

Connecting Life and Learning: Teaching the Whole Person



Montclair State University

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Randy Bass, Georgetown University

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“You know. It was taught as as a gen ed course and I took it as a gen ed course.”

Rising Second Year Student, Georgetown University, May 2009

We have had our *why's*, *how's*, and *what's* upside-down, focusing too much on *what* should be learned, than *how*, and often forgetting the *why* altogether.

In a world of nearly infinite information, we must first address *why*, facilitate *how*, and let the *what* generate naturally from there.

As infinite information shifts us away from a narrow focus on information, we begin to recognize the importance of the form of learning over the content of learning. It isn't that content is not important; it is simply that it must not take precedence over form.

Michael Wesch, "From Knowledgeable to Knowledge-able," Academic Commons, January 2009 (academiccommons.org)

But even as we shift our focus to the “how” of learning, there is still the question of “what” is to be learned. After all, our courses have to be about something.

Usually our courses are arranged around “subjects”.... As an alternative, I like to think that we are not teaching subjects but subjectivities: ways of approaching, understanding, and interacting with the world.

**Michael Wesch, “From Knowledgeable to Knowledge-able,” Academic Commons,
January 2009**

“not subjects but subjectivities...”

*Cura personalis (care for the whole
person)*

“not subjects but subjectivities...”

Cura personalis (care for the whole person)

“The implications of strong interpersonal relationships for improved student well-being cannot be overstated.”

Barbara Craig, “The Impact of Engelhard: Forging Connections and Community”

projects

- Faculty Projects and Profiles
- Engelhard Curriculum Infusion Project
 - Faculty Fellows
 - Requirements
 - Curriculum Infusion Resources
 - Project Team (.pdf)
- Thresholds of Writing Project
- Global Classroom
- ePortfolio Initiative

The Engelhard Project



Connecting Life and Learning: Engaging the Whole Person through the Integration of Academics and Student Affairs

Project Description

Connecting Life and Learning: Engaging the Whole Person through the Integration of Academics and Student Affairs is a Georgetown initiative funded by the Charles Engelhard Foundation and the American Association of Colleges & Universities. It is part of a larger national project that addresses student mental health and wellness through various forms of engaged learning. At Georgetown, our project of engaged learning takes the form of curriculum infusion—the introduction of wellness topics into the academic

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The Engelhard Project

"My experience was probably the best academic experience I've ever had."
- Engelhard student, Fall 2008



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Featured Faculty

[Expand all Descriptions](#)

▲ **Maria Donoghue** Department of Biology

▲ **Jim Sandefur** Department of Mathematics

▼ **Julia Lamm** Department of Theology

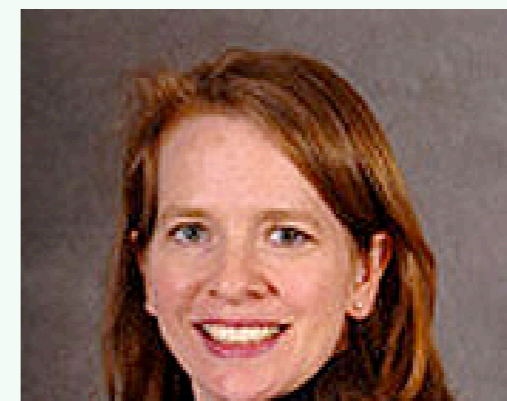
Through the Engelhard Project, Julia addresses with her students how we deal (or try not to deal) with human experiences, such as anxiety, alienation, meaning and meaninglessness, joy, intimacy, courage and trust.

To learn more about Julia's involvement in the Engelhard Project, expand the sections below.

— Julia's Engelhard Experience

Julia Lamm joined the Engelhard Project in the Fall semester of 2006 after noticing that she was already dealing with issues of health and wellness as they pertained to issues of human experience in her Problem of God class. If anything, the Engelhard Project was a way to formalize the incorporation of these issues into the course. "I feel like the material really lends itself to the Engelhard component," remarks Lamm.

In the past three years that Lamm has taught the Problem of God as an Engelhard course, she has infused issues of anxiety, crisis,

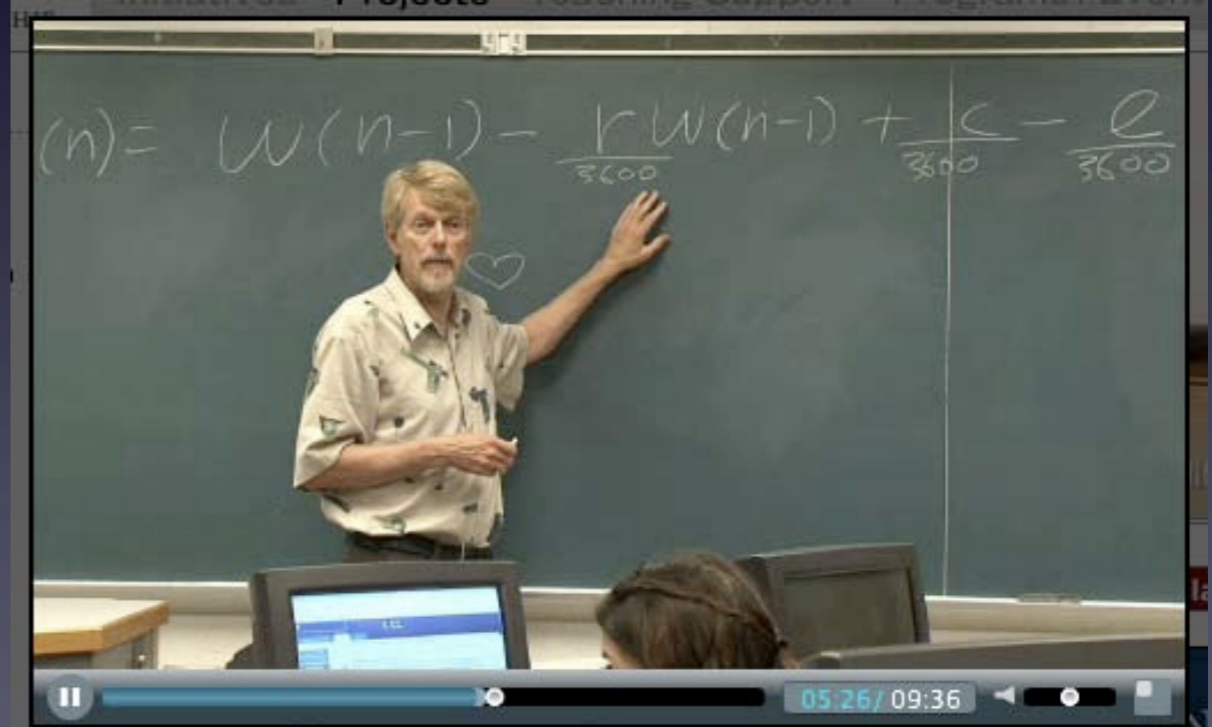


“CURRICULUM INFUSION”

The Engelhard Module

At least three elements:

- Reading connecting topic to course content
- Presentation or discussion led by health professional
- Written reflection

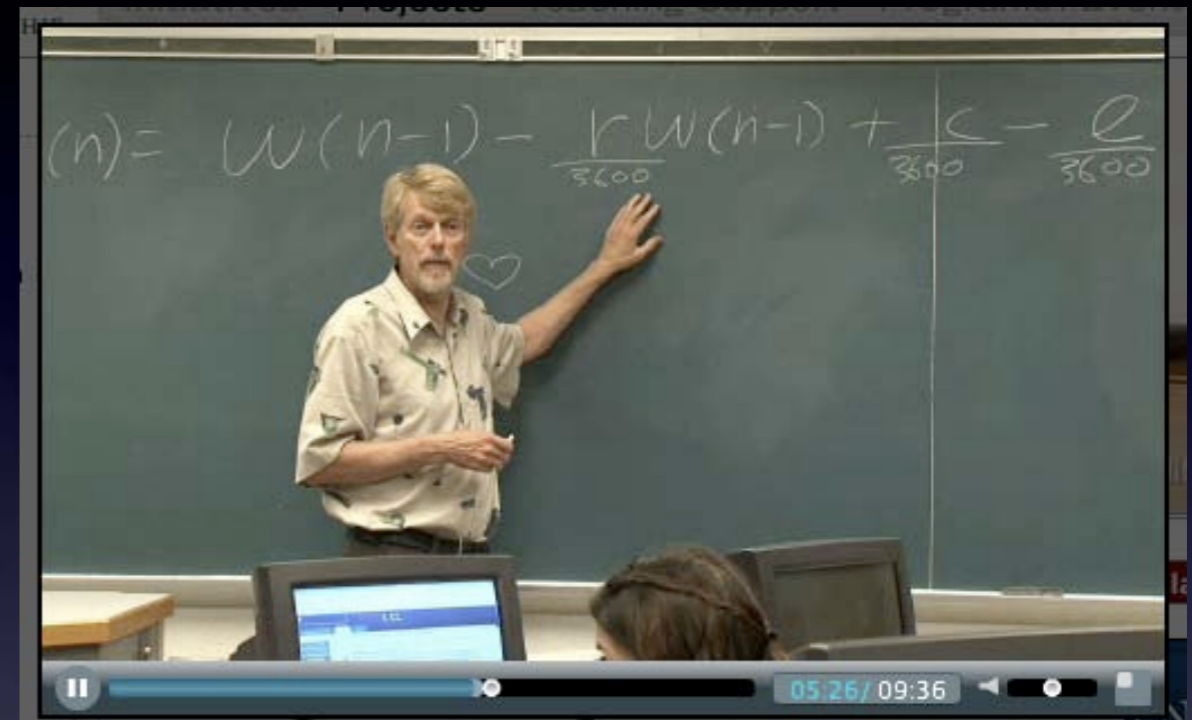


The Engelhard Module

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01:45 / 09:36



Goal: 45-50 courses
1600 students / year

2005-2010:

over 4000 unique students
50 faculty Fellows
22 academic departments
over 70 unique courses.

Engelhard Modules

Maria Donoghue, Biology



Majors: Ug Neurobiology

Ged Ed: An Issues Approach to
Biology

BIOL-195: Neurobiology is intended as a gateway course for Sophomore Neurobiology majors and covers the fundamentals of neurobiology and the study of the cellular basis of nervous system function.

BIOL-195 : Neurobiology



- lecture focusing on the neurochemistry of mood regulation, i.e. what keeps our mood stabilized, what happens during destabilization (specifically depression), and what we can do about it.
- After the lecture, students read a memoir by William Styron entitled "Darkness Visible," in which he describes his own experience sinking into depression.
- Visit by someone from Counseling and Psych Services who talked about mood regulation and campus services
- As a follow up, students wrote personal reflections on their own experiences with depression, contextualized by Dr.

Engelhard Modules



"It brought up so many questions about the biology, and it turns out that many, many students have either had a mood problem themselves or have a family member - or, what is even more important, a friend here at school - who has struggled with one. By talking about the biology of a mood disorder in class, it sends a message to students that this is a problem like any other problem...you demystify it."

Engelhard Modules

Julia Lamm, Problem of God



This course approaches "the problem of God" from the angle of human experience and how many of our experiences, ordinary and extraordinary alike, give rise to theological questions, despite how we may choose to answer those questions. Students reflect on and analyze such complex issues as freedom, evil, meaning, joy, the struggle of belief and unbelief, betrayal and trust, and human action.

Engelhard Modules

Julia Lamm, Problem of God

Specific **wellness topics** such as anxiety, depression, and suicide are addressed in an ongoing fashion as they relate to issues raised in reading assignments and course material.

Wellness topics integrated through several "Engelhard seminars" throughout the semester in which health professionals on campus visit the class to discuss these issues from the perspective of the health professions and to help relate the content of the course to the real world.

Engelhard Modules



Julia Lamm, Problem of God

First, her students find these sessions “especially informative and stimulating because classroom theory is connected to their lives.”

Second, the health professional is able to address very important yet sensitive wellness issues that Lamm feels uncomfortable discussing with her students. “There are some issues, such as suicide, that I just feel much more comfortable having a professional address.”

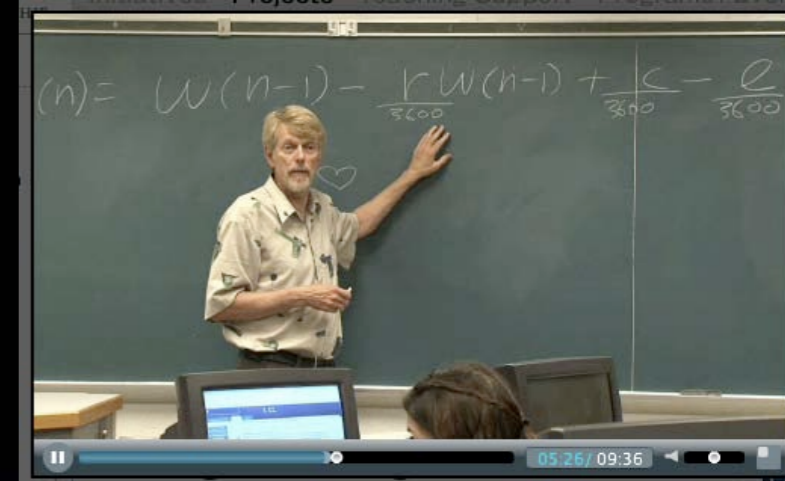
Engelhard Modules



Julia Lamm, Problem of God

The Engelhard Project has also changed Lamm's perception of herself as an educator: "I wanted to become a better teacher, and I definitely think Engelhard has helped me develop and improve my pedagogy." Lamm has noticed "for the past three years" that her "classes have been especially good," and she attributes this in part due to the fact that Engelhard has enabled her to approach her students differently.

Engelhard Modules



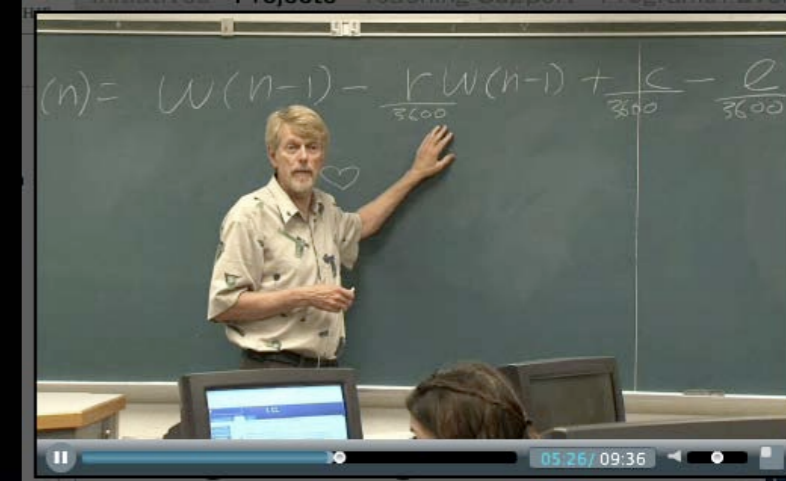
Intro to Math Modelling

- Students study the math models for various disorders and addictions: e.g. how the body absorbs and gets rid of alcohol.
- Supplements the mathematical modeling of issues related to alcohol abuse, dieting, and gambling with open discussions and presentations from health professionals on campus, who have provided further context for these issues by relating them to the Georgetown University community.

Engelhard Modules

Intro to Math Modelling

- The math modeling and health presentations are two parts to a whole: the math arms students with the necessary tools to make informed decisions about their health, while the health professionals arm the students with the confidence necessary to carry out these decisions.

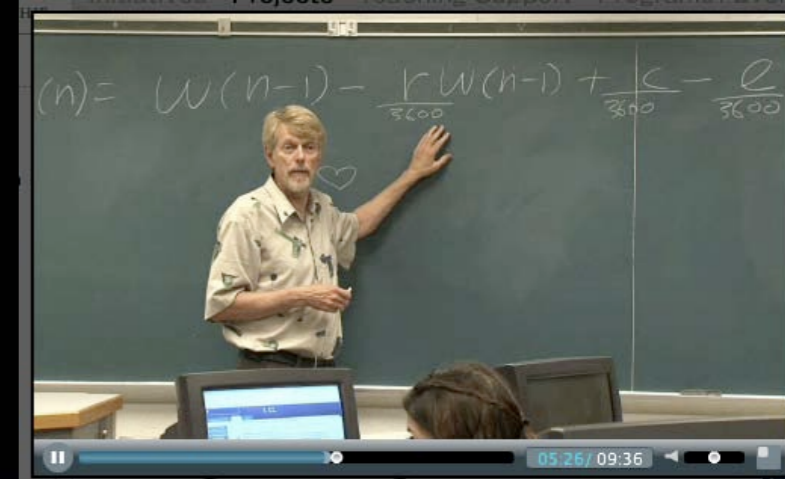


Engelhard Modules: Sandefur

- “they are inundated with sessions about avoiding eating disorders and alcohol problems during freshmen orientation, but a barrage of information actually seems to have the opposite effect as intended with students absorbing very little...Students actually knew very little about things like alcohol's interactions in the body.”
- "The added benefit is that a few students who have had serious problems were able to get help...But even more importantly, for the majority of the students, especially with the alcohol unit, the class made them think more about potentially dangerous problems. One student said to me, 'well, I don't sit there and calculate exactly how much alcohol I have drunk, but I now I keep count.' And that's great, because it is a sign that they are thinking about themselves in a new way "

Engelhard Modules

Intro to Math Modelling

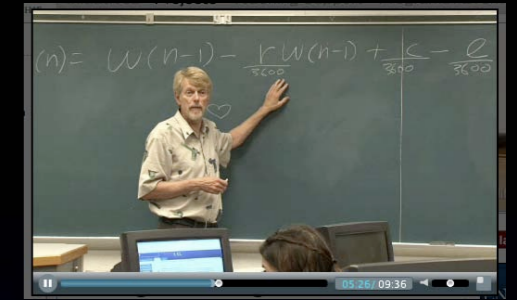


- "The Engelhard Project fit right into what I have always wanted to do. The class is math modeling, so for years I had been looking for engaging models that were important to the students, models where they could see math as it affected their life as well as the life of all those around themselves."

Other examples of “CURRICULUM INFUSION”

The Engelhard Module
At least three elements:

- Reading connecting topic to course content
- Presentation or discussion led by health professional
- Written reflection



Intro to Philosophy: Aristotle on “Flourishing”

Existentialism: Anonymous letter / losing one’s grounding

Business: Stress and affect in organizational management (emphasis on race and racism)

Community Psychology: Coping and Resilience related to community-based work

Philosophy of Education: Emotion and stress related to work in urban public schools

Foundations of Biology: Research papers on genetic (and environmental) causes of mental health disorders—preflection anonymous online/ Blackboard, Psych services visit, staged research

Humanities and Writing: Conformity, Achievement, and

- #57: The Engelhard Project
 - Student list of '100 things to be thankful for at Georgetown'

Students:

- Surprised & pleased that Georgetown University has such a program; positively affects their GU experience. Main effects for students (self-report, reflections) is increased knowledge about health topics, and empathy for others with mental/health challenges
- Some also report behavioral changes, or intention of future change

Faculty:

- Main effect for faculty (self-report) is increased overall satisfaction in teaching: “one of my most rewarding teaching experiences”; “re-energized my teaching”; “has made me more sensitive to student issues of mental health and wellness.”
- Some faculty also perceive improvement in student academic work overall
- Some faculty report increased engagement of ‘whole person’ in their Engelhard course; some report “spillover” effect to other teaching in ‘non-Engelhard’ courses

What the success of Engelhard tells us...

- “The body” is back--Students (and to some extent, faculty) are hungry for connection
- *Faculty are eager for ways to connect to personal lives of students with boundaries.*
- *The Engelhard Project taps a vein of growing interest in the **embodied** dimensions of knowledge and learning*

What the challenges of Engelhard tells us...

- *There are limits to what we can ever know about impact*
- *Not for everyone: faculty or students*
- *Effort and resources to sustain (particularly drain on health and psychiatric services)*

What Students Say

As one Intro to Philosophy student poignantly wrote in her reflection paper: “Most importantly for me though, this presentation let me know I wasn’t the only person suffering from waves of depression and sadness. There is nothing worse in the world than to feel that you are the only one, that nobody else understands what you are going through. There was a comfort in hearing other questions and other stories and realizing that underneath it all, we all have similar struggles.”

What Students Say

“[My Engelhard class] was a wake-up call to re-evaluate my own life and interactions with my friends when dealing with interpersonal problems.”

“Alcoholism runs in my family, so hearing details regarding alcoholism and beneficial ways to control drinking was interesting to me personally.”

What Students Say

“After all these [Engelhard] presentations, there are some concrete changes to which I have committed myself....I am committed to having a plan on the weekends when it comes to drinking and partying....I aspire to be more aware of especially verbal behaviors that perpetuate our culture of blame....[and] I will accept my own responsibility to be aware of and take action if a peer, student, or member of the community seems to be depressed.”

What Students Say

“I feel confident saying that [my Engelhard presenter] eased my anxiety about being anxious and depressive in the first place. His sincere approach in addressing the underlying causes of such disorders, combined with his earnest tone in repeatedly saying that these were common disorders not limited to the few or the feeble, put me at ease from the beginning and allowed me to absorb the entirety of his lecture... I have struggled with depression and anxiety for over eight years now and was truly touched by his words.”

What Students Say

"Finally, I found Dr. Tartaglia's visit to be very interesting. I thought that having a psychiatrist come speak to our class really made the ideas we talked about in class more realistic. I was able to better connect many topics we discussed in class to situations that happen outside the classroom. I am comforted knowing that if my roommate or a friend ever has any problems there is help on campus that I can seek for them. Dr. Tartaglia made this very clear to our class and if needed, I will take it to heart."

What Students Say

"... toward the middle of the semester, I contemplated suicide for a couple of weeks. Fortunately, I decided to refuse to end my life, and instead turned to Georgetown's CAPS service, after having listened to Doctor Charles Tartaglia speak in class one day. The counseling I received helped me work through my problems, and while I still have no faith in a god or in religion, I realize that it is selfish to commit suicide, and having done so would have only caused my family and friends trouble."

What Faculty Say

“One of the nice things about Engelhard is that when these issues do come out with students, now I know what to do about it (i.e. where to send them, what to tell them), whereas in the past, I would not have known at all what to do.”

What Faculty Say

Teaching this way has “changed the norm. I feel emboldened to expect different things of the students. Engelhard gives us a way to recreate a strong personal connection with our students while keeping it appropriate and healthy.” (Philosophy Prof)

Another philosophy professor talked about a powerful reflection paper written by a student struggling with anorexia....“when attention is given to the student, this allows for better understanding of course material but also allows for self-reflection. Some students comment on how this is the first time in school that someone has come to talk about these issues.”

What Faculty Say

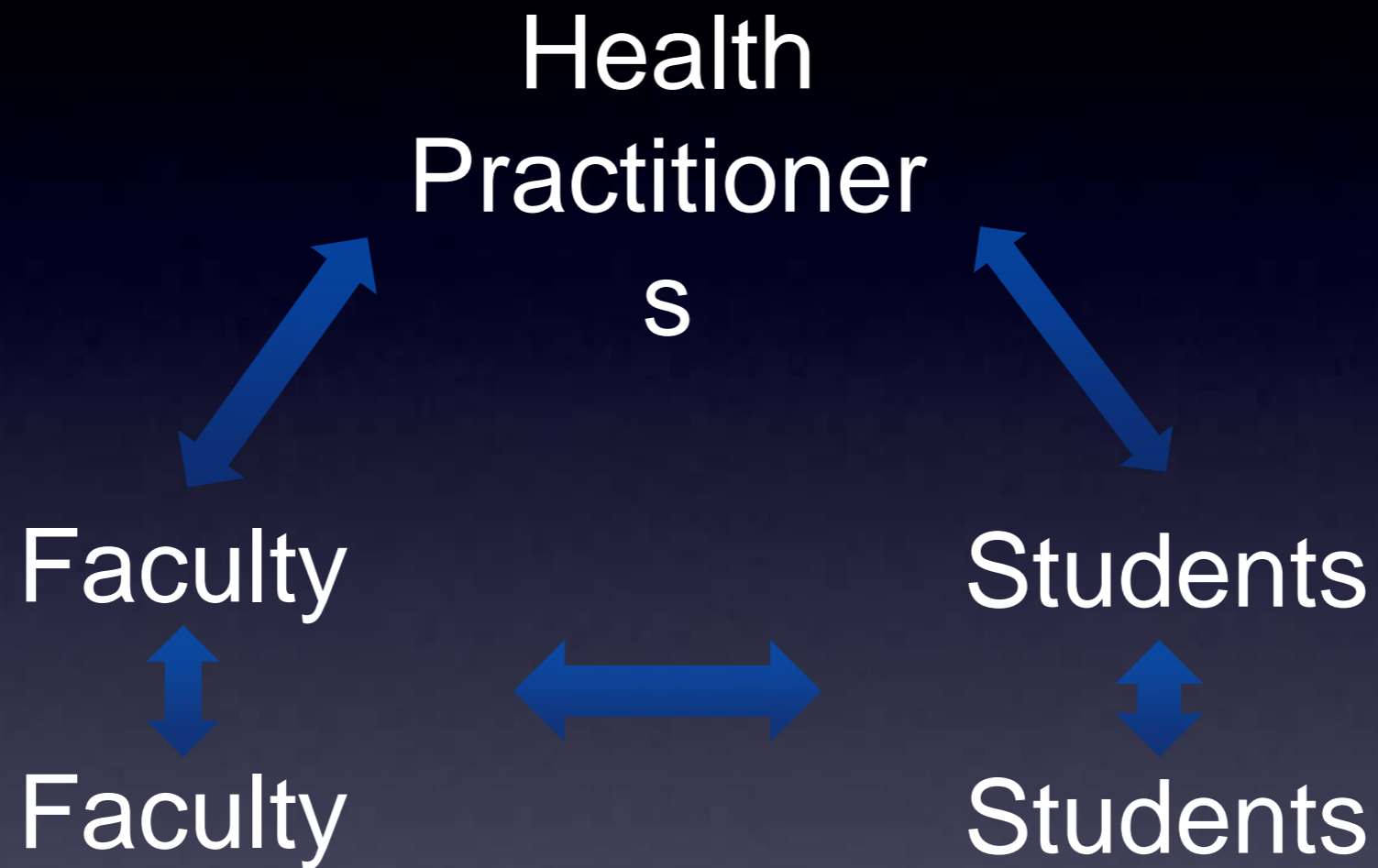
“Over 80% [of my students] had a close connection to the mental health issues we discussed. That was an epiphany because they thought they were the only ones struggling with problems. One girl admitted in class to struggling daily with an eating disorder. You could have heard a pin drop. It shifted the dynamic as to who we are to each other. A lot of students shared that day.”

(Intro to Biology professor)

What Health Practitioners Say

“When you walk into the classroom, the students are in a very different place emotionally and intellectually than if we go to their residence halls and offer them a program on depression. They’re more available to look at what’s happening to them, especially when you do intersect the academic information with their personal experiences.”

Connections



Barbara Craig, "The Impact of Engelhard: Forging Connections and Community"

The New Learning and the Whole Person

High Impact Practices (National Survey of Student Engagement--NSSE)

- First-year seminars and experiences
- Learning communities
- Writing intensive courses
- Collaborative assignments
- Undergraduate research
- Global learning/ study abroad
- Internships
- Capstone courses and projects

High Impact Activities and Outcomes (NSSE)

* Outcomes associated with High impact practices.

They enable students to...

...attend to underlying meaning

...integrate and synthesize

...discern patterns

...apply knowledge in diverse situations

...view issues from multiple perspectives

...make gains in Skills, knowledge, practical competence , personal and social

2/16/19 development

High Impact Activities and Outcomes

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* Outcomes associated with High impact practices

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- Gains in Skills, knowledge, practical competence , personal and social development

So, if high impact practices are largely in the extra-curriculum (or the co-curriculum), then where are the low-impact practices?

formal curriculum

=

low-impact practices ?

If the formal curriculum is not where the high impact experiences are then there are three options

- (1) Make courses higher impact
- (2) Create better connections between courses and the high impact experiences outside the formal curriculum
- (3) Start shifting resources from from the formal to the high impact (experiential) curriculum

Participatory Culture of the Web

How do we make classroom learning more like participatory culture?

Features of participatory culture

- Low barriers to entry
- Strong support for sharing one's contributions
- Informal mentorship, experienced to novice
- Members feel a sense of connection to each other
- Students feel a sense of ownership of what is being created
- Strong collective sense that something is at stake

Jenkins, et. al., *Confronting the Challenges of Participatory Culture*

Six Characteristics of high impact practices AND features of participatory culture

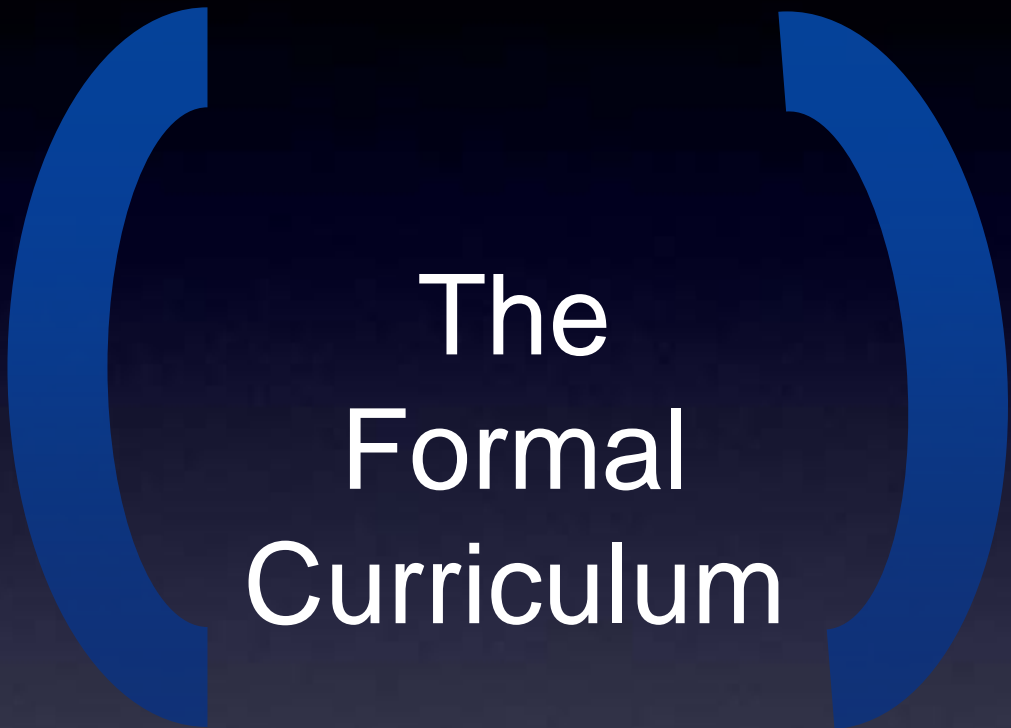
■ Features of participatory culture (on the Web)

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- Informal mentorship, experienced to novice
- Members feel a sense of connection to each other
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■ High impact experiences (co-curriculum)

- Attend to underlying meaning
 - Integrate and synthesize
 - Discern patterns
- Apply knowledge in diverse situations
- View issues from multiple perspectives
- Skills, knowledge, practical competence, personal and social development

Informal
Learning
Participatory
culture



The
Formal
Curriculum

High impact
practices
Experiential
Co-curriculum

Academic Commons



January 2009



Issue edited by Randy Bass with Bret Eynon and an editorial group from the Center for New Designs in Learning and Scholarship (CNDLS) at Georgetown University-- Eddie Maloney, Susannah McGowan, John Rakestraw and Theresa Schlafly.

Capturing the Visible Evidence of Invisible Learning

Posted January 7th, 2009 by Randy Bass and Bret Eynon

0 Comments | 1743 Page Views

This is a portrait of the new shape of learning with digital media, drawn around three core concepts: adaptive expertise, embodied learning, and socially situated pedagogies. These findings emerge from the classroom case studies of the Visible Knowledge Project, a six-year project engaging almost 70 faculty from 21 different institutions across higher education. Examining the scholarly work of VKP faculty across practices and technologies, it highlights key conceptual findings and their implications for pedagogical design. Where any single classroom case study yields a snapshot of practice and insight, collectively these studies present a framework that bridges from Web 1.0 to Web 2.0 technologies, building on many dimensions of learning that have previously been undervalued if not invisible in higher education.

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The Difference that Inquiry Makes: A Collaborative Case Study on Technology and Learning, from the Visible Knowledge Project

The Visible Knowledge Project was a collaborative scholarship of teaching and learning project exploring the impact of technology on learning, primarily in the humanities. In all, about seventy faculty from twenty-two institutions participated in VKP. Here we publish a collection of classroom case studies, edited by Randy Bass and Bret Eynon, who served as the Project's Co-Directors and Principal Investigators. The case studies included here are by Lynne Adrian, Rina Benmayor, Paula Berggren, Pete Burkholder, Bernie Cook, Anne Cross, Heidi Elmendorf, Peter Felten, Edward Gallagher, Juan Gutiérrez, David Jaffee, Sharona Levy, Viet Nguyen, Patricia O'Connor, Taimi Olsen, John Ottenhoff, Elizabeth Stephen and Mark Kann. In addition to these classroom-based inquiries, there are a few cross-classroom studies taking a broader look at learning. These are by Joe Ugoretz and Rachel Theilheimer, Michael Coventry and Matthias Oppermann, and Bret Eynon. Live-linked names are being published in this release; remaining articles will be published in February and March 2009.

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- **Adaptive expertise:** the skills and dispositions that students acquire, which enable them to be flexible and innovative with their knowledge
- **Embodied learning:** role of personal experience, identity, and emotion as a means to engagement, role of confidence, motivation, fear in learning
- **Socially Situated learning:** Authentic situations that pose difficult problems to solve and in turn engender a sense of audience, significance, and accountability

Sir Ken Robinson



TED Ideas worth spreading

<http://www.ted.com/talks>

Sir Ken Robinson



TED Ideas worth spreading

<http://www.ted.com/talks>

Sir Ken Robinson

I believe that our only hope for the future is to adopt a new conception of human ecology--one in which we start to reconstitute our conception of the richness of human capacity.



<http://www.ted.com/talks>

Informal Learning

The Formal Curriculum

High impact practices

Participatory culture

Experiential Co-curriculum

The screenshot shows the website for the Center for New Designs in Learning & Scholarship (CNLS) at Georgetown University. The page is titled 'The Engelhard Project' and features a navigation menu with 'Initiatives', 'Projects', 'Teaching Support', 'Programs / Events', and 'About'. A sidebar on the left lists various projects, including 'Faculty Projects and Profiles', 'Engelhard Curriculum Infusion Project' (with sub-items like 'Faculty Fellows', 'Requirements', 'Curriculum Infusion Resources', and 'Project Team (.pdf)'), 'Thresholds of Writing Project', 'Global Classroom', and 'ePortfolio Initiative'. The main content area has a header image of stones in water with the text '...connecting life and learning.' Below this is a section titled 'Connecting Life and Learning: Engaging the Whole Person through the Integration of Academics and Student Affairs'. A 'Project Description' section follows, explaining the project's focus on student mental health and wellness through engaged learning. To the right, there is a 'Related Videos' section with a video thumbnail for 'The Engelhard Project' and another thumbnail of a woman. A 'Contacts' button is located at the bottom right of the page.

Open Business Models in a digital economy (e.g. journalism, music)

AGGREGATE

FILTER

CONNECT

Tim Kastle, “Successful Open Business Models”

“Successful Open Business Models”
(higher education)

Aggregate

- Information resources

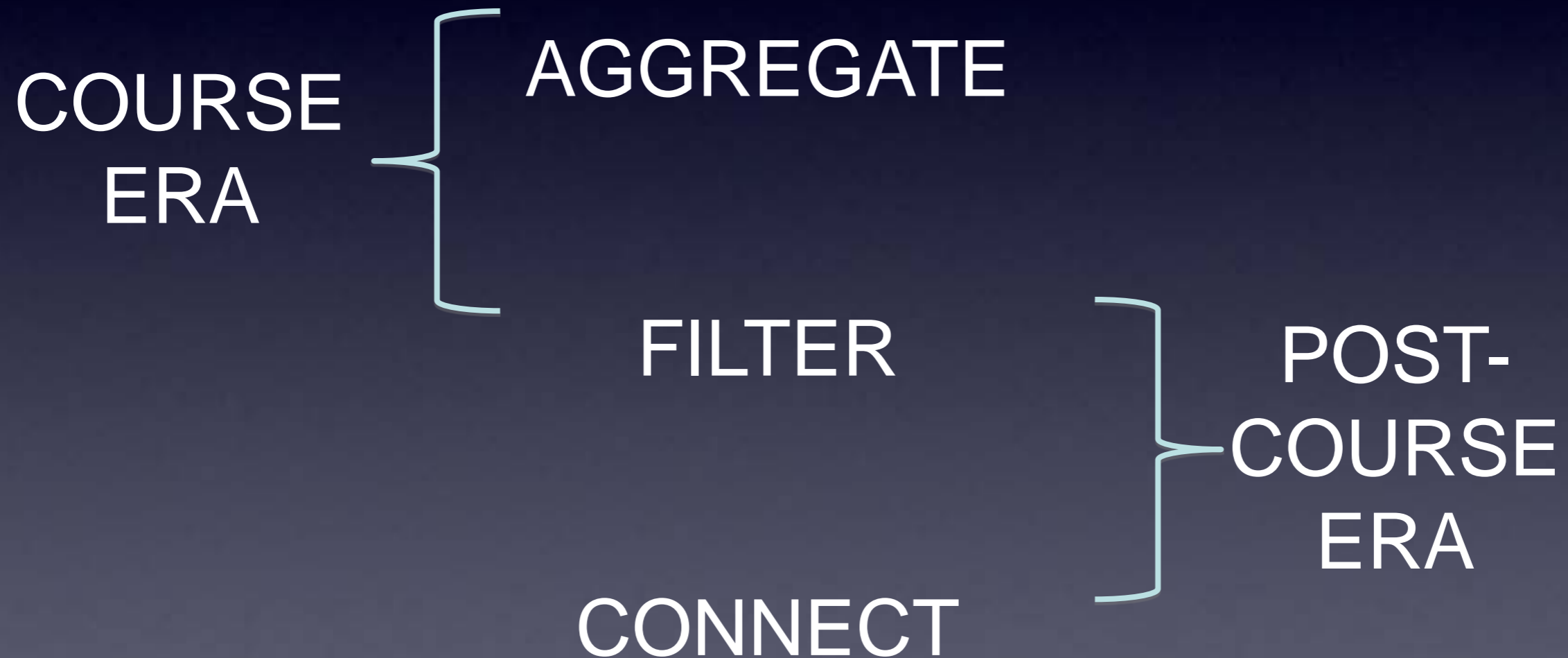
Filter

- Knowledge (what knowledge is worth knowing)
 - Scholarship (peer review)
 - Graduates (employability)

Connect

- Ideas, experiences, people

Shift in How We Add Value?



Tim Kastelle, “Successful Open Business Models”

The lesson to take from the current states of both the music industry and journalism is that you have to have a clear understanding of how you’re creating value so that you build and protect the correct parts of your business model.

Perhaps universities can learn this lesson before educational business models are disrupted as well.