

Touchstone



VOLUME 10.1 (Spring 2019)

EUGENIO MARÍA DE HOSTOS COMMUNITY COLLEGE
THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

Touchstone

2019 CALL FOR PAPERS

La piedra de toque de la enseñanza es el interés que produce...

In linking the power of teaching to a broadening of our vision, Eugenio María de Hostos affirmed the power of education. In honor of our namesake's belief, we have created Touchstone, a new journal devoted to the scholarship of teaching and learning and published yearly by the Magda Vasillov Center for Teaching and Learning.

The goals of Touchstone are to increase awareness of scholarly and creative work of the faculty at Hostos and provide an outlet for work that is on its way to outside publication. In accordance to these goals, Touchstone published a diverse range of scholarship from the Hostos Community. This diversity of imaginative and creative work represents the many talents of the faculty here at Hostos.

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Volume 10.1 (Spring 2019)

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Introduction

Double-Issue: Teaching, Learning, and Expressing by Jason Matthew Buchanan

During my time at Hostos, I have seen this community strive to achieve many new goals, to constantly innovate and improve in order to make the college a better place for everyone. This spirit is, I believe, increasingly important as the students, staff, and faculty of Hostos engage with a world that is undergoing dramatic changes. In many ways, the work found in this issue of *Touchstone* represents a response to what is happening in the world around us. As described by the authorial collective known as The Invisible Committee, the world we live in requires a “constant, generous discussion, undertaken in good faith” (158). *Touchstone* represents how the faculty of Hostos create this good faith conversation and help to make “the means of communication” into the “forms of organization” (158). By acting as a space where ideas from across the college are shared, *Touchstone* helps us to communicate with each other and, by doing so, helps us build new organizations of interdisciplinary knowledge and communication.

It is my hope that this issue of *Touchstone* represents moments where faculty present the work that is being done across disciplines. *Touchstone* is a journal where authors can try and cross the vistas of knowledge, creativity, and practice. It is also space of communication where those at Hostos can express the range of work they do in the classroom. This issue, in particular, shows how the faculty of Hostos is using the space of the classroom to create new lines of communication and organization between students and faculty. Angelika Thielsch has noted pedagogy can help “students to better understand why they

learn and act in distinct ways, as individuals and as students,” which helps them to challenge established structures of knowledge and power “by pushing them out of their comfort zones” (15). Touchstone, I hope, helps foster the new registers of teaching and scholarship here at Hostos. In this way, the journal can create new conversations and relationships that allow us, both collectively and individually, to reach new horizons as thinkers, teachers, and scholars.

Finally, I would like to thank all those who have participated with Touchstone this year. Touchstone, itself, is not only representative of the interdisciplinary work found at Hostos but also a product of that interdisciplinary spirit. I would like to thank Jacqueline M. DiSanto, Sherese Mitchell, Sandy Figueroa, Andy Connolly, Alexandra Milsom, Sean Gerrity, Victoria Muñoz, Elizabeth Porter, and Anne Lovering Rounds for their help editing this issue. Going forward, I eagerly anticipate all the future submissions and learning about the new work being done at Hostos.

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How Mature Are We?
The Enduring Legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s
"Beyond Vietnam" Speech
Speech by Dr. Kristopher Burrell, January 15,
2018, St. Paul's Church—National Historic Site,
Mount Vernon, NY

Good afternoon, everyone. Thank you for attending. As David said, I'm Kristopher Burrell and I am honored to be back here at St. Paul's-National Historic Site. It is wonderful to have been asked once again to give the King Day address. The title of my talk today is "How Mature Are We? The Enduring Legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s 'Beyond Vietnam' Speech."

In conceiving of this address, I sought to connect Martin Luther King, Jr. to our current social and political moment, as well as to New York City. These desires led me to King's important, but not-often-enough-discussed, "Beyond Vietnam" speech at Riverside Church in Harlem from April 4, 1967. At Riverside, King delivered a blistering and sophisticated critique of U. S. intervention in Vietnam. In addition, the speech was also prescient in ways that continue to haunt our society into the present day. Before I go into analyzing the speech, however, it is necessary to provide some historical context, both in terms of King's intellectual evolution that led him to Riverside Church, as well as some quick background on the connections between the Cold War and the civil rights movement.

Many people, upon hearing the "Beyond Vietnam" speech, were taken aback and accused King of wading into intellectual and political territory that he was ignorant about. That, however, was not the case. In fact, King's experiences confronting issues of poverty and

structural discrimination in the North and West showed him the inextricable link between military involvement in Vietnam and the inability to eradicate social ills at home. As King spoke about the virtues of nonviolence for bringing about lasting social change, and was trying to combat what he saw as mass alienation among northern blacks, the young people he encountered in places such as Watts and Chicago and Newark pointedly—and King said “rightly”—called attention to U. S. intervention in Vietnam as a counter argument to his position. King said, “Their questions hit home, and I knew that I could never again raise my voice against the violence of the oppressed in the ghettos without having first spoken clearly to the greatest purveyor of violence in the world today: my own government. For the sake of those boys, for the sake of this government, for the sake of the hundreds of thousands trembling under our violence, I cannot be silent.” Although King had long been opposed to warfare, between his being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964 and his interactions with young African Americans in the urban North and West, he decided that he had to be unequivocally and outspokenly opposed to the Vietnam War in order to remain true to his moral beliefs, remain a relevant crusader for human rights, and remain a true patriot in the battle for the “soul of America.” The stakes could not be any higher as far as King was concerned. Nothing less than the future of America, indeed the world, hung in the balance. His assertion about the U. S. government being the greatest purveyor of violence in the world rankled many Americans at the time, but it is no less true today in many ways than in 1967.

King actually gave a sort of “dry run” of this critique of U. S. involvement in Vietnam in 1965. But in the words of scholar Michael Eric Dyson, King was “soundly defeated” as members of Congress, the national media, and civil rights leaders aligned against him; and even the board of his own Southern Christian Leadership Conference issued a public letter stating that the SCLC did not agree with his view on the war. “Senator Thomas Dodd of Connecticut, a close ally of [Lyndon]

Johnson, attacked Dr. King and cited an obscure 1799 criminal statute, the Logan Act, that prohibited private citizens from interacting with foreign governments” as a way to try and silence him.

By early 1967, however, King determined that he could no longer be silent after seeing pictures of Vietnamese children who had been horribly burned by napalm. As he would ultimately say at Riverside in agreement with an official statement from Clergy and Laymen Concerned About Vietnam (CALCAV), the group that invited King to Riverside, “A time comes when silence is betrayal.” King spoke out against the war again in February of 1967 in Los Angeles before his speech at Riverside. The speech, titled “The Casualties of the War in Vietnam,” was only moderately reported on, however. And even the address at Riverside was intended to be, in some senses, a proverbial “soft opening” for an address he was scheduled to give ten days later at the United Nations, where Stokely Carmichael and other black radicals would also be in attendance. However, even what had happened in 1965 did not fully prepare King for the hell he would catch after the “Beyond Vietnam” speech.

Martin Luther King agreed to go to Riverside Church because as he put it, “his conscience [had left him] no other choice.” In the midst of the Cold War and the continually rising tide of the Black Power impulse within the black freedom struggle, King and his co-writer, Dr. Vincent Harding, crafted the address that he would deliver on that spring evening to an overflowing crowd of more than 3,000, exactly one year to the day before his assassination on April 4, 1968. King and Harding worked on the speech, poring over each word, hammering out any equivocation, and adding increasing nuance with each successive revision. By the time Dr. King gave the speech, he did not deviate from the text much at all, and he delivered it without many of the characteristic sonic flourishes that were associated with his more celebrated addresses or his sermons. Rather, in this instance, King chose to deliver the address more as “he was speaking a dissertation;”

more somber in tone, as if imploring the listener to focus only on the words he was saying, rather than get swept up in the delivery and his oratorical brilliance. King was about to issue a dire warning to the Lyndon Johnson administration, to northern liberals both black and white, and to the country at-large about what continuing to fight this war was doing—and would do in the future—to our country, and he wanted absolutely nothing to obscure or overshadow his message.

I see Dr. King's speech as having three parts, a number symbolizing the Holy Trinity, and an organizing principle that he also used in other parts of the speech. In the first section, King did three things. He explained why he accepted the invitation to speak at Riverside, addressed the many liberals who questioned why he would criticize the war and the Johnson administration so publicly, and framed the speech by drawing the apt connection between the escalating amount of money being devoted to the war in Vietnam and the declining amount of money being allocated to anti-poverty programs at home.

In addressing his “allies” who wondered why King was taking such a strong public stand in opposition to the Johnson's administration's foreign policy, particularly in light of the things that Johnson administration had done that benefited African Americans and the poor, King basically told those people that clearly they did not know him very well, nor did they understand how dangerous a world they were living in. As King said, “. . . many persons have questioned me about the wisdom of my path. . . . ‘Why are you speaking about the war, Dr. King?’ ‘Peace and civil rights don't mix.’ . . . And when I hear them, though I often understand the source of their concern, I am nevertheless greatly saddened, for such questions mean that the inquirers have not really known me, my commitment, or my calling. Indeed, their questions suggest they do not know the world in which they live.” King understood that it was necessary to have a broader view of morality and the struggles for justice around the world in order

to improve the condition of humankind. King had said back in early 1965 that he was “much more than a civil-rights leader.” He was much more a radical than is typically acknowledged. He was demonstrating that once again at Riverside Church.

King then went on to show how continued involvement in Vietnam placed a disproportionate burden on poor people of all racial groups. Not only were poor Americans fighting on the front lines of Southeast Asia in larger proportions because they were not in college or eligible for other kinds of exemptions, but the domestic programs designed to help people escape poverty were being slashed to finance the war. King said, “A few years ago there was a shining moment in that struggle [to end poverty]. It seemed as if there was a real promise of hope for the poor, both black and white, through the poverty program. There were experiments, hopes, new beginnings. Then came the buildup in Vietnam, and I watched this program broken and eviscerated as if it were some idle political plaything of a society gone mad on war. And I knew that America would never invest the necessary funds or energies in rehabilitation of its poor so long as adventures like Vietnam continued to draw men and skills and money like some demonic suction tube.” It is significant that he used the word “adventures” in describing the U. S.’s war in Vietnam. King was indicating that the U. S. government was being cavalier with its use of military force and that the gravity of the destruction that was being caused around the world was not fully being realized, or at least it was not influencing U. S. foreign and domestic policy in the ways King had hoped.

King went on to say, “Perhaps a more tragic recognition of reality took place when it became clear to me that the war was doing far more than devastating the hopes of the poor at home. It was sending their sons and their brothers and their husbands to fight and die in extraordinarily high proportions relative to the rest of the population. We were taking the black young men who had been crippled by our society and sending them eight thousand miles away to guarantee

liberties in Southeast Asia which they had not found in southwest Georgia and East Harlem. So we have been repeatedly faced with the cruel irony of watching Negro and white boys on TV screens as they kill and die together for a nation that has been unable to seat them together in the same schools. . . . I could not be silent in the face of such cruel manipulation of the poor.” So, Dr. King increasingly viewed the U. S. “adventure” in Vietnam as an attack on the poor in the United States. The war was both being financed on their backs and contributing to the perpetuation of continuing cycles of poverty. The violence that the U. S. government was purveying was not just occurring in Vietnam, but here at home as well.

As King transitioned into the next section of his address, he reiterated that he had come to voice his opposition to the war in Vietnam as a child of God and person of faith. He believed that any good Christian had to morally object to the war, and could not condemn others to suffering because they were in some way different from he. “Have they forgotten that my ministry is in obedience to the one who loved his enemies so fully that he died for them?” In this section of the speech, King not only accurately and succinctly summarized the trajectory of U. S. involvement in Vietnam from 1945 to 1967, he also critiqued the American government’s motivations for being in Vietnam. King inhabited the perspective of the Vietnamese peasants who had been caught in the crosshairs of the political and military battles raging throughout the country destroying most everything that they held dear. Again, this section of the speech fulfilled three functions.

I won’t go into King’s summary of U. S. involvement in the region, although I can say more afterwards if there are questions about that. I will, instead, talk briefly about what King said about how the Vietnamese peasants viewed the U. S. government and military. He probed the government and forced the audience to consider difficult questions about American involvement in Vietnam. King said, “What

do the peasants think as we ally ourselves with the landlords and as we refuse to put any action into our many words concerning land reform? What do they think as we test out our latest weapons on them, just as the Germans tested out new medicine and tortures in the concentration camps of Europe? Where are the roots of the independent Vietnam we claim to be building? Is it among the voiceless ones?" King's answer was a resounding "no." He argued that the U. S. was crushing the potential for a non-communist independent Vietnam. "We have destroyed their two most cherished institutions: the family and the village. We have destroyed their land and their crops. We have cooperated in the crushing of the nation's only noncommunist revolutionary political force, the unified Buddhist Church. We have supported the enemies of the peasants of Saigon. We have corrupted their women and children and killed their men."

Dr. King was making the point that U. S. foreign policy and military action was increasingly eliminating the potential basis for any kind of constructive alliance between the Vietnamese and the U. S. governments, especially on a noncommunist basis. What reason did the Vietnamese people have to trust the U. S. government? The United States wanted to ensure that Vietnam did not become a communist nation, but King made the point that the U. S. government intentionally mischaracterized the opposition movement in South Vietnam to remove their dictatorial leader as predominantly communist, when South Vietnamese rebels were not. The press in South Vietnam was censored by the government, the National Liberation Front in South Vietnam was going to be excluded from peace negotiations led by the U. S., and the American government had previously lied by saying that Ho Chi Minh, the leader of North Vietnam, had never reached out to the U. S. in search of peace when there was concrete evidence to the contrary. The American public had been lied to about the government's intentions and actions in Vietnam.

In concluding the second section of the speech, King also

expressed concern about what effects the war was having on American troops, and what effects the war was having on America's standing in the world. Dr. King articulated the real benefit of nonviolence, "when it helps us to see the enemy's point of view, to hear his questions, to know his assessment of ourselves. For from his view we may indeed see the basic weaknesses of our own condition, and if we are mature, we may learn and grow and profit from the wisdom of the brothers who are called the opposition." I would ask, how mature were we as a nation in 1967? How much have we matured as a nation today?

Dr. King argued that our continued involvement in Vietnam was diminishing our standing in the world. He said, "If we continue, there will be no doubt in my mind and in the mind of the world that we have no honorable intentions in Vietnam. If we do not stop our war against the people of Vietnam immediately, the world will be left with no other alternative than to see this as some horrible, clumsy, and deadly game we have decided to play."

And with that warning, King went into the final section of his address, in which he gave concrete ideas about how and why the U. S. should withdraw its troops from Vietnam, called for religious leaders to speak out more courageously against the war, and talked about what Americans needed to do in order to create the kind of society the U. S. professed to be. Dr. King listed five things the U. S. government should do immediately to disentangle the nation from Vietnam, including: ending all bombing throughout the country; declaring a cease-fire in order to create the atmosphere for potential negotiations; halt the troop build up in Thailand and Laos, so as to decrease tensions across the entire region; include the North Vietnamese government in the negotiation process for a future unified Vietnam; and set a date for the removal of all U. S. troops in line with the Geneva Accords. Removing the U. S. presence from Vietnam would, nevertheless, require the U. S. to extend true humanitarian assistance to the nation. He called on the U. S. government to provide asylum to all who sought it, extend

medical supplies to Vietnam, and provide reparations for the damage that had been caused.

King offered these policy recommendations for getting the U. S. out of Vietnam in as moral a way as possible, but he was not done with his audience yet because, as he saw it, “[t]he war in Vietnam [was] a symptom of a far deeper malady within the American spirit . . . [there needed to be] a significant and profound change in American life and policy.” As scholar Eric Tang broke down King’s connection between the war abroad and the abandonment of the poor here at home, “The nation’s capacity for violence in Vietnam was a measure of its capacity for violence at home. One could not expect a nation that behaved with such depravity abroad to take seriously the work of eliminating poverty, joblessness, and environmental racism in its own ghettos.” As Dr. King continued to talk about the need to bring about profound changes in American life and policy, he actually returned to ideas that he had been developing for years; that “we as a nation must undergo a radical revolution of values. We must rapidly begin the shift from a thing-oriented society to a person-oriented society. When machines and computers, profit motives and property rights, are considered more important than people, the giant triplets of racism, extreme materialism, and militarism are incapable of being conquered.” The next three paragraphs all began with the phrase, “A true revolution of values will . . .” The symbolism of the trinity continues to abound in this section of his speech.

King made this diagnosis just over fifty years ago, now. For King, Americans had to really address what it means to be just, both in terms of our domestic society and in terms of the kind of world that we were making. As King said, “True compassion is more than just flinging a coin to a beggar. It comes to see that an edifice which produces beggars needs restructuring.” For King, Americans had to really address economic inequality, both at home and globally. King said that, “A true revolution of values will soon look uneasily on the

glaring contrast of poverty and wealth. With righteous indignation, it will look across the seas and see individual capitalists of the West investing huge sums of money in Asia, Africa, and South America, only to take the profits out with no concern for the betterment of the countries, and say, "This is not just." For King, Americans had to reject war by saying, "This way of settling differences is not just."

Nothing short of this radical revolution of values would elevate democracy to its greatest potential and protect the nation from communist infiltration, according to King. He argued that communism spread during the 1960s because the United States had "failed to make democracy real and follow through on the revolutions we initiated." As a result, the rest of the world came to believe that "only Marxism has a revolutionary spirit." The only hope for the U. S. was to recapture that revolutionary democratic spirit and "go out into a sometimes hostile world declaring eternal hostility to poverty, racism, and militarism." Only then could the country not only rehabilitate its image globally, but also create the kind of society that America professed to have.

Dr. King left the pulpit at Riverside to a standing ovation, but the reaction to the speech outside those church walls the next day was swift and scathing. King was excoriated in the white and black press as nearly 170 newspapers across the country denounced him and the speech. The New York Times called Dr. King's statements "facile" and argued that it was "wasteful" for King to divert his energies and talk about Vietnam because the civil rights movement needed to confront "the intractability of slum mores and habits." The Washington Post called King's recommendations "sheer inventions of unsupported fantasy" and opined that, "many who have listened to him with respect will never again accord him the same confidence." The Pittsburgh Courier, A black newspaper, warned that King was "tragically misleading" African Americans about the incredibly complex issues associated with the war. President Lyndon Johnson rescinded an invitation to the White House and authorized the FBI to increase its surveillance campaign

to discredit and destroy him. Other civil rights leaders spurned him. Even the NAACP issued a statement disavowing King's sentiments.

All of these denunciations show that the liberal civil rights establishment, which included the Democratic Party, media, and civil rights organizations were only comfortable with the King that spoke of dreams and racial progress, and that allowed liberals to remain secure in their condescension toward the South, without having to examine their own assumptions or the policies that they had crafted. The liberal establishment did not want to hear a black public intellectual who wasn't talking about the foibles of black people or how much progress African Americans had made. And civil rights organizations did not want to endanger relationships with the federal government or white philanthropic organizations that provided much of the funding they needed to operate.

The backlash to his remarks, King expected, and it certainly disappointed him, but he was not "soundly defeated" as Michael Eric Dyson said of him back in 1965. As historian Benjamin Hedin wrote, "The Riverside speech seemed to unlock something in him, and he would no longer concern himself with political allegiance and popular opinion." And the policies of the liberal establishment only proved King's arguments, rather than dispel them. Liberals who had previously supported the Civil Rights and Voting Rights Acts of the mid-1960s became the same people that supported laws in the late-1960s, such as the Safe Streets Act in 1968, that began the militarization of municipal police forces and put more money into building up the law enforcement and criminal justice apparatuses than had ever been allocated toward Lyndon Johnson's anti-poverty programs.

In the fifty years since, the U. S. has entered into new war fronts across the world. And the Democrats have often stood in lockstep with the Republicans in supporting increasing funding for the military industrial complex, even as the wars extended to the domestic front in the forms of "wars" on drugs, crime, and the poor here at home.

Increasing funding for military intervention overseas has occurred almost without fail, while attacks on the social safety nets of Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, and other social programs have only ramped up over the last fifty years—mostly from Republicans—and are only getting stronger with each passing year. For example, current Speaker of the House Paul Ryan has expressed his desire to cut, if not eliminate Medicare and Medicaid. And the Congress barely passed a temporary resolution to continue funding the Children’s Health Insurance Program, three months after the original bill expired, and just before states were going to have to begin kicking children off of the rolls.

The current budget for the 2018 fiscal year allots nearly \$700 billion for defense spending, including \$634 billion for core expenditures and nearly \$66 billion for current overseas missions. These figures represent a significant hike over the Trump administration’s initial requests back in May of \$603 billion for core expenditures and \$65 billion for overseas missions, which still represented a significant increase over the projected budgetary outlay under the Obama administration’s schedule, and can only be implemented if Congress amends the 2011 law that capped federal spending, known as sequestration. The Trump administration wants the cap lifted, but only for defense spending.

According to the Congressional Budget Office, the current administration’s plans to increase the size and capacity of the military could increase defense spending by \$683 billion more than had been planned by the Obama administration. By contrast, non-defense discretionary spending, which includes essentially everything else such as healthcare, social security’s disability program, the federal student loan program, and welfare programs, would be cut by nearly \$1.6 trillion dollars over the next ten years. The president’s budget proposal totaled a \$59 billion allotment for discretionary education spending, a \$9 billion or 13 percent decrease from the 2017 spending level. So, while base defense spending will rise by \$85 billion over the cap allowed under sequestration, education spending will decrease by

\$9 billion in fiscal year 2018. Decreasing or eliminating funding to education programs and other kinds of anti-poverty programs, while simultaneously signing bills into law that dramatically increase defense spending and allow tax cuts that will disproportionately benefit the top 1 percent of wealth holders in the United States is antithetical to the kind of society that Dr. King was working to create, and smacks of the same double-burden that he described poor Americans facing back in 1967.

And in light of our president's comments in the past few days regarding immigrants from Africa, the Caribbean, and Latin America, in which he disparaged those seeking to escape violence and persecution by coming to the United States in racist terms, I'd like to end by asking the same question that I asked earlier, "how mature of a society are we today?" In light of our current administration's policies, attempted policies, and recent statements, I think King would answer, "not very."

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A Reflection on My Take-Away of the “Hostos Reads” Initiative

by Denise Cummings-Clay, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Education Department

What happens in a classroom when students are asked to read an extra book? What happens when students are asked to share their most inner thoughts on a topic, but fear how others will respond to them? What happens to students and professors when they engage in conversations seemingly unrelated to the course content? As a professor at Hostos Community College, I discovered answers to these questions by implementing the “Hostos Reads” Initiative in each of my courses.

In the classroom, my goal has been to ensure that the essential content of a course has been covered by using diverse instructional methods, such as small group activities. The literature has revealed that students who share and learn in small groups show greater scholastic attainment, incentive, and fulfillment than students who do not (Schrader, 2015).

You might wonder why I have taught in this way. It’s because my teaching practice has been informed through the tenets of Malcolm Knowles who declared that adults tend to define themselves by their experiences, which they bring with them into new learning environments and add much to discussions in the classroom (Knowles, 1984). Thus, I have facilitated learning experiences that allow students from diverse backgrounds to learn academic material based on their varied experiences. Moreover, my practices have rested on the framework of Boud and Miller who believe “that learning can only occur if the experience of the learner is engaged at some level” (Miller and Boud, 1996, p. 9).

As a result, student engagement in the learning environment has been my priority. It was inconceivable to me that student empowerment would surface in my classrooms through asking students to read material outwardly dissimilar to the course content. But this occurred when the CTL started an initiative at the college entitled, “Hostos Reads,” which was designed to engage students, faculty, and staff into conversations with respect to themes like social justice, identity, diversity, etc.

A question that arose when considering the initiative was, “How will I integrate the ‘Hostos Reads’ initiative into my Education courses?” I was unsure of what the outcomes would be, but I believed that it might be worth the risk introducing the initiative to students because I recognized that they would learn more about themselves and society and that knowledge would supplement their course content learning outcomes.

Thus, I embraced the initiative and plunged into the process of urging my students to do the same. The outcome for me was revelatory. Initially, I observed that students enrolled in my courses seemed to be motivated to learn the course content more after they were asked to participate in “Hostos Reads.” Secondly, I recognized that my educational philosophy was evolving from a purely progressivist stance to a two-pronged methodology that incorporated the progressive and social reconstructionist frameworks. Lastly, I noticed that critical thinking (CT) was taking place and serving as a theoretical foundation to guide the assignments developed as part of the initiative. While writing reflections and sharing thoughts in class, students were using critical thinking skills in responding to the themes identified in the books and in their responses to each other in discussions.

I urged students to read the other books designated by the “Hostos Reads” program: Justice Mercy and Americanah. The CTL gave me copies to distribute to students, and students were urged to read at their own pace. The actual assignments were based upon the campus Library Guides developed for each of the books and accessible

to students on our Blackboard platform.

A benefit of the “Hostos Reads” initiative that I observed was that the reading assignments gave students the chance to reflect on their beliefs and thoughts regarding social justice and its impact in educational practice. The process of reflection seemed to inspire them to attend class, participate in course activities, and engage in classroom learning experiences more. Specifically, energy for learning was ignited in my classrooms when I asked my students to read the “Hostos Reads” books and prepare reflections on the themes identified in the books. Individual student reflective writings were shared in classes, which provoked productive discussions. Furthermore, the students were energized to participate in selecting student colleagues to represent their classes with reflections and/or poems for poster presentations for the campus’ CTL Day.

Not only did the program motivate the students, but the process helped me to grow. As a faculty member, enhancing my student-centered instructional strategies to integrate the book into my teaching practice propelled me into developing the skill of managing the distribution of the students’ voices, beliefs, and thoughts. “Negotiating voice in diverse, critically oriented classroom discussions is an interdependent phenomenon, and an art that teachers often develop through experience and self-analysis” (Yannuzzi & Martin, 2014, pg. 714). Facilitating this reflective process afforded me the opportunity to mold student dialogue in ways that supported and shaped the students’ voices while overseeing the single, interpersonal, and andragogical (art of instruction of adults) effects of those voices (Yannuzzi & Martin, 2014). Influencing student voices in this way was uncharted territory for me as there seemed to be less control of the known learning outcomes for students. However, I found the process to be invigorating. Through reflection upon this new practice, I was able to recognize that it also served as a means of strengthening my educational skills.

Another benefit of the “Hostos Reads” initiative became

apparent during my observation of my students' increased motivation in the classes, which revealed that my teaching methodology was shifting. The classes, which I had centered around progressivism, had organically shifted to now include social reconstructivism. The progressivist philosophy of education, which is student-centered, supports our students' responsible participation in society as well as enables them to gain practical knowledge and develop problem-solving skills. Moreover, this philosophy complements the view of the modern discourse and training of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL). Progressivism alone had guided how I engaged my students in the teaching and learning process. I had used its tenets as I subscribe to the philosophies of its two major advocates, John Dewey and Eduard C. Lindeman. Dewey believed that the educational process had two sides – the psychological and sociological; “and that neither can be subordinated to the other nor neglected without evil results following,” (Dewey, 1897, p. 1). Lindeman (1926), author of *The Meaning of Adult Education* who attempted to provide a framework for adult education in his book, argued that Adult Education aimed to train people to participate and to expose intelligent influence in small collective units like the home, the neighborhood, community, trade union, society, etc. For example, in the introductory, pre-requisite courses in Early Childhood Education (ECE), students must observe a classroom for at least 20 hours, while in the other course, students tutor children a minimum of 10 hours during the term to develop the reading and literacy skills of children. Through this process, they gain experience working with children who have some of the greatest needs in developing their foundational skills in literacy.

In tandem with the progressivist approach, student-centered social reconstructionism helps students prepare for a society that is constantly changing. Through the lens of this philosophy, the purpose of education is to urge “schools, teachers, and students to focus their studies and energies on alleviating pervasive social inequities and, as

the name implies, reconstruct society into a new and more just social order” (Sadker & Zittleman, 2010, pg. 284).

After integrating “Hostos Reads” in my classrooms, I reflected, again, upon why I had taken the risk of allowing my students’ voices with respect to controversial topics to be shared in the classroom when there was required ECE curriculum that needed to be taught. I had introduced the initiative because I believe that our students are capable of excellence. It was crucial, from my viewpoint, to use teaching strategies that support students’ efforts to achieve high academic learning outcomes in education. Moreover, I believed it vital to instill certain values and use andragogical methods, which are focused on the adult learner and his/her life situation, that were useful for our students to understand and eventually emulate if they are to be effective in maximizing their potential. I believe that as students pursue their education, they will learn the academic concepts to which they are exposed, integrate ideas, and think critically, thereby maximizing the use of their cognitive processes. My role is thus to give them the opportunity to engage in inspiring, thought-provoking classroom experiences.

“Critical thinking (CT)-based instruction, i.e., structuring a course by means of activities and strategies fostering CT, has been lauded for improving both CT skills and effective learning” (Toy & Ok, pg. 39). The process of thinking critically requires that adult learners recognize and research the assumptions that serve as a basis for their views, beliefs, and actions (Brookfield, 1987). Inserting exercises in the classroom that promote critical thinking became one of my major goals to engage students in active learning. Hence, the last benefit of “Hostos Reads” that appeared to be prevalent as a response to these beliefs involved the students’ capabilities to think critically in their reflections and during classroom activities.

In conclusion, enhanced student engagement, expansion of my teaching methodology, and the promotion of student critical

thinking skills were outcomes of implementing the “Hostos Reads” initiative in my classes. A projected outcome for students who engaged in this Initiative, from my perspective, is that learning about social justice issues and related themes as well as reflecting upon their beliefs about society might help them to better reconcile these matters within themselves to help them determine how best to prepare children to navigate effectively in our changing society. As a faculty member, the process helped me to refine my teaching methodology and skills regarding shaping student voices, organizing their classroom experiences, and being able to facilitate the complexities of critical classroom discussions. I recommend this practice to faculty in all other disciplines. My experience affirms that participation in the “Hostos Reads” initiative is a win-win for students and faculty alike.

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Student Poster 1

EDU 101 – Foundations of Education

MERCY FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE!

Please Have Mercy

By Kimberly Martinez

In a dark airy night
Are two walking down a path
A man and a woman
The pitch blackness blinds them
They hold onto each other's hands
When suddenly they hear a loud scream

Startled by the loudness
They assume it's a psycho
They begin to run
Hyperventilating and panting
Their chests begin to get heavier and heavier
All of a sudden, both the man and woman are tackled
Their faces pressed onto the rough ground
And a cold metal around their wrists
Both so shocked
They couldn't even get a single word out
And the world went silent
As if the world went mute

Thrown behind bars, both are pacing
Soon a man in a suit visits them
And said, "I'll get you out of this!"
The man in the suit fought with all the strength he could
But unfortunately, both had to face something they could have never imagined

They both wonder what have they done?
They were out on the wrong day
In the wrong place
At the wrong time
But then someone storms into the courtroom and yells, "NO!"
It was another man in a suit
He demanded the couple to be released
The judge stared at him blankly
"Why?" and he said, "Because those two are innocent.
They just found the actual couple who did it."

Don't Speak of Us . . .

By Naomi Holmes

End this fake freedom and make our lives real,
Stop letting them tell you you're wrong
Let them know you can feel.

You see the way they look at you when you walk across the room,
They quickly think you're wrong – you are trouble, they assume.
I don't bother to post what I do, no I don't brag

When they speak my name, they say "she got swag."
Why can't I just be focused on the prize, going to school to find out why's . . .
Why they are sweating my brothers, not letting them live,
Most of my brothers just want something to give.

Forgive the ones who made mistakes 'cause they grew up in the hood
They didn't know any better, they misunderstood.
I'm not saying they are perfect, maybe they were wrong
You have no right to judge them

They had to be strong,
Let me change that chain of thought,
Just reasons why we fought.
The way we dress is our style

Although you hate when we smile,
We don't mean you no harm, 'cause we don't share the same charm.
We had abuse from the ones in blue
And if you did, it would change you too.
We just frown 'cause we hurt, stop thinking we all did dirt.

"Why do we want to kill broken people?"

"I believe that 'Just Mercy' means that we should see first, experiences—what people went through—before judging them."

By Janibel Jimenez

"When people are aware of their human rights, they can fight for change and equality because they are conscious of what is right and wrong."

By Nikhrena Wilson

"We need to be compassionate with all people."

By Nikhrena Wilson

"Stereotypes have to be stopped."

By Ivanna Polanco

"Hold on to life! Be reminded that they (people of color, the oppressed, those who are in poverty—the united), don't stand alone."

By Kimiesha Fuller

"We should not discriminate because of a person's identity."

By Jessica Maldonado

Student Poster 2

EDU 104 - Language Arts for Young Children

MERCY

"Our social system doesn't have mercy. There should not be people higher than others and having certain people feeling lower about themselves and not having equal opportunities. We should all be equal in every form."
By Albertina Acevedo

Just A Child... *By Kimshuan Sepulveda*

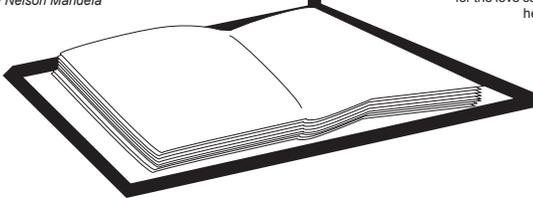
Just a child forced into darkness and despair
Victim of the circumstances, one choice led to a nightmare
Just a child of 14, yet the system declared him an adult
In tears left without a prayer
In the night prisoners targeted, assaulted and destroyed
The last of his childhood, his innocence
Just a child ensnared by the system
Yet one person showed mercy
Just a child damaged, left to pick up the pieces
Just a child who can't flee his nightmare
Victim of a broken justice system –
A system willing to incarcerate our youth
Just a child attempting to overcome his past
One of the lucky ones given an opportunity
To crawl out of the darkness
and find mercy

"Hearing Bryan Stevenson say in the video that even 13-year-olds received life sentences, supports the title of his book, 'Just Mercy.'
By James Owiredo

"I believe that social justice is when everyone is able to be equalized in life."
By Albertina Acevedo

"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world."
By Nelson Mandela

"No one is born hating another person because of the color of his skin, or his background or his religion. People learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for the love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite."
By Nelson Mandela



Student Poster 3

Americanah

**Chasing pavements finding pain
I know one day I will reign
In my reign, I will ascend**

Ascend to the pavements that once caused pain.

**Separate we came separate we saw
Together we conquered, and we will go home
Home, home where we started our journey
In a gurney we will gain the strength
To fix where we came from
A place under the sun
Looking for fun finding fear.**

Fear, that brings tears to my eyes as I
Reach back home with the strength to take
Away the tears of those who once

Wiped away mine.

**Americanah is here
With no fear; she is here to stay
And stray away any fear.**

by: Jaron Rivera

Poster art by:
Diana Maria
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EDU 101 - Foundations of Education course
Dr. Denise Cummings-Clay
Spring 2018

Shades of Skin

Eyes to see the sparks in others' eyes;

Not the skin.

Ears to hear melody not the scream
Words to lift up; not to break down,
Hands to hold the pen;

Never a gun.

Americanah, Americanah help us to see,
How great is integrity.
Race, gender, religion, shouldn't separate us.

What matters is humanity.

I don't want to feel like a queen here, slave there,
I don't want to be gold here, and tin there.
I am the same as me everywhere I go,
I have so much to offer knowledge, love and more.

**Close your eyes and open your heart,
Hold my hand, sing our song.
There is love, why to hate?**

Nature puts the color together; why do we separate?

For happy future we need colorful peace,
We need all the shade of the pigments.
Let's dance in harmony with heart and mind.
NCLB; No Color Left Behind.

by: Aynur Hakimi

Native Language as a Human Right

by Sue Dicker

Language and Power

A foundation of democracy is the freedom to express one's opinions openly, recognized in the United States in the First Amendment of the Constitution. However, the right to use one's native language is a more subtle point and, in this country and others, not widely acknowledged.

Internationally, the right to use the language of one's homeland and heritage has been recognized by major institutions. The United Nations, for example, proclaimed 2008 as the Year of Languages, recognizing the importance of language diversity and the threat it faces: Languages, with their complex implications for unity, communication, social integration, education and development, are of strategic importance for people and planet. Yet, due to globalization processes, they are increasingly under threat, or disappearing altogether. **When languages fade, so does the world's rich tapestry of cultural diversity.** Opportunities, traditions, memory, unique modes of thinking and expression – valuable resources for ensuring a better future are also lost. (*International Year of Languages* 2008; Boldface in the original)

This document encourages member nations to enact policies “allowing each speaker community to use its mother tongue in private and public domains of language use and enabling the speakers to learn and use additional languages.” The initiatives suggested by the document are bi- and multilingual education and culture-centered projects. Bi- and multilingual education are terms encompassing various approaches that use students' heritage languages as well as English. The goals are

good academic outcomes and, depending on the student makeup of the program, either bilingualism (for non-English dominant students or all students) or English proficiency only (for non-English dominant students). Culture-centered projects encourage speaker communities to develop media and arts programs – for example, theater, music, and radio and TV projects – using their languages. The hope is that such steps will counter the weight of majority languages that globalization brings to minority communities.

In the context of world history, globalization has had a broad effect on local cultures, threatening not only languages, as the UN statement points out. Just as the need for local languages decreases, putting their existence in peril, we are seeing the disappearance of local ecosystems: plants, animals and natural habitats. In the case of languages, however, globalization is just one source of peril that minority tongues have faced. There are other reasons why languages have become endangered, reaching back into history. Language diversity within nations was the inevitable result of the creation of nations to begin with, as world leaders drew up artificial borders, encompassing within one entity multiethnic, multicultural and multilingual populations. Under colonization, dominating powers invaded large parts of the world, taking control of indigenous populations and elevating the value of the colonizers' languages over the languages of the colonized. The constant processes of migration also added, and still add, to language endangerment.

With so much linguistic and cultural diversity in nations, there has to be a way for the dominant party to establish and maintain control. This party has to convince the non-dominant population of its superiority, either in race, ethnicity, culture or language, or a combination of these. As linguist Tove Skutnabb-Kangas explains, overt references to race or ethnicity are no longer politically correct means of establishing superiority. Language and culture have become the “defining criteria and as the basis for hierarchization” (Skutnabb-

Kangas 1990: 11). She explains:

In order to legitimate assimilation, the dominant population, its language and culture have to be seen as superior and the dominated ones as inferior. This is a civilizing mission to glorify the dominant and degrade the dominated. In addition, the relationship between groups has to be rationalized, always to the advantage of the dominant group, which is seen as doing the dominated a favor. (Skutnabb-Kangas 1990: 17)

The more powerful sector of society encourages members of the less powerful groups to believe that if they work as hard as they can, they will be able to join those who are privileged. The less powerful are encouraged to take on the outward appearance – in dress, behavior and language – of the more powerful. In some cases, this is possible. In the United States, since the traditionally dominant class has always been white and of European descent, immigrants from northern Europe, and especially their descendents, were and still are able to do this, if they are willing to hide or reject what ties them to their past: by dressing and behaving like the dominant group, speaking only English, and changing their “foreign”-sounding names. Others may not be able to, since the physical features of first-generation immigrants and indigenous populations are passed on to those after them, making later generations appear distinct and “other.”

The Adaptation of Native-Language Groups to U.S. Society, and The Dominance of Anglo-Conformity

The transformation of a member of the non-powerful into a member of the powerful group is one way immigrants and other marginal groups can adapt to the larger society. This is *assimilation*, the cultural transmission process, which usually goes in one direction, with non-dominant groups conforming to the culture of the dominant group. *Anglo-conformity* is assimilation as applied to Anglo-Saxon-dominated nations. In the United States, it is “the desirability of

maintaining English institutions (as modified by the American Revolution), the English language, and English-cultural patterns as dominant and standard in American life” (Gordon 1964: 88).

An example of the pressure of Anglo-conformity on minorities is found in the nineteenth century U.S. policy of placing Native American children in government-run boarding schools. In the semi-autobiographical novel of Alexie Sherman, a teacher tells one of his former students:

We were supposed to kill the Indian and save the child...I didn't really kill Indians. We were supposed to make you give up being Indian. Your songs and stories and language and dancing. Everything. We weren't trying to kill the Indian people. We were trying to kill Indian culture. (Sherman 2007: 35)

The result of this policy is well-known: Native Americans didn't belong anywhere. While they were taught to dress, speak and behave like white Americans, their physical features still set them apart. In cities where they mixed with whites, they were discriminated against. If they went back to their reservations, they also didn't fit in, having given up their languages and cultures.

Later, similar tactics were used on European immigrant children in public schools:

The main fuel for the American melting pot was *shame*. The immigrants were best instructed on how to repulse themselves: millions of people were taught to be ashamed of their own faces, their family names, their parents and grandparents, and their class patterns, histories, and life outlooks. This shame had incredible power to make us learn, especially coupled with *hope*, the other main energy source of the melting pot – hope about becoming modern, about becoming secure, about escaping wars and depressions of the old country, and about being equal with the Americans. (Greenbaum 1974: 431).

Being different from those in power meant being inferior and unworthy of the resources others enjoyed. In this process of immigrant adaptation, the already-powerful kept their place unchallenged.

Assimilation is one of several means of immigrant and minority adaptation to the world they inhabit. Two others are beneficial to the non-powerful, but have not been widely accepted. The early twentieth century philosopher Horace Kallen promoted *pluralism*, a democracy of nationalities, cooperating voluntarily and autonomously...The common language of the commonwealth, the language of its great traditions, would be English, but each nationality would have for its emotional and involuntary life its own peculiar dialect or speech, its own individual and inevitable esthetic and intellectual forms. (Kallen 1924: 124)

Pluralism benefits the non-dominant, and is supported by liberals. At times, conservatives may give it lip service, usually for self-interested ends; for example, candidates for political office often try to attract votes by attending ethnic festivals, sampling ethnic food and speaking briefly to an audience in the group's language. This particular vision of a multilingual America has had shifting support over the years; during times of peace and stability, there is greater support for pluralism, but when the country faces war or other threats from outside, people of certain nationalities, cultures, and languages are deemed suspicious.

The trajectory of the German language in U.S. history is an example. German flourished in the late eighteenth century and into the early nineteenth century in states with large populations of German-speakers: Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Colorado. Pennsylvania state law allowed schools to use German, or German and English, as the language(s) of instruction. However, the late nineteenth century saw support for the German language wane. This accelerated with America's entrance into World War I, as German came to symbolize

the language of the enemy. State and local governments passed laws criminalizing the use of the language in public and private places; the use of German and other languages as languages of instruction and as subjects of instruction was prohibited. This ended only in a 1923 Supreme Court decision prohibiting states from banning foreign language instruction (Kloss 1977).

A final means of adaptation, mentioned previously, is what is popularly called *the melting pot*. The term was first used by Michael-Guillame-Jean de Crevecoeur, an eighteenth century Norman nobleman who traveled across America and spent time living as a farmer in upstate New York. His letters sent home, which became famous, include this passage:

He is an American who, leaving behind him all his ancient prejudices and manners, receives new ones from the new mode of life he has embraced... Here individuals of all races are melted into a new race of men, whose labors and posterity will one day cause great changes in the world. (de Crevecoeur 1904: 54-55)

Despite de Crevecoeur's optimistic view of the future, a melting pot never took place in America. A melting pot would require intermarriage among all people over a period long enough to erase all signs of ethnic or racial distinction, an unlikely prospect. The early colonizers of America were mostly from northern and western Europe. Because these groups shared characteristics, intermarriage was common, creating a limited, biological melting pot. However, other groups – Native Americans and African Americans, as well as later immigrants from other parts of the world – were less likely to be invited into this pot.

What occurred in traits other than biology was different. The largest group of settlers was English Protestant, and other groups gravitated toward this group's religion, culture and language. This was not a process of melting but of Anglo-conformity. The English language gained a prominence that has never been challenged. Still, the image of

the melting pot maintains a strong appeal. For conservatives, looking back to a mythical melting-pot era in arguing against pluralism is a common exercise. The noted historian Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. writes:

The vision of America as melted into one people prevailed through most of the two centuries of the history of the United States. But the twentieth century has brought forth a new and opposing vision...A cult of ethnicity has arisen both among non-Anglo whites and among non-white minorities, to denounce the idea of a melting pot, to challenge the concept of "one people," and to protect, promote and perpetuate separate ethnic and racial communities. (Schlesinger 1992: 14-15)

Schlesinger envisions the melting pot as something that *other* people, "non-Anglo whites and...non-white minorities," are expected to jump into but instead are resisting, fighting the true course of American history. He doesn't identify what groups *are* joining the pot, creating an unclear vision of what the melting pot is. In addition, we find out that he doesn't really support this process. When discussing the education of Hispanic children, he points to the supposed failure of bilingual programs:

Bilingualism has not worked out as planned: rather the contrary. Testimony is mixed, but indications are that bilingual education retards rather than expedites the movement of Hispanic children into the English-speaking world. Bilingualism shuts doors. It nourishes self-ghettoization...Using some language other than English dooms people to second-class citizenship in American society...Monolingual education opens doors to a larger world. (Schlesinger 1992: 108-109)

Schlesinger views the goal of educating Hispanic children as moving them into "the English-speaking world," a world in conformity with mainstream norms. In contrast, a true melting pot would create a new, "American language," to be spoken by "one people." That's clearly not Schlesinger's vision, one in which the English language maintains

its dominance. Schlesinger shares with many others a confusion of two terms: They refer to the melting pot when they actually mean assimilation.

In addition, Schlesinger muddles his argument by claiming that bilingualism is bad for children, while monolingual education opens doors. It's surprising that an intellectual of his stature would confuse the meanings of these two words. One suspects that he misdefines bilingualism as "knowing only Spanish," which would indeed limit children. Knowing only one language, even if it's English, is never as good as knowing two or more. In addition, it would be interesting to know how Schlesinger would apply his definitions to people of his own circle. It's likely that his academic colleagues benefit by being able to read texts written by people in their disciplines in several languages, as well as being able to travel the world and converse with the people they meet.

In the 1980s, Anglo-conformity gained steam from a movement to make English the official language of the United States, something the founding fathers discussed but ultimately felt was unnecessary. The major proponent of such legislation is U.S. English, an organization founded in 1983 by Senator S.I. Hayakawa of California. The current chairman is Mauro E. Mujica, a Chilean immigrant who proudly states, "While English was not my first language, I am perfectly bilingual today. Learning English was never an option nor was it something to which I objected or feared. It was required for success if I wanted to enjoy a prosperous life in the United States" (*U.S. English* 2016). Mujica seems to distinguish himself from some other, unidentified immigrants, who apparently *do* see learning English as an option, who object to or fear it, or who fail to think of it as a requirement for success.

For proponents of English as the official language, any government program that makes use of languages other than English is looked at with suspicion. Although there are many types

of bilingual programs, U.S. English sees bilingual education as one entity, and as a failure. The results of a long-term study of bilingual education, it claims, are “(1) There is no evidence that a program of native language instruction has greater benefits than any other type of education program, and (2) Teaching children to read in English first, instead of in their native tongue, has no negative consequences” (*US English, Inc.* 2016). These statements do not reflect the conclusions of decades of academic research. In addition, true to the dictates of Anglo-conformity, the organization sees the ultimate goal of educating immigrant children as the acquisition of English, not the acquisition of bilingualism (despite Mujica’s own pride in being bilingual) or the overall achievement of academic success.

Proposed legislation to make English the official national language, supported by U.S. English, has never moved through Congress successfully, although thirty-two states have official-English laws of their own. The current congressional proposal is H.R. 997, the English Language Unity Act of 2017. Its purpose is to limit the language of official acts of the federal government to English. Exceptions are made for common-sense purposes and to avoid conflict with other laws: foreign-language education, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, the preservation of Native American languages, national security, international relations, tourism, commerce, public health and safety, the Census, the criminal justice system, and “terms of art or phrases from languages other than English” (*H.R. 997 – The English Language Unity Act of 2017* 2017-2018).

If there are so many exceptions, a legitimate question is why there is a need for the law to begin with. U.S. English finds the current use of multilingualism by the government too expensive. However, the multilingual services it points to actually fall under the exceptions in H.R. 97. Also, missing from its discussion is the difficulty for many immigrants of acquiring more than a rudimentary ability to speak English, and the obstacles posed by a lack of formal education, the cost

of classes, the time needed for taking classes and/or the accessibility of such classes. Limiting government services to English would hardly eliminate the obstacles faced by newcomers wanting to learn English. What the proponents of official English fail to see is that Anglo-conformity dominates U.S. society today. English is not, in fact, in any danger.

“The Star-Spangled Banner” – In What Language?

The official-English movement has gained little ground in the last three decades. However, the dominance of English over all other languages is the backdrop of everyday life in America. From time to time, this assumption is tested, and hackles are raised, when another language appears to encroach on the territory assumed to belong to English. One such occasion came about in the spring of 2006, as the country waited for Senate hearings on immigration reform to resume after a hiatus. Several Latino groups prepared for a day of pro-immigration rallies in cities across the nation. Music producer Adam Kidron released “Nuestro Himno” (Our Hymn), a Spanish-language version of “The Star-Spangled Banner,” sung by several popular Latino artists, written especially for the rallies. The song received a lot of airtime on Spanish-language radio programs. Another version of the song, with English lyrics added, was planned for an album called “Somos Americanos” (“We are Americans”), part of whose profits would go to a Washington-based pro-immigration coalition (Spanish “Star-Spangled Banner” Draws Ire 2006).

The use of a translation of the national anthem into another language began to take on symbolic meanings never intended by its producer or singers. Mark Kidron of the Center for Immigration Studies, a think tank supporting tighter immigration controls, asked, “Would the French accept people singing La Marseillaise in English as a sign of French patriotism? Of course not (Spanish “Star-Spangled Banner” Draws Ire 2006). When then-President George W. Bush was

asked to comment, he said, “I think the national anthem ought to be sung in English. And I think people who want to be a citizen of this country ought to learn English, and they ought to learn to sing the national anthem in English” (Baker 2006).

The messages become clear. Singing the anthem in English is patriotic; singing it in Spanish is unpatriotic. President Bush adds to this the suggestion that singers of the Spanish version don’t know English, are not able to sing the song in English, and/or are not worthy of being citizens. He fails to acknowledge the fact that some people who were going to be at the rally, attended by immigrants and non-immigrant supporters, were able to sing the song in *both* languages, but would choose to sing it in Spanish on this occasion to make a point.

The hypocrisy of Bush’s statement was evident. As a resident and former governor of Texas, Bush often used Spanish in public appearances in front of Mexican-American audiences. At the 2000 Republican National Convention, where he was nominated as the party’s presidential candidate, his bilingual nephew gave a speech in Spanish. According to *Star-Spangled Hypocrite* (2006), during Bush’s first presidential campaign he often went to Hispanic festivals and joined in singing a Spanish-language version of the “Banner;” his 2001 inaugural ceremony featured a bilingual version by Jon Secada. As noted earlier, conservatives may pay lip service to pluralism to attract voters who might not otherwise vote for them. Alternatively, showing support for Anglo-conformity may serve to shore up a politician’s support from the conservative wing of his/her party.

The Spanish-language version of the anthem received support as well. The song is based on a poem written during the War of 1812, and some people acknowledged that its evolution was inevitable. When asked to respond to President Bush’s remarks, Condoleeza Rice, then-Secretary of State and an accomplished pianist, said, “I’ve heard the national anthem done in rap versions, country versions, classical versions. The individualization of the American national anthem is

quite underway” (Baker 2006). Sanneh (2006) recalls that the 1960s rock star Jimi Hendrix’s version, “with guitar pyrotechnics echoing the battlefield pyrotechnics, was once seen as a provocation; now it’s often treated as an exuberant expression of patriotism.”

“Nuestro Himno” is a version of the anthem intended to fit new circumstances. Like the original, it calls for the defense of the nation and refers to the flag as a symbol of freedom. In addition, the song includes a call for brotherhood and equality; “my people” are urged to fight and “break the chains” (A Spanish Version of the Star-Spangled Banner 2006), a call for immigrants to fight for their rights. Sanneh (2006) regards the song as an expression of both political activism and cultural pride. The producer Adam Kidron insisted that the song was never meant to usurp the traditional version, but merely to suit the occasion of the day of rallies.

Interestingly, some ten years later America’s attention is again directed to a conflict between those who see the anthem as a sacred symbol of patriotism and those who wish to use the playing of the anthem to call attention to injustice in the country. In August 2017 Colin Kaepernick, a quarterback for the San Francisco 49ers, sat during the playing of the anthem before a game. He explained two days later that his act was intended to show support for oppressed people, in particular to bring attention to the ways minorities are treated in this country. In the following months, fellow players and team owners joined in, as they moved from sitting to kneeling down or linking arms during the anthem (Sandritter 2017). Once again, the song took on a meaning beyond its traditional significance, as Kaepernick and his supporters tried to shake Americans out of their complacency and face up to the inequities of society. And, once again, their decision to make such a stand was met by criticism from some sectors of society, including the president of the nation.

Native Languages in New York City

Residents of New York City, a historically immigrant-rich urban center, often face challenges to their right to use their native language. The city's Commission on Human Rights recently began a campaign urging residents to come forward with their experiences of discrimination. It began a subway poster campaign featuring models of various ethnicities and nationalities, male and female, with a text beginning "I SHOULD HAVE THE RIGHT." The text of each poster ends differently, focusing on the rights to be safe, to rent an apartment, to maintain one's heritage, to display signs of one's faith, and to get a job. In one poster, a photo of a man is accompanied by the words "I SHOULD HAVE THE RIGHT to speak to my kids in Spanish, without someone telling me to *speak English*." Text at the bottom of the poster informs people that "YOU DO HAVE THE RIGHT. If you have been a victim of discrimination based on your immigration status or heritage, **we can help**" (Italics and Boldface in the original). A telephone number and a web site are offered.

Lauren Elfant, the commission's senior policy counsel, explains that the office has noted an increase in people reporting negative comments, at work and on the streets, regarding the characteristics that make them different from others. The poster regarding the right to speak one's language was a response to a number of complaints received by her office, as well as a situation encountered by a staff member outside the building where the commission is located. Some responses to the poster come from community-based organizations and some from individuals; some contact Elfant's office just to thank the commission for its work.

Staff members of the city's Commission on Human Rights evaluate each response. If there is a possible violation of a city or federal law, the person is asked if he/she wants to file a complaint; if yes, the commission begins an investigation. If there is no law being violated, or the complainant doesn't want to sue, the commission can act in

other ways. If residents of a particular community regularly encounter remarks from other residents, the commission offers to host a meeting between those making the offensive comments and those receiving them, often with the help of a faith-based group in the community, in an effort to mitigate the tension in the neighborhood. In addition, the commission gathers data on all the complaints it receives (personal communication with Lauren Elfant, August 9, 2017).

Further evidence that speaking languages other than English in public spaces elicits negative reactions was collected by the author of this article in a study of New York City bilinguals. This author created an on-line survey on the use of native or heritage languages at home and in public spaces. For this survey, both a native language and a heritage language are languages other than English; the subjects' second language is English, making them bilingual. A native language is the language someone uses while growing up in a non-English speaking country; the person learns English later, perhaps at school as a foreign language or after immigrating to the U.S. A heritage language is also acquired while growing up; at the same time, the person may begin learning English at home from T.V. or older siblings. In this case, English is the major language spoken in the country, and the language of instruction, or one of the languages of instruction, when the subjects start school. People who speak a heritage language are born in the U.S.

The survey was first put on line for subjects who are bilingual English-Spanish and English-Chinese New Yorkers; this survey was live from 2010 to 2012. A second survey sought to draw in a wider set of respondents, anyone who had a heritage or native language in addition to English. This was live from 2013 to 2015. There were 168 responses to the survey.

I searched for possible respondents through social media. For the first survey, the media sites chosen were directed at English-Spanish and English-Chinese bilinguals; for the second survey, the net was cast

more broadly. I sent notices containing the link to New York City museums (such as El Museo del Barrio and the Museum of Chinese in America), organizations that advance the study of nationality groups (such as the Asia Society), and associations that advance the well-being of nationality groups (such as the Korean Cultural Service New York). Universities in the city received notices, including CUNY. Some were directed at institutes (such as the CUNY Dominican Studies Institute at City College and the Caribbean Research Center at Medgar Evers College). Others were sent to student clubs that had social media sites; all city colleges and universities with significant numbers of students from countries outside the U.S., or who identify closely with their families' nationalities, have clubs organized by these students. Respondents gave no information about themselves that could identify them.

Two of the questions in the survey are relevant to this discussion. The subjects were asked if they had been in a situation in which someone near them had reacted negatively to their use of their native or heritage language. If they answered yes, they were given space to explain how often this had happened, to describe a typical situation, and to explain how they reacted. Of the total number of subjects, 68, or 40%, responded positively. All but four offered explanations of these experiences. Four subjects and their responses will be discussed here. All subjects' names are fictitious.

Anna is in her late twenties and was born in Ukraine. She considers Ukrainian and Hungarian as her native languages. Currently, she lives in Brooklyn. Here she discusses what happens when she speaks Ukrainian in public:

Sometimes, people think I'm Russian and I can read on their faces discontent. But I understand them, not everybody likes Russians. When I'm trying to explain that it's a different culture, country, and language they still think I'm Russian which is a bit insulting for me a specially now, with the situation between my country

and Russia.

Rose is in her early twenties. She doesn't give her country of birth, but indicates that she was born outside the United States. Her native language is Spanish. She lives in Manhattan. She writes:

When I was in high school, during a class, I was speaking Spanish to my Spanish speaking friends and the professor heard me. He felt the need to tell me that we live in a country where English is the official language and that I was not permitted to speak Spanish, at least during his class.

Martha is in her mid-thirties. She was born in the United States and lives in Sheepshead Bay. She writes:

It happened recently. About 45 days ago. It started with me closely witnessing someone else's problem (she was seated in front of me) with someone else speaking Spanish during my bus ride home from work one evening. In protest the Spanish speakers (myself included) riding the bus started to speak Spanish. Majority ruled. She shut her mouth, everyone smiled and soon after she exited the bus. We did not have to say anything to her, she got the message.

Finally, there is Karen. She is in her mid-twenties, was born in the United States and lives in Brooklyn. She writes:

Happens all the time. From being a child in elementary school to going through college and perhaps even on the street, in elevators, anywhere really. People tend to remark "immigrant," or something similar. However, when I switch to English and speak in a proficiency that these racist people cannot themselves, match, they just shut up.

One hilarious time that I remembered was that I spoke Chinese in the Chinese community at a Chinese restaurant to order food. The woman behind the counter, Chinese herself, gave me not only a bad look but replied to me rudely. She inquired if I even know what order I'm specifying, in a very rude manner. She was kind to the woman right after me, who spoke to her in English. Then,

I got a call on my cellphone and picked it up, speaking English over the phone to a friend, she immediately treated me well and for whatever strange reason, decided to speak to me in broken English when I in fact, speak Cantonese w/out any accent and she herself, was able to speak Cantonese fluently. Not only did I never go there again, I encourage other Chinese Americans who are proud of their heritage to not be patrons to such a restaurant either. Good example of how a typical Asian American has to deal with hate from non-Asians as well as Western-white-washed Asians who believe English and Whites are better than Non-English languages and Non-Whites.

These subjects were chosen because they represent the diversity of the respondents to the survey: both U.S.-born and foreign-born and speakers of different languages. (Male respondents were rare, and their narratives in response to this question were not as compelling.) The respondents explain their perspectives on why they received negative comments; these explanations reflect the previously-discussed sources of antagonism towards the use of languages other than English in public places.

For Anna, language has changed from being a means of personal identification to a being a symbol of a country she believes Americans view unfavorably. The geopolitics happening halfway around the world has come to her new home. This situation has parallels to the previously-discussed restrictions on the German language during World War I.

Anna answered the survey in March 2014; at this time Russia was making incursions into Ukraine, a move widely criticized by the United States (Edging Closer to War 2014). This causes a complex and frustrating situation for her; not only does she sense people's antagonism when she speaks, but she perceives people confusing the Ukrainian language she speaks with Russian. Ironically, she is identified with Russia even though, as a Ukrainian, she thinks of herself as a victim of

Russian aggression.

In Rose's story, we see the point of view of her high school teacher as he tries to legitimate English as superior to the other languages he hears about him, maybe among the many immigrant languages he hears around him in his school, much as Tove Skuttnab-Kangas explains. We don't know if he has been influenced by the official-English movement, but he believes English to be the legally official language of the country. This is why, he tells Rose, she can't speak Spanish in class. He also claims that he has the right to limit the language used in his classroom to English. He is misguided in both of these assertions.

In Rose's case, she has no way of responding other than to obey her teacher, as he obviously has authority in the classroom. However, in other narratives, the person complaining about the use of a non-English language does not have authority over the person using that language, allowing the speaker to retaliate. We see this in Martha's narrative. Here, the person complaining about a fellow bus-rider's use of Spanish is up against a strong force: all the other Spanish-speakers on the bus. Martha doesn't explain exactly how this happens, but it appears that these riders get the message to speak Spanish, and the language takes over the bus. No more is heard from the complainant. This story speaks to the ubiquity of Spanish, and of other non-English languages heard in New York (*More Foreign-Born Immigrants Live in NYC Than There are People in Chicago* 2013; updated 2017).

Finally, and in a similar vein, we come to Karen's narrative. Here as well, the complainant is not in a position of authority. Added to this is the fact that she speaks the same language as Karen, Cantonese. We don't know why the restaurant worker reacts to Karen's use of Cantonese as she does, but other narratives of this type collected by this survey show that this is not an isolated situation. Because her attitude toward Karen improves when she hears her speak English, it may be that at first the employee looks down on her because she thinks

Karen doesn't know English. This may be something the employee values, since she insists on using her struggling English despite the fact that they both know Cantonese. In any case, Karen interprets her response as the restaurant employee's acceptance of the need for Anglo-conformity. Karen is critical of this, and responds pro-actively, as the bus-riders do. She can't retaliate against the worker, but she can retaliate, rightly or wrongly, against the restaurant, by urging other Chinese Americans to boycott it.

Conclusion

In twenty-first century New York City, and the nation, language and power interact in complex ways. It is illegal to discriminate against immigrants and their descendents, and the native and heritage languages of New Yorkers are not officially banned. In many respects, these groups have a more comfortable life than their counterparts in centuries past. However, there are times when the traits that make some New Yorkers appear outside "the norm," including the language they use, make those who don't possess these traits uncomfortable, and this discomfort may lead to distasteful comments. If we are the targets of such comments, or if we witness them, we may have a choice to make in whether or how to respond.

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To Flip or Not to Flip

by Allison M. Franzese

Introduction

In the 2017-2018 academic year, I experimented with transitioning one of our chemistry courses to a “flipped classroom.” The flipped classroom describes a reversal of traditional teaching in which students gain *first-exposure learning* prior to class and focus on the *processing* part of learning (synthesizing, analyzing, problem-solving, etc.) in class (). Recent studies of flipping the classroom have found significant academic improvement, a >50% reduction in DFW percentage, and improvements in students’ motivation and retention of STEM majors (,). A flipped classroom model for general chemistry has been successfully implemented at both Hunter and Lehman Colleges, and I worked with a postdoc who taught a flipped general chemistry class at Lehman to develop a curriculum here at Hostos.

Methodology

In Fall 2017, I piloted the flipped classroom model in CHE 210, the first semester of our General Chemistry course for science and engineering majors. I used the flipped classroom model in one section of CHE 210 (216A), while I taught my other section (216B) in the usual manner with lectures, inquiry-based activities, and homework that reinforced topics already covered in class. For Section 216A, I “flipped” 1-2 topics from each chapter, with the remaining topics being taught in the same manner as my other section. Both sections were given

homework assignments via MasteringChemistry, an online learning platform associated with our general chemistry textbook. The students in the flipped section were given additional assignments, due before class began. These assignments were also completed on MasteringChemistry and included a video, tutorial, and/or simulation that introduced new material, followed by a short set of simple questions to check their understanding of the material. Each class began with a set of problems for the students to work on in groups, typically assigned through Learning Catalytics, a real-time delivery system offered in conjunction with MasteringChemistry. I would tailor these problem sets based on the students' performance with the pre-lecture assignment; they typically included some questions that were similar (or identical) to those assigned in the pre-lecture homework, and some that were more complex. I walked around the room to provide feedback and assistance when needed. Before moving on to the day's new material, students put the answers to these problems on the board and we discussed them, focusing on topics with which students were still struggling. At the end of the semester, I asked the students in my flipped section to fill out a survey about their perceptions of the flipped teaching style.

In Spring 2018, I continued using the flipped approach for CHE 210, with additional flipped modules, so that pre-lecture assignments were due every week on Monday morning. I modified the assignments based on students' results during the previous term. I also replaced the longer in-class modules with short daily quizzes based on the pre-lecture assignments. Each quiz consisted of one to two questions that were similar (or identical) to those assigned in the pre-lecture homework. These quizzes were graded 50-50 on completion and accuracy. I also added a motivational tool that's used at Lehman College, which offered a bonus point to the whole class each time 100% of the students got 100% on a quiz.

Results and Discussion

Fall 2017 Comparison: Flipped vs. Traditional

In Fall 2017, I taught two sections of CHE 210, piloting the flipped approach with one section. There was no significant difference in the mean grade for each section; they were both in the C+ range. The flipped section did have a lower percentage of students earning D, W, WU, or F but it also had a lower percentage of students earning grades of B+ or better (Fig. 1).

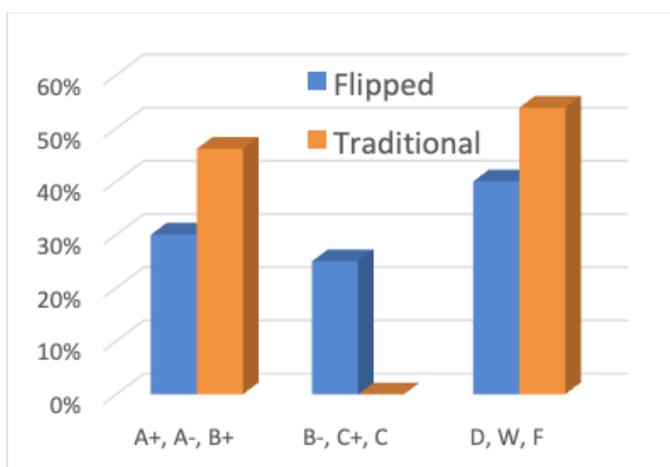


Figure 1: Final course grades for Fall 2017 sections as a percentage of students in each section. The flipped section is in blue; traditional section is red.

The traditional section serves as a pseudo control for the flipped section. Both lectures and recitations were taught by me, scheduled at the same time of day (9:30-10:45 AM), used the online learning platforms Blackboard and MasteringChemistry, and composed primarily of STEM students with ~75% seeking an A.S. degree (Fig 2A). There were, however, some demographic differences in terms of degree program and level of schooling that might make this a less than perfect comparison (Fig. 2).

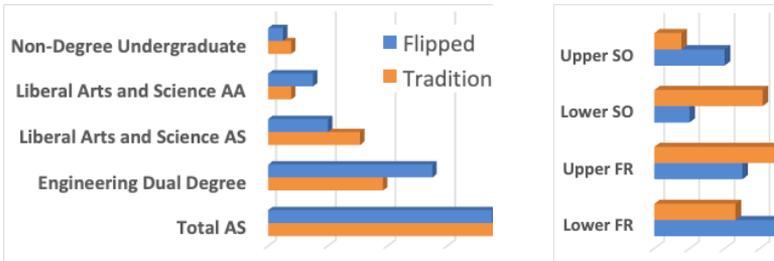


Figure 2: Fall 2017 Student demographics as a percent of students in each section. The flipped section is shown in blue; traditional section is red. **A.** Degree program of students enrolled in each section. Total AS is the sum of Liberal Arts AS and Engineering. **B.** Level of students enrolled in each section.

For example, the flipped section had a higher proportion of new freshman and of upper sophomores compared to the traditional section.

Other differences may be more important: the traditional class may have had some advantage over the flipped section for several reasons. The “traditional” class was held in a smart classroom and had a dedicated peer leader who provided supplemental instruction (SI). The class size was also significantly smaller (13 students in the traditional class *vs.* 20 in the flipped class). These factors may explain the large percentage of high grades in the traditional class, and could also suppress the difference in %DWF.

Flipped vs. Traditional: Long-term Trends

For comparison purposes, I compiled final grade data for all sections of CHE 210 I have taught since Fall 2014. Aside from one outlier in Spring 2017, the mean grades for all sections were consistently in the C to C+ range, regardless of mode of instruction (Fig. 3, yellow).

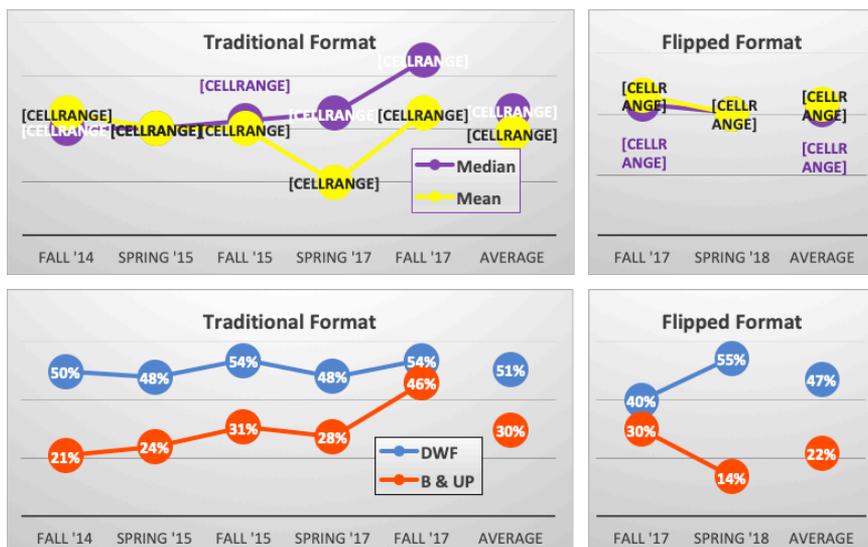


Figure 3. Final course grades for all sections of CHE 210 I taught at Hostos. Top panel: Mean (yellow) and median (purple) course grades for each semester. Bottom panel: Final course grades as a percentage of students in each section. Sum of all D, W, WU, and F in blue; Sum of all B, B+, A-, and A in red. Left: Classes I taught in a more traditional, lecture-based method (but included inquiry-based techniques as I've described in previous years). Right: Classes I taught using a flipped approach.

This is also true for the median grades, with the Fall 2017 traditional section being the exception, with a very high median grade of B+ (Fig. 3, purple). It is clear from the data that the Fall 2017 traditional section was an outlier in the very high percentage of students earning B or higher, while the percent of students earning B or better in my Fall 2017 flipped class was the same as the average value for all the traditional sections I've taught (Fig. 3, red). Furthermore, the percent of students earning D, F, or withdrawing (either officially or unofficially) has been fairly constant for the CHE 210 classes I taught in the traditional manner, hovering near 50%. The < 40% DWF for the Fall 2017 flipped section is a significant improvement (Fig. 3, blue).

Based on the significant reduction in %DWF (one of the main goals for switching to a flipped learning style) and the positive results of the student surveys, I decided to use the flipped strategy for my Spring 2018 CHE 210 class. I made a few adjustments based on the experience I gained in the fall, and set the expectations early in the semester, hoping that the outcome would be the same or better than the previous semester. Unfortunately, this turned out not to be the case, as the data clearly shows; %DWF was roughly the same as for traditional classes and %B and above was the lowest of any section I've taught (Fig. 3).

Flipped vs. Flipped (or What went wrong in Spring 2018?)

In Spring 2018, I implemented a motivational tool to encourage students to complete their pre-lecture assignments (and to complete them on time). I gave short daily quizzes based on the pre-lecture homework that were graded 50% on completion, and I offered bonus points to the class each time they all scored 100% on a daily quiz. I looked at the rates at which students completed the pre-lecture assignments to assess the effectiveness of this reward system and evaluate the reasons for the difference in success of the two flipped sections. I hypothesized that the daily quizzes were not successful in motivating students to complete the pre-lecture assignments, and that lower completion rates led to the poorer student outcomes (i.e. higher %DWF and lower %B and above) in Spring 2018 compared to Fall 2017. The results do not support either of these hypotheses.

It appears that the daily quizzes I gave in Spring 2018 *were* effective in motivating students to complete the pre-lecture assignments. On average, a greater percentage of students completed the pre-lecture assignments in Spring 2018 than in Fall 2017, especially early in the term (Fig 4.).

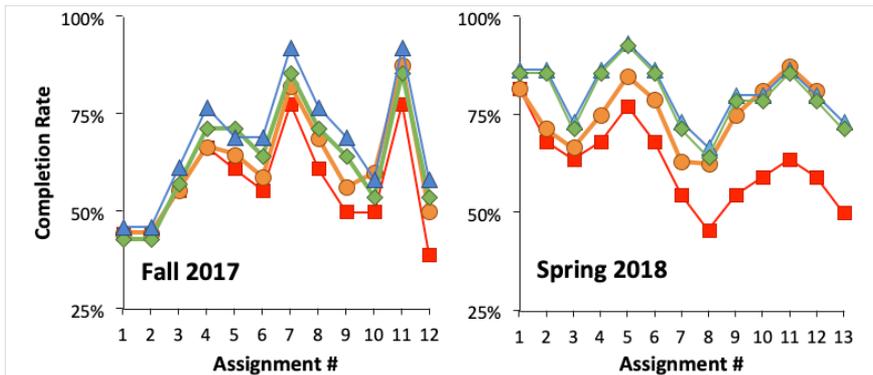


Figure 4: Percentage of students who completed each pre-lecture assignment as a function of time. Red squares show data for all students enrolled past the add/drop period (F'17 $n=18$; Sp'18 $n=22$). Data in orange circles excludes students after they withdrew officially or unofficially (i.e. after they stopped attending class or submitting work). Green diamonds exclude all data from students who withdrew officially or unofficially ($n=14$, $n=15$). Blue triangles exclude data from all students who withdrew as well as those who failed the class ($n=13$, $n=14$).

Removing the data for students who withdrew from the class (blue and green curves), more than 60% of students completed each pre-lecture assignment during Spring 2018, and more than 75% of the class completed 9 out of 13 pre-lecture assignments (Fig. 4, right). These completion rates were much better than in Fall 2017, when only 7 out of 12 pre-lecture assignments were completed by more than 60% of the class, and only one third of the assignments were completed by more than 70% of students (Fig. 4, left). The poorer student outcomes in Spring 2018 were obviously not because fewer students completed the pre-lecture assignments.

Flipped vs. Traditional: The bottom line

We can use the final grade data compilation (Fig. 3) along with the pre-lecture assignment completion rates (Fig. 4), to test the

underlying hypothesis behind assigning pre-lecture assignments, which is that the flipped classroom model will lead to improvements in the success of our students.

Support for the flipped model:

Support for this hypothesis comes from the significant reduction in %DWF in the Fall 2017 flipped section compared to all traditional sections I taught (Fig. 3), but only if one assumes that there were other variables responsible for the differing outcomes of the Fall 2017 and Spring 2018 flipped classes. For example, there may have been important differences in student demographics or classroom atmosphere, or other variables for which I have not accounted.

Another piece of data that could be interpreted to support the idea that the pre-lecture assignments may significantly contribute to student success comes from comparing the pre-lecture assignment completion rates (Fig. 4) of students who completed the course (blue and green curves) with those who did not (red and orange). In both semesters, removing data for students who did not complete the course increases the percentage of students who completed the pre-lecture assignments. Thus, students who completed these assignments were more likely to complete the course.

Against the flipped model:

Some of my data *does not* support the flipped model as a positive intervention for our students in CHE 210. In general, more of my students completed the pre-lecture assignments in Spring 2018 than in Fall 2017 (Fig. 4), yet the Spring 2018 students earned a higher %DWF and lower %B and above than any other CHE 210 class I've taught (Fig. 3). When looking more closely at the rates at which students completed the pre-lecture assignments in each term, some interesting trends emerge. As noted above, throughout both terms, students who completed more of the pre-lecture assignments than students who

failed or withdrew (Fig. 4). Comparing the two terms, however, it is clear there were dramatic differences between the groups of students who completed the term compared to those who didn't (Fig. 4). It may be that the additional homework assignments were an added hardship for students with competing commitments and/or poor time management skills, and the students who could not complete them felt that they were at a disadvantage and decided to drop the class. In other words, completing the pre-lecture assignments did not necessarily help students to pass the course; those students who completed them may have passed anyway. But, not being able to complete the pre-lecture assignments may have caused more students to withdraw, raising the %DWF for Spring 2018. So, including the data for Spring 2018, one could conclude that the flipped classroom model *does not* actually lead to improvements in the success of our students; it may actually hinder their progress.

Conclusions

The results of my experiment with the flipped classroom for CHE 210 do not clearly indicate whether the technique has a positive effect, a negative effect, or no significant effect on our students' success. This is primarily due to a low sample size; more data would be needed to properly assess the effectiveness of a flipped classroom model in improving our students' outcomes.

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100 Words

by Natasha Yannacañedo

Special Conditioner

Every couple months during my childhood my mother would go to Florina — a ninety- pound, four-foot-eight, alcoholic, high-heeled, Filipina hairdresser with big permed black hair. Florina's specialties were melodrama and squealing with delight. "I have to get my special conditioner," my mother would say. I am not sure how old I was when I finally realized the lie. Hair dye was the "special conditioner." I ask myself: how many lies are told for vanity's sake? My lover has even recruited me to deny his latest vanity venture. I have lost count of the number of people that have sworn me to secrecy over "being done" in some manner or another. My trepidation is: will I succumb?

Selective Memory

My mother remembers her rage. My sister remembers the drama. My brother remembers not knowing. My father remembers his helplessness. The doctor remembers the potential lawsuit. I remember death's proximity. And all the blood. Days of bleeding, through my mouth, through my nose, pools of endless blood— no one knowing the cause. "Your daughter will die within the hour if we do not give her a banked blood transfusion." A stranger's gift allowing my salvation. I exist, a living testament, "Blood is the gift of life."

Freedom

Janis once said, "Freedom's just another word for nothing left to lose." Perhaps free isn't all it's cracked up to be? "No expectations, no disappointments," my ex-husband repeatedly said. Furious,

because it made me so desperately sad, I would respond, "What kind of a love denies expectations? Where I feel as if I can't count on you?" Doesn't intimacy come with expectations? How can it not? And what a way to live life, walking around feeling that no one can really be there for you — that you shouldn't expect that security. But you're saving yourself from "disappointment" by being in a constant state of isolation. True intimacy permits some expectations — you cannot convince me otherwise.

The Name Remains Changed

Once upon a time, I was young and head-over-heels in love but too much of a feminist to take on my husband's name. My husband and I combined our last names into one. We petitioned the courts and made it legal. Everyone told us we were insane. I reveled in my rebellion against society's sexist norms. We ended in divorce, and I kept my new name. I had established myself professionally with this name, but most importantly, it reminds me of the courage I had to take a chance. The failure does not matter. What matters is the bravery that exists in me. I gave myself permission to be the exception to the rule. The ex-husband is a tiny memory. I keep the name for me.

Mi Amor, Burn Me to Ashes

As I drive by the cemetery, I survey the dead. I wonder at the strange construct of concrete monuments to those that have left us. Burn me to ashes! Don't leave me to lie in an ornamental deathbed as my bones decay. Don't let me be forgotten within the walls of an overpriced coffin. Return me to the sea, to Machu Picchu, to the tree across the way! Do not implicate me in an artificial and commercial death—have a party, take a vacation, tuck it into savings. Use the money to buy you some happiness, not fund my death.

Top 20 List for Personal Sanity

1. One real vacation a year— no exceptions, no drama.
2. Orgasmic sex at least 3 times a week.
3. Act, dance or create whenever possible.
4. A margarita with rocks/salt when necessary.
5. Quality time with mi amor.
6. 7 hours of sleep.
7. A fat, tuxedo cat named Bambi that cuddles.
8. A book that makes me cry and laugh out loud on the subway.
9. An opening performance that drives me deeper into my character.
10. A brilliant film that touches on the truth of humanity.
11. Clothes that make me feel sensual and fashionable (but not a ludicrous price).
12. A friend that listens.
13. Seeing extraordinary theater.
14. Yoga and Zumba.
15. Comfortable shoes that look sexy.
16. A good meal with a good friend.
17. A well-run rehearsal.
18. Students that rise to the challenge.
19. Stimulating conversation.
20. A lover that doesn't need to be told.

Grey

As the years pass, the greyness of life is something I discover more and more. Not so much discover, as fall upon. There is no real black and white—only varying shades of grey. The sin of lying is not the transgression I learned as a child. Sometimes we lie to make someone feel better...to stave off their sadness. Often there exists a truth in both sides of a quarrel.

Her

She erupted in contagious laughter, her full lips glistening like an enticing whisper beckoning. I resisted temptation and slowly sipped my red wine. Her seductive laughter and perfect, white teeth, that mane of endless hair and hazel eyes that pierce through to the truth. All of her— disintegrating the boundaries of self.

The Crisis

The crisis always happens in the middle of the night. When sleep is most precious, that is when the emergency calls. The ruptured appendix, the water breaking, the high fever, the screaming baby's ear infection. Never at a convenient time when nothing else is going on. It must be dramatic and ill-timed to have its full effect. That way it makes for the best story to tell.

The Claim to Grief

Sometimes we feel as though we have a unique claim to grief — it is ours alone and no one else can fathom our abyss. Wouldn't it simply be more beautiful to acknowledge the universality of the human condition? That we all experience suffering. And with that wisdom, treat one another with more kindness, more empathy, more respect. Instead of lashing out in anger, let's take a moment to acknowledge our shared fragility.

Grandma's Secret

It wasn't until my grandmother had her stroke that my mother discovered the dentures. My grandmother had managed to hide the false teeth from my mother her entire life! My mother stood there in shock in front of the doctor. The stroke was bad enough news— now her mother had, in her vanity, been keeping secrets? The irony was the vanity never dispersed. Even with paralysis on her entire right side and brain damage, my grandmother still applied her makeup every day. And my mother, in revenge for the secrets that had been

kept, would tease her that her eyebrows were drawn on crooked.

Weirdest Dream

“I had the weirdest dream last night...that I shit on myself,” my boyfriend confesses.

“Don’t you remember the text I sent you after the stunt you pulled on Tuesday night?” I ask.

“No, what did it say?” he asks.

“I texted you that you were self-sabotaging and shitting all over our relationship, so your dream makes perfect sense.”

“Oh.”

This Strange Thing Called Email

I remember being in college and hearing about this very strange thing called email. When I learned what it was, I said, “That’s ludicrous; I’ll never do that. I need real interaction.” And yet, now, I spend hours of my life every week responding to emails, the modern day requisite of communication. Technology improves society? I remember days when a phone call announced a birth, a death, an illness, a divorce. Now, I receive emails. Cold, detached emails. And we wonder where people’s empathy has gone? We live in a world of detachment. Emails and texts. The art of conversation is becoming extinct.

My Sister’s Curls

My sister was a little devil with springy curls and mischievous eyes. She had no fear. When she was four, she told the checkout woman how babies were made; the woman’s eyes got bigger and bigger as my sister said the dreaded words “and then the daddy puts his penis in the mommy’s vagina.” My mom was mortified. Then there was the time my sister cut off all her curls because my best friend, Megan, and I wouldn’t play with her. She stuck her curls in my drawer with the hope that I would get blamed for her crime. And, in my family, this was a crime. My mom didn’t allow me to cut my hair until I was

twelve and here my sister had done it to herself at four. My mom came home and screamed into the phone at her hairdresser, "It's an emergency! We are coming over NOW!" The irony was the real emergency was the house that had been on fire right behind ours that day. But my mother couldn't be bothered with that when my sister's curls were at stake.

Seduction in New York

There exists an art in the implementation of a New York seduction. Some are born with the gift of bedroom eyes and come hither charisma. Others must work at it. Women with their painted, puckered lips, high heels, waxed privates, and meticulously applied make-up. Men with their gym routines and carefully styled hair— not to mention financial abundance. The overpriced scents purchased by both sexes to entice the potential lover. The game of seduction may be rigorous and often thrilling. However, I prefer the tranquility of a committed sex life.

I Wasn't Angry

I wasn't angry. I felt sorry for him. He looked like a man on the brink of death — the suicide angel looming, about to pounce. The slouched posture and downcast eyes, the stringy, unwashed hair, the energy of a defeated man perplexed me — how could I have ever madly loved this man? What game had my mind played on me? What was the trick? How could my heart have been so easily fooled? He professed, "I love you and I'm in love with you but I can't be with you." The ridiculousness was laughable when I found distance. I finally figured out it wasn't love — he was infatuated with the idea of love, but the actual act, the practical day to day implementation did not apply since he had never been taught how to do that. And for that, I wasn't angry. I just felt sorry for him.

You Cannot Defeat a Memory

You cannot defeat a memory. You can wail and curse and go to therapy. You can confront the person responsible for the source of the pain. You can meditate and freewrite and fuck your little heart out. But you cannot defeat a memory. The seed has been planted; there is no true uprooting— there is only dealing with it the best way you can. Because everyone knows: you cannot defeat a memory.

Precious Life

A man or woman shall die but once. If this much is true, then this is our one and only precious life to embrace. But what if we have many lives? Perhaps reincarnation is reality and we must work each life to inform the next. Do we then resist the urge to squander our choices on pure pleasure and work towards a life with more integrity and substance, balancing instant gratification with maturity? Or do we live more fully each and every moment of our bountiful lives because we know we have been blessed with so many? The fear of dying resonates among the masses, often paralyzing us so that ironically we forget to live. We will never know for sure the answer within this lifetime so why not assume this is our one and only precious life — and treat it as such.

Grandma is Now the Earth

My grandma is now the earth; we buried her ashes in a rose garden. Often when I watch a play or a movie and someone dies, I think of my grandma and ache for her. She had an amazing spirit. Singing and gambling and winking, brain damage and all. And I think of her in the earth. Randomly in those rose gardens in Santa Rosa. I never visit. She is not really there anyway. That's just her ashes.

Ma'at's Hands

They were a work of art. Ma'at's beautiful, brown hands possessed the most exquisite fingers I had ever seen; they looked like they

had been chiseled to perfection. Obsessed, I would memorize their design whenever rehearsals got tedious. I had never been entranced by a part of someone's body, yet her hands were what poems were made of. Ma'at proved natural beauty still dominated in a Western world of hair straighteners. Her hands remain etched in my memory this many years later.

The Clutter of Life

When one has held proximity to death and escaped on the side of the living, there is often a lesson to be learned. Often, the lesson is shuffled into a "to do" list and buried in the clutter of life. As I unbury priorities and dismantle the chaos of daily existence, I chastise myself for losing the mighty grasp on what is true to my heart, that which is essential for this life of mine. I disappear into paying bills and the tyranny of the North American work ethic. One of the most difficult things to maintain is marching to the beat of my own drum, defying the masses and claiming my own specific piece of life, that which was created just for, and by, me. How many of us get lost in that shuffle of existing?

Mad Waterfalls in Your Head

The faucet won't turn off
And it's not just the constant
Drip, drip
Then torrent of impossible ideas, obsessions, procrastinations,
regrets, pipe dreams
Rushing, flooding the mad waterfalls in your head
As the baby cries incessantly
The old homeless man
Walks with no shoes in a city whose streets are littered with broken
glass
The sirens wail (ambulance stuck in traffic as another New Yorker

dies due to the pure selfishness of others that can't be bothered to clear the path for someone to have the chance to live)
Mad waterfalls in your head
They won't turn off
You love and loathe
The city, the life you've chosen
Mad waterfalls in your head

Young Irony

The first day of school was always so exciting. The planning! What to wear?! What notebook to pick out with a cover that best expressed my personality? Would the teacher be mean? Hard? Too hard? Who would be my best friend? What sports would I be able to get out of? What books would we read? What would we get to write about? And what, oh what, should I wear!?! The anticipation was thrilling! Juxtapose that to the spring, when the days were meticulously counted until the last day of school, and summer plans were all-consuming.

Some Say About God

Some say that God is a HE and He died for our sins
Some say there are many gods and they are almost human like us, flawed and whatnot
Some say he is a SHE, a goddess, and presuming God is a HE is wrong
Some say they find great comfort knowing God exists after the death of a loved one
Some say God is a fantasy created to endure the suffering that is life
Some say God is dead
Some say God simply exists within us, potential needing ignition

I say have whatever God you want
but please don't commit heinous acts in their name

The Other

The present bites like a rabid dog. Choking, drowning in the heart of darkness — almost even disconnected from the overwhelming sadness. If only I could be released into the sunshine of your perspective — birthed to the other side. How do you maintain such light? Positivity is what made me love you, yet now so out of reach, taunting me. Cruel juxtaposition of lovers' opposites. How to achieve the other?

Liberation

Breathe easy, saunter down the street.
Your hair never looked so fabulous,
your clothes show off your sexy ass.
Eat french fries while laughing
and not feeling one ounce of guilt.
Step on stage to thunderous applause
and bow feeling proud.
Watch the ex drool as you walk
through the crowd with your tits bouncing.
Life is good in this country
where freedom is taken for granted.
Savor your liberation.

Kiss

I believe it was the fullness of his lips that provided the overwhelming talent he had for kissing. Or perhaps it was that he could navigate his tongue so sensually. He possessed the gift of instinct— the romantic movie kind of passion where your knees get weak and the wetness, down there, begins right as your lips touch. A lover may have many faults, but a master in the art of kissing can be forgiven almost anything.

The Subway

You know when you get on the subway and some asshole guy is taking up like three seats, sitting with his knees spread way open? No one needs that much space between their legs. I want to scream, “You got 300-pound balls or what?!” Or when people are riding on the subway and are unnecessarily right up on you? Feeling like you went to third base without consenting? I fantasize that sharp knives burst out of my flesh like Wolverine. Except my knives come from all parts of my body like a human porcupine and I completely annihilate the rude fuckers invading my precious space! No wonder my mother worries about my transformation since moving to New York.

Quesadillas & Top Ramen

College was a time of quesadillas and Top Ramen. Gloriously we did not know any better. It was fast and cheap. Satisfied our trashy taste buds, giving invigorated meaning to the words “Ignorance is bliss.” We remember driving up to the coffee stand and ordering three dollar lattes with whole milk, justifying the purchase by saying it was replacing the cost of the cigarettes we used to smoke. And it was always “we”, including friends and possibly the latest lover I had acquired, a unified front, us against the world. What a blissful, ignorant time it was.

Frozen Hearts

There are people that live with frozen hearts. You must not cross them, as they can destroy your life, and even if you don't betray them, they still may ruin your life for sport. It may not be their fault; perhaps when they were children they experienced such cruelty that their hearts became stuck. The clinical term for this is sociopath. The sociopath does not struggle with shame and has no moral conscience; there is no guilt, no remorse, just a history of demolition of innocent people's lives.

Mission Statement

To overcome my own shyness and help others conquer theirs.

To be empowered and teach others to be empowered.

To live in the moment, without detriment to myself or others.

To learn to let things go and accept the truth,
no matter how much I want to kick and scream against it.

To get out of my head.

To not let the suffering in the world overwhelm me.

To truly see strength in my vulnerability.

To act. To teach. To inspire. To create. To produce meaning.

To make the world a better place.

Student Undergraduate Research Activity Title V Grant by Linda Ridley

Introduction

Symbolic Thought vs. Symptomatic Thought

A symbol is an entity that implies something more than its apparent or direct meaning. In short, symbols are myths. Thinking symbolically, then, causes individuals to mythologize and think superstitiously, which leads to confusion.

Traditionally, symbolic thinking has been accepted as a norm of the neurological processes of the human brain. Research from global consultant Edgar Ridley reveals that symbolic thinking is a learned process, resulting from a 'neurological misadventure' (Ridley, 2001). This symbolic thinking encourages metaphors insufficient for accomplishing change in today's global environment, especially considering the shifting demographics. There is a need to replace symbolic thinking with a new mindset, the *Symptomatic Thought Process*[®]. A behavioral concept authored by Ridley, the *Symptomatic Thought Process*[®], encourages actors to think symptomatically by dismissing superstition and myth.

The past several decades have displayed a focus on diversity in the workplace throughout the corporate environment. Questions remain: has the effort been at all impactful, or, due to its symbolic nature, has it only been a distraction? Which behaviors could have been better emphasized to achieve full participation and opportunity by all actors in a firm?

Considerable research has revealed that attempts at diversity are clumsy at best and spurious at worst. The challenge for firms has been to develop a “business case” for why those contributing groups represented by women and people of color should be promoted to levels of leadership within the corporate environment. The unfortunate result, after decades of trial and error, is the enactment of policies designed to tighten the grip of white males on business. These policies create artificial glass ceilings beyond which only a few from the affected groups can reach, and then only with a tenuous hold. Cutting-edge research on symbols and symptoms tells us that the refusal to examine in totality the history of discrimination and racism allows us to perpetuate a myth of white supremacy that prohibits real growth (Ridley, 2008). That myth is enhanced through impotent diversity programs replicated throughout corporate America:

Race remains one of the most hotly controversial and highly complex issues in our society. In American society, race is politically and socially defined. Race has been used to reinforce already powerful groups, while weakening those groups with less power. (Bell Smith and Nkomo, 2003)

With this research project, we examine symbolic behavior in different arenas of business and across the globe. The intention is to examine instances and events when a symptomatic approach would have improved circumstances, all by a change in behavior and decision-making. Perhaps our findings can illuminate the way for a change in behavior in different areas.

The following discussion is provided by two students who served as research participants during the Spring 2018 project: Nora Cordero reviews challenges faced by companies inside the United States as they attempt to make decisions void of symbolic thinking. Leyla Saavedra addresses the impact of symbolic thought in the international arena.

Domestic Issues

Symbolic thinking is the root cause for why racism, gender and age discrimination exists in many of our nation's industries. This section reviews how symbolic thinking as a pathway to racial, gender, and age discrimination manifested in various major American and global corporations.

CHRYSLER CORP. – According to Edgar J. Ridley, certain stereotypes of people exist because of the symbolic thinking towards their human physical attributes (Ridley, 2008). For example, for some industries, a person's age makes an individual irrelevant or unqualified to service their clientele:

The Michigan Court approved Gilbert Foree, a former employee of Chrysler, to sue for age discrimination. Automotive news reported that Chrysler laid off Foree in 1989 and refused to rehire him as a human resources facilitator in 1992 when their new plant in Detroit, MI opened and Foree alleged this decision was based on his age. A three-judge panel agreed that Foree had sufficient evidence to prove age was a determining factor why Chrysler decided not to rehire him. The court deemed that with his experience interpreting Chrysler-UAW collective bargaining agreements, Foree was qualified for the position. However, the three people hired as the human resources facilitators lacked the experience required for the position and the court noted two of the three did not have the 5 years mandatory experience in personnel-related positions. The judges also noted that Foree's computer skills were either comparable, if not superior to the credentials of the people hired. (Freedman, 1995).

Indeed, the Chrysler Corporation and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission in 1989 settled an age discrimination suit filed by the commission in 1981 on behalf of 231 former salaried Chrysler employees for \$8.1 million (Levin, 1989). Many court cases or lawsuit settlements based on discrimination have cost companies

either hundreds of thousands or millions of dollars in payouts (Levin, 1989).

GMAC/ALLY FINANCIAL – Another form of discriminatory practice affecting the auto industry due to symbolic thinking is racism. A report written by the National Fair Housing Alliance states that Yale Law Professor Ian Ayres was the first researcher to prove by using a quantitative methodology that the auto lending industry has a long history of discrimination due to unfair dealer markups on auto loans. Nonwhite car purchasers, particularly black males, were systematically asked to pay more than twice the markup given to white male car purchasers. In 2003, Professor Mark Cohen conducted Professor Ayers's study on a broader scale to 1.5 million of General Motors Acceptance Corporation loans cases, concluding that black customers, although equally qualified with white customers, were three times as likely to be charged an interest rate markup on their loans financed by General Motors Acceptance Corporation (National Fair Housing Alliance, 2018). In the late 1990s, the National Consumer Law Center co-counseled class action lawsuits against all of the major auto finance companies for discretionary markups using a methodology based on race. Loans were obtained from driver's license data from states that recorded drivers' races; for example, in Wisconsin, whereas black Ford buyers paid an average \$1,041 markup, white buyers paid \$156 (Rossman, 2015). As a settlement, all the major auto finance companies paid millions of dollars, and they agreed that they would not mark up rates for five years.

It is striking to chronicle the monetary disbursement of companies that do not recognize the damage of symbolic thought. In 2013, for example, Ally Financial, formerly General Motors' subsidiary GMAC, reached a \$98 million settlement with Federal authorities for discriminatory lending practices since April 2011 against car loan borrowers who were Hispanic, African-American, and Asian/Pacific

Islanders (Isidore, 2013).

TOYOTA – Toyota's financing arm paid as much as \$21.9 million in 2016 to black and Asian borrowers who paid more for auto loans than white borrowers, settling allegations of discrimination by federal regulators (Koren, 2016).

HONDA – In 2005 under the settlements, J.P. Morgan Chase & Co's Bank One unit, Bank of America Corp., U.S. Bancorp and American Honda Finance Corp., are required to offer about \$35.5 billion in no-markup loans to minorities. Also, as part of the settlement, the banks agreed to each make monetary contributions to “nonprofit groups for the purpose of consumer education” (Hawkins, 2005).

Corporate America is being held accountable to shape up its employment practices, and the voices of many are being heard loud and clear in the court arena. Other giant companies that have agreed to payouts in lawsuit settlements are Walmart, Abercrombie & Fitch, Coca-Cola Co., Texaco Inc., and Chipotle, to name a few.

WALMART – According to a sex discrimination lawsuit filed with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, Indianapolis, Walmart stores were ordered to pay \$11.7 million in back wages and compensatory damages, its share of employer taxes, and up to \$250,000 in administration fees because their London, KY Distribution Center regularly hired male entry-level applicants for warehouse positions and excluded female applicants who were equally or better qualified (U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 2010).

In another lawsuit for same-sex benefits, Walmart agreed to pay \$7.5 million to cover claims of some employees who weren't able to obtain coverage for their same-sex spouses from 2011 to 2013 (Rossman, 2016).

ABERCROMBIE & FITCH – Abercrombie & Fitch, one of the nation’s trendiest retailers, settled its class action race and sex discrimination lawsuits for \$40 million to several thousand minorities and females, plus \$7 million in legal fees. The company agreed to alter its well-known collegiate, all-American-largely-white image by adding more blacks, Hispanics and Asians to its marketing materials (Greenhouse, 2004).

COCA-COLA – In one of the largest racial discrimination settlements in U.S. history, Coca-Cola Co. agreed to pay \$156 million to settle allegations that it routinely discriminated against black employees in pay, promotions and performance evaluations; in addition, the settlement also mandated that the company make sweeping changes, costing an additional \$36 million (Winter, 2000).

TEXACO – Texaco settled the largest ever racial discrimination suit in 1996, agreeing to pay \$115 million to approximately 1,400 class members; \$26.1 million in raises over the next five years to minority workers; and \$35 million to fund a Task Force to implement changes in the company’s human resources programs; during litigation, Texaco lost more than \$1 billion dollars of its capitalization (CNN Money, 1996).

CHIPOTLE – In 2016, a federal jury in Cincinnati determined that Chipotle Mexican Grill wrongfully terminated three former general managers on the basis of their gender, and that it violated the federal Family and Medical Leave Act. The jury awarded the three female plaintiffs roughly \$600,000 in damages (Hussein, 2016). A U.S. District Court jury in Washington, D.C., awarded \$550,000 to Doris Garcia Hernandez, a former employee of the burrito chain, after determining that she was fired by her manager for being pregnant (Cooper, 2016).

PALLET COMPANIES – The EEOC reached its first settlement in an anti-gay bias case against Pallet Companies for \$202,200, as a result of the firing of a lesbian employee who had complained to management that her supervisor was harassing her based on her sexual orientation (Johnson, 2016).

OHIO UNIVERSITY – Robert Lipset filed an age discrimination lawsuit against Ohio University in 2001 for denying him tenure based on age discrimination. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission ordered the university to offer a tenured associate professor position to Robert Lipset and to give him \$266,000 in back pay (Lederman, 2006). Some myths and stereotypes associated with old age are: memory loss, antiquated thinking, inability to change, absenteeism, inefficiency, poor productivity, the characteristic of being boring, weakness, helplessness, poor health, and the inability to learn new things. This mythologizing is a direct impact of symbolic thought. Symbolic thinking can lead a person to base decisions on distorted perceptions of what is true, rather than evidence-based facts. Symbolic thinking is acquired through socialization, because people attach meaning and behavior to age, gender, lifestyle and racial groups, (e.g., in some cultures people attribute wisdom to a person with a full head of white hair). Ohio University was penalized for age discrimination because of symbolic thinking by deeming that Lipset was too old, which made him unworthy of tenure. If the University had used symptomatic thinking, administrators would have considered only the evidence-based facts of Lipset’s academic achievements and work history with the university to gauge whether he was qualified to receive tenure. The Ohio Civil Rights Commission concluded that Lipset qualified for a tenured position based on the following facts:

Lipset spent 20 years as an engineer in the automobile industry. He received positive annual evaluations and won a series of awards, for both teaching and research, in his first six years at the Ohio University.

Lipset had won the department's research award the year before he applied for tenure, been published in "some of the most highly respected journals in engineering," and received grants. He had received the largest merit raise in the department just before the tenure ruling, and the raises were distributed based on the same basic criteria used in the tenure process. The commission concluded that "substantially younger professors in the IMSE Department have been awarded promotion and tenure despite having markedly lower performance ratings than Dr. Lipset" (Lederman, 2006).

Is there a solution to discriminatory practices in corporate America? As we can see from these multiple examples from business and academia, symptomatic thinking can provide global business leaders with an effective methodology for making successful business decisions void of any discrimination based on race, gender, age and lifestyle.

International Issues

The Symbolic Thinking of a Country

Once the richest country in South America, Venezuela is today involved in what is essentially a post-war humanitarian crisis, minus the war. Historically, Venezuela was well known for its production and export of oil, which has been the country's main profit resource. Today, the country is best known for its former president, Hugo Chávez Frías. Chávez died in 2013, but it feels like he is still alive. Unsurprisingly, Venezuelans' beliefs and political ideologies still reflect the concept of socialism, which is attributable to Chávez. Former president Chávez has become the country's most potent political symbol controlling the behavior of much of its people.

As we learned in this research process, a symbol can dictate and control people's thoughts and behaviors. This could be used in a right manner or a wrong manner. Edgar Ridley states, "Mental illness is a product of symbolic-behavior" (Ridley, 2008). However, symbolic

thinkers are so comfortable with their thoughts that they rarely realize that they're being controlled. That is the case for Venezuelans. The people's political symbol, Chávez, has been controlling their thoughts, but they can't see it. Venezuelans have been controlled in such a way that they've lost their ability to make choices for themselves, and so, Chávez's socialism remains the operative political philosophy by default. This is not the first time that this phenomenon has occurred. Such communist regimes as China, Cuba, and others have historically employed symbols to manipulate the thinking of their peoples. The oppressive government convinces them that they are patriotic when, in reality, they are forced to obey. Losing their ability to think for themselves, individuals who once had the power to choose to speak out, or protest, or demand better-living conditions, now face murder or forced surrender.

This blind adherence to the Chávez regime created a domino effect in Venezuela. First, the political system went into crisis during Chávez's presidency. Then, the currency-control pushed the country into an economic downfall, and created an economic monster, the black market. Additional consequences included economic inflation, widespread unemployment, poverty, crime, and starvation. All those factors placed additional burdens on the Venezuelan healthcare system, which was not just dysfunctional, but rather non-existent. After the fall of the dominos, immigration has become the most suitable option for many.

The control of symbolic thinking is obvious from the perspective of foreign observers, who easily perceive Venezuela's political crisis, economic fall, and social disintegration. Incredibly, due to symbolic thinking, many Venezuelans have been unable to comprehend that they are living and suffering the consequences of the system's collapse. Consequently, they blindly follow a deceased leader. Believing and supporting a system that has only brought hunger, insecurity, a precarious health care system and other deficiencies on the basic needs

of people is a high price to pay for remaining loyal to a symbol.

It is important to dissect all these factors for a better understanding of the destructive symbolic thinking taking place in Venezuela.

Chávez as a Political Symbol

The face of the deceased former president, Hugo Chávez, is an integral part of Venezuelans' lives. People can see his face on a daily basis on t-shirts, murals, street paintings, advertisements, etc. A common image of Chávez is one where people can see only his eyes, which trigger a singular emotion in citizens: it reminds people of the day before Chávez's flight to Cuba to have cancer surgery. On that penultimate day of his life, Chávez begged his people to vote for Nicolás Maduro, the current president of Venezuela. With tears in his eyes, Chávez promised that socialism was the answer for a better country. Hence, every Venezuelan should vote in favor of what he described as twenty-first century socialism.

Venezuela is a majority-Catholic country. For Catholics, the belief in the afterlife is a reality. This is a result of symbolic behavior: "Religion is the most unifying and dividing force in civilization" (Ridley, 2008). Clearly, religious belief has unified the Venezuelan people in the idea that Chávez is looking down on them from heaven. Chávez's image is a symbol of a promise that everyone must keep, no matter what. Although questions pertaining to the afterlife are open to debate, it is clear that this symbolic thinking has detrimental effects. The enforced loyalty to Chávez keeps the people unquestioningly following a political party that promises them a better future, but in truth offers only misery, sadness, and widespread death.

One point is clear: Chávez was an expert manipulator. He was able to make people love him as an adoptive family member and father. The bond between a father and his child is powerful. Most Venezuelans regard themselves as Chávez's children, which makes them further trust

in his political philosophy. As obedient as children, the people do not question the government. Their blind loyalty is more powerful now that their adoptive father has passed away. Commonly, the deceased are remembered as good and righteous, a phenomenon that has only enhanced Chávez's legacy with the people. This memory of a great Venezuelan past under Chávez, a past that essentially never existed, is controlling Venezuelans' futures and lives.

Currency Control and The Black Market

During the 1990s, the currency exchange in Venezuela was not restricted by the government. Therefore, business, public, governmental and personal entities could buy as many dollars as they could afford. However, in 2003, former president Chávez decided to implement economic measures that he claimed would help the country. Under these measures, he created the currency-exchange entities. In the beginning, one of the entities was only intended to import food and medicine, with the promise of a preferential currency-exchange price that would keep affordable prices for the commonwealth. The money used for that measure was taken from the only oil company that depends on the whole country for profit, *Petróleos de Venezuela, S.A. (PDVSA)*. During the Chávez's era, this measure hurt pharmaceutical companies that later decided to join in the government process. More recently, as a result of Venezuela's recession under the rule of Nicolás Maduro, the government's debts with international pharmaceuticals has made medicine importation into the country impossible. Basic over-the-counter medicines such as ibuprofen, aspirin, or birth control pills are impossible to find.

In the meantime, the black market randomly establishes the currency-exchange price per day. According to *Elnacional.com*, Venezuela's Central Bank fixed the currency-exchange at 25.000 bolivars for each dollar. However, because the government has decided not to sell dollars to any entity in the country, either for business or

personal use, the only way to buy the American currency is on the black market. According to the above online news, the black-market was selling each dollar for 228.000 bolivars as of February 2018. By April 2018, the black-market dollar had increased to is 650.000 bolivars. This unequal currency-exchange has jeopardized the entire healthcare system in Venezuela. Unquestionably, if an entity has no means to buy American currency, it is not able to import medicine into the country. The irony is that the government has also been unable to import medicines. The drug shortage in Venezuela affects not only private pharmaceutical companies, but also governmental entities. Ironically, without medicine importation into the country, people who go to public hospitals for medical attention must sit in a waiting room where they will likely contemplate an image of Chávez, who had promised prosperity for Venezuela under socialism. In the midst of economic inflation and medicine shortages, that propagandistic image of prosperity is revealed to be without value.

Crisis in Healthcare

Reportedly, “Venezuela was the first country to eradicate malaria in much of its territory after a successful insecticide-spraying campaign led by Arnaldo Gabaldon in the 1950s” (Hotez, 2017). Unfortunately, the country has dramatically retreated in its disease control, contributing to an increase in malaria, dengue, leishmaniasis, and chagas. One of the causes is the shortage of insecticides and antiparasitic medicines, which cannot be imported due to the lack of American currency. The domino effect is clear.

Malnutrition is a big problem that is causing increased health problems. The average salary in Venezuela is insufficient to cover a family’s basic needs. Many families receive remittances for one relative living overseas. One concern is that there is no assurance that monies sent by overseas relatives are received by their families. Once the cargo arrives at Venezuelan customs, the government illegally checks

everything before deciding what to allow into the country. Many times, boxes full of food are retained, and the food is stolen.

For those who live in the countryside and have no possibility of external help, the situation is unbearable. Forero states that “Hordes of people, many with children in tow, rummage through garbage.” Such people end up in hospitals with malnourished children that need immediate health care attention. Ironically, the basic need for those children is food, and the only food available is at the black-market price, a price that is impossible for poor people to afford (Forero, 2017).

The scenario is even worse for patients who need special treatment. Under Chávez’s regime, he “promoted and revamped a programme of free cancer drugs to all Venezuelans and residents” (Daryanani, 2017). Venezuela was the “envy of much of the continent.” Today, the situation is different. The currency control has made it almost impossible to obtain the necessary drugs for international pharmaceutical companies. Patients who can afford their own medicines must find them overseas. The president of a non-governmental organization in Venezuela, Francisco Valencia, reported, “There are 300,000 patients with chronic diseases who do not have proper medicines. Almost half are cancer patients -- breast cancer patients have not received any treatment since August 2016” (Burki, 2017). In 2016, the aforementioned situation was fully documented by a Human Rights Watch Report.

Summary

Symptomatic thinking automatically eliminates symbolic thinking. Although symptoms have traditionally been thought of primarily in the medical field, symptoms were originally used as cultural indicators. Very importantly, symptoms are innate to the neurological processes of the human brain, while symbols are not.

Edgar Ridley tells us that there are only two approaches to life: symbolic or symptomatic. By behaving symptomatically, we are correctly responding to the symptomatic signs of our environment –

we are not mythologizing. Philosopher Susanne Langer tells us:

A sign indicates the existence – past, present or future – of a thing, event or condition. Wet streets are a sign that it has rained. A patter on the roof is a sign that it is raining. A fall of the barometer or a ring around the moon is a sign that it is going to rain. In an unirrigated place, abundant verdure is a sign that it often rains there. A smell of smoke signifies the presence of fire.

All the examples here adduced are natural signs. A natural sign is a part of a greater event, or of a complex condition, and to an experienced observer it signifies the rest of that situation of which it is a notable feature. It is a symptom of a state of affairs. (author's emphasis) (Langer, 1942 as cited in Ridley, 2008)

Furthermore, in order to optimize efficiency when implementing diversity in the workplace, managers must have an in-depth understanding of race:

Race has played a unique role in the formation and historical development of the United States. Since the historical encounter of the hemispheres and the onset of transatlantic enslavement were the fundamental acts of race-making, since they launched a global and world-historical process of 'making up people' that constituted the modern world, race has become the template of both difference and inequality. The establishment and reproduction of different regimes of domination, inequality, and difference in the United States have consciously drawn upon concepts of difference, hierarchy, and marginalization based on race. The genocidal policies and practices directed towards indigenous peoples in the conquest and settlement of the 'new world,' and towards African peoples in the organization of racial slavery, combined to form a template, a master frame, that has perniciously shaped the treatment and experiences of other subordinated groups as well. Race is a fundamental organizing principle of social stratification. It has influenced the definition of rights and privileges, the distribution of resources, and the ideologies

and practices of subordination and oppression. The concept of race as a marker of difference has permeated all forms of social relations. It is a template for the processes of marginalization that continue to shape social structures as well as collective and individual psyches. (Lomi and Winant, 2015)

In short, race is a social construct, borne out of myth. Mythology originates with symbols, as Ridley tells us:

The productivity problems of America stem from symbolism and manipulation of the resulting mythology. The business community must understand this fact in order for productivity to become a reality. All metaphors used in the past must be discarded. New metaphors must be carefully examined and eventually eliminated. The business world, like other areas of human activity, has failed to see the need to eradicate myth, metaphors, and rituals. Instead, the necessity of these entities has been emphasized. As long as the business world sees the need for these symbol systems, the problem of productivity will continue to plague all aspects of American business transaction. (Ridley, 2001)

Sociology and humanities research abound with complex analyses of the damage wrought by racism. Nevertheless, the business literature concerning diversity within corporations is lacking a full-on examination of the incorrect assumptions held throughout history.

The very notion of leadership, especially in America, has been predicated upon the superiority of the white male (Bonilla-Silva, 2014). This requires an unflinching acceptance of management dogma, with little-to-no inquiry or challenge. The twentieth century in America was riddled with management errors that, in hindsight, beg the question of how such behavior was permitted to occur, and whether actors operating with a different lens might have been more successful, if only given an opportunity.

Without a concrete understanding of symbols and symptoms, firms will continue to underutilize their talent bases, as Ridley reminds us:

W. Edward Deming stated in Out of the Crisis that 'the United States today might be the most underdeveloped country in the world. The United States misuses and abuses the skills and knowledge of an army of employed people in all ranks of industry.' The United States has used myths to manipulate her image around the world so that there is a misleading view of her strengths and weaknesses. Clearly the United States is no longer the economic powerhouse it once was. The nation's prevalent metaphors are no longer functional or productive. (Ridley, 2001)

We find it helpful to rely on Ridley's instructive treatise on the proper approach to symptoms:

[There is a] misapplication and misinterpretation of root cause analysis. Unfortunately, the business world [and] academia have mythologized the interpretation of this problem-solving method. [The] common view, that symptoms are not a part of an underlying problem, destroys any opportunity of not only solving global economic crises but the problems of human behavior. One of the most glaring outcomes of the misinterpretation of root cause analysis is the fact that racism is a symptom. Racism is a symptom of the neurological misadventure of primordial man. Racism is a symptom of superstition and mythology, viz-a-viz symbolism. So when we practice racism, we are practicing symbolic behavior. The world, and America in particular, refuses to deal with the racial problem, the core problem. Symptoms are a significant part of any problem or entity they represent. Our refusal to deal with racism is our refusal to deal with symptoms, because we do not want to solve the problem of racism. [Former] U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder was correct when he said that we are 'cowards' for not dealing with the racial problem. It takes courage to deal with the symptoms. (Ridley, 2017)

Historically, it has always been maintained that symbols and symbolic thinking were a positive force for good in society. Nevertheless, as Ridley suggests:

Living a symbolic life is living a mythological existence based on racism, dehumanization, constant tribalism, religious conflict, entities that tear down the very fabric of civilization. We cannot live out our life symbolically and have a civilized society. (Ridley, 2001).

When do we witness symbolic thought in the workplace? The easiest way to reduce symbolic thinking is to view how women and people of color have traditionally fared in the corporate environment. The student research in Part I of this essay details how expensive it can become for firms that persist in symbolic management. As for the damages of symbolic thought on a global scale, the examples are endless. The student research in Part II of this essay provides an insightful glimpse at the powerful influences that can hold sway if a population is convinced to think symbolically in unquestioning support of a charismatic leader.

This very brief exploration into the use of symbolic thought both domestically and globally provides but a small example of the damage of symbolic thinking. Future research will allow us to examine the impact of symptomatic thought as a replacement for symbolic thought.

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Developing as a Culturally Competent Educator

by Etienne A. Kouakou

Public schools today have an unprecedented percentage of LEP/ELL/ESL students. These three terms refer to students for whom English is a foreign or second language. Many of these students are challenged by the workload in a language of which they may have, at best, some rudimentary knowledge (Crawford, 2000; Florida Consent Decree, 1990; New York Education Department, 2013). The increasing presence of these students requires attention from educators if they are to succeed academically as mandated by the No Child Left Behind Act. Federal, state and local governments have taken several actions to address the challenges Limited English Proficient students (LEPs) face. However, much more remains to be accomplished to ensure that students designated as LEP do not fall behind. First and foremost, it seems, is the necessity to train teachers by helping them acquire cultural-awareness competence.

Self-assessment of Cultural Competence

As a native of the Ivory Coast, I grew up in an ethnically diverse country, where nepotism dictated who had access to civil service positions even when such positions required a competitive examination as part of the recruitment process. Since 1996, I have lived in the United States, where I have taught in various diverse settings like Jersey City, the South Bronx and Manhattan. In all these venues, I have interacted with students, teachers, and administrators of various nationalities, ethnicities, and races. In my interactions, I have always been cognizant of the differences in cultures, and I have exercised caution when I was uncertain. From experience or by word of mouth,

I have familiarized myself with some of the behavior patterns of each nationality or race present in my classes. I know, for example, that Asian students tend to be quiet participants, preferring to be called on before they participate. They also tend to cling to the traditional notion of the teacher as the repository of knowledge and defer to their instructors' teachings. Contrary to Asian students, I have found many Hispanic students, especially Dominicans, to be particularly vocal. These may sound like stereotypes, but they constitute an important set of information to have and work with while remaining aware of the possible exceptions.

Over more than two decades of teaching, I have learned about the various master statuses and how they may affect our perception of race, gender, sexual orientation, etc. and force a lopsided interpretation of reality (Rosenblum and Travis, 2012). Hence, I always exercise caution when dealing with diverse groups. I manage to avoid generalizing and jumping to conclusions. Asian students may be quieter in general, but there are some who like to participate actively and occasionally share a joke in class. Dominicans may be vocal in general, but this characterization cannot, and should not, be pinned on any one group because groups are comprised of individuals with their own personalities that need to be acknowledged. Lumping members of one group together based on preconceptions is in no way different than the actions of the power structure that has forced upon the general public a dichotomized perception of American society, where most people tend to perceive their lived realities in black and white (Rosenblum and Travis, 2012).

Lessons from a Cultural Awareness Course

The course, which I took as part of my doctoral studies in teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL) was rich in theoretical frameworks, especially those presented in the "Framework Essay" at the beginning of the textbook by Rosenblum and Travis

(2012). Understanding the distinctions between sex and gender, disabled people and people with disabilities and many other dyads clarified many misconceptions I may have had prior to taking the course. The personal experiences that followed each framework essay spoke to me personally. Indeed, I live in an ethnically diverse neighborhood where blacks from Africa and African Americans usually have a divergence of views on everyday-life situations. As discussed earlier, lumping people together because of their physical appearance can be detrimental and misguided. Intrinsically, an African American is born and grows up in the United States, where the dominant culture is Eurocentric or Caucasian. Hence, the average African American does not have much in common with the average African, culturally speaking. The former tends to cling to an atavistic notion of what is perceived as the ancestral culture. However, it is important to acknowledge that more than 300 years on the American continent have blurred much of what little culture the first African Americans brought with them. Tales of African origin, like the Anansi stories, have withstood the passage of time, but not much else remains concerning the day-to-day practices of African culture. Hence, despite their similarity in pigmentation, Africans and African Americans see the world through two essentially different lenses.

Throughout the course, my mind was focused on the constructivist notion that all the master statuses are created for political, social, and economic reasons. The more I pondered this question, the more I became puzzled and enlightened at the same time. Lumping black people or Native American tribes together may have been motivated by exclusionary thinking, a sort of divide-and-conquer mindset. This thinking may have been necessary as the first slave rebellions threatened the established power structure and the need for free labor on Southern plantations. At the same time, one must recognize that for the colonists who did not understand the languages spoken by native tribes or the African slaves, language

differences may not have been obvious. It was therefore logical to find a generic term for all the people who spoke like the locals or an incomprehensible “Gibberish.” Classifying people based on their skin color was equally a simple way to distinguish the various sub-groups.

In general, what captured my interest were the positive aspects of the dichotomizing of society. Thanks to the dyads (black/white, gay/straight, disabled/able-bodied), it is easier for the federal, state and local governments today to address discrimination issues, including repairing past discrimination through affirmative action and laws that target minorities specifically. Many of those laws, including the 1964 Civil Rights Act, were founded on a desire to do right by members of minority groups who had been treated unfairly in the past. Laws like the one above led to the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, which mandates an even playing field for all students regardless of language background. Essentially, this mandate means that all educators must be cognizant of the diversity within their classrooms. One size does not fit all, and this reality needs to guide the way lessons are planned and delivered, as well as the content and the choice of materials to teach and assess it.

Targeted Intervention

With my current level of experience, I feel that I am equipped to address the needs of three groups that are representative of the local community: African Americans, Hispanics and Africans. My language skills and personal experience allow me to interact successfully with each of these groups. I have had to negotiate some of the cultural divides in my home life as well as my work life, for my partner is from another culture. Living with a partner from another culture present many bumpy roads. Learning to navigate these roads, however, can become a professional asset if it is negotiated tactfully. In fact, learning with my spouse and interacting with her and her family has been the equivalent of the kind of language and cultural immersion Yanhui

(2013) recommends for teacher candidates and in-service teachers who want to teach in diverse communities.

Apart from the language immersion component, Yanhui suggests three approaches for schools of education to address their teacher candidates' cultural awareness needs: field work in neighborhoods where the demographics of the potential school of assignment is predominant, attending conferences on diversity, and studying abroad. As a native of the Ivory Coast, I have resided and worked extensively in that country as well as the United States. I have attended conferences on diversity and had adequate teaching experience with diverse groups for over two decades. Additionally, I am fluent in French, and Spanish, which makes communication with students and their parents easy because of the demographics of the neighborhood.

Although I currently feel comfortable working with Asian students in the various pre-college ESL classes I teach, I am interested in learning more about Japanese, Korean and Chinese cultures, as I am always in contact with students from those cultures. With preconceptions aside, it is paramount to experience cultures first-hand to be an effective teacher of students from these backgrounds.

Working with Caucasian Students

All my professional life has been with minority students. I am therefore apprehensive when it comes to working with Caucasian students, not because I feel that I am less qualified, but mainly because of the possibility of unconscious biases or racism that may result from the situation. Rosenblum and Travis (2012) argue that even among those in the dominant group who support diversity, some may be reluctant to engage in direct interactions with members of minority groups. Caucasian people may not be conscious of their biases and stereotypes and therefore have never attempted to fight them. This is an apprehension that I might have to overcome to be able to function

in a predominantly Caucasian class. The situation of racism is real but practically imperceptible. For example, a professor that I admired for being very knowledgeable and rigorous in her class could not obtain tenure at a local college because she received poor ratings in her methods classes from students who were primarily Caucasian. A few months after she left the college, a Caucasian professor was hired. This may be coincidental, but the fact remains that the previous professor was African American in an overwhelmingly Caucasian class, and it is likely that she was subject to bias.

This apprehension set aside, I feel that I can be as effective as with my minority students. I currently work with teacher candidates in a TESOL program where most students are Caucasian. In my second semester of field supervision, my interactions with my mentees have been smooth. To work with secondary school students, however, I will have to use culturally relevant materials, which are readily available since our educational system was designed primarily with that group in mind. But with the latent racism, even if unconscious, I might have to work twice as much as I currently do to earn my students' trust.

Additional Knowledge

As a teacher of a predominantly Dominican student body, one of my goals is to travel to the Dominican Republic to imbue myself with as much of the local culture as possible. Such a trip would be invaluable for many reasons. First, it would be a cultural immersion trip for me, one that would help me gain a deeper understanding of Dominican culture to better understand my students. Second, I would like to observe some classes and possibly collaborate in teaching a few classes to compare teaching approaches in the Dominican Republic with mine. Most Dominican students feel comfortable in my classes, and I believe this is due to my Spanish language skills. I am curious to know what other reason may explain the level of comfort my Dominican students experience in my classes. Finally, I have seen

some academic challenges in my classes and many have told me about the shortfalls of their educational system. Personally, I have observed some serious punctuation problems, which have me wondering if Spanish punctuation taught in the Dominican Republic is essentially different from English punctuation. The problem is crucial as even those with some college background continue to struggle with run-ons and fragments because of faulty punctuation.

Action Steps

Another student population I wish to learn more about is the Asian population, specifically Chinese, Japanese, and Korean. One of the student populations I am most in contact with is the Asian. I need to acquire a better understanding of Asian culture in general and specifically of Chinese, Japanese and Korean cultures. As non-Asian, I tend to see all Asians as people who share the same culture. While the nationalities listed above certainly have some cultural traits in common, they also differ in many areas. Should the opportunity become available, I would do the following:

1. Organize a culture-oriented festival every semester that would include various dishes, dances and other forms of artistic expression.
2. Work in a school in Chinatown for at least a year to compare the teachers' approaches to those of the rest of the city of New York.
3. Attend cultural seminars on the cultures of the three countries listed above to become familiar with the various cultures from an intellectual standpoint. This would help me better appreciate the social immersion in Chinatown.
4. Sign up for a language immersion program in any of the three countries. This would allow me to appraise their approach to teaching languages to foreigners, which can be invaluable in designing approaches for students from the countries visited.

Conclusion

The demographics in American public schools has experienced major changes over the past two to three decades. Today, many schools are in charge of educating children who speak a foreign language at home. At the same time, the necessity arises to give these linguistically deficient students the tools to compete with their native English speaker peers. No Child Left Behind mandates that no student should be left by the wayside because of their language skills or national origin. Many school districts in New York and other states have implemented state-mandated curricula that address the needs of LEP students. These curricula use culturally-sensitive materials and strive to maintain communication between students' home and their school as smooth as possible. Many schools in New York City provide language services for students and their parents through ESL programs and Dual Language schools where the necessity arises. The time is ripe for teacher education programs to acknowledge this dire need and train teachers who are ready to support culturally diverse students.

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Cross-Indexing Game Characteristics to Test Media Literacy Game Design by Linda Miles and Kate Lyons

We have received PSC-CUNY funding to investigate which game and gameplay characteristics are most effective for student engagement, knowledge transfer, and skill development in media literacy instruction. Reporting on the initial exploratory phase of research, this paper presents a novel method for cross-indexing existing and potential games according to specific media literacy objectives, the kinds of learning experiences that happen during gameplay (Gee, 2003; Abdul Jabbar & Felicia, 2015), game type (Grace, 2005), and means of play (such as game board, cards, dice, digital platform, etc.). This cross-indexing will help determine the game and gameplay characteristics to be tested in later phases of research.

Media literacy is not new, but has re-emerged in recent years as a crucial focus within academic librarianship. As the nature of academic research and publishing has evolved, in some cases migrating beyond traditional library interfaces, evaluation of information resources for research has become a more complex task for students. Additionally, the democratization of web publishing has meant that visual and other cues that librarians once taught as fairly reliable indicators of authoritativeness have lost meaning. Researchers recently found that students of all ages generally believed sponsored ads were real news, believed fake/altered user-generated photos were real, and did not consider the bias of sources (Wineburg & McGrew, 2016). “Fake news” and social media channels had a significant impact on the outcome of

the 2016 U.S. presidential election (Allcott & Gentzkow, 2017), and 23% of Americans recently surveyed reported that they had shared fake news online, 14% of whom did this knowingly (Barthel, Mitchell, & Holcomb, 2016). Our students will be lifelong users of information, particularly non-academic media. As Americans increasingly turn to social media and the web for their information, it is crucial that they understand how important it is to verify their sources, that they have a process for determining authority in popular media, and that they realize the impact their information behavior can have on their own lives and their communities.

We will ultimately be testing games and game prototypes focused on media literacy skills and knowledge in a series of focus groups with Hostos students to assess functionality, student engagement, and specific media literacy learning objectives. Knowing which game and gameplay characteristics are most impactful on media literacy learning will help academic librarians evaluate and create effective tools and games to support their institutions' media literacy goals. We plan to seek future funding to test integration of media literacy gaming within specific courses.

The Schema

Our first step in the cross-indexing process was to consider the possible ways that games could be categorized and to perform a literature review and analysis of published classification models. As Collolly, Boyle, MacArthur, Hainey and Boyle (2012) pointed out in their systematic literature review, games have been classified “along a number of dimensions,” including analog vs. digital, general purpose, genre, subject/discipline, platform/delivery method, effects, intended outcomes, and impact. For the purposes of our research, we selected four dimensions: media literacy learning outcomes, learning experiences, game types, and means of play.

Learning outcomes for media literacy have been developed since at least the late 1990s, when the National Communication Association (1997) developed standards and competencies for K-12 education. Other examples include Mihailidis (2011), who provided a set of media literacy learning outcomes focused on student activities using a particular media remixing tool; Ashley, Maksl, and Craft (2013), who developed a framework of core concepts for media literacy instruction; and Fedorov, Levitskaya, and Camarero (2016), who surveyed international experts about curricular approaches to media literacy education using a list of twenty different outcomes. After reviewing these projects and thinking specifically about some of the challenges with media literacy we have observed in classrooms or at the reference desk in the Hostos library, we decided to open a discussion with our colleagues in the library to identify the most relevant learning outcomes. We shared what we had learned from the literature and then asked four questions: (a) When you imagine a media literate student? (b) What are they able to do? (c) What can they accomplish? and (d) What strategies do they use? We came away from this meeting with a rich, but unorganized, collection of notes. This is one example: that a media-literate student might:

1. connect prior knowledge of contextual information to make educated guesses about the author's viewpoint
 - have prior knowledge
 - know that authors have viewpoints
2. use understanding of logic/reason to evaluate the claim made
 - know something of logic/reason
 - know some of the relevant questions to test for logic/reason
 - understand about logical fallacies such as anecdotal/system evidence and confirmation bias.

We then reviewed this data, selected the elements that seemed most significant and most relevant to our population, made sure that we covered all major areas of media-literacy learning, and translated these concepts into the typical learning-outcome format: students will be able to . . . , in order to We ended up with the following two-part schema, which allows matching elements from Part 1 with elements from Part 2 as a way to describe sometimes complex combinations of factors.

Learning Outcomes, Part 1--Students Will Be Able To... (LO-1, as noted in the table of games at the end of this article)

A	connect prior knowledge to new problems/situations
B	strategically search for information both within the site/publication/platform and beyond
C	consider subjectivity, bias, point of view
D	apply understanding of business models and commercial/non-commercial value
E	consider biases and logical fallacies (e.g., anecdotal vs. empirical evidence; confirmation bias)
F	consider publishing conventions
G	consider platforms and the ways information circulates

Learning Outcomes, Part 2--In Order To... (LO-2)

a	in order to evaluate relative veracity of information
b	in order to evaluate authority and credibility
c	in order to evaluate author's and/or publisher's intent and intended audience
d	in order to recognize the absence or underrepresentation of particular viewpoints
e	in order to maintain a level of personal privacy
f	in order to identify satire or parody

Game-based learning experiences have also been categorized variously in existing literature. For example, Paul Gee (2003) identified 36 learning principles attributed to video games produced for the entertainment market. Martinovic, et al. (2014) classified single-player computer games according to the cognitive functions the player engages in during play. We decided to utilize the work of Abdul Jabbar and Felicia (2015), who performed a systematic review of the literature into gameplay engagement and learning, describing both cognitive and affective experiences.

Game-based Learning Experiences (Abdul Jabbar & Felicia, 2015) (Exp)

1	Knowledge acquisition (cognitive): making sense of content Experiences: searching, browsing scanning, skimming
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2	Practicing and processing (cognitive): exploring content deeply; essential skills/knowledge Experiences: observing visuals, intensive reading
3	Knowledge application (cognitive): applying strategies/skills through activities or tasks Experiences: analyzing, synthesizing, summarizing, inferring
4	Knowledge anticipation (affective): getting “hooked” by individual differences Experiences: interest, curiosity, readiness, expectation, perception
5	Reflection (affective): personalizing what has been learned/ experienced, using this to regulate own learning Experiences: ideas, insights, knowledge, confidence, pleasure, displeasure, boredom

Game type or genre is another way that games have been classified, following traditional practices in literature and film, and there are several schema from which to choose. For example, Herz (1997) described eight types of video games in her book *Joystick Nation: How Videogames Ate Our Quarters, Won Our Hearts, and Rewired Our Minds*. Lindsay Grace’s 2005 “Game Type and Game Genre” provides a somewhat simpler schema that fits the purposes of our research.

Game Type (Grace, 2005) (Type)

I	Action: intensity of action
II	Adventure: exploration and puzzle solving
III	Puzzle

IV	Role playing: immersion in character's situation
V	Simulation: matching real world situations
VI	Strategy: reasoning and problem solving

Finally, we decided it would also be valuable to consider the variable for *means of play*, which we consider in somewhat more concrete terms than Grace's (2005) game types. Where Grace's terms capture "description of gameplay" (p. 1), our means of play concern platform and the game players physical relationship to the game itself.

Means of Play (Means)

MP1	cards
MP2	digital platform
MP3	worksheet
MP4	augmented reality

The Games

With schema in hand, we began searching for games that address media-literacy themes. We had heard of a few such games via word-of-mouth, particularly during the months following the 2016 presidential election when media literacy became a hot topic among librarians. We also used the Google search engine, employing search terms such as "media literacy," "news literacy," and "fake news" along with the word "game". In the end we identified fourteen relevant titles and developed our own prototype (Bingo!), adapting a headline bingo game from the *New York Times* (n.d.) called Page 1 Bingo. These we cross-indexed according to the four schema. As we began, we found it somewhat difficult to settle on a single learning outcome in some cases, or on a single primary learning experience, so we chose to allow a secondary, or "other" designation in those situations.

Title	Source	LO-1	LO-1 other	LO-2	LO-2 other	EXP1	EXP1 other	Type2	Means
Allies and Aliens	Mediasmarts	C		c		5		IV	MP2
Bad News	DROG	G	C	c	a,b	3	4	IV	MP2
Bingo!	Linda Miles & Kate Lyons	F	A,C,D	c	a,b,d	2	3	III	MP3
Caspar	Villa Crossmedia	D	G	c		1		VI	MP4
Data Defenders	Mediasmarts	D	G	e		5		III	MP2
Dis/Information	Iris Finkel & Lydia Willoughby	C	E	c	d	4	5	IV	MP3
Factitious	AU Game Lab/Jolt	A	C,F	a	b	3	2	V	MP2
Fake It To Make It	Amanda Warner	D	G	c		3	2	V	MP2
Fake News	Breaking Games	E		f		4		VI	MP1
Fake News/ Real News	License 2 Play	A	C	a	b	3	2	VI	MP1
Fakey	Indiana University Network Science Institute	C	E	c	a,b	3	2,5	V	MP2
Fibber	Ralph Vacca	C		a		5	3	VI	MP2
Incredible Times	Common Sense Education	D	G	a	b	3	2	V	MP2
News Hero	NATO	B	C,D	a		3	2	V	MP2
Page 1 Bingo	New York Times	C	A,F	c		2		III	MP3

Examples of Games

To illustrate how the cross-indexing works, we focused on three example games.

Dis/Information Nation by Iris Finkel and Lydia Willoughby

Dis/Information Nation Persona Worksheet

You will create a persona* as someone who believes the content in the article you were assigned to review. To create your persona, please provide the following details. You can be as creative or boring as you wish!

* "plural personae : a character in a fictional presentation (such as a novel or play) —usually used in plural" - merriamwebster.com

Personal	What is your age? What is your highest level of education? Do you live details about
Professional	What is your How much
Media Literacy	What techn internet? What medi Are you on see there?

Dis/Information Nation Evaluation Worksheet

Title of Article:	
Author:	
News Source:	

Evaluate the article using the persona that you created. Let your created persona be your guide to reading, interpreting, and assessing the value of the article. Using an axis scale of disgusting to anger-inducing, and sad to joyous, mark where your persona would place the article on this scale. Then, write in why your persona would place the article there, use examples of how the article made your persona feel, or what emotions it played upon. Share with your group.

all the sads.	gross. so disgusting.
angry, mad, furious.	this brings joy, hilarious! funny in a good way.

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 Iris Finkel, Lydia Willoughby, 2022

Dis/Information Nation is a role-playing game that explores how personas influence news consumption. Players are each provided with a current viral news article and are asked to fill out a worksheet about the persona of someone who would believe the content of the article--about their personal and professional lives and about their media-literacy practices. Working in groups, each player role plays and introduces themselves as their persona, then works to defend their article

and convince others that it is true. Players are then asked to evaluate the article from the perspective of their persona. Considering how the article plays into their persona’s emotions, they fill out a matrix that runs from “all the sads” on one end of an axis to “this brings joy, hilarious! funny in a good way” on the other, and to a second axis that runs from “gross, so disgusting” to “angry, mad, furious.” Through fact-checking and discussion, participant groups work together to identify information and intentional disinformation in the articles.

LO-1	Students will be able to consider subjectivity, bias, and point-of-view...
LO-2	...in order to evaluate author’s or publisher’s intent and intended audience.
Exp ¹	Knowledge Anticipation (affective)
Type ²	Role Playing
Means	Worksheet

Fake News/Real News: The Game of Fake News and Alternative Facts by License 2 Play

Fake News/Real News is a card game challenging players to determine whether quotations in the news are real or fake. Players or teams take turns reading aloud from quotation cards, and all the other players (or teams) then either toss out a “character card” indicating the person they believe said the quote (if they believe it is real news) or they throw down a “fake news card” to indicate that they don’t believe it at all. The quotation cards have been compiled and fact-checked. This version was released in 2017, and includes quotes from President Trump and current (or now former) members of his administration: Mike Pence, White House Press Secretary Sean Spicer, Chief of Staff Reince Priebus,

Counselor to the President Kellyanne Conway, Chief White House Strategist Steve Bannon, and the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, Ben Carson.



LO-1	Students will be able to connect prior knowledge to new problems/situations...
LO-2	...in order to evaluate relative veracity of information.
Exp ¹	Knowledge Application (cognitive)
Type ²	Strategy
Means	Cards

News Hero by the NATO Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence



In this Facebook game, the player is cast as editor of a newsroom, and has to decide whether to accept or reject various stories drawn from among actual published online news stories. There is a fact checker in the form of a tablet computer, suggesting important questions the editor might ask themselves before accepting the story. Once the editor determines which of the three stories to accept, they send them to the printing presses. For each story, the player is then presented with follow-up information, perhaps a link to a debunking article or suggestions of where the editor might have looked to fact check the story themselves. A graphic display shows how the issue performs, and a figure is generated representing revenue--the higher the quality of the issue, the greater the revenue. At this point, you are prompted to “pay your bills,” and you learn how much is left over. You can use these funds to purchase items such as books or an air conditioner for the office.

LO-1	Students will be able to strategically search for information...
LO-2	...in order to evaluate relative veracity of information.
Exp ¹	Knowledge Application (cognitive)
Type ²	Simulation
Means	Digital platform

Next Steps

In spring of 2019, we will begin testing media-literacy games in a series of focus-group sessions involving gameplay, pre- and post-tests on media-literacy outcomes, and brief interviews about students’ experiences. In this exploratory procedure, we hope to determine which game characteristics might most effectively support each learning outcome, there by helping us to determine what types of games to use in a future, classroom-situated research study.

Support for this project was provided by a PSC-CUNY Award, jointly funded by The Professional Staff Congress and The City University of New York.

These results were previously presented at the Meaningful Play Conference, Michigan State University, October 11-13, 2018, and the CUNY Games Conference, January 18, 2019.

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Appendix: Links to Additional Information on all the Games

Allies and Aliens by Mediasmarts: <http://mediasmarts.ca/game/allies-and-aliens-mission-critical-thinking>

Bad News by DROG: <https://aboutbadnews.com/>

Bingo! by Linda Miles and Kate Lyons (prototype): email lmiles@hostos.cuny.edu for more information

Caspar by Villa Crossmedia: <https://www.caspargame.eu/en>

Data Defenders by Mediasmarts: <http://mediasmarts.ca/digital-media-literacy/educational-games/data-defenders-grades-4-6>

Dis/Information Nation by Iris Finkel and Lydia Willoughby: <http://bit.ly/disinfonation>

Factitious by AU Game Lab/JOLT: <https://www.american.edu/soc/news/fake-news-game.cfm>

Fake It To Make It by Amanda Warner: <https://www.fakeittomakeitgame.com/about>

Fake News by Breaking Games: <https://breakinggames.com/products/fake-news>

Fake News/Real News by License 2 Play: <https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/fake-news--real-news-the-game-of-fake-news-and-alternative-facts-debuts-to-commemorate-administrations-100th-day-300448044.html>

Fakey by Indiana University Network Science Institute: <https://fakey.iuni.iu.edu/>

Fibber by Ralph Vacca: <http://www.ralphvacca.org/projects2/fibber-a-game-about-political-deception/>

Incredible Times by Common Sense Education (in development):
<https://home.edweb.net/webinar/commonsense20180205/>

News Hero by NATO Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence:
<https://www.stratcomcoe.org/news-hero>

Page 1 Bingo by New York Times: <http://nytimesinschool.com/ny-times-teacher-resources/news-bingo/>

Building Young Learners' Scientific Curiosity

by Sherese Mitchell and Marcella Mandracchia

Providing young children the opportunity to engage in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics), more specifically hands-on science, is beneficial because it allows them to build and foster critical and creative thinking skills (Hapgood, Magnusson, & Sullivan Palincsar, 2009). At home, infants can begin to connect to hands-on science through simple tasks like the presentation of measuring cups, cooking utensils, and varying containers with water. The innate curiosity of young learners fosters their natural desire to engage in hands-on learning. Beginning hands-on learning at a young age can provide a foundation for later acquisition and interest (Klahr, Zimmerman, & Jirout, 2011). Even as far back as 1984, Harty and Beall mentioned that students taking part in experiments builds their curiosity and interest in the scientific fields.

To engage young learners in hands-on science, Professors Marcella Mandracchia and Sherese Mitchell united to outline activities suitable for young learners in grades kindergarten through fifth grade. Mandracchia and Mitchell of Hostos Community College partnered with The New York City Montessori Charter School. The New York City Montessori Charter School is the first and only Montessori public school in New York City –offering educational services to pre-K through fifth grade students in Community School District 7 of the Bronx. NYCMCS is designed to empower children to be critical thinkers and creative problem solvers with strong social skills so they can succeed and pursue higher education and prepare for careers needed in the 21st century. The school fosters values such as kindness,

respect, appreciation, trust, communication, patience, perseverance, integrity, cooperation, individuality, creativity, and care for the planet. Hostos Community College/City University of New York (CUNY), was created by an act of the Board of Higher Education on April 22, 1968. In September of 1970, the college admitted a charter class of 623 students at 475 Grand Concourse, a five-story building on the southwest corner of East 149th Street and the Grand Concourse that was once a tire factory. Additionally, in 1970, the State Legislature acted to ease an increasing space shortage by passing a special bill to acquire the 500 Building across from the original site. Furthermore, in the same year, Hostos was granted full and unconditional accreditation following a highly favorable evaluation by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education. Enrollment currently stands at almost 7,000 students.

Thus, it became obvious with the congruent views on the education of students of congruent institutions that “Science Day” needed to occur. The students in NYCMCS needed to have the opportunity to take part in science exploration that was made easy. All the age-appropriate activities that were chosen are easy to replicate in both home and school settings. The age-appropriate activities that were decided upon are as follows:

K-2 Grades	3-5 Grades
<p data-bbox="107 1117 280 1146">Sink or Float</p> <p data-bbox="107 1182 511 1252">Objects were manipulated to determine which sunk or floated</p>	<p data-bbox="542 1117 887 1187">Can You Make a Star from Toothpicks?</p> <p data-bbox="542 1222 932 1292">Students formed a star utilizing only 5 toothpicks</p>

<p>What Can You Use to Make a Bubble?</p> <p>Objects were provided, and students determined which could make a bubble (pipe cleaners, toilet paper rolls, milk cap rings, etc.)</p>	<p>How Do Sharks Float?</p> <p>A bottle of oil and a bottle of water simulating sharks assisted to explain how sharks float in the water</p>
<p>Sound with Water</p> <p>Jars with different levels of water were hit with a spoon and children discussed the different sounds produced.</p>	<p>Can You Make a Square Bubble?</p> <p>Pipe cleaners were used to form a square to produce a bubble</p>
	<p>Make a House of Cards</p> <p>Deck of cards was utilized to form a house.</p>

Each grade band had access to Obleck (a substance that took on the form of a liquid and solid) and the Rubber Egg (an egg that was left in vinegar for two weeks that became transparent and of a rubbery consistency). Students rotated in for 20-minute time intervals in two areas designated to each grade band by class to participate in the activities with the help of their teachers and Hostos’ student volunteers and professors. Hostos students promoted critical thinking by prompting students with engaging questions. Many of these prompts included, “ Why do you think this happened? or What would happen if?” NYCMCS students were involved in each activity and there was plentiful scholarly dialogue during and after the activities. Additionally, the activities will be compiled to produce a resource for students to continue to engage at home and in their school. Approximately thirty student volunteers from Hostos Community College participated in either preparing materials and/or assisting with the 150 NYCMCS

students. Immediately following the activities, students completed an exit slip where they explained which was their favorite activity and why. This data will be used to build on this year's Science Day by incorporating student favorites and including new activities for students to enjoy.

To produce a solid foundation, Mandracchia and Mitchell established an outline for future use. Student feedback from NYCMCS and Hostos students after the activity has enabled the professors to build upon this year's event. The students were afforded the opportunity to see a model of the expectations of STEM activities that will aid them in their current or future classrooms. Scaffolding was employed during the first annual Science Day at the NYCMCS, and next year the Hostos students will step up and take more of a lead on the selection of activities, follow-up analysis, and school-home connection aspect. Based on this year's results it is definitely possible and Hostos professors are quite excited to see their students take the lead to make next year's event even more of a success!

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Reading Comprehension: An action research based on the New York Times Digital Version Newspaper, the Free Dictionary App and Smartphones by Juan Soto Franco

What a wonderful learning opportunity it is: free access to current news, a chance to look up words in a dictionary and everything on the palm of your hands. My interest for this action/classroom research began when I observed that CUNY students have free access to the digital version of the *New York Times* newspaper (TNYT). Plus, they all owned smartphones, and I had learned about this free app called “The Free Dictionary” (TFD) at an educational technology conference. Since most of our students are English Language Learners, a new and engaging learning opportunity was just around the corner. Then these questions crossed my mind: Would Hostos Community College (HCC) ENG 101 students’ reading comprehension improve if they looked up the unfamiliar words on TFD while reading TNYT articles? Would this app help them enhance their vocabulary?

At the beginning of the spring 2018 semester, HCC students were invited to participate in this research, create an account with TNYT and download TFD app on their smartphone. They were informed that at some point in the semester an action/classroom research would be conducted, which included the reading of an article off of TNYT followed by a reading comprehension quiz. Then, students were invited to use their HCC email account and create a free account with TNYT to access their newspaper (digital version). Also, students were prompted to download TFD free app on their smartphones. The last information provided was that these two tools (TNYT and TFD)

would be necessary for this investigation.

On the very first week of the semester, the researcher created a tutorial with screen shots off of TFD app (See Appendix A) to illustrate how to share (look up a word) from an article to the dictionary app while reading on their smartphones. The tutorial was explained and discussed in class and uploaded to our course on Blackboard for future reference. It details on a step by step fashion what students need to do to search a word, learn its definition, pronunciation, synonyms, antonyms and related words as well as the use of the word in the context of a sentence. As the semester moved on, students practiced using the tools, and they felt more and more at ease with them.

Background Research

Conscious about the importance of vocabulary acquisition in the learning of a second language, the use of a dictionary tends to be the helping hand when it comes to comprehension of texts. Krashen (1989) points out that language learners prioritize the use of a dictionary to master the language instead of relying on grammar texts. Further, Zhang and Annual (2008) emphasize through their research that learners' vocabulary domain translates into a better reading comprehension. In other words, vocabulary acquisition, not only seems to be the way learners pick up a language better, but also, the way they tend to understand text better. Vocabulary knowledge works as the basis to reading comprehension just as a good foundation supports a building. Furthermore, Rashidi and Khosravi (2010) stress the idea that students with a deeper and wider scope of vocabulary perform better in reading comprehension assessments. Inversely, a small vocabulary knowledge along with limited word meaning obstruct the comprehension of a text (Garcia 1991). The mastery of the tool translates into a more efficient learning and enhancement of the language in general (Bax 2003). Such mastery needs to become so natural that students would feel that using such a tool is part of their everyday life. Hence, the comprehension of

texts will turn to be more efficient.

Hypothesis

The following hypotheses were developed on the basis of the observation and what the literature says regarding this particular topic.

- a. Participants who use TFD app will have a better reading comprehension of TNYT articles.
- b. Participants' vocabulary level will be enhanced by the use of TFD app.

Methodology

Method

An experimental method involving the use of two groups and a reading comprehension quiz was utilized during the semester of spring 2018. While reading an article off of TNYT on their smartphones, the experimental group used TFD app, but not the other the control group. Participants had downloaded TFD app on their smartphones at the beginning of the semester. Using the app, the experimental group was allowed to look up unknown words to facilitate their comprehension of the article.

Participants

The participants consisted of 26 students enrolled in the English department at Hostos Community College for ENG 101, a developmental English course. Out of this total of 26 students, 20 were females (77%) and 6 were males (33%). All these students had taken the reading and writing entry exams designed by CUNY. The group demographics split up as follows: 61% Dominicans; 20% Africans; 15% Americans and 4% Argentinians. The majority of students in this class were Latin Americans (65%). The average age of the group was 28. The class was taught by the same instructor, the researcher of this

study, to minimize inconsistency due to external influences.

Instrument

The Reading Material. It was based on an article from the editorial section of TNYT (See Appendix B). Students in developmental classes are expected to enhance their reading comprehension and writing skills. They also used the digital dictionary app to look up unfamiliar words and as a reading instrument since the app includes several reading sections such as The Word of the Day, Idiom of the Day, Article of the Day, Quote of the Day, This Day in History, Today's Birthday, Today's Holiday along with a few word games. Once this app is installed on their smartphones, students can use it any time they wanted to acquire more vocabulary.

The Quiz. The researcher created a ten-item multiple choice quiz (See Appendix C) based on an editorial article (See Appendix B). The quiz aimed to test their reading comprehension and vocabulary in the article. Colleagues in the English department at HCC field-tested the quiz. Based on their feedback, some modifications were made to the quiz to increase its reliability and validity. Students accessed the quiz by logging in to our online course component on Blackboard directly from their own smartphones.

Procedure

At the beginning of the semester, the students were instructed to create a free account on TNYT using their Hostos Community College email account and to download free app TFD on their smartphones. To get familiar with these tools, they began using them right away. In mid-June, students were prompted to read a specific editorial piece (See Appendix B) on their smartphones. Said article was sent to them as a link via email. Half of the class was informed to use TFD app while the other half was not allowed to use it. After reading it, the whole class

was invited to log in to our course on Blackboard and take the ten-item multiple choice reading comprehension quiz, and so they did. The quiz was graded automatically by the test feature of Blackboard out of a 100-point score.

Also some on-site brief spontaneous interviews were conducted on a volunteer basis. Basically, students were asked open-ended questions. For instance, what impact did TFD app have on your comprehension of the article? What did you like best about TFD app? Lastly, would you recommended it to anyone?

Results

The results of the quiz were somehow attention-grabbing. The quiz was taken only by the 22 students who attended class that day: 17 females and 5 males. 50% of the students used TFD app to look up unknown words on TNYT article, but the other 50% did not. Surprisingly, the outcomes showed similar results. That is to say, in both groups, 55% of the students passed the quiz with a 60-point grade or more. Table 1 below illustrates the results of the quiz. The identities of the participants have been protected by replacing their names by their respective gender.

Table 1: Results of the reading comprehension quiz by gender and use of TFD

No.	Gender	Grade	APP?
1	Female	30	N
2	Male	50	N
3	Female	70	N
4	Female	70	N
5	Male	40	Y
6	Female	40	N
7	Male	70	N
8	Female	60	Y
9	Female	60	N
10	Female	70	N
11	Female	60	Y
12	Female	40	Y
13	Female	70	N
14	Male	60	Y
15	Male	40	Y
16	Female	70	Y
17	Female	40	Y
18	Female	70	Y
19	Male	60	N
20	Female	70	Y
21	Female	70	Y
22	Female	-	-
23	Female	40	N
24	Male	-	-
25	Male	-	-
26	Male	-	-

The Interviews

Some brief interviews followed the quiz and were done on a volunteer fashion to learn about the students' perceptions related to their experience using the app. One student said, "Best app ever," while other expressed, "Yes, it helped me understand the text better." A third pointed out, "I can't use the app on my iPhone." They all agreed that TFD helped them enhance their vocabulary and were willing to recommend it. Last but not least, one students mentioned that she "not only used TFD app for our class, but also for her other classes this semester."

Analysis and Conclusion

Based on the results shown above, it seems like the use of TFD app did not make a significant difference in the comprehension of the article students read on TNYT. In both groups, 55% of the students passed the quiz with 60 points or more. After these scores, the following questions popped up in my head: Is it worth it to use TFD app? Do students actually comprehend the article better without TFD app? What happened that the results came out to be so identical? Did the instructor/researcher's fail to consider any factors? While in the short run the results came out to be identical; in the long run, it might be recommended to keep an eye on this type of research because it could teach us a lot about engagement with new and innovative ways of learning in the 21st century.

As far as the interviews go, all interviewed students were under the perception that TFD helped them comprehend the text; not only in our class, but also, in other classes. Further, students expressed that they would recommend TFD app because it had helped them enhance their vocabulary and encouraged them to read more. It was clear that there was more engagement in reading, accessibility and portability contributed to their involvement of their learning because of a media-richness environment.

Recommendation

Looking forward, it would be interesting to replicate this study with a larger sample to see what comes out. Probably, having two full classes where one uses TFD app; but not the other one, might bring up a different outcome. It would also be advisable to train and monitor students' actual mastery of the app more effectively before testing their reading comprehension skills. The researcher was under the impression that some participants did not quite master the use of TFD app.

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Appendix A: TNYT and TFD app tutorial

The Free Dictionary (TFD) in combination with the New York Times (TNYT) to enhance reading comprehension on smartphones Here is how it works:

1. Once you identify an unknown word on a NYT article on your smartphone, press down on it to **select** it



Senator Chuck Schumer, the Democratic leader, returned to the Capitol after meeting with President Trump on Friday. Erin Schaff for The New York Times

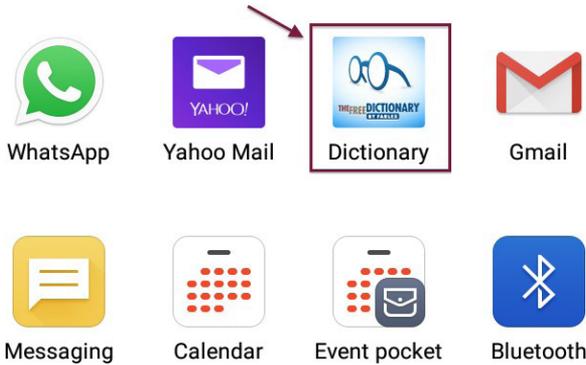
Schumer leaves White House meeting with Trump.

Senator Chuck Schumer of New York, the Democratic leader, wrapped up a



imminent deal to **avert** a shutdown.

2. A menu will pop up. Tap on the **Share** option to launch the TFD app
3. **Tap** on TFD app



4. *Voilà!* The **definition**, pronunciation, examples and much more will be displayed

avert  Also found in:
[Thesaurus](#), [Medical](#), [Legal](#), [Acronyms](#),
[Idioms](#), [Wikipedia](#).

a·vert  (ə-*vûrt*')

tr. v. **a·vert·ed**, **a·vert·ing**, **a·verts**

1. To turn away: *avert one's eyes*.
2. To keep from happening; prevent:
averted an accident by turning sharply.

See Synonyms at [prevent](#).

[Middle English *averten*, from Old French *avertir*, from Latin *āvertere* : *ā-*, *ab-*,

5. **Icons** help you identify synonyms, antonyms and related words

Thesaurus

Legend:  Synonyms  Antonyms

Switch to [new thesaurus](#)

Verb 1. avert - prevent the occurrence of; prevent from happening; "Let's avoid a confrontation"; "head off a confrontation"; "avert a strike"

 deflect, fend off, forefend, forfend, head off, stave off, ward off, avoid, debar, obviate

 foreclose, forestall, preclude, prevent, forbid - keep from happening or arising; make impossible; "My sense of tact forbids an honest answer"; "Your



6. **Translations** of the searched word is available in different languages

Translations  Spanish / Español ▼

apartar desviar impedir prevenir

avert [ə'vɜ:t] VT

1. (= turn away) [+ eyes, thoughts] →
apartar (**from** de) [+ suspicion] → desviar
(**from** de) [+ possibility] → evitar
2. (= prevent) [+ accident, danger etc] →
prevenir
3. (= parry) [+ blows] → desviar

*Created by Juan Soto-Franco, M.A.
January 2018*

Appendix B: TNYT article: “Stop Letting the Russians Get Away with It, Mr. Trump.”

Stop Letting the Russians Get Away With It, Mr. Trump

By The Editorial Board

Feb. 16, 2018



A “March for Truth” rally in New York in June. Credit Eduardo Munoz Alvarez/Getty Images

Are you sure you still want to call it fake news, Mr. President?

For the past year, Donald Trump has repeatedly denied the existence of a profound national security threat: Russia’s attempt to interfere in the 2016 election on his behalf. He dismissed the Russian subversion effort as a hoax by his opponents and the media despite voluminous evidence to the contrary — including the consensus of the American intelligence community — that it did in fact happen, and is sure to happen again.

Now come the indictments. On Friday, Robert Mueller, the special counsel investigating Russia's role in the 2016 election, filed criminal charges of fraud and identity theft against 13 Russian citizens and three Russian organizations, all alleged to have operated a sophisticated influence campaign intended to "sow discord in the U.S. political system."

One organization, the Internet Research Agency — which the indictment says is funded by Yevgeny Prigozhin, the "go-to oligarch" of Russia's president, Vladimir Putin — began its efforts as early as 2014, according to the indictment. Its staffers, known as "specialists," posed as Americans and created false identities to set up social media pages and groups aimed at attracting American audiences. The broad outlines of this interference have been known publicly for a while, but the sheer scope of the deception detailed in Friday's indictments is breathtaking.

By the spring of 2016, the operation had zeroed in on supporting Mr. Trump and disparaging Hillary Clinton. The Internet Research Agency alone had a staff of 80 and a monthly budget of \$1.25 million. On the advice of a real, unnamed grass-roots activist from Texas, it had focused its efforts on swing states like Colorado, Virginia and Florida.

Staffers bought ads with messages like "Hillary is a Satan," "Ohio Wants Hillary 4 Prison" and "Vote Republican, Vote Trump, and support the Second Amendment!"

They created hundreds of social media accounts on YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and other sites to confuse and anger people about sensitive issues like immigration, religion and the Black Lives Matter movement — in some cases gaining hundreds of thousands of followers.

They staged rallies while pretending to be American grass-roots organizations. A poster at one "pro-Clinton" rally in July 2016 read "Support Hillary. Save American Muslims," along with a fabricated

quote attributed to Mrs. Clinton: “I think Sharia Law will be a powerful new direction of freedom.”

As the election drew nearer, they tried to suppress minority turnout and promoted false allegations of Democratic voter fraud. The specialist running one of the organization’s Facebook accounts, called “Secured Borders,” was criticized for not publishing enough posts and was told that “it is imperative to intensify criticizing Hillary Clinton.”

After the election, they continued to spread confusion and chaos, staging rallies both for and against Mr. Trump, in one case on the same day and in the same city.

All along, they took steps to cover their tracks by stealing the identities of real Americans, opening accounts on American-based servers and lying about what their money was being used for. Last September, after Facebook turned over information about Russian ad purchases to the special counsel, a specialist named Irina Kaverzina emailed a family member: “We had a slight crisis here at work: the FBI busted our activity (not a joke). So, I got preoccupied with covering tracks together with the colleagues.” Ms. Kaverzina continued, “I created all these pictures and posts, and the Americans believed that it was written by their people.”

Fake news, indeed.

Mr. Trump’s defenders, desperate to exculpate him, seized on a single word — “unwitting” — that the indictment used to describe certain “members, volunteers and supporters of the Trump campaign involved in local community outreach” who had interacted with the Russians.

In other words, as the White House subtly put it in a statement on Friday, “NO COLLUSION.” The president repeated the claim himself in a tweet, grudgingly acknowledging Russia’s “anti-US campaign,” but

emphasizing that it had started “long before I announced that I would run for President. The results of the election were not impacted. The Trump campaign did nothing wrong — no collusion!”

It’s true that, as Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein said in an announcement, these particular indictments do not allege that any American knew about the influence campaign, nor that the campaign had changed the outcome of the election. But that’s quite different from saying that there was no collusion or impact on the election. As Mr. Rosenstein also said, the special counsel’s investigation is continuing, and there are many strands the public still knows little or nothing about.

Remember, Mr. Mueller has already secured two guilty pleas, one from Mr. Trump’s former national security adviser and another from a former campaign adviser, for lying to federal authorities about their connections to Russian government officials. He has also charged Mr. Trump’s former campaign chairman, Paul Manafort, and his top aide, Rick Gates, with crimes including money laundering. Mr. Gates appears to be nearing a plea deal himself.

Then there were Russian cyberattacks on the elections systems of at least 39 states. And the hacking of emails sent among members of the Democratic National Committee and the Clinton campaign — which Mr. Trump openly encouraged.

This is all going to happen again. Intelligence and law enforcement authorities have made that clear. The question is whether Mr. Trump will at last accept the fact of Russian interference and take aggressive measures to protect American democracy. For starters, he could impose the sanctions on Russia that Congress overwhelmingly passed, and that he signed into law, last summer. Of course, this would require him to overcome his mysterious resistance to acting against Russia and to focus on protecting his own country.

Appendix C: 10-item multiple choice reading comprehension quiz

Read the article “Stop Letting the Russians Get Away with It, Mr. Trump” then respond to the following comprehension questions.

1. In general, the article “Stop Letting the Russians Get Away with It, Mr. Trump” is about
 - a. Donald Trump’s acceptance of Russian’s help during the 2016 election
 - b. Different types of evidence that led to Trump’s win
 - c. Donald Trump’s denial on Russians helping him win the 2016 election
 - d. Proving that during the last election there was no conspiracy

2. Robert Muller
 - a. Confirmed that Russians interfered in the last presidential election
 - b. Filed criminal charges against Donald Trump and some Russian citizens
 - c. Filed criminal charges against some organizations and some Russian citizens
 - d. Became Donald Trump’s best friend

3. In paragraph 2, in the expression, “He dismissed the Russian subversion efforts as a hoax by his opponents...” The word hoax means
- True information
 - Ambiguous news
 - A fake, false news
 - Horrible news
4. The Internet Research Agency was in charge of
- Creating fake profiles of Americans on social media
 - Posting false information online in favor of Donald Trump
 - Attracting the American people’s attention
 - All of the above
5. In paragraph 8, the term “grass-roots” refers to
- Common, basic people
 - A selected group of sophisticated people
 - A selected group of people from Texas
 - A group of well-educated people

6. In paragraph 8, in the expression, “A poster at one “pro-Clinton” rally in July 2016...” What does “pro-Clinton” mean in this context?
- a. In favor of Hillary Clinton
 - b. In favor of Donald Trump
 - c. Against Donald Trump
 - d. In favor of Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump
7. The Internet Research Agency staffers tried to hide evidence by
- a. Lying about the destiny of their money
 - b. Creating accounts on American-based servers
 - c. Robbing real Americans’ identifications
 - d. All of the above
8. In paragraph 13, the word “collusion” is a synonym of
- a. Construction
 - b. Constitution
 - c. Contrary
 - d. Conspiracy

9. According to Mr. Rosenstein, the public is
- a. Knowledgeable of everything that occurred during the 2016 campaign
 - b. Not aware of most details of the campaign
 - c. Well-informed about what happened during the 2016 campaign
 - d. None of the above
10. The author of the article is convinced that the Russians will
- e. Interfere in the next election
 - f. Stop manipulating social media
 - g. Convince Democrats to vote for Irina Kaverzina
 - d. Force Donald Trump to protect the American people



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