General Outcomes and Accomplishments in the 2007-2008 Academic Year

Once again, our collaborative and institutional endeavors, supported by the Teagle grant have helped us attain greater “cognizance” of our effectiveness and have brought us closer to putting what we’ve learned to use when striving to improve the educational experiences we provide. We have again put our grant from the Teagle Foundation to good use (please see Budget Report – Appendix One), primarily to support meetings of our collaborative, to carry on with our Focused Inquiries, and to launch a Symposium on Teaching and Learning at Kalamazoo College.

Even though we did not have as much data-crunching to do this year, we were busy on several fronts. We will follow the format used in last year’s report and simply list, in chronological order, what was done through our collaborative and refer to appendices where appropriate.

1. We helped organize and run a CLA Summer Workshop (22-24 July 2007), the first gathering of the CLA Community of Practice. Thirteen colleges participated, and these institutions have continued to work together to build a rich database for analyzing aggregated CLA results. This work is ongoing. Appendix Two includes the workshop agenda, minutes, and participant list.


3. We analyzed results from the spring 2007 administration of the CLA to the CC and KC seniors and found the 2007 KC seniors performed at the same level (Above Expected) as the 2006 KC seniors (the average scores were 4 points apart, 1383 and 1379, respectively). These almost identical performances suggested that the KC 2006 data were not a fluke. Having the 2007 senior data also helped Kalamazoo analyze CLA results for a larger data set, giving us more confidence that the differences we were seeing among academic divisions were real. 2007 CC seniors performed much better than the 2006 CC seniors. Whereas the 2006 CC seniors performed Below Expected, with an average score of 1245, the 2007 CC seniors performed Above Expected, with an average score of 1379, identical to the 2007 KC senior score. Based on the CC experience, faculty and staff there believe that motivation is a real factor on the CLA. In 2006, they administered the CLA to “captive audiences” in classes, whereas in 2007 they asked for volunteers to take the test, suggesting that volunteers were more likely to put in adequate effort. It will be very interesting to see the scores for the 2009 seniors at all three schools.

4. Paul S. gave a presentation (“What does the Collegiate Learning Assessment tell us about our effect on students?”) at the Beloit College Teagle collaborative meeting in early November.

5. Paul S. attended a Teagle Assessment Scholars (TAS) meeting at the Center of Inquiry in the Liberal Arts, where he worked with other TAS to help colleagues from institutions involved in the Wabash National Study of Liberal Arts Education (WNS) think about, and make plans for putting to use, results from the WNS.

6. A group of Kalamazoo College faculty visited Colorado College in mid-December to learn more about teaching in the block and to share ideas about putting assessment of student learning to use. (Please see Appendix Four for the meeting agenda.) KC faculty from the departments of biology, chemistry, classics, economics, mathematics, and philosophy met with CC colleagues to discuss
teaching and learning on the block plan and assessment of student learning at the department level. The meeting was well-timed for KC because it coincided with curricular conversations about creating a four-week term (similar to a block) in the academic calendar as well as with work across the KC campus to develop departmental assessment plans. The meeting also raised awareness of the Teagle project, and assessment in general, among more faculty on both the CC and KC campuses, and it provided KC faculty with a mini-retreat to discuss issues of student learning in depth.


8. As a TAS, Paul S. attended a mixed-methods workshop (at the Center of Inquiry in the Liberal Arts in mid-March) for institutions involved in the WNS.

9. The annual meeting of our collaborative, at Colorado College 18-19 April 2008, was an enjoyable and productive gathering of colleagues accustomed to open dialogue about a variety of topics. (Appendix Five contains the meeting agenda and notes.) The meeting touched on analyses of CLA data thus far and plans for administering the CLA in year four of the project to complete the longitudinal study begun with the class of 2005. All three schools agreed to administer questions from the WNS together with the CLA to 2009 seniors. We also compared our incoming students’ responses to the Freshman CIRP Survey going back several years (CIRP graphs are included in Appendix Five after the meeting minutes), heard reports on Focused Inquiry projects at all three schools, and made plans for the final year of our project (details in the meeting minutes). Reports on the Focused Inquiry projects at all three schools are included below.

10. Two Kalamazoo College faculty, Dr. Laura Furge (chemistry) and Dr. Ashley McDowell (philosophy) attended a CLA in the Classroom workshop in May. Laura and Ashley will organize and run a similar workshop for Kalamazoo College faculty during the fall of 2008 so as to encourage faculty to incorporate CLA-like problems into their courses where appropriate.

11. Kalamazoo College held its first annual Symposium on Teaching and Learning early in June. Over 30 faculty attended the symposium at which several of our colleagues presented results from, or ideas about, the scholarship of teaching and learning. Charlie Blaich graciously agreed to serve as our lead-off keynote speaker, and he provided closing comments based on what he heard during the symposium. The turn-out (almost a third of the faculty) exceeded our expectations, and the participants were engaged and eager to contribute to the conversation. KC will continue annual symposia with its new grant from The Teagle Foundation. (See Appendix Six for the symposium agenda.)

**Focused Inquiry Reports**

**Colorado College** ~ During the past year Colorado College centered on focused inquiries, and on exploring how the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) might be a component of how the College directly assesses student learning and the value of the CC Liberal Arts experience. Simultaneously, the College engaged in an outside accreditation process through the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Accrediting agency in October 2007. While full accreditation was achieved, the visit by the external team noted the need for the College to engage more fully in direct assessment including more faculty involvement in the process, and the development of an articulated approach with program goals, specific student learning outcomes and a plan to examine evidence of those outcomes in student products such as senior projects and theses. The external report provided further incentive for the College to expand work initiated by the Teagle Foundation award.

1. **Collegiate Learning Assessment.** In our previous report we noted concern over the senior CLA scores from spring 2006 in which seniors scored Below Expected. Many on campus took issue with this result
and questioned if the students were sufficiently motivated to do their best on a test that was not high stakes. Moreover, we oversampled two particular science fields, chemistry and environmental science, and those scores were particularly low compared to the rest of the seniors sampled. Was our poor performance, especially in the two areas of science worthy of concern? In spring 2007 we again tested a sample of seniors. In this case we explained to them the importance of writing full explanations of their reasoning, noted the poor performance of the prior year's seniors and the need to see if motivation was a factor. We also had a more representative sample of all majors. As a whole, the group scored Above Expected. While the new result produced a sense of relief, utilizing the CLA provided faculty with a basis for talking more openly about direct measures of student learning and, importantly, more pointedly about writing at Colorado College. The College long ago (late 1960s) decided on a Writing Across the Curriculum approach and eliminated basic composition courses from the curriculum. Over the last 20 years or so most departments have instituted a senior capstone requirement, most typically a senior thesis. In short, the CLA results furthered the conversations already underway by several departments about the nature of the senior thesis work and how departments were preparing students to succeed in that independent work ending in a written product of high quality.

In addition to campus conversations about CLA results, two faculty participated in the highly useful CLA Summer Workshop at Wabash College in July 2007. Various Teagle collaboratives reported on their work and useful discussions about the nature of the CLA and issues of motivation occurred at that meeting. Questions and concerns were also raised about how results from NSSE and CIRP might correlate to the CLA scores. The result is that the Colorado College faculty returned with a renewed interest in pursuing more intentionally the focused inquiries and determined to have open discussion of NSSE and CIRP results to see if patterns might emerge. Thus in the fall two open faculty luncheons were held by the Institutional Research office in which NSSE and CIRP data were shared.

The consensus at Colorado College is that the CLA is not a useful tool for continuous, long term use but a final determination will likely ensue once we post-test the class of 2009 next spring. This will give us a more accurate sense of 'value added' especially if we are successful in motivating students to 'do their best' and see how their scores compare to those obtained when they entered CC in fall 2005. In the meantime, the Dean has appointed an Assessment Committee of key faculty and has announced that the Fall Faculty Forum in early September will focus on the Writing Program and examine questions related to the program and how we might strengthen our approach to writing. Under consideration is a pilot writing portfolio program targeted to the First Year Experience courses in blocks one and two and then at helping faculty advisors counsel students in the first year who may need more work in courses that emphasize writing. Thus, the Teagle work on CLA and the emerging work on focused inquiries have had a gradual yet significant impact.

2. Focused Inquiries. After a year long debate and discussion, faculty recommended that the funds for focused inquiries be allocated to departments and program units that wanted to initiate or continue a study of capstone projects (e.g., senior theses, research projects, etc.). The parameters were quite flexible and open in order to encourage broad campus participation. Initially, proposals came from the International Studies unit, and from a handful of departments including History, Economics and Sociology. History and Sociology both engaged in very useful 'retreats' and subsequent re-alignment of their majors' curricula to better prepare students to complete an independent project and resultant paper. This year History has continued to meet, using internal funding sources, and is now identifying program outcomes and considering ways to assess how those outcomes are expressed in senior written products. Economics conducted surveys of current seniors to determine the perceived value of their required thesis. This summer or next fall they will conduct a similar survey of recent graduates. In 2008-09 they will hold several meetings as they consider survey results, identify student outcomes at the program level and consider how those might be assessed in the theses. English held two retreats this spring to discuss the trajectory majors take toward a required thesis or seminar. Their curriculum is far from structured, and, for the first time in over 30 years, the faculty are openly talking about adopting a more structured
approach. Both Economics and English will continue to tap unexpended Teagle funds as they progress with their focused inquiry. This summer the Environmental Sciences department was awarded Teagle funds to begin the reflective process of examining their curriculum with regards to more adequate preparation of majors for a senior product (thesis or project). They will begin by holding a retreat in late summer 2008.

While only a few departments have sought Teagle funds to engage in a focused inquiry, several others have moved forward in this arena without Teagle funds and may seek small amounts of Teagle funding in Year Four. The interest stems from hearing about the work of departments such as English, History and Sociology, and from initial knowledge of the recently funded Hampshire College-led Teagle-funded collaborative that will examine and expand the use of a rubric for scoring senior theses. For example, Crown Faculty Center Director Paul Kuerbis facilitated a lunch discussion among members of the Political Science department in late April. He shared the Hampshire rubric for scoring senior theses and the faculty saw how they might use such a tool for both determining possible program learning outcomes and how those might be expressed in senior papers. Faculty openly described meetings they might have each summer in which they would examine student performance via a rubric and modify course content. They considered the possibility of developing a rubric suitable for papers created in entry level courses. This was truly remarkable given the historical resistance to assessment by members of that department. In another example, staff of the Education department modified the Hampshire rubric in a trial effort to develop a suitable assessment tool for research papers required in their secondary Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) degree programs. The director of the secondary MAT program then shared the modified rubric at a recent meeting of the English department.

3. Next Steps in Year Four. Two opportunities are converging with the on-going work of the focused inquiries of senior capstones. First, the Dean has leveraged the Teagle-funded inquiries with the needed accreditation work. She has charged all academic departments with developing learning outcomes at the programmatic level and has also charged departments with examining ways to assess those outcomes in student written products. Second, Colorado College's participation in the Hampshire College-led work on a rubric for assessing senior theses across non-performance arts departments will enhance the emerging work at CC on examining senior capstones and the study of trajectories majors take toward independent research and writing as seniors. The remaining focused inquiry funds will be utilized to enhance our work with the Hampshire collaborative—engaging in discussions among colleagues at comparable colleges and reading senior papers and modifying the rubric. It is likely that some funds will be spent to engage more CC faculty in that project than otherwise would be possible. For example, we may use small amounts of funding to pay stipends to faculty at Kalamazoo and Earlham colleges to engage in reading CC senior theses in several departments as a pilot. It is exiting to see several opportunities converge with the final year's work in our collaborative with Kalamazoo and Earlham colleges.

Earlham College ~ In 2007-08, Earlham started preparing for our General Education assessment to be done in 2008-09. We formed a subcommittee of the Curricular Policy Committee and the Assessment Committee, comprised of eleven people, including one student, one faculty member from the Arts division, the Dean of Student Development, the Associate Academic Dean, the Institutional Research director, a director of study abroad, a librarian, the Registrar and Dean of the college, and three other faculty members, one from Social Sciences, one from Natural Sciences, and one from Humanities. The group met with a number of academic areas, ran a faculty seminar on General Education assessment and discussed what we need to assess.

We discovered that we need to assess three sets of information:

1. Is the current General Education system meeting the administrative and implementation goals the faculty had when we created this system? For example, are students having an easier time registering for classes? Is it easier for them to spend a semester off campus while also completing their requirements for
graduation? Are faculty members more free to teach a variety of classes? Some of these topics will be easy to assess and for others the evidence will be more anecdotal.

2. Are the courses that we established for the General Education system meeting their goals? For example, are the necessary library experiences happening in the appropriate classes? Are the classes that are listed as meeting Quantitative Reasoning requirements spending enough time on these skills? And are students and faculty feeling successful in these classes?

3. Are we accomplishing the outcomes specified by the General Education Learning Goals that were rewritten in 2002-03 as part of the General Education revision?

This last question seems the hardest to evaluate and the largest to address, so Earlham wrote and received a new Teagle grant to devise a method to begin to assess these learning goals on a regular basis, as part of a five-year rotation. We also discovered that the learning goals are not written in a way that makes them easy either to assess or to understand. We agreed that we would focus primarily on the first and second set of issues in this coming year and then on the third set of questions in the following years.

Earlham funded a relatively large number of people to go to the AAC&U conference in January, and two of us attended the pre-conference workshop on assessing General Education. Four members of the General Education subcommittee attended.

We ran two focus groups of seniors two days before graduation in which an outside evaluator worked with students to collect stories and other information about their experiences with General Education goals and classes during their time at Earlham. These focus groups were intended to both give students time for reflection on their General Education experiences and give the assessors a sense of how some students thought about that experience. The students seemed to appreciate the opportunity to express and explore their experiences, and the stories they tell are largely positive. These focus groups were expensive to run, but we hope to use the method as a template for the future and to hire less expensive moderators for future groups.

This summer, we are collecting information from faculty who teach General Education courses. We are looking at how well the classes meet the stated goals of the courses as well as how faculty would like the learning goals to be expressed to students.

Every year Earlham has a Faculty Retreat at the beginning of the new school year. This summer, the Academic Dean provided faculty with Derek Bok’s *Our Underachieving Colleges*, and we will discuss the book at the Faculty Retreat. We will also have Carol Geary Schneider present on Liberal Education goals. We plan then to have faculty discuss in smaller groups what they would like the learning goals for General Education to be. This will be part of the process of beginning to re-imagine and assess our learning goals.

Also in the past year, the Assessment Committee redesigned Earlham’s Assessment web page as part of our goal to make the College’s assessment practices as open as possible to all constituents. This led the Assessment Committee to think about gaps in our assessment practices and to look at ways that we might connect varying types of assessment at Earlham. We are working on ways to use survey data and other types of information to present useful findings on our new web page.

**Kalamazoo College** ~ Kiran Cunningham (KC anthropology) and Bob Grossman (KC psychology), together with expert help from Rachel Udow (KC ’08) continued to work diligently on KC’s Focused Inquiry into effects of “intense dissonance” on cognitive growth of students. The goal of our focused inquiry this year has been to develop a protocol and system of analysis that can be used to assess the effectiveness of experiential education opportunities (service learning, study abroad, and Senior Individualized Project) at Kalamazoo College and other higher education institutions. For purposes of this
research, “effectiveness” will be measured by the degree to which students experience transformational learning.

**Progress to Date:** In Year 1, we designed the research and used the Qualitative Research Methods class to collect interview data on 80 students (40 juniors and 40 seniors). Because we were particularly interested in catalysts for intercultural learning, these interviews focused primarily on the ways that intercultural learning occurred in various elements of a Kalamazoo College education. Students transcribed the interviews, coded them both inductively and deductively, and wrote papers containing preliminary analyses of the interview data. In Year 2, we built a more solid analytical framework for the research grounded in Mezirow’s theory of transformational learning and Kiely’s theory of high intensity dissonance. This work positioned us well for the third year of research leading to the development of a protocol and system of analysis for assessing the effectiveness of experiential education.

**Work Accomplished in Year 3:** The key focus of this year was to a) develop the protocol for data analysis, and b) refine the data collection instrument(s):

**Winter quarter:** Developed the protocol for data analysis.

- Developed indicators for key concepts, especially high intensity dissonance, low intensity dissonance, and transformational learning. (See the Levels of Transformation Learning scale developed by Kiran Cunningham and Bob Grossman in Appendix Seven.)
- Reviewed list of codes from year one, added new codes, and re-coded in accordance with indicators determined
- Analyzed data
- Revised interview guide in light of data analysis

**Spring quarter:** Conducted second round of interviews using revised interview guide

- Determined who and how many students should be interviewed (40-50 seniors who participated in study abroad or service-learning)
- Developed questions about language to include in the interviews (with seniors), in conjunction with those doing that research
- Identified student interviewers
- Rachel Udow conducted interviews and organized and trained additional interviewers
- Determined strategy for administering the questionnaire and analyzing the data
- Sent out digital recordings for transcription

**Plans for Summer 2008:** Test and fine-tune the data analysis protocol developed in the Winter by using it to analyze the interviews conducted in the Spring.

**How will findings feed back into the College generally and student learning more specifically?** Developing a sound assessment protocol is key to collecting good assessment data, and only good data are useful. This project is designed to produce that sound assessment protocol. Once we have this protocol, we can use it to assess the effectiveness of a variety of experiential education programs at the college in terms of the extent to which they foster transformational learning in our students. With specific knowledge and a more nuanced understanding of where we are excelling and where we are falling short of our goals, we can begin to make the necessary improvements to experiential programs and start the assessment loop again.

We also include here an email received from Kate Thomas, a 2006 graduate who took the CLA. Kate sent us the following email after reading the Peer Review article about Kalamazoo’s work with CLA data and our focus on experiences of high intensity dissonance:
I think you're right on in examining what high-intensity dissonance brings to the student (and professor?) experience at K. Now, more than two years after walking through the quad for the last time, I can say with confidence that it was the moments of challenge, the moments when I wasn't 100% sure that I'd actually found a subject for a piece in my independent study with Marin Heinritz, or when I had my universe rocked in the Visions of America cluster events during my FYSeminar, or when I found out my mom had cancer and had to keep on going, or when I was asked to write a piece about Betsy Hoort, or reporting an incident of sexual harassment for The Index, or when I came back to France... THOSE were the moments that taught me the most. They were the ones that pushed me in ways I'd never been pushed before. That dissonance, in my mind and heart, very abruptly pushed me out of my comfort zone and made it all worthwhile. As you all—and nearly everyone at K—deserve…THANK YOU, thank you, thank you. Thank you for not only being the ones pushing us out onto those limbs, but also, now, for studying what that brings to a K student’s lifelong learning adventure.

Best,
Kate Thomas
(rec’d 2 July 2008)

Challenges We Faced

Putting new-found knowledge into action has been challenging on each of our campuses. We are finding that collecting data, as labor-intensive as that can sometimes be, is much easier than motivating an institution to make changes based on assessment findings. We realize that this challenge is not unique to our collaborative, and we will continue to look for ways to act on what we learn. However, finding the correct balance between bottom-up and top-down support for acting on findings can sometimes seem like the holy grail of assessment.

Successes We Enjoyed

The CLA Summer Workshop engaged a critical mass of Teagle-funded institutions in open discussion of CLA data and how best to use those data to improve student learning, and set the stage for an ongoing CLA CoP. We were very pleased that each of our institutions will be able to build on momentum established with our current grant with subsequent awards from The Teagle Foundation that will allow us to dig deeper into particular areas of interest on our campuses. We enjoyed a successful project meeting at CC in which we were able to report on progress in our focused inquires, take a close look at the ways in which our incoming students differ and how they are the same, and finalize plans for the CLA administration in year four. The first annual Symposium on Teaching and Learning at KC was inspiring, both in terms of participation and in the engaged and animated discussion it engendered. Finally, despite the challenges noted above, assessment of student learning is clearly gaining traction at all three institutions, perhaps even reaching a tipping point, with especially great gains at CC.

Plans for Year Four

1. Administer the CLA to seniors at CC, EC, and KC; administer the CLA to first-year students at EC and KC.
2. Get started on newly funded Teagle projects.
3. Continue with Focused Inquiries.
4. Wrap up the work of our collaborative and CLA data analysis with meetings at Earlham College in spring 2009 and Kalamazoo College in fall 2009.
List of Appendices

- Appendix One ~ Budget Report
- Appendix Two ~ CLA Summer Workshop
- Appendix Three ~ KC One-Pager
- Appendix Four ~ KC/CC Meeting
- Appendix Five ~ Annual Meeting at CC
- Appendix Six ~ KC SoTL
- Appendix Seven ~ Transformational Learning Scale

We close with thanks again to The Teagle Foundation. Please contact us if you have questions or would like more information on any part of the report.
Appendix One

Budget Report
Teagle Grant Budget Report ~ Year 3

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Funds expended by the collaborative:

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Balance for Year 4 activities: 103,805.65

- Administer CLA to seniors at all three schools: 24,000.00
- Incentives for seniors to take the CLA: 15,000.00
- Administer the CLA to first-years at EC and KC: 10,000.00 (est.)
- Spring 2009 Meeting at Earlham College: 10,000.00 (est.)
- Fall 2009 Meeting at Kalamazoo College (final meeting): 15,000.00 (est.)
- Wrap up Focused Inquiry Projects: 25,000.00 (est.)

NOTE: Amounts reported are those that had cleared by June 2008. There are still some Year 3 charges outstanding which we will account for in our Final Report.
APPENDIX TWO

CLA SUMMER WORKSHOP
Meeting Outline
CLA Workshop, July 22-24, 2007

“Exploring and Examining Uses of the Collegiate Learning Assessment: A Workshop for Selected Teagle Consortia”

Sunday, July 22 (all sessions in Trippet Hall on Wabash’s Campus Today)

Noon to 5 p.m. - Arrival at Comfort Inn, Crawfordsville, Indiana

6:00 – 6:30 p.m. - Reception at Trippet Hall, Wabash College (all transportation to and from the hotel to the workshop at Wabash College will be provided by the Center of Inquiry)

6:30 – 8:30 p.m. - Opening session (Discussion of the Workshop Goals– (Paul Sotherland, Professor of Biology at Kalamazoo College, and Charlie Blaich, Director of Inquiries at the Center of Inquiry in the Liberal Arts, Wabash College)

Monday, July 23 (all sessions will be in Detchon Hall on Wabash’s Campus Today and Tuesday)

8:15 – 9:00 a.m. - Breakfast

9:15 – 10:30 a.m. – Meetings of small groups, composed of representatives from institutions in different Teagle collaboratives (institutional teams remain together), to discuss similarities and differences in CLA results among institutions

10:30 – 10:45 a.m. – Coffee Break

10:45 – 12:15 p.m. – Reports of small groups to the whole group (making sense of the data and what we are learning from the patterns we are seeing)

12:30 – 3:30 p.m. – Working lunch and work sessions - institutional teams will meet to work on understanding their own data better, in light of what was discussed in the morning sessions, and work toward “action steps” for using the new insights upon returning to campus

3:30 – 3:45 p.m. - Break

3:45 – 5:00 p.m. – Whole group de-briefing (what is emerging from our work that may help others)

6:00 – 7:30 p.m. - Dinner

7:30 – Small groups meet again to discuss and confirm next steps for an action plan

Tuesday, July 24

8:15 – 9:00 a.m. - Breakfast

9:15 – 11:00 a.m.

- Reports on Action Plans
- Reflections on overall themes during the two day’s discussion/workshop overall

11:30 – Lunch

12:30 p.m. and on – Departure
Greetings again to you all! I hope the summer has allowed you some measure of rest and relaxation. We are moving along with developing the workshop here in July, and I am writing to you on behalf of the workshop facilitators (Paul Sotherland, Kalamzoo College and Teagle Assessment Scholar, Charlie Blaich, Director of Inquiries here at the Center, and myself) to ask you to do some work with your CLA data think about some issues related to those data before your team arrives at the July workshop. We believe that if we all engage with the CLA data, along with other institutional data that may correlate with the CLA, ahead of time, we will be better prepared to make substantial progress toward attaining deeper understanding of the CLA and how we can best use the new insights.

Through this workshop, funded, in part, by a grant from the Teagle Foundation, we are convening colleagues from several assessment collaboratives with the intent to form a “community of practice” (please see the two-page primer by Brook Manville) focused on addressing issues related to using the CLA most effectively. To that end, the following pre-workshop “assignment,” as well as all activities taking place during the workshop, will entail openly sharing and discussing data among institutions. Everyone involved in this workshop must understand that we’re all in this together and that details of what transpires at this workshop will stay entirely among the participants only. That said, all of us together might decide to publish, or make public in some way, results of our collective, and aggregated, explorations of the CLA, but no institutional data will be shared beyond the realm of our workshop group. Trusting everyone to adhere to this agreement will foster the open, frank, and supportive atmosphere needed for this workshop to be successful.

We ask each team, to do the following prior to the workshop:

1. Explore, as thoroughly as possible, you institution’s CLA data. As a point of departure, please see the attached manuscript, and the Excel spreadsheet on which much of it was based, to help you with your exploration. Use any data you have on campus such as CSS, CIRP, portfolio summary information, NSSE, etc., the goal being to see if there are connections between these data and what you are seeing in the CLA results. As another example of the kind of institutional data you might think about, we are also attaching some Wabash data: NSSE scores, WNSLAE data on fall, 2006 incoming survey information on freshmen and incoming data on outcomes measures.

2. Summarize your work and submit your summary ahead of time so that we can distribute the collection of summaries to everyone on the first night of the workshop. Receiving these summaries by July 15 at the latest would allow us to make refinements in our workshop schedule if necessary. One of the first things we will want to do, during the small group sessions on Tuesday morning, will be to look for common patterns in the CLA data across institutions. We will want those small groups, each composed of representatives from the assessment collaboratives, to interrogate each other about institutional patterns and then discuss the results of this conversation with the whole group later Tuesday morning.

3. Bring an Excel file (on a USB drive, if possible), similar to the one attached, to the meeting. And, if you used other data sets to explore your CLA data, please bring those as well. Having everyone bring their data to the workshop will allow us to do some new (inter-institutional) data crunching on Tuesday afternoon to investigate broader patterns in CLA results the may emerge from our morning discussions.

The intended outcome of our workshop is to find ways to use the CLA to become institutions that not only continuously serve our students well, but also get better at helping our students achieve well.

Please don’t hesitate to contact me (or Charlie or Paul) with questions about the meeting. We look forward to joining with all of you to do this important work.
Collegiate Learning Assessment Workshop  
Wabash College, July 2007

Summary prepared by Chris Van Wyk

Handouts distributed at the meeting are identified by double-square-brackets [[like this]] and might be available in electronic form to attendees should you wish to have these.

**Sunday the 22nd - evening**

Paul Sotherland: Goals for the workshop

- Make sense of the data institutions received from CLA
- Foster a community of practice
- See how to use findings to improve student learning (“close the loop”)
- Use results from other instruments (NSSE, etc.) to provide context for, and perhaps cross-validation of, CLA results
- Explore psychometric properties of CLA
  - Validity
  - Reliability
  - Meaning of individual students’ scores
  - Existence of “ceiling effect”
  - Role of students’ motivation in their performance

Charlie Blaich distributed a sheet [[Significant differences in pre-test measures of educational outcomes by institutional type]] summarizing a preliminary analysis of how students enrolling in liberal arts institutions differ from those enrolling in regional and research universities and community colleges. The differences identified on the sheet remain after controlling for academic factors (e.g., high school grades, standardized test scores), demographic factors (e.g., sex, race/ethnicity, parents’ education). The differences appear on such scales as:

- Miville-Guzman Universal-Diverse Orientation (e.g., diversity contacts, relativistic appreciation)
- Socially Responsible Leadership (e.g., commitment, controversy with civility)
- Ruff Psychological Well-Being (e.g., purpose in life)
- Selected CIRP items (e.g., importance of different kinds of achievement, openness to diversity, academic motivation)

The modest suggestion is that CAE’s adjusting raw scores only for SAT scores barely scratches the surface of differences that could account for performance on the CLA.

A document based on the HEDS “Statement of understanding” was distributed [[Understandings regarding use of information shared at the workshop]], codifying responsible use of results that were to be revealed during the workshop.

**Monday the 23rd - morning**

Participants worked in small groups and reported back on four topics (shown below in curly braces):

{hopes for CLA}

- Inter-institutional comparisons that identify positive outliers
- Authentic, holistic assessment mechanisms for
  - Current programs
  - New programs
  - General education
- Something better than a “limping” system of portfolios
- DEEP-like study of institutions with high CLA scores

{what participants have learned already}
• Intra-institutional comparisons that identify weaknesses
• Difficulty of “closing the loop” – using results to inform change
• Oversampling from students with low SAT scores need not lower an institution’s CLA score; indeed, it could allow those students to demonstrate better-than-expected performance
• As they are retired from active use, parts of the CLA will soon be available for classroom use

{what has enabled learning at your institution}
• Support from administration
• "Holy trinity of faculty development": alcohol, food, money
• Faculty involvement in development of the tool and grading students' work (e.g., where consortium assessed student writing)
• Some “fast and loose” data mining, if only to get the conversation started
• Consortial work
  o Knowing others' scores enhances confidence in understanding one’s own institutional results
  o Someone suggested seeing the consortium as an “alliance” to improve student learning

{challenges to working with CLA}
• Faculty antagonism to
  o Comparisons between departments and programs
  o “presuming to capture the work of faculty in a standardized test” <jibe: CLA = “mindless empiricism”>
• Students' motivation, esp. since validity of individuals' scores is in doubt
• Cross-validation with other measures (e.g., NSSE, MAPP, CAAP, GRE, MCAT, LSAT, GMAT)
• Consistent administration
• “Unpacking” different effects
  o Major (how discipline-specific are problem-solving skills?)
  o Number of credits being attempted by test-takers during term of CLA administration
  o Facility with the “fantasy element” and role-playing required for some of the performance tasks on the CLA
  o Rule-followers v. rule-breakers <test setting can provoke “dutifulness”>
• Time needed to agree on changes and put them into effect
• Human cost of assessment
• Dealing with floods of performance data

Monday the 23rd – afternoon
Participants met in different small groups and reported back on planning to use the CLA results at their institutions (identified in square brackets):

[Augustana +]
• Intensive analysis of which subscores were most predictive of score (hence, which pedagogical revisions to emphasize)
• “struggling to turn results into information into action”
• Consortium assessed student papers across institutions, so members asked how revelatory CLA findings were compared to findings about students' writing
• Regarding writing assessment, some had asked how competently students’ papers could be assessed without knowing
  o the assignment to which they responded
  o How much score mattered to course grade
  o How much faculty had prepared students for the assignment
  o Discipline of paper
  o Level of student
  o Level of reader
• These questions prompted at least one institution to “to meta” with faculty, reviewing assignments against rubrics, to assess how well-structured the assignments themselves were
• Attempts to assess value added by major must account for students’ migration among majors

[Colorado, Earlham, Kalamazoo]
• Planning two-day workshops for faculty in several disciplines, to discuss both general and discipline-specific pedagogical ideas – process and content, respectively
• Want to pool data from as many schools as possible to look for effects of academic division (e.g., natural science majors underperforming in writing)

[unattributed]
• Add open-ended questions about
  o What contributed most to . . .
  o What experience mattered most . . .
• Compile top five suggestions to CLA

**Tuesday the 24th - morning**
Participants worked in small groups on one of four topics (identified below in curly braces) and reported back to the larger group:

{data sharing} Paul Sotherland distributed a sheet of graphs[[summary of aggregate CLA results from all institutions present]]
• Scatterplots suggest existence of ceiling effect and restricted range
• CLA scores adjusted for SAT “look goofy”
• Effects of academic division (business, natural science, social science, etc.), which were seen at some schools, were not evident in overall data: careful ANOVA needed

{other experiences we would like to see connected with performance on CLA}
• Factors that many institutions already have coded, so could apply to results of CLA already administered
  o Major, double major, minor, concentration; remoteness between major and minor
  o GPA
  o Level of foreign language proficiency, course-taking
  o Level of mathematics attainment
  o Internships
  o Study abroad, perhaps looking for effects of
    ▪ Different durations
    ▪ Home-stay
    ▪ Foreign-language or not
    ▪ dissonance
• Factors that could be applied to results of future administrations of CLA
  o NSSE questions adapted for administration together with CLA [[CLASSE instrument developed at St. Olaf]], e.g., “How often have you ...?”, “How much did coursework emphasize ...?”, “How much did experience contribute to ...?”
  o Service learning involvement
  o Leadership on campus

{best practices in CLA administration} institutions discussed their experience getting students to participate, and the mechanics of giving the CLA [[recruitment lessons from St. Olaf]]

{best practices in helping faculty to understand CLA findings}
• Commitment to bring *something* back to faculty as a condition of participating in CLA
• Open fora (retreat, assessment lunch) at which results/findings are shared
• Open forum on academic advising, at which student leaders commented on the experience of taking CLA
• CLA will send experts to a campus workshop: let faculty “take” a CLA task
• Use questions about and criticisms of CLA to engage faculty discussion or quickly shift the discussion from results to pedagogy
• Links to other instruments (NSSE, writing-assessment consortium) help faculty to understand, cross-validate
• Link to other relevant conversations and decisions at the institution, e.g., gen-ed review and revision
• Host a discipline-based, perhaps multi-institutional, pedagogy workshop
• CLA should disaggregate results to make them more useful (several institutions had done so on their own)
• CLA’s standard report of results “notably unsexy”, “god-awful”, “inscrutable” <worst practice?>

[Chun] Chun notes this will be the “worst pep talk ever!”
• Official narrative v. reality, e.g., how CLA came to be online
• Positive aspect of workshop: constructive criticism, not faculty “gotchas”
• Positive aspect in general: change in conversation about assessment in higher ed
• Negative aspect: lots of work to administer CLA and interpret results
• Tensions
  o Standardized v. customized administration
  o Administration-driven v. faculty-driven settings associated with radically different presuppositions <who is “the reluctant other”?>
  o Validating change v. creating leverage to make change
  o What’s the appropriate unit of analysis? institution, department, discipline, student
  o Ease of administration may be inversely proportional to ease of interpreting results
  o Perfect v. pretty good tools
• [[You ARE a Real Good University After All! Understanding Value-Added Assessment]]: a riff on Charles-Atlas style transformation of 98-pound weaklings

[Blaich] advice to institutions planning to use CLA
• Consider CLA tasks in your institutional context: if your results revealed a deficiency, is there something you would stop doing in order to make room to improve performance?
• CLA is a program in early stages of development, so it is complicated to use
• Better to devote resources to respond to findings than to improve assessment
• Meanings of individuals’ scores continues to be a nagging issue
• Instead of several small consortia, sharing results in a larger group might afford more analytical power

[Van Wyk] take-away from the workshop: three big categories
• Making sense
  o investigating technical questions
  o context from other variables
  o peer schools’ results
  o links to related findings
• Making connections
  o fostering cross-institutional faculty and staff conversations
  o fostering cross-disciplinary discussions within and across institutions
  o creating a community of practice
• Making a difference
  o “closing the loop”
  o getting change into the curriculum and the classroom
  o recognizing when learning outcomes are “good enough”
CLA Participants by Institution or Organization

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Appendix Three

KC One-Pager
After receiving the 2007 CLA data for Kalamazoo College seniors, and seeing patterns in those data that are similar to patterns seen in data from last year, going back and fiddling around with the data from first-year students (now juniors) seemed prudent. Because the intended majors (at least, intended for now...) of these students is now known, categorizing their incoming CLA scores by the academic division of their major and comparing those scores with CLA scores from seniors in the same academic divisions is now possible. As you can see, Adjusted CLA scores were used in the graph because those scores account (to a certain extent) for variation in CLA performance that is correlated with SAT scores, which vary little among academic divisions for first-years or seniors. (If you are interested in more detail about this adjustment, please refer to our 2007 paper in Peer Review.) The graph shows (essentially) no difference in First-Year AdjCLA scores among academic divisions, and, on average K students scored slightly below (but not different from) what was expected of them on the CLA. In contrast, as is already known from past analyses of 2006 data (and corroborated by the addition of 2007 data), there are marked (and significant) differences among academic divisions in how well K students performed on the CLA. Moreover, there is a sizeable (dare one say huge?) change between scores of first-years and seniors majoring in the languages and a small (perhaps puny - but near the "expected" national average) change for students majoring in natural sciences. And, while making "ball-park" comments, changes seen in the social sciences are certainly notable (probably "above expected"), whereas those in fine arts and humanities are probably somewhere around "at expected."
Appendix Four

KC/CC Meeting
**SCHEDULE OF EVENTS**

*Kalamazoo College visits Colorado College*

**12-14 December 2007**

(Unless noted otherwise, all events are in The Learning Commons at Tutt Library located at 1021 N. Cascade. Phone: 389-6252)

**WEDNESDAY - 12 December**

Noon(ish)  
Arrive in Colorado Springs, check in at Antlers Hilton (downtown), scope out environs near hotel, and get used to altitude 😊

5:00 pm  
Gather for “reception” in hotel lobby with Paul Kuerbis (and other CC folks?), followed by dinner at nearby restaurant

**THURSDAY - 13 December**

7:00 am  
Breakfast at hotel or on the way to CC

8:30  
Arrive at The Learning Commons on CC campus

9:00-noon  
Visit CC classes

Noon-1:30 pm  
Lunch and conversations with CC folks about teaching/learning in the block and assessment of student learning

2:00-4:00 pm  
Open for meetings with faculty colleagues

4:00 pm  
Reception at The Learning Commons – conversations about Kalamazoo’s curricular changes

5:30ish pm  
Dinner at restaurant downtown

**FRIDAY - 14 December**

??  
Breakfast on own

10:00 am  
Depart for airport

1:00ish pm  
Depart for K’zoo
Appendix Five

Annual Meeting at CC
Collaborative Meeting

Schedule of Events

Loomis Hall
Colorado College
18-19 April 2008

FRIDAY, 18 April
Morning Time for institutional teams to meet (away from home)
Noon LUNCH – At Loomis Lounge in Loomis Hall – time to chat and get reacquainted
1:30 Words of welcome and overview of meeting (Paul Kuerbis)
1:45 Workshop (of sorts) about survey based on Wabash National Study and how survey results correlate (or don’t) with CLA performance (Paul Sotherland)
3:00 BREAK
3:30 What do patterns in and trajectories of CIRP data from CC, EC, and KC tell us about what our students “bring” to college and how that might affect their response to what they encounter? (Anne Dueweke and Amanda Udis-Kessler)
4:30 RECEPTION
6:00 pm--- DINNER at Sonterra Grill (28 S. Tejon)

SATURDAY, 19 April
8:30 am BREAKFAST (Continental)
9:00 Reports from CC, EC, and KC on Focused Inquiry projects
10:30 BREAK
10:45 Planning for 2008-2009 administration of CLA and for final year of project
12:00 LUNCH – Meeting Wrap-up
Afternoon Time for institutional teams to meet and make plans for final year of project
6:00 pm DINNER at MacKenzie’s (128 S. Tejon)

Meeting Notes

FRIDAY, APRIL 18
12:00 - 1:30 - lunch

Attending: Amanda Udis-Kessler (CC), Anne Dueweke (KC), Bill Buskirk (EC), Deb Jackson (EC), Fonsie Guilaran (EC), Jeff Noblett (CC), Julie Stockenberg (CC), Kari Kalve (EC), Kiran Cunningham (KC), Larry Stimpert (CC), Mario Montano (CC), Mickey White (EC), Nate Eastman (EC), Nate Bower (CC), Paul Kuerbis (CC), Paul Sotherland (KC), Phoebe Lostroh (CC), Re Evitt (CC), Susan Ashley (CC), Tracy Santa (CC)

Introductory Remarks by Paul Kuerbis and Paul Sotherland:
- Information that is shared remains confidential
- Collaboration ends in Fall 2009; by then all will have tested a group of students as freshman and seniors and will get longitudinal value-added score on the CLA
- Differing opinions were voiced about validity of CLA
- Collaboration allows working alongside friends and colleagues
Catalyst for Cognizance and Change
A Collaborative Value-Added Assessment Project Supported by The Teagle Foundation

- CC had high rate of freshman taking
- Some other collaborations have looked at sophomores
- Need to turn what we learn into action research; we should not simply study results, but think of how to use that knowledge back in the classroom
- When interpreting the results we need to keep in mind what students bring to college. How will they respond to what we do? (CRIP data might provide clues.)

Presentation by Paul S.
- Overview of how CLA works and is scored
- Sample Kalamazoo data (seniors from 2006 and 2007, first-years 2005)
  - Scores from consecutive years were almost identical for seniors
  - Adjusted CLA score (real score minus expected CLA score determined by SAT)
    - SAT is composite score, but it would be interesting to separate verbal and math scores and compare individually
  - Students majoring in languages are well above expected score, sciences the worst
    - No significant difference in CLA scores by major for freshman; languages have the most value-added
  - Need critical thinking, analytical reasoning AND writing skills to craft a well-written answer on the CLA; skills are linked, but writing skills may be graded more strongly
    - Are natural science students at a disadvantage? Does the way the CLA folks grade the answers put natural science students at a disadvantage?
    - Social sciences have a balance of both skills, whereas humanities may attract students who dislike quantitative analysis and natural sciences may attract students who don't like to write
- After taking the CLA, 2007 seniors also took a survey with NSSE-like questions about college experience (diversity, teacher availability, classroom experiences, etc.) from the Wabash National Study.
  - Should there be a positive correlation between survey responses and CLA scores? 
    - Split into small groups to discuss this.
      - Diversity experiences could help depending on cognitive ability of the students
        - Interactions with others forces one to be critical of oneself, consider others' opinions, critically analyze arguments
      - Foreign language experience/study abroad requires more critical thinking comparisons; learning a second language is an almost scientific process (graphs of syntax changes, memorization, etc.)
        - Come from many different disciplines
        - Exposure to other cultures and cultural values
          - If students feel that faculty are invested in them personally, they might be more willing to push themselves to rise to higher expectations
  - Paul found no differences among divisions in survey data; he (and Charlie Blaich) also found no correlation between CLA scores and survey data
  - Paul proposes that we administer the survey to the 2009 seniors, who took the CLA as first-year students, and then look for correlations between survey results and value-added CLA scores for those “longitudinal” students.

Amanda Udis-Kessler and Anne Dueweke – CIRP Freshman survey
- What are characteristics of our incoming students and how do they differ among the institutions?
- CIRP – Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) Freshman Survey
  - Covers a wide variety of issues: demographics, financial aid, secondary school experience/achievement, education/career plans, self-concept, values/attitudes/beliefs
Comparison of all 3 schools over all the time they have administered the CIRP
See graph handout attached
Do the data correspond with what we see at our institutions? Overall, yes.
How do CC results match up with college core values? How prepared are CC freshman to meet
our values when they get here? What about gender differences? How have their high school
educations prepared them for critical thinking and academic engagement?
Want to paint as accurate a picture as we can of our institutions (CRIP) and how students view
the education they've received (NSSE) and their achievements (CLA)

SATURDAY, APRIL 19
Morning breakfast

Report on KC’s Focused Inquiry - Kiran Cunningham (and comments from group):
  • Perry scale of intellectual development – where are our students?
  • Under what conditions do students move through the Perry scale and get to upper-level thinking?
    o Conducting interviews and coding them
    o Taking inventory of ones’ own skills
    o With the right kind of scaffolding, students can do more upper-level thinking
  • Study of students at UCLA: teaching first-years about the learning models and presenting the
    process to them - those who hear about the framework do better and think more maturely than
    those who do not
  • Need more opportunities to try in-depth thinking, and need those opportunities repeated over
    four years
  • Students who had more turbulent high school years are more ready to think in-depth than those
    whose childhoods were relatively unchallenging
  • Tension between being open and explicit about class objectives and being a little more tricky in
    order to challenge their thinking
  • Students’ goals of college (either “to get a good job,” “to get an education,” or “to create a life
    philosophy”) changes how they think
  • Examining own world view and deciding if you believe it, be able to see others and be able to
    defend own positions
  • Develop new habit of learning that allows you to explore other options
  • Set up experiences of dissonance that will challenge students’ beliefs
  • Culture of narcissism – millennial cohorts. It is not simply about developmental stages by at
    socio-cultural cohorts. (This is where CIRP data could come in)
  • Other Teagle project that CC is involved in is looking at sophomores and self-authorship

Report from Paul Kuerbis (CC) and Kari Kalve (EC)
  • Paul Kuerbis - CC has devoted most time this year to discuss senior capstones
    o Seniors did not seem adequately prepared to do independent work at senior-level
      • Course structuring
      • Common syllabi for some courses
      • Input from alumni and current seniors about how effective senior capstone was
    o Grant funds went to discussions and retreats about the issue
    o For example, English department noticed a gap between intro level courses and senior
      capstones, with intervening courses all topical, not theoretical
      • As a result, they created a junior seminar
      • What are we preparing them for? Further careers in their field or more general
        world applications
• New Teagle project (with several other institutions) has developed around senior capstones to assess across disciplines with universal rubric for evaluating senior projects – shared rubric with meeting participants who found it very intriguing.
• We, at CC, believe that our current Teagle project has been effective at making changes at CC
  o English department had not made curriculum changes in 15 years
  o Even departments which are against other assessment programs like the idea of focusing on the senior capstone – at least should be having these discussions
  o Successful conversations in a few departments ("positive deviants"?) triggers other departments to examine their own capstones
  o Helped with reaccreditation efforts
  o Has created a culture where it is ok to examine student learning without seeming accusatory
    ▪ CC is very independent - allows profs to make own course evaluations - so progress is slow, but a core group (of early adopters) is hopping on board and gathering supporters
    ▪ Internally developed rather than externally imposed change seems to be working
  o Curriculum study will be examining course number evaluations
  o Rubrics can devalue parts of teaching that are most valuable to teachers because they weigh different aspects unfairly
• Kari Kalve
  o Good progress with assessment, but more has been department-specific, not general education
    ▪ What do we assess? The classes? The 10 learning goals?
      • Working with numbers and writing/critical thinking
    ▪ Will do small group meetings for each set of courses that fulfill a general education requirement. How are we stating what a general ed. class does and are we achieving those goals?
    ▪ Focus groups w/ seniors about general ed
    ▪ General education assessment committee
    ▪ Do students even know what the learning goals are? They know the requirements, but not why they are important
      • Restructuring handbook, informing advisors

Small group discussions and Wrap-up conversation
• What will we do as institutions and as a collaborative by fall 09?
• Kalamazoo
  o Continue with focused inquiry
  o Administer the CLA to 2008 first-years and to 2009 seniors, who will also complete a survey based on the Wabash National Study
  o Analyze the boatload of data that will emerge
• CC
  o See how we can tie together capstone projects and learning outcomes analysis
  o Facilitate conversations cross departmental, with Teagle scholars or outside faculty
  o Administer CLA (and the WNS survey) to 2009 seniors
• Earlham
  o Continue with CLA (as per KC)
  o Faculty retreat around general education goals
• Spring 2009 collaborative meeting will occur at Earlham in early spring
• Final collaborative meeting will occur at Kalamazoo in Fall of 2009

Meeting adjourned at noon for lunch.
Average Grade in High School - A or A+

Kalamazoo  Colorado  Earlham
Time Spent Watching TV - 3 to 5 Hours

[Graph showing time spent watching TV from 1999 to 2006 for Kalamazoo, Colorado, and Earlham, with trends slightly increasing over the years.]
Percentage of Students Self-Rating Above Average or in Top 10% for Academic Ability

Kalamazoo  Colorado  Earlham
Percentage of Students Self-Rating Above Average or in Top 10% for Creativity
Percentage of Students Self-Rating Above Average or in Top 10% for Math Ability

- Kalamazoo
- Colorado
- Earlham
Percentage of Students Self-Rating Above Average or Top 10% for Competitiveness

Kalamazoo  Colorado  Earlham
Percentage of Students Self-Rating Above Average or Top 10% for Drive to Achieve

![Graph showing the percentage of students self-rating above average or top 10% for Drive to Achieve from 1999 to 2006. The graph compares Kalamazoo, Colorado, and Earlham, with data points for each year.]
Probable Career - Artist
Reasons Noted as Very Important for Going to College
To Gain a General Education and Appreciation of Ideas
Reasons Noted as Very Important for Attending this Particular College
This College Has a Very Good Academic Reputation
Reasons Noted as Very Important for Attending this Particular College
This College Has a Good Reputation for its Social Activities
Reasons Noted as Very Important for Attending this Particular College
This College's Graduates Gain Admission to Top Graduate/Professional Schools
Reasons Noted as Very Important for Attending this Particular College
This College's Graduates Get Good Jobs

- Kalamazoo
- Colorado
- Earlham
Reasons Noted as Very Important for Attending this Particular College
Rankings in National Magazines
Objectives Considered Essential or Very Important
Becoming an Authority in My Field
Objectives Considered Essential or Very Important
Helping Others Who Are in Difficulty
Objectives Considered Essential or Very Important
Developing a Meaningful Philosophy of Life
Objectives Considered Essential or Very Important
Being Very Well Off Financially

Kalamazoo  Colorado  Earlham
APPENDIX SIX

KC SoTL
Kalamazoo College
SYMPOSIUM ON TEACHING AND LEARNING*
Spring 2008

Thursday, 12 June
12:00 – 3:00 pm
Stryker Center, Room 2

Lunch - 12:00 to 12:30

Charlie Blaich  Director of Inquiries at the Center of Inquiry in the Liberal Arts
Lessons learned from the Wabash National Study of Liberal Arts Education

Katie MacLean, Jennifer Redmann, Kathy Smith, and Jan Solberg
How does foreign language proficiency lead to better critical thinking and problem-solving skills?

Kiran Cunningham, Bob Grossman, and Rachel Udow
Emerging insights about transformational learning at Kalamazoo College

Ashley McDowell
Use of philosophical epistemology to improve students' personal epistemology

Break - 1:45 to 2:00

Laura Furge
Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) in the Classroom at Kalamazoo College

Patrik Hultberg
Persuasion as a teaching and learning tool

Charlie Blaich
Closing remarks

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Appendix Seven

Transformational Learning Scale
Levels of Transformational Learning
(Developed by Kiran Cunningham and Bob Grossman, Kalamazoo College)

Knowledge changes
1. Learning “about” X
2. Recognizing different points of view
3. Discovery of options
4. Provisional occupation of role
5. Identifying passions
6. Reflection on behavior

Attitude changes (affective shift)
1. Overcoming fear
2. Willingness to open up
3. Gaining confidence
4. Valuing civic action or community involvement
5. Developing a passion for X
6. Recognizing feelings aroused by the experience of high- and/or low-intensity dissonance
7. “Letting go” of control
8. Competence and self-confidence affirmed
9. Competence and self-confidence transferred

Understanding different perspectives
1. “I see things differently”
2. Valuing of different points of view
3. Empathy

Dealing with Dissonance
1. (Experiencing low-intensity dissonance)
2. (Experiencing high-intensity dissonance)
3. Self-reflexively thinking through the feelings aroused by dissonance
4. Making plans to alter one’s behavior based on the feelings aroused by dissonance

Changes in structural understanding of the issue
1. Critical assessment of assumptions about the world
2. Structural/conceptual understanding linked to the experience
3. Developing problem solving tools
4. Authorship of role
5. Applying learning across experiences

Changes in self understanding
1. Critical reflection on one’s perspective
2. Critical assessment of assumptions about self
3. Taking responsibility for one’s perspective
4. Planning and/or taking action based on self-defined criteria
5. Taking responsibility for one’s learning
6. Inventorying and assessing knowledge and skills
7. Seeking to fill identified gaps in knowledge and skills

Transformational change
1. Critically questioning frameworks of meaning in social discourse
2. Making problematic existing ways of seeing and doing
3. Fundamentally shifting premises
4. Reframing problems
5. Creation of new subjective meanings (meanings about “I”)
6. Creation of new objective meanings (meanings about “them”, “the issue”, etc.)
7. Reflexively making connections between the experience, oneself, and a wider institutional, social, and political awareness
8. Shift in habits of mind
Levels of Transformational Learning
(Developed by Kiran Cunningham and Bob Grossman, Kalamazoo College)

Note: The Levels of Transformational Learning scale maps loosely onto the Perry scale of Intellectual Development, however the Levels of Transformational Learning scale goes further. Conventional wisdom in higher education is that most students do not reach the final levels of the Perry Scale as undergraduates. However, Kiran Cunningham, in particular, is convinced that some students are capable of reaching the “commitment” level of the Perry scale, and even reaching the Transformational Change level of the scale she and Bob Grossman developed. The crux of Kalamazoo’s focused inquiry is to learn how to move students as far as possible towards transformational change during their undergraduate years.

References:


