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The Word on the Street from the Office of Learning Advancement

AAC&U GUIDED PATHWAYS GRANT

Michael Young

The Office of Learning Advancement received a $30,000 AAC&U Guided Pathways Grant in 2019. A team consisting of Melissa Hardy, Mark Jarvis, Jessica Curran, Emily Dibble, David Hubert, and myself attended the Student Success and HIPs Institute at Villanova University where we created an action plan that implements the 4th pillar of the Guided Pathways framework: Ensuring Students are Learning. Our action plan consisted of three goals: 1) disaggregating assessment data to explore equity gaps, 2) a piloted course emphasizing ePortfolio assignment redesign, and 3) mapping signature assignments to General Education designations. We have successfully completed two of the three areas of the action plan and are currently mapping signature assignments with various departments and faculty across the college.

2020 General Education Disaggregated Assessment Data

The complete details of the methodology, sample, and analysis of the assessment can be reviewed on our SLCC website here. In our 2019 and 2020 attempts to study equity gaps we have learned that there are very few glaring inequities in learning outcomes attainment across our sample. Going forward, our focus at SLCC will be on those students who are not achieving success by looking at the D, E, and W rates in General Education courses and the distribution of A, B, and C grades in those same courses. Given SLCC's investments in purchasing and adopting faculty and administrative dashboards, we are now able to disaggregate data instantaneously at the course level. This will efficiently allow us to visualize equity gaps and work to make the necessary structural, curricular, and pedagogical changes to reduce and eliminate them.

Piloted Course – ePortfolio Redesign

Professor Mark Jarvis, PhD, piloted a redesign of the ePortfolio project in his Lifespan and Human Development (Social Science) course with a focus on the critical thinking learning outcome. The pilot centered on making the ePortfolio requirement and signature assignment more transparent to students by beginning with *why* SLCC requires the ePortfolio and *why* it is considered a High-Impact Practice. Below are just a few comments from students remarking on the learning experience:

SLCC

AAC&U GUIDED PATHWAYS GRANT (CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE)

- *I honestly have never liked doing my ePortfolio. I have always thought it was pointless and did not know why I had to do it. But reading the 10 Reasons and watching the video, it helped me to understand more on why we need to do them. I can now see that my classes go together and they intertwine with each other. I also now know that it is just as good for the professors as it is for the students. They are able to see in our reflections if we were able to understand what they were teaching. It is also nice to have a place to put my work in that I have worked hard on all semester.*

- *I always thought that the whole Eportfolio thing was kind of just a waste of time. When I read a few of the 10 reasons that were provided it gave me a different outlook on things. The biggest thing that stood out to me was that it provides feedback to your professors. If you write an effective reflection than it helps to give the professors insight into how the students experienced the course. In the video, all of the students talk about how they weren't looking forward to it and it seemed very unnecessary. But then they go onto say how they enjoyed it. How it became a fun personal blog and helped to strengthen their education. They also said it was fun to look back and see their progress.*

General Education Mapping Project

The goal of mapping is to align signature assignments and reflection prompts to our General Education learning outcomes. This goal involved three phases: 1) creating and distributing maps for Deans, Associate Deans, and faculty within our thirteen General Education designations; 2) a larger body of faculty review the maps and provide input and changes to arrive at a consensus of what should be included in a signature assignment; 3) conducting assignment design charrettes in the summer of 2021 where faculty can use the agreed upon maps to exchange ideas, revise existing assignments and create a library of signature assignments other faculty can use for general education courses. Our plan is to complete the signature assignment design charrettes and have the assignments available to use by the end of August 2021.

Conclusion

The SLCC team for this grant appreciates the time and effort from Associate Deans and faculty who have engaged in these projects. We are excited to see the results from this work and where it will take us in terms of implementing changes in our pedagogy, closing equity gaps, and using our signature assignments to ensure that students are learning. We would personally like to thank professor Tiffany Rousculp for her work designing and tracking the General Education designation maps, Laurie Rosequist for her assistance in organizing and planning campus wide meetings, and professors Mark Jarvis, Melissa Hardy and Jessica Curran for their help as grant team members on this project. We would also like to acknowledge Tia McNair and Kate McConnell from AAC&U for their tremendous help and assistance with our questions and planning throughout the work on the grant.

LIBRARY INTERVENTION ANALYSIS

Zack Allred

Findings from the University of Washington's Project Info Lit and the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) have demonstrated that information literacy skills and competencies are major components of employees' and recent college graduates' needed tools. However, they have also found that the majority of college graduates are not adequately prepared for the workplace demands to obtain and evaluate information.

Salt Lake Community College librarians frequently use the ePortfolios students create to evaluate whether our students are meeting information literacy outcomes and expectations. This past year, in addition to the general outcomes' assessment, librarians also conducted an intervention analysis to determine if there is any difference between students who have had library instruction and those who haven't. Some disaggregation of the data did occur but was limited based upon what was available on the students through our access to Cognos.
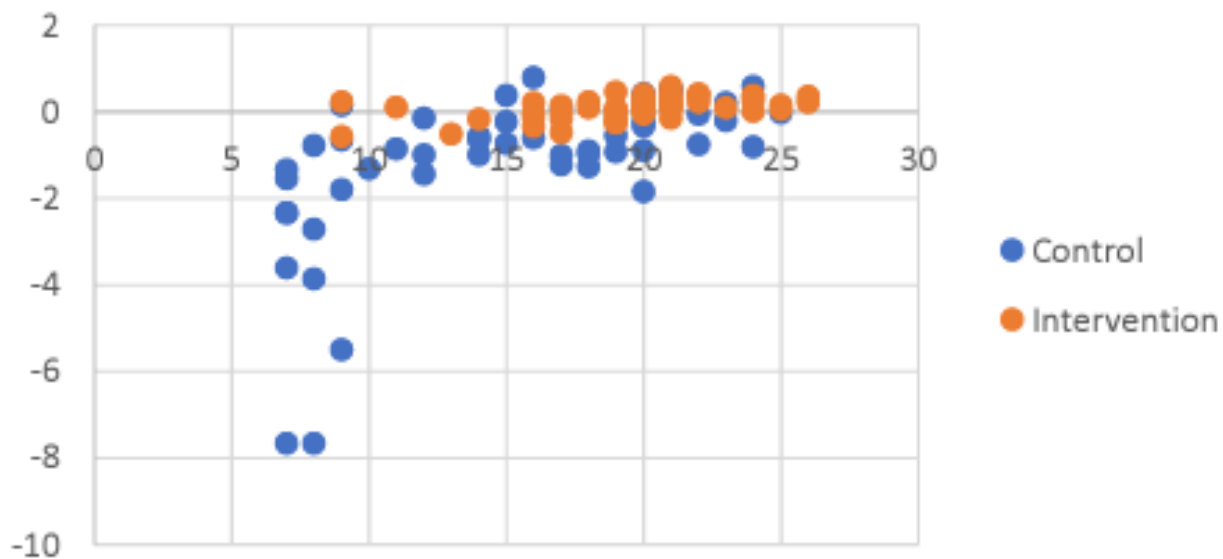
Our sample was comprised of 50 students who had library instruction (intervention) and 50 students who did not have library instruction (control). We found that library instruction correlates to improved information literacy outcomes (see figure on page 4). The average student at SLCC is not meeting information literacy expectations and therefore is less prepared for the workforce or to transfer to another educational institution.However, students who have had library instruction outperform the students who haven't and are meeting information literacy expectations.

Less than 50% of all students at SLCC who take ENGL 1010, ENGL 2010, and ENGL 2100 receive library instruction; this is despite strong and growing partnerships between English, Writing, and Linguistics faculty and librarians. Given the correlation between student information literacy outcomes and library instruction, additional resources allocated to library instruction appear to be a worthwhile investment.

> " *Increasing the volume and scope of library instruction is a worthwhile investment to support the information literacy outcomes of students and to increase student preparation for the workplace and transfer success.* "

Faculty at SLCC have expressed interest in working with librarians to improve information literacy and research processes in their courses and their students work. However, this work has only been able to occur on an informal and an "as time allows" basis. A more methodical and larger strategic collaboration process between faculty, academic administrators, and librarians could allow for increased library instruction to occur at scale. SLCC librarians have built tools for both synchronous and asynchronous instruction, but the volume of incorporation of those have been minimal and sporadic, possibly due to their development without the benefit of faculty collaboration.

Increasing the volume and scope of library instruction is a worthwhile investment to support the information literacy outcomes of students and to increase student preparation for the workplace and transfer success. SLCC librarians are also in the process of developing cross institutional assessment and analysis with partner librarians at the University of Utah Marriott Library. The hope is to compare student information literacy outcomes and measure student transfer success. The full report can be found here: https://libguides.slcc.edu/ld.php?content_id=61370935
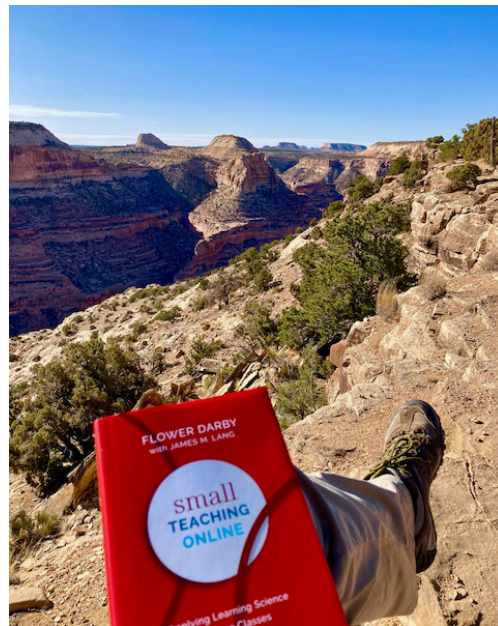
SMALL TEACHING ONLINE

David Hubert

Flower Darby with James M. Lang, *Small Teaching Online: Applying Learning Science in Online Classes.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2019.

In 2017 the Faculty Development Office brought James Lang to campus, and he conducted an afternoon workshop on his then newly published book *Small Teaching: Everyday Lessons from the Science of Learning.* I remember being jazzed by Lang's idea that "you can create powerful learning for your students through the small, everyday decisions you make in designing your courses, engaging in classroom practice, communicating with your students, and addressing any challenges that arise." I also remember being a bit let down by the fact that Lang's advice and examples pertained almost exclusively to classroom teaching. What should I do, given

Faculty development done right.

that my administrative life only leaves room for one online course a semester that I teach as an adjunct for the Political Science Department?

Flower Darby, a Senior Instructional Designer and adjunct faculty at Northern Arizona University, has come to the rescue for those of us who want to apply small teaching principles to our online courses. Darby's book, *Small Teaching Online*, is an excellent contribution to the growing field of research and writing about online post-secondary education. I read it this spring on a solo camping trip in Utah's red rock country. *Small Teaching Online* is rich with ideas—too many to review in this short article. Let me tell you about three small changes that caught my eye.

In the section of the book that focuses on course design issues, Darby reminds us that students do not tend to do well when there is "too much cognitive load," which is another way of saying that the coverage imperative has a tendency to short-circuit learning. A less-is-more approach can help, especially if we create signature assignments that ask students to synthesize and process wide swaths of course content. The problem here is that such signature assignments can seem overwhelming to students. Darby recommends that we create "an incremental sequence of tasks and deadlines designed to pace out the work" on a larger project. I've done some of that already, but *Small Teaching Online* has convinced me to do more to break down the process students use to complete my signature assignments.

Darby also has great advice when it comes to developing a community of inquiry among online students. A community of inquiry is a magical blend of cognitive presence, teaching presence, and social presence. Social presence is the most difficult to cultivate in online courses. Among the many ideas in *Small Teaching Online* to promote social presence, the most helpful to me are those centered

> " *Based on Darby's advice, I'm going to re-examine my discussion topics and the way I structure student-to-student interactions in my course.* "

on creating more engaging and productive discussions. Based on Darby's advice, I'm going to re-examine my discussion topics and the way I structure student-to-student interactions in my course.

I'm starting to think that some of my current discussion topics would make better small writing assignments, which would give me more room for structured discussions that will help my students learn to make and critique political arguments.

I especially liked the chapter devoted to creating autonomy for students, which is a key strategy to boost their intrinsic motivation. I've tended to oscillate between mandating topics for writing assignments and taking a laissez-faire approach. Darby quotes the authors of *The Meaningful Writing Project*, who urge faculty to find the sweet spot "between allow and require" when it comes to student writing projects. In an online course, this can take the form of giving students structured choice of topics for asynchronous discussions in which they want to participate or topics for writing projects they want to tackle.

I highly recommend Darby's *Small Teaching Online*. It is full of manageable interventions you can try—tweaks in your online course design, adjustments in the structure of your assignments, or modifications to how you create a community of inquiry for your students.
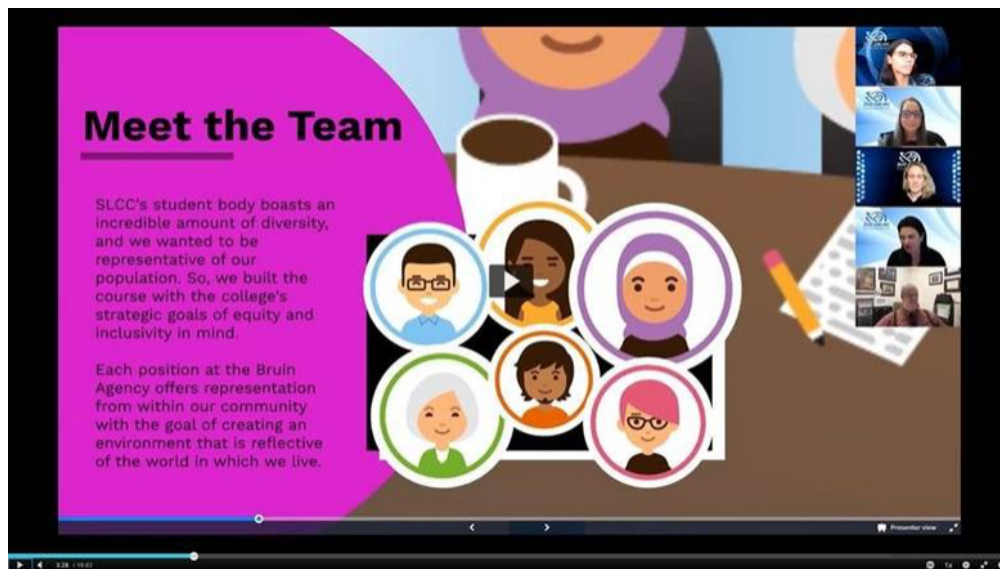
At the 2021 eLearning Spring Showcase, Marcie Young-Cancio, Sarah Billington, and Cherise King deliver their virtual presentation: Story Lines Through a Course: A PR Journey at the Bruin Agency (COMM 2300)

2021 ELEARNING SPRING SHOWCASE HIGHLIGHTS EXCELLENCE IN ONLINE LEARNING

Bob Lindsay

Each year the eLearning team hosts the Spring Showcase, a mini-conference that recognizes some of the best and most innovative online courses produced during the previous year by SLCC faculty in collaboration with the eLearning team. The Spring Showcase also features presentations that highlight eLearning's services, demonstrate new instructional tools, and celebrate successful partnerships with faculty and staff.

Due to the pandemic, the 2021 Spring Showcase was held virtually for the first time. All 16 20-minute sessions were streamed on Zoom to nearly 100 participants on Thursday, March 25, 2021.

Here are some of the highlights from the 2021 showcase:

- MUSC 1040 (US Music and Culture), a fine arts and Gen Ed (DV) course that was designed for online delivery.
- COMM 2300 (Introduction to Public Relations) used a unique story-based design to help students explore the many job roles in public relations.
- SPN 1010 (First Semester Spanish), the first fully online foreign language course offered at SLCC.
- ART 1620 (Introduction to Animation), which offered online the experiences that students usually only get in SLCC's on-campus media lab.
- Search Advocate Training, a fully online version of the course offered by the Staff Development team.

2021 ELEARNING SPRING SHOWCASE HIGHLIGHTS EXCELLENCE IN ONLINE LEARNING (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7)

- Several sessions covered services offered by the eLearning team, such as the media team's graphic design and video production capabilities, Canvas support, a new Canvas course template, SLCC's online tutoring services, quality course reviews, and the professional development credentials offered by eLearning.
- Additional sessions covered strategies to help students maintain an appropriate pace in their competency-based education (CBE) courses, the Business School's new Facebook marketing credential, teaching strategies to "scaffold" learning in online courses, and discussions of the future of broadcast mode courses at SLCC.
- Attendees reported that they were inspired to try new approaches and use new tools with their online classes. When asked how they would use what they learned at the showcase, one attendee said, "It was inspiring to see what the faculty and eLearning has accomplished together." After watching a new online collaboration tool demonstrated, another attendee remarked, "I have been looking for a solution like this for two years."
- A survey of attendees revealed that 100% of respondents would recommend the Spring Showcase to their peers! All 16 Zoom sessions were recorded and are available to view at https://tinyurl.com/SLCCDSHW.

"Attendees reported that they were inspired to try new approaches and use new tools with their online classes."

PAST EVENTS FROM SPRING 2021

- **Engaged Learning Celebration**: Friday, February 5, 2021 four SLCC students were awarded for their outstanding work in Service-Learning and ePortfolio work.
- **eLearning Spring Showcase**: Thursday, March 25, 2021 the eLearning Showcase highlighted some of the best and most innovative online courses, provided faculty with ideas and resources to improve their online courses, and allowed faculty and staff to learn more about the many services that the eLearning team provides.
- **Distinguished Faculty Lecture**: On April 7,2021 Craig Ferrin presented his talk titled,"Instructional Agility: A Framework for Teaching Creativity & Leadership in Content Rich Courses."

FACULTY SPOTLIGHT
JESSICA BERRYMAN

I grew up in a suburb of Chicago but spent much of my 20s and 30s being a bit of a nomad living in Iowa, California, Hawaii, Washington, Australia, Canada, and Peru. I am grateful to now live in Salt Lake surrounded by Utah's natural beauty. I started at SLCC as an adjunct in 2014. I came because Kristen Taylor, my former Grad School roommate, told me how much she loved working at SLCC. When I heard about an environmental science/ ecologist position opening up, I had to apply and come. I teach Environmental Science, Ecology, Conservation Biology, and College Biology I.

I have always loved science. I enjoy figuring out how things work. In college I majored in both Physics and Biology and I struggled choosing between those two areas. I had an amazing Physics professor who got me engaged in glass research which really built my confidence as a student and a scientist. While I loved making new glass that had never been formed before and studying it on the molecular level, the labs were always in windowless rooms. I longed to be outside and decided I needed a career that would have being outside as part of the job description. I am happy with my choice to study ecology. I have been able to travel the world studying amazing organisms in their ecosystems. I studied cedar wax wings in Boundary Waters Canoe Area in Minnesota, rock hyraxes in the Serengeti in Tanzania, ghost crabs on the beaches of Hawaii, and rock ringtail possums throughout the northwestern Australia outback. I now mentor students as they conduct various ecological research projects.

One of the things that fascinates me about Biology is watching and trying to understand animal behavior. My mom would take me to the zoo or out into nature and we would just sit and watch the animals. To this day, that is one of my favorite activities, just sitting still and observing. I also enjoyed watching nature documentaries and reading books about animals. For example, I was inspired by the scientists in the book *The Moon by Whale Light: And Other Adventures Among Bats, Penguins, Crocodilians, and Whales* by Diane Ackerman. I wanted to be a wildlife biologist like Jane Goodall. However, while doing my graduate research, I realized that something was missing. I was doing what I had dreamed of doing, hiking to remote places and studying an animal that very little was known about. But I was working mostly alone in the middle of the outback and so when I saw amazing things, there was no one to share it with. That is what helped solidify in me that I wanted to be a biology professor. I wanted to be able to share my passion for the natural world and help inspire others.

My favorite part of teaching is having a hand in changing the way my students see themselves and the world. It might be as simple as seeing their faces light up when they finally understand a difficult concept or as life changing as them finding a new passion and career goal based on their service in the community. I also love seeing them gain a deeper understanding and appreciation for life and make new connections between their actions and their impact on the ecosystems around them.

FACULTY SPOTLIGHT (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9)

I use a combination of OER textbooks, service learning, undergraduate research, and/ or reflective practices in their ePortfolios in every class that I teach. For example, I have thoroughly redesigned my Environmental Science course since I started at SLCC to make it a highly interactive course. Each week my students learn background information through online modules on a particular topic. Then when we meet in class, they work in small groups to create concept maps that connect the information to our class theme of sustainable food systems. This can be a challenge initially for some topics such as cellular structure, but through the course of the discussion they are able to come up with ways that each of the topics is relevant to our overall theme (and to their lives). This also allows for me to clear up any misconceptions about the materials. We then go out into the community and learn by seeing and/or doing. We take trips to tour places like Momentum Recycling and to do service with the Jordan River Commission. Afterwards, my students reflect in their ePortfolios about the information they learned that week, the activities they did, and the connections to their own choices and/or previous experiences. I am continuously impressed by the service projects my students do as part of this service-learning course and the changes to their attitudes and behaviors they express in their ePortfolios. I enjoy this way of teaching because it allows my students to apply the material to their lives in ways that are relevant to them. I no longer have to justify why something is important or try to be entertaining. They want to be there and actively participate. And the ePortfolios aren't just a hoop to jump through, but an opportunity to reflect and tell someone of the things they have learned and experienced. My goal is to move all of my courses towards this model as much as possible because it is so much fun for everyone.

My main take away from teaching during COVID-19 is to focus on what is most important and try to minimize the extra. One of the things that I struggle with is trying to do too much in the time I have with my students. This past year has helped me to focus on what is most important for students to learn. I flipped my classes and focused my Canvas pages on the most important information. I also created activities that were focused on these essential concepts. This time also gave me time to focus on the most important parts of my life in general.

Doing undergraduate research that was meaningful to others outside of my classroom was a significant experience for me as an undergraduate student. My goal is to develop a community-driven research project. Our students have a lot of knowledge, skills, and access to resources, that would be beneficial to our community. And our community partners have a lot of knowledge and experience that they can share with our students. I am actively looking for ways that we can help conduct research and gather data that can further their goals while at the same time giving students valuable experiences.

My plans for the summer are to take a much-needed break. After I sleep for a couple of weeks, I am going to stick around Utah and play outside biking, gardening, kayaking, and hiking.

OLA STAFF SPOTLIGHT

JENÉE BRENNING

I've been with SLCC since October 2020 and I work with the eLearning Team, as the Teaching & Learning Coordinator. Essentially, I research new Canvas tools to address technology solutions- whether that's on an individual course working with instructors or campus wide- while coordinating the integration of the Canvas tool.

I'm originally from Star Valley, Wyoming and came to Salt Lake City to attend the University of Utah. I've mostly worked for non- profits, including Salt Lake County's Arts and Culture Division, The Sundance Institute, and the University of Utah.

About 5 years ago, when I was working for Sundance Institute, I found myself in a role that oversaw the implementation of a ticketing system, in conjunction with building a redesigned website. After working on this project, I knew that I wanted to further my career in technology and education, so I started a Master's Degree in Instructional Design at the University of Utah, and last October I was hired on to working with the SLCC's amazing eLearning team. My favorite thing about working at SLCC is SLCC'S commitment to diversity, and the support of its students and staff.

I love to travel, especially to warm ocean climates-some of my favorite places to go are Costa Rica, Hawaii, and years ago I got to spend two weeks in the Galapagos. I have a 3-year-old daughter who keeps me very busy, as we love to be outdoors or visiting parks and museums. I have also been practicing yoga for 20 years.

During the COVID-19 pandemic I've learned the value of online education. Throughout the pandemic, I've developed an understanding and appreciation as to how technology can improve the student experience, in my personal experience as a student, and in my career working in educational technology. Also, I feel a deeper sense of appreciation for my family, friends, coworkers, and teachers, in realizing that I wouldn't have been able to overcome this challenging year without their support and guidance. I am passionate about technology in education, and I am here to help anyone who may have questions about adding new tools or needing help in investigating tool options for their Canvas courses.

Three fun facts about me are: 1) after being out of college for 14 years, I have almost completed a master's degree, while juggling the responsibilities of being a parent and having a full-time career. 2) if I could only eat one thing for the rest of my life it would be coffee. 3) one thing I absolutely want to do before I die is swim with whale sharks.

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