this sense, higher education is about expanding our facility with distinct and different language games or worldviews. It provides what Dewey described as a “forked-road situation” that fosters true thinking as it forces us to hesitate and confront a “situation which is ambiguous, which presents a dilemma, which proposes alternatives” and makes us pause in order to clarify for ourselves the path we take and why we take it (Dewey [1910] 2011, 11). Whether one calls these moments cognitive dissonance, transformational learning, or the disruption of an episodic framework, they help us step outside of our taken-for-granted patterns and see the world anew.

Innovative educators are of course always experimenting with new uses of technology. But no MOOC or app, it seems to me, can foster transformational learning. This is where technology as a means of facilitating content delivery meets its limits—and, I would suggest, it is where we must begin if we are to rethink the role of the civic in higher education in this age of disruption.

The Flipped University

I would suggest that we begin to think of technology as enabling the “flipped university,” an idea that Sanjay Sarma and Isaac Chuang (2013) have described as the “magic beyond the MOOCs.” Much as the flipped classroom fosters in-class discussions by requiring students to watch pre-recorded lectures before coming to class, the flipped university can help foster participatory learning and community engagement by using technologically-driven platforms in specific predefined roles. In the flipped university, students can learn particular course content at their own pace and in their own way through online learning platforms. They can then link and extend such learning through specific place-based and

instructor-guided projects. Academic courses—which would require both online and place-based components—thus become mutually reinforcing linkages of theory and action, allowing students to put classroom ideas into real-world practice. Students operationalize the content they learn online by participating in the very “high-impact practices” (Kuh 2008)—such as service learning, project-based learning, and undergraduate research—that are at the heart of what matters to student success.

Technological disruption thus becomes a potent opportunity to tinker with and transform teaching and learning spaces for the kinds of civic practices that for too long have been seen as add-on components reserved for a certain few (Butin and Seider 2012). With technological innovations like MOOCs and their components enhancing content delivery, place-based learning that integrates theory and practice in the civic sphere can regain its status as the key and signature aspect of higher education. This is what signifies the difference between the transfer of *information* associated with MOOCs and the transformation of *education* associated with higher learning.

In conclusion, it is ironic that one of the very aspects of technology that makes it unsuited to advancing higher education’s democratic mission—namely, the primacy it places on knowledge transmission—may actually help advance that mission. By being so good at getting students from point A to point B, new technologies will make visible that higher education has a much bigger and more complex journey to pursue. These technologies will give us the space and opportunity to grapple with the powerful issues that place-based experiential practices force us to confront: how, for example, we can meaningfully translate theory into practice so it truly benefits the communities

we are working with and for; how we can come to understand and take seriously differing stakeholders’ perspectives; what it takes to foster change that is sustainable and meaningful.

There is no fold-out or spiral-bound map that can fully guide us through those journeys. But that is okay. If there were, there would probably be an app for that. ☺

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[CAMPUS PRACTICE]

Using E-Portfolios to Support Transfer Student Success

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Transferring from a community college to a four-year institution can be stressful. After transfer, students often experience a temporary dip in grade point average (Thurmond 2007) and struggle to become engaged (Terris 2009). Acclimating to a new environment can be especially difficult for underrepresented minority (URM) students transferring to schools that lack a critical mass of URM students and faculty, the presence of which has been associated with greater student success (Hagedorn et al. 2007). In the absence of critical mass, institutions must find other ways to support URM students and increase their presence on campus.

Since 2000, Purchase College of the State University of New York has offered the Baccalaureate and Beyond (B&B) program to support URM students as they transition from community colleges to four-year institutions. Initially established to improve the success of URM students in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), the B&B program expanded in 2007 to include students from all liberal arts disciplines. Recently, Purchase College introduced e-portfolios into the B&B curriculum as a means of measuring and advancing students' development of academic identity, future orientation, and scholarly community—elements that likely contribute to student success.

Program Structure

The B&B program is a five-week summer research experience that takes place immediately following Memorial Day. Each year, the program draws approximately forty students from six community colleges. Students are selected for the program after a review of their applications, which include transcripts, a personal essay, and a letter of recommendation. To qualify, students must be eighteen or older, with one semester of community college work completed and with a minimum grade point average of 2.8.

Participating STEM students conduct original research in small lab groups, while humanities and social science students complete an interdisciplinary course on identity and an independent research project. These intensive educational experiences are the first chance many of the students have to fully immerse themselves in a scholarly pursuit. The program's research meetings, field trips, workshops, and communal living build a sense of scholarly community among participants. Group and individual advising sessions encourage future orientation and prepare students for transfer by providing a roadmap for success. The program culminates with a conference at which students present their research, sharing their academic identity with family members, friends,

and representatives from their home institutions.

The program has served over 450 students, 73 percent of whom have transferred to four-year institutions. This transfer rate is substantially higher than the norm: according to Mullen (2012), only 36 percent of community college students who intend to obtain a bachelor's degree actually transfer to a four-year school. In recognition of the program's success, the National Science Foundation awarded Purchase College its Presidential Award for Excellence in Science, Mathematics, and Engineering Mentoring in 2011.

Identity Shift

B&B faculty and staff have long believed that students' success is supported by the development of academic identity and future orientation. Five years ago, we began collecting data on identity shift using the Twenty Statements Test. During the first and final weeks of the program, students complete the phrase "I am" twenty times. By the end of the program, students are more likely to describe themselves in academic ways—for example, as "scholars," "lab rats," and "geeks"—than they were at the beginning. They are also more likely to describe their long-term goals—such as to "be a scientist," "make a difference," or "get my degree"—rather than focusing on their current status.

We see these changes in self-description as reflecting shifts in academic identity and future orientation (Singer-Freeman and Bastone 2013), factors that we believe support students' persistence after transfer. Accordingly, we have sought tools to help students develop these characteristics, including e-portfolios. E-portfolios appear well suited to helping students develop future goals (Barrett 2004). They are also a useful means of documenting learning from activities like intensive

research experiences (Wang 2009) and are hypothesized to support reflection, engagement, and active learning (Yancey 2009).

E-Portfolio Use

In 2012, we introduced students to the Mahara e-portfolio system and suggested that e-portfolios could become social media pages for students' scholarly identities. At an initial workshop, students created e-portfolio pages, wrote journal entries and essays, and reviewed and uploaded the B&B program's learning goals. Following the first meeting, we held weekly workshops in which students wrote journal entries and uploaded evidence of their learning, such as annotations of research articles, written assignments, lab notes, current résumés, photographs and videos of their lab work and projects, and PowerPoint presentations.

We used students' e-portfolios to assess identity shift during the B&B program for the years 2012 and 2013. We coded sixty-one students' first and last journal entries for the number of times they referred to (1) academic identity, through references to scholarly thoughts or accomplishments; (2) future orientation, reflected in statements describing long-term goals and plans; and (3) scholarly community, indicated by statements describing relationships in the context of learning. From the first to the fifth week, the average number of references to academic identity rose significantly from 3.90 to 4.75, the average number of references reflecting future orientation rose significantly from .32 to .61, and the average number of references to scholarly community rose significantly from .48 to 1.27.

While these results largely replicated the results of the Twenty Statements Test, individual students responded differently to each measure, suggesting



Students participate in the 2013 Baccalaureate and Beyond program. (Photo by Dilanthi Graham)

that both measures combined may paint a more accurate picture of student growth than either measure would alone. Additionally, the e-portfolios provided evidence of a developing sense of scholarly community that was not reflected in responses to the Twenty Statements Test—perhaps because the public nature of e-portfolios may encourage reflection on community in ways that the relatively private Twenty Statements Test may not. We hypothesize that e-portfolios may actually contribute to students developing a sense of scholarly community.

Conclusion

The inclusion of e-portfolios enhanced students' experience in the B&B program and has provided us with another window into their developing identities as they engage in undergraduate research. In the future, we hope to test our hypothesis that identity shifts are associated with increased persistence or academic engagement. We will also continue seeking ways to encourage students to see themselves as future-oriented academics who belong to a community of scholars. ☐

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[CAMPUS PRACTICE]

Story Matters: Meeting Actionable Community Needs in a Digital World

■ CINDY O'DONNELL-ALLEN, professor of English at Colorado State University

Stories unite us. Across cultures, we are socialized from an early age to use them to make sense of our world, shape our present experiences, and imagine a distant future (Bruner 1985). Crafting and sharing personal stories that have a wider public impact is the goal of the Saving Our Stories (SOS) Project, a youth digital writing program sponsored by the Colorado State University Writing Project, which I direct. This ongoing program connects preservice English

an existing personal commitment to social justice and civic literacy. Yet she—like many preservice teachers—saw limited opportunities to enact these values and the educational theories and methods she was learning about in her university courses. Brittany was committed to making a difference in her future students' lives, but the future is, well, the future. It exists only as a blurry abstraction in the peculiar liminal space Brittany and her classmates inhabit as

As the one developmental context virtually every young person in the United States shares, schools have great capacity to disrupt social inequities and increase access to the privileges and responsibilities toward which an educated democracy aspires.

teachers, K–12 teachers, and elementary English Language Learners (ELLs) for the purpose of meeting an actionable need, in this case the preservation of stories from the local Latino community that might otherwise be lost.

Theory and Practice

Brittany Belmarez, whose comments accompany this article, participated in the SOS Project when she was an undergraduate at Colorado State University studying to be a high school teacher of social studies and English language arts. As her English professor, I recruited Brittany to be part of SOS because I knew her dual academic emphasis reflected

they straddle the roles of university students and soon-to-be teachers.

Helping preservice teachers transition from the mindset of a student to that of a teacher is a well-documented challenge for teacher educators, and I am no exception (see, for example, O'Donnell-Allen and Hunt 2001). Having been a high school English teacher myself for eleven years prior to becoming a university professor, I am convinced of the intimate relationship between theory and practice. I know that theories never exist in a vacuum; indeed, they emanate from practice as educators and researchers attempt to understand why classrooms operate as

they do. I emphasize to my students that articulating the principles behind their practice will allow them to be intentional about the strategies they employ to support student learning. Otherwise, as the educational pendulum perpetually swings back and forth, they will be subject to every new “surefire” program or method that comes along. Furthermore, I stress that teaching *can* make a difference. As the one developmental context virtually every young person in the United States shares, schools have great capacity to disrupt social inequities and increase access to the privileges and responsibilities toward which an educated democracy aspires.

My students, including Brittany, are familiar with this speech, but they are not always convinced by it. Without concrete examples to contextualize who they envision themselves to be as future teachers, my admonition that they “just trust me on this one” often falls on deaf ears. To correct this disparity, I look for every opportunity I can to get preservice teachers, experienced teachers, and school-aged students into the same room and working together to make a difference now that will also make a difference later in our increasingly diverse and digital world. The SOS Project directly addresses this goal.

Digital Technology and Service Learning

The SOS Project is a digital storytelling workshop that allows preservice teachers to work alongside experienced teachers to help fourth- and fifth-grade English Language Learners (ELLs) preserve their own stories and those of their families and the local Latino community, while at the same time developing valuable twenty-first-century literacy skills. During the weeklong workshop, the elementary students engage in a broad array of multimodal literacy practices and conduct research on local history with cultural innovation and community

change in mind. They read and emulate literary works by Spanish-speaking writers; visit local museums, including El Museo de las Tres Colonias, a restored adobe home originally built by Mexican immigrants working in the sugar beet industry; record their learning in daily journals, podcasts, slideshows, and videos; and share it via various face-to-face and digital platforms like Twitter.

The SOS Project runs concurrently with a weeklong professional development workshop for teachers on teaching with technology. For half of each day, teachers in the workshop explore digital tools and discuss issues related to technology integration in the classroom. For the other half, they immediately apply what they have learned by helping the SOS students use programs like iPhoto, iMovie, and GarageBand to record and edit podcasts, slideshows, and videos capturing their personal and family histories. At the end of the week, when both workshops conclude, teachers participate in a celebratory reading where SOS students share their work with family, friends, and invited guests, including professors and students from Colorado State University who were the first in their families to attend college. With their presence, these first-generation professors and students demonstrate that a postsecondary education is achievable, a point most also emphasize in their direct interactions with the students.

To prepare for their potential participation in the summer workshop—which is a professional networking opportunity but not a course expectation—students in my undergraduate course on teaching composition participate in a required service-learning project. Through this project, they learn to develop instructional materials for marginalized students in our community that meet Colorado standards in secondary English Language Arts. They pilot the curricula they develop in an English class at a local alternative high school with the



Participants engage in the Saving Our Stories (SOS) Project, a youth digital writing program sponsored by the Colorado State University Writing Project. (Photo by Cindy O'Donnell-Allen)

understanding that the materials may be adapted in age-appropriate ways for the elementary students participating in SOS.

Culturally Responsive Teaching

For several reasons, the service-learning project focuses on the development of culturally responsive materials that feature multimodal rather than print-based literacy practices. First, this approach intentionally expands the traditional literacy curriculum to tap the “cultural knowledge, prior experiences, and performance styles of diverse students” (Gay 2010, 29). Second, while a multisensory, multimodal approach to literacy instruction benefits all students, it is especially effective with ELLs (Fu 2009). Finally, the project reflects the reality that ELLs are the fastest growing student population in the United States. National statistics reveal that approximately one in every five students lives in a household where English is not the first language spoken (Shin and Kominski 2010). More locally, Colorado is one of twelve “destination states” for ELLs—that is, states having over 200 percent growth of ELLs since 1994 (Office of Language, Culture, and Equity 2011).

Despite a changing student population, most teachers report feeling inadequately prepared for teaching ELLs. An unfortunate result is that these students are often doomed to receive writing instruction that requires no more than filling in the blanks rather than constructing extended prose (Fu 2009). In light of these realities, researchers have called for better university preparation of preservice teachers to help all students compose digitally, to help ELL students in particular develop academic literacy, and to address the intersection between these areas—that is, helping all students develop literacy skills through digital composing (see, for example, Black 2009; Leander 2007).

Knowing that even experienced educators feel overwhelmed by the prospect of supporting their ELL students’ literacy needs, particularly in a digital realm, I feel an acute obligation to help my preservice teachers see this challenge not as insurmountable, but as a tremendous opportunity in disguise. Yes, teaching is a complex task, as is learning to write. Learning to teach writing to a diverse population in a digital age only

compounds these complexities. But as Robert Frost noted, the best way out is always through.

Engaging by Enacting

Brittany and her classmates are right not to be satisfied with educational theories alone. They must be able to do more than read about how to teach or speculate about how they might help their future students disrupt societal inequities by developing critical literacy skills and civic agency. They must engage these theories by enacting them. Participating in service learning, networking with experienced teachers about teaching with technology, and teaching

diverse youth in the SOS Project allows my university students to act on their impulse to make a difference now.

The power of story unites our efforts to capture what exists in the perplexing now and to shape our collective narrative into a more promising someday. ☐

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Using Digital Storytelling to Cross Linguistic Boundaries

The following excerpts are from an interview with undergraduate student Brittany Belmarez conducted by Cindy O'Donnell-Allen. The interview can be heard in its entirety on the National Writing Project's "Digital Is" website at <http://digitalis.nwp.org/resource/4417>.

[Participating in the Teaching with Technology workshop] really opened my eyes to some of the realities of what it's like to be teaching. It's one thing to be in a [college] classroom and to be talking about what to expect as a teacher, and it's a completely different thing when you're hearing about the hands-on experiences and those first-hand encounters teachers are having in the classroom. For me, just being in the room with some really phenomenal teachers...hearing their ideas and hearing the things they do was so inspiring and encouraging...

[During the workshop,] I worked with two students—a young girl and a young boy—and both were Hispanic, and the first little girl was so shy. She had this

great story to tell...and the first time she tried to tell it, it was a struggle for her. She was just so shy. And then...when we played it back to her the first time, her face lit up. I will *never* forget the look on her face when she heard her voice on that recording....And the little boy...told his story first in Spanish and then translated it into English, and it was his story about learning English and some of the difficulties he had in that process and having a primarily Spanish-speaking family. And so, that was entering a whole different level for him of self-discovery and self-identity. So to be a part of that was great....

The technology definitely will be a natural thing that I'll take into the classroom. But I think [I will also take] the importance of students sharing their experiences and where they come from in ways that allow them to own their story. [Digital storytelling] allowed them to pick a moment in their life. It allowed them to portray that moment the way that they wanted it to be portrayed, and

so they owned it completely. So when you have a student who is...[learning] English as a second language, that can be an uncomfortable thing for them to talk about in the classroom of primarily English-speaking students. So when they're given an opportunity to *choose* if they want to bring that [to the] table, and then *how* they bring [it] to the table, I think it validates their experience in ways that are really worthwhile....

[O]ne thing that I know I will take into my classroom, no matter if I'm teaching a history class or an English class, is storytelling. I think that it's critical for creating a community within the classroom. And I think, honestly, the technology can be a great way to tap into English Language Learners' abilities.... [T]echnology can cross language boundaries really easily, so I think that can be a great opportunity to create an equal playing field in the classroom, especially with English Language Learners.

—BRITTANY BELMAREZ

[CAMPUS PRACTICE]

Bringing Online and Residential Students Together for Engaged Civic Learning

■ LAURA VAN ASSENDELFT, professor of political science at Mary Baldwin College

On Tuesday, November 6, 2012, the Spencer Center for Global and Civic Engagement at Mary Baldwin College (MBC) was transformed into a broadcast studio. In a computer lab operating as a newsroom, student researchers culled election results from internet sources and tracked trends on a SMART Board, while students acting as producers, anchors, and members of the film and sound crew produced a live video feed. Nearby, in a crowded room decorated like a political convention hall, students, faculty, staff, and community members gathered to watch the broadcast. Reaching students across disciplines and programs, the 2012 Election Live Broadcast generated energy and enthusiasm that permeated the campus throughout the election season and beyond.

Engagement and Collaboration

The inspiration for the broadcast came from a workshop presented by John W. Williams of Principia College at the 2012 American Political Science Association Teaching and Learning Conference. At MBC, we applied the concept to accomplish two goals: (1) increasing electoral engagement of students across all disciplines, and (2) increasing collaboration between MBC's on-campus and online students while providing equal opportunity to experience "high-impact educational practices" like undergraduate research and collaborative assignments (Kuh 2008, 10). The Association of American Colleges and Universities has

promoted these and other high-impact practices as a means of achieving Essential Learning Outcomes like civic knowledge and engagement (Schneider 2008, 4).

Civic engagement is a central theme and mission at MBC, but not all students participate in it equally. While political science students enrolled in MBC's Residential College for Women (RCW) routinely engage in role-playing simulations of government processes, students not taking political science classes and students enrolled in the Adult Degree Program (ADP)—MBC's coeducational distance-learning program—have fewer opportunities for such engagement. The Election Live Broadcast was intended to reach a broader segment of MBC's diverse student population than typically participates in such activities.

Planning for the Election Live event started in spring 2012 with an executive committee composed of faculty from political science, communications, and film; the director of the Spencer Center for Global and Civic Engagement; an instructional technology specialist; and two faculty-selected students who served as political director and communications director. These two student leaders held organizational meetings to recruit volunteers for a variety of assigned positions, including producer, technical director, hosts, anchors, editors, news readers, newsroom managers, and researchers. Throughout the semester, the executive committee used a variety of modes of outreach—including e-mail,

Blackboard, Facebook, posters, booths in the dining hall, and word of mouth—to organize volunteers and advertise events. A grant from the Virginia Campus Electoral Engagement Project provided funding for the project.

Course-Based and Volunteer Participation

I required students enrolled in two of my political science courses—American Government (POLS 100) and the US Presidency (POLS 213)—to participate in the Election Live Broadcast. Both courses had a hybrid format that increased interaction among the forty-five RCW and twenty-nine ADP students enrolled. These students shared a single Blackboard page and the same course assignments, due dates, and resources. I taught my on-campus classes using SMART Boards, capturing the lectures and posting them on Blackboard with embedded links to additional readings, data, and multimedia resources (for example, campaign commercials) for both RCW and ADP students to access. A course blog with mandatory weekly posts fostered interaction between the on-campus and online students, engaging both groups in dialogue about the election. I required my students to conduct research and write transcripts for the election broadcast based on assigned research topics, including key races, candidates' biographical information, economic data, issue analysis, party politics, and historical voting data.

About one-third of the students in my classes joined an additional forty-three students in volunteering to help organize and stage the broadcast. These student volunteers attended a variety of workshops on topics like using library resources, writing a transcript, preparing and taping a prerecorded segment, and public speaking for a live segment. Students who were unable to attend these events could access handouts,

transcripts, and notes online. As the election approached, students conducted and prerecorded interviews for inclusion in the broadcast, gathering additional footage and backdrop photos during a bus trip to Washington, DC. Students wrote the script for the anchors, created commercials, scheduled live interviews, and planned food and decorations for the event. They also participated in voter registration drives and “get out the vote” phone banking, attended debate watching parties and guest lectures on policy issues, and watched films related to campaigns and elections.

Energy and Interest

The event itself was a great success, with an online survey conducted after the election suggesting positive results. For example, survey respondents voted in the election at relatively high rates, with 66 percent of RCW students and 88 percent of ADP students reporting that they had voted.

On campus, the event increased engagement among many who previously considered themselves “apolitical.” The art major who designed the logo for event t-shirts and the English major who styled hair and makeup for the anchors agreed that they had not followed the election until they began participating in the broadcast event. Another student commented, “I’m not old enough to vote yet, so I was expecting to have no interest in the elections whatsoever, until the election broadcast.... I am excited for the next election in which I’ll be able to vote.”

Online students also reported high levels of interest and engagement in the election and in the event, thanks in part to the strategic use of internet technologies and face-to-face learning opportunities. One online student, Marie Greer, made her first visit to the campus to work in the newsroom on election night. She worked side by side with students, faculty, and staff, and



Students participate in Mary Baldwin College's 2012 Election Live Broadcast event. (Photo by Woods Pierce)

also met MBC's president, Pamela Fox. (Editor's note: Marie Greer describes her experience with the project on page 21.)

Influence on Future Attitudes

Exposure to electoral politics through events like the Election Live Broadcast can have a positive influence on future attitudes about civic engagement. At MBC, the nonpartisan nature of the event helped dispel negative feelings toward polarized partisan politics by bringing Republicans, Democrats, Libertarians, and Independents together in a collegial and professional atmosphere where all viewpoints were welcomed and respected. Similarly, the broadcast involved a diverse group of participants from the campus and the community and provided a stark contrast to the horserace and hoopla of most network election coverage. Finally, the event increased students' exposure to politics, interest in the election, participation in political discussions, and leadership experience.

While important for all students, positive civic experiences like the broadcast event may be particularly critical for young women, who compose

MBC's residential student population. Indeed, research on civic engagement and political leadership shows a persistent gender gap in political interest and participation. While young women (ages eighteen to twenty-nine) vote at higher rates than young men (54.9 percent compared to 47.2 percent in 2008), they are less likely than young men to talk about politics, to pay attention to political news, or to consider a political career. Women college students also report lower levels of confidence in their skills and personal qualities related to leadership, including public speaking, competitiveness, social skills, and popularity (Kawashima-Ginsburg and Thomas 2013). Lawless and Fox (2013) note that an ambition gap is apparent among women and men with the same levels of educational attainment: women are less likely than men to decide to run for political office, which helps explain their continued underrepresentation at all levels of government. In addition to its other benefits, MBC's Election Live Broadcast fosters a culture of political engagement that prepares women students to address these gaps.

Ongoing Involvement

Student responses to the project were overwhelmingly positive. Reflecting on the event the following morning, one student called it “by far one of the best hands-on experiences I have had at Mary Baldwin College.” She elaborated: “The interaction across academic disciplines, with RCW and ADP students, and the support of faculty and administration was overwhelming and an amazing opportunity to witness how people from all different backgrounds, political affiliations, and generations can come together to accomplish a common goal. It is definitely something that I want to see done on campus long after I’ve graduated.”

MBC is working to make this student’s recommendation a reality. In the aftermath of the 2012 election, students immediately began planning another broadcast event for the 2013 Virginia gubernatorial election. By the end of the second week of fall classes, 105 students had signed up to participate. MBC is also planning broadcast events for the 2014 congressional elections and the 2016 party nominating conventions and presidential election—potentially extending the benefits of the Election Live Broadcast to hundreds of students over the coming years. ☐

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[PERSPECTIVE]

Overcoming Our Distance for Election Night

■ **MARIE LAVINDER GREER**, student at Mary Baldwin College and senior professional in human resources

As a student in Mary Baldwin College’s Adult Degree Program (ADP), I take classes either online or at a satellite campus office in Roanoke, Virginia, about ninety miles south of the main campus in Staunton. While the ADP is an important part of Mary Baldwin, the average ADP student has very little interaction with the Staunton campus community and generally misses out on the cultural and relational aspects of a traditional college experience. But in fall 2012, through my political science class, I had an opportunity to work with students from the main

campus on developing and producing Mary Baldwin’s Election Live Broadcast.

the traditional students in their early twenties were, and how passionate about the project. These students were technologically savvy, and they knew the impact that either candidate might have if elected. Socially engaged and civically minded, they wanted to have a voice in the direction of the nation. I wish I had been more like them at that age.

Civic engagement is a core value of Mary Baldwin College. Projects like this one give that concept life in a way that students of any age, race, religion, ethnicity, or political viewpoint can relate

I would like to see an interactive project like this become a requirement for every online student.

campus on developing and producing Mary Baldwin’s Election Live Broadcast.

Over the course of the fall semester, our team used e-mail, social media, and Blackboard to overcome our distance while developing a theme and researching topics for the broadcast. I felt connected to the other students from the beginning and quickly realized how engaged the group was. The enthusiasm of our professor, Laura van Assendelft, was contagious, but the project was *our* broadcast. It wasn’t developed or scripted for us; it was ours to build and ours to present.

On election night, I went to the Staunton campus to work in the broadcast newsroom. I was amazed by the experience. As a woman in her forties, I was struck by how knowledgeable

to and be part of. The team was professional and committed to producing a quality broadcast, working together despite strong and varying opinions on social issues, the state of the economy, gun control, and the country’s relationship with other nations.

I would like to see an interactive project like this become a requirement for every online student. It not only enhanced my college experience, but also made me feel connected to the college and its history. It also drove me to be more aware of what each candidate stands for. I have always been committed to voting, but for the first time, I am eager to help with a political campaign or volunteer at the polls. I want to become more civically engaged, and I encourage those around me to do likewise. ☐

[CAMPUS PRACTICE]

Connecting across Hemispheres in Media Studies

■ JANNA JONES, professor of communication at Northern Arizona University

Though our students live on different continents, Kate Bowles (University of Wollongong–Wollongong, New South Wales, Australia) and I (Northern Arizona University–Flagstaff, Arizona, United States of America) teach media studies courses together. We create opportunities for virtual exchange that enable students to share their daily lives, media experiences, and place-based perspectives with peers on the other side of the world. While international travel is invaluable for undergraduates, study

research interests, Kate and I had different views of the current well-being of cinema going. To resolve our dispute, we formed an international undergraduate research group and conducted field studies at local cinemas. In 2009, students working with us as independent researchers conducted ethnographic observations at movie theaters in Wollongong and Flagstaff. They observed rituals of cinema going and how audiences interacted with one another before, during, and after the movie; reflected on

Thanks to inexpensive and easily accessible online technologies, our students are able to participate in virtual exchanges that help them understand globalized media and broaden their perspectives.

abroad is not always feasible for students due to family and work commitments. Our course provides a low-cost way for our place-bound students to form international connections: while 7,800 miles and a seventeen-hour time difference separate our classrooms, our collaborative teaching requires little to no additional monetary support. Thanks to inexpensive and easily accessible online technologies, our students are able to participate in virtual exchanges that help them understand globalized media and broaden their perspectives.

Course Origins

Kate and I began teaching together as a result of an academic disagreement. As cinema scholars working in the field of communication who share similar

their own movie-going habits; and made observations about the theaters they visited and the areas where they were located.

Our research findings confirmed both Kate's and my suspicions. Cinema going does seem to be dying in Wollongong, but it is fairly healthy in Flagstaff. My students discovered that while commercial cinema is not entirely vital in their community, non-commercial cinema events such as the university's various series on classic, international, and Native American film are helping to create a dynamic cinema environment. In contrast, Kate's students discovered that there are no viable alternatives to mainstream commercial theaters in Wollongong. Our research enabled us to reflect on the ways cinema

promotes social cohesion and community identity.

The success of this first collaboration led Kate and me to develop the course we now teach together: *Popular Australian and US Film in Everyday Life*. The course focuses on contemporary media practices, the relationship between Hollywood and the Australian film industry, and the cultural and economic implications of globalized media.

Technology and Logistics

Unsurprisingly, teaching a course across hemispheres involves logistical challenges. Scheduling is complicated, because our semesters are not synchronized: students are always surprised to discover that half the class is enjoying the last of their summer vacation on the beach while the other half is beginning a new semester in the dead of winter. The seventeen-hour time difference also requires careful scheduling so our classes can connect in real time using Skype, Ning, Facebook, and Twitter.

These inexpensive and user-friendly technologies enable Kate and me to communicate easily and effectively with one another. We do most of our planning using Skype, a free videoconferencing tool, and we also use Skype to conduct cross-class conversations several times during the semester. We use Ning, an online social networking site, for most student collaborations that take place outside of class. Kate and I guide weekly written discussions on Ning, and students post field notes, communicate research findings, and exchange ideas about what they are learning. They also share their lives: at the beginning of the course, students introduce themselves by posting photographs and videos of their hometowns and their work and media spaces.

Critiquing Global Hegemony

While media technologies enable our students to get to know and learn from

one another, these technologies are also a subject of scrutiny and analysis in our classrooms. Students keep track of their media habits by maintaining a media diary for a week, and they are usually surprised to discover the number of hours they and their international peers spend looking at Facebook, playing videogames, and watching movies and television. When comparing their media diaries on Ning, the Australian and American students find that they share nearly identical media habits and practices. However, media piracy tends to be more common among the Australian students because Australia does not have Netflix or a similar service, and release dates for movies and music are months later in Australia than in the United States.

Our Ning exchanges about illegal downloading open the door for subsequent discussions about the power of Hollywood and its impact on Australian popular culture. Students are delighted and surprised to learn that they share a nearly identical cinematic canon consisting mostly of Hollywood movies. It is a compelling lesson in cultural hegemony when our students realize that Hollywood is, in effect, the national cinema of both the United States and Australia. The Wollongong students, like most Australians, watch far more American movies than Australian ones. In 2011, for example, American-made films comprised 81.8 percent of the total Australian box office, while Australian movies grossed only 3.9 percent of it (Screen Australia 2012).

These lessons in Hollywood's global dominance are intensified when the American students confess, during their Ning exchanges, that they know little about Australian film. Their Australian counterparts tell them not to worry—they don't know much about it, either. When our conversations turn to the struggling Australian film industry, all of our students must wrestle with the



Northern Arizona University (Photo by Tim Ryan, courtesy of Northern Arizona University)

cultural, ethical, and economic implications of their beloved Hollywood's global power. In small groups, students work for several weeks to create proposals for an Australian film festival for American audiences. They use Facebook and Twitter, their preferred modes of communication, to work together across continents on their festival proposals.

Challenging Students' Assumptions

To help both Australian and American students understand the challenges and minor international triumphs of the Australian film industry, we watch contemporary Australian movies such as *Red Dog* (2011) and *The Sapphires* (2012). These films enable us to analyze the objectives of the Australian film industry, which avoids competing directly with Hollywood by producing movies that are uniquely Australian, particularly in their geography. For example, the Australian Outback is featured prominently in many Australian films, including *Red Dog*.

After watching *Red Dog*, our class has a Skype discussion about the film. The first time Kate and I showed the film and asked students if they identified with its geography, we were astonished to discover that none of the Wollongong students had been to the Outback. They explained that their lives were oriented toward the ocean, and they had no relationship at all to the

desert. In contrast, many of the Flagstaff students grew up in the Arizona desert and identified entirely with the film's setting, which looked just like home to them. Thus our Skype conversation about this popular Australian movie and regional identity helped all of us expand our understanding of "home and away"—core concepts that are critical for gaining international experience and perspective.

Preparing Future Professionals

Kate and I feel fortunate that we are able to provide our students with a rich virtual international experience. With the aid of inexpensive and accessible online tools, our students have the opportunity to exchange ideas, share their daily lives, and analyze the cultural and economic consequences of globalization. Our students are excited to conduct international research and collaborate with peers who live on the other side of the world. They also recognize that as soon-to-be media professionals, they are now more prepared to work in an international business environment and to critically navigate our interconnected world. ☒

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[CAMPUS PRACTICE]

Civic Seed: Developing a Video Game for Civic Engagement

■ **MINDY NIERENBERG**, senior programs manager and director of the leadership studies minor at the Jonathan M. Tisch College of Citizenship and Public Service, Tufts University

When students enter into community-based experiences, their knowledge of best practices is critical to maximize positive impact and avoid negative outcomes for both them and their community partners. But colleges and universities are not always able to offer courses or orientations prior to each civic engagement opportunity. To better prepare students for service, the Jonathan M. Tisch College of Citizenship and Public Service at Tufts University and the Engagement Game Lab at Emerson College are collaborating to develop Civic Seed, an interactive video game that teaches best practices for community-engaged service. Civic Seed aims to address civic learning needs while optimizing the positive aspects of game-based learning.

The Challenge of Student Preparation

Student underpreparedness for civic engagement is a pressing issue. On many campuses, students may begin participating in community service, community-based work-study, internships, and service learning with little or no knowledge of the community's history, assets, and challenges or of the campus-community relationship. These students may lack awareness of their own motivations for engaging in community-based work, resulting in missed opportunities for connected learning; or they may carry presumptions that negatively affect desired outcomes.

Educators at Tisch College began to explore the issue of student underpreparedness after community partners

reported that different cohorts of student volunteers were arriving at their organizations with different levels of preparation. While some students have no preservice preparation at all, those enrolled as Tisch Citizenship and Public Service Scholars take a full-credit graded course, Education for Active Citizenship, to prepare them for a year of service in a community organization. Our community partners noted that Tisch Scholars were more ready for service and performed at higher levels than other student volunteers. They described spending valuable staff time orienting unprepared volunteers to basic community issues and practices, and sometimes found themselves engaging in difficult interventions that could have been prevented.

Indeed, across the country, nonprofit organizations cite the lack of paid staff with the capacity to train and supervise volunteers as a primary challenge (Hager and Brudney 2004). Yet the vast majority of students, both at Tufts and elsewhere, are unable to take a course like Education for Active Citizenship.

Recognizing the need for better preservice preparation, in 2010, Tisch College staff convened a task force of community partners, faculty, and students, who completed a report on best practices in student civic engagement. We then began conceiving of a learning experience that could be completed remotely within a three-hour time frame and that would offer students basic preparation prior to their engagement with the community.

We developed a four-section framework for student preparation, focused on (1) **looking inward** (understanding one's own motivations, goals, social identities, ethics, and values in the context of a larger society); (2) **expanding outward** (exploring the concepts of community partnerships with specifics about local collaborating communities); (3) **working together** (reflecting on cross-cultural, social, and socioeconomic differences, along with developing practical and professional skills and common goals); and (4) **looking forward** (building upon experience, evaluating it, sustaining it, and connecting it with academic and career goals).

While developing content that aligned with this framework (including video interviews, readings, and infographics), the Tisch College team approached Eric Gordon of the Engagement Game Lab (EGL) and invited his team to design a digital platform for our work. Although the Tisch College team had initially conceived of this platform as a series of self-paced online learning modules consisting of resources and quizzes, the EGL team suggested a video game, and Civic Seed was born.

The Alchemy of Creative Tension

When the EGL team proposed designing Civic Seed as a video game, the Tisch College team was intrigued but skeptical, envisioning a high level of tension between the playfulness of video games and the seriousness of civic engagement. Yet as Nick Tannahil and his colleagues have argued, "the prospective benefits of game-based learning provide us with reason to examine our fear of diluting the aims of education by introducing elements of entertainment" (Tannahil, Tissington, and Senior 2012). After spirited conversations with our EGL colleagues, we were convinced of the relevance of video gaming technology to civic engagement, its growing use as an

effective learning tool, and its appeal to a new generation of students. Therefore, we opted to move forward with the project.

The resulting collaboration between Tisch College and EGL has been marked by the alchemy of creative tension. A series of constructive conflicts have resulted in a better product than either group could have built independently. In developing Civic Seed, Tisch College and EGL have engaged in constantly cycling feedback loops that travel in both directions. Eric Gordon of EGL has described this process as “a productive and spirited back-and-forth that resulted in much learning for both sides,” with the two teams “always connected by a common design stress test in their ideas and criticism: ‘Is learning happening?’”

This “spirited back-and-forth” has arisen in a variety of contexts, including the development of the game’s dual narratives: the fictional narrative that provides the playful environment to inspire learning, and the nonfiction narrative of embedded content and resources. In creating these narratives, we have engaged in debates over, for example, the dialogue spoken by various characters. While the Tisch College team saw some of the dialogue developed by EGL as being at turns too sarcastic or light-hearted, the EGL team felt that these elements helped advance game-playing objectives. Together, we have continued to revise text, seeking compromises that may feel risky for each of us but that align with our separate and joint goals.

Another example of debate involved embedded video clips of interviews with faculty members, community organization leaders, and civically engaged upper-class students. Ranging from three to seven minutes long, these clips contained information that the Tisch College team saw as important to the learning goals. But the EGL team feared



Tufts University student Maya Zeigler beta tests Civic Seed.

the clips would interrupt the game’s flow. Beta testing suggested that the clips were indeed too long, and we have since shortened the videos.


The Future of Civic Seed

Through beta testing with Tufts students in May and October 2013, we have gathered constructive feedback on Civic Seed’s mechanics and its effectiveness as a learning platform. After incorporating this feedback, Tisch College will launch the game in February 2014 with student groups on campus who engage in community service. Tisch College is also developing a non-gaming version of the Civic Seed modules. This will allow for research exploring whether the video game element contributes to enhanced learning as hypothesized.

With multiple colleges and universities, consortia, and nonprofit organizations expressing an interest in Civic Seed, our ultimate goal is to create a version that can be used by any institution for civic engagement preparation. We plan to replace the game’s one Tufts-specific section, which provides

information on Tufts’s host communities, with a generic section that describes how students can gain essential knowledge about their own communities. This generic version of Civic Seed will be available to interested institutions in fall 2014.

While the development process has taken longer than expected, it has also been richer and deeper than anticipated. The alchemy of creative tension we have experienced is emblematic of the very essence of civic engagement that Civic Seed addresses.

For more information on Civic Seed, see www.activecitizen.tufts.edu/civicseed/ or contact Mindy Nierenberg at mindy.nierenberg@tufts.edu. 

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[CAMPUS PRACTICE]

Improving Student Success Using Technology-Based Analytics

■ ELIZABETH D. PHILLIPS, executive vice president and provost at Arizona State University

The mission of Arizona State University (ASU) is to provide access to a college degree for all qualified students in the Phoenix region. As a result of this mandate, ASU attracts a large and diverse freshman class: in fall 2013, ASU had 10,232 incoming first-year students, 39 percent of whom were members of racial and ethnic minority groups. The university's focus on student success has compelled leading faculty and staff in academic affairs to

parents, or friends instead of finding the best fit for their interests.

The degree search feature of eAdvisor changed how students identify majors. Using a key word search, students can enter a phrase (for example, "interested in people"), and all relevant majors will appear. Students can save these searches and compare degree requirements in various majors. For students who want to investigate a range of possible interests, ASU offers five exploratory

The eAdvisor system has been particularly effective in improving success for racial and ethnic minority students and those who are the first in their families to attend college.

find innovative ways to help students identify majors that best fit their interests so they can successfully complete their degrees. To this end, we created eAdvisor, an advising solution based on developments in computer technology and data analytics.

Focusing Students' Exploration

Before launching eAdvisor in fall 2007, ASU organized its curriculum and majors by departments and schools. The academic catalog listed the departments and their affiliated courses in alphabetical order, from accounting to zoology, but only the rare student even attempted to read the entire catalog. This meant that students chose their academic paths with little notion of the full range of available options. They tended to follow the advice of high school counselors,

majors—arts and humanities, social sciences, science and engineering, health, and business. Students can enroll in these majors until they have acquired forty-five credit hours, at which point they must select a more focused major.

Keeping Students on Track

Incoming students consult eAdvisor and meet with advisors (who are trained staff members) during orientation to discuss their degree choices. After students have chosen a major, eAdvisor provides a "major map" that outlines required courses and the sequence in which they must be taken. Students must take general education courses early in their academic careers, and must also enroll early in "critical requirements"—courses that diagnose their likelihood of success in the major. Before the advent of eAdvisor,

students would often postpone taking the most difficult required courses, especially those with a mathematical focus. Consequently, they would run into trouble late in their degree programs, resulting in delayed graduation or even failure to graduate.

For example, a statistics course is a critical requirement for psychology majors. With eAdvisor, if a psychology major does not take statistics at the prescribed time or does poorly in the course, the student must see an advisor before he or she can register for the next semester's courses. The advisor talks with the student to determine whether a personal issue or an inadequate fit caused the poor performance. Students who go "off track" twice for academic reasons must choose a new major, using the degree search feature to find the best fit for their skills and interests. If the poor performance stems from nonacademic concerns, advisors direct students to appropriate university resources.

Thus eAdvisor helps the advisor as well as the student. The system contains official and up-to-date requirements for each degree, and it automatically matches the courses a student has taken with the requirements of their degree to map the shortest path to completion. With eAdvisor managing these data tracking tasks, the advisor has time to focus on tasks requiring human interaction, including counseling the student and building personal understanding.

Identifying Career Opportunities

ASU recently supplemented eAdvisor's degree search function to show career opportunities for each major. While students and parents are justifiably concerned about students' future employability, unemployment rates among college graduates are actually much lower than for those without a degree (Carnevale and Cheah 2013, 3). Importantly, a degree in any major improves employment prospects. Moreover, ASU's general education

requirements prepare students in all majors to become life-long learners with strong communication skills, informed perspectives, and an understanding of other people.

Given that any degree improves employment prospects, it is best for students to choose their majors based on interest and talent. A good fit in these areas is more likely to lead to success and happiness. By showing students and parents the possible careers associated with each major, eAdvisor provides reassurance of a degree's economic value and enables students to follow their dreams.

Reflecting Positive Outcomes

The eAdvisor system has been particularly effective in improving success for racial and ethnic minority students and those who are the first in their families to attend college. Figure 1 shows the percentage change in first-to-second-year retention rates after eAdvisor's implementation, disaggregated by race and ethnicity, and figure 2 illustrates improvements in four-year graduation rates. Survey data also suggest that students are highly satisfied with eAdvisor and appreciate that it provides clear information about their progress to a degree, e-mails them messages when they are off track, and offers clear direction on their personal paths to success.

In addition to improving student success and satisfaction, eAdvisor has saved money for both the university and its students. Because eAdvisor provides information about how many students are in each major and where they are in their progress toward the degree, ASU can manage course offerings to match need—guaranteeing that seats in required classes are available for all students while teaching fewer classes for each graduate. Ultimately, eAdvisor saves ASU between \$6.5 and \$6.9 million dollars in instructional costs and about \$7.3 million in advising costs each year.

Similarly, by leading students to graduate sooner, eAdvisor saves each student an average of \$24,500, the equivalent of one year's tuition and fees.

Finally and most importantly, ASU produces an average of one thousand additional graduates per year as a result of eAdvisor. These graduates, many of whom are members of less advantaged minority groups, are now enjoying the

benefits of a college education, including the opportunity to pursue academic majors that best match their talents and interests. ☐

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FIGURE 1. Change in Retention Rate After eAdvisor
2006 (Pre-eAdvisor) Compared to 2010/2011 Average

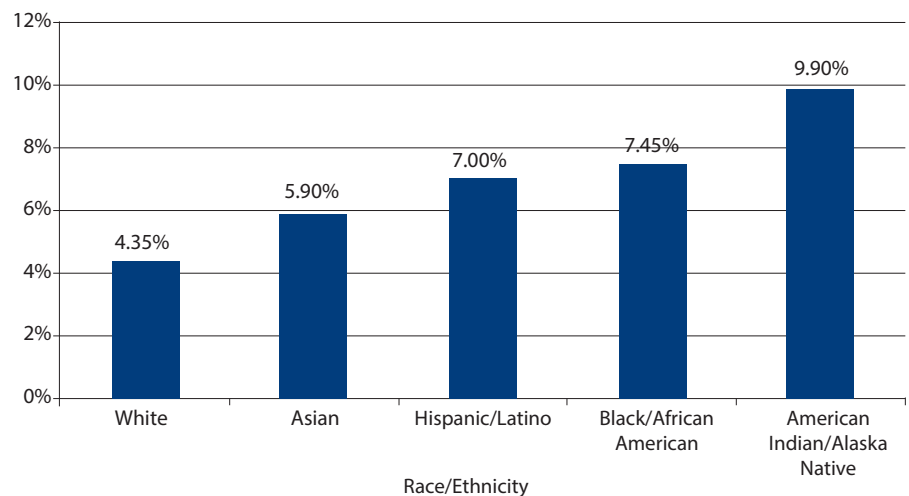
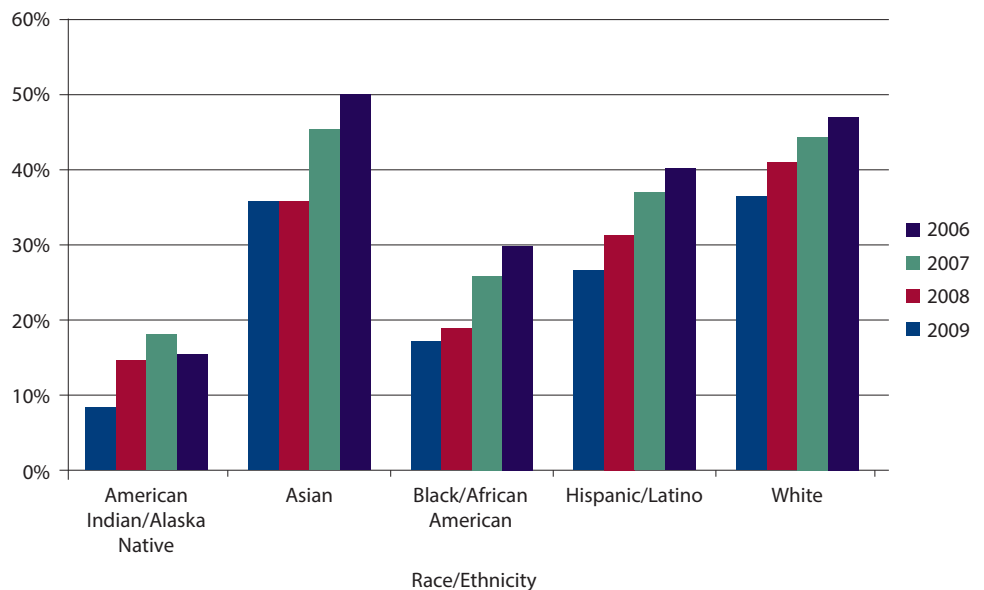


FIGURE 2. Four-Year Graduation Rates
2006 Cohort (Pre-eAdvisor) Compared to 2007–2009 Cohorts



[CAMPUS PRACTICE]

Student-Driven Technological Change in a Contingent Faculty Classroom

■ **REBECCA DOLINSKY**, program manager and research analyst at the Association of American Colleges and Universities

When I think about using technology in the classroom, I often take the perspective of a contingent faculty member. I have had two forays into the world of contingency, the second of which began shortly after I earned my PhD, when I taught courses on gender and sexuality at a private liberal arts institution. I was chronically pressed for time as I balanced teaching with academic research and a full-time position outside of academia. Nonetheless,

course concepts to “lab-style” projects (EDUCAUSE 2012). Flipping the classroom can also involve “digital readings with collaborative annotation capabilities,” discussion boards, clicker technology, and “a cloud-based classroom-management system” (Demski 2013). As exciting as these approaches sound, the flipped classroom demands extensive “planning and experimentation” (Demski 2013) and “careful preparation” (EDUCAUSE 2012). In

Faculty members need time and institutional support (including training in the use of new technologies) to successfully flip their classrooms—provisions that generally aren’t available to those off the tenure track.

I was committed to creating an interesting and relevant learning environment for my students. To me, this included embedding technology into my course design—a task that felt daunting for an adjunct, particularly in light of the discussions about flipped classrooms that have become ubiquitous across higher education.

In flipped classrooms, faculty use new technologies to reconfigure their courses by turning “class time into a workshop” through collaborative, “hands-on activities” (EDUCAUSE 2012). Students may watch prerecorded lectures prior to class meetings and enter the classroom ready to apply

other words, it requires faculty members to increase their workloads outside of the classroom (at least at the outset) while developing a new skill set—a particular challenge for contingent faculty members, who are often sorely lacking in time and institutional support.

As a contingent faculty member, I didn’t have any training on how to flip my classroom. My relationship with the institution’s technology services consisted of one quick Moodle tutorial and various calls for help when technology issues came up in class. While I wanted to incorporate more technology into my courses, I forged ahead with what felt like minimal involvement: I posted

readings on Moodle, brought social media into classroom discussions, and required students to engage with the news media in their assignments. As I read or heard about various innovative faculty members and their flipped classrooms, I felt like I wasn’t doing enough. By my second semester of teaching at the institution, however, I had become acutely aware of something important: even though I wasn’t flipping the classroom, my students were pushing me to use technology beyond what I had originally planned, which helped them demonstrate their learning.

Student Innovation and Engagement

Each semester, right around the due date of the first assignment (which was also right after I finished laying some early theoretical groundwork for the course), students began e-mailing me hyperlinks to articles, blog posts, and videos on current issues relevant to the course material. Although I never prompted students to send these e-mails, with every hyperlink that rolled into my inbox came an opportunity to engage students on course topics. I invited these students to become my coeducators in the classroom, where they discussed the media they had found with their peers using a critical lens.

The practice of students sharing relevant news articles with professors is nothing new. What is new is the expediency with which technology allows this sharing to happen, which has implications for how faculty members can incorporate shared materials into their courses. As students supplemented our course material with current media, they also demonstrated that they were actively applying their learning and engaging in the course material beyond the classroom. This level of student participation reminded

me of a (deconstructed) discussion board like the ones used in flipped classrooms. As students continued to send me articles, blog posts, and videos, I thought about setting up a formal discussion board to encourage student communication outside of class. But the fact that students were organically creating this teaching and learning space—without any prompt from me—seemed critical to their engagement.

Students' self-driven, technology-assisted engagement not only changed the nature of our classroom, but also aided my ability to formatively assess student learning. Formative assessments help faculty "monitor student learning" in order to "recognize where students are struggling" (or, in my experience, where they are quietly excelling) (Eberly Center for Teaching Excellence 2013). For example, some faculty members assign "minute papers" at the end of class meetings, asking students to "write down the most important point from class that day as well as any unanswered questions they may have" (Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching 2013). My students' engagement with current media provided an excellent opportunity for me to formatively assess their learning, as an example from my Sociology of Sexuality course illustrates.

Assessing Student Learning: Sociology of Sexuality

Included in the learning outcomes of my Sociology of Sexuality course was the requirement that students demonstrate an understanding of sexuality as an intersectional concept that is socially and culturally constructed. To encourage this learning outcome, I created writing assignments that required students to critically analyze institutional norms in relation to sexuality, while describing sexual

identities as diverse, fluid, contextual, and historically based. The first writing assignment focused on sexual identity formation, and most students wrote about the topic from their personal perspectives, demonstrating critical thinking and integrative, applied learning. At the same time, students were demonstrating these outcomes informally as they e-mailed me articles, blog posts, and videos. I was able to use this evidence, in addition to their formal writing assignment, to formatively assess student learning.

For example, one student e-mailed me two hyperlinks in close proximity to the due date of the first writing assignment. One was a TED talk by an artist who discusses her own sexual identity formation in connection to sexual fluidity and gender performativity, and the other was an article about a transgender girl who was not permitted to use the girls' bathroom at her elementary school. Both the video and the article were accompanied by comments from the student, who made direct links to the course material. When I asked the student to speak in the classroom, she provoked discussions about the video and the article with her peers who, in turn, further critically evaluated these supplemental course materials.

This exchange gave me the opportunity to push this student to further engage with the course material in her subsequent writing assignments. Her first paper was strong, but it didn't include an adequately deep analysis of sexual identity formation using class readings. I knew the student could delve deeper, having witnessed her critical discussions of current media. With a little encouragement and feedback, the student ended up producing some of the best academic writing I saw from students in the course. Thus as this student used technology to expand the boundaries of our classroom, she

provided an opportunity for me to formatively assess her ability to think critically and integrate and apply her learning—and to connect that assessment to her writing assignments.

Technology and the Contingent Experience

The era of the flipped classroom provides faculty with exciting opportunities to engage students using new technologies. But faculty members need time and institutional support (including training in the use of new technologies) to successfully flip their classrooms—provisions that generally aren't available to those off the tenure track. If higher education administrators are interested in seeing the contingent majority teach innovatively, they may want to consider offering paid professional development opportunities to adjuncts, including workshops on classroom flipping. Unfortunately, too few institutions offer this kind of support, and contingent faculty members continue to be left behind in the trend toward higher education innovation. Nonetheless, contingent faculty can collaborate with students to use technology effectively in the classroom and to connect learning outcomes to technology in meaningful ways. ☐

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Opportunities

Diversity, Learning, and Student Success

AAC&U will host a Network for Academic Renewal meeting on Diversity, Learning, and Student Success: Policy, Practice, Privilege on March 27–29, 2014, in Chicago, Illinois. Among other topics, the conference will address the role of new technologies in student learning and success through a plenary on “Technology-Enabled Education: Opportunities and Pitfalls” and a preconference workshop on “E-Portfolios as Tools for Advising and Intentional Learning.” For more information, visit www.aacu.org/meetings/.

Virginia Tech Conference on Higher Education Pedagogy

The sixth annual Conference on Higher Education Pedagogy, hosted by the Center for Instructional Development and Educational Research at Virginia Tech, will take place on February 5–7, 2014, in Blacksburg, Virginia. The conference will feature workshops on online and blended courses, e-portfolios, and other uses of technology, as well as keynote speaker José Bowen, author of *Teaching Naked: How Moving Technology Out of Your College Classroom Will Improve Student Learning*. For more information, visit <http://www.cider.vt.edu/conference/>.

NCWIT Summit on Women and IT

The National Center for Women and Information Technology (NCWIT) will host its annual summit on Women in Information Technology on May 19–21, 2014, in Newport Beach, California. A nonprofit organization connecting leaders from K–12, higher education, and the workforce, NCWIT offers programs designed to increase women’s representation in computing and other technology-based fields. To learn more, visit www.ncwit.org.

Resources

Imagining America: Public

Imagining America: Artists and Scholars in Public Life launched *Public*, its new peer-reviewed multimedia e-journal, in October 2013. As Jan Cohen-Cruz notes in her Editor’s Welcome, the journal’s editors aim to create a resource for readers and writers both inside and outside of academe, “a space where a diversity of people exchange ideas and share projects integrating humanities, arts, and design in public life.” The inaugural double issue is available online at <http://public.imagingamerica.org/>.

HASTAC

As described on its website, HASTAC (Humanities, Arts, Science, and Technology Alliance and Collaboratory) “is an alliance of individuals and institutions inspired by the possibilities that new technologies offer us for shaping how we learn, teach, communicate, create, and organize our local and global communities.” Offering membership to anyone who registers, HASTAC’s website serves as a portal to engagement with a community of scholars and thinkers contemplating a range of topics, including civic engagement and the digital divide. To learn more, visit <http://www.hastac.org/>.

National Institute for Technology in Liberal Education

Headquartered at Southwestern University, the National Institute for Technology in Liberal Education (NITLE) is “the key organization for liberal arts colleges and universities seeking to engage students in the unique learning experience that liberal education provides and to use technology strategically to advance the liberal arts mission” (from the website). The NITLE website offers various resources, including case studies showcasing innovative uses of technology to advance global learning or community engagement. To access these resources and learn more, visit <http://www.nitle.org/>.

Center for Collaborative Online International Learning

The State University of New York’s Center for Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) has developed models for international collaboration that support students’ intercultural learning in online and hybrid environments. The COIL website offers information about various modes of implementation, as well as case studies based on specific courses. A Faculty Guide for COIL Course Development is available upon request. For more information, visit <http://www.coil.suny.edu/home>.

AAC&U Congratulates Bernice Resnick Sandler

The Association of American Colleges and Universities congratulates Bernice Resnick Sandler, founding director of AAC&U’s Program on the Status and Education of Women (PSEW), on her recent induction into the National Women’s Hall of Fame. For over forty years, Sandler has been a key advocate for educational equity for women and girls, and she played a critical role in the passage of Title IX in 1972. Under Sandler’s direction, PSEW published the first set of papers on women of color in higher education; the first national report on sex discrimination in collegiate athletics; the first report on the “chilly climate,” a term the project invented; and the first report issuing guidelines for faculty search committees to help them identify whether applicants would be strong advocates for women. Sandler, who directed PSEW from 1971 to 1991, is currently senior scholar in residence at the Women’s Research and Education Institute.

Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement (CLDE) Calendar

The following calendar features events on civic learning sponsored by members of the Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement (CLDE) Action Network and others. For more information, please see the websites featured below, or visit AAC&U's CLDE Calendar online at http://www.aacu.org/civic_learning/events.cfm.

MONTH	DATES	CLDE MEMBER EVENT	LOCATION	WEBSITE
FEBRUARY	5	North Carolina Campus Compact Pathways to Achieving Civic Engagement (PACE) Conference	Wilmington, North Carolina	www.elon.edu/e-web/org/nccc/
	15–17	Interfaith Youth Core Interfaith Leadership Institute (Los Angeles)	Los Angeles, California	www.ifyc.org
MARCH	15–19	NASPA Annual Conference	Baltimore, Maryland	conference2014.naspa.org
	27–28	Indiana Campus Compact Service Engagement Summit	Indianapolis, Indiana	www.indianacampuscompact.org
APRIL	2–4	Washington Campus Compact Continuums of Service Conference	Honolulu, Hawaii	www.wacampuscompact.org
MAY	12–16	Indiana Campus Compact Connecting Campuses with Communities	Indianapolis, Indiana	www.indianacampuscompact.org
JUNE	5–7	Forging Civic Pathways for Students Between Our Institutions: 2014 Annual Meeting, American Democracy Project / The Democracy Commitment	Louisville, Kentucky	thedemocracycommitment.org
	15–19	Interfaith Youth Core and the Council of Independent Colleges' Teaching Interfaith Understanding Seminar	Cambridge, Massachusetts	www.cic.edu/meetings-and-events/

AAC&U and the Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement (CLDE) Action Network

As part of its commitment to preparing all students for civic, ethical, and social responsibility in US and global contexts, and building on the momentum generated by the 2012 White House release of the report *A Crucible Moment: College Learning and Democracy's Future*, AAC&U has formed the Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement (CLDE) Action Network. Coordinated by Caryn McTighe Musil, AAC&U Senior Scholar and Director of Civic Learning and Democracy Initiatives, the network includes thirteen leading civic learning organizations that are committed to making civic inquiry and engagement expected rather than elective for all college students. *Diversity & Democracy* regularly features research and exemplary practices developed and advanced by these partner organizations and their members:

- American Association of State Colleges and Universities
- Anchor Institutions Task Force (AITF)
- Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U)
- The Bonner Foundation
- Bringing Theory to Practice (BTtoP)
- Campus Compact
- Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE)
- The Democracy Commitment
- Imagining America
- The Interfaith Youth Core (IFYC)
- Kettering Foundation
- NASPA: Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education
- New England Resource Center for Higher Education (NERCHE)



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Upcoming AAC&U Meetings

MEETING	LOCATION	DATES
AAC&U ANNUAL MEETING Quality, E-Quality, and Opportunity: How Educational Innovations Will Make—or Break— America's Global Future	<i>Washington, DC</i>	JANUARY 22–25, 2014
NETWORK FOR ACADEMIC RENEWAL General Education and Assessment: Disruptions, Innovations, and Opportunities	<i>Portland, Oregon</i>	FEBRUARY 27– MARCH 1, 2014
NETWORK FOR ACADEMIC RENEWAL Diversity, Learning, and Student Success: Policy, Practice, Privilege	<i>Chicago, Illinois</i>	MARCH 27–29, 2014

About Diversity & Democracy

Diversity & Democracy supports higher education faculty and leaders as they design and implement programs that advance civic learning and democratic engagement, global learning, and engagement with diversity to prepare students for socially responsible action in today's interdependent but unequal world. According to AAC&U's Statement on Liberal Learning, "By its nature...liberal learning is global and pluralistic. It embraces the diversity of ideas and experiences that characterize the social, natural, and intellectual world. To acknowledge such diversity in all its forms is both an intellectual commitment and a social responsibility, for nothing less will equip us to understand our world and to pursue fruitful lives." *Diversity & Democracy* features evidence, research, and exemplary practices to assist practitioners in creating learning opportunities that realize this vision.

About AAC&U

AAC&U is the leading national association concerned with the quality, vitality, and public standing of undergraduate liberal education. Its members are committed to extending the advantages of a liberal education to all students, regardless of academic specialization or intended career. Founded in 1915, AAC&U now comprises more than 1,300 member institutions—including accredited public and private colleges, community colleges, and universities of every type and size. AAC&U functions as a catalyst and facilitator, forging links among presidents, administrators, and faculty members who are engaged in institutional and curricular planning. Information about AAC&U membership, programs, and publications can be found at www.aacu.org.

AAC&U Membership 2013

