EDITOR'S NOTES

This issue of the *Journal for the Liberal Arts and Sciences* examines several essential issues in education that have perhaps been overlooked in the present classroom setting, where so much time is given to teaching to the test.

Education scholars from the University of Wisconsin-Stout, the University of Southern Indiana, Purdue University, the University of Tennessee, Oakland City University, the University of Memphis, the University of Tennessee at Martin, and the University of Rochester share their research and their thoughts on several such topics.

The first research study in the fall 2019 issue of the *JLAS* focuses upon the important subject of college retention, in this case, in the discipline of English. This examination specifically demonstrates how "life-narrative research can direct departmental retention efforts." Two educators sought to identify the mentoring needs of novice teachers in this issue's second study, noting that mentees "most desired support for question and answering techniques, content talk, classroom management practices and student engagement strategies." The third research effort is especially timely, discussing how secondary social studies teachers might go about teaching the political and social impact of twitter in the age of Trump.

Of a more pressing and immediate nature, the fourth article in this issue grapples with how one school corporation attempted to improve a set of schools in its district where students were so unruly, the schools had been labeled "chaotic."   A teaching unit developed for the *Man: A Course of Study* (MACOS) approach is explained in another important piece. The writers assert that such an approach "gives students the ability to hypothesize and observe anthropological-based themes in grades four through nine." An excellent essay on the importance of the liberal arts caps off the Fall 2019 edition of the *JLAS.*

Randy Mills, Editor
Journal for the Liberal Arts and Sciences

Becoming and Persisting as an English Major: Implications for English Major Retention

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Abstract

To suggest how to retain United States' college English majors, this study explored how English majors at one U.S. public university understood and performed disciplinary identities in life narratives and in writing. Results indicate that English majors understood becoming and remaining in their majors in terms of (a) mental orientations that predisposed them to be interested in and have aptitude for English major-related activities; (b) influential people, such as teachers or family members, who inspired or validated them; (c) influential environments that awakened them to aspects of their majors; and (d) influential experiences, such as creative writing and literary analysis. Participants used these categories to construct academic life narratives presenting themselves as continuously and richly engaged with their majors. Findings are discussed in terms of how life-narrative research can direct departmental retention efforts.

Introduction

Two chief challenges face U.S. college humanities programs when it comes to student retention. One challenge concerns persuading parents and students that the job outlook with a humanities degree is more hopeful than popular depiction (American Academy of Arts & Sciences, 2018; France-Harris & Hudson, 2018; Jaschik, 2016), and a second is assessing what entices, engages, and retains those humanities majors we do have, both before and during their college lives. The present study focuses on this second challenge: the challenge of

assessment and curricular development for engagement and retention. Specifically, the present study focuses on one particular major, English, to explore how English majors at one U.S. public university—who studied in a literary/creative writing-focused department—understood (and constructed themselves in life stories as) becoming and being English majors.

Persistence traditionally has been defined "through the eyes of students" (Tinto, 2015, p. 2) as "the desire and action of a student to stay within the system of higher education from beginning year to degree completion" (Berger et al., 2012, p. 12). In the present study, I harness this definition of persistence as an *action*—as something performed. I specifically argue that persistence can be understood in the context of students' *investment* (Norton, 2013) in the particular departmental and programmatic environments and experiences that mediate students' contact with both immediate and imagined disciplinary communities. If we take students' evaluative statements at face value (e.g., I love [Vonnegut/research/reading novels/analyzing rhetorical situations]), then what we have is a sense of those activities that prompt students' investment in the conditions of learning a discipline. What we also have is useful data for understanding how students *perform* (Austin, 1962; Butler, 1997) disciplinary identities. In turn, these identities signal performed selves that enact, to varying degrees, belonging in college. Measured in various ways, constructs of belonging have been central variables used to predict a student's likelihood of persisting (Tinto, 2015).

For instance, in an important earlier report, Hoffman, Richmond, Morrow, and Salomone (2002) proposed an empirical measure of *sense of belonging* as comprising " 'quality' student/peer and student/faculty relationships" that included peers that offered social, academic, and classroom-comfort support and teachers who were approachable, who valued each student, and who created both supportive and comfortable conditions for learning (p. 233). More recently, studies such as those by Soria and Stubblefield (2015) identified strengths-awareness interventions as fostering belonging and persistence in college, suggesting that students' self-understanding of being able to navigate college affirms those students' belonging and undergirds their perseverance. These studies offer empirical

support to Tinto's (2015) more recent presentation of a theory of persistence in which the variable *sense of belonging* is directly impacted by a student's understanding of their *self-efficacy* to do well in college academically and directly impacts a students' *motivation* to persist in college (p. 3). An area that I attempt to address here, however, is the degree to which writing as a constructive act might help students forge a narrative in which they belong in their major. As Bruner (2004) and narrative theorists have argued, "In the end, we *become* the autobiographical narratives by which we tell about our lives" (p. 694). By telling narratives of belonging in college, then, the question remains whether the very act of narrating can serve to enhance perceptions of self-efficacy and belonging. This study takes a step toward answering this larger, inferential research question by first asking the descriptive question of how a group of English majors construct themselves as part of their major.

It is important to explore factors related to retaining English majors. English-major retention rates in the U.S. have declined markedly over the last ten years (National Center for Education Statistics, 2014). Yet, while retention rates have been measured, trustworthy empirical data remains scarce and not clearly indicative of college experiences unique to student *persistence* in the humanities or in English. The English major has potential to offer students marketable skills and personal enrichment, but aside from personal-experience articles that signal alarm at the dipping number of English majors in U.S. English departments (Flaherty, 2015; Jaschik, 2016) and empirical studies that talk about humanities-student persistence generally (Harvey & Luckman, 2014; Mestan, 2016), a need exists for additional empirical studies exploring English-major persistence. To guide my analysis, I posed the following research question: *How do English majors understand becoming and persisting as English majors?*

Methodology

All interactions with participants were overseen by my university's Institutional Review Board. In the present study, I used *life-narrative interviewing* to understand how English undergraduates perceived their disciplinary experiences and how they constructed disciplinary identities through academic life

storytelling. Interviewing has been described as especially useful in investigations of individuals' lived experiences (Brinkmann, 2013). Seidman (1998) has described in-depth interviewing as "a powerful way to gain insight into educational issues through understanding the experience of the individuals whose lives constitute education" (p. 7). While listening to digital recordings from the academic life-narrative interviews, I organized participants' utterances into a cohesive narrative comprising past, present, and future experiences and imaginings—using the phrasing and wording of participants. In a second meeting with each participant, I engaged in member checking (Guba & Lincoln, 1981). All participants stated that the academic life narratives accurately reflected their stories as they had explained them during the academic life narrative interview. I worked with a team of researchers to carry out cooperative coding (Smagorinsky, 2008) of 2/10 or 20% of this data set. At this time, we tallied the individual experiences to be able to also look at them as a cohort for overarching themes. The result of our process was a very high degree of reliability, with an average measures intraclass correlation coefficient (ICC) of .99.

In the present study, I also used *life-narrative writing*, by which I asked participants to complete autobiographical writing to allow me to understand how English undergraduates perceived their disciplinary experiences and how they constructed disciplinary identities through academic life narrative writing. That writing "enacts and creates identities" has become a threshold concept, or established knowledge, in writing studies (Scott, 2015, p. 48). Inherent in this tenet are decades of identity and writing theory and research that have conceptualized writing as something more than simply the inscribing of a person's thoughts in material form (Austin, 1962; Butler, 1997). In the second meeting with each participant, after member-checking co-written narratives, I invited participants to enrich the information I already had gathered from co-written academic life narratives. I applied the codes established for the co-written narratives to these stories, but in negotiation with my coding team, we decided that each story itself could be looked at as individual units of analysis encompassing other codes. In other words, we worked to label each individual story as communicating an overall "theme" in the more literary, narrative

sense as being the overall topic of each story. After a session for developing codes and negotiating the transcription of 2 of 10 English participant-authored academic life narratives (20% of this data set), the result of our process was a high degree of reliability, with an average measures ICC of .85.

U.S. English departments differ from context to context in their relative emphasis on literary, liberal-arts focuses in contrast to writing studies, rhetoric-and-composition focuses (Anderson, 2010; Balzhiser & McLeod, 2010; Leverenz, Lucas, George, Hogg, & Murray, 2015; Miller & Jackson, 2007). The present context can be described as having more of a literary-studies, creative-writing orientation, especially in contrast to departments where rhetoric and composition exist outside of the English departments (Anderson, 2010). Results must be understood in this context.

Results
How do English majors understand becoming and persisting as English majors?

From academic life narratives, four findings are summarized here:

1. All ten participants (100%) indicated they bore *mental orientations* that led them logically toward the English major.
2. All ten participants (100%) noted that *influential people* in their lives encouraged, inspired, or validated their becoming and being English majors.
3. Nine of ten participants (90%) indicated that they had experienced *influential learning environments* that supported or inspired their becoming and being English majors.
4. Nine of ten participants (90%) specified *influential experiences,* including *engaging classroom experiences*, that supported or inspired their becoming and being English majors.

See Table 1 for definitions and excerpts fleshing out each finding:

Table 1
Major findings: Codebook labels, Definitions, and Examples

Category	Code	Definition	Examples
1. Mental Orientations of an English Major	1a. Interest in English as a Subject	Statements of being especially or exclusively interested in English, of it being something participants liked, and it relating to the classes they tried to take the most—leading to such actions as changing majors to get into English after realizing where their strengths lay.	"There's really no other route I could have taken to further my education and go on to do better things and get paid doing something I love. This field is a prime opportunity to pursue and create my loves" (Warlock, first-year student, English Ed.).
	1b. Interest in Reading, Analyzing, or Discussing Literature	Statements of being interested in reading, analyzing, and/or discussing literature, of it being something they like, of it being something that was engaging to do, and it being the classes they tried to take the most.	"*I always liked the part in English where we picked books apart*. I may not have enjoyed the books that much, but I found that when we were talking about them, I was able to offer some pretty good insights and to think critically about them" (emphasis

			added) (Sylvester, senior, pre-law).
	1c. Interest in Writing	Statements of being interested in writing, of it being something they like, of it being something that was engaging to do, and it being the classes they tried to take the most.	"My grandma's sick. She's not doing well, so with my free time, I've been writing. My mom said she's like a ticking time-bomb, like she's fine one day and not fine the next. I'll just try to get my mind off of things, and I'll just start writing. I have a Google Doc called Story, because I don't know what to call it. […]. It's helping because it's taking my mind off the present" (Evelyn, first-year student, writing).
	1d. Aptitude for English	References to being good at English and/or writing, as well as being recognized by teachers or established English-field figures as having an aptitude for English.	"I did my practice teaching, and I seemed to do my best teaching in English and math. And I hate math. […]. But like I said, it just seems that I teach English well. Most of

			the times I speak it well though there are times that I don't. I notice mistakes very easily, even in my own papers" (Rudy, senior, English Ed.).
2. Influential People	2a. Great or Passionate Educator	References to a teacher in an English class being "great"—supportive and/or inspirational—as well as going the extra mile by perhaps meeting outside of class and explaining/advising.	"He's awesome. Also Mike, the creative writing professor. I'm excited to take his course. I met his wife, too. I've talked to them at [the local art gallery and espresso bar], and they've recommended books" (Anna, first-year student, writing).
	2b. Lazy or Uninspiring Teacher	References to a teacher who seemingly didn't care or was lazy.	"I had a different teacher, and she just didn't care. She was pregnant and was going to go on maternity leave. Her attitude was basically, *Read it. Don't read it. Do well on the quiz. SparkNote it. I don't really care. I want to have this baby*

			so I can leave" (Evelyn, first-year student, writing).
	2c. Supportive Family or Close Friends	References to parents, other family members, or close friends who are not classmates who cultivate, model, or recognize a participant's interest or ability in English.	"My dad is a computer science professional. He does Internet security for the Army on an army base. He became an IT technician. He's taking a master's degree for free through work. My parents always told me I didn't need to get a computer science degree. But I said I chose it because I liked it, but when I switched, they were totally fine with it. It was nice to be so supportive of me switching my major to English" (Zaphod, first-year student, writing).
3. Influential Environments	3a. Supportive Learning Environments	References to learning environments at home, school, or in a specific department meeting students'	"It was *The Shining*, *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* that one of my teachers gave me when I

		needs appropriately given the subject or creating a positive learning environment.	was maybe in fourth grade, *To Kill a Mockingbird*. And I have all these books, still in my house, and they still have the numbers on them at the top and the teachers' names inside" (King, first-year student, English Ed.).
	3b. Cold/ Unsupportive Learning Environments	References to learning environments at home, school, or in a specific department not feeling supportive or friendly.	"Plus I didn't really like the whole feel—the vibe—I got from the [food and nutrition] department. I just thought the head of the department was really condescending and patronizing. I didn't appreciate it" (Evelyn, first-year student, writing).
4. Influential Experiences	4a. Fun or Engaging Class	References to English classes that were fun, engaging, challenging, or intriguing.	"So I took the class not knowing what to expect and being a total noob, and I'm kind of stunned at how much I appreciate it now. I'm not a

			gamer, and I will not invest money in games, but I love the discourse that we've had so far in this class, and it's just completely blowing my mind how much focus is on text in video games" (Joanne, senior, writing).
	4b. Boring, Meaningless, Unoriginal Class	References to classes in English or in other departments that were not fun, not engaging, and boring.	"Eighth grade English was kind of my introduction to high school-level English. It was largely grammar, and I hated it right off the bat" (Sylvester, senior, pre-law).
	4c. Doubt About Major or College	References to not being sure that this major, or going to this or any college at all, was possible, suitable, or desirable.	"It wasn't an easy decision to make, though. I was tipping on the edge to do it because I was worried that I wouldn't get a job. That was a big thing because everyone says English and history majors are jokes because you're not going to get

			a job" (Zaphod, first-year student, writing).

That English majors understand becoming and being English majors in terms of having certain English major-suitable mental orientations is further corroborated by participant-authored academic life narratives. Table 2 presents the codebook labels and definitions for the themes (defined here as the overall meaning, message, or storyline) developed to categorize participant-authored life-narrative writing stories as a whole.

Table 2
Story Themes for Participant-Authored Academic Life Narratives

Category	Code	Definition	Example Story Excerpts
Realization	1. Character or Interest Fits English-Related Career	Stories that feature a moment of realization or turning point in which participants see how their characters or interests seem to fit logically with a career related to English.	"The last moment that pops in my mind is when my teachers would recommend me to a major that involved reading and writing. I knew that I liked writing, so I chose that I'd be a Journalism major. It didn't feel right, and after discussion with my teachers and my family, the idea of teaching arose. That hole that was there with Journalism was filled with English Ed." (Nick, first-year student, English Ed.).
	2. Character or Interest Fits English Major	Stories that feature a moment of realization or turning point in which participants	"I choose to make it into a storyboard, because I liked the idea of them and I love movies; so this was a small movie in my mind. It was an interesting experience. Because it has a different pov that you have to think

		see how their characters or interests seem to fit logically with a major in English.	about (camera angles and all that stuff). That was actually the assignment that fully convinced me to be an English major" (Astrid, first-year student, writing).
	3. English-Major Character	Stories that feature a moment of realization or turning point in which participants see something they had not seen before about their own character.	"I had a notebook all through high school that I would stream consciousness onto. I would put anything into that book, a cool character design, or a fun fight scene, anything. Honestly, I wrote some pretty R rated shit in that book. I left it in my tech classroom overnight and was mortified to see it on my teachers desk the next day. She began by telling me that she was disgusted by the content of the book, and that she was disappointed in me as a person. She followed by saying that it was startlingly well written, and she had enjoyed reading it despite herself. After that I spent twice as much time scribbling in that book as I had before" (King, first-year student, English Ed.).
	4. Wonder of Reading	Stories that feature a moment of realization or turning point in which participants are in awe of or moved by reading.	"Khaled Hosseini is my favorite author at the moment. His writing is so powerful, it pulls the reader in to where you feel like you are experiencing, not just observing the story. The imagery he uses in the *Kite Runner* and *A Thousand Splendid Suns* is absolutely stunning and when I read

			those books I was so emotional, and angry, wanted to throw the book down and stop reading, but I just couldn't. I want to be able to affect people with words in that way" (Evelyn, first-year student, writing).
	5. Career Possibilities With English BA	Stories that feature a moment of realization or turning point in which participants learn about the career possibilities that exist with a BA in English.	"I then felt apprehensive. Switching majors from computer science to English would be a terrible decision. Everyone always said there was no work out there for English majors, that if you wanted a job in this time you went into the hard sciences. I quickly googled jobs that English majors could gain and was wonderfully surprised. There were opportunities, I just had to have the courage to take them" (Zaphod, first-year student, writing).
Affirmation	6. Character or Interest Fits the English Major	Stories that serve to reaffirm or restate that participants' characters or interests fit the English major.	"The fall that I was getting ready to apply to college, my father and I were out at lunch one afternoon and he asked me what programs I was thinking about applying to. He and I both agreed that my strengths were in writing and reading, and that afternoon was the first time I actually voiced my desire to major in English" (Joanne, senior, writing).

Results indicate that English majors in this study understood becoming and remaining in their majors in terms of (a) *mental orientations* that predisposed them to be interested in and have aptitude for English major-related activities; (b) *influential people*, such as teachers or family members, who inspired or validated

them; (c) *influential environments* that awakened them to aspects of their majors; and (d) *influential experiences*, such as creative writing and literary analysis. Participants used these categories to construct academic life narratives presenting themselves as continuously and richly engaged with their majors. Overall, then, participants understood becoming and remaining in their majors based on a combination of inner strengths and orientations, as well as outside shaping experiences, that are unique to aspects of their major.

Discussion

In explaining getting and staying in their majors, students selected validating moments in constructing how they belong. These validating moments tend critically to include student/faculty relationships, which were primary factors identified by Hoffman, Richmond, Morrow, and Salomone's (2002) study that created a sense-of-belonging measure (p. 233). Additionally, the findings here support those conclusions reported by Soria and Stubblefield (2015), in which students' strengths-awareness affirmed their belonging and motivated their persistence. It may be common sense for students that validation should come in the form of their own performed competence in a major as well as personal interest in a major. Yet students must also be put in situations where they can construct themselves in academic life narratives. This construction in narratives allows them to present themselves as continuous characters in their stories who belong in their majors and who might persist in their majors. Writing, as an organizing practice, can be used to help students construct coherent narrated versions of themselves in relation to their majors (Bruner, 2004). The academic life narratives of English majors in this study indicate the importance of remaining aware that recruiting students into the major may depend on presenting various aspects of the field, since some participants entered English from other fields, such as nutrition, computer science, and theater, while one student entered English in order to enhance his pre-law focus. Many students may enjoy creative writing and literary analysis, but some may prefer rhetorical studies and composition.

English departments often promote the wide range of careers English majors may enter via the English major (Matz,

2016). Yet data here suggests that some English majors see themselves becoming teachers or writers whereas the kinds of skills and writing they report having and doing and as being most meaningful to them seem to not be preparing them for these career paths. The findings here may suggest why so many humanities graduates have reported being unsatisfied at work partly because they see no connection between their jobs and their humanities majors (American Academy of Arts & Sciences, 2018). English departments may choose to explore critically what their classes and the department are doing to prepare students for a range of careers (France-Harris & Hudson, 2018), while working with faculty to determine how to help students enter into disciplinary communities both immediately through audience-focused writing or imaginative engagement with target disciplinary/professional audiences.

The findings in this study must be considered in terms of methodological limitations. It is not argued that life-storytelling reveals what *actually* motivates an English major to have become or be an English major—though it may result in doing so; instead, and importantly, I have interested myself here with how English majors *construct/perform themselves* in life narratives as characters that belong, or not, in this major. Thus I have inflected the definition of persistence, traditionally defined as a "desire and action" (Berger et al., 2012, p. 12), with notions of *performed identity* (Butler, 1997) and *investment* (Norton, 2013), or the actions and desires students have of learning a subject in the particular departmental and programmatic environments and experiences that mediate students' contact with both immediate and imagined disciplinary communities. The findings here, then, must be understood as resulting from an assessment methodology that seeks to determine what students understand—and perform—as vital to their self-constructions. Thus presented here is both insight into how one group of English majors understand becoming and being English majors and another assessment methodology whereby departments can assess what potentially engages and retains their majors.

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Identifying the Needs of Novice Teachers

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Abstract

This paper shares the results from a two-year study involving 90 mentee (new) K-8 teachers and 59 mentor (veteran) K-8 teachers to promote teacher success and retention. Over a two-year period, mentees chose an area of focus to record a lesson; uploaded the recording to a secure, online platform; and shared it with a mentor for review and online dialogue. Chosen focus areas were collected for analysis and provide partial insight into mentees expressed needs for professional support. Results indicate mentees most desire support for question and answering techniques, content talk, classroom management practices, and student engagement strategies.

Background

Meeting a nation's ongoing need.

Several reports highlight the issue of teacher retention across the nation. A notable 2016 report titled, "*A Coming Crisis in Teaching: Teacher Supply, Demand and Shortages in the U.S.*" provides a comprehensive look at the problem of teacher retention across the United States (Sutcher, Darling-Hammond, & Carver-Thomas, 2016) The report emphasizes the following issues that contribute to teacher retention; a) reduction in pre-service program enrollments, b) a desire to return to pre-recession class sizes, c) increases in K-12 student enrollment, and d) large numbers of teachers exiting the profession that never return (attrition). In particular, new teachers are 33% more likely to leave than veteran teachers. With relatively large numbers of teachers leaving the profession, an ample supply of new teachers is needed. Yet, 2016 had the lowest number of

teachers available in 10 years, between 180,000 and 210,000 (Sutcher *et al.*, 2016).

Teacher attrition makes up the largest component contributing to the annual demand for teachers. Therefore, it is often viewed as an important insight into current teachers' perceptions into the profession. Teachers cite a variety of reasons for leaving with the most significant reasons being dissatisfaction with physical conditions (e.g., class size, facilities, and classroom resources) and job security concerns linked to standardized testing. If districts could reduce attrition rates (excluding retiree attrition) by half, they would have attrition rates equivalent to countries often considered leaders in educational achievement (e.g., Finland and Singapore). The implications from teacher turnover are significant.

1. Teacher turnover negatively impacts instructional programs and student achievement. When teachers leave they take their organizational experience and community knowledge with them. This lost knowledge takes much effort and time to replenish if communities and instructional programs are to succeed (Guin, 2004).
2. The cost implications to schools are significant. Barnes, Crowe, & Schafer (2007) calculate that hiring and training new teachers ranges from $3,600 (rural) to $8,400 (urban). The cost savings alone indicate a need for retaining teachers.
3. Teacher turnover has a disruptive effect on school community because it impacts staff morale and school cohesion. Staff and school community relationships directly correlate with student achievement (Guin, 2004).

Teacher turnover is not distributed evenly across all districts or content areas in the United States. For example, there is unparalleled demand for math and science teachers with 42 states reporting mathematics teacher shortage and 40 states reporting a science teacher shortage. Contributing to this are the large teacher turnover rates in high poverty and high minority schools located in urban areas (Grissom, Viani, & Selin, 2015; Ingersoll & May, 2011).

Adding to their attrition factor is that first year science teachers have less practice at teaching their discipline than other

content-area teachers (Ingersoll, Merrill, & May, 2014). Over 40% of new science teachers have no practice teaching as compared to 21% for other new teachers. Reasons for this include increased number of teachers entering the profession through nontraditional licensing programs and decreased emphasis in pedagogical training through traditional university-based, teacher preparation programs. This beginning inexperience is significant because of the complexity of issues facing science teachers. Examples include: a) managing materials, space, safety, and time for inquiry-based science; b) current emphasis in 3-dimensional learning models with new national and state standards, and c) renewed implications for standards/assessment alignment. With this lack of experience these teachers' lessons and and classroom management may suffer with a predictable increase in teacher frustration and disillusionment. The curricular implications are also important because science and math are vital for future career pathway choices for students in meeting national demands for science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) careers. Between 2017 and 2027 careers in STEM will experience a 13% predicted growth rate compared to a 9% predicted growth rate in other careers (Education Commission of the United States, 2017). In 2014-15 only 25.6% of two and four-year college degrees were in STEM fields, indicating the U.S. has a critical need for STEM graduates to enter the workforce. The challenges associated with teacher attrition ultimately become a barrier for successful K-12 student experiences in filling a vital national need. Most of the solutions to this crisis have focused on bringing more teachers into the profession, but arguably more important are strategies to retain teachers that are in the vulnerable first year or two of teaching (Ingersoll & May, 2012). Teacher induction and mentoring programs, therefore, are critical to individual, school district, and national success.

Mentoring as a solution.
Though teacher induction programs possess varying practices, they all essentially aim to provide novice teachers mentoring, coaching, and support in an effort to retain them in the profession and to help their students succeed academically. Evidence of the impact of mentoring is evident in an independent

evaluation of the Investing in Innovation grant supporting The New Teacher Center's nationwide teacher induction program. The evaluation showed that mentoring successfully retained teachers and correlated with significant gains in student achievement (Goldrick, Osta, Barlin, & Burn, 2012). Also, in a 2015 report detailing a five-year longitudinal study from the U.S. Department of Education researchers found that 86% of teachers with first-year mentors were retained compared to 71% without mentors. These findings support others that mentoring helps with teacher retention (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Gray, Taie, & O'Rear, 2015). The Ingersoll and Strong meta-analysis of induction programs found general success for teacher commitment and retention, teacher classroom instructional practices, and student achievement. Exceptions were noted for some large, urban schools' retention of teachers. By providing new teachers with a mentor and a mechanism to promote reflection on their practice, schools foster an environment in which a new teacher feels supported and valued while learning the skills necessary to be an effective teacher, especially in science or mathematics (National Research Council, 2011).

Video as an observation tool.
     Several studies provide support for the use of video recording and video reflection in teacher mentoring as an effective practice to help teachers succeed and be retained. Notably, Harvard University's *Best Foot Forward* identifies that both principals and new teachers found the experience positive and provided them greater control over the process of observing versus traditional "*pop in the classroom to observe a lesson*" format (Kane, Gehlbach, Greenberg, Quinn, & Thal, 2015).
     The use of video annotation tools has been reported to improve teachers' abilities to reflect on their own practice (McFadden, Ellis, Anwar, & Roehrig, 2014; Tripp and Rich, 2012). Combined with a formal mentoring program, the online environment has the capability for mentees and mentors to watch a video multiple times at their convenience, reflect on the happenings of the video, dialogue about it over time, and learn from the video without the need to be face-to-face. In fact, it allows for a more purposeful and thoughtful opportunity to provide reflection and feedback about the learning and teaching

shown through the video (McFadden, *et al.*, 2014). This type of support allows a mentor to work with a mentee without leaving his or her classroom. Another advantage is that time, effort, and money are saved by eliminating the need for a substitute teacher to assume responsibilities for the mentor teacher taking time away to observe during the school day. Districts can also identify mentors based on assets other than proximity to a mentee (new) teacher. While there are advantages to having a same-building and grade-level mentor, it can also be in a mentee's best interest to have a mentor selected based on teaching knowledge and dispositions. A community of learning need not be limited to the hallway in which a teacher resides. Districts can identify mentor/mentee relationships on targeted skillsets identified through personality inventories and demonstrable success in the classroom. Mentoring relationships established through such intentionality result in increased success (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011).

To this end, the purpose of this manuscript is to share results from a research question which falls under the umbrella of a larger two-year program utilizing video-based mentoring with 90 mentee teachers and 59 mentor teachers in 10 school districts throughout our state. In doing so, the data will add to the body of work to help new teachers succeed and be retained. *Which strategies do new teachers need support for in their beginning years*?

Methodology

Because of the importance of teacher retention and the promise of video-based mentoring the authors initiated a statewide effort under the auspices of the Indiana Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (I-STEM) Resource Network to investigate the research question. The effort was funded through the state's *STEM Teacher Retention and Recruitment Fund* and included the following goals.

- Goal 1: increase K-8 STEM teacher retention by providing ongoing, just-in-time support to new STEM teachers with grade level and district STEM mentor teachers;
- Goal 2: improve new STEM mentee teachers' abilities to implement science and mathematics instructional

practices by increasing their pedagogical and subject matter content knowledge;

- Goal 3: develop a STEM community of practice, utilizing an online platform to support interaction and sharing of resources across Indiana; and
- Goal 4: develop a model for school districts to adopt as they assume ownership of the mentoring program.

The research question, w*hich strategies do new teachers need support for in their beginning years*, supports Goal 2 of the larger project.

I-STEM background

The I-STEM Resource Network is a partnership of public and private higher education institutions, K-12 schools, businesses, and government, hosted by Purdue University. I-STEM was started in 2006 as a collaboration among 18 institutions of higher education in 10 regions throughout Indiana. I-STEM includes communities comprised of educational content experts and practitioners who come together to design and employ programs to address STEM education issues. I-STEM supports K-12 teachers and education leaders working to implement high academic standards towards STEM literacy for all students. Its existing partnerships with K-12 provided the means to reach out and identify a pool of mentees and mentors.

Program design: Creating a STEM Community of Practice Identifying mentors and mentees.

The design identified mentors in 10 targeted school districts with which I-STEM possessed established partnerships. Mentors were recruited from each of the participating school districts based on specific criteria (school principal and district recommendation for outstanding teaching skills and classroom management; minimum of five years teaching experience in either science, mathematics, or elementary mathematics and science; and lead teacher experience with previous I-STEM outreach). Mentee teachers were elementary and middle school teachers of science and mathematics with 0-3 years of teaching experience and identified through district administrators. In total, 59 mentors and 90 mentees were identified. Mentor and mentee cadres were sorted to three grade bands for school year pairing

and data reporting. There were 38 mentees in grades K-2, 37 mentees in grades 3-5, and 15 mentees in grades 6-8. All mentees were paired at minimum with a mentor that taught in the same grade band. When possible, they were paired with a mentor at the same grade level.

The initial-year professional development was cleaved into two separate summer trainings (one for mentors and one for mentees) held in summer 2016 (summer 1). The cadres followed the *Making Science Mentors* (Zubrowski, Troen, & Pasquale, 2007) framework relative to their role as a mentor or mentee. This framework weaves inquiry-based science teaching with science content, models science teaching skills, and trains participants in needed skills to be an effective mentor.

Common components of professional development for mentees and mentors.

Mentors and mentees were trained to use iPads to capture video of lessons around targeted instructional practices and the process to upload these recordings to an online platform, *Torsh Talent*. Practice recordings allowed teachers to explore functions in the platform including the online dialogue feature.

Specific professional development for mentees.

Mentee teachers worked in grade bands to explore teaching and learning though a) guided inquiry, b) model-building, c) using data/evidence to support scientific explanations, d) structuring a lesson around essential questions, and e) making meaning from evidence.

Specific professional development for mentors.

Mentors teachers attended their one-week summer professional to explore mentoring others through the lens of inquiry-based science and mathematics. Experiences focused on a) how to observe science- and math-specific teaching when watching a lesson, b) establish a relationship with a mentee, c) effective communication and listening strategies, and d) and how to help mentees set and achieve goals.

At the culmination of the professional development trainings the two cadres spent one half of a day together to establish goals, schedule deadlines to complete up to four observation

cycles throughout the upcoming 2016-17 school year (year 1), and review deadline protocols for recordings and work. An overview is provided in Figure 1. During the school year mentees and mentors completed observation cycles. An administrative team overseeing the initiative held quarterly meetings with mentors to provide support, address problems, and gauge progress during the school year.
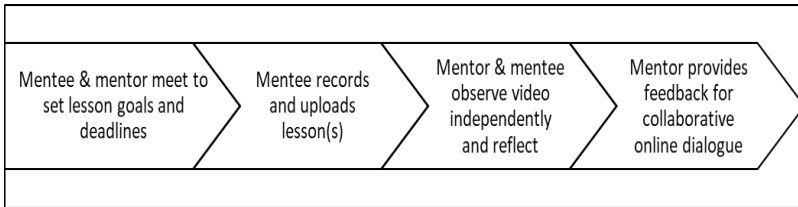

Figure 1. Mentee/mentoring observation cycle

Data collection

During the 2016-17 school year (year 1) mentors completed a Record of Action as part of the process to verify work and collect data around the research question. The Record of Action is an online, menu-driven form which included demographic information (mentor name, school, mentee name, mentee grade level), date of pre-observation conference, date of observation, date of post-observation conference, mentor's ongoing feedback about successes and challenges during the process, and a specific data entry for information aligned to the research question. Specifically, "Which focus area was targeted for this observation and requested by the mentee?" The following nine focus areas were options: assessment, content talk, classroom management, notebook strategies, openings of lessons, other, questioning and answering strategies, student engagement during lesson, and transition into and out of the lesson. The topics were chosen based on a further breakdown of the best teaching practices of science and mathematics incorporated into the structure of the summer professional development workshops. Two options were available to the authors when crafting the Record of Action. One was to create a very exhaustive list of choices and another was to include a limited menu option *and* include other. The latter was chosen to make it simpler for users and to use outcome data to inform decisions

about future professional development trainings in school districts. Again, the focus area was determined by the mentee based on his or her <u>perceived need and desire for observation</u>. The Results section shares relevant data from the Record of Action.

Additional professional development was conducted in separate workshops (five days for mentees and two days for mentors) in summer 2017 (summer 2) following year 1 of the program. Mentees focused on science and math teaching and assessment strategies that were designed using year 1 Record of Action data. Mentors focused on professional dispositions of mentoring such as communication, listening, and effective questioning and year 1 reflections. Mentors were provided summarized Record of Action data and asked to offer specific teaching and assessment strategies to address focus areas by mentees. During the 2017-18 school year (year 2) observation cycles continued and Record of Action data was compiled. Following year 2 of the program additional professional development was offered in summer 2018 (summer 3) that mirrored the summer 2 format. Importantly, mentors were once again asked to offer specific teaching and assessment strategies to address the most often requested focus areas by mentees. Their feedback helps form, and validates, the implications and recommendations which follow.

Results

To answer the research question, "Which strategies do new teachers need support for in their beginning years?" the following data was collected from the Record of Action. Table 1 shows the total number of focus areas requests by mentees.

Table 1. Focus areas observation requests by mentees

	K-2		3-5		6-8	
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 1	Year 2	Year 1	Year 2
Assessment	4	4	5	1	0	3
Content talk	7	15	13	25	1	1
Management	8	13	11	31	7	11
Notebooks	2	9	5	3	3	5

Openings	7	5	2	3	0	3
Other	13	2	12	9	5	1
Q&A	18	12	20	24	11	10
Std. Eng.	14	3	24	21	2	4
Transition	1	0	6	5	2	1
Total	74	63	98	122	31	39

Figure 2 shows the focus areas identified by grades K-2 mentee teachers. Data reveals K-2 mentee teachers' top three requests include help with questioning and answering strategies (22%), content talk (16%), and classroom management (15%).

Figure 2. Percentage of focus areas requested by K-2 STRR mentees (n = 137).

Figure 3 shows the focus areas identified by grades 3-5 mentee teachers. Data reveals that 3-5 mentee teachers' top three requests include help with questioning and answering strategies (20%), student engagement (20%), and classroom management (19%). Two of these areas show overlap with the K-2 mentee teachers' requests. While content talk isn't one of the top three, it is a close 4th and relatively higher than the remaining focus areas.
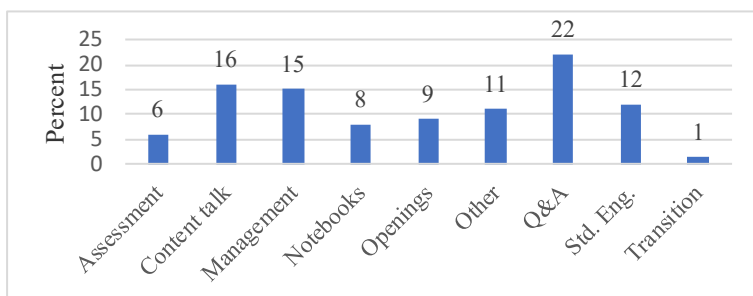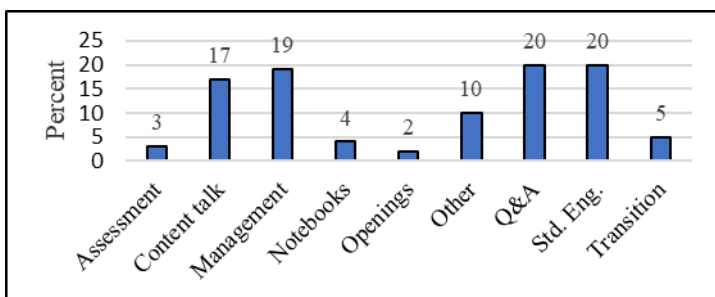
Figure 3. Percentage of focus areas requested by 3-5 STRR mentees (n = 220).

Figure 4 shows the focus areas identified by grades 6-8 mentee teachers. Data reveals that 6-8 mentee teachers' top three request include help with questioning and answering strategies (30%), classroom management (26%), and notebook strategies (11%). Questioning and answering strategies and classroom management again mirror the elementary bands. Notebook strategies (11%) makes a presence as the third ranked observation.
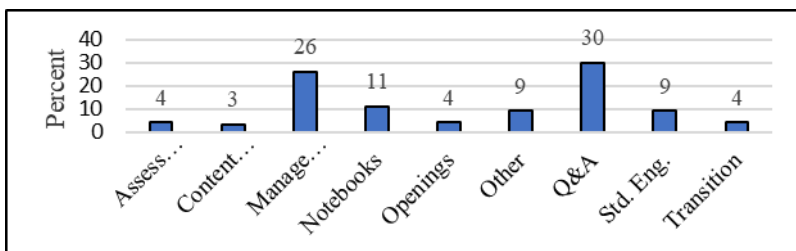

Figure 4. Percentage of focus areas requested by 6-8 STRR mentees (n = 70).

It is also observed that grades 6-8 mentee teachers less requested content talk strategies (3%) compared to primary (16%) or intermediate (17%) teachers. Grades 6-8 mentee teachers more frequently requested classroom management

(26%) than their elementary (15% and 19%) colleagues. Last, 6-8 mentee teachers also differentiate themselves from the elementary teachers by a relatively higher request for questioning and answering strategies.

Comparing elementary bands, it is observed that K-2 teachers more often requested Notebooking compared to 3-5 teachers. Communication with mentees and mentors throughout the program indicate new K-2 teachers need help developing targeted strategies for using notebooks since many primary students re nonwriters or developing writers. K-2 teachers (9%) more often requested observations for opening lessons. Grades 3-5 teachers requested more student engagement observations compared to their colleagues. Both elementary grade bands show an increased shift in requests for content talk observations from year 1 to year 2 (see Table 1). And, K-2 teachers become less concerned with student engagement in year 2 (see Table 1).

"Other" ranked fifth for both the K-2 and 3-5 bands and was tied for fourth in the 6-8 band. Debriefs were held in summers 2 and 3 to explore the "other" option. During these debriefs, mentees and mentors elaborated about what was being explored and observed during these "other" observation cycles. Highlighted examples are included in the Implications and Recommendations section.

Discussion

The following implications and recommendations are offered. They will be of interest to mentors and coaches, district administrators, teacher preparation institutions, and other professionals working to enhance new teachers' abilities to teach STEM related content matter and retain teachers that become better at doing so. The implications are based on the observation cycles (described earlier) and the deeper dives where mentors met to discuss and offer specific professional development training around strategies to address the focus area request by mentees.

Implication 1. Question and answering strategies are the most sought after focus area by mentee teachers.

This focus area ranked as the most requested among each grade band. Specific professional development training needed

by new teachers should include making distinctions between teacher and student led conversations, limiting yes/no questions, using wait time, using language frames when asking students questions, claims and evidence statements when using data, reviewing Bloom's taxonomy to ask higher level questions and efforts to purposefully plan such questions ahead time, addressing incorrect answers, and incorporating "talk move" strategies (Keely, 2016).\

Implication 2. Classroom management strategies increase in rank as grade level increases.

The types of strategies needed by new teachers include giving good directions, managing materials distribution through procedures and routines (assigning jobs, labeling supplies, and using supply stations), managing time during hands-on activities through purposeful openings and established procedures when finishing an exercise, utilizing short time intervals to accomplish phases of class work, redirection strategies when students are off task, high probability of success strategies for below level learners, effectively using transitions, and organizing students into functional groups.

Implication 3. Content talk strategies rank high among elementary teachers.

Emergence of content talk at the elementary grade levels takes on a renewed importance with current accountability models and the role of assessment in school and teacher evaluations. In both elementary grade bands, the requests for content talk observations approximately doubled from year 1 to year 2. As mentee teachers develop their own understanding of conceptual topics, they likely become more aware of the need to share the nuances of conceptual understanding. Strategies to help with content talk include facilitating productive talk in the science and mathematics classroom through "talk moves", formative assessment strategies allowing teachers to document student misconceptions, professional learning community discussion to foster an understanding of the content boundaries for material taught, using the *Teaching with Analogies* model with students, and experiences with real-world connection to

content to increase their comfort level and knowledge applicability to concepts they teach.

Implication 4. Student engagement strategies rank high with elementary teachers (especially year 1).

The correlation between increased student engagement and decreased classroom discipline is highlighted by this implication. New teachers quickly realize the importance of engaging students physically and cognitively. They aspire to successfully integrate themselves, students, and the material of the lesson. For them, ensuring students are "engaged", "having a good time", and "the classroom is running well" is paramount. Examples of engagement strategies new teachers need professional develop around include incorporating brief lesson introductions with engaging scenarios, content-focused bell ringers (entry tickets), lesson summarization activities and strategies (exit tickets), content related games, and using personally and culturally relevant stories.

Implication 5. Teachers sometimes have their own culture-specific needs.

Some new teachers have specific needs based on personal interest, school adopted curriculum, school administrative policies, and specific desires to accentuate their strengths. The following outcomes emerge out of the "other" category. *Literacy integration strategies are a reality for elementary teachers*. Mandated language arts and math blocks prevent significant incorporation of science for many elementary teachers. Therefore, they need opportunities to explore and plan for curriculum integration. Also, specific ideas for working with students with special needs is valued since many new teachers find themselves working in inclusive classrooms. Strategies to help teachers persist are critical.

In addition to incorporating these implications in new teacher training, mentoring, and coaching the authors also offer the following recommendations which will interest those planning and working with induction programs. They are based on the success of number of mentee teachers retained to teaching after year 2 of the program. The program began with 90 mentees and

59 mentors. There were 89 mentees and 59 mentors retained to year 2 of the program. There were 88 mentees and 58 mentors remaining in the program at the end of year 2.

Recommendation 1

Administrative support: Administrative buy-in and support will allow time and resources for mentors to meet with one another and at least one or two times with their mentees if not in the same building.

Recommendation 2

Accountability: Both the mentor and mentee must be held accountable for observation cycles. A designee at the school district level is vital to ensure accountability. The designee should utilize a protocol checklist with mentees and mentors (to help prevent conflict and confusion about what is due and when it is due). And, the designee should strategically balance touch times to allow the mentee/mentor relationship to function independently, yet know they are part of the larger district community moving toward success.

Recommendation 3

Prepare for anxiousness: Making videos of lessons might be anxiety-provoking for new teachers. An initial observation, when possible, where mentees observe mentors can be effective at relieving some stress. The observation can be in person or video-based. Our mentors were encouraged to use such an observation. In the program's end of year survey both mentees and mentors reported they valued this shared experience.

Recommendation 4

Mentoring is not coaching: Mentors need to explicitly understand what a mentor is and what it is not. Administrative teams need to intermittently revisit what embodies a mentor and their non-evaluative nature. Mentors and mentees should be aware of the differences so that mentors are not viewed in an evaluative role. Instead, mentors exist to provide mentee's professional and personal navigation along a pathway toward success.

Conclusion

This study explored and identified the needs of new teachers through a two-year peer mentoring model. The model's basis allowed new teachers to identify focus area for which they wished to be observed by a mentor teacher. The observation occurred through a video recorded and uploaded to a secure, online platform. Online dialogue between mentor and mentee aimed to provide support for the focus area. The number of requests of each focus area was recorded as a lens into the needs of new teachers. The results indicate that new teachers need support with questioning and answering techniques, content talk, classroom management practices, student engagement strategies, and individualized strategies relevant to their community (e.g., literacy integration). Mentor teachers used their experience to offer validated strategies that should provide the framework in the professional development for new teachers. The authors hope that mentors, coaches, and other professionals working with teacher induction programs can use the findings to support new teachers in their communities.

Acknowledgements

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Twitter During the Trump Era: Practical Considerations for Secondary Social Studies Teachers

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Abstract

Social media continues to evolve into one of the most popular and controversial phenomena of the 21st century. Indeed, current U.S. President Donald Trump routinely utilizes one of the premier social media platforms, Twitter, to directly communicate with his constituents. To be sure, the divisive and controversial nature of the President's personal use of Twitter brings with it a myriad of practical considerations for secondary social studies teachers. The purpose of this paper is to explore and examine some of the strengths and limitations the authors have experienced while incorporating the use of Twitter during the Trump era in secondary social studies classrooms. We share ideas about how Twitter can be used to promote social activism, political engagement, and encourage critical thinking among students by examining issues of confirmation biases and fact checking.

Introduction

It's been said for years that a picture is worth a thousand words; perhaps, the same phrase also applies to a 280-character tweet, especially if the tweet in question is published by one of the world's most powerful leaders, the President of the United States. President Donald J. Trump's extensive use of Twitter is unquestionably a catalyst to curtail the spreading of "fake news" and to directly communicate with the American people, acting as the defining characteristic of his administration. By simply responding to Twitter's notorious prompt "What's happening?",

the POTUS is able to immediately share his explicit thoughts, decisions, and actions regarding a myriad of foreign and domestic issues facing the United States from his perspective. By simply scrolling through daily newsfeeds, American citizens that follow the POTUS can receive direct updates on foreign policy, immigration, economy, healthcare, social issues, and any other topic deemed relevant or interesting to the President Trump.

Just as Franklin D. Roosevelt used radio and John F. Kennedy used television, Trump has claimed an arguably even more powerful media device for communicating his perspectives of the status quo with the world (Gabler, 2016; Ott, 2017). Perhaps what makes Trump's specific line of communication so idiosyncratic from others used by previous POTUS is that Twitter allows for a personal, immediate, and bidirectional dialogic communication between the POTUS and the people (Muñoz, García, & Casero-Ripollés, 2016). Individuals that feel empowered to do so may like, retweet, subtweet, or comment on one of the POTUS's microblogs and he, Donald Trump, will receive a direct notification on his personal Twitter account. This level of rapid-fire and direct communication with the POTUS via Twitter is huge (no pun intended) because it greatly narrows the communication gap between a very powerful elected official and the general citizenry (Muñoz, García, & Casero-Ripollés, 2016). Additionally, there is no denying the controversial nature of President Trump's personal use of Twitter, as both the content, tone, and delivery of his messages are often meet with strong reactions. Supporters of President Trump laud his direct nature and effort to bypass the "fake news" media, while critics often find many of the President's tweets to be heavily partisan, derogatory, insensitive, or unbecoming for the highest elected official in the land. Whatever one's political beliefs or attitudes towards President Trump, it is undeniable that his polarizing use of Twitter has increased the social media platforms visibility and relevance across the country and around the world.

According to recent data collected by Statista in 2018, Twitter use has seen exponential growth over the last ten years from 30 million accounts in 2010 to 335 million in 2018. This same timeline exhibits that there have been nearly 25 million new accounts added to the Twitter platform since 2016 when

Trump assumed the office of the Presidency. While we certainly are not trying to imply that the increase in Twitter accounts has a direct correlation to the POTUS's heavy use of the platform, we do think it reasonable to assume that the most powerful leader in the free world routinely tweeting might encourage more people to get involved with Twitter. The President's direct communication method has proven to be more far-reaching than the "Twitterverse" alone; rather, the tweets are being discussed on larger broadband networks to assist in fueling their stories of news and current events facing the nation. As the President, as well as many other national and global leaders, continue to actively utilize Twitter to communicate directly to the people, it becomes imperative that social studies teachers begin to consider the instructional and pedagogical implications of this dynamic platform in contemporary classrooms.

There has been a recent increase in social science education research supporting the integration and infusion of social media platforms, such as Twitter, in the secondary studies classroom (Abe & Jordan, 2013; Carpenter & Krutka, 2014; Hoffman, 2017; Martens & Gainous, 2013; Mao, 2014). Research elucidates that social media, when purposefully integrated, may serve as a relevant catalyst for young people to engage in political and civic participation outside of voting, which obviously isolates many youths from the political process due to age requirements (Nelson, Lexis, & Lei, 2017). Social media use in the United States is nearly ubiquitous (Krutka et. al, 2017) with Pew Research Center reporting 92% of young people, ages thirteen to seventeen, going online and using various social media sites daily. Moreover, the POTUS is openly and avidly engaging in one of the most well-known social media platforms perpetuating messages to a global audience of all ages. With all the aforementioned elements coalescing, social studies teachers should not ignore the opportunity to take advantage of this powerful medium for communication and begin exploring the strengths and limitations of Twitter integration into classroom instruction.

The purpose of this paper is to present secondary social studies educators with objective considerations and educational implications associated with the phenomenon of using Twitter in the social studies classroom. Moreover, we hope to provide

teachers with potential pedagogical ideas for universal implementation and facilitation to transcend the learning environment in the average social studies classroom to one that incorporates current events and responsible use of social media technologies. We begin by discussing the idiosyncratic nature of Twitter as a social media platform that blurs the lines of entertainment, news, and education. Then we examine how Twitter can be used for social activism and civic engagement, as well as other practical considerations for social studies teachers. While this paper certainly does not cover all of the strengths and limitations of Twitter use in the classroom, we hope that it will provide secondary social studies teachers with a foundational understanding of how social media can be an important resource in contemporary classrooms.

Blurring the Lines Between Entertainment, News, and Education

Twitter, like other social media platforms, blurs the line between its function as a source of entertainment and news (Kwak et. al, 2010). However, what makes Twitter idiosyncratic from others is the "relationship of following and being followed requires no reciprocation" (Kwak et. al, 2010). This, in turn, allows for Twitter users to create personal virtual social networks that are uniquely compiled with accounts they have selected to follow. Twitter users are given autonomy of creating their own virtual social networks by following various accounts of their choosing, such as: political leaders, celebrities, news anchors, news organizations, companies, friends, colleagues etc., which foster specific interests and allow for engagement in dialogue and political mobility (Abe & Jordan, 2013; Campbell, 2013; Dunlap & Lowenthal, 2009; Kwak et. al, 2010). Often times, especially now given the current political climate, non-news accounts (i.e. entertainment accounts, celebrity accounts, friend and peer accounts) are contributing to the digital community as unofficial reporters, sharing their thoughts and opinions regarding issues locally, nationally, and internationally.

Deciding to use social media can be very daunting. If teachers do not implement social media appropriately, then the classroom has the potential to not utilize the tool for educational purposes, but rather for off-task behaviors. Even highly driven

classroom teachers cannot avoid all obstacles (Martens & Gainous, 2013). The reality is, social media, as a catalyst for promoting political and civic engagement and enriching content knowledge, is not currently heavily used in the plurality of schools in the United States (Carpenter and Krutka, 2014). One possible reason is prohibited access to these sites, due to the abundant amount of excess non-academic material that one can access through social media. Moreover, even if the schools do not have specific restrictions banning access to social media on school servers, not all students are going to have access to Twitter due to limited access of technology and/or the Internet. These drawbacks must be recognized because they are substantial barriers to the implementation of social media in the classroom.

Additionally, Abe and Jordan (2013) illuminate that social media has become one of the major distractors for youth in the contemporary classroom; however, rather than combatting the influence of social media, they suggest infusing its use in the classroom and utilizing its amenities for classroom engagement. Relevant research and literature highlight best-practices for integrating Twitter in the classroom for the purpose of political and civic participation, which include engaging students in: structured microblogging, backchanneling, and construction of virtual social networks (Kenna & Hensley, 2018). Mao (2014), Dunlap & Lowenthal (2009), Abe and Jordan (2013) all suggest utilizing the amenities of social media in the classroom setting so long as a considerable amount of effort is placed in designing, scaffolding, and interacting with the students while utilizing social media in the classroom to ensure that all use is appropriate. Social studies teachers will have to inventory barriers to using Twitter that is specific to their students and learning environments to create the best action plan for implementation.

Lastly, another issue that social studies teachers should be made aware of as they consider integrating Twitter for a unique and alternative learning experience, is the potential pushback from parents. Some parents may not be comfortable with their child engaging on social media platforms like Twitter for a multitude of reasons. Below is a list of commonly expressed issues we have experienced from parents during our use of Twitter in the classroom. While the list is certainly not exhaustive,

it does provide readers with some of the more common concerns they should anticipate from parents when proposing the use of Twitter in the classroom.

1. Student age and/or maturity level for the content associated with social media
2. Concern over interaction and communication with strangers
3. Belief that social media is a source that spreads falsehoods and fragmented or inaccurate information
4. Concern over partisan and ideological learnings of the teacher
5. Belief that social media, in general, is inappropriate for classroom use

To be sure, the aforementioned list of concerns is not only limited to parents, but often times administrators will have similar concerns as well. While all of these concerns should be taken seriously, that does not mean that teachers should abandon the use of social media simply because it is difficult. Rather, like many meaningful and engaging resources in teaching, careful and thoughtful planning needs to occur for the teacher to maximize social media potential, while minimizing the risks. First and foremost, social studies teachers who are planning to integrate Twitter into class instruction should outline the guidelines and purpose for the use of Twitter in their syllabi. From our experience, having clear and purposeful objectives for instructional activities tends to mitigate many of the aforementioned concerns. We recommend clearly communicating with administrators and parents, both verbally (parent teacher conference nights) and in written form to make sure everyone understands how and why you intend to leverage the benefits of social media throughout the course of your instruction. Often times, this level of transparency helps ease fears, concerns, and tensions associated with the polarizing medium of social media.

Social Activism and Civic Engagement via Twitter
Until recent years, Twitter and other forms of social media use in which members of the digital community shared thoughts and opinions regarding politics was titled as a form of

"slacktivism," stemming from the view that digital engagement and participation was less impactful than mobile political participation (Cook et. al, 2014). However, Nelson et al. (2017) claim, "…the Internet has provided an opportunity to cultivate new, digital communities, and with it a new kind of political engagement" (p. 319). Prominent political advocacy groups such as: Black Lives Matter, LGBTQ+, Me Too, Women's March, and School Walk Out, have demonstrated how the strategic use of social media platforms can create social, political, and cultural movements. Many of the aforementioned groups take to social media to rally and organize support from their fellow citizens and communities to strengthen their mobility efforts and spread their mission statement by strategically using hashtags and regularly posting updates to the Twitter newsfeed. This allows groups to succinctly voice their concerns and stances regarding issues with a global audience and potentially rally people to support their agenda (Kenna & Hensley, 2018). What makes the virtual microblogs on Twitter so important, is that the posts and/or hashtags have the potential to become viral. This could mean that the mission statements have the potential to reach a much grander audience, including political leaders that possess the power to assist in championing the groups' messages.

Perhaps, one of the most powerful examples of Twitter's ability to influence perceptions and rally support can be seen by examining the social media campaigning efforts of the survivors from the tragic events in Parkland, Florida earlier this year. Their grassroots organization using Twitter post-tragedy is extremely inspiring and sends a powerful message to today's youth that they do, in fact, have a voice and can voice their ideas and concerns. The Parkland survivors created social media accounts to organize and communicate the logistics of school walkouts across the country, while also broadcasting their mission statement of fighting for school safety. Social studies teachers have the ability to emulate the Parkland survivors' demonstrated Twitter campaign in their classroom practices by encouraging their students to voice their concerns regarding contemporary issues being discussed in class, or by joining other Twitter campaigns and contributing to their efforts by microblogging and using hashtags that can be used to more widely disperse their message or movement.

It should be noted that much of social activism and civic/political engagement on social media can be heavily partisan and divisive. To be clear, the authors of this paper are completely in favor of parental rights and believe that parents and guardians of students have every right to raise their children with whatever values or beliefs they choose.

Practical Uses of Twitter for Secondary Social Studies Teachers

Educators who choose to integrate Twitter in their classrooms during the era of Trump should be prepared to tackle the dangers of confirmation bias (Lex et. al, 2018), and adequately teach students to steer clear of "fake news" by fact-checking tweets from political leaders (including those from the POTUS) and pundits with differing political views. Confirmation bias is a negative result of the construction of personal social networks because as the name implies, it is a form of bias that is a result of constantly being exposed to and gathering information from, like-minded individuals (Lex et. al, 2018). Research conducted by Lex at al., 2018 found that to mitigate confirmation bias among Twitter users, they (the Twitter users) needed to be heavily exposed to variant opposing viewpoints. Social studies teachers can emulate the findings from this study in their classrooms and curtail confirmation bias that may stem from their students' virtual social networks. They can do this by exposing their students to a wide array of political pundits, organizations, and news sources from varying political perspectives.

A natural next step after exposing and encouraging students to seek out sources of information on Twitter from varying perspectives is to teach the students how to fact check the information being published from various Twitter accounts, including those that are aligned with their personal political beliefs. One powerful source that social studies teachers can direct their students to is FactCheck.org, that is famous for its meticulous examination of published political content for factual accuracy. By teaching students how to fact-check various political groups and pundits for legitimacy, the risk of relying on sources that push radical, nonsense agendas is reduced significantly.

The two tactics of mitigating confirmation and bias and educating students on how to fact-check published political content are not mutually exclusive practices. Both can happen simultaneously. For example, the teacher can direct students' attention to a Tweet from the POTUS regarding the increased growth in the U.S. economy, which will serve as the topic of discussion. Next, the teacher could direct students' attention to tweets from other political leaders/pundits that counter the Presidents claim (potentially liberal vs. conservative ideology) and tweets that may affirm the Presidents claim (most can be found in the comments section) and together with the students, the teacher can guide the students in an analysis of the language being used, statistics and percentages, if mentioned, and sources, if given. Next, the teacher could split the class up into groups with each taking on the task of fact-checking the tweets. Once students have had the opportunity to do this, the class can come back together to discuss their findings and determine if there was, in fact, any dissonance with the Presidents claim posted on Twitter.

Conclusion

Despite possible drawbacks, Twitter use in the classroom, especially during the era of Trump, is a powerful tool that should not be ignored by the social science education community. Teachers that recognize the potential for shortcomings in their classroom should attempt to differentiate as much as possible in order to share with students the major educational and engaging benefits that accompany social media use. Social media combines the technological innovations of the 21st century and amalgamates it with critical thinking skills on a platform that students can use to apply their content knowledge in a meaningful, purposeful, and engaging way.

Twitter is a relevant and new format for educators to consider as they continue to foster students that will become knowledgeable citizens enabled with the skills necessary to address and discuss public issues facing society. Social studies as a field has long been concerned with fostering good citizens and civic engagement. Social media allows students to explore these avenues before exiting high school and entering the "real world" where they will officially be responsible for assuming their

civic duties as a citizen of the United States of America. Why simply teach students about politics, government, and civics, when students can work with Twitter, a familiar and relevant network used very heavily in the contemporary political atmosphere, to spark legitimate and actual engagement with the content? This not only supports core educational curriculum standards but also permits students to take an active role and practice the political engagement skills that will fare them well in the future regardless of their intended career paths.

This article strived to present secondary social studies educators with a glimpse of how and why Twitter should be included as a powerful classroom tool. The authors have shared the idiosyncratic power of Twitter as a relevant political resource and how certain civic groups and political leaders, such as the POTUS, are using it to champion their efforts. Moreover, the authors have discussed potential barriers that educators might face if they decide to integrate Twitter. America is becoming a more digitally reliant society every single day. Americans can connect with anyone at any time from the palm of their hands. Social studies teachers cannot ignore the relevance that integrating Twitter could have on their students and classroom. As the Nation continues to experience a rise in divisive political rhetoric and tone, especially in the realm of social media, it is crucial that teachers begin to tackle these challenging issues by showing students productive and positive ways to interact through social media growth.

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The Impact of an Elementary Alternative to Suspension Program

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine the impact of an alternative to suspension program at the elementary level. The quasi-experimental design study looked at longitudinal data for documented out-of-school suspensions for ABC Elementary. Data included two years pre-program implementation and three years post-program implementation of the New Beginnings Program. Data were analyzed using a one-way analysis of variance using SPSS, Version 19.0. Qualitative data, using unstructured interviews, characterizes attitudes from students, parents, teachers, and support staff on the impact and effectiveness of the program. Additionally, the data showed residual effects the program had on ABC Elementary. The findings indicated a significant difference in lost instructional days in pre-program implementation and post-program implementation of the alternative to suspension program.

Introduction

Prior research studies clearly showed American schools have come under much criticism in the last several decades, especially regarding student test scores (Boykin and Noguera, 2011; Morgan, 2016; Tomlison and McTighe, 2006; Wolk, 2011). In her book, *The Death and Life of the Great American School System, How Testing and Choice are Undermining Education* (2010), Ravitch noted, "Tests have been a fixture in American education since the early decades of the twentieth century, when they were used in decisions about matters such as promotion to

the next grade level, high school graduation, and college admission" (Ravitch, 2010, p. 159). Since the publishing of *A Nation at Risk* (1983), school performance became especially scrutinized.

This and other concerns have led to many changes in education, which have brought forth most recently arguments and reforms featuring assessment and accountability (Fuhrman & Elmore, 2004; Hattie, 2015; McDonald, 2014; Mendler, 2012; Ravitch, 2010). On January 8, 2002 No Child Left Behind was signed into law and changed the nature of public schooling across the nation. NCLB made standardized test scores the primary measure of school quality. "Because test scores were the ultimate judge of a school's success or failure, they become more than a measure; they became the purpose of education" (Ravitch, 2010, p.17).

Under this pressure, preparing students for the test became paramount in schools and classrooms across the country. Some studies, however, have indicated having an emphasis on teaching to the test has a significant and negative impact on the quality of instruction delivered to students (Blazar & Pollard, 2017; Crocco & Costigan, 2007; Nelson, 2013; Valli & Buese, 2007). More importantly, to the detriment of teaching, this attitude and focus has left very little room for any type of student supports outside of academics. Often left behind in these fixing efforts are issues such as student behavior, school discipline, and suspension processes: what works and what does not.
In the case of extreme behaviors, out of school suspensions are often the only option for school administrators and leaders. According to Hayden (1997) "The disruption caused by these children have been defined as 'high level' in most cases, in that it has affected more than the children and teacher in the individual's class. That is, the individual's behavior has tended to have an impact on the running of the whole school" (p. 59).
In most instances, upon the student's return, the school was faced with the same behavior issues, and the cycle continued. As one researcher noted, "Out-of-school suspensions leave kids at home unsupervised and able to cause more problems. And they also do nothing to teach appropriate, alternative behavior nor address underlying issues that may be causing the bad behavior" (Ferguson, 2012, para. 3). Gale & Topping (1986)

determined suspension is highly unlikely to have a positive impact on subsequent student behaviors.

Research also suggested that students who experience out of school suspensions were more at risk of being behind academically. "It is safe to say that when a student who has experienced multiple out-of-school suspensions falls behind academically without academic support, that student will not be an asset to the school community" (Morrow, 2013, p. 25). This suggested that when a student is removed from the classroom, valuable instructional time is missed and when a student is removed from the school, all opportunity for school supports are taken away. In the 2013/2014 school year, The *Indiana*gram (2014) cited out of school suspensions in Indiana schools resulted in over 570,000 missed instructional days. That calculates to over three 3,705,000 missed instructional hours in one school year, in Indiana alone.

A School in Chaos

At ABC Elementary, a school within a city community school district in Indiana, a culture of chaos had ensued. The school was identified as "failing" under Indiana's accountability system. Leadership of the school changed multiple times in a four-year period. Teacher turnover was high each year during that same four-year period.

During the first year of the ABC Elementary School Improvement Grant, interventions were put in place to promote transformational change. This was the first year for the new principal. His appointment was the fifth principal in the most recent four years. Two assistant principals were hired to support discipline in the building. A school guidance counselor was hired to provide counseling support for student behavior.
Even though the school had just been awarded a $2,166,808.48 School Improvement Grant and received $675,473 of that funding in the 2013/2014 school year for school transformation, the school remained in a state of chaos. The new principal made an intentional decision to keep disruptive students from impeding the learning of other students. This attempt to support teachers and students in teaching and learning had an adverse impact on the over all climate of the building.

It was nearly impossible to meet with the school principal or assistant principals without behavior disruptions and outbursts. If any administrative team member was called out of the building it was not uncommon to receive a call for backup support from the district level. Students could be observed sitting in the school office, nurse's office, and each principal's office on a daily basis. Even with all of the additional supports in place, the school recorded an all time high out of school suspension rate. In addition to the 210 out-of-school suspension recorded, there were 923 office referrals documented at ABC Elementary during the 2013-2014 school year. At the end of the 2013-2014 school year 38% of certified staff chose not to return for the following year.

The needle for school accountability did start to move and ABC Elementary earned a letter grade of "D" after several years of being an 'F". Unfortunately, the disruptive behaviors of students overshadowed any gains. Discipline data recorded showed students who were suspended or expelled continued to engage in behaviors that caused additional write-ups and/or suspensions. Out-of-school suspension did not act as a deterrent. Student behavior did not change as a result of experiencing an out-of-school suspension as a behavior consequence.

The New Beginnings Program

During the summer prior to the 2014-2015 school year the School Improvement Grant was amended with programmatic changes to include an alternative to suspension program, the "New Beginnings" program. This was designed, staffed, and implemented as a pilot endeavor at only one school in the district. The foundation of the program was built around providing a multi-faceted and multi-tiered approach to responding to and improving student behavior. A prerequisite to be placed in the program was the student had to exhibit behaviors that would have warranted an out of school suspension. The New Beginnings Team was very cognizant that this could not become a time away room.

Beginning in the 2014-2015 ABC Elementary started full implementation of the "New Beginnings" program, an alternative to out of school suspension. Students who exhibited behaviors

that warranted an out-of-school suspension were given the opportunity to participate in the alternative program in place of being sent home to serve the suspension. Placement in the program provided students:

- One-on one support with behavior interventions designed to change inappropriate behaviors with opportunities for application of the learning.
- Continued academic support.
- Scheduled meetings with school counselor and social worker.
- Scheduled meetings with School Resource Officer.
- Follow-up throughout remainder of the school year.

Teachers were provided professional development to deepen the understanding of the purpose of the New Beginnings Program. The absence of a program like this in Indiana created a need for the team to research programs being implemented in other states. The decision was made to send a group of staff to observe a program in Texas. This group of educators was thankful to be able to find any program that addressed this important issue in elementary education and came away with some very good ideas. However, the vision for the alternative to suspension program, New Beginnings, was very different than the program observed.

A non-negotiable was that the program be housed in the home school. Students needed to have the opportunity to transition back into the general education classroom with support. The New Beginnings room was contained and facilitated by a licensed teacher and highly qualified educational assistants. The intake process required a face-to-face meeting with parents and/or guardians. Students placed in the program received classroom instruction and targeted intervention while in the New Beginnings program. This allowed students to stay current in classroom work and receive appropriate academic support. Behavior intervention would be the fortitude of the program. Just as ABC Elementary developed systematic plans for academic interventions, ABC Elementary became just as intentional with a systematic plan for behavior interventions.

This study will evaluate the effectiveness of the New Beginnings program on the school, seeking answers to the following questions:

1. Did the program reduce the number of lost instructional days for students?
2. Did the program reduce length of a suspension should it occur?
3. Are there residual implications of having this alternative to out-of-school suspension program at the elementary level?

Study Design and Rationale

A mixed-method quasi-experimental design was used for this case study. The independent variable is the alternative to out-of-school suspension program, New Beginnings. The dependent variables are the documented out-of-school suspension numbers and stakeholder testimony. Out-of-school suspensions are reported to the IDOE. The data used in the study was taken from the reports sent to the IDOE. Stakeholders that included students, parents, teachers, and support staff participated in unstructured interviews.

Site Selection Process and Protocol

ABC Elementary was chosen as the site to pilot the program based on two major factors. The first factor was availability of funding. The school was awarded a school improvement grant and had the necessary funding to begin a pilot alternative to out-of-school suspension program. The second factor was the history ABC Elementary had of using out-of-school suspension as a response to student behaviors. If the program had promise in the first year, the district would duplicate the program in a second elementary with similar demographics.

Participant Selection Process and Protocol

Beginning with the implementation year, any student who would have been given an out-of-school suspension as a consequence to inappropriate behaviors was given the option of the alternative program. This option required parent or guardian participation and agreement with the program policies and procedures.

Data Collection and Instrumentation

Quantitative data was collected using two years pre-implementation and three year post-implementation. Data included reported out-of –school suspensions for ABC Elementary to the IDOE. The case study looked at the total number of lost instructional days for each year, the number of students receiving and out-of-school suspension for each year, and the average days of suspension for each year. Parent and staff interviews were utilized for qualitative data collection. Qualitative methods of coding were used to look at patterns and trends through interviews conducted with parents and students who participated in the program and teachers who are employed at ABC Elementary.

Ethical Considerations

An exempt review form was filed with and approved by the Institutional Review Board for this study. Research was looking at a behavior management program and not specific students. All findings were reported in aggregate form. Unstructured interviews with parents who had students involved in the program, students involved in the program, and teachers and staff from the building were used in the study. Out-of-school suspensions are reported to the state annually. Quantitative data included state reported out-of-school suspensions from ABC Elementary. Specific students were not identified in the report. Student ID numbers were removed from all data used in the study.

Trustworthiness: Reliability, Validity, and Rigor

Quantitative data included the data collected by the IDOE for reporting out-of-school suspensions. A criterion for submitting and collecting data was consistent throughout the five years of the longitudinal study. Empirical data from unstructured interviews was cognizant to include different viewpoints. Participants in the interview process included parents, students, and teachers with first-hand experience with the program.

Results

A series of descriptive statistics were calculated on the amount of instructional days lost for each year of the study. Years 1 and 2 represent the pre-program implementation period; Years 3, 4, and 5 represent the post-program implementation period. The highest mean number of instructional days lost were found in Year 1, the first year included in the study, and Year 3, the first year of program implementation. Years 2, 4, and 5 were found to be lower in mean instructional days lost with little difference in instructional days lost across the three years. Results for the standard deviation results displayed the same pattern. The highest amount of deviation was found in Year 1 and Year 3, while the lowest deviations were found in Years 2, 4, and 5. The number of students involved in the study varied widely across the five-year period. Year 2 (n=210) represented the highest number of students followed by Year 1 (n=91), both years in the pre-implementation period. Year 3 (n=19), Year 4 (n=44), and Year 5 (n=44) represented the lowest number of students, all part of the post-implementation period.

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted on the amount of instructional days lost for each year of the study using SPSS, Version 19.0. An F coefficient of 2.408 (df= 4, 403) was significant at the level p = 0.049, the critical value of F being 2.370. Because the calculated value of F = 2.408 was larger than the critical value of F =2.370, it was concluded that a significant difference existed among the five years. Therefore, Null Hypothesis #1a, which stated there would be no significance difference in the amount of instructional days lost in the five years included in the study, was rejected.

A post hoc test was performed (SPSS Version 19.0) to determine which data sets contributed to the calculated difference. The Tukey test returned a p = 0.025 level of significance between Year 1 and Year 2, with no other significant differences observed for the other three years. Therefore, it was concluded the significant difference found by the ANOVA was the result of the number of instructional days lost in Year 1 (n=91) and the number of instructional days lost in Year 2 (n=210).

A series of descriptive statistics were calculated for the group of pre-program implementation years (Years 1 and 2) and

the group of post-program implementation years (Years 3, 4, and 5). The higher mean number of instructional days lost was found in the pre-program implementation years; the lower mean number of instructional days lost was found in the post-program implementation years. The same pattern was found in the standard deviation calculation results.

A two-tailed test for independent means was conducted on the number of instructional days lost for the pre-program and post-program implementation year groups using SPSS, Version 19.0. A t coefficient of 0.660 (df= 406) was not significant at the level p = 00.05, the critical value of t being 1.960. Because the calculated value of t = 0.660 was smaller than the critical value of t = 1.960, it was concluded that there was no significant difference between the two groups. Therefore, Null Hypothesis #1b, which stated there would be no significant difference in instructional days lost in the pre-program and post-program years, was retained.

Evaluation of Qualitative Findings
Unstructured interviews with different stakeholders were conducted and the empirical data showed the following common patterns and trends from all stakeholders:
1. Frustration with academics acts as a trigger and/or contributed to student outburst of inappropriate behaviors.
2. Students exhibit inappropriate behaviors in an attempt to escape academics that cause frustration or are an undesirable task.
3. Out-of-school suspension does not act as a deterrent or support a change in student behavior.
4. Participation in the New Beginnings program made a significant difference in students' attitudes.
5. Participation in the program resulted in an increased self-confidence in students.
6. The New Beginnings program provided an avenue for students to practice learned behaviors with support, from a behavior interventionist, in a general education setting.
7. Parents feel more connected and part of the school process.

Summary
    Both quantitative data and qualitative data indicate the New Beginnings program made a significant difference at ABC Elementary. Findings show there were significantly fewer lost instructional days during post-implementation than pre-implementation of the program. Teachers, parents, and students believe the alternative to out-of-school suspension made a positive difference for all stakeholders.
Reciprocal benefits from the program extended into the general education setting. Interviews revealed teachers and support staff observed differences in students' attitudes towards school after placement in the program. Students and parents stated the program had a positive impact on student self-confidence and self esteem. The findings and results indicate elementary schools would benefit from implementing an alternative to out-of-school suspension at the elementary level.

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Stalking the Paperclip: A Simulation Game from the MACOS Project

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Abstract
When discussing characteristics that define human beings, society, and the ability to shape humanity, elementary students often find difficulty comprehending what is human about human beings and what separates humans from other animals, and cultures. The use of simulation games provides students with valuable opportunities to contrast the efficiency of planning their hunting programs. The activity, Stalking the Paperclip, provides a snapshot of Man: A Course of Study's (MACOS) approach to give students the ability to hypothesize, and observe anthropological-based themes in grades four through nine.

Introduction

What does it mean to plan for a hunt? What makes something useful? How can humans better themselves by using tools? These questions and others were asked to fourth-grade students in an attempt to help students understand the evolution of man, society, and technology. The "A Plan for Hunting" simulation game and more specifically, the optional "Stalking the Paperclip" exercise originated from the 1960s anthropology based project, Man: A Course of Study (MACOS). Considered a student-friendly project for it is time, this student-centered project incorporated non-traditional teaching methods in grades four through nine. Anthropology-based lessons, which focused on direct observations, games, simulations and film-based

ethnographic reconstructions, were considered both exciting and productive. Project founder, Peter Dow (1975) indicated the overall goals of the project as 1) to give students a set of models for thinking about the world; 2) to provide students with different intellectual tools for investigating human behavior; and 3) to promote an appreciation of the common humanity that all humans share. As a result, three central questions were asked during the investigation of the curriculum: a) what is human about human beings? b) how did humans get that way? and c) how can humans become more so?

The goal of this article is to promote social studies for elementary teachers to explore lessons and activities found in Man: A Course of Study. More importantly, the purpose of this article is to 1) provide teachers with a historically significant activity from the MACOS project which encourages students to use creativity and skill to develop a tool for hunting, and 2) allow students to understand better the planning and preparation as they develop their hunting programs.

An Overview of Man: A Course of Study

In the early 1960s, and an International team of social scientist and educators lead by Dr. Jerome Bruner, developed Man: A Course of Study (MACOS). The 120-day educational program, designed for grades four through nine investigated the life cycles of various animals and the ethnographic studies of the Netsilik Eskimo of the Canadian Arctic. Themes and content of the MACOS curriculum were interdisciplinary, covering content disciplines from anthropology, social psychology, and biology. The progression of subject matter (the study of salmon, herring gulls, baboons, and lastly the Netsilik people) provided students the opportunity to compare and contrast human behaviors to those of animals. An example of such analysis is found in the study of child-rearing practices. Students explore the life cycle of Salmon whose parents die before the young are born. As students undertake the curriculum, the concept of parenthood is revisited with each category in greater depth and insight in the effort to develop and expand increasing stages of the life cycle.

Man: A Course of Study curriculum consisted of 26 cartoon-themed booklets, movies, audio recordings, information cards, games, and simulations. The differentiation in curriculum

strategies provided multiple paths for learning at differing cognitive levels. Regardless of pedagogical strategies, MACOS placed a particular emphasis on the gathering of facts from both primary and secondary sources of data. Primary sources often included the students themselves, being their personal experiences from home, school, and interactions with their peers. Secondary sources consisted of materials supplied to the classroom where the use of observation and making inferences promoted discovery.

Perhaps the most powerful learning experience is found in the Netsilik Eskimo unit. The Netsilik Eskimos are studied not for themselves, but rather as a means for students to apply new analytical tools and higher levels of Bloom's taxonomy. The Netsilik videos provided students with the sounds of the environment and society members. No narration is provided. Students are instructed to view each video in its entirety with specific questions as the springboard for inquiry. One group of students in the class would observe what the father is doing; another group observed what the mother was doing, and still, another group observing the children. Often the entire video was not shown, providing just enough information about the roles of each family member to spark discussions based on observations and students personal experiences.

The use of active learning and simulation was encouraged throughout the MACOS project. One example of an early attempt of simulation developed was the *Caribou Hunt*. The simulation provided students with the difficulties Netsilik hunters faced while hunting on in a hostile, barren land. The object of the simulation was simple: students pursued the caribou and forced them into the water where kayakers were fast enough to overtake and kill the caribou. Such fast-paced engagements encouraged students to see the difficulty for primitive hunters to accumulate enough food for survival. As additional rounds of simulated hunting transpired; students often devised better hunting strategies based on student cooperation (Dow, 1979).

Building on the project's perceived successes, the authors decided to use the simulation and activity called *Stalking the Paperclip* found in the *Plan for Hunting* unit in a fourth-grade classroom. The goal of the activity was to integrate the simulation used when discussing the use of tools in society. The

tool making exercise produced an excellent classroom activity. Students were provided with tape, popsicle sticks, a plastic spoon, and yarn. Reflecting on previously viewed pictures and videos over the Netsilik Eskimos hunting and reading, students begun to design their hunting tools in the effort to catch the most paper clips and master the hunt.

Designing the Activity

As with any simulation activity, there are several steps in the *Stalking the Paperclip* that must be introduced and understood before the activity can begin. Before the activity, students were asked if there are problems in hunting. Students were directed to read the short animated booklet, *Antler and Fang*, and consider the problems a predator faces in hunting caribou. The booklet focused on the way wolves' hunted caribou and ended with an analysis of steps many predators follow to hunt successfully: find, approach, attack, retrieve, and use. Following the reading, the teacher asked the students the following questions: a) how does the wolf accomplish these steps? and b) what structures and behaviors enable the wolf to hunt caribou? At the end of the booklet are four speculative questions that not found in the text. Before children are instructed to answer these questions, a classroom hunt is designed to broaden students' notions of potential hunting problems. Before class, the authors hid paperclips of varying sizes and colors throughout the classroom. Paperclips were bent to illustrate different types of animals. Students were then asked how they would find, approach, attack and use the paper clips before informing that some paper clips were already 'hiding' in the classroom. After students read *Stalking the Paperclip* (Appendix A), they planned their hunts.

Results and Discussion

The results of the simulation activity were promising. Students went beyond our expectations regarding creativity, interest, and enthusiasm. Students found various ways to solve the 'capture' problem within its artificial, hands-off restrictions. After each student designed a tool with the provided materials; students were allowed to stalk and hunt paperclips. After students stalked their prey and discovered potential strengths

and weaknesses of their original designs. While unique designs were common, students described the designing of tools as both interesting and exciting. Diego, a fourth-grade student, suggested: "My tool for hunting looked like a plus sign and had strings hanging from it. When I first tried to hunt and capture a paperclip, it did not work. The harder I worked at it, the more paperclips I caught. I just had to try harder."

Some students had difficulty locating the many paperclips scattered throughout the classroom. Sam became visibly frustrated while searching for prey. When asked about the difficulty of the hunt, he replied "I am frustrated because I cannot find anything. Some have found different colored paperclips, but I cannot find anything. How can I use the tool if I cannot find anything?" Other students who experienced little success with their tools, preferred to stop the hunt in frustration. Tisha, who initially was extremely interested in the activity explained "I am upset because the paperclip is right there! It is so hard to use the tool to get it. Since I cannot use my hands, I need to make another tool, but I cannot! If I could do it again, I would use more tape to make it stick better."   The maturation of students to utilize and acknowledge potential flaws in their tool designs were welcomed by the authors. After the first round of hunting, students were given the opportunity to reflect on their tool designs. Of 44 students who participated in the simulation activity, only 12 students were satisfied with their original designed to capture paperclips. Most students suggested modifications after experiencing the hunt. When asked what modifications were needed for the next hunt, D'Mila smiled and replied "I will get a different spoon next time. I need more string and tape to tie at the bottom. It would look more like the tools we looked at in class before we started the hunt." While D'Mila focused on the reconfiguration of her tool, Tamara, decided to focus her efforts on the hunting strategy rather than the tool itself. "I would try to look behind more tables and shelves. Everybody gets the paperclips that are in the open, but I want to get the paperclips that are hiding in the carpet or behind stuff."

When asked if they found the activity fun and exciting, the majority of students who participated found this activity both different and rewarding, Michael, reflected for a moment and said "I felt like I was a hunter from back then. The tools I made

helped me capture the paperclip." Camilla agreed by adding that "the paperclip lesson showed me how people gathered food for their families and this taught me how people used weapons and tools to gather and capture food."

The simulation game approach in which students participated attempted to recreate material learned. Such a process is designed to provide insight into the process of an event or phenomenon from a real or historical world that is being simulated. Paired with a traditional curriculum, the hunting the paperclip activity invoked higher-order thinking skills and the ability to retain information. In doing so, students have the opportunity to: 1) better understand complicated issues, historical events, and content material; 2) discuss issues with their peers; 3) engage in informative discussion and debate related information presented; 4) become active agents in the learning process; 5) develop solutions to historical problems; and 6) decipher causes of events (Kunselman & Johnson, 2004; Byford, 2013). Also, such activity as simulation provided students the ability to interpret and respond to impromptu decisions and active participation to include elements of competition and cooperation that may lead to either positive or negative long-term outcomes often associated with real-world environments (Byford, 2014, Chapin, 2003). Placing students in the hypothetical scenario through real-life situations or contexts, helps teachers develop levels of critical thinking while minimizing stressors that can hinder the learning process (Lennon, 2017).

Conclusion

This time-tested activity from Man: A Course of Study project provides students with an alternative approach in the investigation of tools aide humans in survival. Stalking the Paperclip incorporated and encouraged cooperative learning, thought-provoking problem-solving skills and creativity to simulate the skill of hunting. Teacher-led, student simulation activities and discussions such as the examples found in the MACOS project are potent tools for engaging students in a broad and varied range of conceptual thinking exercises, and this activity is no exception. As the students design a hunting tool and move throughout the classroom hunting paperclips, the teacher can refrain or engage the students during after each

round of hunting, to elicit discussions or dialogues pertinent to their concerns or views. This activity style has been utilized effectively in other scenario types found in Man: A Course of Study, allowing for complex thinking while avoiding controversial issues as the scenarios are abstract and not grounded in real-world subjects or issues (Lennon, Byford & Cox, 2015).   (p. 49).

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Why Defend the Liberal Arts?

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Abstract

This essay details the relationship between the liberal arts and freedom. This is accomplished by defining the phrase the, "liberal arts," as a term from the language of labor from the ancient regime of France before the French Revolution. The liberal arts, as originally understood, emphasized personal and moral restraint. The relationship between freedom and restraint is articulated afterwards. The liberal arts and higher education are discussed, followed by a conclusion section connecting liberal education, freedom, and higher education.

Introduction

The liberal arts are frequently referred to, but not frequently understood. What are the liberal arts, where does the term come from, and what is the value of a liberal arts education? What is the relationship between the liberal arts and freedom?

To answer these questions, the following path is taken: first, the history and definition of the liberal arts is detailed by tracing the term "liberal arts" to the language of labor from the ancient regime before the French Revolution. Following the definition, the concept of freedom is explored. Freedom is found not in unrestrained liberty, free of limitations and authoritative rules, but rather the opposite way: true freedom lies in restraint and our acceptance of restraints on our passions and appetites. Following that, the role of academic capitalism and the changing nature of the university is articulated to explain why the liberal arts are under attack and face challenges in higher education today. Finally, the conclusion contains the rationale for the liberal arts and why they are just as important now as they were in the past.

To understand what the liberal arts are, we must journey to pre-French Revolution era France. This era was known as the "ancient regime." The ancient regime of France had a different schema for societal organization. The ancient regime was a formal and hierarchical system of class-structure similar to the Caste system in India. The ancient regime was organized largely around labor.

What are the Liberal Arts?

The terms "the liberal arts" or "liberal education" are frequently bandied about. Many people have a general idea of what they mean but cannot truly pin-down their origin. For example, Fareed Zakaria (2008) wrote that the liberal arts help people with critical thinking, writing skills, and go beyond the now ubiquitous technical training university students seek. Roth (2015) explained that one of the main purposes of the liberal arts is to create life-long learners and inspire the desire to make the world a better place. In antiquity, "The liberal arts . . . are those subjects or skills . . . considered essential for a free person (a citizen) to know in order to take an active part in civic life" (World Heritage Encyclopedia, N.D., para. 1). The liberal arts education endowed the individual with skills that enabled a person's, "participating in public debate, defending oneself in court, serving on juries, and most importantly, military service. . . .The aim of these studies was to produce a virtuous, knowledgeable, and articulate person" (World Heritage Dictionary, N.D., para. 1).

All of these ideas are accurate of the liberal arts, but they fail to truly articulate the pragmatic rationale of how a liberal arts education accomplishes this. In his work, *Work and revolution in France: The language of labor from the old regime to 1848* (1980), William Sewell, Jr. explains the historical origins of the term "the liberal arts." The liberal arts were a part of the ancient regime's formal and hierarchical class-structure predicated on labor.

The liberal arts were diametrically opposed to the mechanical arts. Sewell, Jr. said, "Commercial as well as manufacturing occupations were considered to be a form of manual labor and therefore to be base. They were 'mechanical' as opposed to the intellectual or learned 'liberal arts'" (1980, p. 21). The mechanical arts were seen as less noble ventures

because they involved manual labor. According to the Christian tradition, labor was the punishment given to Adam and Eve for their sins in the garden of Eden, and was therefore, "a badge of vileness" (Sewell, Jr., 1980, p. 22). This act and punishment are known as Original-Sin. Because of Original-Sin, the mechanical arts were seen as lower in the hierarchy than the liberal arts. As Sewell, Jr. offered, "the liberal arts-defined as those arts 'whose productions appertain more to the mind [esprit] than the hand'- were ranked above the mechanical arts- defined as appertaining 'more to the hand than mind'" (1980, p. 23). Gilman (1905) validated this idea, as he said, "the 'liberal arts' are those subjects that are suitable for the development of intellectual and moral excellence, as distinguished from those that are merely useful or practical" (para. 1). The liberal arts are concerned with spiritual and moral development, while the mechanical arts are more practical and labor intensive.

The term "art" in the liberal arts has nothing to do with our contemporary conception of art. Today, the word art inspires the ideas of unrestrained freedom and creative expression without boundaries. However, during the ancient regime, art meant a different thing altogether:

This conception of art differs importantly from the romantic nineteenth-century notion of art as the expression of creative genius unbounded by the conventions of ordinary life. Quite the contrary, art was not a matter of originality, inspiration, and genius but of rules, order and discipline. (Sewell, Jr., 1980, p. 22).

The liberal arts emphasized a spiritual life with a devotion to rules and order. Sewell, Jr. elaborated, when he said

In this scheme of things, art was a rule giving or legislative activity; art and its rules were the means of creating and maintaining order in human life generally, of subjecting our unruly passions to reason and directing them to orderly and useful ends of whatever kind. (1980, pp. 22-23).

The idea of human nature needing channels to restrain our passions is the main theme running leitmotif in Jerry Muller's (1997) book, *Conservatism: An anthology of social and political thought from David Hume to the present*. Muller collected the works of conservative intellectuals who consistently echoed the following refrain: that human beings are born neither purely

good, nor purely evil, but malleable. If left unrestrained, our evil inclinations will take over, and we, as human beings, will live immoral lives. Human beings therefore necessitate restraints on our passions and appetites. The metaphor most frequently occurring relates to man's unruly passions and appetites flowing like water necessitating dam-like restraints.

We now understand what the liberal arts are and where they came from. They are a term related to spiritual labor, are diametrically opposed to manual labor, and the term art relates to rules and moral restraints on our passions and appetites. Next, the decline of the liberal arts is examined and the sociopolitical factors that precipitated their decline are explored.

The Decline of the Liberal Arts

The dominant theme to the ancient regime was that labor existed as the basis of all social order and therefore served as the basis of all political order (Sewell, Jr., 1980). Implicit in the mechanical arts relationship to the liberal arts is the idea of hierarchies. The mechanical arts, viewed as base and vile, were clearly subordinate to the liberal arts.

As Sewel, Jr. said, "The idea that labor should be exalted as an essential foundation of human happiness rather than despised as a stigma of baseness and sin was pervasive in Enlightenment thought" (p. 64). Those in the mechanical arts believed their labor should be a source of pride, not shame. They believed their labor deserved lionization, or at the very least, equitable status with the liberal arts. One major tenet of the Enlightenment was the desire for universal equity (Nisbet, 1966). The practitioners of the mechanical arts were tired of their status as second-class citizens.

Denis Diderot, in his *Encyclopedie ou dictionnaire raisonne des sciences, des arts, et des métiers (*Encyclopedia or rational dictionary of sciences, arts and crafts), said the following of the relationship between the mechanical and liberal arts:

you will find that the estimation given to the one and the other has not been distributed in a just relationship to these advantages, and that we have praised far more the men occupied in making us believe we were happy than the men occupied in making us happy in fact. How bizarre are our judgements! We demand that people be usefully employed and

we disdain useful men. (Diderot, as quoted by Sewel, Jr. 1980, p. 65)

Diderot further opined that, "the liberal arts have sung about themselves enough" (as quoted by Sewell, Jr. 1980, p. 66). Thus, the beginning of the downfall of the liberal arts.

Diderot, as a vocal proponent of the Enlightenment and its beliefs, advocated for equity. The Enlightenment's goal of universal equity was implemented in France by destroying the ancient regime, which was hierarchical and thus inequitable; emancipating the individual from ancient authoritative ties that emphasized restraint like the church, the family unit, and the corporate trade guild of the ancient regime was another goal of the Enlightenment (Nisbet, 1966). Through this emancipation, the Enlightenment thinkers influenced the French Revolutionaries. These revolutionaries upended the ancient regime and created a new order based on natural reason, equity, the individual as the central unit of life, and the endowment of each individual with ever increasing liberties, freedoms, and rights (Nisbet, 1966).

Additionally, one major influence in Enlightenment and French Revolutionary thought was Jean Rousseau. His most influential ideological belief was that human beings were born naturally-good, but they were corrupted by society (1753). This is a significant change in the perception of human nature previously mentioned in the liberal arts. There, the belief is that human beings were born neither good nor evil, but rather with an ethical dualism necessitating moral restraint. Rousseau and the other Enlightenment thinkers changed the lexicon of morality through their works and removed these traditional restraints on the individual, blamed society as the culprit for the world's problems, and neglected to replace the traditional restraints they invalidated with anything else in their place.

We now have an understanding of the liberal arts and their decline. The Enlightenment, equity, and Rousseau's ideology fundamentally altered the hierarchy of labor in the liberal and mechanical arts. The next section articulates the nature of freedom, and then the role of the liberal arts in higher education today is explored.

Freedom

What is the nature of freedom? This is a question debated by many over the course of human history, but relevant to the liberal arts and the Enlightenment, one specific topic is the focal point of conversation: is freedom found in restraint, or is it found in emancipation without rules and restrictions?

To those who support the thought of the Enlightenment and French Revolutionaries, it is undoubtedly found in emancipation. This idea stands in stark opposition to much historical opinion. To illustrate the incongruence between the natural goodness of Rousseau and previous philosophies, quotes emanating from a temporal-range of differing ethnic origins will illustrate the counter-Rousseau school of thought. These quotes range from Confucian, to Judeo-Christian, to ancient-Greek, and counter-Enlightenment thought.

Hsun Tsu, in his teachings on the nature of man and evil, believed that human beings have a natural inclination towards our desires. If left unchecked, the desires of humanity will overwhelm us and lead to disaster. He said

Man is born with the desires of the eyes and ears, with a fondness for beautiful sights and sounds. If he indulges these, they will lead him into license and wantonness, and all ritual principles and correct forms will be lost. Hence, any man who follows his nature and indulges his emotions will inevitably become involved in wrangling and strife, will violate the forms and rules of society, and will end as a criminal. (As quoted by Kirk, 1969, p. 147)

In *Ethics of our fathers,* a Jewish text, Ben Zoma asked, "Who is strong? He who conquers his evil inclination. Who is Rich? He who is happy with his portion" (4:1). A similar aphorism was said by Aristotle: "for it is not the possessions but the desires of mankind which require to be equalized" (350 B.C., para. 22). The Right Honourable Edmund Burke, father of conservatism, said the following:

Men are qualified for civil liberty in exact proportion to their disposition to put moral chains upon their own appetites . . . Society cannot exist, unless a controlling power upon will and appetite be placed somewhere; and the less of it there is within, the more there must be without. (1791, pp. 51-52)

Shakespeare wrote in *Julius Caesar* that, "The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars, but in ourselves" (I,iii, 140-141). This was Shakespeare's way of saying that we, through our choices, create our own destiny, and that our lives are not the capricious whims of the gods. Finally, the essence of Buddhism is distillable to one aphorism: desire is the root of suffering. Restrain your desires, and you will limit your suffering. As the Buddha once said, "Restraint of the body is good. So is restraint of speech. Restraint of mind is good, and so is restraint in everything. . . .who is restrained in everything, is freed from all suffering" (The Buddha, 2012, para. 1).

To recapitulate all of these thoughts, they revolve around the idea of limiting desires, passions, and learning to be happy with what we have, lest our passions will run amok and direct us to evil. As Sewell Jr. said (1980), "traditional old-regime conceptions that understood liberty not as an absolute and abstract right but as contingent on the maintenance of order and as subject to constraints imposed by legitimate authority" (p. 74). Restraints on our passions and appetites create proper order.

When liberty is left unrestrained and emancipated individuals are able to pursue their desires without limitations, then, "they can never satisfy their limitless acquisitiveness. Only by being a member of a group that imposes limits and sets standards . . . can people achieve their desires and find satisfaction" (Haidt et al., 2008, p. 135). Turgot concurred with this statement, albeit in his time: as an unlimited liberty that knows no other law than caprice and admits no rules but those that it makes itself. This kind of liberty is nothing more than a veritable independence which would soon be transformed into licence, opening the door to every abuse. (Turgot, as quoted by Sewell, Jr. 1980, p. 74).

To conclude, contrary to the Enlightenment school of thought, true freedom is found not in unrestrained liberty, but in personal and moral restraint. These restraints prevent our liberty from denigrating to license.

Next, a brief foray into higher education to explain how higher education has changed through academic capitalism and how academic capitalism has changed students and our universities.

Higher Education

The most important movement in higher education, relative to this topic, is the academic capitalist movement. Academic capitalism is, "the involvement of colleges and faculty in market-like behaviors" (Rhoades & Slaughter, 2004, p. 37). Nisbet said the following about academic capitalism:

I firmly believe that in direct grants from government and foundation to individual members of university faculties, or to small company-like groups of faculty members. . . and other essentially capitalistic enterprises with the academic community to be the single most powerful agent of change that we can find in the university's long history. (pp. 72-73)

Academic capitalism fundamentally altered the landscape of higher education. Congruent with academic capitalism, the cost of tuition, student fees, and books have skyrocketed over the years. Many universities now charge upwards of $60,000 a year in tuition.

In *Academically adrift: Limited learning on college campuses* (2010), Arum and Roksa articulated the lack of learning and near absence of intellectual growth on college campuses. The rationale behind the problem of limited learning on campus is that the exorbitant cost of college has created a customer service experience for the students. This high cost changed the nature of the universities' constituents from students to clients/customers. The students are more interested in social experiences and having fun than they are in learning; the institutions are more interested in meeting the needs of the high paying students as clients/customers than they are with rigor and learning. The expression, "higher education: the only thing people are willing to pay more for to get less of" comes to mind.

The high cost of tuition also forces students to see college in terms of paying off their debt by majoring in lucrative fields, rather than learning for the sake of the pursuit of knowledge. The shift towards more customer-service-centric campuses caused a decline in interest and popularity of the classical liberal arts curriculum. Now, a more vocationally centric technical curriculum leading to high paying jobs is more popular. This is akin to learning a trade. The liberal arts on campus are being supplanted by the mechanical arts.

It is challenging to convince a student to take liberal arts courses when student loan debt is so high. Can you really blame someone for thinking of their education in terms of the post-graduation job market instead of the liberal arts curriculum focused on building character?

Should this matter? Don't our students need technical skills to propel them through the new high-tech world we live in where we now compete not just locally but also globally? How can students think about anything but jobs when their loan debt is so high? It is almost the year 2020: Have we not progressed beyond what the liberal arts teach us?

Conclusion

The ideas of customer service, academic capitalism, and progressivism's belief that we, as human beings, are more advanced and sophisticated today than our ancestors were in their day (Sowell, 1987), are eroding the values of the liberal arts. Progressive policies and market tendencies are driving the changes in higher education, and thus telling our students and universities their needs have changed. Unfortunately, this is not true. As Russell Kirk once said, "By definition, human nature is constant. Because of that constancy, men of vision are able to describe the norms, the rules, for mankind" (Kirk, 1984,p. 39).

As Kirk knew, the human condition is constant. We, as human beings, are the same creatures we have been for centuries. The student and person of today is no different than the ones who lived in antiquity, feudal China, Communist Russia, as well as the Enlightenment era. The progressivist mentality is wrong: the human condition is constant, and we have not evolved whatsoever. The liberal arts are just as important and relevant today as they were yesterday. We must reject the notion that Rousseau and Diderot espoused and remember: the struggle for good and evil is in the breast of the individual and not with society (Babbitt, 1924). The students of today need the liberal arts to help them understand that they are responsible for their actions via their choices; they cannot blame society.

The liberal arts will place restraints on our passions, impart a sense of personal accountability, and give students an insight to human nature and the human condition. Without these restraints, our students will succumb to the same mistakes of our

ancestors. These mistakes are preventable, but unfortunately, without a strong knowledge of human nature that the liberal arts imparts on us, the lessons will be lost, and history will repeat itself. As Santayana knew, "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it" (1905, p. 284).

To conclude, why defend the liberal arts in a time of soaring tuition costs, customer service, and the demand for technical and vocational training? Because a liberal arts education enables true freedom. Without the moral restraints the liberal arts places on us, we are left with unlimited liberty. As Dostoyevsky said, "To being with unlimited liberty is to end with unlimited despotism" (as quoted by Kirk, 1997, p. 33). This is why we need the liberal arts now more than ever: to protect our freedom. Protection of our freedom occurs through our commitment to the liberal arts. As one insures the other, both will flourish.

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