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## Changing the Image of Disabilities With Photovoice: Reflections and Resolutions

For many students, returning to the residence hall after class is a perfunctory and mechanical act conducted several times each day. Shelley is a junior with cerebral palsy who uses a motorized wheelchair to get around on campus. Returning to her dorm room requires strength, agility, perseverance, and scheduling. She must swipe her ID card countless times at the rear entrance of her residence hall to unlock the door, wait for the heavy door to swing open, and carefully maneuver her wheelchair through.

This leaves her in the stairwell where she has a second fire door to contend with before finally entering the hallway. This ordeal often leaves her frustrated and exhausted by the end of the day. For many students with disabilities, the unique stressors of daily life impact their overall health, well-being, and academic success. These stressors may not be understood by, or even visible to, faculty, staff, and other students who do not share similar experiences.

To develop an increased awareness among the nondisabled campus population of the needs and distinctive life perspectives



Reserved parking closed for construction—Photovoice participant

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### The National Resource Center Proudly Announces the 2009-2010 Paul P. Fidler Research Grant Recipient: Rachel Smith

Smith's study, entitled *Connected in Learning: A Mixed Methods Study of First-Year Students' Academic and Social Networks*, draws on social network analysis to examine the specific academic and social relationships new students develop within communities that may influence their learning and involvement. Smith was announced at this year's Students in Transition conference in Salt Lake City, Utah, and will be presenting her findings at next year's conference in Houston, Texas. She is the fifth winner of this annual grant competition and is currently a doctoral candidate at Syracuse University. Fidler grant recipients receive \$5,000, travel funds to two Students in Transition conferences, and the opportunity to publish the results of their research in a NRC publication. For more information on the Paul P. Fidler Research Grant go to [www.sc.edu/fye/research/grant/index.html](http://www.sc.edu/fye/research/grant/index.html). The deadline for the 2010-2011 award is July 1, 2010.



Rachel Smith

of students with disabilities, the University of South Carolina Campus Wellness department and the Office of Student Disability Services conducted a Photovoice project during the 2008-2009 academic year. Developed by Caroline Wang and Mary Ann Burris, Photovoice is a participatory action research strategy that uses photographs taken by underrepresented community members to advocate for social awareness and policy change. Photovoice has three goals: (a) to allow people to capture and reveal their community's strengths and concerns, (b) to promote conversation among community members about important issues uncovered from the photographs, and (c) to connect with policy makers (Wang & Burris, 1997). Thus, this grassroots approach is a unique way to discover the real and perceived needs of minority populations that are often invisible.

This project was partially supported by grant funding through the Arts Institute at the University, which celebrates the arts and encourages collaboration across disciplines. In addition to photography, a creative writing component was added to the project. While creative writing is not a true element of Photovoice, this piece was added to help describe the context of the photograph to the viewer and to serve as another artistic medium through which students could share their experiences.

Six participants, four women and two men, representing students with mobility, learning, mental health, and visual disabilities self-selected to participate in the project. Three participants were undergraduate students, two were graduate students, and one was a recent alumnus. Participants were adamant about not turning the project into a mechanism for complaints; rather, they wanted it to be a means for improving communication and the quality of life for students with disabilities. As one student expressed, she wanted "to give back to the community, to meet new people, to socialize about issues, to make a difference in campus, and to take a stand." Project staff led bimonthly group discussions between the months of September 2008 and March 2009. A photography instructor from the art department and a graduate student from the English department periodically attended sessions to help participants enhance their photography and creative writing skills. A guidance committee consisting of faculty and staff from diverse campus departments was instrumental in facilitating the project and brainstorming potential solutions to the issues brought up by the participants.

Initially, the students brought in pictures of inaccessible parking spaces, buildings that are not user-friendly, uneven sidewalks, and bumpy brick pathways. To them, these concrete images represent the lack of understanding among the campus community of the issues faced by students with apparent disabilities. The creative writing element allowed students to express the emotions they experienced daily, and which the photographs elicited, (e.g., isolation, loneliness, depression, frustration, hope) that were difficult to capture with the camera. Further into the project, other salient themes emerged, including advocating for materials to be available in alternative formats such as Braille, enlarged print, or e-text; and allowing sign language to satisfy the foreign language requirement for graduation. In describing their pictures, students also discussed the stigma associated with the label of disability and how the disability frequently becomes the primary or only identifying characteristic of an individual's identity (e.g., "autistic person" instead of "a person with autism").

In addition to exposing concerns and talking about potential solutions, students documented strengths, achievements, and accessible accommodations on campus and in the surrounding community. Several pictures showed proud students being inducted into Delta Alpha Pi, a student organization that recognizes students with

## Traveling the Rough and Rugged

*Photovoice participant*

Life is hard, or so they say  
Everyone must deal with  
it in their own way

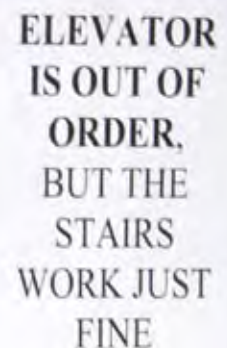
Some make it look easy  
as if they just coast  
While others have it  
much harder than most

We encounter different  
obstacles both you and I  
But the question that  
gets me is . . . why?

Did I somehow draw the  
shortest straw?  
Can't we somehow  
level the path for all?

Through awareness and  
action we can make  
things much better  
So we can all share in  
the good life together.

Out of order—Photovoice participant



ELEVATOR  
IS OUT OF  
ORDER,  
BUT THE  
STAIRS  
WORK JUST  
FINE

See PHOTOVOICE, p. 3



disabilities for their academic accomplishments. Other pictures showed faculty and staff being honored with the Two Thumbs Up Award, recognizing University employees who make a difference in the education of a student with a disability. Photos of a young man in a wheelchair listening to his iPod while strength training, an accessible exhibit at a local museum, a user-friendly computer station at the campus library, and an assistive technology lab available on campus were examples of accessible accommodations that improved the student experience and made learning possible.

A formal exhibit and presentation was held on April 1, 2009 to showcase the photographs and creative writings. To make the event accessible to those who were visually or hearing impaired, the presentation included (a) print materials available in Braille and large font, (b) a sign language interpreter, (c) an audio tour of one of the photographs, and (d) assistive listening devices available on request. Immediately following the presentation, a dialogue began among Photovoice participants, the audience, and University administrators about the audience's reaction to the presentation and expectations for the future. Topics of discussion included students' experiences with accommodations in the classroom; the preferred use of person-first language; progress that is being made in response to early photographs shared with the University community; and making it a practice to regularly include students with disabilities in decisions on building projects and software accessibility.

Photovoice participants developed a list of concerns prior to the event and presented this list to the University president, who appointed a committee to coordinate the campus response. Project participants had the opportunity to meet face-to-face with University administration at a follow-up meeting to hear the committee's plans for resolution. The students also thanked the committee for what is being done to improve the Carolina experience for students with a disability.

The Photovoice project was a tremendously empowering process for the participants. Each felt a strong sense of accomplishment from seeing the impact their pictures made on the University of South Carolina community and on resulting policy changes. When asked what it was like to be a Photovoice photographer, one participant responded, "Exciting! It made me feel like I was a part of the solution." The group developed a strong camaraderie and found strength in the self-advocacy skills they developed over the year. The project also reinforced the concept that accessibility is not just the responsibility of the individual or the Office of Student Disability Services, but rather, accessibility is the responsibility of all.

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# The Big Picture

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## The First-Year Seminar: A Vehicle for Promoting the Instructional Development of College Faculty

The previous issue of this column focused on the first-year seminar's potential for strengthening the college curriculum. In addition to its capacity for promoting curriculum development, the seminar has the capability to promote faculty development, particularly if the course is coupled with a comprehensive instructor training program that is made available to the entire faculty. Offering faculty development under the aegis of instructor training for the first-year seminar (FYS) may provide an effective and efficient vehicle for stimulating campus-wide improvement in college teaching.

In one of his early reports on the first-year seminar at the University of South Carolina (University 101), John Gardner noted that the course's instructor training-and-development program enabled "faculty to generalize and expand their University 101 teaching innovations beyond the confines of the course and into their regular teaching and work at the university" (1980, p. 7). Campus-specific research indicates that first-year seminar instructors (a) become more student-centered in teaching their content-specific courses after teaching the first-year seminar (Reeve, 1993) and (b) are more likely to use innovative instructional strategies in their discipline-based courses that were initially adopted for use in the first-year seminar (DeFrain, 1993; Pittendrigh, 1998).

Research conducted at William and Mary University, comparing faculty on the basis of their participation in its first-year seminar instructor training program, revealed that

- Faculty participants reported using a larger, more varied group of instructional strategies than did nonparticipants.
- Students taught by faculty who participated in the instructor training program were more likely to describe a more diversified classroom learning experience characterized by exposure to a wider variety of instructional strategies.
- Faculty participants received higher course ratings from their students. (Burk, 1998)

At North Carolina State University, focus groups were conducted with 20 faculty members who taught first-year seminars to assess whether and how their participation as FYE course instructors influenced their teaching of other college

... instructor training for the first-year seminar may not only affect how the seminar itself is taught, but may also have a positive ripple effect on the teaching of college courses in general.

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courses. In these focus-group interviews, faculty reported that their involvement as FYE instructors had a positive transfer effect on their overall approach to college teaching, encouraging them to (a) become more reflective about their teaching methods, (b) devote class time to discussions about critical thinking, (c) adopt methods for assessing their students' critical thinking skills, and (d) reevaluate their educational philosophy or instructional role in the classroom (McClure, Atkinson, & Wills, 2008).

The foregoing findings suggest that instructor training for the first-year seminar may not only affect how the seminar itself is taught, but may also have a positive ripple effect on the teaching of college courses in general. These findings reinforce Gardner's (1980) early observation during the nascent stages of the first-year experience movement at South Carolina that many faculty had begun participating in the University 101 training program "exclusively for the faculty training experience" (p. 6).

A substantive instructional development program for faculty, which is linked with the first-year seminar's instructor training program, may be expected to serve the dual purpose of effectively preparing faculty to teach the seminar and providing a visible instructional enhancement experience that elevates campus-wide awareness of, and interest in, improving the quality of undergraduate teaching. Empirical support for this expectation is provided by Barefoot and Fidler (1992) who discovered from survey results and follow-up personal communications with first-year seminar administrators that training workshops offered for first-year seminar instructors had often become "the institution's first, and perhaps only, systematic focus on freshmen and undergraduate instruction" (p. 62). Furthermore, faculty-development efforts that are linked structurally with a formal, new-student instructional training program may increase the likelihood that these efforts become institutionalized by ensuring their visibility and longevity.

Faculty and staff who participate in the first-year seminar instructor training program and serve as course instructors can also gain greater awareness, knowledge and appreciation of their institution's mission and range of services. For example, at Central Missouri State University, 70% of faculty and staff who participated in the seminar's instructor training program reported that the training increased their knowledge of the university (DeFrain, 1993).

New faculty, in particular, would benefit from participation in a first-year seminar instructor training program. Faculty hired directly from graduate school are likely to assume teaching assignments that include a heavy load of introductory courses populated by first-year students. Studies show that a substantial number of new faculty report that they are overwhelmed by their new professional responsibilities and spend excessive amounts of time preparing lecture material and attempting to cover course content; they spend relatively little time focusing on methods to effectively involve students in the learning process (Baldwin & Blackburn, 1981; Turner & Boice, 1987). New faculty could profit immeasurably from discussions of a systematic introduction to engaging, student-centered teaching and learning strategies, which they could adopt immediately in their discipline-based introductory courses. In addition, the increased faculty awareness of campus resources and support services that instructor training programs provide can be "...especially helpful for new faculty who join the university and have some orientation problems not at all dissimilar to those of students" (Gardner, 1980, p. 7).

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# Lee University: A Strengths-Based Campus

A strengths-based approach to education encourages students to consider important questions in regard to their personal strengths (e.g., Which of your talents do you believe will be most instrumental in helping you fulfill your dreams and desires for college? What academic tasks employ your most powerful talents?) and apply this knowledge to campus and life experiences. According to Clifton, Anderson, and Schreiner (2006) when you “develop strengths by building on your greatest talents, achievements will naturally follow” (Clifton, Anderson, & Schreiner, 2006, p. 5).

## Building a Strengths-Based Campus

A strengths-based campus is a concept that a number of colleges and universities have adopted, including Lee University, a private four-year, liberal arts institution located in Cleveland, Tennessee. Lee was introduced to a strengths-based model in 2002, through the efforts of Suzanne Hamid, then director of First-Year Programs, who believed the model would fit well with Lee’s student-focused, whole person development philosophy. The strengths perspective was incorporated into the establishment of a new Center for Calling and Career in 2003 through the use of StrengthsFinder, an online assessment tool, developed by The Gallup Organization and designed to measure an individual’s top five signature themes derived from 34 clusters of talent. Since that time, Lee has administered the StrengthsFinder assessment to faculty, staff, and students to help individuals identify their greatest personal talents and provide ways for them to use these signature themes in their work, studies, and relationships. Lee University has infused a strengths-based approach across the institution in the following ways:

**Through curriculum.** Strengths building has been integrated into the academic curriculum in a variety of formats. As a part of the first-year seminar, students take the StrengthsFinder early in their first semester to determine their primary strengths. Over the course of the semester, they are asked to respond to these strengths through a series of reflection papers as they tell their life story, connect their themes to a choice of major and possible career, apply their themes to academic and extracurricular life, and reflect on using their themes in service projects.

Since transfer students do not enroll in the first-year seminar, strengths workshops are offered to transfer students early in each semester. These workshops introduce the strengths philosophy and debrief the results of the top five themes report for those students in attendance. There is also the opportunity to discuss the application of these themes to relationships and academic life. These workshops are facilitated by transfer student peer leaders who have successfully transitioned into their second year at the University and have participated in a Strengths-Based Leadership Seminar.

Each major at Lee requires students to complete a senior capstone course. Many of these capstones (e.g., communications, foreign language, psychology) return to a discussion of strengths and calling as part of this senior curriculum. Students in these classes are required to write a paper addressing their strengths as part of their calling and future career plans.

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Students are also encouraged to engage their strengths in a variety of other academic classes. For example, students in the communications internship class are required to connect their signature themes to their chosen communications career. In a writing assignment, students respond to questions that apply to each theme (e.g., How will this strength be practically applied in my field? What kind of tasks/skills would I do in a job that uses this strength? What will be the best way for me to be supervised based on my strength? In what kind of work environment am I most likely to thrive and feel content? Based on this strength, what would be the perfect job for me upon graduation?).

Graduate students in education are asked to read Leisveld and Miller's (2005) *Teach With Your Strengths* and apply their signature themes to their potential success in the classroom. Graduate students in counseling psychology are given assignments related to understanding themselves as a counselor through their signature themes and applying these themes to their work.

**In advising.** Faculty and staff are encouraged to discuss students' strengths during regular academic advising sessions. Furthermore, when students declare or change their major, they come to the Center for Calling and Career to process the paperwork. At the Center, they are encouraged to talk with a strengths vocational advisor (SVA) about their decision. The SVAs are trained volunteer faculty who help students (a) understand the potential that lies within each of the 34 themes, (b) identify the unique combinations of talents that are possible with their particular top five themes, (c) make connections between their signature themes, and (d) apply their strengths when choosing a major or making career decisions.

**In career development.** At the Center for Calling and Career, students' strengths are used in conjunction with interests, values, and skills to help them in their decision making (e.g., change in major, job searching). Workshops are presented to classes and student clubs to help students make the connection between their signature themes and the world of work. Students are also encouraged to address their strengths on their resumes and to discuss them in interviews with potential employers.

**In student leadership development.** Strengths development is incorporated into student leadership in several ways, including the (a) Gateway Peer Leader program, (b) Transfer Student Leadership Council, and (c) Poiema Scholars Program. The Gateway Peer Leaders are an integral part of the first-year experience at Lee. Each section of the first-year seminar has one or two peer leaders assigned. Since a strengths focus is an important part of the first-year experience, these peer leaders are prepared to discuss the 34 StrengthsFinder themes and have strengths conversations with the first-year students in their seminars. The Transfer Student Leadership Council participates in a Using Your Strengths in Leadership workshop in the fall semester. Council members are encouraged to lead with their best gifts and see fellow transfer students through a strengths lens. The Poiema Scholars participate in a select scholarship program for 20 first- and second-year students. Scholars meet monthly with the director of the Center for Calling and Career to discuss their strength themes in relation to their calling to serve.

**In residential life.** The Center for Calling and Career in cooperation with the Office of Residential Life at Lee offers strengths training for all resident directors, resident assistants, and chaplains. These student leaders are encouraged to use their strengths in their leadership roles and to incorporate the strengths into hall programming through resident theme identification on hall doors; strengths

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... when you “develop strengths by building on your greatest talents, achievements will naturally follow.”

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(Clifton, Anderson, & Schreiner, 2006, p. 5).

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displays on bulletin boards; or invitations to the Center for Calling and Career staff to come to the residence hall floor to discuss strengths in connection with academics, relationships, or calling and career.

**Through professional development.** Faculty and staff also have opportunities to incorporate strengths into their personal development and to model strengths building to the students. They are given desk plaques displaying their top five strengths themes serving as a personal reminder as well as a visual cue for students and colleagues. For faculty, strengths development is included in new faculty orientation by providing an individual strengths talk with each new person. Departmental faculty have addressed strengths through team-building exercises, and department chairs have discussed strengths as part of their leadership style. For staff, there have been Celebration of Strengths debriefings, where all 34 themes were highlighted, and members of the staff who had those themes were affirmed. Some staff have also participated in sector team-building exercises where they address how to understand and appreciate each other through the talents each one brings to the workplace.

## Conclusion

Although Lee's assessment for the strengths-based approach is still in its early stages, there has been overwhelming support for the program from administration, faculty, and students. The common language of strengths has been a valuable unifying tool for the entire campus. In acknowledgment of their commitment to building a strengths-based campus, in September 2009, the Gallup Organization presented Lee University with the Clifton Compass Award, a national recognition of institutional strengths-based philosophy and programming.

The strengths perspective has flourished at Lee because it fits well with the campus culture. Lee is a student-centered campus that provides individual attention and personal encouragement to students. This positive approach to study and work has given students, staff, and faculty a clearer sense of identity and purpose and a greater sense of direction for their futures.

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## CUSEO

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One way to systematically address the adjustment and pedagogical challenges faced by new faculty issues is by offering the first-year seminar instructor training experience as a component of, or in conjunction with, a comprehensive new-faculty orientation program. Such an intensive and comprehensive new-faculty orientation and development experience has the potential not only to facilitate the adjustment of first-year faculty, but also to proactively promote the development of a new faculty culture on campus—one that is more student-centered, ready, and able to engage in effective college teaching.

In summary, the benefits of a comprehensive FYS instructor training program are many. Faculty development linked FYS instructor training has the potential to (a) ease the adjustment of new faculty, (b) facilitate more student-centered learning strategies among all first-year faculty, (c) promote campus-wide improvements and innovations in teaching, and (d) increase faculty knowledge of university resources and services.

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# Positive Impacts of Required Learning Communities for Undecided First-Year Students

Ohio University's learning communities (LC) program began in fall 1999 with two residential LCs for 40 first-year students and has since expanded to nearly 150 primarily academically-based LCs with 2,177 of the approximately 4,000 incoming students participating in fall 2008. Learning communities are an integral part of Ohio's University College (UC), which enrolls nearly 1,000 of the incoming cohort who enter as undecided students and assists these students in declaring a major and obtaining admission into their field of choice. Based on the success of Ohio's overall LC program, in 2004, University College began offering optional LCs to its students. In December 2006, UC advisors reviewed data that indicated students in learning communities linked with UC's first-year seminar (FYS) for undecided students were earning higher grades and were retained at a higher rate than undecided students not enrolled in an LC. These findings resulted in University College implementing a new initiative, in fall 2007, requiring all undecided first-year students to enroll in one of the 50 learning communities options. The goal was to increase the retention and address the transitional challenges of first-year undecided students while assisting them in choosing a major.

At new student orientation, UC students select an LC option. Each orientation group is presented with a partial list of all the available options, and options are rotated among the groups to ensure all LCs will have equal enrollment. The LCs are designed to explore possible majors by pairing courses needed to complete a major, providing a more in-depth exposure to the field, with a first-year seminar incorporating career exploration assignments. For example, a student considering a major in communications may enroll in the Exploring Communication LC, which includes courses in public speaking and fundamentals of human communication. In the FYS, students attend a majors fair, take online self assessments, and are given the assignment of interviewing a faculty member, advisor, or administrator and asking the interviewee about his or her career choice process. In addition, students are asked to research a major and career and prepare a paper and class presentation showcasing their findings to their peers.

The LC structure also assures undecided students a place in classes that typically can be difficult for nonmajors to get in to. By exposing students to the course work required for a major sooner in their educational process and combining classes with the FYS major exploration assignments, students can better assess if the major is a good fit for their interests or if they need to continue exploring. In addition, the required LC format creates an intentional and consistent first-year experience for all incoming University College students.

## Promising Outcomes

Since the inception of the learning communities program, all students who participate in LCs at Ohio University, on average, have maintained a 0.10 higher GPA and are retained at a 4% higher rate than nonparticipants. Fall 2007 data showed that University College LC participants demonstrated even greater academic achievement with 0.48 higher GPAs. An additional indication that requiring LCs is beneficial is measured by first-year student academic probation rates. UC academic probation rates decreased from 15% in fall 2006 to 8.7% in fall 2007 and

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The LC structure also assures undecided students a place in classes that typically can be difficult for nonmajors to get in to.

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8.6% in fall 2008 compared to University-wide rates of 14.6%, 13.3%, and 11.3%, respectively. Further, UC student retention rates dramatically increased from 63% to 78% between fall 2006 and 2007 while University-wide rates increased from 78% to 80%.

Within University College, the percent of UC students declaring a major at the end of the academic year also significantly increased with the requirement of LC enrollment: 30% for the fall 2006 cohort (pre-LC requirement) compared to 44% for the fall 2007 cohort (first year of the LC requirement). And finally, data indicated that students in LCs with the UC115 instructor serving as the academic advisor (i.e., approximately 40% of University College LCs) were retained at a 4% higher rate than LCs without the dual role.

An added, and unanticipated, benefit of the LC program is the increased efficiency at new student orientation. At previous orientations, students individually selected each of their four to five courses with the assistance of student orientation leaders and a professional advisor. LCs utilize one call number to register for the cluster of courses, and now students supplement their schedules with only one to two additional courses, alleviating some of the stress around course scheduling. Both parents and students report greater satisfaction with the registration process, and parents report they feel University College has a plan to guide their student to choosing a major and academic success.

### Conclusion and Future Direction

The success of LCs at Ohio University and in University College can be attributed to campus collaborations and assessment. Other academic units play a vital role in ensuring the success of the LCs. These collaborative tasks include providing marketing assistance, LC videos, student reminders, and follow-up e-mails (Undergraduate Admissions and University Communication and Marketing); creating course clusters (Registrar's Office); collecting and analyzing assessment data (Institutional Research); supplying first-year seminar instructors (Division of Student Affairs); providing instructors and deciding quantity and selection of courses for discipline- or population-specific LCs (individual colleges and support services); creating online student applications (Information Technology); and determining housing assignments for residential LCs (Residential Housing). Regarding assessment, the feedback from evaluations by students, peer mentors, and instructors has led to more effective LC configurations, enhanced programming, and continued institutional support.

Future strategies to continue to improve Ohio's LC program include (a) increasing the number of FYS instructors who will also serve as academic advisors to their students and (b) requiring all undecided UC transfer students with 30 or less quarter hours to join an LC with a transfer-student specific seminar. Ohio University's learning community program has proven to be an effective student success and retention tool for undecided first-year students and provides a solid foundation to expand services to other student populations.

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# Teaching Academic Honesty: Can We Change the First-Year Student's Mindset?

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Cheating, fabrication, unauthorized collaboration, and plagiarism are the elements that constitute academic dishonesty and that are described in higher education institutions' honor policies. Although cheating is not new to education, given all the technologies available today and shifting definitions of what comprises proprietary information, it can be challenging to teach the value of academic honesty and responsibility to entering students. According to Donald McCabe, cofounder of the Center for Academic Integrity, "Students feel like it's just no longer a big deal to cheat" (McCabe, Trevino, & Butterfield, 2001, p. 200). From information gathered in nationwide surveys spanning three decades, McCabe noted students often reported that they cheat in order to level the playing field to compete for the best grades, jobs, and graduate school placements. He also discovered that students occasionally fault faculty members for not taking more aggressive actions to curb cheating, thus giving students who cheat a competitive advantage over their noncheating peers.

In response to these research findings, especially regarding faculty responsibility, a proactive and intentional classroom strategy for addressing academic dishonesty was implemented in a first-year seminar at the Rochester Institute of Technology. In the fall of 2008, 96 first-year students participated in an informal survey on cheating behavior. Students were asked to respond anonymously to five "yes/no with comments" questions on previous cheating experiences and potential cheating opportunities. Survey results revealed that the majority (70%) of students admitted to cheating at least once in the elementary grades and more frequently in middle and high school. Eighty percent felt cheating was okay (i.e., "everyone does it" attitude), did not feel guilty about doing it, and believed helping others to cheat (e.g., on tests or copying papers) was okay as well, especially if it involved a friend. When asked about cheating in college, most had not yet cheated, with several students noting that their decision to cheat would depend on whether the class they were taking was important for their major—if the class was not a requirement for a major, then they might cheat on a test or plagiarize a paper.

The following strategies were useful in helping students understand the value of academic honesty, have a clear idea of what their college expects of them, and think about ethical choices now and in the future.

## Strategies to Promote Academic Integrity

- **Personal honesty statement.** Describe your belief of what constitutes teaching with integrity and your responsibilities in fulfilling this belief as an individual and professional. Share this statement with your students (e.g., incorporated into the syllabus). The statement can be used as a prompt for an open discussion on what integrity and shared responsibility mean, especially in the academic setting, and sets clear boundaries and expectations. An alternative to, or model for, a personal statement is Bill Taylor's (2002) "Academic Integrity: Letter to My Students."
- **Syllabus fine points.** Discuss the syllabus in detail (e.g., grading, required assignments, due dates) so students are clear about course expectations and what will and will not be tolerated in class (e.g., cell phones, iPods, and iPhone usage). Encourage questions.

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See HONESTY, p. 12

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"Students feel like it's just no longer a big deal to cheat."

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(McCabe, Trevino, & Butterfield, 2001, p. 200)

- **College honor policies.** Have a dialogue on what constitutes academic honesty by reviewing the student handbook policy or the college's mission statement. Have students provide their own definitions of the terms in these statements before discussing the institution's intent. This can be an eye-opening class activity for students as well as the instructor.
- **Ramifications.** Clearly delineate the consequences of academic dishonesty for your class and the campus. Let your students know that both you and the institution take this matter seriously.

To minimize plagiarism, fabrication, and unauthorized collaboration in writing assignments, consider the following:

- **Relevant topic selection.** Engaging students in topics in which they have a vested interest and that are pertinent to their lives can encourage more original thought.
- **Documentation instructions.** Explain the importance and necessity of documentation, even when writing about a book the whole class has read. Provide specific instructions or a style sheet on the documentation style used for the class (i.e., APA, MLA, Chicago).
- **Library tutorial.** Arrange a class tutorial with the campus librarian to teach students (a) search strategies using key words and Boolean operators; (b) the difference between primary and secondary sources and scholarly versus popular resources; (c) the art of paraphrasing instead of plagiarizing; and (d) in-text citation and reference skills.
- **Target writing strategies.** Have the various parts of a research paper (e.g., proposal, outline, drafts, references) due at different times and discuss the individual parts in class or in one-on-one conferences. Breaking larger assignments into discrete tasks allows students to stay on track and receive continuous feedback from the instructor and/or fellow students.
- **Electronic plagiarism detection tools.** Using programs such as Turnitin.com in class can show students where they may have plagiarized in a paper, knowingly or not, and promote class discussion as to what constitutes plagiarism and what can be done to correct it.
- **Resources.** Make students aware of all the writing resources on campus (e.g., Writing Center, librarians, peer mentors).

## Conclusion

Over the course of two years of employing these strategies in a First Year Enrichment class and a Learning Community English 101 class, I have detected only two cases of intentional plagiarism. Furthermore, after a class discussion on the topic, several students realized they had plagiarized in their papers. Disclosing their actions resulted in resolutions (e.g., lowered points instead of a failing grade, which led to continued dialogue on techniques for writing similar, but not identical, papers for different classes) providing an opportunity for learning, not punishment.

Creating a classroom environment where the concepts of academic integrity are intentionally integrated into curricular activities can support students in modifying their behaviors to foster a mindset that chooses, seeks, and values honesty and responsibility over a cheating alternative.

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## Contact

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# The National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition Advisory Board

## Introduction

In the previous issues, we introduced the 2009, 2010, and 2011 classes of the National Resource Center's advisory board. In this issue, we are pleased to present the profiles of the most-recently appointed board members whose terms end in 2012. Board members serve in a consultative role for the Center giving advice and contributing suggestions for publications, marketing and funding strategies, research topics, and conference speakers, as well as authoring articles for NRC publications. Members include leaders and experts in higher education, representing a variety of institutional types, professional associations, and research centers. The 16 advisors serve terms staggered over a four-year period. The contributions of these individuals have been and continue to be vital to our work in improving the lives of students.

### Joyce Holl, National Orientation Directors Association

Joyce Holl is the executive director of the National Orientation Directors Association (NODA). A graduate of the University of Minnesota, Duluth, Holl earned her master's degree in Public Administration from Hamline University and earned a Certificate at the Institute for Executive Director Leadership from St. Thomas University. She has since worked for several nonprofit organizations in various capacities, including the March of Dimes Birth Defects Foundation and Pathfinder Resources. She has also served as an independent consultant for nonprofit and government agencies. Prior to joining NODA in 2007, Holl was the executive director of the Minnesota Organization on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome for six years while also serving at the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism.

### Chris M. Golde, Stanford University

Chris Golde is the associate vice provost for Graduate Education at Stanford University. A graduate of Brown University, Golde earned her MA in Student Personnel Administration at Columbia University as well as an MA in Sociology and her PhD in Education from Stanford University. She went on to join the faculty of the University of Wisconsin-Madison in the Department of Educational Administration. Golde worked as a Senior Scholar for the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, playing a leadership role in the Carnegie Initiative on the Doctorate (CID). Her scholarly interests include doctoral student attrition, the doctoral student experience, the influence of disciplinary differences in graduate education, and improving graduate programs. Her publications include the influential report *At Cross Purposes: What the Experiences of Today's Doctoral Students Reveal About Doctoral Education*, with Timothy Dore. Her CID work included two books. She co-edited a volume of essays, *Envisioning the Future of Doctoral Education: Preparing Stewards of the Discipline*, and co-authored *The Formation of Scholars: Rethinking Doctoral Education for the 21st Century*, as well as a chapter in NRC's *Graduate Students in Transition* monograph. In her administrative role at Stanford, she has the opportunity to

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Joyce Holl



Chris M. Golde



Mark Allen Poisel



Vasti Torres

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put research findings into practice by developing programs, shaping policy, and consulting with students and faculty.

### Mark Allen Poisel, University of Central Florida

Mark Allen Poisel is the associate vice president for Student Development and Enrollment Services at the University of Central Florida. A graduate of Indiana State University, Poisel earned his PhD in Higher Education from The Florida State University. He went on to serve in various positions in the field, most notably as the director of Transfer Services, the assistant vice president for First-Year Transitions, and the associate vice president for Academic Development and Retention in Student Development and Enrollment Services at the University of Central Florida prior to his current position. In addition, he served as a specialist for student services at the Florida division of community colleges. His scholarly interests include studying success factors for transfer students and assessment in student services. His service to the profession also includes his work on the board of directors for the Florida Center for Advising and Academic Support and the board of directors for the Association for the Study of Transfer Students. Poisel has been honored by the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) with a Certificate of Merit for an Outstanding Institutional Advising Program and by the National Resource Center as a semifinalist for the Outstanding First-Year Student Advocate Award.

### Vasti Torres, Indiana University

Vasti Torres is an associate professor and director for the Project on Academic Success at Indiana University. She also serves as an affiliated faculty member in the Latino Studies program. A graduate of Stetson University, Torres earned her MEd in Student Personnel in Higher Education and her PhD in Student Affairs Administration at the University of Georgia. She worked in various aspects of the student affairs profession for more than 20 years prior to joining the faculty of Indiana University in 2003. Her scholarly interests include the ethnic identity of Latino college students, survey development and use, and other diversity issues. She has presented and authored numerous publications on these topics, including refereed journal articles, books, book chapters, and national reports. In addition, Torres served as the principle investigator for a grant-funded project on the college retention of Latino students. Her service to the profession also includes her work with several student affairs and higher education associations, including the American College Personnel Association (ACPA), for which she served as president from 2007 to 2008, and currently serves as associate editor for *The Journal of College Student Development*. Torres has been honored as a Diamond Honoree and Emerging Scholar by ACPA, Program Associate for the National Center for Policy in Higher Education, and Outstanding Faculty Member by the NASPA Latino/a Knowledge Community, and received the NASPA Outstanding Contribution to Literature award.

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- (September, 2009). The National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition advisory board. [7\(1\)](#), 14.

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For complete guidelines and issue dates, see [www.nrc.fye.sc.edu/esource/submission](http://www.nrc.fye.sc.edu/esource/submission).

**Audience:** *E-Source* readers include academic and student affairs administrators and faculty from a variety of fields interested in student transitions. All types of institutions are represented in the readership.

**Style:** Articles, tables, figures, and references should adhere to APA (American Psychological Association) style. *E-Source* does not publish endorsements of products for sale.

**Format:** Submissions should be sent via e-mail as a Microsoft Word attachment.

**Length:** Original feature-length articles should be 750-1200 words. Annotations of new resources should be no more than 500 words. The editor reserves the right to edit submissions for length. Photographs are welcome.

### Please address all questions and submissions to:

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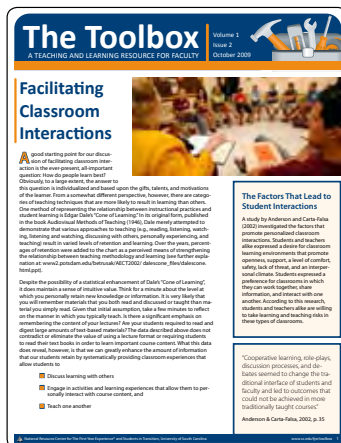
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# What's Happening at the National Resource Center

## Resource Development

### The Toolbox

The National Resource Center is now hosting *The Toolbox: A Teaching and Learning Resource for Instructors*, written by Brad Garner from Indiana Wesleyan University. *The Toolbox* is an online professional development newsletter offering innovative learner-centered strategies for empowering college students to achieve greater success. The newsletter is published six times a year, and the online subscription is free. To register for newsletter alerts and access back issues, please visit [www.sc.edu/fye/toolbox](http://www.sc.edu/fye/toolbox)



## Conferences

### 29th Annual Conference on The First-Year Experience®

February 12-16, 2010  
Denver, Colorado

The First-Year Experience conferences are meetings where educators from two- and four-year institutions come together to openly share ideas, concepts, resources, assessment tools, programmatic interventions, and research results focused on the first college year. To register and take advantage of the Early Bird discount (deadline of January 15, 2010), please visit <http://sc.edu/fye/events/annual/index.html>.

### Save the Date

### Institute on Sophomore Student Success

April 11-13, 2010 • Savannah, Georgia

## Research

### Grant Competition

### The National Resource Center and ACPA AOFYE Annual Grant Competition

The ACPA - College Student Educators International Commission for Admissions, Orientation and the First-Year Experience (AOFYE) and the National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition invite applicants for their 2010 Research Grant Competition. AOFYE and the National Resource Center will jointly award one grant in the amount of \$500 to promote original, descriptive or evaluative research; philosophical studies; or institutional assessment or evaluation on issues surrounding admissions, orientation, and/or the first-year experience. All ACPA members are eligible to apply for this research grant. The application deadline is December 17, 2009. Details regarding the grant are available at [http://www.myacpa.org/comm/aofye/grant\\_guidelines.cfm](http://www.myacpa.org/comm/aofye/grant_guidelines.cfm)



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