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Building-Up Student Success

Maria Babiuc-Hamilton

Marshall University, babiuc@marshall.edu

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Building-up Student Success

MARIA BABIUC-HAMILTON, MARSHALL UNIVERSITY

The SoTL Commons
A Conference for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning
March 9-11, 2011, Georgia Southern University, Statesboro, GA
What is the Purpose of Higher Education?

To acquire and transmit knowledge.
To challenge preconception.
To develop informed, responsible citizens.
To be a beacon of Tomorrow’s society.
To prepare students for a satisfying and useful career.
## Dichotomy in Higher Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What Students Expect</th>
<th>What Academia Teaches</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vocational Education</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Narrow</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Practical Knowledge on a specific subject or topic</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Focus on the Product</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Prepare students to perform a well paid job</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Liberal Education</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Broad</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Theoretical Knowledge on a general subject or topic</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Focus: the Process</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Lifelong learning and social development</td>
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</table>
SUCCESS

We all want this!
The big challenge: Prepare students to be successful in life.

“We, the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, ensure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common Defense, promote the General Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.”

-United States Declaration of Independence (1776)

1. Prepare students for the demands of college work.
2. Inform and guide students in choosing their career paths.
3. Engage students in challenging learning experiences.
4. Offer students a supportive campus environment.
5. Encourage students to build a solid background in the sciences.
6. Engage students in civic activities.
7. Focus students learning around building critical thinking skills.

Is There a Common Language?
STUDENTS’ ABILITY TO THINK CRITICALLY IS ESSENTIAL IN ACHIEVING SUCCESS.
“Dubito ergo cogito, cogito ergo sum.” - *Renee Descartes* (1596-1690)

I doubt therefore I think, I think therefore I am.

The foundation of Western Philosophy!

If I had no doubt, I would not have to start think. Asking questions leads me to great discoveries.

If I start thinking I will understand the world around and realize my true potential.

**What is Critical Thinking?**
Critical Thinking is:

**FOCUSED** on deciding what to believe and do.

**PURPOSEFUL** to increase the probability of a desired outcome.

**REGULATORY** in evaluating the outcomes of the thought process.
The mind is not designed for thinking. - *Neurosciences*

“Most of the time what we do is what we do most of the time.” - *Psychology*

Is the brain fit for critical thinking? Of course it is! Or is it not?
Critical thinking is

- SLOW
- HARD
- UNCERAIN

“Thinking is the hardest work there is, which is the probable reason why so few people engage in it” - Henry Ford (1853-1947)

The brain is not designed for thinking. Most of the time we are on “autopilot”.
Critical Thinking Is Critical Thinking!

How do we teach it?

Critical Thinking Is Taught in College
# New Way of Teaching Critical Thinking

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>From Discipline Bound</th>
<th>To Interdisciplinary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Critical thinking and problem solving is context-bound and taught integrated in the sciences.</td>
<td>• Critical thinking is taught explicit as standalone programs, across all academic domains.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <em>FROM WHAT TO THINK</em></td>
<td>• <em>TO HOW TO THINK</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The development of critical thinking should be the primary reason for higher education.
In order to increase students’ long term performance, the general education program at our university was completely restructured to allow the introduction of three required credit hours in critical thinking across curriculum course at the freshman level.
Scientific Thinking
Information and Literacy Thinking
Mathematical and Abstract Thinking
Multicultural Thinking
Oral, Written and Visual Thinking
Aesthetic and Artistic Thinking
Social, ethical and Historical Thinking

The 7 Critical Thinking Core Domains
1. **Scientific Thinking**
   - uses logical reasoning to question beliefs until reliable evidence is documented

2. **Information and Literacy**
   - access, collect, manage, integrate and evaluate information in a discipline

3. **Mathematical and Abstract**
   - solve problems; interprets formulas, graphs, tables and schematics

4. **Multicultural Thinking**
   - recognizes the diversity of people, cultures and environment across the globe

5. **Oral, Written, and Visual**
   - demonstrates the ability to decipher, interpret and express ideas using language, images, and media

6. **Aesthetic and Artistic Thinking**
   - understanding beauty, significance, unity and quality as social, cultural and historical phenomena

7. **Social, Ethical and Historical**
   - recognizes the diversity of people, cultures and environment across the globe
Is Academia ready to teach a course across curriculum?
Faculty all across disciplines, paired with an embedded librarian.

Uses the “One Book” as vehicle for learning.

Develop interdisciplinary student-learning centered critical thinking activities.

FYS Faculty Learning Community Wiki

http://fys2010faculty.pbworks.com/w/page/30260928/Home:-FYS-Faculty-Learning-Community

Da Vinci Roundtable
Renaissance Professor Program
**Active Learning:**
Students solve problems, formulate and answer questions, discuss, debate, or brainstorm during class.

**Collaborative Learning:**
Students work in teams on problems and projects under guidance to assure both interdependence and individual accountability.

**Inductive Learning:**
Students are first presented with the problems and learn the course material in the context of addressing the challenges.

**Learner-Centered Teaching Methods**
Reasoning skills: Perform the analysis and construction of an argument.

Cultural Judgment: Reach resolution of ethical dilemmas and social justice issues.

Representations: Analyze, evaluate, and create texts in a variety of genres.

Reflection: Engage in reflective thinking related to students learning.

Student Learning Outcomes
The “One Book” used across disciplines and the recommended resources.

Web page for the course
https://sites.google.com/site/aformulaforsuccess/home

Online ePortfolio requirements
http://www.marshall.edu/eportfolio/ePASTutorial.aspx

MapWorks Student Success and Retention Survey
https://marshall.map-works.com/

Teaching the Critical Thinking First Year Seminar
Keep an Open Mind

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nature, Nurture and Luck</th>
<th>Opportunity and Legacy</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Be not afraid of greatness: some are BORN great, some ACHIEVE greatness, and some have greatness THRUST upon them.”</td>
<td>“Superstar lawyers and software entrepreneurs appear at first blush to lie outside ordinary experience. But they are products of history and community, of OPPORTUNITY and LEGACY.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Twelfth Night, by William Shakespeare)</td>
<td>(Outliers, by Malcolm Gladwell)</td>
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</table>
"We cling to the idea that success is a simple function of individual merit and that the world in which we all grow up and the rules we choose to write as a society don't matter at all."

"Do you see the consequences of the way we have chosen to think about success? Because we so profoundly personalize success, we miss opportunities to lift others onto the top rung...We are too much in awe of those who succeed and far too dismissive of those who fail. And most of all, we become much too passive. We overlook just how large a role we all play—and by “we” I mean society—in determining who makes it and who doesn’t."

"To build a better world we need to replace the patchwork of lucky breaks and arbitrary advantages today that determine success--the fortunate birth dates and the happy accidents of history--with a society that provides opportunities for all."

- Malcolm Gladwell (Outliers)
Health and community
Sports, education and accumulated advantage
IQ and times of intelligences
World Poverty and West Exceptionalism
Jewish Discrimination and meaningful work
American culture of honor and Freedom as property
Airplanes and cockpit cultural differences
Chinese work culture and Mathematics
Golden ration and art from renaissance to postmodernism

The Kaleidoscope of Learning
Measuring Critical Thinking Skills

From Bloom Taxonomy

To Critical Thinking Ball

Low-stakes, ungraded assessments that identify:

- Preconceptions
- Reasoning,
- Learning challenges
  and inform where more instruction is needed.

Homework and Individual Research as Diagnostic Assessment
Ungraded assessments that enable students to engage, work in groups, choose sides, justify their decisions, rethink, and change their opinions.

From Rugs to Riches, or Disadvantage turned upside down?

2. Demographic luck: is there such a thing and why?

Yes:
- Matters what type of world you grow up into
- Bad situations turn one or the other way
- Coming from a poor country with good morals will turn into your advantage
- Teaches you to work hard, stay alive, how to use your money
- Birth date can work towards your advantage of it isolates you

Yes, but:
- It’s a personal thing, too.
- You can make the best of your skills where you are

No:
- Is there such a thing as perfect birth date? Is not this a social horoscope?

Debates and Class Discussions as Low-stake Formative Assessments
Graded assessments that provide feedback to students on their learning enable them to make adjustments and improve in both basic knowledge and critical thinking.

The Trouble With Geniuses

In the book, “The Outliers” by Malcolm Gladwell, he discussed how success and Intelligence were related pertaining to certain opportunities given in their life. In this essay I will state my position on the relevance of intelligence and how it correlates with success.

Argumentative Essay
FYS 101

Argumentative essays and High-stakes Formative Assessments
Graded assessments that evaluate mastery or the skill sets students are expected to perform.

Group PowerPoint presentation

Summative Assessments in place of the Final Examination
Final paper
CT course

**The Story of Success**

*What is success*
*To laugh often and much; To win the respect of intelligent people and the affection of children; To earn the appreciation of honest critics and endure the betrayal of false friends; To appreciate beauty; To find the best in others; To leave the world a bit better, whether by a healthy child, a garden patch or a redeemed social condition; To know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived; This is to have succeeded (unknown Author)*

How do we as people define success? Is success defined as money? A higher Education? A diligent career? I am not sure there is any one solution to this question....

**Summative Assessments in place of the Final Examination**
Peer-Assessment

Students have created for peer students a survey in interests and success

http://www.zoomeran.com/Survey/WEB22BB5Z864CM
Faculty Feedback

Faculty from College of science have something to say about this CT FYS course.

“You’re supposed to be resolving complaints, not giving them.”
Faculty Feedback

Faculty from College of science have something to say about the CT FYS course.

• Students feel that they already know those things
• Instructors’ spend time for preparation in a domain outside their discipline.
• Instructors struggle to find material to keep students interested and motivated
• The course delivers a “social critique” instead of “higher order thinking”.

• Suggestions:
  • Team teach the course with a social science or humanities instructor,
  • Move the course to sophomore level,
  • Keep success the subject of the course
RESTORE AMERICAN LEADERSHIP IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Regardless of educational path after high school, all Americans should be prepared to enroll in at least one year of higher education or job training to better prepare our workforce for a 21st century economy.

We have a moral and economic imperative to give every child the chance to succeed.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act