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KOEHLER C E N T E R EVENTS

Teaching Generation NeXt

Koehler Event: Teaching Generation NeXt offers two possible events for registration. On March 27, 2015, The Koehler Center will host Dr. Mark Taylor. The keynote titled "Meet Generation NeXt: Understanding and Teaching Today's Learners" will be presented during a luncheon open to all faculty and staff from 11:30 AM -1:00 PM. A workshop "Teaching Today's Learners" will follow lunch from 1:30 PM- 3:00 PM.

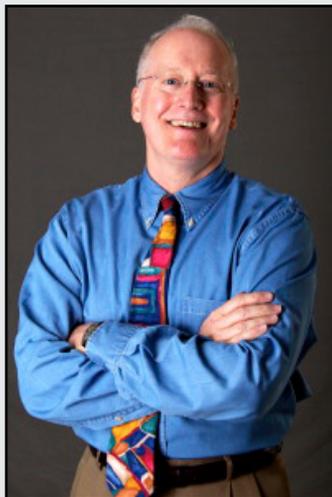
Faculty and staff may attend both the keynote luncheon AND the workshop. Alternately, faculty and staff are welcome to attend only the keynote luncheon or only the workshop. Whatever combination you choose, we ask that you register for each of the two possible events separately.

Friday, March 27, 2015

11:30 AM - 3:00 PM

Kelly Alumni & Visitor Center - Cox Room A

Go to the [Koehler Events website](#) for more information and to register.



Assessing Global Learning on Campus and Online: Tapping into QEP-supported Resources for Faculty Growth

Sarah Ruffing Robbins

Lorraine Sherley Professor of Literature, Department of English
Acting Dean, John V. Roach Honors College
Koehler Center Fellow for Global Citizenship



One of the key strengths of TCU's current [Quality Enhancement Plan](#) (QEP), appropriately dubbed "Discovering Global Citizenship," is the multi-faceted approach its framework provides for addressing global learning outcomes. Study abroad—the mainstay of Global Learning programs that typically comes to mind first when we think about internationalizing curriculum—certainly still claims a central place in the QEP's vision and the [university's mission](#) overall. However, as Provost Steve O. Michael of Arcadia University has pointed out, moves to signal a commitment to teaching "global leadership" have become so pervasive in university mission statements these days that we've reached the point when phrases like "global-minded students and scholars" have lost their aspirational (not to mention their pragmatic and conceptual) force ("In Pursuit," Bridging Cultures, 138). Thus, for an institution like TCU to claim genuine leadership in the field of global learning, the university community must approach global learning proactively and creatively, stepping outside the familiar fields of instruction such as travel abroad. Fortunately for students (and faculty) at TCU, the QEP provides a number of models for doing just that.

A quick look at the QEP [website's presentation of its initiatives](#) confirms the comprehensive vision for global learning that has been a hallmark of the program—one

recently recognized by the prestigious 2015 IIE Andrew Heiskell Award for Internationalizing the Campus. The range of programs being delivered through the QEP includes initiatives that are each distinct yet, taken together, convey an interactive approach to global learning. (Check out the descriptions for Virtual Voyage, Visiting Scholars, TCU Abroad, Global Academy, Local/Global Leaders, and Global Innovators on the website.) Significantly for faculty, each of the programs offers important pathways to learning by teacher-scholars. That is, even though TCU's QEP—consistent with SACS guidelines—focuses on enhancing student learning, the various initiatives sponsored by Discovering Global Citizenship also enable faculty to build new scholarship, enhance their teaching, and enact major opportunities for leadership on campus and beyond.

I can testify to the support the QEP has given to my own professional development as just one example of its efficacy for faculty. In offering this account of one modest program event organized by one team of faculty members, I hope to inspire others to tap into the QEP's transformative potential.

One Visiting Scholar, Many Routes to Learning

During the 2013-14 academic year, I applied for a Visiting Scholar QEP Mini-grant to bring to campus an author whose work I have long admired—[Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o](#). I had been teaching Ngũgĩ's [fiction and non-fiction](#) for years, in a wide range of instructional contexts, including post-colonial and world literature courses; classes on literature as an avenue to political activism; and writing studies in social context. And in spring 2014, I was planning to teach his newest memoir, *In the House of the Interpreter*, for a new course I had developed for TCU's John V. Roach Honors College, "Cultural Contact Zones." So when I read an announcement that the QEP's regional focus for that year would be the Caribbean and Africa, it seemed an ideal

time to organize a visit to campus by Ngũgĩ himself. Having benefited from several small internal grants since coming to TCU, I wasn't intimidated by the prospect of writing the proposal. However, I did find, on reading through the directions for the proposal-writing, some initially daunting language around program assessment. Most of the grant projects I'd facilitated before coming to TCU used a model of formative, qualitative assessment. The rubric for the QEP Visiting Scholar proposal called for measuring student learning in a more quantitative way than I was used to doing. After re-reading the directions and consulting with the always-affirming QEP leader Ed McNertney and Associate Provost Catherine Wehlburg, however, I was reassured that I could count on their help with the actual assessment process, assuming I was funded. Thus, this project seemed a good chance not only to bring an esteemed scholar-writer to campus but also a fortunate occasion for learning about different approaches to assessment myself.

And that's exactly what happened.

Once I received notification of funding, Catherine and I met to discuss how best to implement an assessment process that had been only tentatively described in the proposal. Because I am actively involved in doctoral education in my home department of English, I had included a modest stipend in the budget for two graduate student research assistants to assist with the assessment portion of the work. I hoped that having them involved would also provide an opportunity for us to learn together about how student writing produced in response to project-related prompts can help illuminate the impact of humanities programming initiatives like Ngũgĩ's visit. With that in mind, besides employing the rubric to "score" various pieces of student writing through the framework of the [QEP rubrics](#), the two doctoral students (Tyler Branson and Chase Sanchez) also did a separate close reading

from a more inductive stance. Intriguingly, what they found from this more qualitative and open-ended approach was that students who interacted with Ngũgĩ during his visit actually seemed to achieve more learning at a “higher” level on the QEP rubric than they did at a relatively “lower” level domain. (See the rubric for learning outcomes #2 versus the rubric for learning outcomes #4, via the URL link above.) More specifically, many of the student texts produced after the visit spoke quite eloquently about how seeing and conversing with the author had led them to feel much more deeply what the experience of colonial control of education and political oppression would be like; to engage more empathetically and thoughtfully with his writings; and to wish to learn more about Kenyan history and culture.

What we learned from this close look at student writing—and at what that writing seems to say about avenues for global learning—is now shaping new program initiatives both inside and outside the classroom.

For example, we are drawing on our learning from this project as we design new projects linked to global learning. For example, this fall Tyler and I worked together with a group of undergraduate students from my fall course on Popular Literature, faculty, and alumni to organize a community reading project linking study of Albert Camus’s *The Plague* to current media reporting on the Ebola outbreak in several African regions and its eventual reach into the Metroplex via Thomas Eric Duncan, a patient treated at Dallas’s Texas Health Presbyterian Hospital, whose case in turn led to a very close-to-home patient’s contracting the disease, [TCU alumna](#) Nina Pham. The idea for the on-campus [roundtable](#) came from an alumna of TCU’s Honors program, Linda Newman. But an [online discussion board](#) where the novel and its link to current events are still being discussed—as well as another experiment in using writing to assess humanities programming—were inspired primarily by the learning our Ngũgĩ team experienced through that earlier project. And

the extension of that learning through the roundtable and online discussion board for “Contagion, Quarantine and Social Conscience” has been enabled by funds from the Koehler Center’s Global Learning Fellowship.

Overall, then, this foray into QEP-funded project design and evaluation has affirmed for me how generative Discovering Global Learning opportunities can be—not only for our undergraduate students, but also for faculty. In this case, one very modest grant has allowed me to build new cross-campus networks, enrich my own teaching in several courses, and begin to develop new research options.

Work Cited

Michael, Steve O. “In Pursuit of Excellence, Diversity, and Globalization: The Art of Leveraging International Assets in Academia.” *Bridging Cultures: International Women Faculty Transforming the US Academy*. Edited by Sarah Robbins, Sabine Smith, and Federica Santini. Lanham: University Press of America, 2011. 138-144.

Distance Education at TCU

Tracey Rockett

Department of Management, Entrepreneurship,
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Koehler Center Fellow for Distance Education



According to the TCU Koehler Center website, distance education is defined as “any for-credit internship, clinical, practicum, online course delivered via video-conferencing provided to a TCU student inside or outside the State of Texas.” While distance education started out as classes delivered entirely online to students who are not physically present, many professors nationwide are now using some sort of “blended” or “hybrid” model. That is, they are blending the

best practices of teaching in the classroom with technology to expand the conversation outside of the classroom. Distance education can be thought of as a continuum. On one end is purely online education, where students and faculty never meet and all class interaction is done via computer. On the other end is a class that meets in a traditional classroom space and might use online tools to supplement the discussion. Here at TCU, we have faculty on all points of the spectrum. TCU supports five (5) fully online graduate programs delivered by the Harris College of Nursing and AddRan College of Liberal Arts, all at the graduate level. There are currently 84 courses at TCU that are delivered online, serving 380 students. However, most of the distance education falls in the blended or hybrid space. One way to offer a blended approach, which is used by many professors here, is the use of Pearson LearningStudio to supplement the class. Some professors use it minimally, only posting grades,

but many are using it to add content and options, such as videos, to their classes. When LearningStudio was introduced to TCU in 2002, 162 class sections were using it. Currently 3,778 TCU class sections are found on LearningStudio, reaching 9,892 students—virtually all of the TCU student population.

I am interested in helping the TCU community explore the ways in which distance education can be employed to create a more engaging classroom experience for students. Often professors will avoid using technology to expand the classroom because they worry it will be either too difficult or that it will be distracting for students. However, there are some great ways to use technology that are neither difficult nor distracting. I want introduce several methods that are currently being used by professors at TCU and that can be adapted to work for most classes. One method of distance education that is becoming more popular is the “flipped classroom.” A flipped classroom is based on moving traditional lecture content online and asking students to watch the lecture videos before the class. When they come to class they are able to spend their time together solving problems and engaging in experiential learning.

Some professors at TCU are using a modified flipped approach. That is, they are putting an introduction lecture video online and using that to start class discussion. Sean Atkinson, Assistant Professor in The School of Music, is using a modified approach. He makes some short videos (typically about 5 minutes long) that he uploads to [YouTube](#) and has students watch the video before class. He likes this approach because it frees up class time for activities, and it allows students to pause, rewind, and watch again. He says this process allows students to “process at their own pace, not beholden to the pace of the class.” One neat thing about using YouTube is that you can gather metrics on how many students are watching videos. He gives quizzes at the start of class to make sure students are watching the videos and to reinforce content.

Center Fellows Workshop with Tracey Rockett:

Bridging Distances Using Social Media

Monday, March 2, 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM

Kelly Alumni & Visitors Center, Room Cox C

If you are interested in increasing student involvement in either your virtual or face-to-face classes, this workshop offers ideas on how to do that using social media. I will introduce popular social media tools, such as Twitter, blogs, Wikis, and YouTube, that you can use in your classes to increase connections between students and class material and to enhance and supplement class discussions. You will leave with some concrete examples and tips to maximize the experience for both you and your students. Please bring your device (phone, tablet, laptop, etc.) if you want to follow along.

[Register for this workshop.](#)

Curby Alexander, Assistant Professor of Professional Practice in The College of Education, is expanding the classroom space in several interesting ways using Google tools. He uses [Google Hangouts on Air](#) for exam review sessions. Students can enter the space and connect in real time, or they can watch a recorded session later, at their convenience. The really neat thing about Google Hangouts on Air is that you can create an “index” of questions so that students can click on a particular question and it will jump to the place in the video where it was answered. He also uses [Google Forms](#) and [EdPuzzle](#) to put content online. He uses Google Forms to post a reading assignment and comprehension questions to be completed before class. He uses EdPuzzle to post a video with embedded questions. While the questions are pretty simple, they allow him to track who is doing the work, and he posts their progress to leaderboards to give them feedback. He says, “This has been helpful in putting some students who thought I wasn’t paying attention on the right track.”

[Twitter](#) is another popular tool that many professors, including Sean and Curby, are using to continue the class conversation. I have used Twitter for several years with success. I have students find articles related to class concepts and tweet about them. They are also required to read and respond to their classmates’ tweets. I find that students who are generally quiet in class are much more likely to participate in a Twitter conversation, and students are generally happy with the experience.

We have so many tools at our disposal to create educational opportunities for our students! If you think you might want to try some type of distance education, there are several steps you can take:

1. Reach out to the Koehler Center. They have experts in the area that would be happy to help you set up a course, give you tips for getting started, and provide you resources for support.

2. Sign up for a TLC – there are a variety of Teaching Learning Conversations are focused on technology and/or distance education.
3. Contact me at t.rockett@tcu.edu

Fostering Student Engagement with Technology in a BYOD Learning Environment

Curby Alexander
College of Education



University instructors must deal directly with the presence of student electronic devices in their classrooms. Instructors can ban students from bringing networked devices into their classrooms, they can let students bring their devices, or they can tell students to bring their own devices to class. Although the difference may seem subtle, each approach to students’ personal technology has implications that influence the classroom climate. These factors may include pushback from students who want to use their devices or distraction among students who mentally wander in and out of learning activities while “multi-tasking.”

Many instructors resist the idea of telling their classes to “bring your own device” (BYOD). Unless instructors have thought through the details of a technology-enhanced activity, they may quickly find themselves overwhelmed and frustrated if everything does not work as anticipated. After two semesters of implementing technology-infused learning activities in a large lecture-based class, I have developed a few essential skills that every BYOD instructor should consider when planning instructional activities.

Sync the Class

Instructors should have a way to get students in the same virtual space and keep them there. For this purpose, tools such as [Apollo](#) or [Top Hat](#) allow teachers to project a common set of slides or pages on each student device in the room. Students can follow along on their own devices, and instructors can guide them through learning activities. These tools help create a common learning space for the instructor and students.

Check the Pulse

In addition to getting all students on the same virtual page, instructors should monitor student understanding and engagement. A good way to do this is to implement activities that require students to collaborate, discuss, and process course information. Learners are attracted to challenging yet attainable team-based problems. One way to utilize group problem-solving and discussion is to provide students with a space to aggregate their responses. Potential tools for

checking the class pulse include [Socrative](#), [ActivePrompt](#), [InfuseLearning](#), and [Google Forms](#).

Create Space

One of the key elements of teaching in a BYOD environment is to keep students engaged in activities with their computers. Since students have exerted effort to bring their computers to class, it is important to do some activities that are particularly well suited to these devices. These activities could involve editing the same Google document at the same time or simultaneously editing slides in a Google presentation. The Google Sheets add-on [Doctopus](#) is especially useful for creating and disseminating copies of Google Drive files for students to edit, either individually or collaboratively. Instructors can have students pin and explain places on a Google map or annotate and draw images using a drawing tool. They may create a [5-picture story](#), or capture a 30-second explanation using video. There are many possibilities for creating workspace for students during a BYOD class meeting.

Join us this spring for Teaching and Learning Conversations:



Michael Sherrod on February 17: Teaching Entrepreneurial Thinking in Non-Business and Multidisciplinary Courses

Robyn Reid on March 17: Integrating Information Literacy into Your Syllabus

Sean Atkinson on April 14: An Individualized Approach to Flipped Classroom Instruction

Read about the spring topics and Register on our [workshop page](#).

Koehler Center Teaching and Learning conversations are delivered by TCU faculty to help enrich the TCU teaching community. If you are interested in leading a Teaching and Learning Conversation, please review our [TLC webpage](#) for information on submitting a proposal.

Showcase the Students

Once instructors engage their students in learning activities that utilize higher-order thinking and collaboration, they must be intentional about showcasing student work and integrating these learning products into further class discussion. This is the point in the lesson in which instructors communicate to their students whether they, as the learning expert in the room, value this activity as a real learning endeavor or just a high-tech time filler. If they truly value the work students are doing, instructors will devote time to acknowledge, praise, critique, and share the fruits of student learning. If instructors skip the showcase, they should not be surprised if the students show less enthusiasm and engagement the next time around.

Many universities across the United States have invested heavily in transforming their campuses into 21st Century learning spaces. Initiatives such as these challenge students to master time-tested habits of mind and thinking skills, but they also require faculty openness to new possibilities created by innovation. This openness includes reimagining the way we facilitate face-to-face learning using the digital tools students already have. Instructors must be intentional when learning how to navigate the digital learning landscape. Teaching in a BYOD environment is not easy at first. It requires patience, creativity, persistence, problem solving, and a little faith. By implementing this framework, instructors increase their likelihood of success for maximizing the potential of each device, and student, in the room.

Learning About Our Learners

Marla McGhee

College of Education

Koehler Center Fellow for Student Engagement



In *Endangered Minds*, Jane Healy opens by recounting a conversation among a group of educators. In their exchange they remark that they can't teach the same curriculum or in the same ways they had in the past.

"These kids are so sharp, but sometimes I think their minds are different from the ones I used to teach. I've had to change my teaching a lot recently, and I still wonder how much they're learning."... Likeable, fun to be with, intuitive, and often amazingly self-aware, they seemed, nonetheless, harder to teach, less attuned to verbal material, both spoken and written. (13)

Many of us would be amazed to learn that these words were actually published in 1990 since the conversation is not all that different today. Just like in the 90s, today's learners present us with unique teaching and learning opportunities. Students are challenging our educational paradigms, having grown up in the most image-rich, screen-oriented world we have ever experienced with just-in-time knowledge at their fingertips.

As a life long educator with over two decades in public schools and 15 years in higher education, I've always been curious about how to truly engage students. While I understand and consistently apply what we have historically known about working successfully with emerging adult learners, my learning curve about how best to connect with students has remained steep, as I have had to keep learning too.

In my ongoing quest to better understand students in our academic settings, I had the opportunity this fall to travel to two unique schools, one on the east coast and one in the north Texas region. These campuses are college prep schools that work with students who have learning differences. While the difference may not be outwardly visible or immediately recognizable, these learners operate differently from more typically developing 21st century students. On my visits, I sat in classrooms, observed instruction, watched teachers interact with their learners, and had extended and rich conversations with the leaders of the schools. Below, I offer my primary take-aways that were beneficial to me as a teacher seeking to more fully engage my students. None were surprising or particularly revolutionary; some simply reinforced practices I am already using.

1. As best possible, know your students. I heard students being addressed by name by their teachers. There was no hiding in the classroom; all were involved and all were responsible for the material and for participating in the related discussions.
2. Be approachable and make yourself available to your students. Both of the school leaders talked about the important work they do in helping students develop strategies for learning and for personal advocacy. This may come in the form of where a student sits in the classroom to taking advantage of office hours to meeting with the professor and asking specific questions about course content or expectations. As one head of school shared, "We help to equip students with advocacy skills but if the professor is not open and approachable, the advocacy skills will fail—they will serve no purpose." She went on to say that when students have the personality and the perseverance, they can succeed in the university environment. As evidence, she recounted the experiences of a particular student noting, "We had a student who went to Arizona and that young man sat on the front

Center Fellows Workshop with Marla McGhee: Engaging the 21st Century Student

Friday, April 10, 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM
Tucker Technology Center - Room 139

Many higher education faculty members are intrigued by information and literature exploring the characteristics of 21st century university students. This one-hour session will offer insights and discoveries from site visits to college prep campuses serving populations of students who learn differently, information from a variety of sources on the topic, and examples of effective student engagement strategies and instructional plans. Come ready to exchange ideas and leave with plans you can put into action in your classroom to more effectively engage your learners.

[Register for this workshop.](#)

row every day and made a point to get to know all of his professors."

3. Be flexible in the ways you present material. While in classrooms, I observed some students using tablets or laptops for viewing the materials while others chose hard copies and highlighters. By making course matter available through multiple media (posted to a learning management system; texts available in hard copy or e-versions), students can choose the format that works best for them.

4. Be flexible in the ways you assess learning. At one of the school sites, senior students were charged with conducting an in-depth research project, writing an accompanying paper, and making a public presentation of their findings as a condition of graduation. While this is a rigorous and challenging assignment, students are allowed to select a research topic that is personally meaningful and interesting to them. Samples included the history and design of surfboards, the impact of Shakespearean plays on modern English language, shark attacks, and exorcism. Teachers knew that demonstrating research skills and the capacity to write a paper and present publicly could be accomplished through any topic.

As teacher-scholars, I believe we must be equally devoted to long-term learning as it is how we continue to grow and mature in our craft. Seeking ways to more effectively connect with and engage the learners in our classrooms will increase our levels of satisfaction and benefit our students.

Work Cited

Healy, Jane. *Endangered Minds: What Children Don't Think—and What We Can Do About It*. New York: Touchstone, 1990.

Challenging and Supporting First-Year Students

John Mark Day, Lindsay Knight, and Trung Nguyen
Office of First Year Experiences at TCU



“Every student comes to TCU with high potential. Who they meet, what they do, and how they think determines what we become.” That’s the philosophy of the Office of the First Year Experience at TCU, staff members in Student Affairs who work to connect new students to the people and resources they need to be successful inside and outside of the classroom. Researcher Vincent Tinto has built a career around studying characteristics, events, and experiences that help students to succeed in college and those that cause them to leave. In his 2012 *Completing College: Rethinking Institutional Action*,

Faculty Focus Lunch Tuesday, March 3, 12:30 PM - 1:30 PM Smith Hall - Room 104A

An ongoing Koehler Center initiative is to connect with faculty members across campus; we like to hear about the things you’re doing in your departments, your classes, and your research. Getting to know you and your work, as a TCU faculty member, can help us offer the best teaching and development support possible.

This semester we’re hosting a lunch with faculty members across campus, and we invite you to join us. Our lunch invitation is limited to a focused number of guests, which will help ensure a comfortable conversation between colleagues. There’s nothing for you to prepare—please just join us to share a meal and some of your thoughts about TCU students, courses, and teaching. Of course, if you do have something particular you’d like to discuss about teaching and learning at TCU, now is the perfect time to talk with your colleagues and the Koehler Center faculty development team.

[Register for this workshop.](#)

he moved the focus from the student to the institution saying, “Student success does not arise by chance. It requires that institutions commit themselves to intentional, structured, and systematic forms of action that involve faculty, student affairs staff, and administrators alike” (8). According to Tinto, those forms of actions fall into four areas: expectations, support, assessment and feedback, and involvement.

Expectations

Expectations are the way in which institutions communicate to students what they need to do to be successful not only in an overall course of study but also in a specific course. Students need to know as they walk through the door what TCU asks of them. Institutionally, we communicate this to new students through Orientation and Frog Camp, two programs intentionally designed to introduce students to the opportunities and expectations of TCU's learning community. Faculty members can and should be setting high and clear expectations for students in the classroom. Other researchers have shown that the higher the expectations are for students, and the more engaged they must be in their coursework, the better they do overall in college (see *Success in College* by Kuh, et al. for more information). Encouraging high expectations is particularly important for students in their first year at TCU, because they're making assumptions and drawing conclusions that will influence the next four years.

Support

Support is the extent to which students feel that TCU will help them live up to those expectations. As Tinto notes, “without academic, social, and in some cases financial support, many students struggle to meet institutional expectations and succeed in college” (24). One of the classic theories undergirding the work of college education is Nevitt Sanford's idea of the relationship between challenge and support. When students face too much challenge in their transition

to college (be it academic, personal, or social) without an accompanying level of support, they feel overwhelmed and are unable to learn. When they receive a high level of support but are not challenged in their education they become complacent and do not learn. Growth and learning best occurs in a college environment where students encounter high (but appropriate) levels of both challenge and support. Faculty members can set these high challenge levels by setting high expectations. Levels of support come through accessible office hours, answering emails in a reasonable amount of time, and referring student concerns to the appropriate offices (for example, letting Campus Life know if a student has been missing class often or exhibits sudden changes in behavior).

Assessment and Feedback

Assessment and feedback communicate to students how well they are doing in meeting expectations. In order to be successful, students need frequent feedback from their faculty members so they can adjust their study habits and work levels accordingly. This is particularly important for first year students, who do not have a frame of reference for the level of work required to be successful in college compared to high school. Faculty members can help students to be successful by providing tests or making assignments due early in the semester—this lets students assess how they are progressing in a class while there is still time to make changes.

Involvement

Finally, students need involvement on the TCU campus, both inside and outside of the classroom. Numerous studies have shown the same result: the more students are involved on a campus (both academically and socially), the more deeply they'll learn. They're also more likely to graduate. In the classroom, this means giving students opportunities to be active participants in the learning process: group projects,

in-class conversations, and engagement with research have all been shown to increase student learning. Out of the classroom, involvement with student organizations, in the residence halls, and in leadership opportunities do the same. A higher level of student involvement leads to a deeper the level of student learning.

Given these needs, the Office of the First Year Experience at TCU seeks to partner with faculty, staff, and upper-level students to provide support along each of those areas. We focus on eight areas of development that researchers like Upcraft, Gardner, and Barefoot have been shown to be crucial for a student's first year:

- Establish and maintain interpersonal relationships
- Develop intellectual and academic competence
- Maintain health and wellness
- Consider faith and the spiritual dimensions of life
- Explore career opportunities
- Develop multicultural awareness
- Develop civic responsibility
- Explore identity development

In addition to working directly with first-year students, we are here to help faculty members deepen first-year student learning. If you would like more information on the needs of first-year students or TCU's incoming class, please email us at fye@tcu.edu or visit our office in Student Development Services (BLUU 2003).

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Feminist Pedagogy at TCU

Layne Craig
Department of English



To open discussion with the attendees at a Feminist Pedagogy Teaching and Learning Conversation this fall, I asked the audience about ways in which they use feminist pedagogy in their classrooms. Their answers were inspiring: organizing the classroom space to encourage students to address each other; integrating active learning into class planning; and maintaining an awareness of historical power structures in syllabus planning. As they spoke, I was reminded of how much the instructional approach we call feminist pedagogy has in common with research-based methods of effective teaching. However, an understanding of the unique background and purpose of feminist pedagogy can help us see it as more than "good teaching." Rather, feminist pedagogy asks that we interact with students in ways that encourage them to think critically and challenge the status quo.

Feminist pedagogy emerged from critical pedagogy ideas connected to Paulo Freire, the well-known critic of the "banking" model of education, wherein students are imagined as passive receptacles of knowledge. Freire's

critique is accepted in classrooms across TCU, where our students share papers at the AddRan festival of scholarship, get funding for their own research, and take on extensive internships. These alternatives to the banking model are “good teaching”: they increase student responsibility, encourage practical skills, and engage students. Some argue that since these classroom practices draw on those developed by feminist pedagogues, “We are doing feminism nearly every day in today’s classroom, but rarely calling it so” (Weber, et al. 10).

What changes, however, when we call feminist pedagogy “feminist pedagogy,” rather than employing it as a set of practices divorced from their history? First, feminist pedagogy is a political model of instruction. Freire aimed through his teaching to overthrow colonial hierarchies; in the same way, feminist pedagogues direct attention to issues of power in the classroom, at the university, and in the wider community, and bring those issues to bear on student learning. As feminists, we believe we can create a better world founded on equality, justice, and compassion, and as feminist pedagogues, we claim the right to believe those things in the classroom as well as on our own time.

Bringing one’s political positions into the classroom can be a fraught endeavor and risks reinforcing hierarchies between professors and students that feminist pedagogy seeks to complicate. One way I have balanced a feminist approach with respect for students’ own perspectives is to open up space for student-led small group discussion. As part of a discussion of Charlotte Perkins Gilman’s 1915 novel *Herland*, my students worked in groups to found their own imaginary utopias...and decide how they would enforce the “perfection” they created. Students’ utopian visions solved a variety of social problems; however, it was in their discussions of the government structures of their utopias that they struggled with problems of individual freedom, the collective good, and social justice. This assignment, while fulfilling an objective to teach the utopian novel genre, encouraged them to grapple with issues of inequality and power in a *self-directed* ways.

Second, feminist pedagogy foregrounds the subjectivity of professors and students. In public discourse about academia, the experiences of women, people of color, and LGBTQ+ people who teach are designated as “special” or “different”; the subjectivity of professors who fit those categories is more

Instructional Preparation Strategies

Friday, February 20, 1:30 PM - 2:30 PM in Tandy Hall Board Room 120
or Tuesday, March 24, 9:30 AM - 10:30 AM in Smith Hall – Room 104B

In the Instructional Preparation Strategies Workshop, we’ll cover ideas and tips about how to make your class time planning more organized and efficient to save you time and effort in both the current and future semesters. This workshop will provide templates you can use or adjust to fit your specific needs and to organize the files you accumulate over a semester so that you’ll spend less time recreating plans, questions, and activities. There will also be time for questions and answers so that you can leave ready to try these ideas this semester.

[Register for this workshop.](#)

visible and more subject to scrutiny. Feminist pedagogy, however, reminds us that EVERY teacher (and every student) occupies a subjective position in relation to their communities and the larger culture, suggesting that instead of obscuring those differences, we teach from them, and we encourage students to contribute and learn from their own subject positions.

One stereotype of feminist pedagogy is that it encourages a focus on emotions rather than intellectualism; rather, though, a successful feminist pedagogy leads students to take responsibility for in-depth learning. bell hooks describes it thus: "When I enter the classroom at the beginning of the semester the weight is on me to establish that our purpose is to be, for however brief a time, a community of learners together" (153). I have used a model for classroom community building inspired by the Koehler Center's Amanda Irvin: in smaller classes, I ask students to set their own policies for interacting with technology and with each other during class. This shared leadership leads to a more egalitarian classroom that maintains the instructor's authority—and, I would argue, enhances it, as I am able to refer to shared commitments when problems arise.

Finally, feminist pedagogy foregrounds gender as a category of analysis through curricular structure, lesson planning, and class dynamics. It is not sufficient to consider gender only: feminist pedagogues must be aware of intersections of gender, race, sexuality, and social class, and to direct students' attention to the ways in which traditional hierarchies have affected the materials and attitudes we bring into the classroom. Incorporating material from a diversity of perspectives into our teaching takes effort: such material changes over time, and is often created in response to contemporary events. For example, the successful Black Lives Matter panel put on by TCU faculty in fall 2015 required faculty to act quickly to analyze media texts and plan an approach appropriate to our students. The ongoing revision

of teaching, not to tokenize or nod to a global perspective, but to integrate the variety of voices and concerns in our fields into each aspect of our teaching, creates true feminist pedagogy.

Our mission statement at TCU is "To educate individuals to think and act as ethical leaders and responsible citizens in the global community." As feminist pedagogues, our commitments to critical thinking, sharing leadership with students, and bringing the global community into our classrooms uniquely position us to advance this mission in the twenty-first century. Moving forward, I am organizing a Faculty Interest Group on feminist pedagogy to begin meeting in fall 2015. Please email at a.layne.craig@tcu.edu if you'd like more information.

Work Cited

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Weber, Jessica Ketcham, et al. "Risks and Possibilities of Feminism in the Academy in the 21st Century." *thirdspace* 8.1 (2008): <http://journals.sfu.ca/thirdspace/index.php/journal/article/view/weber/228>.

Spring Faculty Open Labs

Tuesdays & Wednesdays from 10:00 am - 3:00 pm through May 6, 2015 (except spring break week)
[Koehler Faculty Lab, Winton-Scott 108](#)

The Faculty Open Lab is designed for faculty to work with Koehler Center staff on LearningStudio course shells, training, and tools (e.g., threaded discussions, gradebook setup, online quizzes, electronic dropbox, adding content and more), as well as pedagogical strategies to encourage active, engaged learning.

No registration required.

Go to the [Faculty Open Lab page](#) for more information.