2009 APSA Teaching and Learning Conference Track Summaries

The sixth annual Teaching and Learning Conference (TLC) was held February 6–8, 2009, in Baltimore, Maryland, with nearly 300 registrants. The conference uses the working-group model, permitting in-depth discussion and debate amongst colleagues on research dealing with the scholarship of teaching and learning. In addition to the 11 working groups there were workshops on various topics. Michael Brintnall, APSA executive director, and Kimberly A. Mealy, APSA director of Educational, Professional and Minority Initiatives, offered welcoming remarks. John Jeffries, dean of the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, was the opening speaker, and APSA president Peter Katzenstein, Cornell University, spoke at the opening reception. Joseph A. Kahne, the Abbie Valley Professor of Education, dean of the School of Education, and director of the Civic Engagement Research Group at Mills College, delivered the keynote address titled "Teaching, Digital Media, and Civic Engagement: Evidence and Strategies." The closing program featured a short presentation from the chair of the Programming Committee, Russell Mayer. It is our hope that the ideas generated and shared at the TLC will help to foster debate, research, and pedagogical innovations within the discipline.

APSA would like to thank the following individuals for their service on the 2009 Teaching and Learning Conference Program Committee: Russell Mayer, Merrimack College, chair; Marcus Allen, Wheaton College; Helen Boutrous, Mount Saint Mary's College; Tim Meinke, Lynchburg College; Christine Sierra, University of New Mexico; and Christopher Van Aller, Winthrop University. These six committee members, along with the following five individuals, served as the 2009 track moderators: Mitchell Brown, Auburn University; Tyson D. King-Meadows, University of Maryland, Baltimore County; Allison Rios Millett McCartney, Towson University; Chad Raymond, Salve Regina University; and Deborah E. Ward, Rutgers University. For more information on the 2009 TLC, visit http://www.apsanet.org/section_236.cfm or contact Kim Mealy at kmealy@apsanet.org. Below are the track summaries for each of the 11 workshops.

TRACK: CIVIC ENGAGEMENT I

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The 22 political scientists who participated in Civic Engagement I Track at the APSA's sixth annual Teaching and Learning Conference agreed that promoting civic engagement among students should be a goal of undergraduate political science programs. They also agreed that all civic engagement assignments, classes, and programs should help students recognize and act on connections between the lessons and skills learned in the classroom and specific needs in their communities. However, the agreement ended, and stimulating conversation began, when the group began to discuss the skills that students needed to develop to become engaged members of their political communities. These discussions revealed a divide in the group that was basically ideological at its core. The more liberal members argued that students should be developing the skills needed to become social activists, while their conservative colleagues suggested that engagement could also involve preserving the positive aspects of their communities, which could require a different set of skills. While never resolving which worldview was correct, the conversations did produce important points of agreement in three main areas.

The Relationship between Civic Engagement and Political Science

Track members discussed the relationship between civic engagement and political science. They agreed that civic engagement is both a means and an ends. On the one hand, civic engagement (in the form of service learning, community-based research, internships, and other experiential learning activities) is an ideal pedagogical tool to develop and deepen students' understanding of core concepts in the political science curriculum. On the other hand, many political science departments and college campuses include civic engagement as part of their mission statements. The political science classroom is a place where students gain the knowledge, skills, and motivation required to become engaged citizens.

Assessment of Civic Engagement

Track members also agreed that it is important to assess the impact of our efforts to foster civic education and engagement among our students. It is not enough to assume that students will master the learning objectives listed on our syllabus simply because they complete a course. Furthermore, we cannot assume that all service-learning or community-based research projects improve students' understanding of core course concepts or strengthen their commitment to a life of engaged citizenship. It is important for the discipline to think more about the specific types of knowledge, skills, and motivation required to participate fully in social and political life. Once these learning objectives are clearly defined, they must be operationalized so that we can determine whether or not these objectives have been met.

Finally, it is important to apply the same best practices we use in our disciplinary research to our study of civic engagement and student-learning outcomes. One cannot make claims about students' "demonstrated growth" without a pre-test that provides a point of comparison. Furthermore, we should not expect a student's knowledge base, attitudes, and political worldview to undergo a fundamental shift based on a single assignment or course. Rather, we must design studies that test the effectiveness not only of specific assignments and courses, but also of programs (i.e., a structured major or a set of general-education requirements). In addition, we must do follow-up studies that

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help us to determine the long-term effects of our work on student knowledge and attitudes. More importantly, we should ask students about their level of engagement since graduation. This research can be linked to national surveys including the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) and the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI), allowing researchers and campuses to compare their students to national trends and benchmarks.

Skill Development and the Developmental Model

Similar to the APSA TLC track discussions on civic engagement over the last five years, 2009 track participants identified skill development as a natural learning outcome in the political science classroom. There was robust discussion among track members about skill development aligned to civic-engagement activities. Participants agreed that the political science classroom provided opportunities for students to gain the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and motivations to act responsibly as engaged citizens. Moreover, track participants thought carefully about what specific types of knowledge, skills, and motivation are required by citizens in the American democratic system to enable them to fully participate in social and political life.

Each of the papers presented different approaches to skill-development models and as a track, we identified important areas for further consideration: the development of political literacy, awareness and motivation to engage, stages of skill development, critical thinking, and the connections between local and global actions.

While there are numerous opportunities and resources to guide and incorporate civic-engagement activities into courses, an added benefit in introductory classes such as American government is that non-majors can be introduced to civic engagement. Moreover, interdisciplinary collaborations across the curriculum could prove fertile ground to deepen skill development through the matriculation process. Any activity that promotes civic behaviors and a sense of responsibility plants seeds for future advocacy and efficacy.

TRACK: CIVIC ENGAGEMENT II

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This civic-engagement track focused on the intersection of civic engagement, political engagement, and service learning in an attempt to find common ground in theories and practices, explore contested areas, and contribute to the development of all types of engagement in university, civic, and political communities. In our discussions, the major issues that emerged were sustaining engagement, definitions of key terms, and implementation of engagement in many different contexts. In the end, we focused on three areas in which our discussions could contribute to the field at large: contested areas, developmental issues, and creation of a handbook.

Contested Concepts

Track participants recognized a number of areas of contention, starting with the vocabulary of civic engagement. Participants grappled with the meaning of terms such as service learning, civic engagement, and political engagement. While an extended debate over semantics for its own sake would not be productive, participants agreed that some distinctions are important. For instance, the categories of civic and political engagement, while perhaps overlapping, seem to encompass different realms of activity. Drawing a clear (if contestable) distinction between political engagement and other forms of civic engagement has a real value for such substantive concerns as understanding which types of activities are most effective in stimulating greater political participation among young people.

Participants also noted several challenges in institutionalizing civic-engagement programs. Some institutions, especially liberal arts and religious institutions, explicitly name the education of engaged citizens as a part of their mission, but at others administrators may be reluctant to embrace civic-engagement programs. This reluctance may stem from doubts about the academic rigor of such programs or concerns about politicization of the classroom or indoctrination of students. It is thus the task of advocates of civic-engagement programs to design them with academic rigor and clear connections to learning outcomes in mind. The question of politicization is somewhat more complex. The literature indicates that classroom experiences do not easily alter students' ideological orientation, a finding that could be publicized more effectively. However, there are legitimate concerns that carelessly designed projects may alienate some students, leading them to silence themselves or doubt the credibility of information conveyed in the classroom. This is an issue in a larger debate over whether it is better for an instructor to maintain a stance of strict neutrality to avoid undue influence on students or whether it is better share a particular viewpoint as a way of modeling active citizenship.

Participants agreed that well-designed civic-engagement programs can provide students of any political orientation with the tools and knowledge to participate more effectively as citizens. This is not to say, however, that advocacy for civic engagement is a value-free endeavor. It is not. The inclusion of civic-engagement programs in the political science curriculum is predicated on the belief that it is better for citizens to participate than not and that it is a legitimate goal of the profession to prepare students to engage the political system more effectively.

Developmental Issues

In our discussions of different aspects of participatory behaviors, we found there to be a disconnection between the work of civic engagement to political engagement. The larger literature on participation finds that young people are more likely to participate in civic activities than their older counterparts, but are less likely to participate in politics. Our students find a distinction between civic and political engagement and at times want more of a connection between civic participation and the political structures in an attempt to create more sustainable change. In our observations, our students tend to think of politics too narrowly and miss occasions when they are already participating in civic activities or events as political actors. Students are asking for more than just volunteerism, but they do not always know how to connect their civic activities to political action.

We found this opportunity to connect civic engagement and political engagement by including political concepts with practices in service-learning and civic-engagement environments.

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Bridging this gap with our students is a key component to encouraging sustained involvement in the causes for which our students work and in general in the political system. Connecting civic engagement with political action allows for additional teaching opportunities that explore how to make changes to public policy, political structures, and politics.

As teachers in political science we have the opportunity to help our students perceive a world that is larger than the single organization or civic-learning opportunity and to connect these moments to sustained engagement to create civic and political change. It is also a learning opportunity for academics to assess the goals of civic engagement. How can we include different types of information into our curriculum that not only focus on civic and service learning but also include connections to structures, policies, and politics? Should we be concerned about continuing participation in civic and political life after college? What skills can our students take from these learning moments for future participation? How can we encourage lifelong learning, interest, and participation in both civic and political life?

While in the academic environment we hope that we are teaching our students how to think critically about their world and their place in it. We need to help our students to connect scholarship with service and understand how the theories relate to reality. Opportunities abound for the university to encourage civic and political participation through modeling participatory behaviors and adhering to college mission statements that discuss service as a component of college education. We need to think about alternative ways to inform our students about the civic and political connections, whether it is bringing more structural and policy literature into the classroom, creating a documentary about local politics, sharing our experiences as political and civic actors, or offering international opportunities for comparative structure and policy analysis. In the end, we need to know that our students can learn about civic and political engagement in a variety of ways and that successful learning can come from circumstances where everything did not work out perfectly. The power of civic engagement is that our students learn not just through lectures, textbooks, or class discussions, but through engaging in the civic and political system around them.

The Handbook

The Civic Engagement Track II group explored the broad need to catalog the civic-engagement vocabulary and the learning outcomes from courses and programs aimed at encouraging civic engagement. This track recognized the broad applicability of civic/political engagement in the discipline in the different subfields due to our own differences as academics from across political science. Participants proposed that a handbook could serve as a reference in the discipline for course structure, as a glossary of terms related to civic engagement, and as a resource for effective assessment practices in non-traditional pedagogies. This handbook could evaluate and catalog best practices in service learning and study abroad programs with a civic and/or political engagement learning outcome.

There was considerable agreement around the need to define, distinguish, and specify the language used with civic engagement, political engagement, and service learning. A glossary of terms would clarify how political science as a discipline operationalizes civic engagement as a learning outcome, recognizing just how diffuse the term has become across colleges and universities and across different disciplines. This glossary could also deepen and sharpen existing knowledge and better serve faculty and administrators in creating, implementing, and assessing engagement opportunities for students. Several papers presented refined definitions, and participants agreed that well-placed terms such as *informed advocacy* and *political efficacy* better informed the outcomes of student learning (Lorenzini 2009).

Participants discussed many methodologically and programmatically rich ideas about how students can best learn to be engaged through service learning and study abroad. Faculty realized that students often want to learn more and desire deeper engagement. This goal might be best achieved by requiring students to enroll in a series of classes or indeed by the professor modeling engagement in the classroom. A handbook would highlight courses and pedagogical styles that vary in structure, length, and activity that best demonstrate and teach engagement. The effective use of group activities or the requirement of a research methods course are examples of prerequisites that may heighten learning during a service-learning or abroad experience. Finally, a handbook would allow space to enumerate best practices and discuss how to take advantage of less predictable teachable moments that occur when learning civic or political engagement outside of a traditional classroom setting. In sum, a resource or reference consolidating core ideas and theories, providing examples from all subfields, and explaining effective assessment techniques in these non-traditional courses would be valuable to professors who seek to and already include civic-engagement components in their classrooms, and would also contribute to the discipline's understanding of our role in fostering civic and political engagement.

REFERENCE

Lorenzini, Michelle. 2009. "Beyond Civic Engagement to Informed Student Advocacy and Awareness." Presented at the Teaching and Learning Conference of the American Political Science Association, Baltimore.

TRACK: CORE CURRICULUM AND GENERAL EDUCATION

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Political Science's Mission within the Curriculum

Participants in the Core Curriculum and General Education Track engaged in a spirited debate about a variety of crosscutting topics. Although political science's appropriate role varies with the needs of different kinds of institutions, from community to liberal arts colleges, from religiously oriented campuses to large public universities, various learning environments raise unique challenges to and expectations about how political science courses should serve an institution's curriculum goals.

There was general consensus that our courses serve two fundamentally different functions, or missions. The first focuses on majors, who take a variety of courses in the discipline, at all levels, in integrated, department-specified curricula. The second focuses on undergraduates who have no intent to become political science majors. Our discussion focused on the difficulty of defining the purpose of a general undergraduate political science course

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that serves both populations simultaneously within a liberal arts framework.

One issue is the need to justify political science's presence within the general curriculum. With pressures to improve undergraduate students' performance in math, science, and other so-called more practical or useful areas of learning—as well as pressures to reduce total graduation requirements—several presenters described pressures to drop political science requirements from core curriculum requirements altogether. One problem was external preconceptions that American government courses (the most common offering in the core) were redundant because such material is covered in high school. Many of us suggested instead that undergraduates, as adults, were uniquely positioned as stakeholders to appreciate an American government course.

Several of us urged seeking out courses beyond American government as points of entry into the core curriculum. We pointed to other important contributions political science makes to a liberal arts education: critical thinking skills, statistical literacy, an understanding of global issues, and an appreciation for the theoretical questions that have shaped political life for centuries. Some suggested that community colleges and small liberal arts colleges are particularly well suited to more flexibly address political science's role in general education. Perhaps this could be a topic of future conference sessions.

The Better Making of Global Citizens

We also considered preparing students for global citizenship. We acknowledged the difficult task of teaching introductory classes to a diverse range of students. Overuse of American-specific references may suggest (falsely) that other polities deviate from the American gold standard. Core courses should enable students to understand the various ways citizenship is constructed. It is important to expose students to both theoretical relationships (what is possible) and empirical relationships (what has happened) connecting institutional design, citizen preferences, and policy outcomes. A properly designed core course encourages students to ask critical questions about the dynamics of citizenship inside and outside the American context.

We expressed concerns about the value of political science as it relates to citizenship. First, concern about the *civic value* of political science: Are there attitudinal, behavioral, or cognitive differences between majors and non-majors? Can we see such differences in students before and after completing a core course? Second, concern about the *monetary value* of political science: Where do we fit within broader graduation requirements? How do we defend our practicality to students seeking jobs, companies seeking talented applicant pools, or legislators seeking to reduce higher education costs? Third, concern about the *substantive value* of political science: do we offer students a way of thinking and writing about non-political phenomena in ways that uncover underlying premises about citizenship, power, or policy? Most agreed that an introductory course on American government was essential. Others wanted to offer a second course in international relations, political theory, or comparative politics. In the end, we wrangled with whether our courses made students better informed, deliberative, and collaborative citizens.

We also discussed how concerns about the value of political science education reflected changing conceptions of academic culture (as the learning styles of today's college student force changes in faculty teaching styles); where non-Americanists increasingly teach introductory courses in American government; where student and faculty bodies are more diverse; and where recent upheavals in the economy facilitate student-enrollment pressures and downturns in faculty hiring. Overall, we agreed that courses within the core curriculum must prepare students to become better global citizens.

Engaging Political Science Students

We also addressed the need to engage students already determined to be bored. One critical task is to expose how important—and universally human—politics is. Some ideas included building pop-culture references into the curriculum. These ranged from using *American Idol* as a vehicle for comparing Tocqueville and Marx to using *The West Wing* to illustrate concepts in American government. Another idea was to use service learning to engage students with hands-on experience.

We drew a number of caveats from this discussion. First, pop culture must be used to teach rather than simply to entertain. One participant used *American Idol* as a springboard for a paper in which students were required to cite the required texts several times. Such an integrative practice is not simply a means of appearing relevant or hip; it is a hook that draws students into asking core questions about politics. Second, what we regard as contemporary culture may be dated. *The West Wing* was past its prime before today's college freshmen entered high school. Its value as an instructional tool is not that it satisfies students' need for pop culture, but that it presents political concepts in an attractive and emotionally engaging format. Third, not all college students are the same—especially in contexts with high percentages of nontraditional and lower-income students. Pitching examples at millennial students may exclude other students. Similarly, it is wrong to assume that all college students are "digital natives." Because many students may have limited experience with computers, a teacher who pushes the class to do more online may find a role doing more technical support than lecture preparation.

We were divided between traditionalists and non-traditionalists. Traditionalists argued that efforts to engage students with pop culture betrayed the gravitas of our discipline; they questioned why such an approach is necessary, when political science has not traditionally needed to make itself relevant. Non-traditionalists countered that such integration bridges the emotional distance between students and the material; in their view, pop references are necessary for genuine learning (rather than soon-to-be-forgotten memorization).

New Technologies and Political Science Education

Students are often drawn to political science because theoretical questions, issues, or policies relate to them. Teachers can help students forge those connections with a variety of tools. When used judiciously, Internet, cell-phone applications, broadcast programming, and other media can help students plug into course material and make meaningful connections with each other.

Though further research will show whether "millennial" is a proxy for "white, middle class, privileged," we acknowledge changes among traditional college students. One presenter offered evidence that today's students want continual feedback and hands-on activities. Without transforming education into a consumer product—and accounting for subpopulations that do not fit the millennial profile—we can make courses more accessible by incorporating Internet-based assignments, video clips, simulations,

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contemporary examples, and social-networking tools that many students recognize and use comfortably.

Course Web sites that promote interaction (beyond course management tools like Blackboard) build on students' familiarity with online social networks and provide additional forums for student discussions and can create spaces for collaborative learning among students from campuses across the world. Still, teachers must highly structure planned activities to stress their academic nature. Those who experimented with these approaches reported positive responses from students and attested that learning outcomes were generally met. However, we acknowledged the need for further assessment of learning outcomes associated with assignments incorporating new technology.

Finally, not all students respond positively to technological tools, just as many professors discount the utility of such devices. As one of us pointed out, "Just because students can use tech, doesn't mean they will; and just because we provide them the tools, doesn't mean they'll use them." Being aware of students' relative openness or reticence to new tools and patiently teaching them how to use them is critical.

TRACK: DIVERSITY, INCLUSIVENESS, AND INEQUALITY

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Last year's Diversity, Inclusiveness, and Inequality (DIIE) Track encouraged us to think of DIIE self-reflexively: "Instead of conceptualizing DIIE as learning about 'the other,' it is better conceived as a process of learning about oneself—it is about coming to recognize oneself as a social, historical, and political being" (Allen, Gordon, and Matthews-Gardner 2008, 616). This year's DIIE track pursued that idea further, exploring ways to get students to know themselves better. Many of us shared the view that to learn about ourselves meaningfully requires a great deal of unlearning. Our discussions revealed layers of knowledge and assumptions that not only needed discovering but also dismantling. How, we asked, can teachers help students to interrogate their preconceptions and to replace those with an understanding of their own place in the social, historical, and political processes that create us—processes that, indeed, create those very preconceptions that need interrogation? For example, teaching comparative politics effectively involves more than conveying information about political institutions and political culture, for many students bring to the classroom rather wooden images of people around the world. Revealing pervasive images of other countries and their people as stereotypes teaches students to examine critically the information they receive. At the same time, it frees student minds to construct more nuanced understandings of the comparative politics subject matter. Or again, when teaching students about the role of race in American politics, faculty frequently run up against the misconception that race refers to non-white identities. Breaking down the idea that certain non-white people are racial and that they present a problem for society enables a teacher to portray the concept of race as a social construct that mediates relations between all people. That step can lead to discussions that transcend blame and guilt and focus on experiences and responsibilities.

These misconceptions that must be unlearned are not coincidental. They are pervasive and serve to prop up entrenched interests. That presents a series of challenges for teachers. The first challenge is that many of us, as teachers, share some of these misconceptions. In virtually every discussion, workshop participants found themselves understanding diversity, and the process of teaching diversity, in deeper, more complex ways. One participant expressed the ongoing nature of diversity teaching and learning; he noted that we think we have arrived when we include a particular group in our thinking, but that reveals another form of exclusion that must be addressed. A second, and related challenge, is that teaching materials reflect many of the assumptions that need to be challenged. This was evident in the studies of textbooks that informed workshop discussions. American politics introductory textbooks, for example, lack diversity in their text and images. More importantly, these textbooks lack the analytical perspective on U.S. institutions and culture that teaching diversity provides. Without that analytical perspective, teachers using these textbooks have an uphill climb if they wish to do more than teach diversity as an afterthought. Another example of this challenge can be seen in the syllabi of many courses on just war. Teaching just-war traditions has its own tradition of portraying just-war theory as a Christian construct. To teach inclusively means to teach other just-war traditions, such as those of the Islamic and Jewish traditions. However, to develop an awareness of and a competency in those traditions requires the breaking down of assumptions regarding the equivalence of just-war theory with Christian just-war tradition. In our workshop, there was wide agreement that an essential component of developing the classroom environments and exercises that are necessary for DIIE goals to be achieved requires that teachers, too, be willing to examine their own assumptions, participate in their own process of unlearning, and collaborate with other teachers in developing alternatives to mainstream materials.

A self-reflexive approach to teaching generates more pedagogical benefits than a more inclusive curriculum. When teachers engage in the process of questioning their own assumptions and exploring their own complicity in the perpetuation of exclusion and inequality, they provide a model for students. Further, that activity fosters a sense of trust in students who are being asked to do the same difficult work. In turn, students will be more likely to expose themselves to the vulnerability that unlearning engenders. This brings us to the third in this series of challenges, for addressing diversity and seeking inclusiveness means taking students out of their comfort zones. Many students are resistant to exploring diversity when they perceive it as something other than the main content of a course. Students who benefit from current social, economic, and political arrangements frequently feel threatened when those arrangements are criticized. Teachers must find ways to draw students into meaningful self-reflection. To the extent possible, teachers should also seek to develop an atmosphere in which questioning safe views and having uncomfortable conversations can take place as safely as possible. Techniques for fostering this classroom environment included many from last year's workshop such as role playing and small class activities. This year's participants also noted the value of establishing early in the semester clear rules regarding equal respect for all students in the classroom. To be clear, avoiding discomfort is not the goal. The goal is to assure students that discomfort is part of learning and to draw them into the process by relating their experiences to larger social and political processes.

Finding a way to engage students in the process of self-discovery can be a critical step in establishing an environment in

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which diversity programming will resonate with them. We developed classroom strategies that take advantage of materials that are familiar to students to help them address material with which they may not be familiar—engaging students in a conversation or exercise in which they felt a level of comfort or authority. In other words, we want to start addressing students where they are in order to get them to participate in the process of progressing to someplace new. Playing music, viewing hip-hop videos, developing relationships with mentors, and assigning team projects focused on a vital issue (in this case immigration) all emerged as possible methods for actively engaging students. These methods worked in different ways. When students develop an expertise (and a sense of expertise) on an issue, they become more invested in exploring the ramifications of their topic. Likewise, when students see the other as like themselves, the life experiences of others take on an importance that an abstraction does not have. Classroom exercises that we examined in our workshop used music as a vehicle to bring students to a level of identification with others that makes difficult discussions more productive.

Emerging through our discussions of these pedagogical strategies was an increased awareness of the importance of context for the teaching of inclusiveness and diversity issues. Since so much standard teaching material marginalizes these issues by compartmentalizing them, the tendency to bring in these issues as supplementary material is strong. While this may be better than ignoring inclusiveness and diversity, it is not ideal. Adding in exercises without providing sufficient context can reinforce old patterns of thought. Integrating exercises and strategies into a course will be most effective when the course itself is redesigned to reflect the insights that studying inequality yields. Changing syllabi by making diversity a category of analysis that informs each unit instead of just adding a unit on diversity will often provide the kind of context necessary to make other teaching strategies particularly effective. This may lead to teaching more courses without textbooks, something that allows teachers to compose a course that is more reflective of the scholarship available. Participants also discussed the need to change one's approach depending upon the context of the class one is teaching. In introductory courses, encouraging critical thinking may involve a teacher's de-emphasizing one's political views in order to draw all students into a conversation. In upper-level courses, in contrast, vigorously arguing a set of views can be the catalyst to more critical thinking among students.

All of these conversations were informed by an awareness of institutional constraints—especially on junior faculty. Many of the strategies and techniques explored and developed during the workshop take time, and that is always a difficult resource to find. Again, building on last year's discussions, participants widely supported the creation of networks of support both within one's institution and among peers in the discipline. The value of the Teaching and Learning Conference itself became a theme of the workshop, for it provides the kind of environment in which faculty can nurture networks of support which improve the prospects of achieving DIIE goals.

REFERENCE

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TRACK: GRADUATE EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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Graduate education is the starting point for professional careers in political science; hence, what occurs in graduate education affects both the scholarly advancement and professional development of faculty. The TLC did well to combine these two topics in one track. The track presentations were complementary, and the resulting discussion was highly productive.

Graduate Education and Professional Development: A Critical Linkage

There is a symbiotic relationship between graduate education and professional development. They are intertwined dimensions of political science as a discipline and as a career. Programs could do more to prepare faculty to face issues concerning academic integrity, promotion and tenure, student and faculty mentoring, and opportunities for publication.

Learning Norms and Meeting Expectations

Track participants agreed that the discipline needs to devote more attention to transmitting professional norms and expectations—a key to faculty career advancement. Formal, targeted mentoring is an effective means for conveying these norms and can open significant pathways of professional teaching and research development (McCormick et al. 2009). Successful programs require institutional recognition of the benefits of mentorship and resource support.

Participants highlighted the critical role of champions in successful professional development and teaching programs. Individual faculty members (such as department chairs) committed to working on institutional design, implementing key components, and championing the professional value of mentorship programs are also fundamental to program success. A major consideration for new graduate programs concerns the balance between flexibility in meeting unique student needs and dedication to maintaining academic rigor. The new Ph.D. program at the University of South Dakota, for example, which is structured for practitioners and provides a threefold specialization in public administration, public policy, and American political institutions (Nordyke and Anderson 2009), is mindful of this important balance.

The track also focused on the importance of academic norms of conduct both inside and outside of the classroom. Graduate programs should socialize future faculty into the profession, exposing doctoral students to disciplinary norms and clarifying institutional procedures and pathways for meeting expectations for career advancement. Our sessions included discussions of academic integrity, tenure and promotion, mentorship, and publication.

In terms of academic integrity, plagiarism is a central challenge to academic integrity and must figure prominently for student and faculty development (Roberts 2009). Professional development also includes socializing faculty to the expectations and procedures of the tenure and promotion process. While junior faculty need formalized and systematic attention to meet

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expectations for tenure and promotion, senior faculty may also benefit from active mentorship to enhance their career trajectories, such as moving from the associate to full-professor ranks.

Institutional support for formalized programs and workshops provide a valuable opportunity to learn best practices and prepare for an evolving and competitive job market. Unfortunately, such institutional opportunities are rare. They should be much more widespread and available across various types of colleges and universities. In addition, these development opportunities should be geared to meeting the distinct needs of the student communities they serve. The program at Baylor, for example, uses an apprenticeship model, pairing advanced graduate students with teaching faculty in course development. At Miami University, graduate students participate in the College Professor Training Program as a prerequisite for teaching an independent course—a crucial component of graduate education geared to fulfill the department's mission to train teachers (Ishiyama, Miles, and Balarezo 2009).

Finally, professional development includes learning the norms and expectations for publication. Programs to promote faculty development should identify various opportunities for publication, including the scholarship on teaching and learning (SoTL). The increase in SoTL publications has developed from the bottom up. That is, junior cohorts are showing increased interest in conducting and publishing SoTL research (Hamann, Pollock, and Wilson 2009). Nevertheless, there is a glaring paucity in scholarship devoted to graduate education. APSA and the discipline should recognize SoTL as a distinct field, signal its importance to academic departments and institutions, and encourage more scholarship specifically dedicated to graduate education and professional development.

Looking to the Future

Additional meetings of this track should consider issues related to the appropriate design of graduate-education programs. They could address proper mechanisms for effective graduate-student assessment, promotion of service learning in postgraduate studies (Harris 2009), and changing needs and demographics of students pursuing graduate education in political science. Finally, issues of graduate education and professional development should remain central to discussions of political science teaching and learning and should be more thoroughly investigated in our scholarship.

NOTE

All references are from presentations in the Graduate Education and Professional Development Track at the 2009 APSA Teaching and Learning Conference and are accessible through the APSA Web site (www.apsanet.org).

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TRACK: INTERNATIONALIZING THE CURRICULUM

Rachel Ellett, *Beloit College*
David Kiwuwa, *University of Nottingham*
Joseph W. Roberts, *Roger Williams University*

Looking back over five years of Internationalizing the Curriculum tracks it is clear today that the emergence and ubiquity of information and communication technologies place us at the edge of a profound transformation in global learning. The papers and discussion in the 2009 track offered a fascinating opportunity for reflection on our early experiments with these technologies as we seek to construct new global learning communities. This reignites the need to reconfigure our understanding of internationalizing the curriculum—from a static exploration of the *other* to "the enriching modes of inquiry and dynamic processes of global interaction" (Barber 2007, 105). However, despite these changes we continue to find ourselves hampered in our internationalization efforts by both institutional and cross-cultural obstacles.

For many of us study abroad remains the central component of internationalizing the curriculum. Presenters and discussants agreed upon the concomitant need to continue experimentation in study abroad programs while more purposefully reflecting on the ways in which study abroad is and can be integrated into the curriculum. As the 2008 track noted, these efforts need to be multilevel: the student, the course, the department, and the institution.

The Democratization of Education: Increasing Cross-Cultural Scholarship, Collaboration, and Assessment

Study abroad; incorporating international students, faculty, or others from a "local" diaspora community into the classroom; and international collaborative teaching are ways to internationalize the curriculum. International education creates, for students, an opportunity to see how other communities approach similar problems and, for faculty, an opportunity to encounter divergent teaching styles and university settings. The former is indicative of Steven L. Lamy's (2007) emphasis on preparing students for a role as citizens in a global society. Equally important, should we not see political science and an international curriculum as a bridge to a range of opportunities for our students? We use the term *democratization* to emphasize the need to make global learning available to all students, both at our home institutions and abroad. Exchange of ideas from diverse social, cultural, and political positions internationally encourages the democratization of education.

A theme our track repeatedly came back to was how students from different countries see the world, and their role within it, differently. Dennis McCornac, Pam Zeiser, and David Kiwuwa note in their papers how international exchange allows for unique dialogue, debate, and unsurprisingly, disagreements. The different structures of university life or educational culture create a unique set of problems for collaboration and learning. Students will have differing expectations for workload, timing of assignments, and critical reflection of empirical and theoretical claims

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that can be both challenging and an opportunity for growth. Kiwuwa discusses a unique set of problems in this vein: the different socio-political or cultural aspects of student experiences. There is a general perception of a pedagogical divide between so-called Asian, Western, European, and American learning and instructional approaches. While there is a realization that there is no rigid differentiation, an acknowledgement of the crucial adaptation and sensitivity to alternative learning styles and traditions is necessary.

Increasingly, internationalization of the curriculum suggests two distinct assessment problems. At the student level, how are activities and coursework abroad assessed by the home university for fulfillment of departmental and university degree requirements? Generally, when students are working through a recognized partner institution these issues are minimized. However, there are increasing opportunities for international internships, service learning, and unique partnership arrangements where the academic rigor and cross-cultural relevance is not as apparent and assessment must be resolved on a case-by-case basis. At the faculty level, the issue of assessment is far more challenging. The assessment of faculty for retention, promotion, and tenure (RPT) focuses to varying degrees on scholarship and teaching. The consensus is that faculty RPT assessment must incorporate international experience and the promotion of international education into the process. Faculty will do what they are incentivized to do.

Using Appropriate/Evolving Technology

Pam Zeiser and Doris Fuchs demonstrated successful use of course management systems (WebCT, Blackboard, Sakai, or Moodle) as a tool for cross-border discussions between the U.S. and Germany. The ability to host varied content (text, pictures, audio, and video) allows faculty to incorporate international, student, or faculty-generated content into their courses. Of course, these can also be posted online on Facebook, YouTube, or other more accessible systems. Roger Murphy demonstrated how a Web-based course could be offered in conjunction with a traditional study abroad experience. Students in the Web-based course viewed films prepared and uploaded during the study abroad experience. Murphy found that the Web-based students came to view study abroad as a necessary component of their education. Skype, an online videophone system, could potentially allow for expansion of the program to real-time interaction.

Web conferencing presents possibilities for international collaboration in the classroom and beyond. Numerous options are currently available for Web conferencing. DimDim is an open-source application that provides free access for up to 20 participants. Elluminate is available as an add-on for some course management software (notably, Blackboard). The COTELCO program at Syracuse University, built around Elluminate, is the most rigorous program using Web conferencing. Tomorrow's college graduate will be more likely to use Web conferencing in a typical work environment making it an important and marketable skill. More importantly, it allows students from diverse locations to share the classroom experience. Martin (2007) notes that Web conferencing "facilitate[s] the exchange of knowledge within learning (or, epistemic) communities and the development, transferal, and/or realignment of norms, views, and values. This process is a small cog in the wheel of a larger global civil society."

Finding Resources and Allies to Promote Internationalizing

Presenters and discussants came from a wide range of institutions, with access to various levels of resources. Discussion frequently came back to concerns about how international programming will be affected by budget cuts in the current economic climate. When international programming is located at the heart of the curriculum it is more likely to be protected from budget cuts. Faculty should position themselves at the forefront of these efforts. In examining ways to integrate study abroad back into the classroom, Rachel Ellett found that students were surprisingly open to the public dissection of their experiences. Extended papers and senior theses also represent potential outlets for students to process and convert their personal experience back into an academic and theoretical framework.

Our track concluded that moral, financial, and technical support for study abroad programs was encumbered by meek institutional endorsement. The use of technology as an important component/alternative to physical presence in study abroad programs was seen as an attractive option, albeit prone to weak take-up enthusiasm from administrators and faculty. Crucially, there remains an entrenched hesitance in faculty going abroad, not to mention students who are still reluctant to embrace its normality perhaps seeing this as just academic tourism with little intellectual reward. As Derek Hall noted, *both* students and faculty frequently need convincing of the intellectual and practical worth of global cultural capital.

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TRACK: INTERNATIONALIZING THE CURRICULUM II

Mark Sachleben, *Shippensburg University*
Deborah Ward, *Rutgers University*

The participants in the second track on internationalizing the curriculum spent the weekend discussing what they considered to be an important task facing the discipline: how to bring internationalization to political science, their departments, and their students. The track began with a discussion of why internationalization was important to APSA and the discipline at large. Deborah Ward provided the history to date of activities undertaken by APSA, the Teaching and Learning Committee, and the Task Force on Internationalization to address internationalization. APSA's inquiry into this topic was born out of a larger interest by the American Council of Education and various foundations in the internationalization of undergraduate education within specific disciplines. In response to data that students are graduating from U.S. colleges and universities with minimal knowledge about politics and societies outside of the United States, various disciplinary associations were tasked with looking into this phenomenon in more detail within their own disciplines. A taskforce was established by APSA leadership in 2005 to examine the current

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state of internationalization in the discipline. A report and general findings were presented at a panel at the 2006 annual meeting and plenary panels on internationalization were held at the 2007 and 2008 annual meetings. The 2007 plenary was titled "Is American Political Science Too Parochial" and the 2008 plenary was titled "Global Challenges to Categories in American Political Science: Should the Discipline Eliminate the Subfield of American Politics?"

After framing the context, there was a discussion of what internationalization meant to the different track participants, obstacles ahead, and next steps. The track heard six papers: two papers addressed how to measure internationalization, while four papers examined methods of internationalization. This note summarizes the discussion of the track and the conclusions reached by its participants. Our discussions were greatly enhanced by the substantial contributions of the track discussants, especially Mark Sachleben, Marek Payerhin, Denita Acker, and Dianne Long.

Christopher Saladino presented his research project on students' high school preparation for courses on international politics. By conducting a survey each semester of his students, he has been able to point to shortcomings in their preparation for college in the field of international relations. Professor Saladino has used his research to advocate a change in the curriculum in high schools in Virginia to include more international relations and has used the argument that increased international awareness would be better for democracy. Professor Saladino reports some interest in changing the curriculums in a few districts, but his research also points to a potential obstacle: there are many stakeholders whose interests must be addressed in attempting to achieve internationalization.

Similarly, Daniel Friedman reported on his preliminary study on how much an introduction to international politics course facilitated the internationalization of incoming freshmen. Professor Friedman reported that many students had significant international experiences coming into the course, a point political science, as a discipline, can build upon. Preliminarily, he found some internationalization did occur as a result of the course. Nevertheless, the survey wrestled with the concepts of how to measure internationalization and how to translate what we think are good strategies into demonstrable outcomes.

Professors Saladino and Freidman's work set the stage for broader discussion about how internationalization in political science can be achieved. Four other papers examined strategies for the internationalization of specific courses. Bidisha Biswas worked toward overcoming selective perception bias acquired from prior knowledge among students. They found through their classroom experiences that students would engage in cognitive dissonance when presented with new information. In fact, the authors presented evidence that students would have their existing stereotypes reinforced when presented with films and readings that the instructors had intended to challenge their assumptions. One of the professors' remedies was to have students keep a news portfolio to collect opposing points of views of a given topic.

Nancy Wright offered a course proposal in which the leadership skills of pre-twentieth century female leaders from Africa were considered. Professor Wright noted that this set of leaders represented dual marginality; two groups (women and Africans) who have traditionally been ignored by political science and Western academics. The course is intended to examine traditional topics of interest to political scientists, such as leadership, with a new set of cases.

Howard Lehman also focused on leadership in his building of an International Leadership Academy. Professor Lehman detailed his first experiment of the course and subsequently how the course evolved and grew. The course is designed to become institutionalized into an ongoing seminar. It employed non-political science readings on leadership in addition to discipline-specific titles and a number of guest speakers from the community to bolster the ideas of what constituted good leadership. Based upon business models, the course also required students to pair with a mentor in the community to observe leadership on a personal basis and develop an international service project. Professor Lehman's work on the topic appears in this issue of *PS*.

William Volke presented the latest work from the Carnegie Council to help develop materials to engage students and academics in the process of understanding international politics better. Among the new materials are audio links, podcasts, and YouTube videos of speeches and presentations of varying lengths to encourage students to think more critically about issues facing the international community. The object of the new programs is to have students be more interactive; therefore, the new material allows students to respond with videos of their own. The hope, as expressed by Dr. Volke, is to develop a dialogue among many people to discuss issues and problems confronting the world today.

In addition to hearing and discussing the participants' research, the track was charged with having a dialogue about how the discipline might be internationalized. We were reminded that internationalizing the discipline and internationalizing the classroom were two different tasks. Nevertheless, it led to a more fundamental question about what the process of internationalization constituted. The track wrestled with the idea of the meaning and definition of internationalization. When discussing internationalizing the curriculum, the members of the track devised a series of statements that argued that any project to internationalize the curriculum, or the classroom, must include: meaningful engagements with another culture; encouraging critical thinking that breaks down provincial or parochial thinking; allowing students to walk in the shoes, sandals, or boots of another; and bridging interests in things international with the needs of the community.

Furthermore, internationalization is an ongoing process, not a checklist. Thus, we cannot say that because a student has completed some task, or had a specific course, that they have become internationalized. Moreover, we need more than proficiency in a foreign language or completing a study abroad opportunity. Although these are valuable experiences, language skills do not require knowledge of politics or culture; a program in which students take classes in a foreign country, but spend the bulk of their time with other students from their home country is less than optimal. The track concluded that internationalizing a person includes a set of knowledge, values, empathy, and behavior. Our problem, as a discipline, remains how we are to assess the process of internationalization. We recognize that the goal of internationalization is ultimately not to have to talk about or debate the merits of internationalization; however, there probably needs to be some intermediate goals to assist in this objective. There is the recognition that the answers to internationalization might be different depending on campus needs.

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The challenge of internationalizing the discipline reminds us that no important improvement in teaching, learning, and research can happen without the larger intellectual discussion of the content of political science. As a discipline, internationalization requires us to think more broadly than we have in the past. This means the inclusion of knowledge across national cases. Thus, we cannot exclusively privilege American or Western cases. Institutions must be willing to engage and hire faculty that have international experience. Without a program of internationalization, the discipline runs the risk of parochialism in its study, methods, and prescriptions.

TRACK: PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

Troy E. Grandel, *Wilmington University*
Susan J. Martin, *Indiana University of Pennsylvania*
Paul E. Sum, *University of North Dakota*
Michael M. Welsh, *Keene State College*
Russell K. Mayer, *Merrimack College*

The assessment track brought together a group of teacher-scholars from a variety of backgrounds: veterans and newcomers, researchers and practitioners, the quantitatively and qualitatively predisposed, skeptics and true believers. Yet, despite the range of expertise and experiences we brought to the table, our conversation converged around several key points that defined the current state of thinking regarding assessment in political science.

The Conversation Has Changed

The discussion regarding assessment in political science has evolved significantly over the six years of the APSA Teaching and Learning Conference. Track participants noted that their colleagues are much more likely than they were in the past to accept the idea that assessment is a part of what we do as teachers and professionals. While many in our group maintain a healthy skepticism about the value of assessment, and continue to question and periodically reevaluate the benefits of "the assessment project" in general, we now dwell less on the question of whether to do assessment, and spend our time thinking about how best to do it.

External and Internal Motivators

Two drivers motivate departments to assess. The first is external, typically featuring administrators, compelled by accrediting bodies, who themselves may feel the pressure of political agendas. The second is internal, involving a department's professors and instructors, who want to ensure that their teaching, and student learning, meets their personal and professional expectations. We want to know that our graduating students are becoming engaged and knowledgeable citizens, competent and creative grad students, and politically mindful and responsible professionals. The second motivation is the better one, and was cited often in the papers and discussions in our track. However, the increasing demands on our time make it difficult—if one is being honest—to imagine assessment being pursued in the absence of the first, less noble, external motivator. At the very least our motivation is unlikely to be pure.

The trick then is to prevent the dangers that arise when assessment is subservient to external forces. The desire for expedience in a program's design and execution can lead to one such danger. What could be easier than giving students a test, particularly one preapproved or perhaps designed by the very entities urging you to assess? The risk, of course, is a program whose more noble goals are reduced to teaching to a test—a surrender of academic freedom and professional responsibility. Another danger is the potential for assessment methods to become a means for disciplining unpopular department members, or as a measure of performance used in deciding promotion and tenure. While we disagreed about the extent of this danger, we concurred that assessment used this way undermines a culture of assessment since student learning outcomes are affected by many factors beyond faculty performance.

The solution to avoiding these pitfalls demonstrated in several papers is departmental responsibility for assessment design, implementation, and evaluation. Departments should design and evaluate their own assessment plans, as well as control access to and use of these data. Furthermore, if the burden of and responsibility for assessment falls on departments, then departments require the resources and autonomy needed to make this exercise a success.

Ideal Assessment: Simple and Adaptable

If assessment is to be a truly useful, departmentally controlled enterprise that enhances student learning, then we offer the following advice to our colleagues charged with designing and implementing assessment plans. The highest priority is *keep it simple*. Be clear with student learning goals and objectives. Consider phraseology such as critical thinking, effective communication, and knowledge of the discipline, which are flexible enough to be applied to many settings. Be straightforward with measurements and analysis of data. Strive for direct measures of student-learning outcomes as well as indirect measures, such as student perceptions captured through surveys. Reflect upon the results with an open mind.

Simplicity is paramount, in part, because overly complex assessment makes closing the loop difficult, if not impossible. It is better to measure a few things well rather than many things poorly. Departments do not have to measure every section every semester; rather, a sampling of sections and semesters is best. In addition, departments should use assessment to measure program-level goals, not course-level goals. Whenever possible, departments should integrate assessment across the curriculum, in part because using assessment to integrate program-level goals across the curriculum can help facilitate faculty acceptance of assessment and ease concerns about possible reprisals with a course-level assessment.

In addition, *assessment must be adaptable*. There is no one-size-fits-all solution to doing assessment, and the mission and goals of a program and the institution should dictate methods of assessment. Good assessment also changes in response to the broader context of higher education, both the political factors inherent in the assessment process and the changing environment of higher education instruction, for example with the introduction of service learning and online courses. Assessment should be flexible enough to incorporate both formative and summative data, and be smart enough to distinguish between the two. Ideally, and over the course of an entire assessment cycle, departments should use multiple outcomes measures including syllabi review, pretest-post-test questions, rubrics, and capstone courses. Successful

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departments will adjust both their assessment methods and the goals that they are assessing periodically, but to make assessment useful a departmentally identified linkage between goals and methods is critical.

TRACK: SIMULATIONS AND ROLE PLAY

Jennifer J. Hora, *Valparaiso University*
Robbin Smith, *Central Connecticut State University*

The 2009 Teaching and Learning Conference's Simulations and Role Play track held a successful three-day workshop where a wide variety of ideas were exchanged by members. Participants discussed simulations lasting as short as a few minutes of class time to semester-long activities. Conference participants presented a wide range of projects including papers addressing development of simulations in general, specific applications of simulations, and formal evaluations of student learning before and after simulations.

In the Simulations and Role Play track, two subjects emerged as issues of primary concern for all instructors looking to utilize these activities successfully: the consequences of the design of the simulation and the importance of simulation assessment.

Design

The simulation-track participants determined it is important for an instructor planning a simulation to consider five design elements before launching a simulation: target audience, amount of instructor control, duration of the event, outlining the goals, and planning a debriefing. First, any instructor using a simulation must accommodate the audience. Who are the participants? What is their background? What skill sets do they possess and what substantive knowledge do they bring to the simulation? Knowing the audience increases the chances of creating an exciting and stimulating simulation. Second, the instructor must decide how much control to surrender to students. Will the simulation have many or few parameters? The nature of the instructor, the students, and the course play determining factors here. Third, when designing a simulation, instructors need to decide the duration of the simulation. Class time is a valuable commodity; any time spent explaining and executing a simulation results in less time for lecture, group work, presentations, or other classroom activities. Fourth, all simulations need clear goals, both for the instructor and the students. Specifying these ahead of time and expressing them to the students (before, during, or after the simulation) increases the usefulness of the exercise. And lastly, any instructor utilizing a simulation needs to build in class time for a debriefing after the exercise. Students need a guided activity that allows for processing the material.

Assessment

The participants' second major focus was assessment and evaluation of experiential activities. Track participants agreed that assessment of student work in a simulation is an essential part of a simulation activity and that a major issue they faced was determining the weight to assign to a simulation in the course-grade breakdown. The complexity of the simulation (consisting of the differing roles played by students, the demands on student participation, and the duration of the simulation) influenced the weight of the overall simulation grade, with track participants agreeing on the importance of a multi-pronged assessment of students' work throughout the simulation. The five modes of evaluation favored by track participants included:

- *Self-reflection papers*: Self-reflection papers allow students to demonstrate a thorough understanding of course concepts and theories upon the conclusion of a simulation. Moreover, self-reflection papers allow students to move beyond the content of the simulation and engage in larger debates about the utility of political science concepts they encountered in the simulation as well as the validity of the simulation construct itself.
- *Peer evaluation*: For simulations and role playing that involve intensive group work, peer evaluations can successfully augment other assessment tools and provide the faculty member with a fuller picture of student participation. Peer evaluations also allow students to identify individuals who acted as group leaders and to acknowledge individuals who played important, but largely unseen, roles during the simulation or role play.
- *Portfolio creation*: Portfolios of material accumulated during a long-term simulation not only allow students to demonstrate increased cognition of the subject matter as the activity progresses, but also permit students to revisit issues raised early on in the simulation process and analyze them from a more informed perspective that develops during the process.
- *Post-tests*: Post-tests administered at the conclusion of a simulation or role play can be used to determine areas of student mastery of the subject matter. Post-tests can also identify areas within the simulation that were not fully comprehended by the students. Post-tests can be administered substantially after the simulation activity concludes in order to determine retention of materials as well as unintended lessons learned from the simulation.
- *Participation*: Clearly, the simplest assessment tool for a simulation and role playing activity is attendance and participation. Measuring *quality* participation is a difficult task, and track participants agreed that attendance and participation should only be one aspect of a multifaceted simulation-assessment model.

TLC Simulation and Role Play track participants acknowledged that long-term assessment of simulations is crucial. Although student evaluations generally reflect a positive view of simulations and role plays (with students often mentioning these activities as their favorite part of the course), little research has been done to determine the extent to which students *retain* the knowledge or skills garnered during a simulation. As one participant questioned, does the simulation merely reduce "knowledge anxiety" or does it produce long-term cognitive outcomes? While track participants would not ignore the "cool factor" of simulations for student participants, all agreed that more research must be done in this area in order to determine what it is that simulations really do.

TLC track participants struggled with how to strike the balance between the two outcomes—affective learning and cognitive learning, particularly because the ability of faculty to accurately measure affective learning is so limited. However, the possibility that a well-designed simulation could improve classroom dynamics and increase the willingness of students to embrace diverse

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perspectives is a promising one. More research needs to be done in this area: first, to develop accurate tools to measure affective learning, and second, to see if simulations substantially contribute to affective-learning outcomes.

TRACK: TEACHING ACROSS THE DISCIPLINE

William J. Miller, *The University of Akron*
Helen G. Boutrous, *Mount St. Mary's College*

The Teaching across the Discipline track examined ways in which academicians can successfully overcome student misperceptions and help engage them in the political world. Participants brought forth ideas on innovative teaching methods that can be utilized across the discipline. Beginning with the simple idea that political science—unlike its natural science brethren—cannot occur in a vacuum. The track, which consisted of professors and graduate students representing a wide variety of schools (from small community colleges to large research campuses), ultimately found that an "interdisciplinary mindset" needs to be cultured that allows faculty to move past their graduate-school socialization to better appreciate the contributions of all subfields of political science. To truly help students learn political science, we need to de-socialize them with the sole intent of re-socializing them with a more critical understanding of politics. By getting past intra-disciplinary battles, being open to other disciplines outside of political science, and being willing to de-specialize at time, we can most efficiently begin to help students look past their misconceptions on politics.

Kenneth Betsalel (University of North Carolina at Asheville) began our presentations by describing a collaborative interdisciplinary undergraduate-research project that examines the meaning of community. Building on cultural anthropology and utilizing students as colleagues, Betsalel has worked to utilize interviews, the contextualization of documents, and photographs to begin shaping the meaning of community. Betsalel finds numerous benefits to such an interdisciplinary approach, including: moving politics from a mere interest to a narrative, learning the importance of trust (between researchers and between researchers and subjects), experiencing the benefit of conducting research without a preset agenda, and being willing to trespass on other disciplines in order to gain a thick description.

William J. Miller and Derek Feuerstein (The University of Akron) brought forth a question of how to best teach undergraduate students about bureaucracy. Despite the fact that most aspects of political life point to Americans disliking bureaucracy (from textbooks to political satire to media portrayals), public-opinion polls show that Americans in fact view bureaucracy favorably. Teaching bureaucracy consequently becomes extremely important in introductory courses. Professors must overcome the myths of bureaucracy. Methods on how to best do so were examined during our discussion, along with a cursory examination of the relationship between political science and public administration.

Deanna Malatesta and Sheila Suess Kennedy (Indiana University-Purdue University at Indianapolis) continued on a public administration angle when discussing whether administrative ethics can actually be taught. The goals of administrative ethics (particularly in an MPA program that is producing practitioners) are to help students be aware of ethical issues and problems, to analyze these situations, and ultimately to foster and cultivate an attitude of moral obligation. Through concise analyses of ethical dilemmas that students find in newspapers, faculty can begin to help students see that the rules are not always self-evident and oftentimes ethical—particularly the interplay of ethics and discretion—can be quite blurred.

Matthew Moore (California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo) returned the group to the idea of intra-disciplinary approaches while presenting survey results from political theorists about what they include in political theory classes and how they teach it. He showed that variety exists in every aspect with different faculty including varying theorists and utilizing different methods. He did, however, note that two models emerge for the design of classes: a thematic model and a chronological model. Further, he found varying results regarding the types of texts required in theory classes. The discussion went broader and focused on where political theorists see themselves fitting best in academia. We discussed the relationship between political theorists and historians, classical scholars, and comparative literature.

The track concluded with the development of four points that we believe—if encouraged—will best assist faculty in overcoming student misperceptions and helping to get them engaged in politics:

1. bridging the differences within our discipline;
2. using approaches beyond political science;
3. recognizing that teaching calls for a breadth of knowledge that cuts across the discipline; and
4. conversation within institutions supporting interdisciplinary approaches.

To begin, we need to recognize the strengths of the varying subdisciplines within political science. While graduate school has socialized members of the academy into particular patterns of thought, intra-disciplinary conflict will not assist students—particularly at the undergraduate level—in receiving a well-rounded background in political science. Further, it is imperative for political science to recognize the relatedness of our discipline to areas such as history, economics, psychology, cultural anthropology, and sociology. Beyond mere recognition, the field would be able to gain from considering research techniques and practices and determining potential ways to cross-utilize methods. Ultimately, the Teaching across the Discipline track returned to the idea of the "interdisciplinary mindset" where we recognize that in a globalized world, it is not merely our discipline that we will need to consider. While interdisciplinary teaching will likely require additional preparation for faculty and cooperation from campus administrators and other departments, the net benefits to students and the discipline of political science will ultimately make the endeavor worthwhile.

TRACK: TEACHING RESEARCH METHODS

Wendy Watson, *Southern Methodist University*
Mitchell Brown, *Auburn University*

Is learning research methods central to an undergraduate political science education? If it is, what ought to be taught, and how do we optimally convey these materials to our students? These

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questions drove the presentations in the Teaching Research Methods track at the 2009 Teaching and Learning Conference. Track participants represented a range of perspectives, from small liberal arts institutions to Ph.D.-granting universities, veteran research-methods instructors to those anticipating their first opportunity to teach such a class, and both quantitative and qualitative scholars. We agreed, however, on the centrality of research-methods training to political science education, and we focused much of our discussion on the perceived disconnect between research methods and the rest of the political science curriculum. Specifically, students, faculty, and administrators tend to see research-methods instruction as separate and apart from the central thrust of political science education. Our conversations focused on integrating research methods into the broader focus of our teaching mission. To that end, we emphasized the importance of choosing context-consistent goals, building interest and engagement, and using regular assessment and evaluation to improve the quality of our teaching.

Choosing Context-Consistent Goals

To the extent that political science education intends both to impart knowledge and to build skills, many of the skills we hope our students will acquire are first introduced—or introduced most explicitly—in research-methods classes. Accordingly, our discussion returned repeatedly to the idea of identifying the skills we want our students to develop and using a backwards mapping approach to structure curricula, courses, and classes.

We identified a number of best practices for integrating research-methods courses with the broader educational missions of our departments and schools. First, as in previous years, we agreed that undergraduate research-methods courses are ideal opportunities to review basic information-literacy skills. We addressed the value of working cooperatively with library staff to improve information literacy and incorporating librarian-led instruction in methods classes. Second, we focused on the importance of sequencing courses. Students should take research-methods courses early in their educational careers, so that they may better utilize the skills in their coursework. Research-methods courses should also be structured to provide continuity in both content and teaching style. Sequencing and coordination allows for greater clarity in course objectives, reinforcement of key concepts and skills, and the creation of student cohorts that can support one another throughout their education. Third, we recognized the importance of matching the content of research-methods classes with how students will ultimately use the skills they acquire. For example, graduate students who are anticipating careers in public administration will require a different set of skills and a different depth of knowledge than graduate students planning academic careers. Ultimately, research-methods training is about providing students with tools, and as instructors we need to be aware of the tools our particular students need most and to impress upon students the importance of choosing the right tool for the job they plan to do.

Building Interest and Engagement

As in past years, we touched on the public-relations problem that research-methods courses face. It is difficult to persuade students, and sometimes even university administrators and other political science faculty, that methods courses are valuable; because engagement is central to the learning process, resistance to the subject matter undermines our effectiveness as teachers. A key component to engaging students is demonstrating the relevance of the material to their lives and to the rest of their classes. This can be accomplished by emphasizing the utility of these skills sets to their futures as lawyers, public administrators, and even simply savvy citizens.

Another crucial component in engaging students is transforming them from passive to active learners. We agreed on the importance of students applying their methods skills immediately through a combination of in-class exercises, research papers, computer-based data analysis, and larger simulations (such as student-created and conducted surveys and experiments). We also returned to the notion of creating learning communities to engage students, and participants offered a number of innovative suggestions beyond the usual to help students see themselves and each other as active contributors to the learning process: conducting office hours in informal settings, utilizing peer review for essays and short papers, and employing minute papers as a way of stimulating conversation and setting the class agenda.

Assessment and Evaluation

Finally, we discussed the importance of assessment and evaluation to improve the quality of our teaching. As in past iterations of this track, we noted the irony that, as instructors of research methods, we often claim best practices without providing empirical, systematic evidence to support our claims. Each year, track participants bring ideas and innovations for improving the quality of research-methods courses, and as a group of instructors committed to quality teaching and positive student outcomes, we must focus more on understanding the utility of these ideas and innovations. Will creating a cohort through learning communities actually improve student absorption and retention of the material? Do active-learning exercises actually improve student learning as compared to traditional lecture methods? Do presentations by instructional library faculty actually improve the information-literacy skills of our students? We believe the answer to all of these questions is yes, but we still lack systematic evidence to support these claims. The call to action we are left with is to work together to systematically assess these claims. ■

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