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EDITOR'S NOTES

The Spring 2021 issue of the *Journal for the Liberal Arts and Sciences* features educators from several institutions: Edith Cowan University in Australia; Ivy Tech College; University of South Carolina, Aiken; Berea College; and Oakland City University. The topics included here concern an array of issues that involve all levels of education, such as the present state of the liberal arts, social studies education, community college academic advising, a historical examination of the struggles of nineteenth century women teachers, the present state of the practice of mindfulness in K-12, and work-balance issues for adjunct college instructors. Taken altogether, these pieces offer an insight into the present issues in education in this age of COVID.

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At Risk:
The Arts and Humanities

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Abstract

This paper discusses current threats to the arts and humanities in western education and their supersedence by sciences, in the wake of the 2020 coronavirus sweeping the world and causing human beings, fighting for survival, occasionally to forget their humanity. The article begins with the problem in Australia, while the body of the essay, in three sections, examines scholars' and educators' views across the world. The first section discusses research projects and discussions, seeking to overcome threats to the humanities. The middle section scrutinizes attempts to persuade leaders to support the humanities. The third section critiques articles explaining the value of humanities to the public. Despite commentators extolling humanities' unquestionable strengths, not one acknowledges a weakness that began as a virtue. The final paragraphs attempt to redress this, to enable the Renaissance.

KEY WORDS: arts and humanities, innovation, creativity, soft skills, complex problem-solving, versatility.

Introduction

The arts and humanities in Australia are in danger of gradual elimination. The pressures of funding often drive decisions about discipline priorities. Clearly, the humanities are struggling. This is at odds with the plethora of research telling us how universities need to equip future graduates with skills enabling them to deal with a different future workspace, in which the core values of humanities like contextual knowledge, critical abilities, creativity and adaptability will be essential. Yet humanities disciplines in Australian universities, evident on their websites, are shrinking so much that, even when blended, as in history/politics and literature/writing, the number of

academic staff in some areas, particularly in new universities, has shrunk to one or two teaching staff members. Even in older universities, the number of staff in subjects like history or literature can be fewer than twenty or even fewer than ten. Many Australian humanities university websites, especially among older universities, conflate emeriti, honorary and adjunct research-only staff with teaching staff, without mentioning specific disciplines, glossing over diminishing ranks.

Relatively young by western standards, Australian universities often import ideas and practices nurtured in other countries. Yet have other countries found the panacea for overcoming threats to arts and humanities? Are they not similarly placed, despite their greater longevity? In its examination of the particular perils facing arts and humanities in Australian universities today, this paper examines the strategies, ideas and experiences of humanities academics facing current and past threats in other countries, in some of which the invaluable contribution of these areas has been recognized for centuries. The article will attempt to ascertain why they do not appear to provide a solution. For many decades, academics have rarely spent their whole career in one country, let alone in one university. The international cross-pollination of ideas has been regarded as a virtue, especially since globalization, although this concept is being questioned in light of the pandemic and international cyber security. Nor is the transference of ideas from one country to another, even within a monolingual framework, *always* successful, for no two monolingual societies are identical. Local and international circumstances can suddenly change. Consequently, the paper is mindful of the dangers of global application of concrete or abstract entities.

Out of Australia's forty universities, twenty-two began in 1987 or later, and fourteen of those began in 1990 or later. When founded, all forty universities honoured the original Latin meaning of *universitas magistrorum et scholarium*, a *whole* community of teachers and scholars, used in the University of Bologna, the oldest of the world's universities, by providing faculties and schools across all the disciplines of a modern university. These included, of course, science, the Latin etymology meaning knowledge from *scire* (to know), including humanities. Sciences, though, are one of the threats.

A large number of academics have discussed and displayed their ideas and projects, but rarely their fears, in learned journals; an equally large number

have shared their ideas and sometimes their fears, with colleagues on websites, with leaders in politics and business in world fora, and in collegial journals and magazines. A much smaller number have communicated those ideas and fears to the public through news media. Yet educational disciplines depend mostly on government funding, which has to take into account public perception and approval in final decisions. This means that a close interface between university humanities disciplines and the public is vital for their continuation. Finally, the article offers a partial solution that may help the humanities, in its change of approach.

Threats

The fundamental threat is dwindling funding, when competing claims multiply and all but silence older, less glamorous disciplines. On this economic basis sit all other threats. STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) sound more practical than arts and humanities, especially to a country like Australia, with relatively recent western settlement. Its pioneering days, when practical skills were uppermost in settlers' minds, are still fairly fresh in national memory. Arts and humanities in Australia include creative writing, visual and performing arts, literature, languages, history, geography, philosophy, theology, anthropology, sociology and social sciences. None of these disciplines, in themselves, creates material wealth. Currently, Australia's wealth is seen to be mainly in raw materials like minerals, oil and gas, which ostensibly depend on STEM subjects for extraction and use. There are even threats from within humanities clusters, like digital humanities, its technological element requiring extra funding for basic equipment.

An unforeseen danger to western universities worldwide has been the coronavirus, resulting in loss of international students and revenue, and potential shift in attitude to internationalized curricula. For western universities, renewed emphasis on linguistic and cultural skills for international students helped highlight certain humanities. When studying within their own cultural context, domestic students do not require these skills in quite the same way. If international study becomes too difficult or too costly, linguistic and cultural skills will quickly fade from academic landscapes.

Cyber security has created another fear, its antidote believed to lie in STEM disciplines. As a relatively new university discipline, cyber security is yet another competitor for funding, almost constantly under review by

governments. The Australian government has just introduced a funding revision for universities, directly affecting most humanities. This extra challenge will be, in some cases, extra student expense, compared with reduced fees for teaching, nursing, maths, science and engineering. Despite publicly declared optimism by western university leaders, the way ahead for universities, and especially humanities in Australia, is unclear.

Strategies from Scholars in Learned Journals, Books and Reports

Humanities scholars have long extolled their disciplines' virtues and strengths, itself a key strategy. As American sociologist, Craig Calhoun (2020), when interviewed in South Africa, says humanities are essential, since "what individuals don't get from nature, they get from the culture and cultivation provided by the Humanities" (p. 95). At that time, Calhoun was Director and President of the London School of Economics, so his experience straddled at least two countries, and his ideas find fertile ground on a third. Calhoun also stresses that these invaluable endowments come from the *teaching* of humanities, rather than their research axes. According to Calhoun (2020), humanities' complicity in numerical "evaluations and rankings and other sorts of assessment schemes" (p.94), driven by sciences and only measuring research, has drawn a dark veil over their greatest educational asset. Despite optimism, Calhoun concludes by acknowledging that "other revenue streams," to find ways of mitigating "the effects of inequality," and making a "good role" for humanities, will remain "uphill battles" (p.99). In short, he concedes humanities will continue to struggle.

Calhoun is not the first academic to lend strong support to humanities as a strategy, when faced with threats. In the wake of the global financial crisis of 2008, American philosopher Martha Nussbaum (2010) wrote an impassioned book*, In Defence of Humanities*, which she said were already under threat in her own country, where a liberal arts education had long been nurtured. A political activist on several fronts, Nussbaum admitted the humanities' weakness, from the point of view of economists, by emphasizing it as if it were a strength, at the beginning of the book's title, *Not For Profit*. Her sub-title, too, provided a political provocation for western society: *Why Democracy Needs the Humanities*. Speaking of humanities "being cut away, in both primary/secondary and college/university, in every nation of the world" (p.2), Nussbaum argued their case. She listed the attributes learnt: "the ability to think critically; the ability to transcend local loyalties and to approach world problems," without

self-interest intervening, as well as "the ability to imagine sympathetically the predicament of another person" (p.7). Even a decade ago, Nussbaum believed that "[d]emocracies all over the world are undervaluing and consequently neglecting, skills," absorbed from humanities to remain "vital, respectful, and accountable" (p.77).

All the more concerning, Nussbaum said, are world leaders, well versed in humanities, who, once in power, ignore them, citing Nehru. In spite of "his own deep love for poetry and literature, during his time from 1947-1964 as first prime minister of independent India," Nehru emphasized "science and economics as linchpins of the nation's future," since "modes of emotional and imaginative understanding must take a back seat to science" (p.130). Nor did Barack Obama, while President of the United States, behave differently. Having himself received a liberal arts education, Obama overlooked them and "focused on individual income and national economic progress" Nussbaum is critical of other Anglophone countries neglecting humanities, believing that "Australia, like Britain, has long thought of education as commercial and instrumental" (p.153). Nor is her criticism invalid.

Unlike Nussbaum, Robert Koons (2011), another American philosopher, adopted a different strategy. Instead of praising humanities, he blamed sciences for their denigration, tracing this back to the seventeenth century, when the fascination with science and technology began diminishing human artistic work. Proposing a number of reforms for American universities, including decentralized rules and norms, Koons (2011) asserted that philosopher and statesman Sir Francis Bacon (1561-1626) was responsible for turning "from the classical tradition" to favor "the modern fascination with technology as power" (p.135). Both American Irving Babbitt (1865-1933), in *Literature and the American College* (1908), and English C.S. Lewis (1898-1963), in *The Abolition of Man* (1943), condemned Bacon for plundering nature, and encouraging "practical men" to "impose their own wills upon the raw material of nature" (Koons 2011, p.135). This power, from science and technology, according to these scholars, began the deterioration of art forms.

As expected, the Arts and Humanities Research Council (2008) in Britain began by extolling the contributions made to the world by knowledge from the arts and humanities. In particular, Hasan Bakhshi, Philippe Schneider and Christopher Walker (2008) describe this knowledge as nourishing "the UK's cultural existence," and inspiring its "creative behaviour as well as its innovative

goods and services" Yet in the next breath, they emphasize the importance of humanities totally abandoning their unique and original "lone scholar" mode of research and pursuing the team approach of the scientific model. At the same time, Bakhshi and his co-writers bemoaned the dearth of funding given to humanities trying to compete with sciences in what has always been the latter's territory and *modus operandi*, seemingly unaware that mimicry has never won awards, except perhaps in comedy. Yet in comedy there is often a guy set up to fall, and that guy for a while has been the humanities. Competing on the scientific playfield, even using the scientific research model, has not augmented humanities research funding.

Nor does this mean that scientists themselves view humanities in this light. From the science perspective, American scholars Véronica Segarra, Barbara Natalizio, Cibele Falkenberg, Stephanie Pulford, and Raquell Holmes (2018, p.1) acknowledged the need for "the use of the arts in the training of scientists" to ensure that they are "innovative" and sufficiently agile to confront unforeseen changes. In offering their own strategy for helping the arts, they advocated (Segarra et al 2018, p.2), from the fields of microbiology, computational science modelling, and mechanical engineering, not only STEAM (science, technology, arts, mathematics) research teams, working on collaborative research projects but also STEAM education in K-12 and post-secondary institutions so that students can work side-by-side for "scaffolding interdisciplinary collaborations." Segarra et al (2018) wrote of scientists benefiting "from the transferable skills required in the performing theatrical arts," for instance, before making their research publicly available (p.5). They claim that the benefit is for arts and science, but do not produce evidence for this being advantageous to arts. However magnanimous, they apparently see arts as servants who can disseminate, in a populist way, the value of science to the world, often believed to be its objectivity, as opposed to the subjectivity of the arts. Yet Polish philosopher W.J. Korab-Karpowicz (2002) maintained that the science of facts is determined by "human relatedness to the world as a whole" (p.71), so the observation of phenomena as "mere objects," is in itself just a partial view (p.72). It could be said that popularizing science through the arts presents the scientific perspective with an even more partial view. Nor is it ultimately helpful for the arts.

Case studies of collaborative work across sciences and humanities have received encouragement and funding in some universities, in the belief that this helps both sciences and humanities. Mark Roughley, Kathryn Smith

and Caroline Wilkinson (2019), of the Liverpool School of Art and Design at Liverpool John Moores University, cited five additional universities, three in Scotland and three in England, where Master's degrees blend arts and science. Roughley and his colleague outlined their own Master of Art in Science program, which began in 2016 with four students, "variously holding undergraduate degrees in Fine Art, Illustration and Computer Science." Over the two subsequent years, an average in each year of eight students, whose undergraduate degrees were in disciplines such as "Biology, Education, Fine Art, Illustration, Linguistics, Oceanography and Zoology," were enrolled in this research degree (p.228).

Roughley and his colleagues explained that their intention was to equip students for transdisciplinary careers, presupposing this would constitute "the future world of work." Mindful of arts being perceived as a means of "science communication," they determined their research degree would be interdisciplinary so that, regardless of undergraduate background, students would admit ignorance of other areas, and tolerate ignorance in others to enrich their work from both sides of the arts-science divide (pp.228-229). Working in teams, students were expected "to examine the relationship between art and science, with respect to history, theory, philosophy and practice," anticipating that they could see how these could be personally experienced (p.230). In their second semester, students might work collaboratively with "scientific partners," who may be in the local community, in another part of the UK, or even overseas (p. 237). The ultimate hope of Roughly and his colleagues is that their program could be adopted by research programs in other STEAM disciplines.

While this has laudable objectives, the cost, for such a small group of students, is not revealed. It is also project-driven and project-based, often useful in research, less so in teaching. Lateral and flexible thinking require broad frameworks, without specific project objectives, which, of necessity, narrow focus for end goals, both in time and scope. Still in infancy, this Master's, emanating from arts, has also adopted, automatically, the science team model. Yet the most ground-breaking scientists in history are the following individuals: Polish Nicolaus Copernicus (1473-1543), Italian Galileo Galilei (1564-1642), English Sir Isaac Newton (1642-1727), and modern-day English Stephen Hawking (1942-2018). It would be unimaginable to think of these intellectual giants working in teams, either within their fields or across disciplines. Teamwork invariably involves compromise. Compromises do not incubate or result in originality.

Blending humanities with sciences in a largely monoglottic society is difficult. Doing so in a polylingual society requires fortitude, planning and money. One way to overcome some of the difficulties, according to Mexican digital humanities lecturer Armida de la Gaza (2019), writing in a European journal, is to internationalize the curriculum. To date, her own higher education and academic career have taken her from Mexico to England, to China, and now to Ireland so her breadth of international experience is considerable. Sharing "the same goal of pluralizing the epistemological base" of STEAM, de la Gaza's internationalization drive is to make curriculum content "more comprehensive, updated, and relevant," for domestic and international students. Her "interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approaches" for this include "indigenous knowledge as it does not separate the arts and humanities from science" (pp. 1-2).

Historians might be quick to point out that, during the Renaissance in western society, polymaths like Galileo, already mentioned, and Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519), often blended sciences with arts. Modern day scientists, however, might be even quicker to point out that the knowledge base in sciences has grown exponentially since the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, hence the growth in specialism across sciences *and* humanities. This in no way invalidates de la Gaza's point about indigeneity, for many specialists lament their gradual loss of wider vision, the longer they remain in their specialist field. As de la Gaza (2019) indicated, the fusion of humanities with science, by STEAM and indigenous people, greatly facilitates imagination and lateral thinking (p.4). Unless transdisciplinarity is confined to specific projects, in itself narrowing focus as mentioned above, human life is probably still too short to become expert across such a wide field of disciplines at doctoral, postdoctoral research levels and beyond.

Since the issue of funding underlies the impetus to encourage humanities to seek fusion with sciences, some academics have sought a different strategy. To cope with financial crisis and beyond, the impression given by Ellen Hazelkorn and Andrew Gibson (2016) is that humanities in Ireland will continue to argue for "a more sophisticated understanding of research relevance," and retain their "disciplinary strengths" by keeping their autonomy as their way of "demonstrating value to the public sphere" (p.110). Their view is perhaps not as brave as it sounds, as Ireland remains part of the European Union, which, as will be illustrated below, has more respect for humanities, as Europe was nurtured by the original Bologna model, on which American liberal arts colleges are based. By contrast. Simon Moreton (2016), of the University of the West

of England, explores collaborations between humanities in universities and "the creative economy" (p. 100). This was because of the special grant in 2011 by the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council, in response to the global financial crisis three years before, to establish four "Knowledge Exchange Hubs" in regional universities. Research in these universities was tailored to promote "commercialisation via patents, Intellectual Property protection and the establishment of 'spin-out' companies." As Moreton (2016) emphasizes, knowledge as an identifiable entity is usually more easily recognized among sciences, in contrast to the "'soft' outputs of social sciences or humanities" (p.102) .Just two of the problems identified by Moreton are the loss of academic freedom in the pursuit of "independent research" (p.109), and the "changing responsibilities and work patterns," not necessarily compatible with academic duties of teaching and administration (p.110). Once again, the project-based research is enabling financially—for the research to take place—and disabling educationally, for one of the university's core responsibilities is teaching. The commercial arm can thus impede the professional one by taking precedence, often in terms of deadlines, to turn capital outlay into profit. The professional *academic* arm needs to balance research and teaching, as Nussbaum intimated.

American higher education colleges seem to have found one way to achieve balance between humanities and sciences. Cathy Levenson (2010), professor of biomedical science and neuroscience, illustrates how undergraduates in humanities as well as in sciences can learn research methods by assisting with certain tasks undertaken by academics. Where previously only sciences involved undergraduates in their research, Levenson explains that this can also work in humanities. By becoming involved in the research of academic mentors, Levenson (2010) points out that students learn "[t]he undergraduate research process is a continuum," to stimulate their academic curiosity and later to "identify their [research] interests" (p.14). For instance, a humanities undergraduate could "help a faculty member work on the index of a book," even perhaps "collect resources for the next project" (pp.13-16).While the nature of acknowledgement for this work is not spelled out, Levenson does mention the position of "research assistant" in conjunction with this role, long practiced and respected in sciences. Significantly, although Levenson advocates humanities learning from sciences, she adapts the model to suit research traditionally undertaken by humanities. Equally significantly, not once does Levenson argue for a transdisciplinary science-humanities nexus or even a specific science-humanities research project, respecting essential differences integral to humanities and sciences.

These kinds of strategies do not only apply at higher degree level and beyond. American high school administrator, Daniel Gleason (2020), gave a detailed critique of five ways in which humanities face threats posed by privileging sciences. Using case studies, Gleason named these approaches from the vantage point of humanities at high school level: the subservient "training ground;" the oppositional "critical vantage;" the joint and equal "willing partnership;" the welcoming "open door" into the humanities, and the stand-off of the "separate spheres" (pp.186-206). Gleason's conclusion about the training ground model is not dissimilar to problems identified earlier, in the approach taken by Segarra and her co-authors concerning higher research. What is striking, Gleason said, is "[t]he posture of servitude," which outweighs the opportunity for student and teacher enrichment by introducing "evaluative distortion," in which "the humanities teacher whose course aspires to STEM value" will probably be assessed by someone from sciences (pp.190-191).

Even when humanities are seen to provide deficiencies in medical sciences, Gleason believed, the outcome leaves humanities in the role of servant, "subsumed by" medical science targets (p. 194). As noted earlier, with respect to higher degree research (de la Gaza 2019), Gleason indicated the huge logistical problems, despite worthy intentions, involved in interdisciplinary willing partnerships between humanities and sciences at high school level (p., 198). Nor does welcoming science and technology into humanities, in particular digital humanities introducing large data, overcome difficulties observed by humanists who believe in focusing more closely on fewer details at a time. Statistical research, Gleason hinted, is scientific and, of its nature, questions the qualitative humanist approach. While digital humanities might invigorate, (2020, 200), they might also overwhelm time-honored humanist methods (p.200). Finally, the risk of insularity and limited vision in a separate spheres approach, pursued too narrowly, threatens to stall human progress, Gleason intimated (p. 203). While not offering a solution, Gleason concluded that, at high school level, the best way forward is for teachers to find some means of their own to keep their disciplines "engaging, relevant and meaningful" (p.204). Beyond this, Gleason offered no specific solution or strategy. In this, he tacitly acknowledged the complexity of such an undertaking and, in so doing, possibly queried the wisdom of this approach.

Whether they have adopted a positive approach or a negative one to combat threats to humanities, the overall feeling among academics has remained the same: concern for the future. Neither the role of servant to sciences, nor

the stand-alone role, offers a glimmer of hope in Australia for the following humanities disciplines, which already seem to have disappeared from most Australian universities: anthropology, sociology, philosophy, theology, geography, linguistics, let alone the many languages no longer taught at higher degree level.

Ideas and Fears Conveyed by Academics and Commentators on Websites, in World Fora, Intercollegial Journals and Magazines

Inside learned journals, scholars focus on discussion, examination and argument. Since publication is highly competitive, it is understandable, though unwise, that weaknesses inherent in the respective disciplines and fears for their future, have not so far featured significantly. Outside learned journals, academics are more likely to voice fears. This section focuses on outlets used by academics to discuss their disciplines with peers, political leaders controlling their funding, and leaders in industry and commerce, possibly contributing funding for research or employing their graduates. These outlets do not include the public.

As early as 1998 in America, James Engell and Anthony Dangerfield in the *Harvard Magazine* sounded a warning bell about risks faced by humanities in the modern university. They attributed this risk to the huge budgets since the 1960s for the rapid proliferation of universities, which eventually had to be curbed. Implicitly and indirectly, they blamed the democratization of higher education, unsustainable for the public purse. In the name of pragmatism, vocational subjects were favored over liberal arts, once nurtured in dedicated colleges. Universities adopted the business model, in place of the collegial. Since humanities could not claim to generate money, it became relatively easy to dismiss them as too expensive, when most humanities disciplines, classroom-based and lecturer-focused, were among the least expensive. Engell and Dangerfield (1998) pointed out that in America, this expansion of vocational disciplines left humanities “neglected, downgraded, and forced to retrench” (p.53). The fears of Engell and Dangerfield, apparently, fell upon deaf ears.

Just over a decade later, Canadian Tod Pettigrew (2011) felt it necessary to remind peers that the function of universities is to conduct “research” and provide “instruction on matters of intellectual importance.” Despite public interest in graduate employment, Pettigrew (2011) stressed that employment is not the specific goal of a university education, although its “intellectual

enrichment" would facilitate a graduate's progress in the world of work. Even in professional vocations like law or education, the primary role of universities is "to teach the history, theoretical underpinnings, crucial knowledge, and critical skills" to give graduates a deep knowledge of the respective discipline. Universities are neither training grounds nor ivory towers, separate from the community. Given the unknown nature of work in the future, all universities should ensure that liberal arts remain integral to course offerings. Despite not voicing actual fears, Pettigrew's reminder itself implies that Canadian universities have changed focus, sidelining humanities.

In fact strong evidence in support of humanities was provided by American Google's Project Oxygen research in 2017, finding STEM expertise to be the *last* of eight traits in the company's top employees. Cathy Davidson (in Strauss 2017) states that the seven more important traits are soft skills integral to humanities: coaching, communicating, listening, possessing insights into others, being empathetic and supportive, being able to think critically, solve problems, and make connections. In an age of robotics, AI and a mechanized workforce the human traits of creativity and empathy are essential for adjusting to a new way of working, and thinking (Davidson in Strauss, 2017).

Despite these research findings, American Holly Hickman (2014), at the 2014 World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, announced that STEM degrees were displacing humanities at universities. This annual forum claims to be "committed to improving the state of the world," inviting leaders from business, politics and academia, and other leaders "to shape global, regional and industry agendas." Here an idea like the importance of STEM in one country can quickly become a world trend. Hickman (2014) spoke of Harvard humanities professors becoming nervous by the 20% drop in numbers. Andreas Schleiker (in Hickman 2014), statistician and Division Head of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Programme for International Student Assessment, however, claimed without evidence that STEM subjects are "the better investment," regardless of expense. The British government (Hickman 2014) has made huge investment in STEM at university level and cut "STEM tuition fees for students," at the expense of humanities, while China has "doubled" its universities in a single decade, focusing "on subjects such as biotechnology, alternative energy and advanced information technologies" (Hickman 2014). Hickman recorded that "service economies in China, the EU, and the US are becoming increasingly dependent on data, technology and scientific advancement." Yet, Hickman pointed out

that scientific and technological professions still require critical and creative thinking. Dr Sangeeta Bhatia, holding a medical degree and PhD in engineering, and "famed for her research into regenerative biology," said that humanities "can help foster creativity and give a broad cultural context to STEM" (in Hickman 2014). While Hickman (2014) valiantly concluded that graduates face the prospect of having at least two or three different careers in unforeseeable occupations, so a foundation in humanities may help to "keep them relevant," her paper exposes the extreme difficulties facing them. Yet the forum did not bring this openly to light. The strengths of humanities are long term. World leaders in universities (vice-chancellors and presidents), politics, industry and commerce are not tenured; they are on relatively short contracts, even if given a second or third term. Each contract has a finite point. Their goals are inevitably short term so that they can be realized before the end of each individual contract. Visibly, STEM subjects produce results more quickly than humanities. Or do they?

American Jack Miles, General Editor of the *Norton Anthology of World Religions*, made another valiant effort in 2015. He quoted Cable News Network host Fareed Zakaria, in his then forthcoming book, *In Defense of a Liberal Education* (2016), that liberal arts should be protected "against the perception that an engineering or business degree is a wiser choice" (in Miles 2015). Condemning America's fourteen years' bilateral global war response to 9/11 and al Quaeda through STEM and economic measures, Miles (2015) regreted that "[h]istory and religion are only rarely brought into American foreign policy or rhetoric." Instead of rushing into Iraq in 2003 with technological weaponry, continued Miles, a history major might have queried why America had chosen to defend Ayatollah Khomeini's Iran against Saddam Hussein's Iraq. A STEM-thinker, commented Miles, could never have foreseen the complications of western martial action, but "a policy maker with a background in the study of Islam or even simply in the recent history of the region" could have anticipated many of the catastrophic effects and avoided them. He warned that, "[i]f our higher education is headed [through STEM-only courses] toward deepening that ignorance and worsening that poverty, we are headed for bigger trouble than we have yet seen" (Miles 2015). With robust bellicose rhetoric still used in American international politics, it would seem that Miles' words went unheeded.

In 2017, Joni Adamson, Professor of Environmental Humanities, was still having to argue the case for humanities during an American government push for STEM, placing these subjects before humanities, which were being hugely

cut. Despite America, over the past decade, having produced three times as many scientists and engineers than needed, the continued impulse was still for increased teaching of STEM, which would, Adamson warned, adversely affect the American economy. This ignored the fact that "non-profit arts and culture industry" had created far more jobs and revenue for the government at local, state and federal levels (in Adamson 2017). Not unlike Miles' earlier claim, Karl Eikenberry, a retired general and now "a fellow at Stanford's Center for International Security and Cooperation," believed that people with backgrounds in "history, foreign languages and cultures can help America" provide "multinational solutions" to "multinational issues" (in Adamson 2017). For this reason, Eikenberry said, education needs both sciences and humanities (in Adamson 2017). Nor does this just apply to higher education. Edward Abeyta, who directs K-16 Programs in California, also stressed that "the full potential of the whole-brain" needs to be captured by having both sciences and humanities taught (in Adamson 2017). Despite increasing warning bells about national finances diminishing, and international problems escalating from a STEM-only push from primary through secondary to higher education, the STEM mantra still predominates.

Canadian Paul Axelrod, Professor Emeritus of Education and History, accounted for the continued push for sciences over humanities, revealing (2017) that China and India, whose universities are much younger than those of America, Europe, Britain, New Zealand and Australia, produce the vast majority of the world's STEM graduates, with China much further ahead than India (2017). China's perception, according to Axelrod (2017), is that "STEM subjects matter more economically and academically than the humanities and social sciences," completely jettisoning, like India, the old wisdom that a university should offer the whole range of disciplines. Axelrod (2017) explains the value of different humanities disciplines: students learn "the ideological systems" governing us from philosophers and political theorists; "cultural memory and perspective on contemporary conflicts" from historians, "the infinite power of the imagination" from "novelists, poets and artists," and the way to "forge economic and social relations among nations" through learning foreign languages. He cautions that too much investment by countries in STEM subjects will adversely affect their economic standing and *ultimate* survival. Increasing automation means that "[h]igh-tech jobs [are] not at the top," and constitute "just 5.6 per cent of the labor force in Canada and 5.9 per cent in the United States" (Axelrod 2017). Axelrod's (2017) final warning was that if China does not foster "academic freedom, critical thinking and intellectual autonomy,"

which remain "core university values," any success they might attain in "high rankings" in STEM subjects will be "hollow." While Axelrod's warning is directed at China, it should be heeded by all countries interested in long-term prosperity.

A glimmer of hope appears in Europe. While the European Union's Horizon 2020 acknowledged the "major investment" by "European and national funds" to encourage students into science, it does recognize the vital role of humanities for "Responsible Research and Innovation," which clearly made Hazelkorn and Gibson in Ireland sufficiently confident to pursue their single discipline approach in humanities. Although the removal of "artificial barriers" between disciplines could provide "a broader context for solving real-life problems," EU Horizon (2020) advised the need for "analytical, interpretive and evaluative skills used in many subject-matter areas." Once these skills are learned in their separate disciplines, the next step is application. Through this kind of mature syncretism (Horizon 2020), students will be ready "to meet the requirements of modern society and industry." Diametrically opposite to this approach, Sue Riley (2019), Arts Integration Specialist for the New Zealand Ministry of Education, seemed to expect the different skills in sciences and humanities to be learnt concurrently by forging together "curriculum learning objectives, standards, assessments, and lesson design/implementation" so that students can "solve real-world problems through hands-on learning activities and creative design." Riley (2019), though, does not elucidate how this would help students acquire the basic skills that need to be learned in discrete disciplines before syncretism can be applied.

Unfortunately, Australian universities continue to pursue the same short-term policies lamented by Hickman, Adamson, Axelrod, and British research. Professor Clive Barstow (2019), President of the Australian Council of Deans and Directors of Creative Industries, cited statistics (2017) from the UK International Association for Media and Communication Research (IAMCR) running counter to current UK and Australian educational policies. These statistics revealed that "in the UK, the creative industries account for 1 in 11 jobs, employing 700,000 more people in 2017 than the financial services sector and is now the fastest growing part of the UK economy" (in Barstow 2019). So why are "media and communication programmes seen as 'low value degrees,' despite this vital contribution to the knowledge economy, the cultural and creative industries and democratic well-being?" (Barstow 2019) Barstow further questioned why, compared with STEM subjects, the latest government report on post education funding (Augar 2019) can claim that the arts receive "a

disproportionate amount of public funding" (in Barstow 2019). How can Augar, with his background in financial services and history, claim that STEM subjects are "better aligned with the economy's needs," when the statistics have provided evidence that humanities graduates are "employable" and sufficiently "versatile" to make "a significant contribution to multi-dimensional economies" (Barstow 2019). Once again, facts, *reputedly* at the core of sciences, refute the policy of favoring them over humanities for economic purposes, both in the short and long term.

The most recent report (2018) concerning research in Australian universities, under a procedure called "Seeking Excellence for Research in Australia" (ERA), also indicated that decisions on funding are not based on factual evidence, but on data highly subjective and problematic. Frank Larkins (2018), Professor Emeritus of Chemistry, implied that "high ranking[s]" in STEM areas are questionable, undermining academic excellence. Larkins' language is cautious, but clear. He noted that, "over time," there have been "[c]hanges" evident "in the predominantly quantitative metric-based benchmarks" employed in evaluating sciences, in contrast to "relatively stable peer review [qualitative] assessment" used for "humanities and social sciences," and circumspectly commented that these changes, perhaps, "account for at least some of the differences" (Larkins 2018). At the same time, the difference in the ways sciences and humanities are assessed "provide a basis to question the comparative integrity of the excellence findings with the associated adverse funding consequences for some disciplines" (Larkins 2018). Briefly, sciences are doubly rewarded through high rankings and large numbers of national grants, while humanities and social sciences are penalized by not being able to produce the requisite high numbers, so are 'punished' by being awarded fewer national grants. Larkins (2018) hinted that the assessment method undermines the whole process, although the various peak bodies representing practice-led creative disciplines (in Barstow 2020) have since driven major changes to the categorization of research codes and definitions, and made a strong submission to the government for equivalence funding for non-traditional outputs as funded research. In the meantime, the statement by Larkins (2018) that universities in developing countries in science journals use "the world average citation rate per paper," which has "declined over time," and long been recognized as a problem without redress, is the current situation. The temptation for Australian universities is to invest more heavily in sciences to obtain higher rankings and win the greater share of national grants, but (Larkins 2018) said this "may not be in the national interest of preserving breadth and

strength in course and subject offerings." Larkins' comments are cautious, but his findings reveal serious problems.

With the exception of the European Union Horizon Project (2020), humanities academics voicing concerns to leaders in universities, politics, industry and commerce are wasting their breath. Neither rational argument, nor factual data in favor of humanities will convince them not to support sciences instead of humanities. The fixed idea, even in the face of contrary evidence, will not fade their fervor. They believe they must continue to pursue what they deem to be scientific and technological progress, but ultimately this will be a blind alley for their institutions, countries and corporations.

The Humanities Communicated by Commentators to the Public Via News Media

Positive public opinion is important for humanities to survive and thrive. Yet it seems that humanities academics have not learnt to adapt their message to suit their readership and audience. Addressing the converted, in learned journals, is straightforward. Appealing to leaders with another objective, in world fora, is futile. The public is open to persuasion. When scientists discuss their latest achievements in public news media, they name positive visible and tangible examples, like medicines and machines, to illustrate how science helps humankind, overlooking past mistakes like the atomic bomb. However positive the following commentators are, they continue to cite combined science and arts projects, or use abstract references, rather than positive concrete examples when arguing for humanities.

The editors of the *Scientific American* argued within the title of their paper in 2016 that "STEM Education Is Vital—but Not at the Expense of the Humanities" (*Scientific American* 2016). Targeting the fiscal purse, they added that "[p] oliticians trying to dump humanities education will hobble our economy" (*Scientific American* 2016). Although the *Scientific American* believes in teaching STEM subjects, it stressed that it would be "deeply misguided" to do this "to the exclusion of the humanities" (*Scientific American* 2016). Subjects like "music theory and string theory" are vital for the American "economy to continue as the preeminent leader in technological innovation" (*Scientific American* 2016). The editors refer to Steve Jobs (1955-2011) to endorse their main argument. As they note, Jobs, "tech hero" for many a decade, "was neither a coder nor a hardware engineer," bringing "an artistic sensibility to the redesign of clunky mobile phones and desktop computers" (*Scientific American*

2016). For blending "artistic design with the engineering refinements needed to differentiate high-end cars, clothes or cell phones" from others in the market place, it is "those same skills" from liberal arts that are needed (*Scientific American* 2016). Humanities academics could learn much from the oldest continuously published scientific magazine, which has included articles by many famous scientists, including Albert Einstein, in endorsing humanities. The caveat for humanities, however, lay in the editors' subtle blending of sciences and humanities so that their endorsement includes their own disciplines, thereby subordinating humanities.

A British publication advocates a similar blending. The *Independent* (2016) lauded the American Sesame Street toddler television program's acknowledgement of how sciences and arts "both go hand-in-hand" to create new toys and ways of looking at the world through pre-school eyes. Sesame Street was then entering its 43rd season. The article criticized Britain's emphasis on STEM subjects, disagreeing with the recent plea about A levels by the Institute of Directors representing "company directors, senior business leaders [and] entrepreneurs" (*Independent* 2016). The Institute asserted that "at further, higher education level and beyond," these "businesses would be pleased to see a rise in the number of entries in maths" (in *Independent* 2016). Noting that "STEM entries [were] up almost one-fifth from 2010 to 2015," this institute "said students were recognising the need to build skills to compete within a modern economy" (in *Independent* 2016). The *Independent* then pointed out that the Institute of Directors had not realized that the arts had *already* been "incorporated onto the field of STEM" through "the STEAM movement," which had been "spearheaded" at the Rhode Island School of Design. The *Independent*, in its turn, did not acknowledge that this program only addresses visual and performing arts, neglecting the larger part of humanities.

Refreshingly, *The Washington Post* (2017) neither used the acronym STEAM nor argued for blending humanities and sciences at the learning stage, but wisely implied that disciplines need to be mastered *before* lateral thinking takes place. Valerie Strauss (2017) asserted that "[t]he human touch has never been more essential in the workplace." Automation and digital technology, creating big data, require "human judgment" to make sense in terms of our way of life, yet liberal arts students are decreasing. Even in 2015, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences reported that the number of humanities degrees were ten percent lower than in the previous three years. Strauss urged readers to heed Gerald Greenberg (in Strauss 2017), who explains that education in liberal

arts does not just concentrate on humanities but, like the medieval Bologna university model, includes natural sciences, mathematics, social sciences and humanities. Students do not study these subjects in a mélange, but "sample fields in each subject" (in Strauss 2017). In science, students "can learn what happens when tiny particles collide," opening "the window into the universe" (in Strauss 2017). In social science, students "can learn about how resources are used by people and companies," leading "to an understanding of how the economy might develop" (in Strauss 2017). In humanities, students "can learn another language, opening "the window into a new culture, a new worldview" (in Strauss 2017), vital for assessing an international relations situation, possibly arisen from a STEM development. Humanities teach students "to process information and to deal with difficult situations," enabling them "to deal with contemporary global issues at local, national, and international levels" (in Strauss 2017). Although sciences are "useful," Greenberg (in Strauss 2017), stressed that "a lack of appreciation of the humanity involved in any situation can lead to undesirable results," as the world has seen many times. Greenberg did not advocate short-circuiting the learning process of discrete skills before solving world problems, implying that problem-solving skills come once the individual components have been learned. Nonetheless, Greenberg still communicated with the public through general abstractions rather than concrete examples.

Science, technology, engineering and mathematics cannot be fully grasped without understanding the language underlying concepts, according to Keith Budge (2018), Headmaster of Bedales, an English co-educational independent school, Budge cited Bill Lucas, renowned for re-modeling the nexus between vocational training and relevant educational practice. "[W]ould-be engineers," said Lucas (in Budge 2018), will not be prepared through "STEM subjects" alone. Yet, as Budge observed, "nine out of every 10 schools in a recent BBC survey confirmed they are cutting back in at least one creative arts subject." Bedales, "known for offering an arts-rich curriculum," challenged the "government's recent obsession with STEM subjects at the expense of the arts and humanities," preferring to enable students to understand "their subjects, and indeed their worlds, from as many different perspectives and experiences as possible" (in Budge 2018). Literacy "is essential" for scientists, since it "calibrate[s] the scientific components of the pressing issues of the day through political discourse," which is "crucial," if they choose to become scientists or engineers, as they require "an understanding of the wider societal implications of the work that they do" (in Budge 2018).

Budge is not alone in holding this view as an independent school administrator. John Montgomery (2019), Head of Curriculum at Australia's Scots' College, also ridiculed "[t]he popular discourse" that, in over-emphasizing STEM subjects, "depicts a rapidly changing digitally disrupted world where the 21st century values the 'hard' sciences above all else." He agreed with Budge that "to be human is to be more than an economic producer" (Montgomery 2019). He warns that "recent employment figures for university graduates have shown that the hardest area to find employment post university is in the STEM field, with jobs in these domains currently in decline" (Montgomery 2019). Budge is responsible for the secondary education of 740 girls and boys; Montgomery has a similar responsibility for 1,800 boys. Both Budge and Montgomery are highly experienced educators, mindful of the high aspirations of their students and high fee-paying parents.

The views of Budge and Montgomery were endorsed by eminent professors. Harvard Professor Michael Sandel, world-renowned political philosopher, underscored the necessity for liberal arts to be integral to modern education. Speaking on Australian Broadcasting Corporation's Question and Answer Program, Sandel (2018) asserted that, however dazzling their discoveries and inventions, scientists and technologists cannot tell us how these "can be used for the human good." That has to be decided through rational discussion among citizens who have studied liberal arts, including philosophy. He stressed that, especially in the age of science and technology, we must learn how to reason together, especially "where we disagree" (Sandel 2018). Reasoning is fundamental to humanities.

Towards the end of her tenure as Executive Director of the Center for Talented Youth at John Hopkins University, Elaine Tuttle Hansen (2017) wrote an opinion piece in the *South China Morning Post*. She believed that "premature specialization" leads to narrow thinking (Hansen 2017), citing educational psychologists Jonathan Plucker and Ronald Beghetto, who judged that "functional fixedness" generally results from "someone" spending "long periods of time" exclusively "in a domain or on a particular task" (in Hansen 2017). Hansen espoused "flexible thinking," derived from "the ability to test and transfer knowledge within and across domains." She revealed that it is in the way humanities are taught that students do not simply learn facts in history or parse lines from Shakespeare's plays. Teaching humanities involves discussion, interpretation and communication of "complex ideas—skills necessary to solving today's problems," and this "fosters social and emotional

learning" (Hansen 2017). Like Harvard's Engell and Dangerfield, Hansen implicitly stressed the essential constituents to enable the world to use science, technology, engineering and mathematics for the betterment of all human beings. In concentrating on science and technology, China has chosen not to understand Hansen's abstract advice.

Finally, American Professor Scott Lindroth (2018), Vice Provost for the Arts at Duke University, reminded the public that "arts are for everyone," then failing to demonstrate the validity of his statement, Lindroth repeated tired abstractions, the last item lacking conviction: "[t]he arts subjects facilitate collaboration, problem-solving, seeing complex projects through to completion and engaging wider public audiences." Lindroth, like other humanities commentators communicating with the public, failed to offer one concrete instance. However articulate, humanities commentators have always included lists of abstract examples, very few of which give the public any visual image to which they can relate.

Conclusion

All western universities were founded on Christianity. Christianity implicitly provides the basis for the active tolerance of different disciplines and differing perspectives within those disciplines through the second great commandment: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Most universities, even the newest, have proudly retained ecclesiastical gowns for graduation and ecclesiastical nomenclature like Dean in their administrative bureaucracies as well as their mission statements, even as they have become almost totally secularized. Regrettably, their laudable inclusion of multi-faith declarations as their ideological shibboleths has caused them often to forget their tolerance for their closest neighbors, achieving the reverse of their intention by attracting scorn rather than gratitude from other faiths. The retention of self-respect and loyalty to one's own origins is integral to both tolerance and charity, as Charles Dickens (1812-1870) illustrated in his novel, *Bleak House* (1853), in his lampooning of the useless philanthropic efforts of the fictional Mrs. Jellyby and Mrs Pardiggle, while neglecting the most basic care of their own children. Likewise, secularized universities, particularly, have attracted accusations by the public funding them for prohibiting free speech.

The growing intolerance of opposing views in the once hallowed halls of academia has facilitated a hierarchy among disciplines, enabling sciences to be placed well above and, at times, instead of arts and humanities. Physicist and novelist C.P. Snow (1905-1980) warned of this split, sixty years ago, in his 1959

Rede Lecture, “The Two Cultures,” at the University of Cambridge, which has always been more science-oriented than the more humanities-based University of Oxford. His lecture might even have been tantamount to a competitive challenge to Oxford, the oldest extant university in the English-speaking world, the second oldest being Cambridge. Snow argued that the gulf between sciences and humanities could threaten the survival of western civilization.

The widening schism between humanities and sciences will continue to grow unless secularized universities can remember, when they don their ecclesiastical graduation gowns at graduation ceremonies in front of their ecclesiastically-named Deans and refer graduates to their mission statements, also to don their Christian caps of tolerance. At that point, schism will metamorphose into fusion, allowing all disciplines to nurture each other, as they used to do and as they must in the future, if universities are to survive, thrive and prosper, as well as adequately prepare their graduates for the world at large. A grounding in arts and humanities is especially important when phenomena like the 2020 coronavirus streak through global communities, threatening lives, livelihoods and fundamental human kindness across the world. If people have not been taught the lessons of history and human compassion, they will not cope, nor see such threats in perspective.

As this paper illustrates, many scholars and educators across the western world have lamented the sidelining of arts and humanities, yet the rhetoric in educational administrative circles has not changed sufficiently to facilitate innovative resolution. It is time to address this before the international problem becomes insurmountable. One way of helping to accomplish this would be a twenty-first century paradigm shift. Driven by humanities, as movements mostly are, western universities, quite rightly, have spent decades apologizing to the rest of the world for the wrongs of their pioneering ancestors. This admission, together with practical help, has facilitated burgeoning prosperity in emerging countries to such an extent that, as this paper has shown, countries like India and China justifiably are proud of their huge achievements and competitive universities. The western dirge, however, needs to change to avoid diminishing such prodigious progress. Persistent apologizing is a kind of self-harm. As the arts and humanities would be the first to point out, human beings are complex: their fallibilities, with possibly few exceptions, are counter-balanced by their virtues. While still maintaining ethical tolerance, arts and humanities in the west should acknowledge, without hubris, the exceptional achievements and virtues of their forebears, *alongside* their offences. Western scientists acknowledge

past errors, but also acknowledge their achievements to command the world's respect. Serial apologizing presumes superiority in perpetuity, over the rest of the world, and over generations of antecedents. Serial apologizing is demeaning to the point where it becomes risible to the world at large and harmful to younger generations in the west, who are desperately seeking heroic role models from their progenitors—and only finding them in *Harry Potter* and *Superman* fantasies. Western universities are already at risk where popular opinion is concerned, and this has a powerful impact on funding, recruitment and reputation.

Faint sounds of hope for humanities accompanied the privately funded Ramsay Centre's courses on western civilization, but were drowned out by *western* intolerance until one Australian university, through its council's intercedence, gave the center a home. One of the best places, initially, for discussion across universities to continue this positive move would be in learned humanities journals. Here different opinions and voices could openly plan positive paths among peers. As American physicist and philosopher Thomas Kuhn (1922-1966) observed over half a century ago, when a new idea is mooted, at first there is strong, sometimes violent, opposition as it challenges ingrained ideas upon which people have built careers, shaped lives, and forged identities (1962). The challenge is perceived as personal but deemed political to conceal embarrassment. Gradually and incrementally, as Kuhn elucidated, the paradigm shifts. The new paradigm is never a copy of the old although, invariably through human fallibility, it will have discordances, but will also inspire new practitioners, and the seasonal cycle of decay and renewal will continue. The worm will drop off the sick coronavirus bud and open a healthy bud. Global migration to western countries has ensured that new voices introduce distinctive subtleties to the old paradigm, leading to greater understanding, optimism, and harmony. Only arts and humanities can create this new paradigm and lead the tired world towards the twenty-first century Renaissance.

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Academic Advising on Community College Campuses: Whose Role Is It Anyway?

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Abstract

As retention rates fell under scrutiny during the initial decades of the 21st century, community colleges across the nation found themselves at the center of a national debate. Traditionally viewed as institutions that served as gateways to a better life for historically disenfranchised segments of the American population, data revealed dismal graduation rates. However, mounting research indicated that effective academic advising practices could have a positive impact on this disheartening trend. Furthermore, all stakeholders needed to play an active role in building these meaningful relationships between very different groups of individuals, each facing their own unique issues. This review of pertinent literature provides a brief history of community colleges, examines the often-conflicting missions of these organizations, reveals the obstacles that many community college students face, and outlines recommended responsibilities of stakeholders for potentially higher rates of graduation.

Introduction

Research indicated that student retention and graduation rates had declined at colleges and universities around the nation. Slightly over half of students who began college would complete a four-year degree within six years (Hoffman, 2014; Chiteng Kot, 2014). For those students who initially enrolled in a two-year college, that figure dropped significantly to less than one third (Reitano, 1998; McArthur, 2005; Allen, Smith, & Muehleck, 2013; Hagedorn, 2015; Tovar, 2015). “In the past few years, scholars and policymakers have been concerned that many institutions fail to retain and graduate a significant portion of their undergraduate student body (Chiteng Kot, 2014, pp. 527-528). This particular author went on to note that half of the states in the nation had begun tying college funding to student performance and college outcomes rather than merely enrollment figures (p. 528).

Furthermore, this latter issue was perhaps most pressing at community colleges where, as indicated above, graduation rates were substantially lower than on four-year campuses. This was a significant problem, as half of all undergraduates in this country were enrolled at community colleges (Reitano, 1998; Bragg, 2000). Thirty-seven percent of white students who attended public colleges or universities were enrolled in community colleges while 56 percent of Hispanic students and 51 percent of African American students were enrolled in these institutions. Also, females outnumbered males at a ratio of nearly 1.4 to 1 on community college campuses nationwide (Bragg, 2000, pp. 77-78). To exacerbate this problem, many of the students who attended community colleges were the first in their family to seek a post-secondary education. They were more likely to face poverty issues and grapple with learning disabilities. Many were single parents who found themselves juggling family, work, and school. Most community college students were trying to obtain practical employment-related skills, but they may have simply had no idea how to navigate the complex bureaucracy of higher education (Reitano, 1998; Bragg, 2000; McArthur, 2005; Allen, Smith & Muehleck, 2013; Hagedorn, 2015; Tovar, 2015).

Another problem area concerned the fact that many community college faculty members held master's and doctoral degrees in their respective fields of study, but they may not have had adequate advising training (Williamson, Goosen, and Gonzalez, 2014). In a tongue-in-cheek manner, Freeman (2008) pointed out this very real issue on many campuses: "Visit any campus in the United States and ask undergraduates what they are unhappy about, and you are likely to get the same three answers: parking, dining hall food, and advising" (p. 12).

Numerous studies indicated that when faculty connected with students outside of the classroom, specifically in an advisory capacity, students were more likely to succeed not only in the class but also overall (Reitano, 1998, Petress, 2000; Drake, 2011; Leach & Wang, 2015; Tovar, 2015; Ellingham, 2018). Varney (2007) cited research that revealed "contact with a significant person within an institution of higher education is a crucial factor in a student's decision to remain in college." Drake (2011) stressed three critical elements of student persistence: "connecting students early on to the institution through learning support systems… first-year programming… and solid academic advising, with advising positioned squarely as the vital link in this retention equation" (p. 9). "Students in need of assistance need someone to point the path to appropriate help and to see that relevant aid is offered without hassle or trial"

(Petress, 1996, p. 91). Students had reported higher levels of confidence when faculty members spent more time advising them and addressing their particular academic needs. Overall higher GPA's and retention rates reflected this trend as well (Bragg, 2000; McArthur, 2005; Freeman, 2008; Drake, 2011; Allen, Smith & Muehleck, 2013; Leach & Wang, 2015, Tovar, 2015).

A review of literature pertinent to this particular topic will provide a brief history of community colleges, examine the often-conflicting missions of these distinctly American institutions, and outline multiple student retention issues on community college campuses around the nation. Finally, research regarding the essential roles of stakeholders will be presented for potential examination and study.

A Brief History of Community Colleges

Throughout the twentieth century, the role of the community college shifted with the ebb and flow of an evolving society. According to Dougherty and Townsend (2006), "The community college is not a static institution and neither are its missions. They have changed over time, with new missions appearing and older ones changing in importance" (p.8). As a matter of fact, the history of community colleges reflected the often-conflicting missions of these institutions. On one hand, they represented unprecedented access to higher education for entire segments of society who would have otherwise never enjoyed the benefits before relegated to an elite few. On the other hand, they provided occupational training for those individuals who desired to enter the workforce as quickly as possible either out of desire or necessity. Unfortunately, these goals often pulled community colleges in opposite directions (Bragg, 2000; Dougherty & Townsend, 2006; Braxton, Doyle, & Lyken-Segosebe, 2015).

Reitano (1998) related that the first community college appeared on the national stage as far back as 1901 in Jolliet, Illinois. In 1907, California established schools for students who were not prepared or interested in "regular" colleges. These institutions were intended to provide relief for universities that increasingly found themselves burdened with teaching "less sophisticated students." Community colleges were also seen as a means to sift out students before they attempted to enroll in traditional four-year schools. "[T]wo-year colleges were associated with students deemed inferior and purposes considered marginal to higher education. They were neither serious nor selective and were, therefore, quite suspect as educational institutions" (Reitano, 1998, p. 120). Despite their perceived status as "extensions of high school" and "the stepchild of higher education," federal legislation in 1963

and 1968 provided government funding for these growing institutions. “The two-year colleges had officially come of age precisely at the time when career education was becoming the vehicle for democratic education” (p. 122). The image of community colleges as vehicles for economic development emerged almost immediately, and as early as the 1930’s they were viewed as a means of providing adult education and community services (Dougherty & Townsend, 2006). Throughout the last half of the twentieth century, two-year colleges became synonymous with open education and local education (Reitano, 1998). Bundy and Benshoff (2000) cited statistical information that indicated a 174% increase in community college enrollment between 1969 and 1994.

In the early decades of the twenty-first century, community colleges continued to grow despite their often-conflicting missions and an all-too-common inferiority complex in the academic realm. They did receive a much-needed endorsement from President Obama via the 2004 initiative entitled *Achieving the Dream: Community Colleges Count* (AtD). Reitano (1998) recognized the true aim of community colleges when she wrote, “The comprehensive community college was designed to go the last mile in making higher education available to all, either on or off campus, in the morning, noon, or night, on the weekday or weekend, before, during, or after work” (p. 121). In keeping with this very spirit, “[t]he stated goal of AtD is ‘success for more community college students, especially students of color and low-income students’” (Hagedorn, 2015, p. 51). The Obama administration even went so far as to propose a program that would provide free tuition for the first two years of study at community colleges for many students via a combination of federal and state funds (Braxton, Doyle, & Lyken-Segosebe, 2015, p. 83). The president was well aware that half of all undergraduate students in this country attended two-year colleges and that a vast majority of this population would probably otherwise never have had access to the world that a higher education could provide. Bundy and Benshoff (2000) stated that “Having come from near obscurity in the early twentieth century, community colleges now play a vital role in American higher education” (p. 77). However, with increased responsibility came increased scrutiny to serve the vast array of students who entered the community college’s doors (Hagedorn, 2000; McArthur, 2005; Dougherty & Townsend, 2006). Despite this fact, Braxton, Doyle, and Lyken-Segosebe (2015) pointed to evidence that indicated “intervention to improve community college success [was] notably thin” (p. 83).

Bundy and Bensfoff (2000) related that the average community college student was 29 years old with 39% aged 30 and older. Furthermore, nearly half worked 35 or more hours per week while attending school either full or part-time. The authors added that since community colleges tended to serve the local communities in which they existed, students' characteristics often varied depending on geographic location. In the midst of all this, Reitano (1998) pointed out that "[t]wo-year colleges claim to provide access to four-year colleges, to jobs, to lifelong learning, to compensatory education, to community enrichment, and last but not least, to individual self-growth" (p. 119). "The new nontraditional student must balance work, family, and other responsibilities with school work" (Bundy & Benshoff, 2000, p. 94). For these reasons, college may not have been the top priority in their lives. "The pressures of family and employment responsibilities can easily frustrate the returning adult student" (McArthur, 2005, pp. 2-3).

Moreover, while community colleges were located in a variety of settings, they tended to be urban institutions, "inner city versions of the nineteenth century land grant colleges that were intended to serve rural, poor, white high school graduates with what was considered to be an appropriate technical education" (Reitano, 1998, p. 121). Eventually the nation turned to community colleges to reach out to traditionally disinherited segments of the population. "The plight of community colleges reflects the contemporary plight of the cities but also the anti-urban bias that has pervaded American history" (p. 122).

Often Conflicting Missions

As mentioned above, half of all undergraduate students were enrolled in community colleges. Therefore, it was little wonder that the nation turned to these institutions of higher learning to provide access to educational opportunities for segments of the population who had traditionally found themselves disenfranchised at best. However, no organization could be everything to everybody, and community colleges were no exception. To confuse the situation further, some research data indicated that "most students have a common goal to pursue a community college education to fulfill practical, employment-related needs" (Bragg, 2000, p. 78). Meanwhile other data revealed that "[a]lthough the transfer rate has plummeted since the fifties, 75% of entering full-time urban community college students aspire to transfer and earn a BA" (Reitano, 1998, p. 123). Furthermore, by their very nature, specifically open-enrollment policies, affordability, and location, community colleges attracted many students who could not attain admission into most

traditional four-year institutions for a variety of reasons. Reitano (1998) summed up the ensuing dilemma in this fashion: “The fact that the two-year college students are distinctly nontraditional places their institutions, their curriculum, and their faculty ‘at risk’ in the academic community” (p. 121). Despite the fact that community colleges had been cast as somehow inferior to their four-year counterparts and that students and faculty often found themselves the butts of cruel jokes (Hagedorn, 2015, p. 50), “[i]nstructors pride themselves on the quality of their instruction and their ability to work with a diverse group of students, some of whom may have special needs” (p. 49).

Moreover, as community colleges continued to attempt to serve an often underprivileged and unprepared student population, they still grappled with the issue of multiple missions. No organization had access to unlimited resources, so “serving one mission may thus entail cutting into the resources available for others” (Dougherty & Townsend, 2006, p.8). The authors continued to note that emphasizing occupational education was not only expensive but also might have been “associated with less institutional success in transfer” (p. 9). In other words, the dual missions of the community colleges could have actually been hindering each other.

Reitano (1998) explained how “two-year colleges border on chaos” when they strove to make themselves comprehensive to students who were many times at risk (McArthur, 2005; Bahr, 2008; Hagedorn, 2015). These institutions consistently found themselves juggling the demands of career education and a more traditional liberal arts education.

Furthermore, Braxton, Doyle, and Lyken-Segosebe (2015) stressed the notion that community college faculty themselves must establish and maintain a professional identity if their institutions of higher learning were to gain any real credibility in the world of post-secondary academics. The authors offered a variety of recommendations including scholarship, professional titles, career opportunities, professional development, flexible teaching loads, research incentives, and community service (pp. 79-81).

Student Retention Issues

The disheartening fact was that on community college campuses around the nation on average a mere 20% of full-time students actually earned a certificate or associate’s degree within 150% of their expected time (Margolin, Miller, & Rosenbaum, 2013). For part-time students, who made up a large portion of

the population on 2-year campuses, degree completion and overall retention rates were much lower. To exacerbate this issue, a high number of minority students were also present in this mix. They frequently lacked the social capital necessary to navigate the often-confusing realm of higher education (Reitano, 1998; McArthur, 2005; Allen, Smith, & Muehleck, 2013; Margolin, Miller, & Rosenbaum, 2013; Hagedorn, 2015; Tovar, 2015).

First-Generation Students

Many of these students were the first in their family to attend an institution of higher learning, and this fact posed very real issues in and of itself. Schauer (2005) emphasized that first-generation college students "often receive mixed messages from their families – make us proud/don't leave us. These students are 'breaking,' not 'keeping' the family tradition." She further stated that they "often get lost in the maze of college life." To complicate this issue further, "[a] n academic advisor who seeks more information about this student population finds several contradictions." This began with the realization that there simply was not a clear definition of a first-generation college student. Furthermore, these individuals must have self-identified if advisors could not access this information via FASFA forms, which many advisors did not have access to.

Even if advisors could identify this "at-risk" population, how could they offer needed assistance? Demetriou and Mann (2011) offered detailed suggestions for encouraging first-generation students' success. These included defining exactly what a first-generations student was on a particular campus; providing successful first-generation role models from among current students, advisors, faculty, and staff; connecting these individuals with one another; and celebrating first-generation students' success on campus. Schauer (2005) pointed out that while this population tended to come from lower income families, had lower entrance exam scores, and were twice as likely to drop out of college before the second year, those first-generation students who had completed a high school program of equal rigor to their counterparts whose parents had graduated from college tended to succeed at the same rate. This indicated that these individuals did indeed possess the innate ability to make it in higher education. What they lacked was essential support. "We must foster students' sense of belonging on campus and facilitate healthy relationships with faculty, staff, and other students, both in and out of classroom. Advising, tutoring, and mentoring are necessary to help these students succeed" (Schauer, 2005).

Demographics

A closer look at the fastest growing ethnic group shed light on this often-frustrating situation as well as the growing need to provide better access to higher education to large segments of the population. Tovar (2015) cited 2010 data which indicated as many as 39% of Latino/as 25 years old and above had less than a high school diploma. “Only 26% reportedly had graduated high school, 22% had some college, and only 33% had a college degree” (p.52). Comparatively, 17.5% of blacks, 50.0% of Asians, and 30.7% of whites had completed college. Lawrie and Wessel (2006) pointed out the need for many academic advisors to increase their own awareness of cultural differences as they sought to help growing numbers of multicultural students. Zhang’s (2016) research indicated that while international students did experience validation from their advisors, the experience was actually hindered by the advisors’ lack of cultural knowledge. The author also addressed gaps in the available literature concerning international students as a whole on community college campuses in the United States. Furthermore, Tovar (2018) shared that Latino/as were the largest growing group of first-time, full-time college freshmen between 2007 and 2008, increasing by 15% while all other ethnic groups grew by only 6%. Over 50% of Latino/a students entered “higher education at less than 4-year institutions, including community colleges.” While more than 80% of these students indicated that they intended to transfer, less than a quarter actually did. Unfortunately, statistics showed that 53% of Latino/a students had left higher education without completing any credentials between 2003-2004. This was higher than any other ethnic group.

However, retention rates for all demographic groups were dismal, especially at community colleges. Allen, Smith, and Muehleck (2013) presented research that indicated “the probability of a student attaining a baccalaureate degree is reduced 21 to 33 percentage points by beginning at a community college rather than a 4-year institution,” even when other key factors of success were taken into account. As a matter of fact, the very nature of these institutions could have affected this outcome. The authors stated, “Compared with their experiences at community colleges, students feel anonymous...as well as more isolated and alone...at 4-year institutions” (pp. 336-338). Therefore, those who persisted to make the transition to the 4-year institution often did not make it successfully. Furthermore, Tovar (2015) pointed to studies which provided more evidence of an all-too-real need to help these struggling students. He reported that “[s]tarting at community colleges slows down degree progression,

reduces degree aspirations by up to 40%, and reduces the chances of degree attainment by as much as 20%, in comparison with students who start at 4-year institutions" (p.51). The author did, however, concede that these students "are often able to transfer to more competitive universities than they were originally eligible for as high school graduates" (p.55). Sadly though, as described above, often these students simply did not make the transition successfully in the end. While advising played a vital role in closing this educational attainment gap, "the quality of advising students receive may not be consistent across 2-and 4-year institutions" (Allen, Smith, and Muehleck, 2013, p. 344). It even appeared that pretransfer students reported more opportunities for advising, as well as "more significant relationships, even friendships, with advisors at their colleges." Meanwhile, "post transfer students reported difficulty navigating 4-year institutions and disappointment when their high expectations for universities went unrealized." However, both groups rated "overall satisfaction with their educational experience" higher than their satisfaction with advising on their respective campuses (p.344). This obviously indicated a need for improved advising practices both before and after transferring.

Fowler and Boylan (2010) cited a 2007 ACT report that indicated up to 75% of students who completed the ACT were not adequately prepared for math, English, social science, or natural science coursework at the college level. Moreover, 60% to 70% of students enrolled in developmental classes on college campuses did not even complete these sequences. The authors went on to point to further research which indicated factors such as "students' attitudes; motivation; level of self-confidence in an educational setting; degree to which students are willing to do academic work; degree to which students associate and feel connected with other students, university personnel, and the institution as a whole; and the degree to which a student is willing to seek help" determined as much as 25% of students' ultimate academic success. If only academic factors were addressed, students were simply at a higher risk of dropping out (pp, 6-8). As a matter of fact, numerous research results revealed the single biggest factor resulting in student retention was a meaningful relationship and continuous interaction with academic advisors as well as faculty.

Stresses of Life

Petress (1996) put forth that students' lives, both academic and personal, played a vital role in their academic performance, and advisors needed to be aware of this. "Students' teacher, peer, family, romantic, and employment

relationships; their physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health; their out-of-class activity; financial well being; test anxiety; home sickness; and post graduation anxieties are all germane to an advisor's role." Furthermore, students who did not know or trust their advisor were less likely to seek the help they actually needed and deserved. The author even called for college administrators to monitor and ultimately to reward successful advising practices as they were "a key component to a college career" (p. 91).

Williams Newman (2016) shared that when given the opportunity to discuss their fears and anxiety about attending college, many students focused on fear of failing, especially not wanting to disappoint parents. "This fear motivated some new students to do well, while it almost paralyzed others, especially first-generation college students, some of whose families' hopes and dreams for a better future rested solely on them." Honest, non-threatening discussions regarding these fears "help students realize they are not alone. An advisor who can be vulnerable with students and share in an appropriate manner from her own college experience can also be helpful."

At-Risk Students

Allen, Smith, and Muehleck (2013) cited earlier research that indicated "women, older students, students of color (specifically African American, Asian American, and Hispanic), and low-income students...regarded the advising function as more important than other students" (p.344). They confirmed these findings and went on to add first-generation college students to the list. This would certainly make sense due in large part to the lack of exposure to educational opportunities that these particular segments of the population experienced (Reitano, 1998; Bragg, 2000; Bundy & Benshoff, 2000; McArthur, 2005; Fowler & Boylan, 2010; Allen, Smith, & Muehleck, 2013). They would have in turn required more focused guidance through the often unfamiliar territory of higher education, thus highlighting the very real need for informed and intentional academic advising. Tovar (2015) stressed that "it is imperative that counselors systematically address not only the academic issues, but developmental issues as well, such as students' career decisiveness" (p.68). He further related, "Key to the success of these programs will be the proper training of college faculty and staff to ensure they can function in their capacity of mentor. These individuals must be fully aware of the barriers students experience in not only getting to college but through college" (p.69).

Transfer Students

As for those students who did succeed in community college, Allen, Smith, and Muehleck (2013) presented a study that highlighted the need for advisors at these institutions to help students navigate the often-daunting task of transferring to a 4-year school. This included providing information regarding which general education courses would transfer as well as the logistics of articulation policies in relation to 4-year programs. Furthermore, community college students were often faced with the decision of whether or not to complete a 2-year degree before transferring as well as what kind of degree, such as a transfer degree or career technical degree, to pursue. "Thus, advising of pretransfer students should be concerned with helping students explore the advantages and disadvantages of the various pretransfer degree options in addition to baccalaureate degree options." Overall, community college students, especially those who intend to transfer to 4-year institutions, needed guidance to teach them to stand on their own two feet, "where advisors provide support and modeling for students so that they can accomplish tasks they would not otherwise be able to do without guidance."

Academic Preparedness

The reality was simply that sometimes students were not ready for college and would have been better served by someone explaining to them that perhaps they needed to sit out a semester or two. Williams Newman (2016) described this sort of conversation. "Of course, I try to do it with kindness. I don't bluntly tell them they are unmotivated, young, and unprepared for college and need time to mature, get out in the real world, and think about their future plans." She continued, "It has been a real joy to see some of those same students take my advice and later return to college with a renewed sense of purpose and a desire to learn."

Ellingham (2018) not only asked but also answered the ultimate question when she wrote: "How can we effect real change that will help our students achieve success and minimize the challenges they encounter? To me, this is the role of the advisor as cultural navigator, where the advisor can see that there may be barriers in place, but for the sake of their advisees, will work to enhance the student experience."

Stakeholders' Responsibilities

As stated above, Bragg (2000) indicated that half of all undergraduates were enrolled at community colleges, with more than half of Hispanic and African

American students enrolled in these institutions. These same students also grappled with the very real issues of family, work, and perhaps even learning disabilities in addition to their educational responsibilities (pp. 77-78). Furthermore, they may not have possessed the essential skills to navigate the often-perplexing bureaucracy of higher education. Demetriou and Mann (2011) stressed the need for students to "master the 'college student' role." This appeared to pose yet another obstacle for first-generation college students, negatively influencing "their ability to meet expectations and succeed in postsecondary education." Ellingham (2018) noted that not all students made the transition to a post-secondary world successfully, "and for many of these students, it is not their fault." The causes could have included inadequate academic preparation, uncertainty of what to study, financial instability, work obligations, first-generation college student, or even first-generation North American college student – "each of these factors adds to the challenges of transition to post-secondary education."

For decades data had emerged which revealed the need for students to connect with someone on campus outside of the traditional classroom setting, and this in turn would bolster the odds of ultimate academic success. Duberstein (2009) presented research that underscored the importance of student/faculty contact in order to ensure ultimate student retention. Quite simply if students felt isolated they were more likely to withdraw from college. Findings showed that"A sense of connection with teachers helps students feel like they belong at the institution." In turn, "[f]aculty members who understand the learning needs and interests of their students can appropriately tailor assignments, expectations, and conversations." The author pointed out that advisors were in a position to help foster these important conversations which could "also be helpful to students who believe they have solidified their academic interests, as role modeling, references, and research opportunities can arise from these relationships." Ellingham (2018) echoed the sentiment that all stakeholders in higher education had a very real responsibility to ultimate student retention and graduation. "It is not enough to simply admit the students to post-secondary institutions, there is also an implied obligation on the part of the post-secondary institution to provide support and services to help these students succeed."

Academic Advisors

The inevitable questions emerged: who were these stakeholders, and what exactly were the roles and responsibilities of everyone involved. The first

place to find these answers began with the academic advisors themselves. “Academic advisors are strategically positioned to help students, and perhaps especially at-risk students, make a successful transition to post-secondary education” (Ellingham, 2018). Duberstein (2009) added that “[w]hen they help their students ask faculty well-crafted questions, advisors can help faculty and students connect.” This was important because after all “[g]ood faculty-student relationships begin with conversations.” Furthermore, this was also beneficial because “[a]ll workers need to converse with supervisors; thus students who learn to effectively converse with their educational supervisors will do better in the workplace.” The author went so far as to state, “Advisors can help students and faculty invest in each other for both student and institutional success.” In order to fulfill this mission, advisors themselves needed to possess a wide knowledge base. Ellingham (2018) wrote, “A solid foundation begins with information: the specifics of the job that advisors must know in order to do their job competently...policies and procedural updates that are critical to an advisor’s role.” This essential knowledge would help advisors as they led students through this often-confusing world. After all, “[p]ost- secondary education has its own traditions, policies, systems of organization, regulations, and in short, its own culture. Academic advisors have the opportunity to share this knowledge with their advisees and help them understand this new culture of post-secondary education” (Ellingham, 2018).

Advisor/Advisee Shared Responsibilities

Moreover, the relationship between advisor and advisee was not a one-way street; both individuals would need to take on their share of the ultimate responsibility. Saving and Keim (1998) presented research that indicated advisor and student perceptions of effective advising could indeed vary markedly. While it was ultimately the advisor’s responsibility to be aware of this, it was in fact students themselves who were not being served by less-than-adequate advising practices. Petress (2000) laid out seven characteristics of successful advisees. First, they needed to meet with their advisors more than once each term. He recommended that both parties view the process as “more than a registration exercise...[t]aking responsibility to keep in contact, keep informed, and to make the relationship active, not passive” (p. 598). The author went on to stress the importance of preparedness both mentally and emotionally. This included detailed record keeping and sharing of information. “The need for complete up-to-date and accurate records assures the advisee, the advisor, and the institution that such accusations as forgetfulness, sloppiness, betrayal, or incompetence will not emerge in the future” (p. 598).

After all, in the ever-present hustle and bustle of the academic world, essential information could have easily been misplaced and/or forgotten completely. “On many campuses, in addition to an academic advising load, advisors may also be actively involved in recruitment activities, orientation activities, and possibly teaching in a first-year program” (Harborth, 2015), which further demanded that advisors pulled in a variety of directions be mindful of careful recordkeeping. This sentiment was echoed by Pizzolato (2008) who prompted “educators to carefully document their practices and the student outcomes that result from these practices” (p. 25). The other six characteristics that comprised Petress’ list were “(2) preparation for advising, (3) information accuracy, (4) advisee disclosure to advisor, (5) timeliness of advising, (6) advising follow through, and (7) asking useful and necessary questions” (p. 598).

In order for critical and meaningful conversations to take place between advisor and advisee, both constituents simply had to work on establishing a relationship of trust and support. Tovar (2015) struck at the heart of this very sentiment. “The relationship students established with agents and with select special programs at the community colleges afforded them access to crucial educational resources and information as they contemplated their academic future.” Petress (2000) offered further advice to both advisors and advisees in order to achieve this sort of interaction. He pointed out the importance of follow through on actions that involved both academic and personal aspects of students’ lives. Half-hearted attempts to live up to plans and promises tended to lead to mistrust that could very well undermine the advisor/advisee relationship. This held true for both parties, thrusting responsibility onto the shoulders of advisor and advisee alike. The author stated, “Advising is a mutual responsibility. Teamwork is essential to success and contentment” (p. 599). Petress ended his comments with a heartfelt recommendation that advisees request a new advisor if essential communication based on trust broke down. After all, the process should have ultimately enhanced students’ success (p. 599).

“In spite of cultural trends against honest and ethical behavior, academic advisors must stand strong in support of honest practices in the profession” (Williams, 2016,). The writer stressed the importance for advisors to practice honesty with both students and themselves. “They should be open about issues that may influence their interactions with students, such as issues related to gender, race, socioeconomic status, culture, and sexual orientation. Generational differences may also come into play.” She highlighted the importance of honesty in regard to advisors’ own weaknesses and limitations

as well. “I am always suspicious of advisors who think they know everything about every program, policy, and course offering. I much prefer to work with advisors who are not afraid to admit they are not sure about a pre-requisite or requirement and take the time to double check, make phone calls, or refer the student to other resources when necessary.

Faculty

In a 2015 study that examined the role of faculty, counselors, and support staff in Latino/as students’ academic success and ultimate intent to persist, Tovar (2015) noted that all students, including Latino/as, who lacked the social capital, or knowledge of the dominant culture ever-present at institutions of higher learning, overwhelmingly found themselves at a distinct disadvantage when attempting to navigate through the complex channels of the academic world. The author concluded that they required the guidance of institutional agents, specifically faculty and advisors, “who (a) possess and have the capacity to transmit knowledge, (b) serve as bridges or gatekeepers, (c) advocate or intervene on students’ behalf, (d) serve as role models, (e) provide emotional and moral support, and (f) provide valuable feedback, advice, and guidance to students.” He went so far as to describe these pivotal individuals as “empowerment agents,” providing “both psychological and instrumental support” (pp. 52-56).

Additionally, by their very nature community colleges attracted a wide range of students from diverse backgrounds. Their needs, both academic and social, were as varied as the individuals themselves (Reitano, 1998; Bragg, 2000; Dougherty & Townsend, 2006; Hagedorn, 2015). Furthermore, Bundy and Benshoff (2000) warned that if these students did not receive the support that they often required, research indicated they were likely to drop out or at best withdraw to attend another college (p. 94). The inevitable question that arose then became what were the reasons students simply did not persist in higher education. Hoffman (2014) pointed to lack of adequate academic progress as well as financial concerns. However, less clear were the roles of poor academic self-concept and lack of motivation, which may have been affected by the relationships between students and faculty (p. 13). “The faculty members represent the authority figure, the mentor, and the role model that may not appear anywhere else in the student’s life” (McArthur, 2005, p. 3). Hoffman (2014) went on to cite studies that indicated “[f]aculty availability and accessibility contributes to not only student intellectual development, but

also to setting educational goals and subsequent goal attainment, changes in attitudes, and orientation toward more scholarly careers" (p. 13).

Moreover, research conducted by Bahr (2008) revealed that academic advising, especially for students who required remediation, benefitted all students from a variety of ethnic backgrounds. This sort of interaction obviously extended beyond the classroom setting, in turn, bringing up the issue of establishing relationships between faculty and students outside of the traditional classroom setting. Again, Hoffman (2014) explained that while 15-25% of students dropped out of college due to poor academic performance or financial reasons, the rest were due to factors that may have been directly related "to the quality of relationships between students and faculty members on campus" (p. 14). The author went on to state that "Positive interactions with faculty can be conducive to successful navigation in not only the academic realm, but also the social domain" (pp. 14-15). Tovar (2015) related the following:

> Attending to students' psychosocial and academic needs facilitates their transition-to-college experience and students' perception that they are valued by others at the institution. It also enhances their sense of belonging to the institution; facilitates social interactions and relationships with others, including faculty; and ultimately impacts degree progression.

On the other hand, the author warned, "Failing to address these needs, student distrust and detachment from instructors, counselors, and the institutions themselves will likely impact help-seeking behavior and may influence students' decision to prematurely leave the institution or higher education altogether."

Unfortunately, despite overwhelming evidence, many faculty members remained reticent to engage students outside of the classroom. Moreover, "about 10 percent of full-time and 40 percent of part-time instructors reported spending no time advising students...[t]hat means many students may never receive academic advising from an instructor, because two thirds of faculty members at 2-year colleges nationwide teach part time" (Ashburn, Bartlett & Wolverston, 2006). Research indicated four primary reasons for this. They included "lack of time, few institutional rewards for building and supporting relationships, differing values and core beliefs about teaching as opposed to research, and faculty feelings of competence in building relationships with students" (Hoffman, 2014, p. 14). Nevertheless, it seemed imperative

that faculty be made aware of effective advising practices and held to some standard for utilizing these with their students as this could have played a vital role in helping to improve what many deemed unacceptable retention and graduation rates. However, Petress (1996) flatly stated, “Not all faculty are suited temperamentally for advising. Such faculty and their students would both be well served by being alternately assigned to other duties” (p. 91).

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Her Hair and Dress Betrayed Her: The Struggles of a Female Hoosier Teacher in the late 19th Century

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Abstract

Ella Cockrum Wheatley's vocational journey as a pioneer in college teaching and administration seems, on first glance, to serve as a study in the struggles young women often endured when pursuing a teaching career in mid and late nineteenth century America. Until this research, Ella's life seemed one of occasionally difficulty, but always in a straight line. Newspaper articles found in this study show otherwise, revealing a much richer and more difficult life than previously known.

Introduction

Putting together the story of Ella Cockrum Wheatley's contributions to Indiana's Oakland City College seems easy enough, as dusty college yearbooks and yellowed student newspapers offered many details of her extraordinary life. There was one item, however, among these resources that nags at the mind, one which suggests there might be a deeper story.

In all but one of the college yearbook photos taken of Ella over the years, her portrait could easily be said to represent the classic unmarried schoolmarm, the photos showing her with short, square cut hair, glasses, a plain dress, and little makeup. It was the one exceptional yearbook photo, however, one where her eyes are looking sadly into the distance and she has lace against her neck and her hair is fixed up in an attractive rolled-up braid, where there was a hint of something else.

From old newspapers articles, another story did emerge—two unexpected tales, one of bad love and one of lost love, along with the eventual story of a vocation in teaching well lived. The last aspect, Ella Cockrum Wheatley's vocational journey, serves as a study in the struggles young women often endured when pursuing a teaching career in the mid and late nineteenth century America. The former aspect, that of love, speak to the complexities of life.

Women Teachers in Indiana Newspapers

Perhaps in no other profession were American women able to make greater strides in the nineteenth century than in teaching. After the Civil War, the number of women teachers began to accelerate across the nation, including in Indiana. By 1869, one Indiana newspaper reported, "In the field of teaching women have been unusually successful and have gradually superseded men in most schools. Nearly two thirds are women."[1]

This demographic change also represented a major shift in cultural attitude, one that found new reasons for women to be in the classroom. In 1891, a Brownstown, Indiana, newspaper spoke of the importance of women teachers as "moral guides" who held male students "in check" by appealing to "their manliness and their self-respect."[2] Historian Geraldine Clifford also stressed the "moral guide" aspect of women teachers as a factor that brought more women into the field after the Civil War, noting the growing ideology in the nineteenth century of teaching being primarily "a women sphere." But Clifford also maintained that a more practical idea also drove the male dominating culture to embrace women teachers, that of economics; women were given lower salaries than men, "a powerful inducement to financially strapped school trustees."[3]

As liberating as women coming into the classroom was, the change was not without struggle. Some issues seemed silly, such as women teachers wearing bloomers or riding bicycles, topics which occasionally appeared in Hoosier newspapers. In one instance, women teachers at one school were accused of doing both and the school hired inspectors "to secure names of women teachers who had been riding bicycles in 'male attire' commonly called bloomers."[4] Fortunately, such problems were quickly resolved with common sense.

One issue that was not so easily resolved concerned married teachers, a controversary that saw Indiana communities going either way on the issue. The *South Bend Tribune* asserted, for example, that "when a teacher marries, her place is in the home and that her husband ought to make the living."[5] Conversely, the *Richmond Item* was more sympathetic to women, noting, "Of all the causes now tending to keep women out of matrimony one that is very effective is the discrimination against married women teachers in the public schools. . .. No such discrimination is made against a man."[6] Indiana's *Waterloo Press* humorously pointed out that a school board that dismissed married woman teachers, "evidently think that as soon as a woman is married,

she either loses her mind, or at least is incapacitated for the governance of children."[7] On a sourer note, in the largest school district in the state, the Indianapolis school board, in 1899, "adopted a rule that if a woman teacher marries—the fact is equivalent to her resignation."[8]

As these newspaper articles suggest, young Hoosier woman interested in teaching in this era were caught in the crossfire of the controversy, often feeling they had to chose between marriage or a teaching career. School hiring practices, as historian Jackie Blount pointed out, further enforced this dilemma, "especially preferring single women" and spinster teachers, as they came to be known, who "were hired so frequently in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century that they eventually became an important part of the cultural landscape."[9] One Hoosier newspaper article captured well the sterotype regarding unmarried women teachers at this time. The narrative was of a man who had gone to a Hoosier railway station to pick up a visiting woman teacher who was arriving in the Indiana town for a conference.

> *I had never seen her but received a telegram asking me to meet her at the train. I was sure I would be able to identify her. I went through the train which was crowded with passengers. I looked around and soon found the teacher. She was perfectly astounded when I came up and said, "Is this Miss Blank?"*
>
> *"Yes, that is my name," she replied, "but how did you know me?" I did not explain, but it was easy enough. At first glance, I saw her hair was short, that she wore eyeglasses and had on a plain looking sort of gray cloth dress. Her dress and hair betrayed that she was a school ma'am.*[10]

In truth, the lives of Indiana women teachers in the nineteenth century were often more complicated than the stereotyping in the article suggested. One way of better understanding what their struggle was like can be achieved by looking at one Indiana woman's personal journey to becoming a teacher in Indiana in this era.

Ella Wheatley's Early Life

Ella Wheatley was born June 3, 1859, the second child and first daughter of William and Lucretia Cockrum of Oakland City, Indiana. She was certainly born into a busy and oftentimes exciting household. Her parents were prominent citizens in Oakland City and in the southwestern Indiana region. They were

especially strong proponents of education, the latter an unpopular sentiment at that time in the state. Ella's grandfather who lived nearby, James Cockrum, had been one of the founders of Oakland City, and together with William Cockrum, had been secretly involved in underground railroad activity in the 1850s, a dangerous effort given the pro-south and anti-black attitudes of the region.[11]

In 1861, twenty-five-year-old William Cockrum left his family to serve in the Civil War. Ella would have been less than three-years-old when her father left. The next four years witnessed much trauma— Ella's father's furlough visits were few and short-lived; two of William's brothers died in combat; and Ella's mother would have a set of twins a month after Ella's father was severely wounded and then captured at the battle of Chickamauga in 1863. One twin, named after his father, died shortly after childbirth.

William Cockrum survived the brutal war and returned home in the spring of 1865. After his arrival, things turned more stable for the Cockrum family. Both James and William Cockrum continued to be rising stars in farming, business, church, social, and political endeavors. In 1867, for example, the two men started a college in Oakland City, the Oakland Institute, to help improve the skills of local teachers and to provide a classical education to any of the locals who wished to go to college. In 1875, a Princeton newspaper reported the college was "going full blast with at least 115 in attendance and out of that number, 76 are schoolteachers."[12]

Ella, who would have been sixteen years of age in 1875, was on the cusp of young womanhood, and the college environment that surrounded her offered a much richer cultural experience than a young girl in the region would have normally experienced. This included having the opportunity to hear of the latest scientific, political, and religious discourses and to be able to attend public art and musical presentations. Unfortunately, Ella's life was about to grow more complicated.

In 1874, James and William Cockrum spearheaded a temperance movement in their immediate area, going so far as to violently destroy legal saloons in several nearby places, including a legal saloon in Oakland City. Ella was sixteen years old when the destruction of the saloon in her hometown brought horrible retaliation upon her family.[13]

One February night in 1875, in the wee hours of the morning, the William Cockrum home was firebombed by unknown attackers. The family barely escaped as the house blossomed into flames and burned to the ground, Ella and her siblings running in bare feet away from the catastrophe. It was thought that the brutal assault was reprisal for the vigilante destruction of the Oakland saloon, and the attackers were never identified. The shock of this event may have also led to the deaths of Ella's elderly Cockrum grandparents, who both died shortly after the firebombing. And if these two events were not awful enough, with James Cockrum's death, the college founded by Cockrums failed, the college building sold to the town, with only a yearly teacher's institute still taking place there.

Questions of Vocation

William Cockrum did not let these setbacks deter him. He quickly replaced the firebombed house with a beautiful and spacious two-story brick Italian Villa style home with a three-story tower that became a regional showpiece. William and Lucretia's oldest son, John, two years older than Ella, was a helpful part of the Cockrum family's rise from the ashes, being a budding law student. For Ella Cockrum, life went on too, as she faced the question of her own future as a young adult woman. Like her older brother, she too was expected to do well. Vocationally, however, she had two choices. If Ella remained unmarried, she could look forward to attending Indiana University and the local teacher institute and becoming a schoolteacher. The other possibility, however, was what she wished for. Ella yearned to find a kind and ambitious husband and have a family. This too was a highly prized path for a young woman at this time and place, and in Ella's life that person soon took the form of a Lynnville, Indiana, man named John T. Thompson, an acquaintance of Ella's lawyer brother.

John Thompson seemed a sophisticated match for Ella. He began gaining newspaper recognition in January of 1874, when the Boonville *Republican* noted he had studied enough under a local lawyer "to be admitted to the Warrick County bar."[14] In late June, the Boonville *Weekly Enquirer* reported that the young Thompson had been elected as secretary for planning the Lynnville Fourth of July celebration.[15] Late that summer the same paper printed a longer report about the rising star of Lynnville, noting his ambition of becoming a great lawyer. "Our young friend, John T. Thompson, left us on Thursday for Greencastle (DePauw College), where he designs entering the law department of the college for the purpose of thoroughly preparing himself for the practice of law." The article further praised the young man as

being "of bright intellect, a close student, and should he continue as he has started out, he is destined to arrive at high eminence in the profession of the law." The reporter lamented that the Lynnville community "regretted to part with him, as his society will be missed from us for the time being."[16]

In 1876, a year after the Cockrum fire bombing, Thompson again left Lynnville and moved to the Warrick County seat of Boonville, to be closer to the legal action. The Lynnville reporter to the Boonville paper noted, "We regret his departure from town but congratulate the citizens of Boonville and especially the members of the bar on his accession to their ranks as he will certainly be an honor to the profession as well as a worthy citizen."[17] That Thompson was a popular and likeable young man is also evident in an article that speaks of his "smiling countenance."[18] It was in Boonville that John T. Thompson came to know another young lawyer practicing law there, John Cockrum.

By August of 1876, Thompson had joined an established lawyer to create the firm of Taylor and Thompson. For one so young, Thompson quickly began to develop a reputation for speaking at political and social events. The Boonville *Enquirer* reported, for example, that he made "a respectable little speech" at one political gathering in the county, "and will in time make a mark as an orator."[19]

In 1877, the *Enquirer* featured Thompson and his law partner, John Taylor, in an article, noting that the two "engaged in professional business and enjoying the social company of their numerous friends. The two young attorneys are happy to learn, are working their way into quite a lucrative practice and will make shining stars in their profession."[20] Secretly during this time, however, Thompson was talking with John Cockrum about joining him in a law practice.[21] In these talks at Cockrum's Boonville home, Thompson had met Cockrum's sister, Ella. There was an almost instant mutual interest.

Bad Love

William Cockrum was appropriately concerned about his first-born daughter's romance, not quite knowing what to make of the smiling, confident young man from Lynnville. Still, he was able to check out Thompson's talents at a Fourth of July celebration at Perigo Grove in Warrick County, where he and Thompson both spoke under the shade of several large oak trees. The shade, however, was of little help, the temperature, according to one newspaper, just shy of one hundred degrees when the two men spoke. The same Boonville newspaper

touted both men's speeches as "highly credible efforts. . . . Suffice it to say that the speeches indicated careful presentation, earnest study, and a high order of intellectual power on the parts of their authors."[22] Ella Cockrum sat in the audience, uncomfortably hot, but still beaming.

The engagement of Ella Cockrum and John T. Thompson in 1877 was the talk of the immediate region of Gibson and Warrick Counties. Thompson's father, Captain D. R. Thompson, was a local tobacco grower and merchant in Lynnville and was, like William Cockrum, a venerated veteran of the Civil War. Both men had served together in the Indiana Forty-Second Regiment. Captain Thompson, however, injured his health while serving and never completely recovered.[23] Overall, John Thompson had the most to gain socially in the marriage, as both Colonel Cockrum and, to some extent, his lawyer son John Cockrum, had important political pull and were highly respected.

Newspapers carried stories of the upcoming marriage and the ceremony as if it involved royalty. The week before the September 26, 1877, wedding, Ella and her family were "hosted by Captain D. R. Thompson at his residence in Lynnville." The wedding itself was the first official social occasion held in the newly built Cockrum mansion in Oakland City. A Boonville paper observed of the major social event, "On last Wednesday, the 26th, of September, the long talked of and long looked for marriage of John T. Thompson Esq., of Boonville to Miss Ella Cockrum, daughter of Col. W. M. Cockrum, took place at the residence of the Colonel, in Oakland City, with all the pomp and circumstance characteristic of modern style high life. The attendance was quite large and intellectual in the highest degree." The entertainment that followed the wedding was said by the paper to be "so brilliant and magnificent that we feel ourselves entirely too inadequate for the task of giving even a faint description of it." The piece ended by wishing the special couple "a long life, happiness and all the rich blessings of the earth."[24] The Princeton, Indiana, newspaper too spoke of the sophistication of the wedding with its "bountiful food and the elegant strains of music" which followed the marriage ceremony. The Cockrum parents, the paper went on to say, "will be long remembered by many friends for the impressive day."[25] Even the *General Baptist Herald* got into the spirit of celebration, reporting that "after the ceremony, the guests were ushered into the beautiful dining room where one hundred and three people partook of a sumptuous meal."[26]

By early the next year, 1878, John Cockrum and John Thompson were working together in their law firm, and Ella entertained frequent visitors in her new

home, as her husband continued to be, in the words of one newspaperman, "a good attorney and a gentleman with all."[27] It is unclear in the newspaper accounts that could be found in this research as to how things began to fall apart for John Thompson. This much is known—by September, he was advertising in newspapers as practicing law without a partner, his office, "Over Wm. Kinderman's Store."[28] The real shocker, however, came in December of that year when newspapers told of his arrest. The *Princeton Clarion-Leader* reported, for example,

> *John T. Thompson, one of our young attorneys, was arrested Monday morning last and taken to Evansville, by a United States Deputy Marshall. Thompson was assignee in bankruptcy of the firm Hemenway & Johnson and had collected money and failed to turn it over to be proper authorities, and an indictment was found against him by the United States Grand Jury at Indianapolis, hence his arrest. His bail was placed at $1,500, but up to this writing, he had not secured bail, and was under the guard of the city.*[29]

By July of the next year newspaper accounts showed Ella was living with her parents in Oakland City. Ella soon after sued for divorce, a rare occurrence in those days, taking back the Cockrum name. The specifics of the divorce were also printed in the local paper so that readers could see in detail how she had little choice in the matter and was not in any way at fault, a situation that needed to be made clear to the public if Ella were to have a future. The report also gave strong clues as to what went wrong and why it happened so quickly.

> *Ella Thompson was granted a divorce from John T. Thompson, on a complaint charging him with cruel and inhuman treatment, failure to provide, habitual drunkenness, neglect, gambling, laying out of nights, visiting houses that ought to be shunned, especially by young married men, and generally sowing the modern variety of wild oats after his season for such work has long since closed. The plaintiff resides at Oakland City, and the defendant in Boonville, Warrick County.*[30]

The article suggests what likely drove Thompson's dramatic downfall—alcohol. It also reflected that time's lack of knowledge concerning an understanding of alcoholism as a disease and the hope of recovery through modern-day twelve-

step type programs. Still, what an awful heartbreak and embarrassment this must have been for Ella, and for the Cockrum family who had risked their very lives fighting saloons.

After the divorce, John Thompson all but disappeared from the newspapers, save for one odd courtroom account in 1881 where he served as the prosecuting lawyer in a lowly Justice of the Peace setting. Perhaps too, the embarrassment Thompson caused his own family brought a relatively early death to his father who died suddenly in 1882.[31] Meanwhile, Thompson's drinking habits took their toll. In 1884, he died suddenly at the young age of twenty-five. The circumstances of his death led one local paper to use his death to make a moral statement.

> *The news of the death of John T. Thompson will be read with genuine regret by many of our citizens. Six or seven years ago there was not a young man in the country with brighter prospects than John Thompson. A fair law practice, good social standing, robust heath, and a host of friends. And this is the end![32]*

If Only Life Was Fair

fter her divorce from John Thompson, Ella Cockrum spent time at Indiana University, studying English and literature so she could come back to her home area to teach. Teaching meant she would probably not marry, which likely suited her just fine after the John Thompson debacle.

At first, she taught at a rural school far enough away from Oakland City that she had to board away from home, dealing with rambunctious rural children and learning the hard way about the dynamics of maintaining a potbellied stove.[33] She also began attending the annual Oakland Normal Institute in Oakland City for rural and small-town teachers.

While Ella developed as a teacher, her father also began a new project, trying to restore the prior liberal arts and teacher's college he and his father had founded in Oakland City 1867. This time he had the support of the General Baptist denomination, a group which hoped to have a seminary as one of the departments in the college. In 1885, these efforts brought a charter for a college from the state, but the school had many obstacles to overcome before it would hold its first classes in 1891.[34] As it turned out, the school was destined to be an important part of Ella's life.

By 1885, Ella had garnered a prime teaching position in the Oakland City school system and was living with her parents. It had been five years since her divorce, and Ella may have felt she was an older and wiser person, prepared never to fall in love again. That same year, however, a new principal in nearby Francisco, Winfield Scott Wheatley, was one of the two directors of the teacher institute, and he immediately caught Ella's attention.[35]

Scott Wheatley was a scholarly man, well-traveled, as he had worked researching and writing county histories for the Goodspeed Publishing Company of Chicago. He was a year younger than Ella. One newspaper noted he was "A thorough gentleman and a man of decided literary tastes. . .. He lives among his books." Two years later, he would be living, in the words of the same newspaper, "in the love of his estimable wife, Ella."[36]

Ella and Scott Wheatley's wedding in 1887 was much simpler than Ella's marriage ten years before to John T. Thompson. A Boonville paper simply observed that "Prof. W. S. Wheatley and Miss Ella Cockrum, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. W. M. Cockrum, will be married at the residence of the bride's parents on the 20th inst."[37] The Princeton paper also reported the couple would be leaving their teaching positions and "be engaged in a work, the fulfilling of which will enable them to travel over considerable of the south."[38]

In fact, the couple would be traveling throughout the south while working for the Goodspeed Historical Company, interviewing interesting people, gathering research, and writing county histories together. Having a partner as an equal, one she could share her intellectual ideas with was a dream come true for Ella. Tradition has it too that the couple eloped before the wedding, Ella's sisters using a sheet rope to help lower her down from the second story of the Cockrum house into Scott Wheatley's waiting arms and on to Arkansas for their first work assignment together. If only life were fair. Eleven months later the Princeton paper carried a grim report:

> *Prof. W. S. Wheatley, a well-known teacher of this county, died at Fort Smith, Arkansas, on last Saturday. Mr. Wheatley was married to Ella Cockrum, daughter of Col. Cockrum last October. The wife of less than a year started home with the remains yesterday and was met at St. Louis by G. M. Emmerson and Col. Cockrum, who passed through Princeton today in route to Oakland City*

> *where the body is to find its last resting place. Mr. Wheatley was without a vice, and the world is poorer today.*[39]

As Ella Wheatley struggled to get past the shock of her husband's unexpected death, she found some solace in throwing herself into helping her father in his efforts to keep alive the fledgling Oakland City College. Ella's work soon became a lifetime career. Her contributions to the school would be many, as she came to dedicate her life to the institution. In 1892, she donated her house for the first woman's dorm, a house that was renamed Wheatley Cottage. In 1895, after graduating from OCC and taking classes at the University of Chicago, Ella became the first women's dean at Oakland City College and a professor of English language and literature. Eventually, a much larger "modern" women's dorm would be built in 1911 and was named Wheatley Hall in Ella's honor. As women's dean, Ella Wheatley would oversee the lives of hundreds of female students who came to Oakland City, and her namesake, Wheatley Hall, would continue to be a home-away-from-home for female college students for decades after Ella's death in 1943.[40]

As noted, one early Oakland City College yearbook faculty photo of Ella Wheatley was of interest, standing out from her other faculty photos. The one that was so different showed a sad-faced woman with a far-away look in her eyes. Interestingly too, few, if any, at the college would ever know about Ella Wheatley's earlier experiences with love. However, these stories, shared here for the first time, remind us that peoples' lives are complicated and rarely dull, full of unexpected and often difficult events and adventures. They are, in fact, important stories to be remembered and cherished by individuals, families, and by institutions.

Endnotes

1 *The Indiana Herald* (Huntington, Indiana) October 20, 1869.

2 *Jackson County Banner* (Brownstown, Indiana) September 24, 1891.

3 Geraldine Clifford, *Daughters into Teachers: Education and Demographic Influences on the Transformation of Teaching into 'Women's Work' in America,* in Alison Prentice and Marjorie Theobald*, Women who Taught: Perceptions on the History of Women and Teaching,* Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991, 121.

4 *Chicago Tribune,* July 21, 1895.

5 *The South Bend Tribune*, September 8, 1899.

6 *The Richmond Item,* December 31, 1897.

7 *The Waterloo Press*, July 27, 1893.

8 *Fort Wayne Daily Gazette*, May 22, 1899.

9 Jackie Blount, "Spinsters, Bachelors, and Other Gender Transgressors in School Employment, 1850-1990." *Review of Education Research*, 70(1), 2000, 87.

10 *Logansport Pharos-Tribune,* September 27, 1895.

11 For background concerning the Cockrum family, see Randy Mills, "To Make War against the Whiskey Ring: Anti-Saloon Sentiment and Extralegal Violence in Southwest Indiana 1874-1875." *Indiana Magazine of History*, 111(3), 217-249.

12 *Princeton Clarion Leader,* April 1, 1875.

13 Randy Mills, "To Make War against the Whiskey Ring: Anti-Saloon Sentiment and Extralegal Violence in Southwest Indiana 1874-1875."

14 *Boonville Republican*, January 17, 1874.

15 *Boonville Weekly Enquirer,* June 20, 1874.

16 Ibid., September 12, 1874.

17 Ibid., June 3, 1876.

18 Ibid., June 17, 1876.

19 Ibid., September 2, 1876.

20 Ibid., February 17, 1877.

21 Ibid., April 6, 1878.

22 Ibid., July 14, 1877.

23 Ibid., September 2, 1882.

24 Ibid., October 6, 1877.

25 *Princeton Clarion Leader,* October 4, 1877

26 *General Baptist Herald,* October 6, 1877.

27 *Boonville Weekly Enquirer*, March 30, 1878.

28 Ibid., September 14, 1878.

29 *Princeton Clarion Leader,* December 26, 1878.

30 Ibid., February 17, 1881.

31*Boonville Weekly Enquirer*, September 2, 1882.

32 Ibid., May 3, 1884.

33 *Princeton Clarion Leader,* December 30, 1880.

34 Betty Shirley, *A History of Oakland City College, 1885-1957*. Oakland City, IN: Oaks Printing Company, 1985.

35 *Princeton Clarion Leader,* February 12, 1885.

36 Ibid.,

37*Boonville Weekly Enquirer*, October 14, 1887.

38 *Princeton Clarion Leader,* October 20, 1887.

39 *Princeton Clarion Leader,* February 12, 1885.

40 Betty Shirley, *A History of Oakland City College, 1885-1957*. Oakland City, IN: Oaks Printing Company, 1985.

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Instructional Methods for Teaching Social Studies: An Update of What Middle School Students Like and Dislike about Social Studies Instruction

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Abstract

When the advent of the C3 Framework, social studies instruction has undergone both a perceptual and practical shift. This shift deemphasizes the ubiquitous read-write-notes-lecture instructional model and instead emphasizes inquiry-based, hands-on, participatory social studies. Though the ways in which social studies instruction is both designed and delivered may have changed, the seminal question remains: How do students like (or dislike) learning social studies? This article will update previous research (Russell & Waters, 2010) by providing a comparative, contemporary glimpse into middle level social studies instruction. By benchmarking student instructional preferences, educators can begin to design engaging, inquiry-driven instruction that meets the needs of all learners in the social studies classroom.

Introduction

Social studies has an image problem, particularly amongst students. For decades, students have not only decried the subject's lack of relevance to their daily lives but have also lamented the formulaic and often uninspiring ways in which it is presented (Chiodo & Byford, 2004; Gibson, 2012; Zhao & Hoge, 2005). Though numerous calls have been made to change this apparent paradigm of relational disconnection and instructional routinization, social studies remains rooted in the seemingly timeless lecture-read-show-write model of instructional design and delivery (Author & Kumpiene, 2017; Bolinger & Warren, 2007; Russell, 2010; Russell & Waters, 2016; Van Fossen, 2012).

If blame is to be assigned for this apparent student malaise, who or what may be at fault? Is it the scope of the curriculum in terms of the content students are expected to know and understand? Is it the purpose of the curriculum; what students are expected to *do* with the content? Or is it the way in which the teacher designs and delivers the content? Shaughnessy and Haladyna (1985) flatly asserted that "it is the teacher who is key to what social studies will be

for the student" (p. 694). And if instruction is dictated by teachers who ascribe to the lecture-read-show-write model, it is no wonder students leave social studies classrooms feeling both uninspired and disengaged.

In an effort to shed light on this pervasive disconnection and disengagement, Russell and Waters (2010) surveyed 466 middle school students at a public charter school in the southeast. Their research focused on two simple questions: How do middle school students like to learn social studies? And conversely, what do middle school students dislike about social studies instruction? Their findings revealed that students generally favored multi-modal approaches to teaching and learning social studies. In particular, students appreciated cooperative learning, focused study guides, reviews and review games, graphic organizers and foldables, and the use of technology (Internet, video, film, etc.) and hands-on activities. Conversely, students did not favor lecture, rote memorization, worksheets or assignments drawn directly from the textbook (Russell & Waters, 2010). Though the authors were not particularly surprised by these findings, they did illustrate a sharp disconnect between the way middle school students prefer to learn social studies and the way it is generally taught.

The past decade has witnessed a perceptual and practical sea change in opinion on the way social studies should be taught. The field has been encouraged to move away from fact-based memorization and instead ground teaching in inquiry-based instruction. In 2013, the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) published *College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards*. In it, an inquiry-based instructional framework for teachers was provided that utilizes four strands or lines of inquiry: developing questions and planning inquiries; applying disciplinary concepts and tools; evaluating sources and using evidence; and communicating conclusions and taking informed action. There is sound research that not only defines what inquiry-based social studies instruction is (Croddy & Marshall, 2014; Grant, Swan, & Lee, 2017, 2015), but also identifies engaging classroom strategies used in implementing it. Strategies and/or materials that support inquiry-based instruction include, but are certainly not limited to, rich and varied text-based and visual sources (e.g. art, photographs, advertisements, etc.); case studies; graphic organizers, project-based learning opportunities; robust, critical dialogues and discussions as well as internet-based resources (e.g. videos, websites, etc.) (Marston & Handler, 2016; Neel & Palmeri, 2017; Thacker, et al., 2018; Thacker & Friedman, 2017; Thacker, Lee, & Friedman, 2017).

With the introduction of the C3 Framework, select states have either revised or completely redesigned their state social studies standards. (It should be noted that the state in which the middle school used in this current study is located overhauled their state social studies standards in 2019). States have minimized the promotion of isolated names, dates, places and facts and have adopted standards that are grounded in process (inquiry) and outcome (multimodal means of demonstration and assessment).

Purpose

The purpose of this article is to provide a comparative update by answering the following questions, both posed in the original study: 1). How do middle school students like to learn social studies? 2). What do middle school students dislike about social studies instruction? Premised on the recent changes in the field of social studies theory and practice, an additional question will be addressed: 3). Does the advent of the C3 Framework and the revised inquiry-based state standards impact the way middle school students like or dislike social studies instruction? This study provides new answers to these questions.

Methods

Utilizing a convenient sample model (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000), students (grades 6-8) at a middle school in a southeastern state participated in this study. This school is a Professional Development School (PDS) partner to a local university which provides field-based teaching opportunities for their pre-service educators. It was also chosen due to its relative size and demographic composition which generally mirrors other middle schools through the state. The school is 51% Male and 49% Female. The student body is 48% White, 35% African American, 13% Hispanic with 4% of students identifying as Multiracial. Slightly over 65% of students qualify for free or reduced lunch. To preserve student anonymity, all demographic information has been roughly approximated.

Adhering to the methods found in the original study, the two question, open-ended free-response survey was given to each student at the beginning of their respective social studies class. Students were briefly told the purpose of the survey and that no identifying features (i.e. name, grade level) should be included. It was explained that the survey was not about individual teachers but was solely interested in garnering personal perceptions (likes and dislikes) of how social studies was taught. Participation was voluntary. Though five indicators or elaborators were provided for each question, students did not have to provide information for all five. A total of 301(n) responses were collected. All responses were read, analyzed, and categorized accordingly.

Discussion and Conclusion

Based upon the array of survey responses, middle school students overwhelmingly preferred technology infused within their social studies instruction. Students specifically liked watching videos and accessing online instructional learning platforms. A handful of students favored online game or simulation websites. Middle school students also preferred instruction incorporating cooperative learning activities. Hands-on/active learning was, to a much lesser degree, preferred as well.

Addressing what students disliked about the way social studies was taught, it was clear that middle school students did not prefer teacher-centered social studies instruction including lecture, note-taking and textbook use. Students also noted their dislike of worksheets and individual presentations.

These finding generally align with the Russell and Waters' (2010) original survey. In the original study, students noted their favor of cooperative learning activities and technology. Students in the original study also liked hands-on/active learning and class discussions. Though this current study supports student preference for technology and cooperative learning activities, students in this study did not like hands-on/active learning or class presentations to the degree previously noted.

In terms of instructional dislikes, both surveys strongly supported the same general conclusion – middle school students dislike passive learning. Lecture, note-taking and textbook use were particularly noted as instructional strategies that were disfavored. These findings supported previous research into student preference of social studies instruction (Gibson, 2012; Zhao & Hoge, 2005).

Addressing the question of correlating the revised inquiry-driven state social studies standards to a noted preference in active, participatory inquiry-driven practices, the findings were inconclusive. Students overwhelmingly stated their preference for technology integration (particularly videos), yet a number of students simply put "watch videos" as a descriptive preference. This provided little distinction between passive (simply watching) and inquiry-based (interacting with) instruction. Among other instructional practices, inquiry-based social studies encourages discussion, hands-on learning, student presentations and informed action. None of these outcomes were markedly favored by middle school students. It would disingenuous to therefore conclude that inquiry-based instruction is generally absent from these middle school classrooms. A more focused and nuanced study specifically focusing on identifying which

key inquiry-based instructional practices are evident in (or absent from) middle school social studies classrooms would provide a reasonable benchmark in addressing the correlation between inquiry-driven state standards, teacher instruction and student preference.

Though these findings are in many ways aligned with the conclusions reached in the original study, there are a few limitations that need to be addressed. Due to the disparity in sample sizes, roughly 150 fewer middle school students participated in this updated study. Therefore, absolute generalizations to the original study, nor to all middle school student's writ large, cannot be made. Yet the updated findings did provide an important window into social studies instruction.

In summary, this updated replication study did reinforce key instructional indicators detailed in the original Russell and Water (2010) research. Students preferred multi-modal instructional methods, specifically favoring cooperative learning and an infusion of rich and varied forms of technology. Conversely, students (continued) to dislike passive and uninspiring instruction that is premised on the read-write-notes-textbook model. It is desired that this study will provide classroom teachers with important insight as they work to meet the learning needs of all students in their social studies classrooms.

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Dissenting Voices of and About Mindfulness: What can We Learn?

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Abstract

Mindfulness, a set of de-stressing, calming practices to combat anxiety, worry and stress has become ubiquitous in mainstream U.S. society and the k-12 education field in particular. While there is substantial research to support the psychological, social-emotional, spiritual and physical benefits of mindfulness, some critics in the field are concerned of how mindfulness is being implemented in the field. They claim that severing mindfulness from its authentic Buddhist roots corrupts the spiritual, ethical and philosophical principles on which it is based. These critics further charge that this co-option of a secularized form of mindfulness panders to a neo-liberal agenda in Western society and has devolved into a distorted form of mindfulness they consider to be Mcmindfulness.

KEY WORDS: Buddhist Roots, mindfulness, Mcmindfulness

Introduction

To say that mindfulness has captured the imagination of mainstream society and academia is perhaps an understatement. If academic publications are any indication, the graph below from the American Mindfulness Research Association demonstrates the dramatic growth in research studies and other scholarly works on mindfulness.

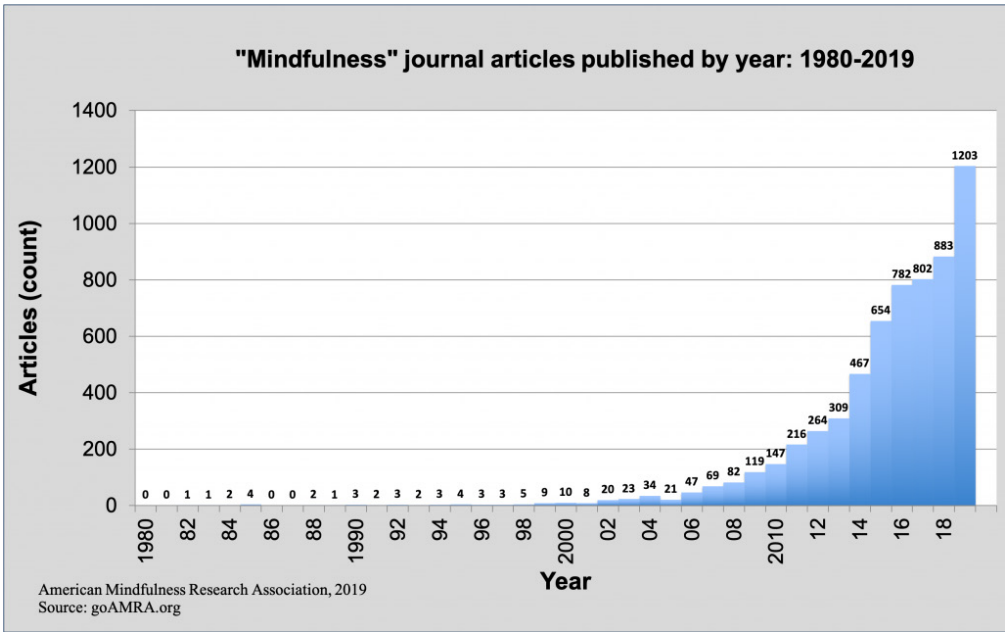

Figure 1. *Mindfulness journal publications by year, 1980-2019*

Given this trajectory and continued interest in mindfulness and the increased reports of stress, anxiety, worry and depression due to the pandemic, there is no reason to believe that 2020 and beyond will see a change in this trend. Mainstream U.S. culture has also demonstrated increasing interest in mindfulness. There are celebrity endorsements, such as Oprah Winfrey, LeBron James, Jennifer Aniston among others. In fact, Goldie Hawn was so impressed with mindfulness, she founded an educational non-profit organization, MindUp (https://mindup.org/mindup-for-schools/) for students ages three to fourteen. Additionally, there are hundreds of programs and apps to teach and help one practice mindfulness and thousands of articles in popular mainstream media. Take for example, the 2014 special issue of *Time*, with the title, "The Mindful Revolution." Indeed, in the early 21st century, mindfulness will be regarded as one of the major cultural icons.

In the broad field of education, the interest in mindfulness has been no less explosive with dozens of programs (Meiklejohn, 2012). Besides the increased attention to mindfulness in the form of research, books, programs, apps, and mainstream articles, many have noticed these works are overwhelmingly positive concerning the psychological, emotional, spiritual and physical benefits. Only fairly recently, within the last five years, have dissenting voices

about mindfulness come to the forefront. Specifically, these voices have discussed *how* mindfulness has been politically and socially mis-practiced and/or mis-used in the U.S. and Europe and been co-opted, or culturally appropriated, for a neo-liberal agenda (Forbes, 2019; Purser, 2019). In fact, the term, *Mcmindfulness* coined by Miles Neale in 2010 has become the moniker in summing up how in the words of Ronald Purser (2019) secular mindfulness has become the "new capitalist spirituality" (p.17).

In this essay, I will highlight instances of resistance and the dissenting voices around mindfulness and/or how it is (mis)-practiced in K-12 schools in the United States. I will argue that stifling dissenting voices is to the detriment of the field/discipline of mindfulness as both a concept and practice in the educational field. These voices need to be heard and considered if the practice of mindfulness is to evolve and better serve the needs of its various adherents. In this essay, I will highlight two different kinds of "voices." The first set of voices will be theoretical/academic voices from the literature. They will illustrate the problematic conceptual and ethical issues of implementing a tradition that is stripped of its philosophical, religious and psychological Buddhist and Hindi cultural underpinnings to make it conform to a secular (i.e. Western) context. While mindfulness practices can be found in the religions of Islam, Judaism and Christianity, the field as introduced and practiced in the West has its roots in Buddhism and Hindi (Selva, 2020), and this is the perspective that will be taken in this essay. The second voice will be from an individual who is from the K-12 educational system and represents many of the anecdotal and informal complaints concerning the implementation of mindfulness in the K-12 schools.

Dissenting Voices within the Field of Mindfulness and Why They Matter

Before understanding the resistance to mindfulness specifically in the K-12 educational field, an understanding of the resistance to mindfulness more broadly in society is necessary since schools reflect the social contexts in which they exist.

Perhaps no other label can sum up the abuse and mis-use of mindfulness in Western culture than "*Mcmindfulness*." This one-word term can sum up almost all that is wrong with how mindfulness is practiced in the West. While a detailed analysis of all the issues and challenges of implementing mindfulness is beyond the scope of this paper, I will highlight the most serious and conspicuous issues that have been raised: 1) the cultural appropriation of

mindfulness and its severance from its ethical/religious roots to make it more secular; 2) The commodification and neo-liberal packaging of mindfulness; 3) the approaches and ways in which mindfulness has been implemented in the K-12 education system.

Cultural Appropriation of Mindfulness

One cannot discuss mindfulness as practiced in the U.S. without acknowledging the cultural appropriation of how it has been stolen, distorted, re-packaged, marketed, and sold to (sometimes uninformed and unwitting) U.S. consumers. Without severing mindfulness from its Buddhist ethical and philosophical roots, it could not have flourished in the West. Why? One might ask. Well, simply because those seeking to implement mindfulness in the U.S. felt the segments of the population who were strongly Christian would object. John Kabat Zinn, a professor, ardent supporter of mindfulness and *Buddhist practitioner* provides a very compelling reason. Kabat, who introduced a scientific version of mindfulness to the West – Mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) – in the 1970s, has also been seen by his critics as "selling out" mindfulness as a Buddhist philosophy/religion. Forbes (2019) noted how Jon Kabat Zinn

> …white-washed the dharma and appropriated its original meaning: he declared that his brand of scientific mindfulness is "not different in any essential way from Buddadharma" and called it "universal dharma" (2011: 296), MBSR, he said is a new lineage (Bazzano 2015). The dharma doesn't belong to Buddhism, he claimed: it is timeless human nature. Kabat-Zinn took over the meaning of the dharma, colonized it, stripped it of its history and cultural tradition, declared it to be the public domain-and claimed to know how to teach it. In this way he got to have it both ways. He got to keep both science and the dharma, or so he believed. MBSR is now declared a scientific technology derived from human nature, the universal dharma. People were impressed with that (p. 19).

Forbes eloquently summed up how mindfulness in essence had to be destroyed so it could be re-birthed as "*Mcmindfulness*." What is *Mcmindfulness*? It is the commodification and marketing of mindfulness as a brand in a capitalist society. Kabat-Zinn and many others knew that mindfulness in its authentic form as a Buddhist philosophy would never take

hold in the U.S. (Purser, 2019) It had to be colonized and made secular to be palatable to U.S. citizens of varying faiths, but particularly many Christians, many of whom oppose the Buddhist influence of mindfulness as demonstrated by court cases opposing the teaching of mindfulness in K-12 schools on the grounds it was implementing Buddhist beliefs. The American Law and Justice Center, a Christian advocacy group, was the author of several lawsuits on behalf of schools (Stierhoff, 2019).

Proponents of a secularized form of mindfulness were open about calling their form of mindfulness – "crypto-Buddhism" or more commonly "stealth Buddhism" (Brown, 2017) particularly when trying to introduce it in the K-12 schools. Because K-12 schools are extremely sensitive to potential litigation concerning religious indoctrination, school districts have carefully framed the social-emotional benefits of mindfulness **only** in scientific/secular terms and research.

Critics of this secular-only approach to a corrupted form of mindfulness or "Mcmindfulness, would charge that there is a danger in framing mindfulness *only* in terms of its neuroscientific and psychological benefits. First, simply emphasizing the scientific aspects of mindfulness doesn't mean that the religious aspects don't exist and/or that students don't know about them. In fact, students might be curious about this aspect of mindfulness, and nothing is more tempting than perceived "forbidden knowledge." In essence, students are getting the proverbial "half story" rather than the entire story. While such an approach is not an outright lie per se, it is also not the entire truth. Second, while there is research about mindfulness and its benefits to K-12 children, critics have lamented the "scarcity of methodologically rigorous scientific studies supporting the practice" (Purser, 2019, p. 197). In essence critics are arguing even the scientific research on mindfulness and its use with K-12 youth is not robust and extensive enough to confidently trust its efficacy

The aforementioned examples are the predominant reasons as to why mindfulness has been explicitly culturally appropriated in the U.S. It cannot exist in its original form in a Christian, neo-liberal, Western, white-identified context. Not only is treating mindfulness in this way ethically wrong, but it ultimately threatens and undermines the philosophy, practice and potential benefits of mindfulness. Unfortunately, cultural appropriation is just the beginning of the story…

Commodification of Mindfulness

As if cultural appropriation is not damaging enough, mindfulness has been co-opted by a neoliberal agenda, a "complex form of cultural hegemony" (Purser, 2019, p. 27). Whether it be business, health, the military, politics, or schools among other institutions, Purser (2019) showed how mindfulness has been commodified, re-packaged, marketed, and watered-down into a set of secular isolated techniques. He notes that "by deflecting attention from social, political and economic structures – that is, material conditions in a capitalist culture – mindfulness is easily co-opted. Celebrity role models bless and endorse it, while "cool" Californian companies -including Google, Facebook, Twitter, Yahoo, Salseforce, Apple and Zynga – have embraced it as an adjunct to their brand…" (p. 30).

From Cultural Appropriation to Commodification of the K-12 Curriculum in US K-12 Schools

As noted above, an astonishingly vast array of institutions have taken up mindfulness: from Fortune 500 corporations to small businesses and from journalism, law and politics (Magee, 2019; Harris, 2017) to the military. However, its phenomenal rise in the U.S. can be partly attributed to its intensive introduction into K-12 schools, where scientific research as well as first-hand student, teacher, and family testimonies has shown it to improve the social-emotional lives of K-12 students (Wong, 2017). Often, mindfulness is used in K-12 contexts to help students self-regulate their emotional-social selves (e.g., monitoring their emotions; mitigating or decreasing anxiety and/or stress, improving concentration or attention, being more self-aware, knowing how to cultivate healthy relationships, etc.). Few would argue against helping K-12 students develop such skills and knowledge. However, because schools are part of a larger neo-liberal context, critics would argue that *Mcmindfulness,* not *authentic* mindfulness, is being implemented in many school programs. The main reason that mindfulness is stripped essentially of any references or connections to its religious roots is because of the First Amendment, which among other freedoms, prevents Congress from promoting one religion over another and restricting an individual's religious practice. Again, one must ask, what is being lost in stripping mindfulness from its ethical roots? For example, while it might be helpful to teach students how to control their emotions, such as anger, *there is often little discussion* ***about the sources*** *causing the anger of students*. Might the students' anger be justified?

Mindfulness practitioners know their approach to mindfulness must be secular to be accepted by educators, families and the general educational community; they rely on science as both the justification to deflect attention from its Buddhist roots as well as evidence for the social-emotional and psychological benefits of mindfulness. Again, few would argue about these benefits. Why would students not want to feel more relaxed, less anxious, more focused, more attentive, etc.? As for educators, mindfulness can ease their stress because their students are less stressed and more productive contributing members of their classroom community. Students are able to emotionally self-regulate (e.g. know how to de-stress, remain calm, etc.) and as a result, classroom management is made easier for the teacher. Thus, mindfulness seems to have created an all-around proverbial win-win situation.

However, an element that mindfulness cannot address are the sources of the stressors themselves. Those implementing mindfulness, or really McMindfulness, are only implementing mindfulness as solution to address student and/or educator stress in a very pragmatic manner. By having removed the spiritual, philosophical and cultural aspects of mindfulness, which includes ethical elements, very few mindfulness practitioners take the time to question the very institutional structures or constraints, such as overcrowded classrooms, mind numbing curricula, un- or under-resourced classrooms, and a myriad of other educational deficits, that create the stressful conditions for students and educators in the first place. Might students and educators be justified in being angry and not remaining calm, especially if such conditions persist year after year? Mindfulness is fundamentally about compassion – to one's self as well as others. While learning to cope with external stressors is a life skill, this is just a start. Sometimes there is a bonafide reason when students act out. Purser (2019) asked, "Could their [students'] behavioral problems, poor academic performance and stress be related to living in impoverished and crime-ridden neighborhoods, or being the victims of institutional racism?" (p. 186). Students need skills and knowledge to critique and act on how to change the social conditions and structures that are creating the stress, not just how to respond to it. Unfortunately, I have yet to read about such an approach to mindfulness. I can't help but wonder whether authentic mindfulness would help raise such critical and urgent questions.

The lack of a critical ethical orientation to mindfulness as it is generally implemented in the schools is problematic. Another additional issue is the fact that mindfulness in the mainstream culture is associated with White, middle-

class populations, and while mindfulness programs, especially when there are fees, are found in white, suburban schools, there are many fewer mindfulness programs in schools with predominantly students of color (Chin, Anyanso, & Greeson, 2019). Statistics could not be found about the number of mindfulness programs in K-12 schools with a majority of BIPOC students; however, there appears to be many academic research studies assessing the benefits of mindfulness on K-12 students of color.

Very few mindfulness programs consider the cultural backgrounds of students (Mindful, 2017). Furthermore, many teachers of mindfulness are white, and they are teaching predominantly students of color. Purser (2019) notes that many white teachers exhibit a "white savior mentality" and operate from a deficit perspective when working with their students of color. Mindfulness, or more accurately, *Mcmindfulness* is used to teach obedience, acceptance and passivity to one's context rather than a compassionate and critical perspective.

Unfortunately, there is no easy or viable solution to the complete and total secularization of mindfulness in K-12 public schools because of First Amendment concerns. Mindfulness teachers are very careful to use vocabulary and terms that are secular, such as mindfulness practices versus meditation and to not make any religious references. This approach works for a secular version of *Mcmindfulness*, but at what price? Being mindful isn't only about breathing calmly, emotionally self-regulating, handling stress in a healthy way or paying attention; it is also engendering compassion, learning to sit with strong emotions such as fear and suffering, diminishing the ego, and feeling more spiritually engaged among many other ethical dispositions. Many would argue that it is these latter aspects of mindfulness that truly make a student whole and can lead to the kinds of communities in which we want to live. Until a compromise can be found, this issue will be a continual source of controversy in K-12 education.

Now What?

This analysis of how *Mcmindfulness* has become pervasive in mainstream society and in particular in the K-12 schools, is not all encompassing but does illustrate and raise critical questions for the field. Beyond the deeply troubling ethical issue of culturally appropriating and distorting mindfulness from its true cultural Buddhist roots, well-meaning practitioners need to take responsibility of how to address this issue as the competing cultural tensions between mindfulness and *Mcmindfulness* will likely continue. As those who

seek mindfulness (but experience *Mcmindfulness)* to relieve their suffering be it in the form of anxiety, depression, stress, etc., they might experience short-term relief. At some point, particularly if they practice long enough and interact, read and converse about mindfulness with others, they might start to question *why* their relief is short-lived. When their attention turns to the causes of their stressor(s), they will realize their *Mcmindfulness* is the equivalent of the 18th and 19 century traveling salesmen peddling useless "snake oil" miracle health cures. How might these individuals feel about being deceived? Angry, flummoxed, depressed, deceived or all of these? These individuals might choose to walk away from mindfulness all together and spread the word rather than find a true mindfulness teacher that practices and re-connects mindfulness back to its rightful roots. Currently, conversations highlighting the simmering tensions concerning the secular nature of mindfulness given its Buddhist (religious) origins are ongoing (Van Gordon & Shonin, 2019). In short, authentic mindfulness in the U.S. risks becoming just another fad if *Mcmindfulness* is not addressed directly and widely by those of us in the field – practitioners, academics, researchers and anyone else concerned about preserving true mindfulness.

Concern about Mindfulness: A Voice from a Community Member

This second perspective is from a community member in the U.S. It is in the form of a letter to the editor that was printed in a local paper of a town, which is considered the county seat of a rural district located in central Kentucky. While the readership of the newspaper is regional, the fact the letter can be accessed on the Internet means its reach is potentially anywhere in the world.

While the brevity and lack of details in the letter hinder a thorough analysis and raise many questions, it is interesting the community member and the aforementioned academic voices are both concerned about the Buddhist roots of mindfulness but for very different reasons. While the academics lament the severing of Buddhist principles from mindfulness, the author of this letter is concerned about the opposite – the fact that mindfulness is inherently Buddhist and cannot be separated from its Buddhist roots.

Understanding this dissenting voice requires understanding the context in which the author is writing. The author is a retired educator, who is a Christian pastor. The region in which he resides is rural and identifies as overwhelmingly Christian (76%), much like many people across Kentucky (Pew Research Center, 2021).

This voice is not an academic, insulated voice but a public one with a wide-reach expressing a real concern over mindfulness and by association Buddhism being taught in the local public schools of where he lives.

Analysis of Mr. Cruse's letter reveals that his main concern or "objection" is in the conclusion of his letter. He notes, "my objection is that if we are not allowed to come into public schools and try to teach students about Christ while sitting in a captured audience, then why should we watch as our children are introduced to another religion?" (Cruse, 2020, Feb. 28). Mr. Cruse is not objecting to mindfulness per se, but its connection to Buddhism. It is difficult to know, but I suspect that Mr. Cruse is worried about Buddhism supplanting Christianity. He seems to be objecting to the fact that through mindfulness students are being exposed to Buddhism. Because the establishment clause in his view does not allow students to learn about Christianity, they should not be allowed to learn about Buddhism via mindfulness.

It should be noted that it is lawful and constitutional to teach ***about*** various religions. This is not the same as the school institutionally promoting the practice of specific religions. If teaching *about* religion was breaking the law, much of history and English/language arts could not be taught. Students would not be able to Pledge Allegiance to the U.S. Flag or be able to read/study the Declaration of Independence and many other historical events.

Interestingly, Mr. Cruse highlights the same issues as mindfulness academics concerning the roots of mindfulness. He does his research and learns about John Kabat-Zinn and Zinn's quest to introduce mindfulness to the U.S. public.

His [Kabat-Zinn's] vision was that he would introduce the ancient Eastern disciplines he'd followed for 13 years, mindfulness meditation. However, he knew he would have to convince Americans that mindfulness is not a religious practice, but rather a scientific one. He knew Americans wouldn't accept it if they knew the truth about it, that it is a Buddhist/New Age practice.

We are being told that mindfulness is safe, not religious, and is not the same as Eastern or Buddhist meditation. It would be said that mindfulness is a type of meditation, but there would be few mindfulness teachers who would deny that mindfulness has roots in Buddhism (Cruse, letter to the editor, 2020).

Cruse voices and exposes exactly the issue that Forbes and many mindfulness academics have raised; though located on opposite ends of a Buddhist mindfulness continuum, they seem to agree. Cruse is referring to the "stealth Buddhism" or universal dharma that many proponents of mindfulness have identified as an issue. Mindfulness has its roots in Buddhism and is connected to it no matter how it is packaged.

Now What?

It might be tempting and even easy to dismiss Mr. Cruse as just another lone, "radical" voice. To be sure there are many unanswered questions in his letter. The author does not describe the specific program of mindfulness being implemented, so given the hundreds of mindful curricula and programs in existence, it is impossible to know if it is a valid curriculum (i.e., from a recognized organization which specializes in teaching mindfulness in K-12 schools) and/or being implemented correctly. The concerns brought to him by various individuals were not detailed. What exactly concerned them or made them feel "uncomfortable"? These are legitimate questions to better understand Mr. Cruse's perspective, but they do not need to be answered to recognize that the issue at the heart of the matter is the connection with Buddhist roots of mindfulness. Academic critics loathe mindfulness severed from its Buddhist roots because it grossly distorts it. Cruse is opposed to mindfulness also because of its Buddhist foundation but unlike the academic critics, he feels that mindfulness cannot be severed from its Buddhist roots. Situations, such as this one, might seem isolated and inconsequential, and it is difficult to know how pervasive Mr. Cruse's view is. However, it doesn't matter; the fact that two vastly different audiences have identified an ethical issue in how mindfulness is implemented in the US should be reason enough to raise the alarm among mindfulness practitioners.

Conclusion

It is beyond the scope of this essay to discuss potential solutions to the issues raised. However, there seems to be historical precedent for other issues similar to the charges levied against mindfulness in schools. In those cases, it seems the three-part *Lemon Test*, after the 1971 Supreme Court case of *Lemon v. Kurtzman*, to determine violations of the First Amendment might have application here (Hayes & Thomas, 2007). Since that time, alternative "tests" have been proposed as the *Lemon Test* has come under criticism from several

Supreme Court Justices. Regardless of what kind of test is used, one must ask the question: Could there be a program of mindfulness not severed from its Buddhist roots that could pass a kind of *Lemon Test*?

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Appendix A – Full Letter to the Editor

Letters to the Editor for Feb. 28, 2020

By Winchester Sun
Published 10:34 am Friday, February 28, 2020

Concerned over mindfulness practices

I have been a supporter of public education for all my life, and I spent 30 years — 15 as a teacher much with special needs students and 15 years as a principal — in public education.

In the last few years, I have seen trends that we are implementing that give me concern.

Over a year ago, I received a letter from a grandmother who wrote to me stating her concerns over a program that was being implemented called mindfulness.

At that time, I didn't know what it was. Then, a few weeks later, I had two teachers come to say how uncomfortable they had felt when the program was used.

It was at that point I began to research and to find out what mindfulness was all about.

I found out that a man by the name of John Cabot-Zinn, in 1979, who was an avid student of Buddhist meditation, had a vision of what his life work would be.

His vision was that he would introduce the ancient Eastern disciplines he'd followed for 13 years, mindfulness meditation.

However, he knew he would have to convince Americans that mindfulness is not a religious practice, but rather a scientific one. He knew Americans wouldn't accept it if they knew the truth about it, that it is a Buddhist/New Age practice.

We are being told that mindfulness is safe, not religious, and is not the same as Eastern or Buddhist meditation. It would be said that mindfulness is a type of meditation, but there would be few mindfulness teachers who would deny that mindfulness has roots in Buddhism.

Part of my problem with mindfulness is that all awhile, we as Christians are told we can no longer pray in public schools, we can no longer post the 10 Commandments and the Bible can no longer be read. There have even been objections for athletic teams to pray before or after a game in some places.

I believe in the freedom of religion, and I will support anyone who wants to worship however they want, even if it is Buddhism, Hinduism or whatever else, even though I believe there is absolute truth, and that is through Jesus Christ.

So, if mindfulness is part of Buddhism, and it is a religion, and it is whether we want to believe it or not, then it is a doorway into another religion.

Then my objection is that if we are not allowed to come into public schools and try to teach students about Christ while sitting in a captured audience, then why should we watch as our children are introduced to another religion?

That is my concern.

Lee Cruse,
Pastor of Grace Bible Church
https://www.winchestersun.com/2020/02/28/letters-to-the-editor-for-feb-28-2020/

The Perceptions of Adjunct Instructors Regarding Work-Life Balance

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Steve Custer
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Abstract

Adjunct instructors are charged, by definition, with the responsibilities of equipping and teaching students in a higher education environment in a tangle way while adhering to administrative policies in total even in the fulfillment of what could be described as a peripheral assignment. Coupled with that, adjunct instructors are typically employed elsewhere although one prominent exception could be for those who teach in one program and are considered an adjunct in another program at the same institution. Along that line, work-life balance issues remain of paramount importance to adjunct instructors as they attempt to manage multiple work environments plus investing in personal and family time. This study focused on the perceptions of adjunct instructors - who have been employed in that capacity at Christian colleges in the Midwest - regarding work-life balance.

Introduction

Custer (2018) pointed out that the concept of balancing work and personal life obligations such as one's own health, one's family, and to recreational and spiritual needs was of great importance. Many studies have supported this idea (Rue, Ibrahim & Byars, 2016; Wilk, 2016; Matos & Galinsky, 2011; Gómez-Mejía, Balkin, & Cardy, 2007; Ackers & El-Sawad, 2006; Wexley & Latham, 2002). Carvell (1980) pointed out that "occupational stress can be caused by extraordinary workloads, too much responsibility, or conflicts in a person's occupational roles…stress is a part of nearly every type of job found in business and industry" (p. 160). Lockwood (2003) defined work-life balance in several contexts, but notably, in terms of the employee, she identifies it as the "dilemma of managing work obligations and personal/family responsibilities" (p. 1).

One area where the need for life balance may not have been well emphasized is that of college instructors, especially adjuncts. Many researchers have asserted that to be successful as an adjunct instructor, one must be able to triage a plethora of tasks. (Doyle, 2020; Mohabir-McKinley, 2020; Pilieci, 2016; Rich, 2013; Pyram, 2016). Flaherty (2020) further noted the challenges inherent to adjuncts by conveying that "adjuncts themselves may be difficult to track down because they often work on multiple campuses to string together something resembling a living (p. 11).

The above notions suggested that for adjunct instructors to be effective over time, they must attend to various aspects of life--not just in the performance of their job duties but also in the total context of their overall daily living. However, based on the complexities of generational attitudes and the various backgrounds of respective individuals, the concept of achieving a work-life balance, while well intentioned, has become a catch-all phrase that has different connotations for everyone.

Colleges and universities have increasingly been hiring adjuncts to fill the expanding need for faculty, often making up half of the faculty at degree-granting institutions (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). Adjunct faculty are involved in both teaching and development, often developing as much as 44% of new graduate courses (Ridge & Ritt, 2017). Many of these adjunct faculty are teaching because they feel a calling and find intrinsic satisfaction in helping others and themselves to grow (Greive, 1984; Carlson, 2005). The word *calling* has a significant implication in Christian institutions. In the book *A Noble Calling* (2008), Dr. Rodger Minatra tells us that these callings also add a sense of security and joy to our lives (p. 111). In a sense, joy and security are tied to the success of our students. Success is often measured by effectively improving individual students' performances to meet explicit and implicit learning outcomes for their respective future careers (Henkel, p. 52).

Context of the Study

To discover the perceptions of work-life balance for adjunct instructors at a Christian university in the Midwest, three individuals who were adjunct instructors were interviewed. The following questions were posed to those three individuals: First, they were asked to describe their responsibilities and outline a typical day in the fulfillment of their role(s). Second, they were asked about how they prioritized those duties.

Third, the subject matter shifted to ask them about their family and personal hobbies and interests. Fourth, the candidates were asked to appraise their level of cell phone usage both during the day and at night and to comment on their availability to their constituent groups. Along this line, their policy and utilization of office hours was covered in this exchange.

Fifth, the next topic involved stress management. They were asked about their own techniques as well as their impressions about how well their colleagues handled stressful situations. Sixth, the question called for them to assess how understanding their families were with regard to calendar conflicts between family occasions and university functions and adjunct tasks. In this area, the adjuncts were also asked to describe how they felt upon having to indicate to others about such conflicts. Finally, interviewees were asked about whether they believed that achieving or maintaining a work-life balance was important to them.

Methodology

In advance of the interviews, the adjunct instructors were contacted and were made aware of the questions that would be asked. Consent was granted for their responses to be recorded. The interviews (averaging thirty minutes in length) were conducted in their respective offices during a two-day period in early January 2021. The method used to document the interviews was done via voice memos on a standard iPhone 8 Plus, the device owned by the researcher. Subsequently, as a quality measure to ensure safety of the material, the memos were airdropped to an iPad and were emailed as a backup procedure in cases where the file size would allow. To safeguard the anonymity of the adjuncts in the collection of the research, pseudonyms were ascribed to each interviewee both in the following section and in the concluding reference listing. The university IRB provided permission to utilize the survey instrument prior to the administration of the interviews.

Findings

Subject number 1 – Mr. Rick Vanderburgh

Mr. Rick Vanderburgh was serving as a full-time instructor for a faith-based, Midwestern institution of higher learning. In addition, he had taught periodically for the same university in an adjunct capacity. Moreover, in a previous post, he had the distinction of serving in an administrative role which included managing multiple sites of the university evening program offered for adult learners. In fulfilling those tasks, Mr. Vanderburgh was charged with identifying prospective

adjuncts and recommending them to his dean for future consideration. Also, in developing the twelve-month calendar of classes offered at a particular location in which he was the academic program coordinator, he met regularly with adjunct instructors to gauge teaching interest for upcoming class assignments.

In terms of how to prioritize his work, Mr. Vanderburgh related that his overall number one priority was his family and in raising his two sons. As a result, he has structured his entire workload around a schedule that allows him to achieve those objectives. He further expressed his gratitude for being able to serve an organization that valued his principles in that regard in a family friendly way.

A typical day for Mr. Vanderburgh included getting his boys (and himself) ready for school and then teaching classes, interacting with students, and completing required administrative tasks. Upon leaving school, he coaches or refereed games (basketball or baseball), spends time with his sons, and is called upon to teach evening adjunct classes when contracted to do so and whenever his schedule allows.

Regarding cell phone usage, he admitted that his ongoing cell phone usage is very high. He kept his cell phone nearby, responding to texts, emails, social media on a regular basis. Also, he followed several media channels to keep updated on sports, political news, and current events. In the evening, he continued to respond to emails from students (who generally contact him at all times of the day and evening) and occasionally watched videos on his phone to relax at the end of the day. Along that line, he stated that he believed he used his phone too much and has therefore incorporated reports that measure his daily and weekly usage. Currently, he stated that these reports indicated that he used his cell phone approximately 5 hours per day. He did screen his calls but considered himself very available to be reached via phone or text (which was his preferred choice).

In his role as a faculty member, Vanderburgh regularly adhered to the ten office hours per week requirement as stipulated in the terms of his contract. As a general rule, he arrived one hour before each class that he taught and planned for at least one hour of office time following his classes. That pattern allowed an appropriate amount of time for students with specific questions to have any concerns addressed in a timely manner.

Contrary to previous positions in sales and other responsibilities in which he was responsible to cover a significant geographical territory, he appreciated his chance to interact directly with students, which provided great accessibility to them in and out of the classroom. The skills he learned in previous positions still benefitted him as he sought to advise students on a regular basis as he monitored their progress and made sure they stayed on task.

In terms of managing stress, Vanderburgh had recently implemented some lifestyle changes to better manage stress. He shared that seeking medical guidance has been extremely beneficial in charting a course correction in this regard, including – but certainly not limited to – prescription medications. Additionally, walking and engaging in sports had been extremely beneficial in combating stress. In observing the conduct of colleagues, Vanderburgh believed that they did a good job of deflecting stressful situations, employing regular communication to keep everyone informed before issues escalated. Additionally, he stated that effective delegation of tasks is a typical feature of his workplace that has led to successful outcomes. Concluding his comments on this subject, he readily admitted that everyone is different and that some are more expressive about tough issues they might be experiencing while others may tend to be more reserved and keep it to themselves.

Regarding calendar conflicts between personal events and university functions, his family had always been very supportive – particularly since he placed a premium on valuing time with them each and every day. In total, he still felt "bad" about having to tell anyone that he cannot attend a function, but he could "sleep at night" resting in the fact that his family came first.
In summary, Mr. Vanderburgh considered work-life balance to be essential. He had turned down career opportunities in the past that did not seem to provide work-life balance as an integral component.

Subject number 2 – Dr. Celeste Renault
Dr. Celeste Renault was serving as an adjunct instructor for a faith-based, Midwestern institution of higher learning. She had retired from a full-time position at the same university two years prior. Additionally, during her years as full-time faculty, she served as an adjunct for most of those years in multiple programs. Renault conveyed how each of those programs had evolved over the years. Along with their progression, the preparation and delivery of content had changed as well. Getting to know the students had been one facet that has required a great deal of her time, yet had been very fulfilling.

In terms of how to prioritize her work, Dr. Renault explained that no matter how many interruptions she had experienced due to meetings, faculty assignments, administrative responsibilities and even life events, she adopted the mindset that "students come first." In fact, prior to beginning her teaching, she worked in another area of the university. It was in this position that her philosophy was formed about the necessity of helping students who came to her with an issue that needed to be resolved. Whatever she was doing, she believed it was important to stop and help that student. More than that, Renault emphasized that id always been a priority for her to support students outside of the classroom by attending athletic events whenever possible.

It remained a family affair for Renault. Years ago, her husband began a second career as a professor in the classroom after retiring from a position with the government. Even in retirement, he continued to teach several classes per year on a part-time basis. Therefore, not only was Renault an adjunct instructor, but she was also married to an adjunct instructor as well.

Regarding cell phone usage, she revealed that she does not use her cell phone very much. She kept her cell phone nearby but used it in the afternoon mostly. Renault regularly screened her calls and would not answer unknown callers who did not leave a message. With that being said, when she taught full-time, she gave students her cell phone number and advised them to call her anytime they were having a problem.

In her role as a faculty member, Renault was faithful to keep the required office hours per university policy. Since she had multiple positions at the school during her tenure, keeping office hours was a customary element to her work. She appreciated the chance to be available, particularly to students who needed to speak with her.

In terms of managing stress, Renault smiled when being asked the question. She commented that stress has been a big thing in today's society that is common to everyone and not just to a certain group of employees. In fact, she observed stress even in kids and students. Moreover, colleagues have visited her during times of stress. One fellow professor stopped by her office and often peered out her window trying to process how to deal with all of the stress that was present.

Regarding calendar conflicts between personal events and university functions, it really bothered Renault when those issues occurred. Although she believed in family first, she still felt bad if her students had events that she could not attend. She tried to make it work whenever possible but was upset when it could not happen. She did all she could and would send notes to students explaining the conflicts with the hope that they would understand.

In summary, Dr. Renault wholeheartedly believed in work-life balance. Sometimes, she compared the pursuit to a juggling act, but even so, she related that it was important to try to pursue a balance in order to keep everything together.

Subject number 3 – Mr. Tanner Warrick

Mr. Tanner Warrick was serving as an adjunct instructor for a faith-based, Midwestern institution of higher learning. In addition, he was employed full-time in an administrative role for the same institution, a post he has held for the past several years. Based on his unique skill set, he was approached to serve as an adjunct and at the time of this interview he was completing his very first class in that regard. He greatly appreciated the fact that his institution had been very supportive of his intent to adjunct when called upon. He enjoyed helping students and the university, but he was still evaluating how to incorporate adjunct work into his schedule.

In terms of how to prioritize his work, Mr. Warrick related that he relied on an email system to triage important tasks. As a general rule, he left emails in his inbox which contained issues that were still pending. Once completed, he filed the emails in the most appropriate folder and had created approximately 200 folders in his account with which to organize such correspondence. Functionally, this system defined his current “to do” list.

In the course of his work, Mr. Warrick mentioned that there were not many routine tasks, which made it difficult for him to characterize a typical day. During some weeks, he knew he would be in meetings all day. There were a few monthly, quarterly, and annual reports that occupied his time, even though he would not consider them to be routine tasks. Upon leaving school, he liked to work on the farm and enjoyed hunting when he had the opportunity.

Regarding cell phone usage, he confessed that he used his cell phone for work during the day but rarely used it at night. He kept his cell phone nearby

but did not consider himself a “cell phone guy.” When deciding whether to answer his cell phone, Mr. Warrick stated that he would do so if available but only if it was from a recognizable number. Along that line, he considered himself very reachable, and his office door was often open. He remarked that he had had supervisors in the past that actually said Warrick was “too available.” He believed in keeping regular office hours. He said he might not be the first to arrive, but he was often the last to leave.

His prior work experience consisted of many different types of administrative positions.

In terms of managing stress, Warrick admitted that his time on the farm was his best source of stress relief. He observed that others managed stress by interacting with their kids and grandkids to take the focus off of work stress.

Regarding calendar conflicts between personal events and university functions, his work had always been number one. He looked after his mother who lived in the area but otherwise he did not have other family who lived nearby. Circling back to a point he made at the outset of this interview, he was still assessing how best to divide his time in order to fulfill his adjunct teaching responsibilities. Admittedly, he still felt guilty that apportioning some of his time toward teaching preparation inevitably took away from the other duties that he was already supposed to be doing.

In summary, Mr. Warrick considered work-life balance to be very important. He did not feel like he had been successful in achieving a work-life balance in the past and suggested that his lack of balance in making time for his personal life might be a contributing factor in why he remained single. Nevertheless, Warrick maintained that work-life balance should be a priority.

Conclusion

xamining work-life balance continues to be a perplexing conundrum. This article is a follow up to a previous study and follows the same pattern. In the first study, perceptions of work-life balance among deans were evaluated. It was particularly noteworthy, however, that the findings were quite similar between adjunct instructors and deans. For future study, the researchers recommend replicating the qualitative study to unpack the perceptions of higher education faculty as a whole.

As related by each of the three adjuncts with teaching responsibilities at a Christian university in the Midwest, the duties performed were numerous as expected. The above research demonstrated the need for flexibility to achieve stated goals. From the questions posed, it was reasonable to conclude that all three adjuncts (regardless of length of tenure as an adjunct) found their work to be valuable. With the increasing inclusion of technology in everyday life, it was clear from responses that although the adjuncts incorporated technology (cell phones predominantly) into their routines, it was a vitally expressed characteristic for them to set clearly delineated boundaries on utilization to prevent excessive intrusions.

All adjuncts agreed that a work-life balance was a desirable formula to pursue. All conceded the challenge was infinitely more difficult to attain in programming calendars, meeting office obligations and in managing stress. Also, just as in the previous study involving deans, the adjuncts did not believe that they had found the appropriate balance at the time of the interview. Yet again, as their journey continued, perhaps it was only a matter of time.

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