The Journal of Public Affairs Education (JPYE) is the flagship journal of the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA). Founded in 1970, NASPAA serves as a national and international resource for the promotion of excellence in education for the public service. Its institutional membership includes more than 250 university programs in the United States in public administration, policy, and management. It accomplishes its purposes through direct services to its member institutions and by:

- Developing and administering appropriate standards for educational programs in public affairs through its Executive Council and its Commission on Peer Review and Accreditation;
- Representing to governments and other institutions the objectives and needs of education for public affairs and administration;
- Encouraging curriculum development and innovation and providing a forum for publication and discussion of education scholarship, practices, and issues;
- Undertaking surveys that provide members and the public with information on key educational issues;
- Meeting with employers to promote internship and employment opportunities for students and graduates;
- Undertaking joint educational projects with practitioner professional organizations; and
- Collaborating with institutes and schools of public administration in other countries through conferences, consortia, and joint projects.

NASPAA provides opportunities for international engagement for NASPAA members, placing a global emphasis on educational quality and quality assurance through a series of networked international initiatives, in particular the Network of Institutes and Schools of Public Administration in Central and Eastern Europe (NISPAcee), the Inter-American Network of Public Administration Education (INPAE), and the Georgian Institute of Public Affairs (GIPA). It is also involved locally; for instance, directing the Small Communities Outreach Project for Environmental Issues, which networks public affairs schools and local governments around environmental regulation policy issues, with support from the Environmental Protection Agency.

NASPAA's twofold mission is to ensure excellence in education and training for public service and to promote the ideal of public service. Consistent with NASPAA's mission, JPYE is dedicated to advancing teaching and learning in public affairs, defined to include the fields of policy analysis, public administration, public management, and public policy. Published quarterly by NASPAA, the journal features commentaries, announcements, symposia, book reviews, and peer-reviewed scholarly articles on pedagogical, curricular, and accreditation issues pertaining to public affairs education.

JPYE was founded in 1995 by a consortium from the University of Kansas and the University of Akron and was originally published as the Journal of Public Administration Education. H. George Frederickson was the journal’s founding editor. In addition to serving as NASPAA's journal of record, JPYE is affiliated with the Section on Public Administration Education of the American Society for Public Administration.
Information for Contributors

The Journal of Public Affairs Education (JPAE) is the flagship journal of the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA). JPJE is dedicated to advancing teaching and learning in public affairs broadly defined, which includes the fields of policy analysis, public administration, public management, public policy, nonprofit administration, and their subfields. Advancing teaching and learning includes not only the improvement of specific courses and teaching methods, but also the improvement of public affairs program design and management. The goal of JPJE is to publish articles that are useful to those participating in the public affairs education enterprise, not only in the U.S., but throughout the world. In service to this goal, articles should be clear, accessible to those in the public affairs fields and subfields, and generalizable. The new editorial team is particularly interested in articles that (1) use rigorous methods to analyze the relative effectiveness of different teaching methods, and (2) have international and/or comparative components, or consider the effect of country setting. Articles submitted for publication in JPJE should not already be published or in submission elsewhere. Articles that have been presented at conferences are welcome.

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• Be typed in a standard 12-point serif font (such as Times New Roman), double- or 1-1/2-spaced, with margins of no less than one inch on all sides.
• Include one document with no author names but including a title and an abstract of around 150 words, and
• Include another document with the title, authors’ names and contact information, and any identifying references, including acknowledgments.

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FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to Volume 15, Number 3, of the Journal of Public Affairs Education (JPAE). This issue contains Marvin Mandell’s presidential address, delivered at the October 2008 conference of the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA), as well as the first JPAE Symposium edited by the team at Arizona State University. I am very pleased that the first symposium under our aegis is a set of articles from the Teaching Public Administration Conference (TPAC), because TPAC is a conference directly relevant to JPAE, and one that I have always valued.

Marvin Mandell’s presidential address, concentrating as it does on NASPAA’s standards-revision process, speaks directly to the two articles at the beginning of Volume 15, Number 2 (Henry, et al., 2009 and Raffel, 2009). Mandell’s address helps keep these issues on our collective front burner and prods us to continue considering and discussing them. As did Henry, Goodsell, Lynn, Stivers, and Wamsley (2009), Mandell points out the proliferation of MPA-like degrees. He argues that this presents both challenges and opportunities for our community, and he concentrates attention on which public values, other than economic efficiency, we teach our students. His perspective is particularly relevant to those who emphasize public policy analysis and program evaluation.

The TPAC Symposium section includes seven articles that originally were presented at the 2008 TPAC, held May 31 - June 1 in Richmond, Virginia. These articles range across a wide variety of topics, giving readers a taste of the many areas covered at TPAC. We are pleased to have Margaret Stout, of West Virginia University, to introduce the TPAC Symposium. She was one of the 2008 conference organizers, and also helped put together the TPAC symposium.

Since I began my career as a professor, I have been lucky enough to attend several TPACs, and I have always found them inspirational and refreshing. To spend several days thinking and talking about teaching is a valuable pleasure that is all too rare for most of us, and I always find interesting ideas at TPAC. In fact, I attended the 2008 conference, and I participated in Diane Kimoto’s session on public-service videos (Kimoto, Frasco, Mulder, & Juta, 2009). It inspired me to try a similar exercise in my PAF 505 Public Policy Analysis class during the fall semester of 2008. Though the students found the experience rather frightening, they also found it exhilarating, and most teams were able to produce good videos. It forced them to think about policy communication in a different way—and it forced me to think about teaching policy communication in a different way. I will leave Professor Stout to introduce the other articles in the TPAC Symposium. I hope that you, as did I, will find some new ways to approach teaching in JPAE’s TPAC Symposium.

In September of 2009, watch for the Call for Papers for TPAC 2010. Next year’s TPAC will be held in Grand Rapids Michigan, hosted by Grand Valley State University.

— Heather E. Campbell, Ph.D.
Editor-in-Chief

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Loosely affiliated with the American Society for Public Administration’s Section on Public Administration Education (SPAE), the Teaching Public Administration Conference (TPAC) has been hosted annually by an informal network of public administration educators since 1978. The purpose of the conference is to promote excellence in teaching through shared experiences and pedagogical research. Participants teach at all levels of higher education, with some emphasis on Master’s of Public Administration (MPA) programs.

Following the theme of the 2008 conference, this symposium draws together a selection of TPAC papers focused on how and why we, as teachers of public administration, reproduce (or transform) the field as generations roll forward. TPAC papers often explore the various elements of teaching, mentorship, public service/service learning, and pedagogical research that contribute to the way we impact the field of public administration in terms of both practice and scholarship. Some of the papers published here were originally presented formally, while others began as conference roundtables and workshops that subsequently were honed and refined through collegial response. This group of papers provides a well-rounded snapshot of TPAC offerings, using the *JPAE* categories for submission that include
1. Pedagogical research,
2. Interpretive, reflective, critical, or theoretical exploration,
3. Case study, and

Leading the way is David Powell’s pedagogical research paper, titled “How Do We Know What They Know? Evaluating Student-Learning Outcomes in an MPA Program.” It offers a specific approach to the evaluation of learning in MPA programs, and finds that student assessment is critical not only for matriculation and course-grading purposes, but also for overall curriculum development and evaluation. With an increasing emphasis from the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA) on competencies, as opposed to course content, the notion of a holistic assessment becomes even more valuable. Powell’s example from California State University, Long Beach provides guidance to other programs that wish to develop a similar system.

Lorenda Naylor and Laura Wilson explore online education in MPA programs, and its capacity to meet NASPAA expectations. The paper, “Staying Connected: MPA Student Perceptions of Transactional Presence,” focuses specifically on the problem of transactional distance — the relational separation among teachers and students that can occur even within a physical classroom. Transactional presence is offered as a solution, and their cross-sectional survey of online MPA students at the University of Baltimore offers very interesting implications for improving transactional presence in both online and face-to-face relationships.

Also using digital delivery, Karen King & Cara Spicer offer an interesting inquiry into collaborative learning projects with their study of MPA students at
the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh (UWO) in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, and at Indiana University-Northwest (IUN) in Gary, Indiana. Appropriately titled “Badgers & Hoosiers: An Interstate Collaborative Learning Experience Connecting MPA Students in Wisconsin and Indiana,” their article provides a compelling definition of collaboration as an egalitarian concept and presents an interesting case – one where students and faculty generated a community of learners, even at a distance, by using digital communications.

In terms of interpretive, reflective, critical, or theoretical exploration, my own contribution [Margaret Stout], titled “Enhancing Professional Socialization Through the Metaphor of Tradition,” explores using the metaphor of tradition to foster specific public-service attitudes in students of public administration, while simultaneously helping them make sense of the diverse ideations presented in the field’s theories. According to the article’s typology, professional socialization may promote a Constitutional view of the administrator as bureaucrat, a Discretionary view of the administrator as entrepreneur, or a Collaborative view of the administrator as steward.

In terms of case study, Donna Lind Infeld provides a unique comparative case via her experiences as a Fulbright Scholar who worked with a Chinese faculty member, Dr. LI Wenzhao, in the classroom at Renmin University of China in Beijing. The case considers cross-cultural differences and the related importance of specific teaching elements in the public administration curriculum. Her research identifies the following: (1) Chinese students’ English and academic listening skills, (2) teaching with cases, (3) the “good” teacher, (4) the “good” student, (5) Chinese conceptions of teaching, (6) questioning, and (7) group work. Overall, Infeld’s reflections on the quality of academic life in the two environments are most interesting, and offer a poignant counterpoint to our field’s predominately American perspectives.

In terms of creative pedagogy, Diane Kimoto, Jenny Frasco, Lorne Mulder, and Sylvia Juta’s explication of using public service announcements (PSAs) as an innovative tool in the MPA classroom could not provide a better categorical fit. The piece, titled “Operation PSA: The Action Learning of Curiosity and Creativity,” replicated and expanded the YouTube/NASPAA “Speak Truth to Power” video challenge to create 90-second PSAs for explaining a policy problem and its potential solution. The resulting pedagogical approach inspires creative, active learning and collaboration, while building research, problem-solving, communications, and technology skills that are critical to administrative practice.

Equally creative is Bruce Neubauer & Shelley Stewart's paper on the use of Rockwell Arena software for modeling government processes, appropriately titled “Introduction of Government Process Modeling With Rockwell Arena Software.” Many professors of organizational theory and public management struggle with static images of organization charts and work-flow charts to communicate and analyze the complex and dynamic nature of today's agencies and networks. This paper offers an alternative approach to modeling these structures by using service-oriented architecture software that is intuitive and relatively easy to operate.
In all, the group of papers offers readers a notion of what to expect at the next annual Teaching Public Administration Conference. Attendees can anticipate a broad range of papers, experiential workshops, and roundtable discussions of pedagogical research, theoretical exploration, creative pedagogical approaches and techniques, and exemplar case studies of teaching experiences. In fact, one of the most commonly heard reactions to the conference is that it is one of the most practically useful experiences for professors, both seasoned and new. We hope to see you in 2010 at Grand Valley State University in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

— Margaret Stout, Ph.D.  
West Virginia University
Public Values As a Core Element of NASPAA

Marvin B. Mandell
University of Maryland, Baltimore County

EDITOR’S NOTE:
Here, *JPAE* is pleased to provide the text of the presidential address delivered on October 17, 2008, at last year’s Annual Conference of the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA), in Charleston, South Carolina. For publication as an article, the text of this speech was edited.

ABSTRACT
The diversity of types of degrees offered by NASPAA member programs creates both challenges and opportunities. One of the most vexing of these challenges concerns the identity of our field. In this address, I suggest that bringing public values to bear upon the analysis and management of organizations, programs, and policies should be a core element of the identity of NASPAA and its member programs. At the same time, it appears that to date we have not been entirely successful in helping society incorporate public values other than economic efficiency into public policy and management. In addition to sharpening the identity of NASPAA and its members, doing a better job of helping society incorporate public values other than economic efficiency into public policy and management can help reverse the erosion of the role of government that we have witnessed over the past four decades.

PUBLIC VALUES AS A CORE ELEMENT OF NASPAA
The coming year promises to be, for better or worse, an interesting one for NASPAA and its member programs, as well as our profession. Regardless of the outcome of the upcoming presidential election, it seems fair to say that both the confidence in and the expectations of government at all levels will rise — at least in the short run. Combined with a likely recession, most of us are expecting greater interest in NASPAA programs, which is generally a good thing, even if we don’t know where the budgets to maintain and expand our programs will come from.
I am honored to be given the opportunity to lead NASPAA in such interesting times, and look forward to working with the Executive Council; the dedicated and talented NASPAA staff, led by Laurel McFarland; and you, the members, to further the mission of NASPAA and the field of public affairs and administration. Thank you for giving me this opportunity.

Before proceeding further, I would like to recognize outgoing president Kathleen Beatty. Please join me in thanking Kathleen for her superb leadership of NASPAA during the past year.

There is no single template for NASPAA presidential addresses, but an approach that is often taken, and that I also will take, is to share the president’s views on one or more aspects of the state of our field, and their implications for the direction and activities that NASPAA should pursue. The aspect I will focus on is the diversity of NASPAA’s member programs, and how it poses challenges in terms of establishing an identity for NASPAA and its member programs. I argue that bringing public values to bear upon the analysis and management of organizations, programs, and policies should be a unique characteristic of our programs — regardless of their specific labels — and should form an important component of our collective identity. I will discuss some of the challenges of bringing public values to bear upon the analysis and management of organizations, programs, and policies. I also will point out at least one potential way that the broader society might benefit from a greater ability to bring public values to bear upon the analysis and management of organizations. I will conclude my remarks with a brief discussion of the implications of my argument for NASPAA and its member programs.

DIVERSITY AND IDENTITY AMONG NASPAA MEMBER PROGRAMS

NASPAA’s mission is to play a leadership role in ensuring “excellence in education and training for public service” (NASPAA, n.d.). It does this in various ways, with the most visible being accreditation of professional master’s programs in the field. As you know, the accreditation standards are under revision. With the committed help of many NASPAA members, as well as its staff, Jeff Raffel and Steve Maser have done a masterful job in leading the effort to develop a new set of standards. There is still more work to be done, and I hope all of you will continue to provide input into this process.

I am confident that the new set of standards will move us forward in several dimensions. For example, the new standards are much more outcome-oriented than the existing ones. In the course of developing this new set of standards, a number of issues have come to the fore. Many of these issues are relevant for the standards themselves and, more broadly, have important implications for the long-term health of this organization and the field it represents.

The standards-revision process has highlighted the existing diversity of NASPAA’s member programs. This diversity encompasses a number of
Public Values as a Core Element of NASPAA

dimensions that include size, resources, mission, and organizational location within our universities. Another dimension of NASPAA's diverse membership is the types of programs offered. It might be reasonably accurate to say that public administration programs dominated NASPAA's early years. But the organization has evolved considerably since then. In addition to public administration programs, degree programs in public policy, public affairs, and several other categories are now well-represented in NASPAA's membership.

The diversity of program types reflects growth and maturation in our field, and creates numerous opportunities. But it also creates serious challenges. One of these challenges concerns the identity of our field, and how we can characterize it in a way that is understandable and meaningful to ourselves, and to relevant external audiences.

One approach is simply to list the types of programs that are currently “inside the tent,” and label the field as “public administration, public affairs, public policy, etc.” But that runs several risks. For starters, it is a mouthful. There also is the “Oscar-acceptance-speech” problem — the possibility of inadvertently omitting an important and valued member of the field. A bigger downside is that this definition doesn't provide very much guidance on whether a potential new member program — one that is not included in the current list of degree titles — should be allowed into the “club” or “tent.”

Some of us have tried to address the question of defining our field by articulating what is common to all NASPAA members, and what distinguishes us from professional degree programs that we intuitively believe do not belong in the tent. It comes as no surprise that this is a difficult task. Preparation for public service has been tried on for size, but many audiences interpret “public service” as the direct provision of services to members of the public. Understood in this way, professionals such as police officers, firefighters, and teachers engage in public service, along with graduates of our member institutions.

Another direction in identifying the distinguishing characteristics of our field emphasizes a particular aspect of the adjective “public.” “Public” can be defined in terms of the legal status of an institution. However, as a profession and as an organization, we generally have recognized that partnerships between government, nonprofit organizations, and businesses are all necessary and desirable in many circumstances, and that many of our graduates will have careers that span these sectors. Hence, to emphasize public institutions solely in the legal sense of that term is a step backward.

A somewhat different aspect of “public” — and the one I wish to emphasize here — concerns the values that are brought to bear upon the analysis and management of organizations, programs, and policies. Specifically, I would like to suggest that what is — or should be — a unique characteristic of our programs, regardless of their specific labels, is that we and our graduates bring public values to bear upon the analysis and management of organizations, programs, and policies.

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ADDRESSING PUBLIC VALUES IN PUBLIC POLICY ANALYSIS AND MANAGEMENT

While I am attracted to the proposition that bringing public values to bear upon the analysis and management of organizations, programs, and policies should be a core element of the identity of NASPAA programs, it is not at all clear whether this aspiration has widespread support. I look forward to discussions during the coming months and years of the desirability of this aspiration. But even if this proposition is appealing to the NASPAA membership, we have a long way to go before we can legitimately claim that we fulfill this role. That is, as a profession, I don't think we have done a very good job of helping society incorporate public values into public decisions.

One very important manifestation of this shortcoming is the way we go about determining when public intervention is warranted. Market failure is the primary lens that mainstream policy analysts apply to determine when public intervention is warranted (or, more accurately, when it should be considered, because market failure in the classical view is a necessary, yet insufficient, condition for government intervention). In many respects this lens is quite useful, and I am not at all advocating that it should be abandoned. Indeed, there are some cases where greater attention to market failures would facilitate better public policy and management. To take one dramatic example, it seems clear, at least in retrospect, that transactions over the past few years involving derivatives of subprime mortgages entailed a considerable level of information asymmetry — a classic rationale for increased regulation.

However, the market-failure lens is incomplete in the sense that the absence of a market failure should not necessarily be taken to mean that government intervention is unwarranted, as is generally the case in current thinking. A more appropriate view is that a market failure is neither a necessary nor sufficient condition for government intervention. As my friend Barry Bozeman (2007) and others have pointed out, the notion that government intervention is warranted only if a market failure is present is based on economic individualism, and assumes that economic efficiency is the only value that should drive public and private decisions. Certainly, economic efficiency is an important goal of public policy and management. But it obviously should not be the only goal.

I don't think we can simply reject the principle that market failure is a necessary condition for government intervention without replacing that principle with something else. There are many issues that advocates believe should be addressed by government, and we need some framework to filter these issues. Simply throwing out the market-failure lens is likely to greatly exacerbate the frequency of — as Gene Bardach (1981) warned many years ago — “legitimating private grievances as ‘public problems’” (p. 167). But what exactly should replace the principle that market failure is a necessary condition for government intervention? Perhaps we should simply broaden the traditional market-failure approach, by adding the prescription that government
Public Values as a Core Element of NASPAA

intervention is warranted when the market fails (or can be predicted to fail) to achieve significant public values, one of which is economic efficiency.

Of course, standard views of policy analysis do indeed talk about the importance of considering certain other ends — most notably social equity and protection of rights — in public decision making. But we tend not to “walk the walk” when it comes to addressing these considerations. That is, I suspect there are many instances where these ends should be taken into consideration, but they are either ignored altogether, or given short shrift.

Moreover, I’m not convinced that economic efficiency, social equity, and protection of rights exhausts the set of significant public values. Examples of other possible public values — and these are intended as a very tentative list — include resource conservation and environmental sustainability, fiscal sustainability, a longer time horizon (a social discount rate that is lower than the private discount rate), and different levels of risk tolerance. (Many public risks are either too large to be insured against, or involve outcomes for which no fair compensation exists.) All of these examples, by the way, still maintain the assumption of individualism. That is, they are valued because of their (potential) effects on individual consumption. In addition to values associated with individual consumption, public values associated with collective outcomes also may be important, although they are rarely articulated and generally receive little attention.

When thinking about incorporating public values other than economic efficiency into public policy and management, it is helpful to understand why the market-failure lens is so attractive. One large reason is because it is an organizing concept that is easily understood (although our students don’t always get it as quickly as we might like!) and communicated. By contrast, our analytic frameworks for addressing public values other than economic efficiency are not nearly as well-developed as the market-failure lens, and not as easily communicated.

Doing a better job of helping society incorporate public values — other than economic efficiency — into public policy and management is likely to yield social benefits beyond a clearer identity for NASPAA and its members. For example, as Michael Lipsky (2007) and his colleagues have pointed out, the role of government has been undercut over the past 40 years. This has substantial negative consequences, not only for our profession, but also, more importantly, for our country. They attribute this in large part to “decades of relentless negative rhetoric [on the part of public officials and candidates for public office] emphasizing waste and government mismanagement” (Lipsky & Stewart, 2007, p. A29).

But, I would argue that our neglect to go beyond the market-failure lens also has contributed to this erosion of the government’s role. If the only criterion applied is economic efficiency, then the desirable role and scope of government is far more circumscribed than when a broader set of public values is applied.
Some might argue that the events of the past few weeks have served to counteract the erosion of the role of government in the U.S. For example, David Brooks (2008) recently claimed that “the era of conservative free market economics is largely over.” In the past few weeks, we have seen the beginning of government intervention in financial markets that is unprecedented in its magnitude. Some might argue that this marks the beginning of an era where government intervention is more acceptable, making the intellectual dominance of market failures as the primary rationale for government intervention less harmful than it has been in recent years.

It seems to me, however, that these events make it even more imperative
1. To identify public values — other than economic efficiency — that justify government intervention, and
2. To develop tools that incorporate them into our analyses of public decisions.

While enormous in magnitude, the interventions of recent weeks, and related interventions that surely will follow, are in a narrow domain — one of financial markets and macroeconomic stimulus. I doubt that they portend an openness to a larger government role in other domains. Indeed, they create a danger that even more stringent barriers to an activist government will develop in other domains. The financial rescue plan has made increased spending in other domains even more difficult to sell to the public. In the first presidential debate of this past election campaign (Commission on Presidential Debates, 2008a), Jim Lehrer asked the two candidates “As president, as a result of whatever financial rescue plan comes about … what are you going to have to give up, in terms of the priorities that you would bring as president of the United States, as a result of having to pay for the financial rescue plan?” and Tom Brokaw aggressively followed up with the same question in the second debate (Commission on Presidential Debates, 2008b). As this question suggests, and as David Brooks (2008) also commented, whoever we elect as president on November 4 will need to focus his attention and political capital on financial markets and economic recovery, and he will have a very limited opportunity for substantial government initiatives in other domains. In such a context, the question of when government intervention is warranted becomes particularly salient. Moreover, if it turns out that there is, in general, a greater openness to new government initiatives, there will be many candidate domains to be considered — not all of which can be pursued. This context, too, will enhance the salience of criteria for determining when government intervention is warranted.

IMPLICATIONS FOR NASPAA AND ITS MEMBER PROGRAMS

I believe it is at least worth discussing the proposition that an important characteristic of our programs, regardless of their specific labels, is that we and our graduates bring — or at least aspire to bring — an appreciation of public values to
Public Values as a Core Element of NASPAA

bear upon the analysis and management of organizations, programs, and policies. Further, this characteristic is common to all of our members, and distinguishes us from other professions. If there is a consensus on this proposition, there are several implications for NASPAA and its member programs. First, this characteristic should be reflected in the new standards that are being developed.

In addition, if we are to do a better job of helping society incorporate public values into public decisions, several sets of research tasks come to mind. The first is identifying significant public values other than economic efficiency, equity, and protection of rights. The second is advancing the tools and data that can be used in our analyses to address the public values that we identify. An important component of this process is developing ways to communicate our results, in order to facilitate the goal of bringing these tools and data to bear upon public decisions. NASPAA’s Social Equity Committee is doing important work along these lines and will be presenting some of it at their session scheduled October 18, 2008 at this conference.

I look forward to discussions of these and other issues in the months ahead.

REFERENCES


FOOTNOTES

1The risks potentially associated with genetically modified foods are a case in point. See Bozeman (2007, Chapter 9).

Marvin B. Mandell is a Professor of Public Policy at University of Maryland, Baltimore County. His research and teaching interests include the evaluation of public programs, methods of policy analysis, and the influence of policy analysis and research on the policy process. He is serving as President of the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA).
How Do We Know What They Know? Evaluating Student-Learning Outcomes in an MPA Program

David C. Powell

California State University, Long Beach

ABSTRACT

The development of student-learning assessment systems is a resource- and time-intensive process. Instituting a comprehensive assessment system is especially important in Master’s of Public Administration (MPA) programs, due to the emphasis on skill-based education. This paper details the development of an assessment system in the MPA program at California State University, Long Beach, and reports some preliminary data collected from this new system. An argument is presented for the use of a holistic, rather than a layered, assessment system.

EVALUATING STUDENT-LEARNING OUTCOMES IN AN MPA PROGRAM

In the past two decades, we have witnessed an increased emphasis on assessing the utility of educational programs. As external resources diminish, and student tuition and fees increase, educational programs are being held accountable for the education they provide to students. Over the past 50 years, the Master’s of Public Administration (MPA) has become the vital degree in the public service (NASPAA, 2009). As MPA degrees continue to become more vital, the emphasis on assessing the skills that MPA students acquire becomes even stronger. In order to respond to these pressures and continue refining the MPA curriculum, programs need to continuously improve their student-learning assessment systems.

DEFINITIONS OF ASSESSMENT

Before beginning a discussion of the development of an assessment system at California State University, Long Beach (CSULB), it is important to explore the definitions and purposes of assessment. Accepted definitions of assessment are as varied as assessment systems themselves. One common theme in academic literature is the formative-summative taxonomy of assessment purposes (Terenzini, 1989). Formative assessment refers to the examination of individual outcome data for the purpose of redesigning curricula and programmatic
requirements. By contrast, summative assessment is often done on the aggregate level, and views outcomes on a programmatic rather than individual level. For MPA programs, the results of summative assessment prove beneficial in the accreditation process.

Terenzini (1989) also identifies two additional aspects of assessment systems — the level and focus of assessment. The level of assessment refers to assessment by individuals or groups. This is not a mutually exclusive situation, and effective assessment systems often incorporate both individual- and group-level assessments. The focus of the assessment system may target knowledge, skills, behaviors, or attitudes (Ewell, 1994).

Even within these foci, there are important distinctions. Knowledge may be viewed from either a knowledge-reproduction or knowledge-construction perspective (Ewell, 1994). Assessment for knowledge reproduction analyzes the ability of students to reproduce the knowledge acquired in the classroom, while knowledge construction focuses on students’ abilities to create new knowledge and contribute to the phenomenological development of the discipline. Because most MPA program mission statements are geared toward preparing students to contribute to the community, as well as the discipline, assessment must go beyond the mere reproduction of knowledge. As a practical program, the MPA should afford students the opportunity to develop skills that may be applied to a myriad of public sector issues. Behavior and attitude assessments also are important for ethical adherence and public accountability. Therefore, assessment in public affairs education must be multi-dimensional and comprehensive.

The instances of assessment also may vary between programs. Kennedy (1999) identifies four possible levels of assessment: classroom observations and student surveys, teacher depictions of teaching, specific depictions of teaching strategies, and general depictions of teaching strategies. This definition of multiple levels of assessment underscores the need for a multi-dimensional assessment approach — one that includes many different mechanisms within an integrated assessment process.

**WHY ASSESSMENT?**

Developing assessment systems requires a significant investment of time and energy. In order to justify this investment, there must be compelling rationales for it. Weiss, et al. (2002) cite a renewed emphasis on assessment during the 1980s, due to highly publicized stories of student failures in numerous public school settings. This prompted state legislatures to become engaged in mandating assessment for public schools. As it is with most policy changes, the implementation of change is usually easier when the impetus comes from within the organization. Fortunately, there are several reasons for initiating an assessment revision within a department or college. Denton, Swanson, and Mathews (2007) recommend the involvement of teachers in developing an
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assessment system. This involvement facilitates implementation, and enhances the positive benefits of assessing student-learning outcomes. Some of these positive benefits include faculty development, curricular improvement, improved teaching, and improved learning (Angelo & Cross, 1993). If faculty members are committed to assessment, students are more likely to view assessment as something that enhances accountability and potentially improves the quality of teaching in the classroom (Brown, Hirschfeld, & Gerrit, 2008).

Unfortunately, the draw of assessment is countered by several factors that add difficulty to the implementation of a comprehensive assessment system. Weiss, et al. (2002) point out that resistance to assessment often results from the system not being marketed correctly to faculty. The development and implementation of comprehensive assessment systems is resource-intensive for administration and faculty alike, and if the benefits are not viewed as exceeding the costs, resistance will be profound. Banta, Lund, Black, and Oblander (1996) recognize that, because assessment is often contrary to faculty reward structures, it can increase resistance. If faculty members are faced with a choice of doing research or assessment, the reward structure in most academic environments is certainly skewed toward the former. Academic tradition also values the individuality of teaching, thus making it difficult to apply the standardization that is often a hallmark of assessment systems. A multi-dimensional assessment system that includes open participation by multiple assessors usually involves scrutiny by other faculty, which may make some of them unlikely to participate.

Despite these sources of resistance, the utility of a comprehensive assessment system has led most programs to develop assessment measures. This is true for the MPA program at CSULB, and this paper explores the development of the assessment system and some preliminary data that have emerged in the early period of implementation.

Layered vs. Holistic Assessment

The assessment system at CSULB was originally envisioned as a layered assessment approach that afforded assessment opportunities at several points in a student's academic career. However, it was soon apparent that the characterization of the assessment system as "layered" was incomplete at best. A layered assessment approach denotes a vertical design, where one participant would have multiple opportunities to assess a student's development. It is essential to include multiple participants in the assessment process and to afford these participants the opportunity to assess student progress at multiple points in a student's career.

Therefore, a more accurate characterization of the new assessment system is that it is holistic rather than layered. A holistic approach is multi-dimensional as well as longitudinal. It involves multiple participants who engage in assessment at multiple points of time during a student's academic career. These attributes characterize CSULB's system.
In this view of assessment, there are multiple stakeholders who are actively engaged in student assessment, from a student’s entry into the program of study until graduation. In the fall semester of 2007, the MPA program at CSULB instituted a holistic assessment system that gives multiple stakeholders numerous opportunities for student-learning outcome assessment. These stakeholders may include the students, full-time faculty, part-time faculty, administration, advisory board members, and members of the community. These multiple stakeholders need multiple opportunities to become engaged in the assessment process. For the assessment system at CSULB, assessment begins upon entry into the program.

**ENTRY-LEVEL ASSESSMENT**

The first point of assessment for most students is, naturally, an admission file. As part of admission, prospective students must submit an essay and other items intended to provide insight into their career-based goals, and objectives for the MPA program. Historically, it also has been used to evaluate student writing competencies. This process has occurred on an individual basis, with inter-student comparisons made only on an anecdotal level. This assessment was done solely by the admissions committee. Once admitted to the MPA program, specific student skills were not assessed in a standardized fashion, thus making it difficult to determine the skill levels of students upon entry into the program.

In the fall semester of 2007, the MPA program initiated the use of Initial Skills Self-Assessments. An example of this assessment instrument can be found in Appendix A. The purpose of this instrument is to enable students to evaluate their own skills in several important skill areas. This is done through an ordinal ranking and a narrative analysis. Students complete this assessment in their PPA 500 Foundations of Public Administration (PPA 500) course, and it is evaluated at the course level by the instructor of record. Each PPA 500 instructor also supplies a copy to the departmental assessment director, who compiles a database of the ordinal rankings. These Initial Skills Self-Assessments are then coupled with a final assessment that students complete at the end of the PPA 697 Directed Research (PPA 697) course program, and are submitted as part of the Student Learning Portfolio. The addition of these Initial Skills Self-Assessments has enabled students, course instructors, the departmental assessment director, and other faculty to review the self-perceived strengths and weaknesses of students in each of the important skill areas for the program. The data generated by the Initial Skills Self-Assessment, completed by PPA 500 students enrolled during the fall 2007 semester, appear in Tables 1 and 2. (See Tables 1 and 2.)
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Table 1.
Initial Skills Self-Assessment Averages
– Course A (PPA 500)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill Areas</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std Dev</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Budgeting</td>
<td>1.73</td>
<td>(0.799)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision Making</td>
<td>2.73</td>
<td>(0.704)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethics</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>(1.42)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral</td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td>(0.884)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization Theory</td>
<td>2.13</td>
<td>(0.743)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personnel</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>(0.816)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy</td>
<td>2.07</td>
<td>(1.22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem Solving</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>(0.99)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Methods</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>(0.899)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teamwork</td>
<td>4.07</td>
<td>(1.03)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written</td>
<td>3.53</td>
<td>(0.743)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Sample Size = 16
The number on the left is the average of results from an ordinal ranking scale of 1 to 5, where students entering the program self-rated their knowledge levels in each identified skill area. The number in parentheses is the standard deviation.

Table 2.
Initial Skills Self-Assessment Averages
– Course B (PPA 500)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill Areas</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std Dev</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Budgeting</td>
<td>1.73</td>
<td>(0.991)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision Making</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>(1.06)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethics</td>
<td>3.47</td>
<td>(0.964)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>(1.04)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization Theory</td>
<td>2.31</td>
<td>(1.20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personnel</td>
<td>2.10</td>
<td>(1.04)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy</td>
<td>2.05</td>
<td>(1.18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem Solving</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>(0.976)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Methods</td>
<td>2.31</td>
<td>(0.820)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teamwork</td>
<td>4.10</td>
<td>(0.737)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>(1.07)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Sample Size = 19
The number on the left is the average of results from an ordinal ranking scale of 1 to 5, where students entering the program self-rated their knowledge levels in each identified skill area. The number in parentheses is the standard deviation.
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The fall 2007 ordinal rankings reveal that students felt they possessed the strongest skill sets in teamwork, oral and written communication, problem-solving, and ethics. The mean for each of these exceeded three, on a five-point scale. Problematic skill areas for many students included budgeting, organization theory, policy analysis, personnel, and research methods. There was remarkable congruence between the responses of students in both class sections (Course A and Course B).

The narrative responses from students supported the ordinal results. Students indicated that they had the least amount of practical experience in budgeting, organization theory, and research methods. Their experience in these core content areas also was cursory, and involved reading research, receiving budgetary documents, and being aware of the organizational structures in their agencies.

The identification of problematic skill areas by students should help to shape curriculum modifications in the program. For instance, the low mean ranking in research methods indicates that additional focus should be placed on developing these skills. As a result of this feedback, as well as more narrative evaluations of research-methods training in the program, the faculty recently revised prerequisites for the research methods course, so that they include a statistics course. This essentially will create a two-course sequence for some students who lack the prerequisite skills in statistical analysis. In the areas of personnel management and budgeting, the assessment results suggest a need to incorporate more practical exercises because so many students report having little-to-no experience or skills related to budgeting and finance, and personnel management.

IN-PROGRAM ASSESSMENTS AND CORE COURSE ASSESSMENTS

Core and elective courses in the MPA program have been designed to provide students with the opportunity to develop many of the skills necessary as indicated by the Initial Skills Self-Assessment. The basic core curriculum consists of the following courses:

- PPA 500 Foundations of Public Administration
- PPA 555 Public Budgeting and Finance
- PPA 577 Human Resource Management
- PPA 660 Organization Behavior and Theory
- PPA 670 Policy Analysis
- PPA 696 Research Methods

Each core course requires completion of a Pre-Instructional and Post-Instructional Assignment. The Pre-Instructional Assignment must be completed within the first three weeks of the semester. A similar Post-Instructional Assignment is required during the final three weeks of the semester. The two
assignments are then combined, and submitted by students to their Student Learning Portfolios at the end of the program of study. The purpose of the Pre- and Post-Instructional Assignments is to give the course instructor and the student an opportunity to assess the achievement of course-specific learning objectives. While instructors have great latitude in developing these assignments, the Pre- and Post-Instructional Assignments must gauge similar skills, and provide an empirical basis for comparison of student performance at both points in the semester. The Departmental Assessment Coordinator is charged with the responsibility of collecting and reviewing copies of these assignments from one core course per semester. In the fall 2007 semester, the core PPA 555 Public Budgeting and Finance (PPA 555) course was selected for analysis.

The results of analyzing assignments from two sections of PPA 555 demonstrate that students were better equipped to analyze city budget documents after finishing course requirements. Both assignments required students to analyze a city budget, and document the type of budget format used, the revenue/expenditure patterns for the city, and the fiscal solvency of the city. Both assignments also required students to recommend the appropriate budget format for the city to use. In the Pre-Instructional Assignment, less than 50 percent of the students were able correctly to identify the type of budget format used (n=25). This compares to 92 percent of students (23 of 25) who performed this task correctly in the Post-Instructional Assignment. The fiscal solvency question also demonstrated an increase in student skills. Fewer than 10 percent of Pre-Instructional students (2 of 25) were able to correctly assess the fiscal solvency of the city. In the Post-Instructional Assignment, 80 percent of students (20 of 25) were able to assess it correctly.

The data generated by these Pre- and Post-Instructional Assignments are complemented by traditional student course evaluations. The mean value for the question regarding the usefulness of the PPA 555 Public Budgeting course is 4.57, on a 5-point Likert scale. This is typical for most courses in the MPA Program (program average = 4.5).

Program Conclusion Assessments

The capstone experience for MPA students is the completion of PPA 697 Directed Research. PPA 697 is the final required course in the program, and it gives students the option to complete a traditional research project, or a series of five case studies. The case study option requires the completion of a case study in each of five core content areas, which include budgeting, human resource management, organization theory, policy analysis, and research methods. Upon receiving a case study from a student, the PPA 697 advisor routes it to the core content faculty member(s) for review and evaluation. Once evaluated, these case studies are returned to the PPA 697 advisor for delivery to the student.
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**Final Skills Self-Assessments**

Regardless of whether a student selects the traditional research paper option or the new case study method, all PPA 697 students are required to submit a Final Skills Self-Assessment. This assessment has three parts. Part I is an ordinal ranking of how much students feel they know in each of the skill areas listed on the Initial Skills Self-Assessment. The areas and the ranking system in the Final Skills Self-Assessment are identical to those provided in the Initial Skills Self-Assessment. This assessment is designed to provide a post-curricular test of self-perceived student-learning outcomes as students prepare to exit the MPA program. Part II is a narrative description of students’ experiences and/or skills in each of the five core content areas. Part III of the assessment requires students to reflect on their experiences and determine how well the program met their expectations. An example of the Final Skills Self-Assessment is shown in Appendix B. The Part I results of the Final Skills Self-Assessment are presented in Table 3. (See Table 3.)

The sample of students’ who completed the Final Skills Self-Assessment admittedly are different from those sampled in the Initial Skills Self-Assessments. Given the newness of the assessment system, students who completed the Initial Skills Self-Assessment were in their first semester of study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill Areas</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std Dev</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Budgeting</td>
<td>3.71</td>
<td>(0.984)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision Making</td>
<td>4.13</td>
<td>(0.704)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethics</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>(0.771)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal</td>
<td>3.18</td>
<td>(0.730)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral</td>
<td>4.31</td>
<td>(0.740)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Behavior</td>
<td>4.08</td>
<td>(0.850)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personnel</td>
<td>4.03</td>
<td>(0.788)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy</td>
<td>4.03</td>
<td>(0.972)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem Solving</td>
<td>4.24</td>
<td>(0.675)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research</td>
<td>3.89</td>
<td>(0.863)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teamwork</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>(0.688)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>(0.547)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Sample Size = 38*

The number on the left is the average of results from an ordinal ranking scale of 1 to 5, where students completing the program self-rated their knowledge levels in each identified skill area. The number in parentheses is the standard deviation.
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when it was completed. Because the students who completed the Final Skills Self-Assessment were in their last semester of study, they never completed an Initial Skills Self-Assessment at the time they entered the program. However, it is still instructive to compare results from the Final and Initial Skills Self-Assessments, in order to determine whether there are any significant trends. (For purposes of comparison, it should be noted that, when the results of Tables 1 and 2 are combined, it produces a total sample size of 35, which is equivalent to the sample size in Table 3.)

A simple t-test of independent sample means produces the results shown in Table 4. (See Table 4.) All of the differences between the means on the Initial Skills Self-Assessment and the Final Skills Self-Assessment are statistically significant. The largest differences appear in the areas of budgeting, decision-making, organization behavior, personnel, policy, problem-solving, and research. As mentioned earlier, caution should be used in interpreting these results, because the two samples are independent. However, because the admission standards that students in both samples entered under were equivalent, it is unlikely that students' characteristics were so significantly different that it would account for such differences in their initial and final perceptions of core content skills.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill Areas</th>
<th>t Values</th>
<th>p Values</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Budgeting</td>
<td>-8.84</td>
<td>&lt;0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision Making</td>
<td>-5.38</td>
<td>&lt;0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethics</td>
<td>-2.70</td>
<td>&lt;0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral</td>
<td>-1.97</td>
<td>&lt;0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Behavior</td>
<td>-8.31</td>
<td>&lt;0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personnel</td>
<td>-10.11</td>
<td>&lt;0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy</td>
<td>-7.62</td>
<td>&lt;0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem Solving</td>
<td>-5.32</td>
<td>&lt;0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research</td>
<td>-7.53</td>
<td>&lt;0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teamwork</td>
<td>-2.21</td>
<td>&lt;0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written</td>
<td>-4.95</td>
<td>&lt;0.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Table 4 uses a simple t-test of independent means to compare the combined independent sample size of 35 from Tables 1 (Sample Size = 16) and 2 (Sample Size =19), to the similar independent sample size of Table 3 (Sample Size = 38). The t values are in the left-hand column. In the right-hand column, p is the probability that the t values are greater than or equal to the number shown on the left. Small values of p (less than .05) typically represent significant differences.
Another point of comparison is to analyze results of the Final Skills Self-Assessment, and the Alumni Survey conducted in March, 2008. One relevant question on this survey asked alumni to rank the amount of knowledge they gained from each core area — using the same five-point ordinal scale that was used in the Final Skills Self-Assessment. Table 5 reports the results of that comparison. (See Table 5.)

In eight out of 11 areas, the perceptions of students just leaving the program were higher than the perceptions of the alumni. In the three instances where perceptions of graduating students were lower than those of alumni, the small differences were not statistically significant. Significant differences in the eight areas could have been the result of several factors. First, there could have been differences in alumni responses based on graduation years. To control for this, the data were sorted into two samples of graduates — one from before 1998 and one from after 1998. There were no significant differences or patterns when comparing these two samples. Second, the differences could have been driven by the non-equivalence of alumni responses.

Table 5. Differences Between Students’ Perceptions of Knowledge in Five Core Content areas on the Final Skills Self-Assessment and on the 2008 Alumni Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill Areas</th>
<th>t Values</th>
<th>p Values</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Budgeting</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>NS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision Making</td>
<td>2.57</td>
<td>p&lt;0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethics</td>
<td>3.18</td>
<td>p&lt;0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral</td>
<td>2.87</td>
<td>p&lt;0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Behavior</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
<td>NS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personnel</td>
<td>14.18</td>
<td>p&lt;0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy</td>
<td>-0.8184</td>
<td>NS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem Solving</td>
<td>1.46</td>
<td>NS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research</td>
<td>-0.17</td>
<td>NS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teamwork</td>
<td>4.94</td>
<td>p&lt;0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written</td>
<td>2.87</td>
<td>p&lt;0.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Degrees of Freedom = 148 NS = Not Significant
Table 5 uses a simple t-test of independent means to compare results from the independent sample size of 38 in Table 3, to the independent averaged results of the 2008 Alumni Survey (sample size not listed), which also are based on an ordinal ranking scale of 1 to 5. The t values are in the left-hand column. In the right-hand column, p is the probability that the t values are greater than or equal to the number shown on the left. Small values of p (less than .05) typically represent significant differences.
samples and graduating student samples. This is an issue that in the future could be addressed by comparing characteristics of both samples. However, a cursory examination of the demographic characteristics of these two samples reveals that they are equivalent in age (while in the program), ethnicity, and prior educational training. The one major difference is in the income level of the two samples, because, obviously, income levels of alumni are significantly higher than those of graduating students. One of the most probable explanations for the differences between the two samples is the recent experience of graduating students. Because graduating students completed the core courses more recently than the alumni did, the courses may give have a higher perceived utility.

**Case Study Option**

As mentioned earlier, PPA 697 students also have the option of completing five case studies to satisfy course requirements. The primary impetus behind creating the case study option was to develop mechanisms that measure a student’s ability appropriately to apply information, from each core area, to practical public-sector situations. Student performance results from case studies throughout the 2007-2008 academic year are reflected in Table 6. (See Table 6.)

The case studies are evaluated by core-content faculty from each area. In order to make the evaluation fair and uniform, only one faculty member is assigned to evaluate the case studies in a particular core content area. Each faculty member develops a specific grading rubric that is made available to students at the beginning of the semester, on the departmental Blackboard Web site.

As seen in Table 6, students were generally successful, with no one receiving a grade below C+. Students also performed very well in the PPA 577 Human Resource Management case studies. The lowest grades appeared in PPA 660 Organization Behavior and Theory.

**Table 6.**

**PPA 697 Student Performance – Case Study Option**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PPA# &amp; Course Title</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>A-</th>
<th>B+</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>B-</th>
<th>C+</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>555 Public Budgeting and Finance</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>577 Human Resource Management</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>660 Organization Behavior and Theory</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>670 Policy Analysis</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>696 Research Methods</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>21</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Students completed a case study in each of five core content areas, as represented by the course titles. Case study performance results are based on a standard A-F grading system.*
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STUDENT LEARNING PORTFOLIO
Starting in the 2001 fall semester, the MPA program replaced its comprehensive examination option with a required Student Learning Portfolio (SLP). Implementation of the SLP was intended to provide a more comprehensive assessment mechanism than the comprehensive examination.

Part I
The original SLP required construction of a four-part portfolio. Part I of the portfolio included a resume and a “where I am now” essay that both were completed in PPA 500. The purpose of these assignments was to enable students to assess their current career statuses upon entry into the program. A primary problem with this requirement was that the assignments were not evaluated by the PPA 500 instructor. A second problem involved the content of these assignments. The essay lacked structure and an objective basis for student-to-student comparisons. A revised SLP was implemented in fall of 2007, in order to rectify these deficiencies. The revised SLP now requires submission of the Initial Skills Self-Assessment and the Final Skills Self-Assessment. The Initial and Final Skills Self-Assessments are reviewed by at least two faculty members. (The PPA 500 Instructor reviews the Initial Skills Self-Assessment and the PPA 697 instructor reviews the Final Skills Self-Assessment.) This rectifies the second deficiency associated with the lack of comparability between assignments, because the Final Skills Self-Assessment mirrors content of the Initial Skills Self-Assessment. Using an ordinal ranking system in Part I of the assessments, when combined with the narrative assessments in Parts II and III, provides a more complete picture of student skills in each core content area.

Part II
Part II of the original SLP required the submission of portfolio assignments from each core course. These assignments normally were completed at the end of each course, and required approval of the course instructor and a second faculty member. This process presented many problems. First, the paper could be revised up to three times. If after three submissions the paper still was not approved by the original instructor and the second faculty member, the student was required to re-take the course. Most students found themselves revising their papers for up to one year after completing the course. Therefore, the paper did not necessarily reflect skills acquired in the course. Second, obtaining approval from a second faculty reader proved problematic, and imposed additional work on instructors that was beyond their normal course loads. This in turn posed problems for adhering to the requirements of collective bargaining agreements. The second readers also would occasionally impose requirements on students that were not part of the standard paper requirements for the course. In the fall semester of 2007, Part II of the SLP was revised to require the
substitution of Pre- and Post-Instructional Assignments from each core course. These papers require approval only from the course instructor, which limits the possibility of a second faculty member imposing additional, non-course-related requirements on them. Obviously, the primary superior quality of the Pre- and Post-Instructional Assignments is that the Pre-Instructional Assignments create a baseline that is used to compare them with the Final Skills Self-Assessments. This provides a more accurate and complete basis for the analysis of skill-acquisition in each core course.

Part III

Part III of the SLP required the submission of professional development documentation. This could include documents such as training certificates and promotion letters. Unfortunately, this requirement did not give students or faculty any opportunities to assess the students' development while in the program. Also, many students lacked physical documentation of training while in the program. Therefore, Part III also was revised to include at least two examples of written work that was completed in the MPA program. Students are instructed to include projects that provide examples of their best work while in the program. These projects are reviewed by faculty for the purpose of determining the students' writing competency skills. These papers are reviewed by all PPA 697 faculty, as part of the SLP approval process.

Part IV

Part IV — the final part of the SLP — focuses on the outcome of the PPA 697 course (either the five case studies or the research project, depending on the student's choice). At this point, case studies already have been reviewed by the core content faculty, and are reviewed again for assessment purposes by the PPA 697 advisor. Compiling all four parts of the SLP results in a holistic assessment document that also serves as a collection of work completed in the MPA program. Students may then use the SLP to document their skill sets and writing abilities for present and future employers. Each semester, a random sample of portfolios is reviewed by the departmental Assessment Coordinator, and in the future they also will be provided to members of the departmental Advisory Board for review and comment. The feedback from these community leaders and public officials will help inform changes to the necessary skills and concepts covered in the MPA program.

Conclusions and Future Directions

The purpose of this paper is to report initial findings from a new assessment system in a large MPA program. Even though the data are preliminary, and are from a system that has been in place for only one academic year, the findings indicate some success. First, results of the Final Skills Self-Assessments are significantly different than results of the Initial Skills Self-Assessments for all
core content areas. Despite the fact that the samples are from two different
groups of students, all students were admitted under the same criteria.
Therefore, there should not be significant differences in the samples’
characteristics. The significant differences in these responses indicate that
students who are exiting the program have a higher-level perception of their
skills in all core content areas than students who are entering the program.

In terms of skills-acquisition in the core courses, a small sample of Pre- and
Post-Instructional Assignments from a Public Budgeting class seem to indicate
that students improved their abilities to analyze a local city budget as a result
of the course. However, this finding is preliminary, and must be augmented
with analyses of Pre- and Post-Instructional Assignments from all core courses
in the future.

Students also appear to be performing well on the PPA 697 case studies,
because none of them received a grade below a C+. However, there were large
variations in grades between the core content areas. Again, more data need to be
generated before conclusions can be drawn regarding the ability of students to
apply core content skills to relevant public-sector scenarios.

While all of these results are very preliminary, CSULB’s new holistic
approach to assessment presents the opportunity to expand assessment efforts
of the department by involving more stakeholders in the assessment of
student-learning outcomes. Assessment mechanisms alone are inadequate to
assure a comprehensive assessment of student-learning outcomes. Involvement
of stakeholders is vital to any assessment system, because they must be
engaged in the process in order for it to be successful. This involvement will
be fostered by rotating the Assessment Coordinator role throughout all
department faculty members. Engaging community members is a difficult
task, but it could be made easier by beginning the engagement process with
members of the departmental Advisory Board.

Assessment is a process, rather than a result, and development of the
assessment system is based on feedback from all stakeholders. Hopefully, as
more stakeholders are engaged, their constructive feedback will continue to
further refine and develop this holistic assessment system.

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reading intervention teachers. Reading and Writing: An Interdisciplinary Journal, 20(6), 569-590.
How Do We Know What They Know?
Evaluating Student-Learning Outcomes in an MPA Program


David Powell is Associate Professor and Director of the Graduate Center for Public Policy and Administration at California State University, Long Beach. His primary research areas include student assessment, intergovernmental relations, and Internet taxation. His research has appeared in Publius: The Journal of Federalism, California Politics and Policy, The Journal of Online Learning and Teaching, and State Tax Notes.
APPENDIX A.
EXAMPLE OF INITIAL SKILLS SELF-ASSESSMENT

GRADUATE CENTER FOR PUBLIC POLICY AND ADMINISTRATION
INITIAL SKILLS SELF-ASSESSMENT

Instructions: Effective as of the 2007 fall semester, all PPA 500 students are required to complete an Initial Skills Self-Assessment in PPA 500. The purpose of this self-assessment is to allow students and faculty to assess student skills in each core content area, upon entry into the California State University, Long Beach MPA Program. It is vital that students provide honest and accurate information in this initial assessment.

Please begin by responding to the questions on the following page. Indicate your knowledge in each of these areas by circling the most appropriate number (1 = no knowledge, 5 = a great deal of knowledge). In Part II, please provide a written discussion of any skills and/or experience that you have in the core content areas. Your discussion should include an honest assessment of your strengths and weaknesses in each content area. For more information on each topic, see the list of core concepts for each of these core content areas on the PPA department Web page at http://www.csulb.edu/colleges/chhs/departments/ ppa/coreconcepts/. Finally, in Part III, please discuss your reasons for pursuing the MPA degree and what specific skills you expect to acquire upon completion of the degree.

Format: There is no mandated length for this assignment. However, it is useful to organize your discussion by core content area. Upon completion, please submit this assignment to your PPA 500 instructor. When the Initial Skills Self-Assessment is returned to you, you are strongly encouraged to place it in your Student Learning Portfolio. It will then be evaluated again by your PPA 697 instructor at the end of the MPA program.

(See sample form on following page.)
**PART I**

Please indicate how much you think you know about each area. How much I already know about this area: 1 = nothing; 5 = a great deal.

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**PART II**

Please discuss your experience and/or skills in each of the following content areas:

- Budgeting and Finance
- Human Resource Management
- Organization Theory
- Policy Analysis
- Research Methods

**PART III**

Please discuss your reasons for pursuing the MPA degree and what specific skills you hope to acquire in the MPA program.
APPENDIX B.
EXAMPLE OF FINAL SKILLS SELF-ASSESSMENT

GRADUATE CENTER FOR PUBLIC POLICY AND ADMINISTRATION
FINAL SKILLS SELF-ASSESSMENT

Instructions: Effective as of the 2007 fall semester, all PPA 697 students are required to complete the Final Skills Self-Assessment, as the final requirement of PPA 697. The purpose of this self-assessment is to allow students and faculty to assess student skills in each core content area at the conclusion of studies in the California State University, Long Beach MPA Program. It is vital that students provide honest and accurate information in this final assessment. The purpose of this requirement is to provide an empirical basis for assessing student skill-development as a result of instruction received in the MPA Program. This Final Skills Self-Assessment should be submitted to your PPA 697 advisor, along with the Initial Skills Self-Assessment that you completed in PPA 500. The PPA 697 advisor will compare the Initial and Final Skills Self-Assessments to analyze your growth and development in the field of public administration and policy. If you did not complete an Initial Skills Self-Assessment in PPA 500, the Final Skills Self-Assessment will be submitted in Part IV (if a case study approach was used in PPA 697), or Part I (if a traditional research project was completed).

Please begin by responding to the questions on the following page. Indicate your knowledge in each of these areas by circling the most appropriate number (1 = no knowledge, 5 = a great deal of knowledge). In Part II, please provide a written discussion of any skills and/or experience that you have in the core content areas. Your discussion should include an honest assessment of your strengths and weaknesses in each content area. For more information on each topic, see the list of core concepts for each of these core content areas on the PPA department Web page at http://www.csulb.edu/colleges/chhs/departments/ppa/coreconcepts/. The answers provided in Part II of this Final Skills Self-Assessment should be substantially different than those provided on the Initial Skills Self-Assessment, and should demonstrate concrete examples of skill acquisition in each of the core content areas. Use specific examples to illustrate the skills that you have acquired in each core area. Finally, in Part III, please reflect on the skills that you acquired in the program and how well the program met your expectations.

Format: There is no mandated length for this assignment. However, it is useful to organize your discussion by core content area. Upon completion, please submit this assignment to your PPA 697 instructor, along with the Initial Skills Self-Assessment that was completed in PPA 500, and the skills-assessment approval form. After approval by your PPA 697 advisor, the skills assessments will be submitted in Part I of the Student Learning Portfolio.
## Final Skills Self-Assessment

### Part I

Please indicate how much you think you know about each area. How much I already know about this area: 1 = nothing; 5 = a great deal

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### Part II

Please discuss your experience and/or skills in each of the following content areas:

- Budgeting and Finance
- Human Resource Management
- Organization Theory
- Policy Analysis
- Research Methods

### Part III

Please reflect on how well the MPA program met your expectations.
Enhancing Professional Socialization Through the Metaphor of Tradition

Margaret Stout
West Virginia University

ABSTRACT
This article explores how the metaphor of tradition can help educators foster specific public service attitudes in students of public administration, while simultaneously helping their students make sense of the diverse ideations presented in the field's theories. This is of particular value because public administration is experiencing an identity crisis related to competing interpretations of legitimacy and associated role conceptualizations. In fact, the explication of multiple traditions throughout the program of study could help educators better achieve forthcoming accreditation mandates to demonstrate firm emphasis on public values.

INTRODUCTION
Public administration education is an important element of professional socialization for both pre-service and in-service students. Master of Public Administration (MPA) programs help students form and adopt an ideation of the public administration role that can serve to (1) bring diverse occupations into a common sense of purpose, professional identity, and trust; (2) establish standards for professional action; and (3) provide legitimacy to the public (Stever, 1988). However, the presence of multiple and distinct ideations of public administration serves to intensify the ambiguity of the postmodern condition (see for example Catlaw & Stout, 2007), and exacerbates questions of legitimacy (see for example McSwite, 1997). For example, MPA programs have been found to instill the competing ethical standards of both the bureaucratic and the democratic ethos (Heijka-Ekins, 1988). Another examination of theories that promote progressive values found there were seven distinct approaches (Box, 2008). This sense of confusion may be mitigated in part by helping students become clear on the theoretical choices available within the field, the practical and philosophical implications of those choices, and the opportunity to identify with others who share similar beliefs and prefer a similar approach to action.
To support this goal, this article explores how public administration theories might be organized in an innovative manner that could help practitioners better navigate the contemporary governance context. This organizing framework considers the legitimacy of public administration from three distinct social perspectives: those of the elected official, the citizen, and the practitioner. The perspective of each is developed as a sociological ideal type (Weber, 1949) comprised of coherent sets of ideas, referred to as traditions (Stout, 2006). Traditions are social and intellectual presuppositions about activities and inquiries that evolve through time (MacIntyre, 1988). This fits an understanding of public administration as an enterprise “characterized by an interlocking set of values, not by rigid doctrine, certainly by nothing resembling a scientific paradigm …” (Waldo, 1980, p.77).

The metaphor of tradition enables faculty and students to organize competing ideas in order to make more conscious choices among them, instead of presenting public administration as a mixed bag of inherent philosophical tensions and fragmentation that each practitioner must sort out alone. It must be noted that the substantive content of traditions may be organized differently. For example, organizing themes are commonly historical in nature, referring to Orthodox public administration, New Public Administration, New Public Management, New Public Service, and the like. The three distinct traditions of public administration presented here emerged during a hermeneutic study of the field’s theoretical literature that used the basis of legitimacy as the categorizing characteristic (Stout, 2007). Each of these traditions promotes a different conceptualization of the administrative role, and each provides an important clarification of normative commitments when choosing among them.

Combining this purpose and method, this article explores the process of professional socialization in the field of public administration, the problem of competing ideations of the legitimate administrative role, three distinct traditions framing the administrative role, and the possible use of these traditions in professional education for the more intentional socialization of public administration students into specific role conceptualizations.

Professional Socialization in Public Administration

All processes of socialization rely on concepts such as social role and sense of identity. Role conception is an internalized set of beliefs and ideas that a person holds about one’s place and purpose in society, which defines how one may act (Selznick, 1957). Alternatively, role conceptualization is an external set of norms about the appropriate enactment of a given social role. The administrative role often is described as a “cohesive set of job-related values and attitudes that provides the public administrator a stable set of expectations about his or her responsibilities” (Selden, Brewer, & Brudney, 1999, p.175). This social role is in large part considered to be a profession, which requires, among other things, a commitment to a calling or enduring set of normative and behavioral expectations, as well as specialized training or education (Moore & Rosenblum, 1970).
Based on a library database search, professional socialization during the academic experience is of great concern to many professions, yet receives little attention in public administration literature. However, through accreditation by the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA), MPA programs across the country have become fairly uniform in their admission requirements, curricula, and teaching approaches (R.B. Denhardt, 2001). According to the NASPAA code of good practice, each member “focuses on the preparation of students for professional careers in public service, emphasizing both the values and ethics of public service, and the development of professional skills and knowledge” (NASPAA, 2006, emphasis added). Some programs actually identify this as “a socialization sequence” (Georgia, 2006). Furthermore, research suggests that professional socialization is a significant factor in public service motivation (Perry, 1997). Therefore, we can assume that this process is important to the field.

The manner in which professional identities are believed to develop can be described as a general causal relationship of indeterminate direction, or at least a starting place, whereby (1) a person is motivated by a variety of personal and social factors to adopt a particular social role, which (2) entails a specific set of attitudes and actions, which in turn (3) impact personal role conception and normative theoretical role conceptualizations, which in turn (4) are transmitted and validated through professional education.

Figure 1 presents a new graphic depicting this relationship, with a focus on the elements of professional socialization that are most impacted by academia. However, it is important to note that socialization is a nonlinear process, where external sources of evaluation and internal sources of reflection combine in an evolving developmental cycle (Weidman, Twale, & Stein, 2001). (See Figure 1.)
To emphasize, this article pertains only to specific elements of professional socialization — those which are impacted most directly by scholars. Research, theory, and pedagogy are all used to plan and implement the professional education and socialization process that engenders role-taking. The focus here is purely on the relationships among theoretical role conceptualization, pedagogy, and role-taking. For the most part, theory impacts professional education and academic mentorship. While much of this process focuses on requisite knowledge and skills, of key interest here are the sense of “occupational identity and internalization of occupational norms” (Moore & Rosenblum, 1970, p. 71) and the “transmission of more accepted values of the discipline or profession” (Weidman, et al., 2001, p. 18).

**Step 1: Practitioners Act as Role-Takers**

Administrators are conceptualized as “role-takers” (Harmon & Mayer, 1986; Selznick, 1957) because they both consciously and unconsciously take on a role that has been organizationally and socially predetermined in terms of a set of expectations. Other than in rare cases of conscription, practitioners voluntarily accept a role by entering public service. While some theories posit an a priori public service motivation, socialization also can shape the meaning and value that an individual attaches to attitudes and actions (Fuller & Dornbusch, 1988). “The transformation process of a novice to a professional is essentially an acculturation process during which the values, norms and symbols of the profession are internalized” (du Tort, 1995, p.164). This “inculcation of motives” can occur at both pre-entry and entry stages to an organization (Barnard, 1938, p.149). In the case of MPA curriculum, socialization efforts can be designed to change convictions and intrinsic motivations (deCharms, 1968) through the internalization of values, norms, or morals (Etzioni, 1975; Katz & Kahn, 1966).

**Step 2: Role is Performed and Assessed**

At the individual level of analysis, each practitioner assesses his or her own role performance based on a variety of factors, including how performance is judged by fellow administrators, as well as the citizens and elected officials they serve. This self-assessment may or may not change one’s internal role conception. However, more important to the present discussion are the formal methods through which empirical evidence continues to inform theory in an evolutionary manner. Research abounds on the relationships among factors of public service motivation, role performance, and perceived legitimacy. In essence, theorists seek to answer the question, “Can professionals be developed in ways that are conducive to democratic responsibility?” (Perry, 1997, p.191).
Enhancing Professional Socialization Through the Metaphor of Tradition

These types of inquiries find that misalignments of the three factors often occur. As is evident in national opinion polls and media reports, the contemporary perception of government legitimacy is very low (King, Stivers, et al., 1998). Based on this crisis of legitimacy, adjustments are made to theory, in hopes of developing role conceptualizations that will better meet citizen expectations in the future. For example, if role performance is in accordance with the prevailing role conceptualization, but still is perceived to be illegitimate by the public, then theorists may suggest a different meaning of legitimacy and offer a new role conceptualization.

Step 3: Experience Impacts Role Conception and Conceptualization

As assessments are made of administrative performance, adjustments are made to future action. In the case of the administrator, individual role conceptions (internal perception and motivation) may be confirmed or adjusted according to experience. In terms of the field of study, normative theory evolves in response to the changing conditions of role performance. Scholars assume the task of constructing a role conceptualization (external prescription) for the public administrator that will be deemed legitimate not only by practitioners themselves, but also by the citizens they serve, including elected officials. However, there are many competing role conceptualizations in public administration theory that have changed over time, never completely eliminating prior conceptualizations. This leads us back to the question of which theory and which role conceptualization should prevail.

Step 4: Pedagogy Transmits Role Conceptualizations

Role conceptualizations are used to socialize students into professional identities (De Soto, Opheim, & Tajalli, 1999; Lowery & Whitaker, 1994). They are imparted via the professional socialization process, much of which occurs through the curricula of professional degree programs such as the MPA (Heck, 1995; King, 1998). Graduate programs carry legitimate power to prescribe behavior and influence psychological change about a given social role or position (French & Raven, 1959). Higher education in general is imbued with cultural legitimacy, and the increasingly coveted MPA is made even more authoritative by the legitimizing practices of NASPAA accreditation. The rationale for regulating admission to a profession in some way is “to protect the potentially gullible client from incompetent and unscrupulous ‘experts’…” (Moore & Rosenblum, 1970, p.111). This is particularly important in public administration, because its professionals operate with the power of the state behind them. Thus, in light of the impact public administrators have on democratic legitimacy, the pedagogical choices made in the reproduction of the field are important decisions.
Summary

From this professional socialization process view, role conception is envisioned as a problem of scholarship, practice, and public perception. It can be studied from the perspective of those constructing the role (scholars), those taking the role (practitioners), or those interacting with the role (elected officials, other administrators, and citizens). While internal role conceptions and externally prescribed role conceptualizations are clearly interrelated, this article focuses on the latter, and the manner in which theory describes and promotes roles for the public administrator. It seeks to describe the constitutive elements of unique role conceptualizations, define how they are mutually exclusive in terms of legitimacy logic, and explain how the field attempts to promote them through pedagogy.

ROLE CONCEPTUALIZATIONS AND DEMOCRATIC LEGITIMACY

As noted by Morgan (1986), images and metaphors are used not only as descriptors, but also as prescriptive guides for attitudes and action. Role conceptualizations depict what we wish social actors to be and do. In this case, images of identity stem from “legitimating myths” about the enterprise of public administration within our political system (Kass, 1990). In fact, a historical review of the field “shows that the debate over defining the role of the administrator in governance has actually been a struggle of political ideology” (McSwite, 1997, pp. 229-230). For example, Waldo (1984) brought the problem of political philosophy into public administration theory: “Are training in the mechanics of administration and codes of professional ethics enough? Or should our new Guardian Class be given an education commensurate with their announced responsibilities and perhaps be imbued with a political philosophy?” (p. 202). While the field for the most part has accepted this charge, the specifics flow “from different, often conflicting, ideas in American political philosophy” (Kettl, 2000, p.14).

Perhaps in part because of this phenomenon, there is widespread disagreement about the legitimate role of government actors. This has been described as a “crisis of legitimacy” (King, et al., 1998) for which a variety of solutions has been offered. In fact, the resulting identity crisis has been recognized as one of the most pressing concerns for the field in the new millennium. A 2006 symposium in the International Journal of Public Sector Management described a competition between the traditional bureaucratic ethos and the managerialist ethos promoted by the New Public Management and related theories. Elsewhere, competing democratic and bureaucratic ethos are similarly described (Pugh, 1991). Each ethos has a specific logic, ethical framework, and corresponding role identity for public administrators (Newland, 2003). Such competition among ethos is described as an “identity project” that
is thought to be changing the professional culture of public service (Du Gay, 1996), along with the associated practitioner identity (Cooper, 1984; Horton, 2006; van Bockel & Noordegraaf, 2006). To a large extent, these references to alternative ethos and professional identities are just different ways to say “competing bases of democratic legitimacy.”

The notion that the ethos and the corresponding role conception of public administrators can and perhaps should change suggests the need to make informed choices. A better understanding of these role conceptualizations should benefit this effort. Research on public service motivation and the question of what causes individuals to adopt the role of public administrator is one approach (Brewer & Selden, 1998; Brewer, Selden, & Facer, 2000; Downs, 1967; Perry, 1996, 1997; Rainey, 1982; Selden, Brewer, & Brudney, 1999). Related literature about a vocation or calling also explores the motivation to enter public service, and assumes a role conceptualization related to some type of moral purpose (J.V. Denhardt & R.B. Denhardt, 2003; Kass & Catron, 1990; Staats, 1988). A similar area of inquiry provides typological conceptualizations of the role conceptions held by individual administrators (R.B. Denhardt & deLeon, 1995; Svara, 2006).

In sum, these varying conceptualizations of the public service role include categorizations by cognitive type, social level of concern, type of personal affect or commitment, orientation toward technical and democratic concerns, and relationship to politicians. However, while empirical approaches are important in linking value systems to specific functions, organizational missions, or job classifications, they may not explain competing and mutually exclusive bases of legitimacy. For this, an ideal-type model is required.

Reconsidering these role conceptualizations using legitimacy as an analytical lens also highlights an important theoretical problem: they frequently offer paradoxical or conflicting normative prescriptions. For example, in some role conceptualizations, administrators are charged with being both discretionary and obedient to external masters (e.g., managers, politicians, and law). These two characteristics are based on two very different bases of legitimacy (expertise and the constitutional order, respectively), and it is questionable whether they can be successfully integrated. Perhaps certain elements of various approaches to public administration can be combined into one role conceptualization, while others cannot. The framework presented here seeks to remedy this deficiency by devising ideal role types derived from three distinct bases of democratic legitimacy that are present in public administration literature. Generating coherent sets of administrative practices and role conceptualizations that are associated with mutually exclusive bases of legitimacy may help scholars evaluate and select which one(s) to promote or to practice.
THREE TRADITIONS OF LEGITIMATE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

There is a need for normative theories of public administration that address the “deeper problem of the legitimacy of the public administrative role” (Cooper, 1984, p.148). Such theories frame attitudes and actions in a variety of administrative functions. As noted sociologist Max Weber (1968) observed, “Action, especially a social action which involves a social relationship, may be guided by the belief in the existence of a legitimate order” (p.31). The following discussion offers an overview of an ideal-type framework that describes three distinct traditions of public administration (Stout, 2007). In order to understand how prescriptions for practice are related to differing role conceptualizations and understandings of democratic legitimacy, ideas about proper attitudes and actions presented in public administration texts were sorted into coherent sets, based on similar attitudes about who is empowered in the governance process and why they should be so authorized.

This hermeneutic analysis of the public administration theory literature found that there is not one tradition of public administration, nor even two that can be characterized as simply modern versus postmodern (Farmer, 1995); traditional versus “post-ist” (Farmer, 1999); or traditional versus post-traditional (Farmer, 2005a, 2005b, 2006). Nor are there two that can be characterized as technical versus normative (R.B. Denhardt, 1981), orthodox scientific versus democratic and humanistic challenge (R.B. Denhardt, 2000), traditional versus New Public Administration (King, Patterson, & Scott, 2000), hard-core rationalist versus soft-core rationalist (Harmon, 1995), rationalist versus nonrationalist (McSwite, 1997), or any other dichotomous presentation.

Instead, three traditions of public administration emerge, each with its own language that can be called (1) Constitutional; (2) Discretionary; and (3) Collaborative (Stout, 2007). The notion of a trichotomous model is not substantively different from the many dichotomies used in public administration theory, in that they can both be understood as ideal types (Rutgers, 2001). Trichotomies can be composed of similar categories, but also can be expressed as two elements in dialectic opposition, along with a synthesis or transcendent replacement. In essence, the synthesis represents a third position to the opposing duality. Indeed, this analysis of public administration traditions found exactly that—the Collaborative tradition seeks to transcend the Constitutional and Discretionary traditions (Stout, 2007).

In this typology, role conceptualization is considered to be a summative description of a prescribed pattern that is comprised of the assumed governance context, political ontology, political authority and scope of action, formulations of responsibility and accountability, decision-making rationality, and organizing style. It might be said that these factors are similar to the independent variables that influence role conceptualization as a dependent variable. However, it is more accurate to describe them as logically coherent.
sets of interacting variables. Indeed, per Weber’s (1949) method, the varying meanings and prescriptions for these “generic” elements are used to generate ideal-types. Each tradition of public administration is based on a “genetic code” of mutually exclusive legitimacy logics—Constitutional, Discretionary, and Collaborative—which respectively create three distinct role conceptualizations of the Bureaucrat, Entrepreneur, and Steward.

A brief narrative can explain how these role conceptualizations were generated using the genetic meanings of a specific set of generic elements. Each tradition has a unique perspective and description of the governance context that is assumed in its theories. The world as seen from this perspective is taken as the reality that theory either responds to or promotes. Ontology and political philosophy frame the underlying meaning of democratic legitimacy that is promoted by a given tradition. In turn, this political ontology prescribes how political authority should be distributed to government, and the appropriate scope of action delegated to administration. In order to ensure that neither authority nor scope is being overstepped, each tradition prescribes specific ways to achieve responsibility and accountability. These limitations on scope of action, and paths to responsibility and accountability, further dictate the type of decision-making rationality that should be used. Furthermore, these combined elements dictate the type of organizing style best suited for implementation. All together, these elements imply a specific role conceptualization for public administration and administrators in a democratic society, including their relationship to elected officials and citizens. Through all of these constraints, the behavior of the administrator is channeled into a specific role pattern.

By way of a basic sketch, in the role of Bureaucrat, actions are framed by the rules and procedures commanded by the separated powers of the constitutional order, through the organizational hierarchy, in order to ensure legitimacy. This approach empowers the role of elected official, to whom administrators must be accountable. In the role of Entrepreneur, actions are framed by the independent pursuit of various performance criteria, as stand-ins for the legitimate public good, which empowers public administrators as discretionary experts who are responsible for desirable outcomes. In the role of Steward, legitimate actions are framed by the standards of direct democracy, and are answerable to the citizens impacted by the decision or action, thereby empowering citizens as democratic sovereigns to whom administrators must be responsive. Table 1 provides a summary of the findings pertaining to each tradition and its unique role conceptualization. While these details are beyond the scope of this discussion, they are offered as examples of the way that key concepts of public administration can be organized via the metaphor of tradition. These elements are common concepts, covered in the core curriculum of most MPA programs. (See Table 1.)
## Table 1. Traditions of Public Administration Theory

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tradition</th>
<th>Constitutional</th>
<th>Discretionary</th>
<th>Collaborative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Role Type</td>
<td>Bureaucrat</td>
<td>Entrepreneur</td>
<td>Steward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Element</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal Public Administration Theory</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Orthodoxy or Traditionalist</td>
<td>Traditionalist or New Public Administration</td>
<td>Managerialist or New Public Management (NPM)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Role Characteristics</td>
<td>Politically neutral competence; follow management directives</td>
<td>Conservator of agency/regime values as interpreted by legislature</td>
<td>Effective and efficient entrepreneur; technician; the American version of NPM — privatization, reinvention, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legitimacy Problems (within tradition)</td>
<td>Failure to follow hierarchical rules and procedures</td>
<td>Failure to reflect political direction and obtain authority via hierarchy</td>
<td>Failure to perform efficiently and effectively</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1.
Traditions of Public Administration Theory (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tradition</th>
<th>Constitutional</th>
<th>Discretionary</th>
<th>Collaborative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assumed Governance</td>
<td>Representative democracy; governance is conducted through government organizations</td>
<td>Representative democracy; governance occurs through a complex blurring of boundaries between public and private sectors, and pluralist activity</td>
<td>Direct democracy; governance occurs through a deeply nested federalism, down to neighborhood level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Context</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Ontology</td>
<td>Classical Liberalism and Conservatism—the political elite determines the public interest</td>
<td>Modern Liberalism—the administrative elite determines the public interest</td>
<td>Radicalism and Communitarianism — the citizenry determines the public interest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Role</td>
<td>Administrator as Man-the-Citizen; the Servant role in representative government</td>
<td>Administrator as Man-the-Maker; the Master role in representative government</td>
<td>Administrator as Man-the-Answerer; the Co-Creator role in direct democratic government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authority and Scope</td>
<td>Use a functional dichotomy to ensure legitimacy via the representative political system — hierarchical control answering to legislators, judiciary, and the executive ensures legitimacy</td>
<td>Ignore, eliminate, or shift the dichotomy because administrators are involved in policy-making — outcomes prove legitimacy (efficiency, effectiveness, equity, or other chosen values in the form of ethics)</td>
<td>Synthesize all dichotomies by bringing administrators, politicians, and citizens together — egalitarian democratic participation from all is the path to legitimacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of Action</td>
<td></td>
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**Table 1. Traditions of Public Administration Theory (continued)**
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<td>Role Type</td>
<td>Bureaucrat</td>
<td>Entrepreneur</td>
<td>Steward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political State</td>
<td>Administrative State</td>
<td>Democratic State</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsibility and Accountability</td>
<td>Trusts politics to produce The Good; administrators serve the system through hierarchical procedures and rules; bureaucratic accountability</td>
<td>Does not trust politics to produce The Good; administrators produce The Good through chosen criteria (e.g. efficiency, effectiveness, equity, ethics); performance evaluation and expert responsibility</td>
<td>Trusts all mature individuals to produce The Good together; administrators ensure process and empowerment (egalitarianism); being responsive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Decision-making Rationality</td>
<td>Instrumental rationality (administrative) — strict procedural rules ensure the best result (technically or normatively); deontological</td>
<td>Instrumental rationality (both technical and strategic) — whatever gets the best results given the situation, with “best” defined by expertise (both technical and normative); teleological</td>
<td>Collaborative rationality; intersubjective agreement and communicative action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizing Style</td>
<td>Bureaucratic hierarchy (deep)</td>
<td>Humanistic and entrepreneurial hierarchy (flattened; empowered)</td>
<td>Fluid networking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governance Role Concepts</td>
<td>Bureaucrat sees Citizens as abstract objects or passive recipients — interaction is guided by political mandate</td>
<td>Entrepreneur sees Citizens as active customers or clients — interaction based on principles of exchange</td>
<td>Steward sees Citizens as collaborators — egalitarian interaction in all political and administrative activity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO COMBINING TRADITIONS**

Given the utopian nature of ideal-types, rarely does a given scholar advocate a tradition of public administration in its ideal-type form. This is because such an approach would create a “trinitarian cul-de-sac” of public administration theory, where the end state of the politics/administration relationship places democracy at risk through

1. Over-empowerment of political micromanagement,
2. Over-empowerment of administrative discretion, or
3. Disempowerment of both politics and administration altogether (Golembiewski, 1996).

These conditions are loosely aligned with the logical ends of the three traditions discussed here, should they be fully implemented. Perhaps in large part due to this inevitability, the vast majority of scholarly discussion of public administration theory will draw elemental characteristics from two or more traditions in their ideal-type formulations as presented here. A notable exception would be Lowi’s (1979, 1993) firm defense of the Constitutional tradition throughout his writings, but such cases are rare.

It also has been suggested that there may be conditions under which differences between rival and apparently incompatible traditions may be resolved (MacIntyre, 1988). In fact, much of the theoretical debate within public administration is related to whether or not any of these traditions should be primary, or whether two or more can be integrated into some unified, comprehensive theory of public administration in order to improve social outcomes. In many cases, a combination represents an attempt to reform the Constitutional order, without actually bringing it into question or calling for a revolutionary transformation (Stout, 2009). In other cases, blending is an attempt to accommodate what is observed in empirical reality—that neither people nor organizations tend to display pure ideal types of any kind. In still other theories, conciliation is attempted among traditions in order to allow dialectical tensions to persist, by claiming that awareness of their problematical or paradoxical characteristics is the best that can be achieved (King & Zanetti, 2005).

In what can be called “integrationist approaches” (Stout, 2007), theorists combine or blend logics into one role conceptualization by taking what is considered to be the “best” of all three traditions. As an exemplar, Appleby (1952) called for a “pattern of administrative responsibility” (p.218).

Of concern are

1. Popular control,
2. Humane practice,
3. Pluralist tolerance, and
4. Responsible and unifying leadership.

To ensure all of these elements, the pattern of responsibility must begin with
the moral performance of individual administrators in the tasks delegated to
them (Discretionary). Accountability must be given upward in a hierarchy
that ultimately ends with the popular level of citizens, as well as laws
(Constitutional). Furthermore, responsiveness to citizens must be given to
ensure humane practice and pluralist tolerance (Collaborative). All told,
democratic public administration is “a process in which facilities of appeal and
levels of review are more numerous, various, and open than in any other action-
laden process yet devised” (Appleby, 1952, p.251). As Wamsley (1990) put it,
the public administrator’s role must be at once all of the following:
“subordinate, autonomous, agential, responsive, and responsible” (p.118).
Alternatively, what can be called “conciliatory approaches” (Stout, 2007) do
not prescribe a preferred blend, but instead support a conscientious balancing
act among competing logics. Conciliation is a notion that allows fundamentally
different ideas to be reconciled, or at least brought into a state of “agreeing to
disagree,” without negative outcomes. Rather than being integrated, disparate
ideas coexist in a separate, but related, manner. Differences can be interpreted as
complementary or competitive, but, in either case, conciliation imagines the
ideas to be in a positive state of dialectical tension (Carr & Zanetti, 1999). Each
conciliatory theory of public administration unifies at least two of the three role
conceptualizations described in this inquiry, while maintaining their distinct
characteristics. An exemplar would be Rosenbloom’s (1983) unified theory of
public administration that maintains three distinct powers of government (legal,
managerial, and political), each of which “has a respected intellectual tradition,
emphasizes different values, promotes different types of organizational structure,
and views individuals in markedly distinct terms” (p.219). Neither compromise
nor dominance by any one of them is likely to occur, because either approach
would violate deeply held American values. In fact, attempts to collapse the
legal, managerial, and political powers of government into public administration
may be a source of the legitimacy crisis in the first place. All three powers must
be present to function with one another in a system of checks and balances.

In the end, theorists principally associated with each of the three public
administration traditions, as well as those fully straddling the interstices, seek to
achieve the public interest. In doing so, all three traditions offer some role for
public administration. But the Discretionary ideal is always challenged by our
political system of legitimacy through accountability; a true Constitutional ideal
is always challenged by the risk of inefficiency and administrative evil and a call
for administrative responsibility; and both of these ideals are challenged by the
Collaborative tradition’s participative democratic standards and demand for
direct responsiveness to citizens.

The notion that these conflicts can be successfully resolved through either
integration or conciliation seems unlikely. In short, all social groups comprising
governance (elected officials, administrators, and citizens) cannot be empowered
simultaneously in our political system (Peters & Pierre, 2000). In the end, if there is disagreement, one view must trump the others in order for action to occur. These theoretical conflicts illustrate the mutual exclusivity of their logics and the paradox of empowerment. Therefore, something more than integration or conciliation is required to achieve legitimacy in public administration. If one basis of legitimacy must ultimately dominate the others, then we each must find a way to choose which legitimacy logic we prefer, and the manner in which the others will be addressed.

**Implications for Pedagogy**

As noted above, inculcation of role conception is an important element of professional education and training, whether it is through academic or workplace models. Professional socialization can occur through both implicit and explicit teaching (Schein, 1968; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). Faculty members in a variety of fields describe their socializing role as transmitting the culture and values of their profession (du Tort, 1995; Pescosolido & Hess, 1996; Sachs, 2001; Teschendorf & Nemshick, 2001). It is clear from the inquiry described here (Stout, 2007) that at least three role conceptualizations—with substantively different bases of legitimacy—are being promoted in various blends either by individual scholars, or in combination across faculty during the course of a professional program of study. Therefore, students of public administration are receiving mixed messages that also are incoherent when linked back to associated legitimacy logics.

An increased understanding of the differences among role conceptualizations should impact how public administrators are educated and prepared for work roles. Such understanding also should help answer the question posed during the presidential address at the 2005 NASPAA annual conference: “How best do we ensure through experiential learning and our own good example that we instill in the next generation of leaders and managers fidelity to the democratic impulse and democratic institutions, which are at the heart of our culture and civic society?” (Mazmanian, 2005).

A leading article on public administration education suggests that “those who are secure in their own identity (the result of personal development processes) are more likely to act in accord with their knowledge and principles (both of which are the result of learning), even under pressures not to do so” (R.B. Denhardt, 2001, p.530). This self-reflective capacity and integrity is most critical in times of crisis, particularly when the source of chaos is related to the very legitimacy of one's professional role within society. If we do not give students the tools needed for the deepest levels of reflection, we are asking them to make choices unconscientiously. Furthermore, if we do not give them a way to organize and link specific prescriptions for practice to various theories of legitimacy, we are asking them to choose haphazardly actions that may be
conflicting in logic. Indeed, most academic programs seek a diverse faculty, with the specific intent of providing a broad range of theoretical perspectives to their students. As a result, students are encouraged to adopt competing ideals and approaches from these three traditions, and the various hybrids that seek to integrate or conciliate them.

Alternatively, formal academic programs may be conscientiously designed to promote a specific tradition of public administration. In *PA Times*, the monthly newspaper of the American Society for Public Administration, Bourgon (2004) presents a case for unifying public service around a central, underlying philosophy about the role of the state in society. She describes the traditional approach to public administration, as well as the paradigm emerging under the New Public Management, citing many of the same shortcomings and negative consequences noted by the normative camps within the Constitutional and Discretionary traditions described here. In essence, certain theories are privileged by default of prevalence, if nothing else. Rather than unifying public service around the authority of the state or the marketization of the state, she suggests that public service unite around “a common mission, a common sense of purpose, and common values” (Bourgon, 2004, p.6). She reflects back on a time when mandatory training ensured that public administrators shared a common understanding of the values of public service. These orientations supported collective values, cooperation, political consensus, democratic outcomes, individual rights, fairness, and the rule of law. She suggests that the field has experienced a great loss because this type of training has gone by the wayside.

This claim would appear to be evident in empirical studies. In general, issues such as legitimacy and role conceptualization are covered in ethics and leadership courses. However, Paul Light’s (1999) content analysis of the core curriculum of 13 of the top 20 public administration and public policy programs in the United States found that, on average, only 0.4 courses in ethics, and 0.2 courses in leadership, were required. This lack of coverage was supported by graduates reporting less satisfaction with these elements of their programs than they did with policy analysis, and budgeting and finance. The vast majority of graduates felt that maintaining ethical standards was the top skill that they considered very important for success. No other skills (including influencing policymakers, policy analysis, and budgeting and public finance) ranked consistently in the 80th percentile range. Leadership followed ethics, ranking in the 70th percentile range. Thus, “as a general rule, these graduates would have closed the gaps identified above on their own, through on-the-job training, personal experience, and their own reading throughout career [sic]” (Light, 1999, p.118).
These perspectives on public administration pedagogy suggest that a particular substantive and normative content is desired from professional socialization, but is not consistently present in graduate programs, or at least not called out through specific courses in ethics and leadership. Alternatively, perhaps these ideas are integrated into the theories taught throughout many courses during graduate study, as suggested by the elements described in Table 1. Indeed, NASPAA accreditation standards call for a program of study that gives graduates “values, knowledge, and skills to act ethically and effectively” (NASPAA, 2008), and the new draft standards promote “public values as the heart of the discipline” (NASPAA, 2009, p.4), demanding that programs “demonstrably emphasize public values” (NASPAA, 2009, p.1). Specific values mentioned include civic virtue, participatory processes, social equity, transparency, accountability, responsiveness, fiscal and environmental sustainability, efficiency, and effectiveness (NASPAA, 2009, p.7).

Whether these ideas are disseminated via specific courses, or integrated throughout the program of study, the normative models informing professional socialization are desired, and are believed to make a difference in the attitudes and actions of the role-takers. Unfortunately, there is a lack of agreement on which set of values to inculcate. The values listed by NASPAA are linked to competing legitimacy logics. If we anticipate a public administrator acting in accordance with these role conceptualizations when they become part of one’s identity, it will benefit faculty to be cognizant and conscientious about which models we are prescribing.

Interestingly, we seem to deny that this type of normative socialization is occurring. “To be more precise, we frown not on socialization, but on conscious and responsible control of it” (Bennis, 1967, p.15). For example, MPA programs in China are roundly criticized for intentionally imparting a uniform approach to legitimacy, according to Marxist and socialist theory: “The Chinese government is clearly unwilling to give up political indoctrination in the MPA program” (Tong & Straussman, 2003, p.112). This is done in order to ensure professional characteristics that are appropriate for China’s political, historical, and cultural attributes.

Comparatively, it is reasonable to assert that MPA students in the United States are similarly indoctrinated with representative democratic capitalism as a part of their programs of study. Not considering the very few who might transcend representative democracy altogether, most individual scholars tend to profess liberalism in one of its classical, modern, conservative, or radical manifestations. As Bennis (1967) notes of all organizations, MPA programs are “magnificent, if undeliberate, vehicles of socialization. They teach values, inculcate ethics, create norms, dictate right and wrong, influence attitudes necessary for success and all the rest” (p.15). But, because of our individualistic mistrust of intentional indoctrination and our pluralist tendencies, socialization
in American MPA programs occurs much more covertly and haphazardly. To own up to the fact that we are, in a very real sense, indoctrinating students of public administration in competing political philosophies, and to combat the confusion created in its wake, professional socialization and role-taking must become a more intentional choice-making activity. “Taking conscious responsibility for the socialization process will become imperative in tomorrow’s organizations” (Bennis, 1967, p.15).

As sagely noted elsewhere, the various theories in our field “present important choices for students trying to develop a personal philosophy of public administration” (R.B. Denhardt, 2000, p.iii). Theories help clarify the normative ethos at play in the field, in a given organization, and in an administrator’s own organizational experience (Harmon & Mayer, 1986). “When we take on the mantle of public service, it is important to know not only who we serve, but to which tradition we are committed, what moral principles this tradition upholds, and what attitudes it engenders” (Stout, 2006, p.620). The metaphor of tradition provides a pedagogical structure through which faculty can organize competing theories and ideas. Student choices among traditions can then provide a framework for reflexive attempts to understand, and endeavors to act effectively (Arendt, 1978; Stivers, 2000c, 2003).

APPLICATION TO CURRICULUM

Applying the model proposed here, the different PA traditions offer an organizing framework for many topics in the field, which keeps the question of legitimacy visible through coherent sets. Whether it is through a foundations course that covers the landscape of the field in an overview, or through individual courses that provide depth of knowledge in specific elements of practice, the traditions can provide useful framing that always can be linked back to the legitimacy question of “Who’s in charge?” Using the NASPAA (2007) accreditation guidelines, let us consider in brief the most likely common topics of MPA study:

1. Political and legal institutions and processes,
2. Economic and social institutions and processes,
3. Organization and management concepts and behavior,
4. Human resources management,
5. Public policy formulation, implementation, and evaluation,
6. Decision-making and problem-solving,
7. Quantitative and qualitative techniques of analysis,
8. Budgeting and financial processes, and
9. Information management, technology applications, and policy.

Here, these topics will be grouped into related sets and, referring back to Table 1, a sketch will be offered of how the traditions might help organize typical course content.
Institutions and Processes of Political Economy

In regard to political, legal, economic, and social institutions and processes, the three traditions have fundamentally different interpretations of appropriateness. In foundations courses, it is common to cover the legal and political aspect of the field, and how public administration fits into the larger political economy—including civil society. Through these topics, typical discussions focus on political philosophy, political economy, and constitutional structures and processes. However, what one professor described as “putting a lot of balls into the air” can be transformed from juggling lists of discrete philosophical perspectives, theories, and institutional structures into coherent sets of related ideas about these institutions and practices.

The Constitutional tradition assumes a representative political state that is guided by a conservative version of classical liberalism. It envisions a mixed economy, where capitalism is constrained by government in order to achieve the common good. Governance occurs through government agencies, which are controlled through hierarchical authority, procedures, and a functional differentiation in which administrators serve the representative political system. The citizen is conceived of as an abstraction called “taxpayer” or “voter.” Interactions are based on political mandates, plus rules and procedures that require equal treatment of all recipients of government services. Civil society is considered the domain of the citizens, who influence government only through formal processes that are constitutionally allowed.

The Discretionary tradition assumes an administrative state that is guided by modern liberalism, which to a large degree makes the political system symbolic in nature. It envisions free-market capitalism that is minimally constrained by government. In fact, there is a blurring of boundaries between private and public sectors through the process of contracting out government work, while leaving remaining government functions in the hands of expert public administrators. This use of discretion and outsourcing is made accountable through the use of outcome objectives, including sometimes competing ideals of efficiency, effectiveness, equity, and ethics. It is the responsibility of expert practitioners to assure that these objectives are met. Here, citizens are treated as customers or clients, and interactions are based on principles of exchange. Both civil and political processes take on the pluralist, competitive model borrowed from theories of efficient economic markets.

The Collaborative tradition calls for a radical, fully democratic political economy, where political and market activities are self-governing in nature. Governance thus occurs through fluid, egalitarian networks of concerned individuals, regardless of social sector or role. Ultimately, roles such as politician and public administrator would be dissolved into the role of citizen. Again, there are many possible interpretations of what these social institutions and rules of engagement can or should look like. Some theories draw from workplace
democracy to imagine egalitarian organizations for collective action, and cooperative marketplaces for economic exchange. However, this tradition is emergent and is largely normative, as it envisions a future state of social relationships that is based on nascent practices observed today. In this role, administrators act as stewards, or facilitators of egalitarian interaction among sovereign citizens, in pursuit of the common good. In essence, society becomes a fluid whole, wherein the political, economic, and civil spheres of social action are no longer evident as distinct sectors.

Organizational Behavior and Theory
In terms of theory and application, the three traditions offer a way to organize the various frames (Bolman & Deal, 1997)—or the various periods of organizational theory—in terms of administrator role, authority and scope of action, responsibility and accountability, and organizing style. The way that organizational structures and relationships are envisioned shifts dramatically from tradition to tradition, and offers varying views on organization and management concepts and behavior, as well as on application to the practice of human resources management.

In the Constitutional tradition, people are considered to be self-interested beings who accept the constraints of the political system in exchange for the benefits that citizenship brings. Therefore, bureaucratic hierarchy is the most effective organizing style. On the one hand, it offers the methods of control needed to mitigate self-interest. On the other hand, such control is accepted because it is authorized by the political system. Here we find the orthodox or traditional approach to bureaucracy, in which authority is delegated via a deep hierarchical structure that carries accountability up through the ranks to the executive at the top of the pyramid. This structure is designed for a bureaucrat who is a servant to the representative form of government. The only discretionary action anticipated would be to conserve the agency itself and the regime values that it is bound to uphold. In the classical approach to organizational behavior, employees are somewhat objectified and passive within the mechanistic functions motivated by economic gain.

In the Discretionary tradition, however, people are considered to be self-interested beings who need very little constraint because liberal transactions of both economic and social types produce the most efficient and effective results. Furthermore, each individual is deemed sovereign and expectant of the fullest degree of liberty possible while maintaining social equilibrium. Therefore, organizations that are freed of inordinate controls are developed. Yet, because the administration still draws on the legitimacy of representative government, it cannot recommend doing away with organizational authority altogether. Therefore, organizations are redesigned to support empowered administrators and outsourcing to the market.
Here, we find the more common contemporary form of government, where permeable boundaries between political and administrative activities empower administrators, and thus require a flattened hierarchical organizing structure, as well as more empowered forms of responsibility to desirable outcomes. This arrangement supports a more entrepreneurial administrator, who holds delegated discretionary authority in the representative form of government. In this tradition, neo-classical and early humanistic approaches to organizational behavior come into play, along with contemporary structural approaches, leadership, and organizational power theories. In a certain sense, the Discretionary tradition represents the organizational reality that “administrative man” works within—a transitional form that is moving from the classic government agency toward governance networks.

The Collaborative tradition draws from direct democratic authority, and therefore it eliminates the need for hierarchical organization altogether. Instead, it calls for network forms of organizing, where all who are concerned or affected by a given issue will participate in addressing it. The only authority resides in the law of the situation (Follett, 1995). Once again, this is a demonstrably different approach to the organizational behavior and theory that is linked to many specific prescriptions for practice. Here, we find that the most advanced humanistic theories of organizational culture and systems theory combine with fluid network organizing structures to create fully empowered groups—with the caveat that they must operate under the same egalitarian rules as all other governance actors, including elected representatives and citizens. In essence, this emerging tradition requires a more direct form of democracy than our current representative system allows. Responsibility and accountability are ensured through responsiveness to those impacted by a decision or action. This arrangement calls for a facilitative and educative expert who must answer to fellow citizens as a co-producer of the common good. This arrangement also clearly challenges the status quo of representative democratic capitalism. Therefore, servant and transformational forms of leadership, and organizational change theories are prominent.

Public Policy, Program Evaluation, and Applied Analysis

Several listed topics have related competencies that are used throughout the various processes and activities involved in public policy. Similarly, several traditional elements have an important application to policy formulation, implementation, and evaluation. These include decision-making and problem-solving methods, as well as analysis techniques. In these areas, we might refer to practitioners as analysts with expertise in various forms of analysis and evaluation, problem-solving, and policy design.

In the Constitutional tradition, the analyst puts her expertise to work specifically as guided by the bureaucratic hierarchy, and as dictated by the
Separated powers of government. Decision-making by the administration in this case is deontological, with procedural rules handed down through the bureaucracy from political leaders who have managed the substantive issues at hand. Therefore, the instrumental rationality is administrative in nature, and seeks the most efficient way(s) to achieve the given goals. In order to achieve hierarchical accountability, analysis techniques tend to be quantitative, and procedural measures of an output nature are of great importance. Because this is the Constitutional norm, we must prepare students to work with elected representatives who may expect them to play this functionary role.

In the Discretionary tradition, the analyst uses expertise to guide and interpret policy independently from the political system. Rather than following strict directives from the elected leaders, the analyst is asked to act in an influential advisory capacity, and is then given large amounts of discretion to achieve adopted goals with high levels of efficiency and effectiveness. Analysts not only influence policy designs and choice, but also determine how it will be implemented and evaluated. Decision-making, therefore, is dependent upon objectives defined by experts using a teleological form of rationality to pursue both technical and normative ends. In this regard, practices such as cost-benefit analysis are in partnership with social science evaluation approaches. In this tradition, outcome measures play a greater role in analysis and evaluation, and political analysis must be added, in order to ensure successful adoption and implementation of favored policies. Given the highly complex nature of public policy, this is the most common role that analysts are asked to play, which puts expertise in a greater leadership position, as part of a blurred political and administrative role continuum. In fact, many reform efforts since the birth of the field have been geared toward empowering administrative expertise in these processes.

In the Collaborative tradition, the analyst offers substantive expertise as an equal participant in a self-governing network—being fully on tap but never on top. Thus, all forms of technical and substantive analysis and evaluation are put to work toward goals defined collaboratively by all those affected. Decision-making and problem-solving activities occur through deliberative, consensus-based processes. Here, critical and interpretive forms of policy analysis and evaluation must be brought to bear on the process, in addition to output- and outcome-oriented techniques.

It also should be noted that research methods beyond these applied analytical techniques are related to the ontological assumptions of the traditions and the manner in which they are manifested in epistemology. The Constitutional tradition is closely linked to positivism by its reliance on deontological rules and procedures. The Discretionary tradition, on the other hand, is very behaviorally oriented, and is more closely linked to post-positivist approaches to knowledge. Finally, the Collaborative tradition is linked to a postmodern or phenomenological understanding of knowledge. Ideally, all three should be
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covered in courses on quantitative and qualitative research. The notion of diverse traditions helps clarify the meaning and importance of multi-epistemological approaches and methodological pluralism.

Financial and Information Management
While it is common for information management and policy to be delivered as a curriculum component that is integrated into a number of courses, here I will link it with a particular form of information entrusted to administration — financial data. Of course, human resource management also has critical information policy elements, and most forms of policy analysis require information technology skills. So, this is a rather arbitrary grouping.

Compared to the various organizing characteristics of the three traditions, financial and information management activities are vastly different in contexts of discrete government organizations, public-private partnerships, and cross-jurisdictional or multi-sectoral networks. While we often may be teaching with an assumption of bureaucratic hierarchies—where control over finances and information was possible and desirable—these conditions no longer hold. Therefore, students must learn practices that are better linked to Discretionary or Collaborative bases of legitimacy. They would be best served to understand how these prescriptions for practice are related, because partnerships under the assumption of entrepreneurial discretion are quite different from collaborative networks.

For example, in the Discretionary tradition, it would be completely appropriate to control financial issues and withhold information from external sources, be they citizens or partners. But, in the Collaborative tradition, this type of privileged, “meta-governance” position may not be acceptable. In short, we must consider the implications of shifting issues—such as authority and scope of action, responsibility and accountability, decision-making rationality, and organizing style—on these basic government processes. If we are moving down a continuum that runs from absolute control to absolute responsiveness, we must be aware of how these changing value systems can impact budgeting, accounting, and information management policies and practices.

CONCLUSION
In conclusion, I assert that it will benefit the field of public administration and individual students of the discipline to use the metaphor of tradition for organizing the field’s competing philosophical foundations and recommendations for practice. When one has a framework from which to reflect and act, external chaos is calmed, and put into a perspective that supports choice-making. At a more fundamental level, it could be reasonably argued that the turmoil of our times is largely grounded in the question of legitimacy in governance. No sector of society is immune from the legitimacy
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challenge in a context where the principles of democracy are increasingly expected to prevail. Therefore, traditions designed to attend to the issue of legitimacy likely will be the most successful ones for calming public criticisms. While I have offered one possible interpretation of the varying traditions of public administration, for purposes of designing a curriculum, the use of the metaphor itself is the most important and compelling thing for pedagogy. Organizing the field’s concepts according to tradition helps students of public administration anchor their professional identities and enhance understanding of their own philosophical commitments and shared theoretical lineage. Thus, they will be better prepared to weather the storms of discontent in the ongoing crisis of democratic legitimacy.

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Staying Connected: MPA Student Perceptions of Transactional Presence

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ABSTRACT
Online education has increased exponentially in the past five years and is now considered part of mainstream higher education. It has significantly changed bricks and mortar institutions, but has the change been effective? One of the most common concerns regarding online education is the physical separation between teachers and students (Robertson, Grant, & Jackson, 2005; Moore, 1997). In order to bridge the physical distance of online education, Shin (2003, 2002) argues that universities should enhance transactional presence. However, little is known about transactional presence and online public administration courses. This study examines Master’s of Public Administration (MPA) student perceptions of transactional presence with two groups: faculty and peers. Findings support previous research of no significant difference between teaching mediums in regards to student perceptions. Contrary to previous studies, neither ethnicity nor gender appear to play a prominent role in whether students are satisfied with the contact they have with peers or with faculty.

INTRODUCTION
Online education in the U.S. has increased exponentially in the past five years and is now considered part of mainstream higher education for most academic institutions. In fact, some experts predict that traditional face-to-face classes will become a model of the past (Blustain, Goldstein, & Lozier, 1999; Drucker, 1997, as cited in O’Malley & McGraw, 1999). In a 2007 report, Online Education: Five Years of Growth, the authors found that online enrollment in at least one course doubled at U.S. degree-granting institutions — from 1.6 million in the Fall 2002 semester, to approximately 3.5 million students in the Fall 2006 semester. This shows a compound annual growth rate of 21.6 percent for online education, compared to a growth rate of 1.5 percent for the total
student population (Allen & Seaman, 2007). In 2006, two-thirds of all U.S. colleges and universities in the survey reported offering complete online programs. The larger the institution, the higher the percentage of online courses it offered. Equally important is the finding that 59 percent of all institutions (public and private), and 79 percent of all public institutions surveyed identified online education as a long-term growth strategy (Allen & Seaman, 2007). Similarly, a 2005 study found that, among all degree-granting institutions offering traditional master’s degree programs, 44 percent also offered online master’s degree programs (Allen & Seaman, 2005).

Moreover, online education has significantly transformed the delivery of Master’s of Public Administration (MPA) programs. Both MPA courses and degrees are now offered completely online (National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration, n.d.). For example, the University of Baltimore has offered individual MPA courses online since 1999, and the entire MPA degree has been offered online since 2003 (Wilson-Gentry, Gerlowski, Pritchett, Ross, & Martin, 2006). The National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA) incorporated distance education in its accreditation standards and guidelines in the late 1990s, which legitimized the use of online formats in MPA programs (NASPAA, 1997; Schuhmann, Cawley, Green, & Schenker, 2000). Cost-cutting measures and enrollment enhancement served as the impetus for adopting online education (Rahm & Reed, 1997; Cartwright, 1994).

Initial research regarding online public administration education was exploratory in nature, and relied on case studies and small sample-size (small-n) surveys. These studies revealed that online education provides students with more flexibility (Barth, 2004; Ebdon, 1999; Leavitt & Richman, 1997; Mingus, 1999). It also levels the playing field for introverted students (Mingus, 1999) and female students (Stowers, 1995), due to the anonymity characteristic of Web-based courses. Ebdon (1999) reported that students in online courses perceived themselves as having higher interaction levels with their peers.

The use of online courses in MPA degrees has not been without concerns. The workload for students (Ebdon, 1999; Mingus, 1999) and faculty is considerably higher than traditional face-to-face courses (Barth, 2004; Leavitt & Richman, 1997; Mingus, 1999; Rahm, Reed, & Rydl, 1999; Stowers, 1999). Additionally, some students perceived interaction with faculty as unsatisfactory (Ebdon, 1999), though other students perceived it as strong (Mingus, 1999). More recently, it has been argued that it is easier for online students to cheat, due to the psychological distance created by the online teaching format (Campbell, 2006).

Initially, the use of online education was posed as “one of the big questions facing public administration education” (Denhardt, 2001, p. 526). Today, online MPA courses are considered part of mainstream education, and treated as
such. According to the 2008 NASPAA Commission on Peer Review and Accreditation (COPRA) standards, it is critical that distance education be comparable to traditional (face-to-face) education in regards to core curriculum, faculty, admission standards, student services, and support services (NASPAA, 2008). The key issue is ensuring that online or distance MPA courses are as effective as traditional courses in educating public administrators.

LITERATURE

NASPAA (2008) defines distance education as occurring with “students who do not engage regularly in face-to-face interaction with an instructor who is in physical proximity” (p. 13). Lahart and Mendez-Grant (1997) define online or distance education as a “collection of teaching approaches that is concerned with the delivery of instruction to students who are not at the same location as the instructor” (p. 6). It has changed universities by releasing coveted classroom space and increasing student access. But has the change been effective? The initial debate focused on comparing the two course-delivery mediums (face-to-face and online), and asked the critical question: “Can a computer-mediated course offer the same or equal quality as a traditional classroom?” Proponents argue that distance learning can be equally successful as traditional classroom teaching. In reviewing 355 comparative studies, Russell (1999) concluded that, in regards to student outcomes, student perceptions, and attitudes toward technology, there was “no significant difference” between technologically mediated courses and traditional face-to-face courses. However, these findings have been challenged based on doubts about scientific rigor of the studies.

Online education also provides the additional benefits of flexibility (Ebdon, 1999) and anonymity, which typically are absent in traditional courses. Anonymity or invisibility flattens the hierarchy and social status of peers (Oravec, 1996), which makes some students feel more comfortable expressing themselves online (Mingus, 1999).

Opponents of online education have urged institutions to be cautious when reviewing the results of studies such as those reviewed above. In the well-referenced report — titled What’s the Difference? — Phipps and Merisotis (Institute for Higher Education, 1999) warn that many studies are seriously flawed, which creates uncertainty and suspicion about the “no significant difference” finding. Specifically, the studies lack control of extraneous variables, subjects are not randomly selected, measurement instruments lack validity and reliability, and reactive effects are not controlled (Institute for Higher Education, 1999). However, harsh critique of distance education studies by Phipps and Merisotis (Institute for Higher Education, 1999) has been met with equal concern. Brown and Wack (1999) point out that Phipps and Merisotis (Institute for Higher Education, 1999) utilize the same criteria that they accuse, for example, Russell (1999) of using to justify his findings. Over time, this lively
debate has shifted from comparing course mediums to focusing on the quality of online education.

Transactional Distance

One of the most common concerns regarding online education is transactional distance (Robertson, Grant, & Jackson, 2005; Moore, 1997), which is the separation between teachers and students. There are degrees of transactional distance. The concept is not simply an issue of geographic separation (Moore, 1997), given that it also can occur in face-to-face classrooms (Rumble, 1986). Moore (1997) describes it as “the universe of teacher-learner relationships that exist[s] when learners and instructors are separated by space and/or by time” (p. 22). Specifically,

The transaction that we call distance education occurs between teachers and learners in an environment having the special characteristic of separation of teacher from learners. This separation leads to special patterns of learner and teacher behaviours. It is the separation of learners and teachers that profoundly affects both teaching and learning. With separation there is a psychological and communications space to be crossed, a space of potential misunderstanding between the inputs of instructor and those of the learner. It is this psychological and communications space that is the transactional distance. … It is a relative rather than absolute term (Moore, 1997, p. 22).

According to Moore (1997), the degree of transactional distance is influenced by three interrelated variables: (1) the dialogue between learners and teachers, (2) the structure of the instructional program, and (3) learner autonomy. Moore postulates that transactional distance is increased by low dialogue and high structure, but can be mitigated by increased student autonomy. This claim is supported by the finding that online student success is determined by the immediacy of information, feedback, and assistance (Wilson & Whitelock, 1998; Vonderwell, 2003). In contrast, high dialogue and low structure decrease the need for learner autonomy because transactional distance is lower in such situations. Because online courses tend to have lower dialogue and higher structure, it is not surprising that online students need higher levels of motivation and self-discipline than students in traditional courses (Wilson, 1996; Rivero, 1998; Ahern & Repman, 1994; Hiltz, 1994; Barth, 2004; Cohen, Eimicke, Kamlet, & Pearson, 1998), and that successful online students are characterized as self-motivated, independent, and organized (Irizarry, 2002). In order to mitigate transactional distance in online courses, faculty should have frequent and consistent communication with students and design courses with flexibility.
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Transaction Presence

Building on Moore's (1997) concept of transactional distance, Shin (2002) coined the term “transactional presence” to capture the feeling of connectedness and availability in distance education. Similar to Moore (1997), the term “transactional” refers to relatedness, while “presence” refers to social richness. This richness “involves the degree to which media are capable of making users perceive other users’ sociability, warmth, sensitivity, personality, or closeness in a mediate[d] communication situation” (Shin, 2002, p. 124). In other words, it is the “feeling of contact” (Williams, 1978, p. 127; Shin 2002, p. 126). Social presence is significant because it is positively related to online student satisfaction (Boverie, Nagel, McGee, & Garcia, 1997; Gunawardena & Zittle, 1997; Hackman & Walker, 1990); it can bridge the physical distance of online education. In essence, it focuses on the psychological presence that is often missing in online education.

Shin (2003) examined the role of transactional presence by surveying 506 undergraduate distance-education students at Korea National Open University. Results indicate that Institutional Transactional Presence (TP) predicts overall student satisfaction, a student’s intent to persist (graduate), and student-perceived learning achievement. Teacher TP influences student-perceived learning achievement, and Peer TP influences satisfaction and intent to persist. These findings suggest that universities providing online education need to be aware of the role of faculty and peers, as well as the institution’s interactions and relationships with students. Student support services are critical to an institution’s success (Sewart, 1993; Tait, 1996).

Transactional presence may be critical for some student populations’ success in online educational formats. In comparing online and traditional classes, Rovai and Gallien (2005) found that African-American students prefer learning in traditional class settings more than white students do. The sense of community developed in the traditional classroom setting may be more valued for this student population than independent learning in online formats (Rovai & Gallien, 2005). Kirkup and von Prummer (1990) argue that women in their study preferred interactive learning styles that are more likely to be found in traditional classroom settings, and “demonstrated a strong need for connection with others during their studies” (Kirkup & von Prummer, 1990, p. 28).

STUDY AND METHODOLOGY

This study assesses MPA student perceptions of transactional presence in two areas—with faculty and with peers. Specifically, it looks at students’ perceptions regarding the amount and satisfaction of contact they have with faculty and peers. Its aim is to evaluate the extent to which MPA students perceive transactional or social presence in online graduate courses at a mid-sized urban university. While most studies have focused on individual online classes.
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(Institute for Higher Education, 1999), this study concentrates on a degree program, specifically an MPA program.

The University of Baltimore (UB) has offered its entire MPA program online since 2003. Previous research on online graduate programs at UB found that a substantial portion of students taking these courses also take traditional courses at the Baltimore campus (Wilson-Gentry, Gerlowski, Pritchett, Ross, & Martin, 2006). This fact enables the current authors to compare the sense of transactional presence in both live and online classes.

A cross-sectional survey of MPA students who took at least one online course between the Spring 2006 and Fall 2007 semesters was conducted in December of 2007. Included in this survey were a number of questions meant to measure aspects of transactional presence, such as the amount of contact with peers and professors, and satisfaction with that contact. Additional questions attempted to capture whether students were fully online, or whether they were using online classes in conjunction with more traditional formats.

There are two notable study limitations. First, the sample under-represents minority students compared to the UB student population. Second, because this was a self-administered survey, it probably captured students at either end of the spectrum — those who loved or hated the online course experience.

RESPONDENT PROFILE

Eighty-nine students who took at least one online MPA class between the Spring 2006 and Fall 2007 semesters completed the survey instrument. The survey was e-mailed to 450 MPA students, and generated a 20-percent response rate. Several reasons may account for the relatively low response rate. First, the sample included students who had graduated. These students might be less interested in completing a survey. Second, this problem is compounded by the fact that the invitation to participate was sent to a university-issued e-mail address. Students tend to access these accounts less frequently if they are not their primary e-mail addresses.

Use of the online format varied among these students, with approximately 36 percent taking only one course during this time period. However, a significant proportion (30 percent) took four or more courses during the same time period, with 20 percent of respondents being strictly online students who had never taken a traditional class. These students could be truly distant or they could reside locally, but they opted to take all their classes online. These findings echo previous results, which found that the principal consumers of online graduate courses at UB use a combination of online and traditional formats to complete their degrees (Wilson-Gentry, et al., 2006).

Students responding to the survey were predominantly female (62.9 percent), which is reflective of the overall MPA student population at UB. However, only 36 percent of respondents were minority students. This figure is slightly below
the average for the university as a whole (38 percent), and the MPA program in particular (65 percent). Respondents also tended to be between the ages of 26 and 30 (29.4 percent), with approximately 81 percent at age 40 or below, which is representative of the MPA program.

**STUDENT-Student Transactional Presence**

Fulford and Zhang (1993) indicated that there were two important dimensions of interaction in the distance-learning environment. One is the personal interaction that a student has with the professor. However, they found that an equally important level of interaction is overall classroom interaction, which includes interaction with peers. Most of the MPA students responding to the survey had some contact with their peers (84.7 percent), with 50.5 percent reporting that they had this contact at least once per week. Students who had taken both traditional and online classes were then asked a follow-up question to compare the amount of contact in both formats. When questioned on whether the amount of contact with peers was different than that for a traditional class, more than 57 percent indicated that the amount of peer contact was either somewhat less or much less than they had experienced in traditional classes.

However, the amount of contact is not necessarily highly correlated with the value of contact. In regards to students’ satisfaction with the contact they had with their classmates, most students reported that they were either somewhat (25.3 percent) or very satisfied (32.2 percent) with the contact they had with their peers. However, a large proportion (31 percent) also indicated that they were neutral concerning the contact that they had with their peers.

Next, a hypothesis concerning satisfaction with student-student transactional presence was tested. To test the hypotheses that women and minority students may have different needs for “connectedness,” or preferences for communal learning styles, a series of Chi-Square analyses were conducted. Although the Chi-Square analysis of the relationship between gender and satisfaction with peer contact did not yield a statistically significant result (p = 0.217), there is some evidence that the women surveyed were less satisfied with the student-student transactional presence than the men were in online courses. As shown in Table 1, men were more likely to be very satisfied (37.5 percent) with the contact they had with classmates, while women only expressed high degrees of satisfaction 29 percent of the time. Conversely, women were more likely to indicate that they were either not very satisfied or not at all satisfied (14.5 percent), when compared to the men (6.3 percent). (See Table 1.)

Part of the reason for this finding may stem from the motivation for using an online format. Analysis of the reasons why students took their first online class indicates that women were much more likely to see the online class as a
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Data in Table 2 suggest that there is no significant difference (p = 0.932) in satisfaction with peer contact based on ethnicity. As a matter of fact, African-American students were more likely to express high degrees of satisfaction with peer contact (36 percent) than their white counterparts (31.1 percent). Although the other minority groups (Asian and White Hispanic) in this study tended to express lower levels of satisfaction with peer contact, this finding should be tempered by the fact that there are relatively few respondents from other ethnic groups. (See Table 2.)

One question that arose was whether students who took traditional classes in the MPA program would be less satisfied with the amount of peer contact in the online environment than students who took all of their courses online. Because former students have the exposure to a more communal learning environment, they may be less satisfied with their peer contact in the online environment. No statistically significant relationship was found when satisfaction with peer contact was analyzed according to whether a participant was either a fully online student, or one who had taken some traditional classes (Chi-Square = 1.045, df = 4, p = 0.903).

Table 1.
Satisfaction of Peer Contact by Gender for Online Classes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Satisfaction of Contact with Classmates</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not at All Satisfied</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6.3%</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Very Satisfied</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>10.9%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>37.5%</td>
<td>27.3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat Satisfied</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18.8%</td>
<td>29.1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Satisfied</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>37.5%</td>
<td>29.1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Chi-Square = 5.773, df = 4, p = 0.217

The Chi-Square statistic was utilized for all data to determine statistical significance. The Gamma statistic was used to measure the strength of associations in Tables 3 and 4, because the dependent variable was ordinal. The Lambda statistic was used to measure the strength of associations in Tables 5 and 6, because the dependent variable was nominal.
PROFESSOR-STUDENT TRANSACTIONAL PRESENCE

According to Shin (2002), debate exists on whether pedagogy in the online setting should differ from the more traditional classroom setting. While some argue that learning in the online environment should be reflective and self-directed, others suggest that it is the sense of availability of the faculty and the resultant interaction that enhance student success (Shin, 2002; Fulford & Zhang, 1993).

The majority of online students (55.2 percent) had contact with their professors at least once per week, while a small proportion (6.9 percent) indicated that they have contact more than once a week with their professors. A follow-up question was then asked of students who had taken classes in both online and traditional formats at UB. This question asked them to compare the two formats in terms of contact with the professor. Responses to this question indicate that nearly 55 percent of these students felt that they had at least the same level of contact with their professors, with one-third reporting that they had somewhat more contact (21.1 percent) or much more contact (11.3 percent) in the online class than they did in a more traditional classroom setting.

These findings may be a function of the formats for both traditional and online courses at UB. Traditional courses are offered once a week in a 2.5-hour format. Online courses at UB encourage frequent interaction and feedback for the students, because faculty members are encouraged to use periodic assessment activities such as threaded discussions or essays, in lieu of examinations. Data indicate that students feel they receive at least as much, if not more, feedback from a professor in an online course than one held in a more traditional setting. Approximately 60 percent of the students in online classes indicated that they

Table 2.
Satisfaction of Peer Contact by Ethnicity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>White, Non-Hispanic</th>
<th>African-American</th>
<th>White, Hispanic</th>
<th>Asian</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not at All Satisfied</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfied</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfied</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Satisfied</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Chi-Square = 8.50, df = 16, p = 0.932

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were either somewhat or very satisfied with the amount of contact they had with the online class professor. There were no statistically significant differences between men and women in the amount of satisfaction on this item \((p = 0.593)\). Both men and women reported high degrees of satisfaction as their modal values. However, men were more likely than women to indicate that they were either not at all or not very satisfied with the degree of contact with their online professor. There also were no statistically significant differences in satisfaction levels for contact with the professor when analyzed by ethnicity \((p = 0.592)\). However, African-American students (52 percent) were more likely than their white, non-Hispanic counterparts (36.2 percent) to indicate that they were very satisfied with the degree of contact with their professors.

Finally, an analysis was conducted to see if students who took traditional classes in the MPA program would be less satisfied with the amount of professor contact in the online environment than students who took all of their courses online. One could argue that students who are fully online would have different expectations of contact with professors. No statistically significant relationship was found when satisfaction with professor contact was analyzed by whether a student was a fully online student \((\text{Chi-Square} = 3.003, \text{df} = 4, p = 0.557)\).

**Dimensions of Transactional Presence**

Shin (2002) notes that transactional presence in the digital classroom transcends mere interaction. In her words, transactional presence is “the degree to which a distance student perceives the availability of, and connectedness with, teachers [and] peer students … while interaction is viewed as an activity which may result in a high degree of transactional presence” (Shin, 2002, p. 132). To investigate these dimensions, the first set of analyses involved a series of tests to see whether satisfaction with student-teacher and student-peer relationships was influenced by the level of interaction. A second series of tests then investigated whether preference for the online format was influenced more by the amount of contact or by satisfaction with the contact.

As may be seen in Tables 3 and 4, overall satisfaction in contact with both professors and classmates is strongly influenced by the amount of contact that students have with each group. Both of these relationships are significant at the 0.05 level. Gamma tests of the nature of the relationship also suggest fairly strong, positive relationships between the satisfaction with contact and the amount of contact. Among peer-to-peer contacts, the gamma value is 0.398. In the case of the professor-student relationship, the correlation is even stronger, with a gamma value of 0.508. It appears the amount of interaction is a critical — but not the sole — determinant of student satisfaction levels with contact. *(See Tables 3 and 4.)*
Our final tests revolved around whether overall satisfaction with the online format was dependent on the amount of interaction with the professor, or on satisfaction with the quality of that interaction. Data from a question about whether a student would recommend the online format to another student was then cross-tabulated against the amount of interaction, and the quality of that interaction, with both peers and the professor.

Table 3. 
*Satisfaction of Contact with Classmates, by Amount of Contact w/Classmates*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Satisfaction of Contact with Classmates</th>
<th>No Contact</th>
<th>Once in a While but Less Than Once Per Week</th>
<th>At Least Once Per Week</th>
<th>More Than Once Per Week</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not at All Satisfied</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Very Satisfied</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>41.4%</td>
<td>32.1%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>30.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat Satisfied</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>34.5%</td>
<td>32.1%</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>26.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Satisfied</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>13.8%</td>
<td>32.1%</td>
<td>78.6%</td>
<td>32.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Chi-Square = 25.22, df = 12, p = 0.014*

Table 4. 
*Satisfaction of Contact with Professor, by Amount of Contact with Professor*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Satisfaction of Contact with Professor</th>
<th>No Contact</th>
<th>Once in a While but Less Than Once Per Week</th>
<th>At Least Once Per Week</th>
<th>More Than Once Per Week</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not at All Satisfied</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Very Satisfied</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>13.9%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>66.7%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>13.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat Satisfied</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>31.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>21.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Satisfied</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>27.8%</td>
<td>47.6%</td>
<td>83.3%</td>
<td>40.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Chi-Square = 25.22, df = 12, p = 0.014*
In neither case was the amount of interaction sufficient for students to recommend that another student take the online format. However, as can be seen in Tables 5 and 6, the quality of the contact exerted a high degree of influence on whether students would recommend this format to other students. Use of the Lambda statistic, as a measure of association, found that the relationship between recommending the format and satisfaction with contact was slightly stronger for the relationship among students (Lambda = 0.100) than for student relationships with faculty (Lambda = 0.091). (See Tables 5 and 6.)

CONCLUSION

With regard to student perceptions, our research supports the “no significant difference” claims about online and traditional teaching mediums — that MPA students perceive no difference in faculty contact and peer contact. In addition, this research found that, contrary to previous studies, neither ethnicity nor gender appears to play a prominent role in whether students are satisfied about the contact that they have either with each other, or with the professor. However, the study affirms the concept of Shin (2002) — that transactional presence is more than just the amount of interaction. Students have to be satisfied with the...
quality of that interaction as well. While frequent interaction is an important component of quality, it is not the sole determinant of quality. Following the lead of Fulford and Zhang (1993), we also have found that, while students find that a personal relationship with a professor is important to overall satisfaction, overall interaction in the distance setting with peers is equally important.

REFERENCES


Staying Connected: MPA Student Perceptions of Transactional Presence


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Staying Connected: MPA Student Perceptions of Transactional Presence


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Teaching Public Administration
As a Fulbright Scholar In China:
Analysis and Reflections

Donna Lind Infeld
George Washington University

LI Wenzhao
Renmin University of China

Abstract
After spending fall semester, 2007, on a Fulbright Scholarship at Renmin University of China, Dr. Infeld examines her experiences in light of the literature about teaching in China. Six aspects of teaching in China are discussed, including (1) Chinese students’ English and academic listening, (2) teaching with cases, (3) the “good” teacher, (4) “the “good” student, (5) Chinese conceptions of teaching, and (6) questioning. Descriptive examples are used to explore differences between teaching public administration to first-semester graduate students in China and in the U.S. The “Lessons on American Teaching Style,” developed by Dr. LI Wenzhao, a junior faculty member who assisted Infeld in her classes, are shared to provide insight from a Chinese perspective on the difference in teaching styles. A secondary objective of the paper is to encourage public administration scholars to apply for Fulbright Scholarships to teach in China, or elsewhere around the world.

Teaching Public Administration as a Fulbright Scholar in China
In fall, 2007, I had the honor and privilege of teaching Public Administration as a Fulbright Scholar at Renmin University of China in Beijing. The goal of this paper is to share my experiences as they relate to the literature about teaching in China. Its secondary objective is to encourage other public administration scholars to apply for Fulbright Scholarships to teach in China, or elsewhere around the world.

Fulbright Program
The Fulbright Program was instituted to “increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries.”
Teaching Public Administration As a Fulbright Scholar In China:
Analysis and Reflections

(U.S. Department of State, n.d.) With this goal in mind, I went to Beijing in
the fall of 2007 with my husband and 11-year-old daughter. We applied to go
to China for two reasons: Our daughter was adopted from China, and it was
possible to teach in English.

Fulbright in China

Based on an agreement in 1947, China was one of the first countries to
participate in the Fulbright program. However, in 1949, the program was
suspended with the establishment of the People’s Republic. Fulbright exchanges
were renewed with normalization in 1979. From Academic Year 1983-84 to AY
1988-89, approximately 21 scholars per year traveled to China under the
Fulbright Program. Then, in 1989, China suspended exchanges as a reaction to
Participation resumed in 1990/91, and in 2008/09 there were 21 grantees
teaching in China. (See Figure 1.)

Participating countries select the academic disciplines from which scholars are
recruited. Initially, China gave priority to those lecturing on English as a
language, American literature, and history, in order to help the country move
toward modernization. Since 1983, the focus has been on American history,
literature, law, journalism, business, economics, political science, sociology,
philosophy, and international relations (U.S. Department of State, n.d.). Only
six public administration faculty members have been Fulbright Scholars in
China since 1999.1 (See Figure 2.)

Since the MPA was approved as an official degree in China in 2001, nearly
100 programs have been established there. The MPA degree is one component
of increasing the professionalization of administration and civil service in China.

Figure 1.
Number of Fulbright lecturers and lecturer/researchers in China
since normalization (all fields)

![Number of Fulbright lecturers and lecturer/researchers in China since normalization (all fields)](image)

Note: From the Council for International Exchange of Scholars, “Fulbright Scholar Program – Scholar

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The Chinese Public Administration Society, affiliated with the American Society for Public Administration (ASPA) and the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA), supports development of the profession and field. To help in this effort, several U.S. public administration textbooks have been translated into Chinese.

RENMIN UNIVERSITY OF CHINA — MPA DEGREE PROGRAM

I was matched with Renmin University of China because of my request to be in Beijing, and the school's status for housing one of China's top Public Administration programs. Renmin means “belonging to the people,” so Renmin is the People's University. Established in 1937, it is an official “key comprehensive university,” which puts it among the top Chinese universities in terms of applications and resources. It enrolls approximately 20,000 students per year. Renmin University (known as Renda), is located inside a walled campus in the northwest quadrant of Beijing. The embassy area and most international residents live in the east or northeast, so there are few Westerners on or around campus. As with most Chinese universities, recent economic growth has led to significant new construction. Renda is proud of its large, new academic complex that includes schools of Business, Law, and Journalism, as well as a new athletic facility. While I was there, construction of a new library also was started.
Renmin University of China was the first to offer the MPA degree, and its School of Public Administration boasts one of the oldest buildings on campus. Its role as a leading MPA program is evidenced by its co-sponsorship of the biannual Sino-U.S. Conference on Public Administration, and publication of the journal *Public Administration and Policy Review*.

The School of Public Administration at Renmin includes three departments: Public Administration, Land and Real Estate Management, and Urban Planning and Management. There also are eight institutes and 10 research centers. Seventy-eight faculty members teach courses for 328 undergraduates, 818 MPA students, 414 graduate students in other degrees, and 134 Ph.D. students — in full-time, part-time, and executive programs (School of Public Administration, Renmin University of China, n.d.).

**MPA Curriculum**

Like many MPA programs in the U.S., Renmin University of China offers both full-time and executive MPA programs. The full-time program offers a 40-credit-hour curriculum that looks much like American MPA programs. It includes 30 credits of core courses, 10 credits of electives, and a required research paper, for a degree that generally takes two to four years to complete. The titles of MPA courses are very familiar, including, for example, Public Management, Public Policy Analysis, Research Methods, Practical Economics, and Public Finance (School of Public Administration, Renmin University of China, n.d.). However, core requirements seemed to be interpreted with some flexibility in China. For example, while Program Evaluation is listed as an elective, when I was there the students were told it was required.

Another major difference I noted is that students told me they were taking between seven and 11 courses per semester. Seven core courses were standard during the first semester, and if students wanted to take electives, those were in addition to core courses. It appeared that the students front-loaded their programs so they could devote more focused time on the major research paper requirement later in the program.

I was teaching full-time students, who all lived on campus. They were assigned together to dorm rooms of three to four students each. As a result, another difference I noticed was a stronger sense of community and camaraderie than one would see in most U.S. programs.

**Overview of Teaching**

Fulbright lecturers typically teach two courses per semester. I taught a required Program Evaluation course for MPA students, and an elective on Health Policy that was open to graduate students from across the campus. The following discussion focuses on the Program Evaluation core course.

Twenty-nine, first-semester MPA students registered for Program Evaluation,
which met once a week from 10:00 to 11:30 a.m. The classroom was equipped with a computer that offered PowerPoint, Internet access, and a projector. Once a student started the system to get past the all-Chinese-language screens, I was able to function pretty much as I would at home. Desks and other amenities were similar to those in U.S. classrooms.

While Chinese students typically study English starting in sixth grade, and are expected to be able to understand lectures in English, the dean realized that they might have some difficulty, and assigned a junior faculty member to assist me in the classroom, and to help translate as needed. This teaching assistant, Dr. LI Wenzhao, encouraged me to speak slowly, and then translated most of what I said for the first few lectures. After that he answered questions in Chinese when the students did not understand my explanation. By the middle of the semester, he determined that the students understood me well enough so that translation was not needed.

Dr. Li was more than just a teaching assistant. His job for the semester was to help me out. He did everything from meeting us at the airport, helping us buy cell phones, to taking us out to lunch or dinner periodically throughout our stay. Universities that participate in the Fulbright program are required to have a liaison, but in most cases it is an administrative staff person from the international affairs office. I was fortunate to be able to work with someone from my academic department. As a result, Dr. Li and I initiated a joint research project that we hope to continue to pursue.

Teaching Program Evaluation

U.S. courses in Program Evaluation often require students to perform studies for real-world clients. Based on my correspondence before arriving in China, it became clear that this was not a realistic expectation here. First of all, while research design and analysis is a required part of the MPA curriculum, my students had not yet taken it. Therefore, a significant portion of the course necessarily introduced topics of research design and data collection before getting to specific issues of their application in a program evaluation. More importantly, I was told that it would be extremely difficult for students to gain access to public and nonprofit organizations where they could conduct evaluations. Finally, because the students were carrying such a heavy course load, the available time for any specific class assignment was much less than we would expect in the U.S.

For this course, there were two main, graded assignments. The first was a brief critique of an outcome- or impact-evaluation of an existing program found on the Internet — in either English or Chinese. The second assignment was the development of a proposal to evaluate a program. This assignment was developed in two parts: (1) a description of the program, again located on the Internet, and including the student’s specification of measurable objectives, and (2) a detailed research design and implementation plan. Each of these
assignments posed significant challenges to these first-year MPA students, due mostly to their general discomfort with working in the English language. In addition, the notion that in their future careers they might be either conducting a program evaluation or making decisions based on evaluation findings seemed to make them uncomfortable. Since most of the students had come directly from undergraduate school, it was difficult for them to relate the tools of public administration to the activities and responsibilities of the professional world. Other Fulbright lecturers also noticed that Chinese education is very theoretical, and that students generally do not know how to address real problems in the “real world.”

After my semester of teaching in China, I thought it would help me gain insight into my experience to review the literature on cross-cultural teaching. The following section uses the academic literature as a framework to examine the process of teaching public administration in contemporary China.

CROSS-CULTURAL TEACHING LITERATURE

Researchers in education and educational psychology have explored differences in teaching Western and Chinese students. Studying in English is a significant challenge for all non-English-speaking students. Huang (2004) identified specific problem areas with professors’ use of English for Chinese students. Another important aspect of Western-style teaching is the use of case studies. Thompson (2000) examined the use of cases in teaching Chinese MBA students. Finally, Watkins and Biggs (1996) conducted a meta-analysis to examine American and Chinese views of what makes a good teacher or a good student, conceptions of teaching, use of group work, and styles of questioning. Following a brief summary of each of these aspects of teaching, descriptive examples from my experience are used to examine the differences between teaching public administration to first-semester graduate students in China and those in the U.S. In addition, for each area I summarize lessons on American teaching, as developed by my Chinese teaching assistant, Dr. Li. The dean of the School of Public Administration, Dr. DONG Keyong, asked Dr. Li to share his thoughts about my teaching methods and style with the faculty of the school. His “Eight Lessons on American Teaching Style” are listed in Table 1 and referred to in the analysis below. (See Table 1.)

MY TEACHING EXPERIENCE VIS-À-VIS RESEARCH ON TEACHING IN CHINA

1. Chinese Students’ English and Academic Listening

According to Huang (2004), there are six areas of English speech that make it difficult for Chinese students to understand professors. They include rapid speech, a lack of clear pronunciation, long and complex sentences, colloquial and slang expressions, a lack of clear definitions, and the use of discourse.
markers or transitions. While Huang’s (2004) analysis was based on Chinese students in U.S. classrooms, it is likely that these issues would be even more problematic in China, where the students are less familiar with listening to spoken English.

Despite years of studying the language, first-semester MPA students have significant difficulty in understanding spoken English. Most had taken only one English course taught by a native speaker. I made every effort to address each of the items identified by Huang (2004). For example, during the first class, I distributed small yellow flags for students to wave if I was going too fast. This got a good laugh, but students didn’t use it as a tool. I also asked students to bring to each class session a word from the reading that they didn’t understand. Since they were accustomed to using a dictionary, only a few took advantage of this opportunity. Since spoken English goes by so quickly, it is difficult for students to interrupt and ask for a definition. However, highlighting technical terms on PowerPoint slides helped facilitate explanation and discussion.

Despite my efforts, it was extremely difficult to know what students did or did not understand. Colloquial expressions were particularly problematic. Toward the end of the semester, one brave student asked what I meant when I used my index and middle finger in bending motions, when I demonstrated a phrase that was in quotation marks. I had been unconsciously using this gesture, and undoubtedly several others all semester, and the students had no idea what I meant. Even terms we take for granted in the U.S. could cause problems. In my health policy class it took me some time to realize that the students did not

Table 1.
Eight Lessons on American Teaching Style

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lesson</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 1</td>
<td>The whole teaching process and course design are planned in advance. Students are made aware of the whole syllabus in the first session, which arranges the whole process of the course. It is just like a contract between the teacher and students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 2</td>
<td>The reading materials and essays are very rich and provide much information for students. They are divided into two parts, the textbook and essays [articles].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 3</td>
<td>The course exercises and essays are very useful for improving the ability of students. Students are encouraged to use the tools and methods learned for the solution of actual problems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 4</td>
<td>Pay attention to the case study and case analysis. In the everyday classes, many concrete cases were provided for students. Also, the students are stimulated to criticize the case themselves.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 5</td>
<td>Academic honesty is required in the whole class and plagiarizing is forbidden completely.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 6</td>
<td>Be generous with encouragement, inspiration, and praise of students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 7</td>
<td>Be confident in the process of teaching and enjoy the experience of contact with students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 8</td>
<td>American professors earn high salaries and enjoy good welfare [quality of life].</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Teaching Public Administration As a Fulbright Scholar In China: Analysis and Reflections

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understand the concept of “insurance.” Because they don’t own cars or homes, and health care is provided by the government, they have had no need to purchase insurance. As a result, I added a module to introduce the basic idea of insurance as shared risk.

My experience in trying to communicate to non-native English speakers helped make me more sensitive to the clarity of my presentation style when I returned to the U.S. If I had stayed in China for a second semester, I think I would have been able to significantly improve students’ understanding by further slowing down my speech, and by providing more detailed explanations of even minor points and terms throughout the course.

E-mail was extremely helpful as a tool to communicate with students. There was a listserv of all of the students in my class that I used regularly. After each session, I sent a message detailing what was expected for the next class, and offered specific guidance on what to look for in the readings. These messages often generated e-mail-based dialogue during the week that helped students stay on track with course requirements and expectations.

2. Teaching with Cases

Cases are widely used in U.S. graduate-level education. Thompson (2000) explored whether cases were appropriate for Chinese MBA students, and found that cases that were recent, decisional, and about well-known organizations were “unequivocally considered highly important in a generally good MBA course” (p. 109).

My MPA students were very receptive to case materials. I intentionally selected a very basic textbook on Program Evaluation so I could supplement it with articles and cases that could be accessed through the Internet. For each topic in Program Evaluation, I initially assigned a chapter in the textbook and two short case studies. The cases were based on reports or articles in areas of development, education, and health. Valuable case materials were located on the Internet from the Asian Development Bank, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), UNESCO, the World Bank, and the World Health Organization. I also used a report from the China Daily as a case example of data presentation.

While the students were able to navigate the Internet in English to find material required for course assignments, it seemed that they were not generally expected to do this. Typical Chinese classes appeared to be textbook-based, without significant supplementation with articles or case materials. Dr. Li noted this in one of his lessons to the faculty of the School of Public Administration: “The reading materials and essays are very rich and provide much information to students. They are divided into two parts, the textbook and essays [articles and cases].”

In order for the students to understand the role and methods of evaluation used in each case, it was first necessary to spend significant time describing the
nature of the program that the case involved. Consequently, the amount of class
time required for each case was substantially longer than it would be in the U.S.
As a result, I cut back the assignments to one short case per week.
The most successful case materials dealt with adolescent smoking cessation,
because I was able to locate evaluation studies conducted both in the U.S. and
in China. One study was a quantitative randomized intervention study in
Wuhan, China (Chou, et al., 2006), while the other was a qualitative pilot study
conducted in Connecticut (O'Connell, et al., 2004). The location of one study
in China, and the contrast between the evaluation methods engaged the
students' interest in determining which was the “right,” or at least the “best”
evaluation design.
Other valuable case materials included an evaluation of the Intel® Learn
Program, a computer training program for children in nine countries around
the world, including China (Center for Technology in Learning, 2006), as well
as a qualitative evaluation of a Chronic Disease Self-Management program in
Shanghai (Dungbo, Ding, McGowan, & Fu, 2006). These cases enabled the
students to see Chinese programs in an international context, and also provided
a range of evaluations that included quantitative and qualitative methods and
process, outcome, and impact evaluations.
Students were uncomfortable with the expectation that they would critique
professional work, and seemed shocked that I found fault with the methods
used in published reports. Gradually, however, most students were able to raise
questions about various methodological issues. Even my teaching assistant
expressed surprise at this expectation when he described American methods to
his colleagues, noting that “[the professor] pays attention to the case studies and
case analysis. In the everyday classes, many concrete cases are provided for
students. Also, the students are stimulated to criticize the cases themselves.”

3. The "Good" Teacher
Chinese students have been found to define a “good” teacher based on his/her
depth of knowledge, ability to answer questions, and being a good “moral
model.” They also expect the teacher to be their friend. This differs from the
Western view, which originated in Great Britain, where the definition of a good
teacher is more likely to be based on teaching skills and methods employed in
the classroom (Watkins, 2000).
I did note some differences between the expectations of Chinese students,
and those of American students. Chinese students were much less likely to ask
questions, but seemed to have greater expectations for out-of-classroom
contact. Consistent with the notion of the teacher as friend, one of the most
rewarding aspects of teaching Program Evaluation came after class hours.
Because the class was scheduled for late morning, it was convenient to take
small groups of students out to lunch. This turned out to be a very inexpensive
option that was greatly appreciated by the students. I was able to find out a little bit more about them, and their aspirations, and answer more of their questions about life in “the States.”

One fundamental aspect of being a “good” teacher in the U.S. is a well-organized and detailed syllabus. This was not an expectation in China. My teaching assistant, Dr. Li, was surprised that the “whole teaching process and course design are planned previously.” In fact, this was the comment about my teaching that he put first on his list of eight. He further described to the faculty, “Students can know the whole syllabus in the first course [session], which arranges the whole process of [the] course. It is just like a contract between the teacher and student.” Students explained to me that they often didn’t know what was going to be required in their other courses (papers, tests, etc.) until it unfolded during the semester.

4. The “Good” Student

Good behavior and paying close attention is expected of all students in China (Watkins, 2000). Starting with the daily, “Good Morning, teacher,” through the end of the class, students were consistently well-behaved. Graduate students in the U.S. are similarly attentive, albeit less formal in their student roles. In addition, attendance was better in China than in the U.S.

One dimension of being a good student that is widely accepted in the U.S. is not to use others’ ideas without citation. Chinese students do not understand the concept of plagiarism. During orientation we had been told that previous Fulbright scholars had experienced widespread plagiarism. As a result, I spent some class time describing my expectations and made sure that my teaching assistant translated the requirements. Therefore, I was very disappointed when more than half of the papers had most of their content taken directly from the Internet, without citation. This made me realize that even with a translator, students did not understand significant portions of what I was saying. I think it was difficult for students to use their somewhat-limited English to convey what someone else had already said in a better way.

I had told the students that plagiarism would result in the grade of zero for the assignment. I quickly decided that this approach was not feasible. After consulting my teaching assistant, I decided to let the students rewrite the assignment, but reduced the resulting grade. Unfortunately, even the rewritten papers were not up to American standards of citation. By the end of the semester, I understood that the unacceptability of plagiarism is a culture-based expectation that they had not been exposed to as undergraduate students. It seemed to me that one possible explanation for this difference is that, because China missed out on so much development during the Cultural Revolution and the Great Leap Forward, students are taught that it is acceptable to do whatever is necessary to catch up. Using others’ ideas, technologies, or content
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(videos, brand names, etc.) to achieve that goal is therefore generally acceptable. Several possible causes for widespread plagiarism in China have been described in literature by Stone (2008). Its roots have been traced to classical Confucian education, dating from around 500 B.C., which required memorization of classical texts. The more recent history of Communism, in which all property is shared, also could have created an environment that is incompatible with the Western notion of intellectual property rights. While plagiarism was a serious problem among my first-semester MPA students, it was less widespread among students in my advanced graduate elective. What we require of our students throughout their education seems to be introduced much later in the system in China.

My insistence on appropriate citation even seemed to be a surprise to the junior faculty member who was my teaching assistant. In his Lesson #5 to the Public Administration faculty, he wrote that in America, “academic honesty is required in the whole class, and plagiarizing is forbidden completely.”

5. Chinese Conceptions of Teaching

Teachers in China are expected to transmit information and also to “cultivate” students’ interest in the subject area, as well as in areas outside of the scope of the topic (Watkins, 2000). Based on a recommendation from a former Fulbright Scholar in China, Dr. Kathryn Mohrman, I incorporated a valuable technique that is an example of a teacher’s role extending beyond his/her area of expertise. During the first class, I introduced myself and my family, including pictures of my husband and daughter, our house, and my university campus. I then asked them to write down and turn in the following three items:

1. What they wanted to learn about the course topic.
2. What they wanted to know about life in the U.S.
3. What they wanted to know about anything else that I might be able to address.

The questions in the first category were fairly general topics that I already planned to cover. The second and third questions provided material that I addressed during the first 10-20 minutes of each class. Examples of some of the most thought-provoking questions that I addressed include:

- Do all Americans own guns?
- What do you do when the President doesn’t have the right background or skills to do the job?
- Do Americans really believe in God, or is it just part of their culture?

It was clear that despite their exposure to Western movies and the Internet, having the opportunity actually to talk to an American was a unique and valuable opportunity for most of the students. They were very interested and engaged in this part of class. This process got them to warm up to listening to English, and I think it also helped them focus on the course material.
aspect of the class clearly fit with the notion of the teacher as a moral model. They wanted to know what I thought both personally and professionally on a range of topics that I would not normally discuss with students in the U.S. I was able to follow up on many of these discussions with the small groups of students I took to lunch after class.

6. Questioning

Students in Western classrooms are expected to raise their hands and ask questions when they do not understand something or want to share a comment. If you ask Chinese students whether they have any questions you generally will receive only blank stares. Chinese students are not expected to ask questions in class unless they have conducted an independent investigation upon which to base those questions (Watkins, 2000).

By the end of the semester, several students teased me by saying, “That was a very good question,” or “That is a good idea.” I said something to this effect whenever a student made any contribution. This was in sharp contrast to their description of the typical Chinese professor who, when they asked a question, would make students feel that they were wrong or stupid to ask. Speaking up in class was a challenge even for the more advanced graduate students.

According to my teaching assistant, as a faculty member I stimulated students more than the typical Chinese faculty member. His guidance to colleagues was to be “generous with encouragement, inspiration, and praise of students.” He said that I was “confident in the process of teaching and enjoy the experience of contact with students.”

Before going to China, I thought that Chinese faculty members carried heavy teaching loads and, as a result, didn't spend much out-of-classroom time with students. What I found was that faculty members did develop some close relationships with their students, but that most spent little time in their offices. This was not because of teaching loads, but because of their low salaries and the need to do consulting or other work to supplement their incomes. Faculty positions continue to be sought after, and have substantial status, but the salaries do not reflect this level of recognition.

7. Group Work

While group work in Western classrooms tends to involve small groups of students talking among themselves, Chinese teachers more frequently have two students engage in a dialogue in front of the class. This approach is consistent with the focus on “moral training,” and works well in larger classes (Watkins, 2000). Thompson (2000), in examining use of cases with Chinese MBA students, noted a preference for working in small groups, as opposed to class-wide discussions.

Because students were extremely hesitant to ask questions or participate in
discussions, it was especially important to structure group activities into each session. Several of my teaching assistant’s comments related to how I used group work and in-class exercises as ways for students to “use the tools and methods learned for the solution of actual problems.”

I selected the case of the upcoming 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, at that point less than a year away, as the basis for in-class activities throughout the semester. Based on the Strategic Objectives for the Olympic Games (The Beijing Organizing Committee for the Games of the XXIX Olympiad, 2003), I created several group exercises for students to operationalize objectives and design program evaluation strategies that could be used to examine whether those objectives had been met. While not willing to raise their hands individually to make a comment, students were comfortable with the process of group discussion, where one member would report their ideas to the rest of the class. The groups generally selected the student with the strongest English-speaking skills. This process allowed all students to participate, without putting each one on the spot in front of the class. Also, because students felt that speaking up might be seen as criticizing the professor, there may have been safety in numbers when speaking up on behalf of a group.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

“American professors earn high salaries and enjoy good welfare [quality of life].” This was lesson #8 from Dr. Li’s writings to his more senior colleagues, as shown in Table 3. I think this lesson was designed to deflect any potential interpretation of the other lessons as criticizing their teaching methods. While he clearly implied that the way I taught my courses was good, using phrases like “very rich,” and “very useful,” he did not want to suggest that it was appropriate to expect the same teaching style from his Chinese colleagues.

I think he is right in saying that American professors have good “welfare.” We have great opportunities to pursue our intellectual interests and to explore the world through opportunities such as the Fulbright Scholars Program.

This is an exciting time to be living and teaching in China. Chinese students are very enthusiastic and dedicated. In fact, they smile and nod even when they don’t understand. While they are shy about speaking up in class, they do well in small-group exercises and formal presentations.

There are great opportunities for increasing academic cooperation between MPA programs in the U.S. and China. The bi-annual Sino-U.S. Conference on Public Administration is a forum for developing and sharing research on public administration theory and practice in the two countries. Further, the Chinese government is providing increased support for faculty and doctoral scholars who pursue research in the U.S. In order to be promoted to the rank of full professor, many universities require faculty members to spend a year in another country. China recognizes that it has much to learn from the rest of the world.
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We should appreciate that we have a lot to learn from other cultures as well. The Fulbright Program offers the opportunity for American scholars to explore the world and their disciplines in a new context. That we now live in a global society is clearly a truism. Our economic problems affect China and the rest of the world, and vice versa. For example, China's air pollution affects air quality across the Pacific Ocean in California. It is important to work together on these global problems. We need to understand each other and better address our common goals. A Fulbright experience is one small step that can help move us in that direction.

In the words of Senator Fulbright, “Fostering these — leadership, learning, and empathy between cultures — was and remains the purpose of the international scholarship program. … It is a modest program with an immodest aim — the achievement in international affairs of a regime more civilized, rational, and humane than the empty system of power of the past. …” (U.S. Department of State, n.d.).

With 800 U.S. faculty and professionals traveling all over the world per year, and 40 of those designated for Public Administration, the Fulbright Scholars program offers a rewarding opportunity to expand your personal and professional horizons.

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FOOTNOTE

1Two faculty members were Fulbright Scholars for two years, thus resulting in eight years during which public administration faculty were in China, as shown in Table 2.

Dr. Donna Lind Infeld is a professor at the Trachtenberg School of Public Policy and Public Administration at The George Washington University, where she is Director of the Masters of Public Policy program. Her recent courses include policy analysis, the capstone seminar, and the dissertation workshop. Her research interests focus on health, aging, and long-term care.

Dr. LI Wenzhao is an assistant professor of the School of Public Administration at Renmin University of China in Beijing. He teaches policy analysis, policy evaluation, the selected classic works of public policy, and administrative reforms in China. His research interests focus on administrative reforms in China, the constitutional political economics of public policy, and self-governance of public affairs.
Badgers & Hoosiers: An Interstate Collaborative Learning Experience Connecting MPA Students in Wisconsin and Indiana

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**ABSTRACT**

Collaborative learning projects are a widely used instructional strategy in Master's of Public Administration (MPA) classes, because participating in them leads to increased student learning and helps students develop the ability to work in self-directed teams. In this article, researchers report on three collaborative learning projects involving students of graduate-level, public administration programs in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, and in Gary, Indiana. They describe the projects, assess students' responses to them, and offer recommendations for instructors who might be interested in implementing similar activities across programs, state lines, or national borders. The authors found that the projects served as a critical bridge to course concepts by broadening their students' perspectives on the study and practice of public administration, and by challenging them to reflect on their own activities and behaviors in a theoretical context.

**INTRODUCTION**

Collaborative learning projects are a widely used instructional strategy in Master's of Public Administration (MPA) classes. They increase learning across the MPA curriculum, and enhance students' abilities to work in self-directed teams because, as Schumaker (2005) observes, “the ability to work successfully with others is one of the most important interpersonal skills that one can develop” (p. 22).

Collaborative learning projects typically involve a group of students within a given class working jointly on projects that had been defined by the instructor.
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In some cases, these projects may involve students from different classes in the same program. The subject of this paper is less common: a series of collaborative learning projects that involved students in similar MPA classes, in different institutions and, in this case, in different states.

Using entries embedded in a 69-page e-mail journal, the authors describe three collaborative learning projects, assess student responses to them, and offer recommendations for instructors who might be interested in implementing similar activities across programs, state lines, or even national borders. Attached is a brief overview of these three collaborative work assignments, and the lessons learned from them.

The authors are from the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh (UWO) in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, and Indiana University-Northwest (IUN) in Gary, Indiana. They conducted a successful two-semester collaborative learning experiment with students whose only commonality was the simultaneous pursuit of an MPA degree. UWO and IUN are both regional campuses within their statewide university systems. Both institutions serve primarily undergraduate students, but also offer selected graduate programs. UWO’s student population of 12,000 is roughly double the size of the IUN student body. Both Oshkosh and Gary have suffered from a loss of manufacturing jobs over the past quarter century. However, Gary is distinctly more urban than Oshkosh, and this is reflected in a more diverse student population.

The UWO program offers a Healthcare Management Certificate and a Law Enforcement Emphasis in addition to its general public management degree. Concentrations in the IUN program include Criminal Justice, Health Services Administration, Human Resources Administration and Public Management.

In Oshkosh, most courses are offered on Saturdays, in order to meet the needs of working adults; several are offered as hybrid classes that incorporate both in-class and online meetings. IUN’s courses are offered primarily in the evening, in a traditional classroom setting. The IUN program has 180-200 students, while UWO’s has roughly half that number. The UWO student body is about evenly split between males and females; the IUN enrollment is 70 percent female.

BACKGROUND

The collaborative effort began when the authors met at a social gathering, and discovered they were teaching similar organization theory MPA courses at their respective institutions, so they began sharing pedagogical strategies. The result of that initial effort was a chopstick exercise, where students from each class were issued a pair of chopsticks at the end of class and told to use them at their next meal, and report about their experiences at the next class meeting. Both classes found this exercise to be an informative and entertaining way to understand how workers in a machine bureaucracy (Morgan, 2006; Bolman &
Deal, 2003) feel when they are given a task to complete with little direction, an absolute deadline, and no indication of what the final product should look like. The IUN and UWO classes participated independently in this exercise and only the instructors compared notes on the outcomes. Both agreed that the exercise would have been more valuable for the students if they had communicated directly with each other. Thus was born a plan to involve our classes in a collaborative project to interact directly with each other.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Our search of Public Administration and general literature produced no results on education for inter-program collaborative projects that involved master’s-level students. However, there was extensive literature, going back a half-century, on the value of shared-learning experiences for students from kindergarten to college, as well as detailed instructions on how to conduct and evaluate them. After reviewing voluminous amounts of research on collaborative learning in the classroom, Barkley, Cross, and Major (2005) conclude that “Virtually all of the compilers and synthesizers of research findings regarding group learning come to largely positive conclusions” (p. 17).

Because the literature gives small-group learning projects many different names and definitions, the authors debated about what to call their pedagogical experiment. For example, Dr. L. Fink describes small-group projects as casual, cooperative, and team-based (2004, pp. 5-8). To Fink, casual small-group projects are relatively ad-hoc exercises that require little or no advance planning. Meanwhile, the other end of the continuum offers team-based learning, with small-group work as the primary in-class activity. In between the two extremes are carefully planned, cooperative-learning projects that incorporate structured group activities.

To Barkley, Cross, and Major, there is a primary distinction between cooperative and collaborative projects (2005, pp. 5-7). Cooperative projects require students to work together on a common task, while the teacher retains a traditional dual role as a subject-matter expert and classroom authority. In collaborative situations, students also work together on a shared goal, but the teacher’s responsibility — as well as the students’ — is to become a member of a community in search of knowledge. Considering these distinctions, we chose to use the term “collaborative learning,” rather than adopting Fink’s (2004) cooperative learning label, because we felt the former term more appropriately conveyed the idea of students working with instructors to accomplish a shared learning goal. In Collaborative Learning: Creating Knowledge with Students, Matthews (1995) stresses the importance of the faculty and student partnership in creating knowledge, a concept Fink (2004) does not address when describing cooperative learning.
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COLLABORATIVE LEARNING VALUES

We contend that collaborative learning is a valuable use of instructional time because of the following:

1. Teachers cannot simply transfer knowledge to students. Meaningful and lasting learning occurs via personal, active engagement,
2. Many employers consider the willingness to engage in productive teamwork to be a requirement for success,
3. Our increasingly diverse society requires engaged citizens who can appreciate and benefit from different perspectives, and
4. Collaborative learning personally and actively engages students of all backgrounds (Barkley, Cross, & Major, 2005, pp. xi-xii).

FALL SEMESTER 2007

One of the more challenging aspects of managing this kind of collaborative learning experience is finding a project in which students from different classes can jointly participate. While the instructors had shared ideas for in-class activities (i.e., the chopstick exercise), they had not worked together before on a project that would involve class members in different locations interacting with each other directly. Searching for an appropriate shared activity came to an end in early September, 2007, when King received an e-mail from the International City/County Managers Association (ICMA) with the headline “Get Published! ICMA Press Seeks Proposals for Case Studies.” This announcement described an excellent opportunity for students to work with each other on a “real life” project. This is how it happened:

1. Each class was divided into six groups of four or five students.
2. Each group prepared a one-page abstract for an extended case study that could be submitted to ICMA for consideration. Groups were encouraged to draw on their personal experiences and local observations when choosing a case to study.
3. Student groups from one institution electronically submitted their abstracts to pre-selected groups in the other institution’s partnering MPA class.
4. The groups then electronically provided each other with 1-2 pages of written feedback on the submitted abstracts.
5. Finally, group members in both classes were asked, as part of their individual classes, to evaluate how useful the feedback was in improving their abstracts.

No other class assignments were collaborative in nature, and in fact they differed greatly from each other. For example, UOW students were required to develop a 3,000-word, extended case study based on the abstract, and to submit it for a grade, an experience that IUN students did not have.

While instructors and students felt that this experiment was generally
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successful, and worthy of the effort involved, all agreed that it could have been more coherently conceptualized and smoothly executed. We found that the logistics of implementing this type of project were more difficult than expected, because of differing class sizes, course content, schedules, and assignments. In addition, just keeping track of the numerous electronic messages being transmitted between the cities of Gary and Oshkosh proved to be a daunting task. We learned the importance of being clear about objectives for the joint activity, and that standardized response tools and e-mail protocols needed to be determined at the beginning of the process. These recommendations were implemented as we prepared to conduct a similar experiment in the spring semester.

In Dr. King's class, the impact of this assignment extended beyond the semester. Although not required, three of the groups decided to submit their revised abstracts for evaluation and possible publication in the ICMA casebook. Two groups were invited to write full case studies for consideration, and, since then, one was accepted for publication and is now accessible as Case 13 (“Ethics and Internal Hiring”) in Managing Local Government: Cases in Effectiveness (International City/County Managers Association, 2008).

In addition, two of the case studies developed in the fall class became part of the capstone seminar offered in the spring semester. Although most students were not assigned to participate in the cases they helped write, they clearly were pleased to see their work presented by their peers.

SPRING SEMESTER 2008

The collaborative learning project conducted in the spring semester of 2008 was specifically designed so that students in both locations could 1) examine society's perceptions of the value of public administration, 2) explore the connection between themselves and a larger cohort of MPA students, 3) develop an awareness of how public administration is exercised differently in other communities, and 4) reflect on their own reasons for pursuing an MPA degree. Both courses used Bolman and Deal's (2003) Reframing Organizations: Artistry, Choice, and Leadership, and Gareth Morgan's (2006) Images of Organization. Course content differed in the two classes, but they both shared learning goals of addressing organization and management theory as it relates to the public sector, and addressing the relationship between theory and practice in public sector organizations.

Elements of the project's design were influenced by the previous semester's collaborative learning project, and several factors needed to be addressed up front. Fortunately, as was the case in the fall semester, enrollment was comparable in the two spring classes (about 28 in each). A significant logistical challenge was the difference in class schedules — the IUN class met weekly for three evening hours, from January 19 through the end of April. UWO had five
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full-day Saturday sessions that met every three weeks, from February 2 through the end of April. It became necessary to map out a time-and-action calendar in early January, in order to ensure that students had appropriate time frames for completing various components of the assignments, and that the classes would have some uniformity as the shared project evolved.

We determined that interactive logistics, which had proven somewhat unwieldy in the fall semester, primarily should take the form of direct contact between student partners from each class. The assignment for each class used U.S. Census and other factual data for an analysis (community scan) of the partner school’s community. A one-on-one telephone interview with a counterpart in the other class used a structured interview form developed by the instructors.

Because the UWO semester started later, students there received names and e-mail addresses of their IUN counterparts, and were instructed to contact them promptly for interviews that lasted 30 minutes and longer.

Another consideration in designing the collaborative project was determining the final products to be generated by students from each campus. Based on existing coursework and class schedules, the assignments varied in their implementations. At the conclusion of the community-scan component, and following an analysis of interview data, IUN students were required to produce an analysis of their group’s self-organizing behavior, and to reference concepts from course lectures and interpretations of the Bolman and Deal “frames” (2003). Students were asked to compare the way their group established its method of tackling assignments with key characteristics of the organizational frames they studied in class. Several students noted that analyzing their own organizing behavior helped clarify course concepts from organization theory.

Results showed that two of the teams adopted the bureaucratic frame (with one person directing the project, assigning tasks, and monitoring progress), while two other teams clearly were comfortable with strategies from the human resource frame (where each team member assumes a role that fits the project’s needs, and works with a high level of autonomy).

Two other teams operated a little more chaotically, and completed their projects by improvising and adapting to changes in the environment, and in response to other team members’ participation levels. These team members recognized that their divergent interests and unpredictable behaviors encouraged organizing strategies that were characteristic of the political frame: bargaining, negotiation, and coalition-building.

None of the groups recognized in its behavior the hallmarks of the symbolic frame — to build and identify with a shared culture. Some students postulated that their involvement with one another was of too short a time for these subtler distinctions to emerge. Everyone ultimately agreed that the “Organization as Theater” concept existed in all groups.
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The UWO class incorporated community scan information and an analysis of the interview data into a mini-social-science research project that was submitted at the last class meeting, in addition to being sent back to IUN. While not statistically significant, their findings included the observation that IUN students had many reasons for entering a graduate program, and that the primary value of completing the degree program was because of its applicability to their work situations. Beyond this, IUN students believed that the primary value of public administration is to improve society.

**Student Response**

In a 2005 *Journal of Public Affairs Education (JPAE)* article, Alice Schumaker reported on her empirical study to investigate the perspective of 100 MPA students at the University of Nebraska-Omaha on group projects. Although her main thrust was to identify the skills developed during group projects that most successfully transferred into the workplace, the point most applicable to this undertaking was Schumaker’s observation that “[P]art of the joy of graduate education is to build friendships and professional relationship,” and that “[I]nstructors should be aware of opportunities to foster student friendships” (p. 33).

Since our earliest efforts to engage classes in shared learning activities, students have been intrigued by the idea of interacting with students from other institutions. For example, even though they had no direct interaction with one another after the chopstick exercise, our students enthusiastically participated in discussing similarities and differences between the two groups’ responses, and the students’ perceptions of being connected to the concepts explored in each class.

During the fall of 2007, in the first full-blown attempt to involve our classes in a single, integrated, collaborative-learning project, students in both classes displayed confusion over what the project was supposed to accomplish and how it was to be logistically managed. Although writing and submitting an abstract for consideration by the ICMA publication, seeking feedback from group members in another class, and giving feedback on this feedback all were appropriate assignments for both classes, the logistics of implementing these activities was a nightmare that nearly made management of the project take precedence over its substance. Students were further confused by the fact that the instructors used the collaborative project to implement somewhat different goals in the two classes.

Responses to critiques of the abstract from colleagues in partner classes were generally positive, but both instructors observed a bit of competitive “chest-thumping” on each side throughout the project. For instance, an IUN group’s response to the critique of their abstract by a UWO class in the fall semester of 2007 included the following comments:
“The assessment was critical and harsh.”
“You made our group feel like undergraduates (Penultimate for crying out loud!).”
“This got our dander up!”

In the UWO class, one group asked (incredulously) if the IUN group members were “really graduate students.”

The IUN students often would visibly respond to positive feedback by smiling broadly, sitting or standing taller, and “high-fiving” or “fist-bumping” their teammates. Both authors agree that the collaborative project generated more energy in the IUN class, but both groups of students and instructors were stimulated by a connected approach. It encouraged all participants to look at the coursework from a variety of perspectives, including as the embodiment of “framing” perceptions, and as responses to the environment. This observation led to a discussion of how the exercise might have had a different dynamic if students in the two classes had the opportunity for more direct personal contact.

With lessons learned in the 2007 fall semester, we were better prepared to introduce students to collaborative work, and made changes in the logistics of how students would interact with each other. Both instructors observed a heightened level of interest by the students when the collaborative learning project was introduced and, in the end, most students reported that learning about another community and graduate program in public administration was of interest, and gave them a broader perspective on their own academic pursuits and professional lives. Far and away, the project component with the greatest impact was participating in an interview with a student from the partnering class. One UWO student commented on the value of honing her interviewing skills:

The interview process as part of the collaborative learning project provided one of the best learning opportunities of the project … In the future, if I am asked to interview people as part of a project, I would be more than happy to do so. The information and knowledge gained through this technique is invaluable.

Another UWO student’s comment reflected a broader perspective:

I very much enjoyed researching Gary, IN, and in having a phone interview with an MPA student at Indiana University Northwest … It was really interesting and informative to have a great conversation with someone I would never have met otherwise … It was humbling in many ways to discuss the problems that Gary faces and compare them to the less severe ones facing most of us in the Fox Valley [of OshKosh] … The personal stories were the most compelling part for me, making the interview process my favorite element of the project.
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IUN students were equally intrigued by the interview component of the project and, for the most part, embraced it enthusiastically. Three of the IUN students reported that a real rapport was established during the interview with their UWO partner, which resulted in a wider discussion than would have been possible by merely adhering strictly to the interview guide. Several commented that analyzing their own organizing behaviors helped to clarify course concepts in organization theory. In summarizing the general consensus of the IUN students on this collaborative learning project, one student commented, “I thought this project was extremely helpful in understanding not only the material but how other students viewed how the applications could impact their work or environment.”

RECOMMENDATIONS

This project began as a casual conversation, was followed by a sharing of ideas for in-class activities, and eventually morphed into a full-blown collaborative learning experiment that was implemented twice. Fortunately, our students were willing and enthusiastic participants. Yet, because of our unfamiliarity with this unique approach to collaborative learning across programs, we deliberately “under-tasked” the associated assignments, so that the students would not be penalized because their instructors were learning as they went along.

From this experience we have learned much:

1. Plan to do this activity with someone whose opinion you trust and with whom you feel comfortable. When unanticipated problems arise, it helps to have a collaborator with whom you can laugh.
2. Give each class the same assignment. Because the interactive portion of the assignment was incorporated differently for each class, students had difficulty understanding what their counterparts were trying to do.
3. Keep in mind that some students in the class may not be in the MPA program, and adjust expectations accordingly.
4. Develop standardized response tools and establish e-mail protocols. With files going back and forth between instructors, students in the same class, and students in the other class, at times it was difficult to sort them out.
5. Use a telephone interview format. Although they hesitated at first, students in both classes confirmed the value of phone conversations over e-mail contact.
6. Have students provide written autobiographies before initiating their interviews. Some students were intimidated by the notion of a cold call to someone they didn’t know anything about.
7. Let students devise their own questions, if possible. While we developed a survey instrument that we thought would spur productive class discussions and contribute to overall learning of organizational theory, it turned out that several of the students commented on the difficulty of...
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asking “canned” questions. Given the objectives of the project, students could come up with the right questions and ones that would intrigue them as well.

8. Use technology to implement collaborative learning projects in classes separated by time and space. The projects we implemented in the 2007-2008 academic year were completed entirely via telephone and the Internet. Although conducted within the United States, there is no reason why, using current communication technology, these could not have been conducted between similar programs in different countries.

CONCLUSION

The IUN-UWO collaborative learning projects in the fall 2007 and the spring 2008 semesters provided unique benefits to approximately 100 student participants. In addition to broadening their perspectives on the study and practice of public administration, components of the two projects served to bridge course concepts by challenging students to recognize their own activities and behaviors in a theoretical context. These projects also helped them develop the interpersonal communication and teamwork skills that are essential to a successful career as a public administrator.

The two projects described in this article generated a high level of energy in both students and instructors. We attribute this effect to several factors. The first one is the novelty of students connecting with their counterparts in similar programs at different institutions. This is not a typical experience for MPA students and, as mentioned earlier, nothing similar has been found in the literature on collaborative learning projects. The second factor was the collegial rivalry that emerged between the two groups, and appeared to encourage full project participation. Finally, the project inspired instructors to look at course content in a new light, and challenged them to present a valuable learning experience for their own students, as well as their counterparts in the partnering school.

As the world grows smaller, and as networks continue to gain dominance as an important form of organization, we believe that some components of collaborative learning between programs and institutions can enhance the learning experience in many disciplines, but is especially valuable in public administration programs.

REFERENCES


Badgers & Hoosiers: An Interstate Collaborative Learning Experience Connecting MPA Students in Wisconsin and Indiana


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Badgers & Hoosiers: An Interstate Collaborative Learning Experience Connecting MPA Students in Wisconsin and Indiana

APPENDIX A

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Collaborative Teaching Project Summary</th>
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<td><strong>Spring 2007</strong></td>
<td>IUN</td>
<td>Implement Chopsticks Exercise with students.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>UWO</td>
<td>Implement Chopsticks Exercise with students.</td>
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<td><strong>Fall 2007</strong></td>
<td>IUN</td>
<td>Teams create abstracts to submit to corresponding teams at UWO.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>UWO</td>
<td>Teams create abstracts to submit to corresponding teams at IUN. UWO teams also charged with developing extended case studies.</td>
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<td><strong>Spring 2008</strong></td>
<td>IUN</td>
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<td>• Research respective communities, institutions, and programs.</td>
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<td>• One-on-one telephone interviews with assigned partners.</td>
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<td>• Analysis of self-organizing behaviors in reference to Bolman and Deal “Frames.”</td>
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<td>UWO</td>
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<td>• Research respective communities, institutions, and programs.</td>
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<td>• One-on-one telephone interview with assigned partners.</td>
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<td>• Mini social-science research project.</td>
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<td>• Critical to develop an e-mail protocol to maintain clarity of communication threads.</td>
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<td>• Advisable for class participants to communicate directly, instead of through instructors.</td>
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<td>• Many students comment that the most enjoyable part of the collaborative project was the one-on-one interviews.</td>
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<td>• E-mail protocol dramatically improved interaction quality.</td>
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<td>• Students would have preferred to create their own one-on-one interview guide.</td>
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<td>• Collaborative project is most effective when working with all of the same components in the assignment.</td>
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APPENDIX B

| Spring 2008 |
| Collaborative Learning Project – Interview Form |

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Name of Interviewer</th>
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<tr>
<td>Name of Person Being Interviewed</td>
<td>Length</td>
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1. What do you see as the value of public administration to a society?
2. Based on the analysis of the two collaborating communities, what stood out? Similarities? Differences? Did anything surprise you?
3. What do you feel are the greatest challenges faced by public organizations in your community?
4. What is the value of professional programs in public administration/affairs?
5. Why are you pursuing an MPA degree?
Operation PSA: The Action Learning of Curiosity and Creativity

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ABSTRACT
The National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration’s (NASPAA) YouTube public policy challenge (NASPAA, 2007) asked students to create 90-second videos or public service announcements (PSAs) that frame current problems and offer solutions. “Operation PSA” similarly discusses this communication medium as a useful classroom tool that warrants incorporation into more public administration programs across the nation. Building upon Dewey’s (1916) belief that learning occurs during instances of communication and Revans’ (1980) emphasis on collaborative communication for action learning, the article details the steps and tools necessary to creating thought-provoking PSAs, the manner in which to distinguish between potential and realized learning, and current challenges and future directions when considering PSAs as educational tools.

INTRODUCTION
“Speak Truth to Power” is a public service campaign, offered by the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA), for which graduate students create a video that frames a current problem and offers their solutions. The campaign also signals a change for public administration programs that recognize the power to communicate a very special message about public policy issues through the use of YouTube as a “fast-changing video web...
environment” that delivers public service announcements (PSAs) in 90 seconds or less (NASPAA, 2007). PSAs are commonly understood as the following:

... any announcement (including network) for which no charge is made and which promotes programs, activities, or services of federal, state, or local governments (e.g., recruiting, sale of bonds, etc.) or the programs, activities or services of non-profit organizations (e.g., United Way, Red Cross blood donations, etc.) and other announcements regarded as serving community interests, excluding time signals, routine weather announcements and promotional announcements (Museum of Broadcast Communications, 2007, para. 1).

Using the present policy challenge and its emphasis on technology as the impetus for inquiry, this article similarly encourages educators and practitioners to use PSAs as a proactive means for helping students acquire the valuable marketing and technological competencies necessary for becoming leaders in today’s public agencies. Without the ability to teach and serve diverse societies by using a practical means of training and encouragement, the field of public administration is at risk. Therefore, it is imperative to return to the basics of all learning: Communication.

OPERATION PSA: THE COMMUNICATION CONNECTION

Dewey (1916) “believed that education can and should only occur in the context of active relationships — as instances of communication with others. He saw all communication as potentially educative in nature” and “asserted that, in order for an experience to be educative, there must be an intentional effort to communicate the value of the experience to a person’s learning” (Koliba, 2004, p. 297).

Society not only continues to exist by transmission, by communication, but it may fairly be said to exist in transmission, in communication. There is more than a verbal tie between the words common, community, and communication. Men [sic] live in a community in virtue of the things which they have in common; and communication is the way in which they come to possess things in common (Dewey, 1916, p. 4).

In the same manner, leadership may be viewed as a communicative function that is paramount to public administration because “both managerial and technical competencies are needed in order to translate a vision into strategies, programmes and activities for development” (United Nations Economic and Social Council, 2002, p. 4). In order for students to become leaders in the field of public administration, they must be taught how to become leaders. The focus of learning must be shifted, from students being “taught” to students being “led.”
Cohen and Tichy (1998) discuss the ability to do something and do it well, and the ability to articulate how to do it, as two very different skills. The very basis of their article is in the phrase “but until you can articulate your knowledge to others, you won’t succeed as a leader” (Cohen & Tichy, 1998, para. 3).

Similarly, previous investigations into the state of turmoil in higher education have determined that only 31 percent of graduates are able to complete the basic communicative tasks of effective leadership (i.e., the ability to discern and share inferences across multiple audiences) (Boyer, 1990; Griffin & Kaleba, 2006; Kingsbury, 2007). In order to reverse this negative trend, Operation PSA posited that one path to leadership could be gained through the incorporation of creative assignments and challenges within the classroom environment. Rather than being a place for rote memorization, higher education should be a venue that encourages and facilitates action learning. As Sternberg and Luppart (1991) suggest, there is a difference between knowledge and usable knowledge. What this means is that students can be taught, but can they apply what they know? It is evident that college graduates struggle with critical thinking skills (Bok, 2006; Casner-Lotto & Barrington, 2006). The focus then, in order to facilitate learning, is to command an environment where innovation is fostered and rewarded.

Through the “Speak Truth to Power” campaign and NASPAA’s promotion of the PSA format in making public policy tangible for students and their stakeholders, Operation PSA was stimulated by a desire to determine how PSAs could be used as action-learning tools that could make administrative leadership come alive. The project was further refined by a fundamental concern about how communication could be employed as a means to coalesce ever-changing views of public administration, in a fast, succinct Web-based environment, while extending the boundary-spanning capabilities of its users.

For example, two PSAs — discussed in greater detail later in this article — were developed to document (a) the branding and creativity employed within an introductory undergraduate course in public administration, and (b) the energy that transpired between attendees of the 2008 Annual Teaching Public Administration Conference (TPAC). In the former case, the PSA elicited examples from students of how they have undertaken and realized their own growth in administrative leadership (Kimoto, Frasco, Juta, & Mulder, 2008a; see http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xyeqrPBKtri4). The latter PSA project revealed the fluidity of how conference participants blended their individual goals for the conference with organizational resources for identifying TPAC as a market leader within its field (Kimoto, Frasco, Juta, & Mulder, 2008c; see http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ugf9nzZcxko).

The goal of the article is to stimulate the reader’s determination to utilize action learning in general, and PSAs in particular, as an inventive format for acquiring the marketing, analytical, and technological competencies necessary to becoming a leader. The article begins with a clarification of the role that action learning plays
in furthering the education of future public and nonprofit administrators, and the role of boundary-spanning communications in their day-to-day interactions. It moves into an explanation of the methodology utilized in creating PSAs and addresses educational, evaluative, and logistical concerns. The paper closes with some critical observations and future directions for Operation PSA.

**ACTION LEARNING: DEVELOPING ADMINISTRATIVE COMPETENCIES**

Action learning relies upon the act of communication to forge education. The particular type and form of communication emphasized in this article is based on the boundary-spanning capacity of PSAs to deliver messages. The underlying theoretical foundation that enables action learning to bring the elements of boundary spanning and PSAs together is the ability “to unlock the capacity of everyone” who shares an interest in cooperation (Raelin, 2006, p. 152). “Through reflection...[on] unfamiliar problems—as a gateway to collaborative leadership,” action learning strives to position creative learning with an organization’s skills in adapting to change and building managerial expertise (Raelin, 2006, p. 152). It relies upon the resilient talents of diverse group members to see strengths and challenges in the resolution of unique questions and dilemmas that might otherwise be taken for granted given personal impressions, cultural biases, and reflections.

**ACTION LEARNING DEFINED**

Revans (1980), a trained astrophysicist, introduced action learning “as a way to improve performance, promote learning, and position organizations to adapt better in turbulent times” (Dilworth, 1998, p. 28). By focusing on how research stimulates action into learning and the attainment of skills, his method of inquiry and learning contrasted with the customary mode for knowledge acquisition. Given his physics background, it is not surprising that he employed a mathematical formula to define action learning as a sequence of concepts: \( L = P + Q \). The now-famous equation is expanded for the reader’s ease as \( L \) (Learning) = P (Programmed, Past, or Traditional Knowledge) + Q (Questioning and Insight) (Revans, 1980).

a. **Learning (L):** the compilation of past knowledge attained through the discerning questions of group members and personal insights to resolve actual problems under unfamiliar conditions and circumstances.

b. **Past knowledge (Programmed instruction) (P):** a foundation of general information, lectures, and case studies chosen by a teacher (mentor) that serves as the catalyst for learning and creates the ground rules for topic formation.

c. **Questioning (Q):** an awareness of one’s own taken-for-granted assumptions about a topic, while still being prepared to explore areas of ignorance. “Q” is further delineated into major and minor questions.
Operation PSA: The Action Learning of Curiosity and Creativity

Major questions focus on broader levels of concern, such as where, who, when, and what. Minor questions, in contrast, dig deeper into understanding the specific concerns for why, how many, and how much. While action learning typically occurs at the major level of questioning, it also follows that the greater the significance of the problem or issue, the greater the need for clarification pertaining to details involving cause, effectiveness, and efficiency.

It should be noted that action learning is an educational process predicated on the wealth of an individual’s own experiences. As such, action learning is a theoretical model conducive for adult learners, as opposed to those within the K-12 curricula, because without adequate real-world challenges and successes, individuals cannot guide their future actions and improve performance. “Q” recognizes the relevance of listening as a key component of action learning, because humans spend more time listening than they do in any other form of communication (i.e., 70 percent) (Ruben & Stewart, 1998).

Just as action learning is distinguished from conventional modes of teaching, so are action-learning PSAs, which (1) deliver evidence that change has been made, (2) emphasize the role of communication, (3) demonstrate how organizational goals are realized through group activity, and (4) reflect the needs of multiple communities across stakeholder boundaries. In order to understand how action-learning PSAs are connected to developing the boundary-spanning skills of public and nonprofit administrators, the next section delineates the importance of boundary spanning in public administration.

BOUNDARY-SPANNING MANAGEMENT

Boundary spanners perform two general functions: informative processing and external representation (Aldrich & Herker, 1977). Within these two functions, they perform five important activities: (1) they present organizational information to the outside environment and bring environmental information into the organization; (2) they filter both organizational outputs and environmental inputs; (3) they scan the environment and decide what information to bring into the organization; (4) they buffer the organization from external threats; and (5) they represent the organization (Pepper, 1995, p. 180).

Boundary-spanning PSAs reproduce and transform public administration, while simultaneously advancing leadership competencies, in three ways. First, PSAs, as defined in this paper, illuminate community interests because individuals work in teams to alter their communications and share responsibilities in the creation of focused messages for change. Second, faculty members are not always aware of how their own communications hinder the acquisition of knowledge. In particular, they do not understand what boundary-
spanning communication is and how it enhances personal growth, cuts down on redundancy, and cultivates a management environment. Boundary-spanning PSAs help with this by making faculty more aware about the limits of their own communication. Finally, through the insightful editing of individual statements and group dialogues, faculty and students are able to construct PSAs that reflect the viability of public administration.

What further distinguishes PSAs created in this manner is the significance of action learning. Action learning expresses the balance between an individual’s imagination and an organization’s constraint of curiosity, while signaling the identification of leadership with a global convergence. Together, the boundary-spanning potential of PSAs rests upon the development of social expressiveness, sensitivity to others’ reactions, and an ability to adjust behavior through reflection towards the attainment of viable solutions. The full attainment of such skills can only be accomplished through the resolution of real problems. Through a desire to build sustainable and accountable relationships, negotiated communications, such as boundary spanning, manage the complexity and interdependency of a changing world. Where can future administrators begin to trust those viewed as “outsiders?” Developing boundary spanning within the organizational context of a course provides one option in serving as the “lubricant” of this trust (McGuire, 2006, p. 38).

**Operation PSA: Promoting the Development of Action-Learning Tools**

**Overview**

Operation PSA sought to channel the potential of the PSA format to make administrative leadership come alive across the boundaries of the classroom and the community. Translating this goal into Revans’ equation of L (Learning) = P (Past knowledge) + Q (Questioning) results in the following:

L = Educators and practitioners generate PSAs that highlight the role of technology, creativity, and branding to inspire and develop leadership abilities through boundary-spanning communications,

P = The usage of pre-selected materials, tutorials, and related literatures chosen by a mentor (teacher) that fuel an understanding and expansion of boundary-spanning PSAs within the curricula of administrative leadership, and

Q = An awareness of taken-for-granted assumptions about the boundary-spanning capabilities of PSAs in promoting leadership, and an exploration into its strengths and challenges when addressing real problems and dilemmas.

The major processes instrumental in this action-learning project — aimed at invigorating the leadership capabilities of administration — resulted in seven procedural steps: (1) general problem identification, (2) team recruitment, (3) topic selection and clarification, (4) protocol and rubric development, (5) media
selection and experimentation, (6) PSA formation, and (7) action-learning documentation. Each step is explained through the team’s shared experiences in the production of the two PSAs, including one made during the 2008 TPAC. The first PSA was purposely crafted to reflect an undergraduate perspective on the meaning and role of public administration. Completed prior to the conference, the team hoped it would resonate with audience members and build excitement about the pedagogical appeal of PSAs. The second one was filmed and edited over a 24-hour period during the conference. It relied upon the expressed trust and respect between conference participants to entice newcomers to the 2009 TPAC, and required a willingness from attendees to accept the learner role themselves. Describing the process for these PSAs is intended to engage the reader through the progression of building boundary-spanning PSAs.

Step 1: General Problem Identification

Determining what issue or concern is the focal point for any research effort is extremely important. An initial resource for feedback might come from the trusted opinions of peers, practitioners, or former students. If venturing into new or unknown territory, interacting with institutional Centers for Teaching and Learning might help one discern developmental trends or issues that spark a researcher’s interest or curiosity. Operation PSA, on the other hand, grew from the notion of returning to a back-to-basics style of learning, similar to Dewey’s (1916) association between communication and education. It provided a logical foundation from which to address the development of students’ and educators’ leadership talents and action-learning experiences.

Step 2: Team Recruitment

Research or application projects are only as good as their members. The importance of this fact becomes even more clear when documents reveal that “people join groups to pursue individual needs,” rather than to resolve group goals (Ruben & Stewart, 1998, p. 279). For the team leader, finding a commonality or foundation upon which others could agree was imperative. Drawing again upon the works of Dewey (1916) and Revans (1980), Operation PSA arose from (a) the commitment to resolve a real problem or issue (i.e., the incorporation of innovative action-learning tools within public and nonprofit administrative classrooms) and (b) a willingness to explore the bounds of innovation in order to generate change as learner agents (Worley, 2000). Keeping the number of members down to a workable unit was another factor of concern, because, with four members in the group, there could be as many as “twenty-five potential communication relationships” (Ruben & Stewart, 1998, p. 281). Therefore, the inclusion of any more than four additional members was outweighed by the costs incurred for attaining consensus, keeping members informed, counteracting pressures toward conformity, and affecting leadership (Ruben & Stewart, 1998).
Because the objective was to find pedagogical alternatives that would be useful in bolstering leadership skills, former graduate and undergraduate students were approached as potential members. Three graduate students were selected because their experiences (i.e., variance in modes of successful learning) and breadth of backgrounds (e.g., international, nontraditional, and doctoral) would serve as a sounding board for the final resolutions proposed by the team. Initial delineation of duties and time obligations were discussed, along with the general direction of the research. Finally, the assembled team approached its endeavors by declaring that personal ego would not be allowed. Rather, the collaborative efforts of the group in addressing the problem would be paramount.

Step 3: Topic and Literature Clarification

Various suggestions regarding elucidation of the topic were discussed during this phase of the project, but it was the enthusiasm of one team member regarding the reproductive and creative means of PSAs for developing public and nonprofit leadership that rallied our passion. This member’s experience, based on a second-place win in the previous year’s YouTube Challenge, lent additional credibility to the topic when paired with NASPAA’s continuing promotion of PSAs.

From this point forward, each team member began researching the particular areas of interest and intrigue that they would later write about in their sections of the conference PowerPoint display (Kimoto, Frasco, Juta, & Mulder, 2008b). For the previous YouTube winner, the topic of creativity expanded her involvement with active learning. For the nontraditional student with a background in marketing and public relations, there was an immediate connection in the branding of real-world experiences. The last student member, a graduate student from Zimbabwe who would soon be pursuing doctoral studies, chose technology because she valued its force as a catalyst of change for all people. The remaining member’s focus rested upon uniting the interests of the team members under one theoretical foundation. Action learning was selected because it advances the prominence that communication plays in the development of collaborative leaderships. Henceforth, all efforts were poised to investigate the boundary-spanning capacity of PSAs as inspirational tools in expanding leadership capabilities.

Step 4: Protocol and Rubric Development

Any group that values its efforts is likely to establish a list of rules and codes. The members of Operation PSA spent a great deal of time discussing their research, the necessity for student participation, potential venues for filming, and the appearance of the final PSAs. First, while the general application question had been framed, the team brainstormed an additional list of 24 questions that could be modeled by student and faculty participants in the
development of their initial PSAs (Appendix A). Using the pool of questions in Appendix A, and through conversations about the strengths and merits of each, the collected items were narrowed down to a reasonable series of 10 questions.

Five questions were suitable for use when videotaping students:
1. How did you learn about public administration?
2. What does public administration mean to you?
3. Do you think that you’re in the right field? Why?
4. How important is public administration and do we really need this field?
5. What was your most memorable public administration class and why?

Five questions were used when videotaping faculty members:
1. What is public administration?
2. Who are public administration students?
3. How are we doing with recruiting new students to the field?
4. What advice would you give to someone considering a public administration degree?
5. In your teaching, what was the most memorable public administration course and why?

The succession and framing of these queries was quite strategic. They were built into a funnel sequence that “starts with broad, open-ended questions and moves to narrower, more closed questions” (O’Hair, Gustav, Wiemann, & Wiemann, 1995, p. 392). This system enabled interviewees to discuss public administration in an abstract manner (i.e., What is public administration?) and then proceeded into personal declarations of leadership within and about the field, advice to others considering public administration, and memorable experiences. In similar fashion, it coincided with Revans’ learning equation, where the first group of questions related to past or programmed knowledge (P), the middle ones promoted insight (Q), and the last few revealed a composite of learning.

Second, another concern was the identification of which courses to approach for student and faculty participation when making the PSAs. For example, in trying to explore the spectrum of leadership development within an undergraduate program, PA 270 Public Administration was selected, because it reflected students’ initial forays into public and nonprofit leadership, while the PA 619 Public Management Seminar exhibited a graduate perspective on leadership skills. Once a consent form (Appendix B) outlining the nature of Operation PSA was drafted and approved by the department chair, team members approached students and faculty for participation.

Third, because they were to be instruments representing the evolving field of public and nonprofit administration, the team agreed that the resultant PSAs should (1) document change within the discipline, (2) emphasize the boundary-spanning role of communication, (3) demonstrate how organizational goals were realized through group activity, and (4) reflect the needs of community
stakeholders. These points promoted Revans’ (1980) summative belief that no presumptive resolution exists when encountering unusual circumstances. Instead, the collective infusion of energy during trying times and unknown circumstances results in change and signifies excellence.

Step 5: Media Selection and Experimentation

There were only two criteria when selecting the software for the project: free and user-friendly. In order for students and faculty to share PSAs crafted from common digital resources, the team perused the Internet for programs that shared these characteristics. VideoThang (http://www.videoothing.com/) was selected as the primary media tool for mixing video clips with images, background music, titles, and transitions, because it could be learned and applied within one sitting. Wink (http://www.debugmode.com/wink/), a tutorial and presentation software system, was chosen because it permitted the team to incorporate personalized screenshots and explanation boxes about using VideoThang.

Some of the problematic areas associated with VideoThang were the needs to (1) ask participants to speak slowly in order to capture whole sentences rather than run-on phrases, (2) find filming areas with little or no background noise, (3) keep lighting on the interviewees and not behind them (as this led to a shadowing effect), (4) import music files in the MPEG-1 Audio Layer 3 or MP3 mode to compress music without affecting its quality, and (5) recognize that editing takes longer than expected when dealing with multiple respondents. Comparable concerns when working with Wink were figuring out how much detail one could include in a tutorial while still keeping it simple and under five minutes. Given these factors and the team’s varied media talents, even the person with the lowest skill level was able to navigate the chosen media resources.

Step 6: PSA Formation

One element of leadership is the ability to fashion targeted communications, such as PSAs, for different, applicable audiences. For instance, the 90-second PSA created to develop awareness of leadership skills acquired by undergraduates in an introductory public administration course was differentiated from those created to represent the talents of graduate students, educators, or practitioners. At the conference, the common goal of crafting applicable PSAs served as a source of encouragement for the novice who might want to begin experimenting with media resources, while simultaneously inviting input from more seasoned media specialists.

The transcripts for the undergraduate PSA definitely illustrate the elements of creativity, branding, and technology (Appendix C). Creativity, which deals with “a process of becoming sensitive to a problem … and communicating the
results” (Baker, Rudd, & Pomeroy, 2001, p. 163), was reflected through one student’s remarks about the importance of undergraduate public administration studies:

Public administration is critical to our lives, as I had mentioned. We really do need this field, and particularly at the undergraduate level like we are. It is one thing to talk about it as an academic and it’s another thing to actually go out there and impact the lives of people (Appendix C, Respondent #1, April 2008).

Students illustrated evidence of a branding process or “a shortcut means of identifying an organization, program, or cause in a way that differentiates it from alternatives” through the naming of individuals and institutions that had influenced their public administration goals and objectives (Herman, 2005, p. 289). For example, the same participant stated that he had “learned about it [public administration] from the former Mayor of Grand Rapids, who had made the comment that people weren’t learning civics anymore, so I got interested” (Appendix C, Respondent #1, April 2008). Another mentioned a former institution, “Muskegon Community College, when I went and talked to my advisor and she suggested public administration would be needing a lot of solid educated individuals to fill the careers in upcoming years” (Appendix C, Respondent #3, April 2008).

Technology is defined as a branch of knowledge that deals with the creation and use of media text and its interrelation with life, society, and the environment (Kimoto, Frasco, Juta, & Mulder, 2008b). It is not simply electronic gadgets, such as videos and computers, but the manipulation, interaction, and creativity of using learner-generated media for knowledge creation (Lee, McLoughlin, & Chan, 2008; Littlejohn, Falconer, & McGill, 2006; Yang, 2007; Yeh, 2006). The reinforcing effect of technology was adeptly depicted by a student who said:

… to be able to put all of the seriousness which needs to go into the field and to watch Happy Feet [an animated movie about an Emperor penguin who is born unable to sing, but who can dance] and to be able to relate that to public administration was really, really, really cool. It really made a difference and you can make a difference in society (Appendix C, Respondent #3, April 2008).

Instead of shrouding the vitality of students’ messages under fancy transitions and elaborate music, only titles were flashed on the screen (a) to reflect the questions posed during the taped interviews and (b) to draw attention to students’ reactions about how others might develop their own leadership skills through the impact of teachers and mentors.
Step 7: Action-learning Documentation

Although team members had learned to operate the VideoThang and Wink media systems, and realized the potential of such educational endeavors, the real test of action learning would entail the application of the group’s diverse talents to produce a boundary-spanning PSA about a novel or unfamiliar situation. Therefore, instead of using the previously delineated questions for faculty PSAs regarding the discipline (Appendix A), it was imperative that the focus for this PSA arise from the conference itself, as sessions were attended, new friendships formed, and remarks about the state of teaching public administration were shared. True enough, one resounding question arose: Why weren’t there more attendees for a conference devoted to the teaching of public administration?

Using this troublesome condition as a stimulus for action, the team set out to gain participants’ motivations for coming to the conference and ideas regarding how they might go about marketing it to newcomers. By the end of the first day’s sessions, 15 video clips had been shot, with a total time of 15.33 minutes. Still, it would take another 7-10 hours for them to be reviewed, edited, and aligned with music into a persuasive PSA. At this point, however, the PSA was only two-thirds complete. The team presented this preliminary video to various conferees and asked for suggestions about developing greater participation for the next conference. Through five additional clips and another 2.33 minutes, the team had all materials necessary for generating a composite PSA that reflected TPAC and its future ambitions, as shown in its transcripts (Appendix D).

Creativity has been defined as an interactive process composed of ability and stimulation (Gowan, 1975). In order to determine the degree to which conferees experienced and developed these abilities, the notion of creativity was broached in the team’s first question, “What was your motivation for coming to the Teaching Public Administration Conference?” While all respondents identified personal experiences, the team members captured the importance of interaction through one participant’s need to see “colleagues eyeball-to-eyeball and hear what they’re doing in their classes…because their ideas give me fresh, new ideas about what I can do” (Appendix D, Respondent #1, May 2008). Another case highlighted how participants were re-energized by colleagues who “are all very exciting people committed to the one thing of teaching public administration. They’re not out to impress anyone. They’re out to share their experiences” (Appendix D, Respondent #2, May 2008). The theme underlying these statements was the role of interpersonal sensitivity in advancing teaching.

The second question, “How would you go about marketing this conference?,” although somewhat similar in nature to the last query, focused participants’ thoughts on branding the uniqueness of the conference, its goals, and mission. To that end, the team chose the response of one individual who put it quite pointedly, by saying the “professional responsibility of most faculty goes into
three categories: service, research, and teaching. And this is the only conference that addresses one-third of our professional responsibility in helping us to build skills in teaching” (Appendix D, Respondent #8, May 2008). When this response was coupled with the following, the branding of this conference was undeniable.

You’ve got to meet the people who love teaching public administration. You’re going to gain something here that I don’t think you’re going to get anywhere else—a love for teaching, a passion for teaching, all kinds of ideas about how to teach. It’s not about content. It’s about how you’re going to make differences in people’s lives (Appendix D, Respondent #1, May 2008).

The third question of “What you can do…” was aimed at the power of media sources and technology to connect present and future attendees. The first interviewee provided a suggestion for employing technology as the conduit for change.

We think people need to create a tree structure by collecting the director’s names for the NASPAA schools and having the videos announced and distributed through those directors, especially to Ph.D. students and adjunct professors in addition to the regular faculty (Appendix D, Respondent #9, May 2008).

The second respondent reiterated the same theme with the following call:

As a champion of teaching excellence in public administration, your charge is to take this PSA, upload it onto your website, and distribute it as broadly as possible. And, of course, come to the next TPAC [Teaching Public Administration] conference (Appendix D, Respondent #10, May, 2008).

In the first statement, the appeal for mobility and action was directed at the administrative levels of the discipline. By contrast, the latter statement made a simple request for all attendees to become “champions” of public administration and make a personal commitment to ensuring the conference’s endeavors.

Action learning is vested within a group’s ability to develop resolutions for unfamiliar problems in a timely fashion. Generating a final PSA reflecting the passion of the conferees and their urgency for resolving issues of pedagogy, curricula, and convention attendance (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ugf9nzZcxko) — all within less than two days — posed a perfect illustration of the power of action learning. As with the undergraduate PSA discussed earlier, the respondents in the final PSA were just as ardent in their illustration of the elements of creativity, branding, and technology surrounding the conference.
Critical Observations

In retrospect, it’s often amazing how the most basic components of a project have the largest impact. Operation PSA was no different. The strength and merit of the team’s endeavors rested on the framing of the interview questions for the PSAs. While none of the videotaped participants was given the questions in advance for perusal, each provided responses that clearly documented the magnitude of creativity (i.e., sensitivity), branding (i.e., trust), and technology (i.e., interrelationships) associated with the boundary-spanning skills of public and nonprofit leadership. The success of the PSAs rested upon the fact that the questions possessed an inherent relevance for eager audiences of those who had grown tired of classroom politics, and had come to prefer rebuilding the intricate connection between education and communication.

The length of the conference-based PSA was another consideration for the team. While no definitive rule was set regarding the length of the conference video, most memorable PSAs typically range between 90 and 120 seconds (National Centre of Languages, 2007; Weatherization Assistance Program, 2009). For example, the longer, draft PSAs generated from the conference (i.e., more than three minutes) found participants intertwining their explanations for the motivation and marketing questions (e.g., What was your motivation for coming to the conference? and How would you go about marketing this conference?) Therefore, the marketing question was eliminated from the final PSA, but the two most pertinent statements were still retained to add greater depth to the attendees’ passion and commitment. In contrast, the shorter draft PSAs (i.e., 30 seconds) did not showcase the breadth of respondents’ emotions or the naturalness that colleagues felt when asking one another for assistance. Keeping these factors in mind, the team finalized a 2.33-minute PSA that would hopefully inspire public and nonprofit students, practitioners, and educators to try action learning.

Conclusion

Action learning empowers “anyone who is capable and who has the willingness to assume leadership in his or her relationship with peers, team members, customers, suppliers, and other organization partners” (Raelin, 2006, p. 152). It is imperative, particularly as public administration reproduces and transforms itself, that the same learning formulation of \( L = P + Q \) be continued, for it will help educators and practitioners ask (a) what could be happening within the field, (b) what is stopping such a flow of creation and utilization, and (c) what can individuals do to demonstrate a learning-to-learn aptitude?

Raelin (2006) reinforces how “learning results from the independent contributions of programmed instruction (designated P) and spontaneous questioning (designated Q)” (p. 153). From these similar beginnings, the project
team set out to persuade educators and practitioners to utilize the growing power of the PSA format to share the leadership capabilities of boundary-spanning communications. Since then, team members have expanded beyond the conference realm into portfolio materials used for job interviews, pre-doctoral addresses, working tutorials for classes, and as reflective course exercises in grant-writing, communication workshops, and career development.

As Revans (1998) said,

There is now plenty of evidence that the world is not only changing but doing so in a fashion hard to understand. The concept of action learning, identifying improvement in not only technological performance but also in personal self-development and sociological co-operation with working colleagues (or team-mates), is taken up in many different historical, economic, industrial, social, and other conditions. Action learning becomes a simple and direct approach in adapting to the accelerating rate of change (p. 23).

Operation PSA has become an example of the action learning of curiosity and creativity in the ever-changing teaching world of public administration.

REFERENCES


Operation PSA: The Action Learning of Curiosity and Creativity


Operation PSA: The Action Learning of Curiosity and Creativity

Diane Kimoto is an Assistant Professor in Grand Valley State University’s School of Public and Nonprofit Administration. Kimoto earned her Ph.D. from the University of Southern California, with emphases in interpersonal and organizational communications. Her research and publishing interests combine communication and pedagogic theory towards identifying the underlying approaches that guide the co-operative experience between teachers and students in promoting excellence in learning. She is currently the program chair for the annual American Society for Public Administration-sponsored Teaching Public Administration Conference.

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APPENDIX A

Potential and Subsequent Questions for PSAs

Potential Questions for the PSAs:
1. Why did you select PA as a major?
2. What jobs can you get with a PA/NP [Public Administration/Nonprofit] degree?
3. How can you advance a field without knowing what it is?
4. What type of personality makes a good administrator?
5. What does PA mean to you?
6. What are nonprofits?
7. What does nonprofit administration mean to you?
8. What advice would you give to someone considering a PA/NP degree?
9. How would you sell PA? NP?
10. How important is PA? NP? Do we really need this field?
11. How have your views changed now that you're in the major?
12. How are we doing with recruiting new students to the field?
13. What are the human resource concerns when recruiting PA/NP administrators as baby boomers are quickly retiring?
14. Do you think that you're in the right field? Why?
15. Was PA your first choice? Please explain.
16. What was your most memorable PA/NP class? Why?
17. How diverse are PA students?
18. How did you learn about PA? What inspired you?
19. Who are PA students?
20. How long does a typical PA program take?
21. What do you plan to do with your degree?
22. What are the marketable strengths of public administrator[s]?
23. Are you curious about PA?
24. What more do want out of PA?

Questions for a Student PSA:
1. How did you learn about public administration?
2. What does public administration mean to you?
3. Do you think that you're in the right field? Why?
4. How important is public administration? Do we really need this field?
5. What was your most memorable public administration class within your emphasis? Why?

Questions for a Faculty PSA:
1. What is public administration?
2. Who are public administration students?
3. How are we doing with recruiting new students to the field?
4. What advice would you give to someone considering a public administration degree?
5. In your teaching, what was the most memorable public administration course? Why?
Operation PSA: The Action Learning of Curiosity and Creativity

APPENDIX B

Why PA? Creating PSAs for the Field
Consent Form

The field of public and nonprofit administration is not uniformly or easily defined. If you were being interviewed for a 60-second public service announcement (PSA) about our discipline, what would you say? In turn, how would you go about teaching such an ever-changing topic? Cohen and Tichy (1998) discuss that the articulation of knowledge is best represented by getting individuals to work on real issues for their respective organizations and communities. In recognizing the need for students to interpret and apply what is being taught, how can educators utilize creativity and curiosity in the classroom as a means of inspiration and challenge over a “simply be told and then get tested” model of learning (Hensley, Arp, & Woodward, 2004)? While there have been many calls for transforming the educational curriculum with a “back to basics” approach, just how far back should we go?

As a research team, we are asking for your 15-minute participation in the creation of several PSAs which will be demonstrated and presented at the 2008 Teaching Public Administration conference this May. Members from the research team will be asking you a series of questions about your impressions of the public and nonprofit administration fields. They will also be videotaping your responses. No monetary gain is associated for this project. It is purely an academic endeavor.

By signing this consent form, you agree to participate in the videotaping of this project and volunteer your impressions. When the project is completed, you can view a copy of the PSAs by simply e-mailing me, Name, at e-mail address. We thank you for your assistance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Participant’s Signature</th>
<th>Research Team Member Signature</th>
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<td>Print Your Name</td>
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APPENDIX C
Transcript of the Undergraduate PSA Presented at the Teaching Public Administration Conference, May 31-June 8, 2008

How did you learn about public administration?

Respondent #1: I learned about it from the former mayor of Grand Rapids who had made the comment that people weren’t learning civics anymore, so, I got interested.

Respondent #2: I learned about it from one of my advisors who suggested it since I wanted to work with nonprofits. My actual major is public relations, but he suggested public and nonprofit administration for my minor.

Respondent #3: I learned about it at my community college, Muskegon Community College, when I went and talked to my advisor and she suggested public administration would be needing a lot of solid educated individuals to fill the careers in upcoming years.

What does public administration mean to you?

Respondent #1: It means making a difference in the lives of people around you and in your community.

Respondent #2: For me it means having the knowledge to know how I can best effect the change when I start working with a nonprofit.

Respondent #3: Public administration to me is everything in society… everything in society that sometimes gets overlooked if people don’t understand something and to do the research into it, it’s basically everything and how everything runs.

Do you think you’re in the right field and why?

Respondent #1: Absolutely, without a doubt. There is no other field that I can find that offers such a way to have a hands-on impact on everybody’s daily life.

Respondent #2: I would say I’m definitely in the right field now.

Respondent #3: Definitely, public administration is for me. I think Grand Valley has a really, really good curriculum and I know that I would like to bring my experience, my education, and my research into the field and give a very interesting approach to the ethics and everything that needs to be installed in public administration.

How important is public administration and do we really need this field?

Respondent #1: Public administration is critical to our lives, as I had mentioned. We really do need this field and particularly at the undergraduate level like we are. It is one thing to talk about it as an academic and it’s another thing to actually go out there and impact the lives of people.

Respondent #2: I think public administration is really important and, after
taking this class, I can’t imagine if our cities and our government were run by people who didn’t know, at least, the basics and hopefully more then the basics, which is what we are learning.

Respondent #3: I think public administration is really important. My master’s degree that I’m going to get from Michigan State is in health care administration and I think that it’s an upcoming career that many people need to be educated in to make, formulate, decisions — educated decisions.

What was your most memorable public administration class and why?

Respondent #1: I’ll say both of the public administration classes I am taking right now. I’m taking PA 270 and PA 307, which is local politics. This class is fascinating because we get to really apply what we’re learning to our own situations rather then just textbook knowledge. Local politics is fascinating to me because I’ve never had a course that has gone quite so focused on something so personal.

Respondent #2: This is the only one I’ve taken it, but it’s been really memorable, because, in addition to learning the theories, I know how to apply them now. I think that’s really important.

Respondent #3: I would have to say this one. This is my second one I’ve taken. I took PA 360, which is the nonprofit, um, public administration approach, organizational approach, and this one. I mean, to learn everything in a fun manner and to be able to put all of the seriousness that needs to go into the field and to watch *Happy Feet* and relate that to public administration was really, really, really cool. It really made a difference and you can make a difference in society.
APPENDIX D

Transcripts for Educator and Practitioner PSA Created at the Conference, May 31-June 1, 2008

What was your motivation for coming to the Teaching Public Administration Conference?

Respondent #1: I wanted to see my colleagues eyeball-to-eyeball and hear what they're doing in their classes ... because their ideas give me fresh new ideas about what I can do.

Respondent #2: I get re-energized by my colleagues. These are all very exciting people into the one thing of teaching public administration. They're not out to impress anyone. They're out to share their experiences.

Respondent #3: And I hoped that here I might find one or more colleagues who might be interested in what I do.

Respondent #4: Well, I very much enjoy the Teaching Public Administration Conference. A lot of my good friends are here.

Respondent #5: I'm going to teach online, [an] undergraduate class in urban studies this fall. So, I came to find out some pedagogical techniques that I can use in my class.

Respondent #6: My experiences is to share it with professors.

Respondent #7: ... was to get ideas on teaching and improving my teaching.

How would you go about marketing the conference? (Note: Question posed off-camera with chosen responses for the PSA displayed here.)

Respondent #8: Professional responsibility of most faculty goes into three categories: service, research and teaching. And this is the only conference that addresses one-third of our professional responsibility in helping us to build skills in teaching.

Respondent #1: You've got to meet the people who love teaching public administration. You're going to gain something here that I don't think you're going to get anywhere else—a love for teaching, a passion for teaching, all kinds of ideas about how to teach. It's not about content. It's about how you're going to make differences in people's lives.

What you can do?

Respondent #9: We think people need to create a tree structure by collecting the director's names for the NASPAA schools and having the videos announced and distributed through those directors, especially to Ph.D. students and adjunct professors—in addition to the regular faculty.

Respondent #10: As a champion of teaching excellence in public administration, your charge is to take this PSA, upload it onto your Web site, and distribute as broadly as possible. And, of course, come to the next TPAC [Teaching Public Administration] conference.
Introduction of Government Process Modeling With Rockwell Arena Software

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**Abstract**

Students in a core Master’s of Public Administration (MPA) course were taught to model and simulate selected business processes of government agencies and nonprofits with Rockwell Arena software. Each student or pair was asked to document an existing government process, in order to model and simulate a variation of the process, with a goal of improving service quality and/or lowering costs. Students found it challenging to make the transition from a simple model, taught as an example, to modeling and simulating real processes on the computer. Experiences are reported and suggestions are provided to others who may want to use Arena software to introduce process modeling into the Public Affairs and Administration curriculum.

**Government Process Modeling With Arena Software**

Students in Master’s of Public Administration (MPA) programs are preparing to enter complex and dynamic working environments. It is becoming increasingly important for those working in public affairs to understand both organizational structures and the “business” processes of agencies and nonprofit organizations. The automation of processes is common. Information systems serve as a foundation for automated processes that span the functional (departmental) structures of large organizations. When information systems are designed to support the needs of specific departments, rather than entire processes, large organizations are likely to perform efficiently at the departmental level, but then perform poorly in terms of enterprise processes. Our students need to learn how to identify “business processes” and understand the basic tradeoffs involved in designing them. The general insights needed to design processes are the same, regardless of sector.
Introduction of Government Process Modeling With Rockwell Arena Software

When agencies and nonprofits become players in networks of strategic alliances, the same principle applies. What ultimately matters to citizens is throughput — not how the outputs were produced. Service-oriented architecture (SOA) is the art and science of designing automated processes that cross organizational boundaries within strategic alliances. The purpose of this article is to report the experiences of an instructor and MPA students while using Rockwell Arena software to create models and simulations of “business” processes for individual organizations, and the larger potential networks of strategic partners. The key assertion of this article is that MPA students should be made aware of the importance of designing and automating the “business processes” of agencies and nonprofit organizations, and that using Rockwell Arena software to do this is both valuable and feasible. Arena is a major modeling and simulation software application with an intuitive visual interface, and is used in industries, businesses, and government agencies. The following sections of this article include a background, explanations of Arena software and of the assignments, a discussion, and conclusions.

BACKGROUND
As Public Affairs scholars and teachers we tend to emphasize organizational structure and departmental functions rather than business processes. Scholars in Business Administration programs tend to place more teaching emphasis on the importance of business processes, partly because of a strong interest in operations research, logistics, and supply chains. “Functions” are specialized activities that usually are performed within single departments. Processes are sequences of activities that usually span multiple departments and perhaps multiple organizations (Harmon, 2007). This distinction is important because the optimization of functions at the expense of the design of processes can constrain the throughputs of an organization (Dettmer, 2007). Spencer (1999) observed that reengineering rejects the paradigm of separating tasks by function, by using technology to join tasks into connected, coherent processes. Hence, process orientation is a major challenge to the paradigm grounded in Adam Smith (2003), Max Weber (Andreski, 2008), and others. Our students need to see beyond bureaucracy and its functional subdivisions of work, to the inherent possibilities of process orientation, and beyond that, to service orientation.

J. F. Forrester and J. W. Forrester (1969) anticipated the preparation of a new kind of manager with skills in modeling and organizational design. They compared the design of organizations to the design of aircraft, noting that it is unlikely for an airplane designed without modeling to be flown successfully. Herbert Simon (1969) advocated the development of design sciences within the social sciences. Shangraw, Crow, and Overman (1989) made the tie between the New Public Administration and the design (and redesign) of organizations.

More recently, Anderson et al. (1994) noted that public managers need to
appreciate the strategic possibilities that technology presents for creating or improving government processes. Dawes (2004) emphasized that MPA graduates need information technology (IT) savvy to help assure future alignment of public IT projects with agency objectives. She listed five major competencies for effective strategy and management of government information, including analytical skills. Within analytical skills, she included business-process analysis, information and work-flow analysis, and modeling techniques.

NASPAA has affirmed that information is an important organizational resource in its own right, and that information management should be included in the MPA curriculum (White, 2007). Brewer, Neubauer, and Geiselhart (2006) maintained that it is important for public managers to know enough about IT systems so they can assure that technical professionals do not make the decisions that managers should make regarding the design of e-government applications.

Hammer and Champy (1993) championed business process reengineering (BPR) efforts as the key to efficiency, effectiveness, and successful automation of processes. Economist Ronald Coase (1937) recognized that new information technologies can reduce external transaction costs (Downes & Mui, 2000), and anticipated the implications of reduced external transaction costs from outsourcing, as well as the downsizing of organizations. These insights serve to anticipate the observations by O’Toole (1997) and others — that networks of strategic alliances among organizations are becoming increasingly important in the performance and delivery of public services. Traditionally, we have placed more emphasis on the implications of bureaucratic structures than we have on the dynamics of processes and networks of associations. We generally placed more emphasis on relationships involving authority than we did on the means by which work is completed through cooperation, coordination, and emergence.

Modeling and computer simulations can be a way to approach the challenge of helping students understand processes and networks as complex dynamic systems. A model of a business process is a static representation of activities that reflects how work is performed. A computer simulation of a model provides a dynamic visual representation of an “alternative future” that can lead to virtual, vicarious learning experiences. The initial creation of a model is a learning activity. Multiple observations of simulations using the model can lead students into iterative learning experiences as they identify problems in the simulations that would not have been recognized in the static model. Koliba (2004) writes of the importance of MPA students being engaged in reflective writing assignments regarding their studies and their relevant employment experiences. Computer simulations can become a context for learning about which students have the ability to reflect and write. Simulations can produce unexpected outcomes, and they do not always produce the same outcomes when run repeatedly.
Each time the learner observes a simulation of the model, a reaction takes place in the mind of the learner (Alessi & Trollip, 2001; Jonassen, 2006). The simulation provides feedback about the possible outcomes that a real system might produce in the real world. Based on new information derived from multiple simulations of the same model, the learner can adjust the model, run additional simulations, and gain additional insights. It is far better to iron out the probable consequences of poor design decisions in a computer simulation than in a real organization. A simulation of a business process can produce insights not only into system performance, but also into tradeoffs involving costs and outcomes.

Situational simulations are popular in business education in order to simulate interactions with other businesses (Faira, 1998; Keys, 1997). Learners are encouraged to explore alternatives with a sense of unpredictability, as the actions of organizations and the people therein are largely unanticipated. Models and simulations offer potential benefits in terms of transfer of learning to real applications (Clark & Voogel, 1985).

Simulations typically have multiple learning advantages when compared to other teaching methodologies. Models are simplifications of the real world, and allow learners to focus on relationships between specific aspects (Alessi & Trollip, 2001). It takes far less time to observe the simulations produced by a model than it does to run an experiment in the real world. The experience of creating a model and observing the outcomes of its simulation is a real experience, and can be motivating to learners. Simulations provide motivational elements such as challenge (Malone & Lepper, 1987) and relevance (Keller & Suzuki, 1988). The outcomes of simulations also are more engaging and persuasive than the speculations about simulations that are offered by an instructor. Having designed a model, learners are likely to “own” the outcomes of its simulations, even if those outcomes were not anticipated.

Simulations are flexible because they can be used to facilitate any educational philosophy, and can be included in any of the four phases of instruction (Alessi & Trollip, 2001). Instructors have numerous options when they implement simulations. Simulations can be designed to emphasize measured outcomes, critical thinking, and discovery learning. Simulations also can be geared to promote individual learning, collaboration, or even competition (Alessi & Trollip, 2001).

**ROCKWELL ARENA SOFTWARE**

Arena is the process-modeling and simulation software developed by Rockwell Automation and the former Systems Modeling Corporation, which was acquired by Rockwell in 2000. The software is widely used to model and simulate industrial processes and supply chains. The major value of using Arena is to anticipate the implications of designing complex processes, so as to observe
Introduction of Government Process Modeling With Rockwell Arena Software

A simulated performance, without first incurring the costs to build and implement actual facilities. Arena produces Markov-system simulations that are based on discrete events and probability distributions for entering entities into the system, and for the duration of events. The software generates reports that reflect the performance of the simulation. Arena software is taught at more than 900 universities globally, and primarily is used in Industrial Engineering and Management Science programs.

Arena has the familiar look and feel of Microsoft products. Microsoft Visio flowcharts can be imported into Arena. Arena can read from Excel and Access files and also output data to them. Specialized blocks (modules) can be used to enter Visual Basic for Applications (VBA) code into a process model. The student version of the software (free of charge) is available for download from the Rockwell Automation Web site, using the word STUDENT as the registration key. The student version is very adequate for most educational purposes. Tom Hayson of Rockwell Automation can provide the URL to download the newest version. Hayson's e-mail address is tchayson@ra.rockwell.com. The relevant Web site URL is www.ArenaSimulation.com. With permission from Rockwell Automation, Arena can be made available for installation in a campus computer lab, currently at no charge. As of March 2009, Arena software is up to version 12, and runs on Windows XP and Windows Vista operating systems. There is no Macintosh-compatible version of Arena. There currently are at least five university textbooks that focus on Arena (Seila, Ceric, & Tadikamalla, 2003; Altio & Melamed, 2007; Seppanen, Kumar, & Chandra, 2004; Kelton, Sadowski, & Sturrock, 2007; McLaughlin & Hays, 2008). The student version of Arena is packaged with each of these textbooks.

The Assignments

In our case, “Computer Applications and Management Information Systems” was the core MPA course where Arena was introduced. It was taught in the spring semester of 2008 at Albany State University. There were 10 students in the course. Nine of them had recently completed undergraduate degrees. One student was a mid-career employee with years of experience in city government, in a job handling requests to subdivide land. None of the students had a background in computer modeling, simulation, or programming.

The instructor hoped that by using Arena the students would 1) recognize organizations in terms of processes, 2) identify strategies for process reengineering, 3) assess the value of visual modeling and simulation, and 4) evaluate the benefits of service orientation and of strategic alliances among organizations. These assignments consumed 15 percent of the total instructional time and effort spent during the semester. The software was made available to students on CD-ROM, and in an on-campus computer lab. The instructor demonstrated use of the software in class, and on multiple occasions worked...
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Figure 1.
Model showing the most commonly used Arena modules

with students in the lab and in his office. The first two lab assignments were intended to help students learn how to use the software and to understand the meaning of the various “modules” it generates. (See Figure 1.)

As shown in Figure 1, an entire process is composed of multiple (sub) processes that are represented in Arena by labeled rectangles. Sub-processes also can be referred to as Activities. A Create module is used to introduce entities (instances of work to be done) either on a schedule or at time intervals, based on an exponential distribution. In Figure 1, each new entity passes through an Assign module, where it can be given attribute values. For example, if the model represents a process within a hospital’s emergency room, the entities entering the process are patients, and each patient can be assigned a gender, an age, and a severity of medical need by use of the Assign module. The Process 1 module in Figure 1 may represent some kind of necessary admissions activity, followed by a decision to be made about each entity as it flows through the system. Some of the entities flow out the “True” branch of the Decide module. All others flow out the “False” branch of the Decide module. Each entity receives some additional attention, as represented by the Process 2 and Process 3 modules in Figure 1. Finally, every entity must eventually exit the system via a Dispose module.

The first lab assignment included specific instructions on how to place modules on the screen and how to create pathways between them. The intent was for students to learn to start using the software and to understand the most basic Arena modules. (See Figure 2.)

The intent of the second lab assignment was for students to learn how to set parameters within the modules of a process model. When one double-clicks on a module in an Arena model, a dialog box appears, as shown in Figure 2. The use of dialog boxes eliminates the need for designers to write instructions as lines of programming code. In Figure 2, Process 1 is being made into an action that requires “seizing” the full attention of a clerk for at least a half-hour, and then “releasing” the resource (a clerk) to be available for servicing another entity. The time required for one clerk to perform Process 1 for a particular entity is a triangular distribution, where the minimum required time is 30 minutes, the maximum required time is 90 minutes, and the most likely required time is
Introduction of Government Process Modeling With Rockwell Arena Software

It is the variation in arrivals of new entities and variation in time required to perform (sub) processes that make Arena models probabilistic, rather than deterministic. Often it is variation that produces bottlenecks in processes, and results in reduced service quality and increased costs. A bottleneck is the place in an entire process where entities must wait to be serviced, because the capacity of a limited resource is exceeded. Identifying bottlenecks is an important step in improving services by reducing the average total processing time.

The second lab assignment included specific instructions on how to open dialog boxes and set parameters. In a Decide module, for example, the choice determining the path of an entity can be based on either probability or conditions. Using the hospital scenario, perhaps the choice is whether or not the patient requires immediate medical care. The model could be programmed to

Figure 2.
Dialog box associated with a (sub) process module
randomly cause 30 percent of entities to require immediate attention, or the
decision could be based upon the attributes of an entity that were previously set
in an Assign module.

The third assignment asked students to create an Arena model, based on the
hypothetical explanation of how a nonprofit organization accepts applications
from prospective volunteers, and how it screens them. Stated briefly, prospective
volunteers enter the system on either a constant or variable schedule, and
submit their applications. A clerk reviews applications for completeness, and
returns incomplete applications to be completed and resubmitted. Once
complete, the application is reviewed by others for different reasons, and other
conditional activities are initiated. A criminal background check may be
required. Skills testing may be required. An interview is required. Ultimately, a
decision is made to either accept or reject the applicant as a new volunteer.

The question then becomes one of how the entire process should be designed
so as to reduce average total-processing time and avoid unnecessary costs. For
example, if the applicant has none of the skills needed by the organization, there
is no need to invest time and money in a criminal background check. Therefore,
skills-assessment should precede the background check, and the background
check should be contingent upon the applicant having one or more skills
needed by the organization.

There is a “Separate” module in Arena, which allows some activities to be
performed alongside others. In some scenarios, it would make sense to explore
the implications of parallel processing for activities as an alternative to simple
serial processing. Parallel processing could reduce the average service time and
save the organization money.

Finally, the students (working individually or in pairs) were asked to write a
paper about an existing process in a government agency or nonprofit, to
describe the existing process, and to model a possibly improved process by
using Arena. This assignment highlighted the students’ abilities to identify a
process, to describe it logically, to use Arena, and to imagine new ways to
perform the process.

The students had little or no difficulty with the first two lab assignments,
because the instructor provided step-by-step instructions. Students completed
these labs quickly, and apparently understood what they were doing. There was
some confusion that the direction of a flow in an Arena model was not identified
with arrows. An entity always flows through a module from left to right. This is
visually obvious when a model is run as a simulation. But to inexperienced
persons, it is not obvious during the construction of a static model.

The third lab was somewhat difficult for the students, and caused them to ask
the instructor for personal assistance. This lab required use of critical-thinking
skills and resulted in some quality teaching/learning experiences. It provided the
instructor an opportunity to encourage students to consider tradeoffs between service quality and costs and between simple serial processing and parallel processing. Because the scope of the assignment was well-defined, the instructor quickly became able to anticipate most of the students' questions, and to provide guidance and answers with ease.

The open-ended writing and modeling assignment was very challenging for both the students and the instructor. Students had difficulty identifying a process and scoping their work. In the real world, business processes are nested within one another, and it can be difficult to define the boundaries of a particular process. Existing processes in agencies and nonprofits often are unclear, and may not be followed in practice. This assignment resulted in students asking the instructor to help them use Arena to model things that were relatively difficult to represent.

Discussion

In terms of evaluating the learning objectives, the first two — recognition and identification — were lower-level. They were intended to help students learn the mechanics of creating Arena models. These first two objectives were met, as demonstrated by the students and as evaluated by the instructor. The third objective required each student to think critically at a higher level by creating and assessing the value of a process model within a "business" domain. The business domain was a nonprofit organization and its need to screen prospective volunteers. This objective also was met, and provided the instructor numerous opportunities to help students with their critical-thinking skills. It also made clear to the instructor some of the students' misunderstandings regarding business process modeling.

The fourth objective (which actually could be considered as multiple objectives) was to evaluate the benefits of process automation and/or business process re-engineering for a public sector organization or governance network. Requirements for the paper included describing an existing process and modeling a possible improvement of that process. This assignment was intended to help students make the transition from classroom examples to "real-world" applications. Evaluation by the instructor determined that the students did not adequately demonstrate this objective. They did not effectively connect the process-modeling activities to real processes, or to shared services and service-oriented architecture. Perhaps the students lacked the "scaffolding" necessary to experience the kinds of discovery that the instructor hoped they would share (Vygotsky, et al., 1978) on the potential of service-oriented architectures to facilitate networks of strategic alliances. Because evaluation is one of the highest levels of critical thinking, it is likely that more time should have been devoted to achieving this fourth objective.

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Our impression is that the one student with years of working experience in local government had more initial understanding of the importance of processes, even though she had not used Arena software. Whether she gained more insights than the other students by working with Arena in the course is unclear.

It is important to note here that Arena software does not provide any explicit support for modeling shared services. Because of this, it is not an ideal tool for introducing students to service-oriented architecture (SOA). We are of the opinion that even if the software did explicitly support the modeling and simulation of shared services, the students in this course probably would not have realized the potential of IT systems to support strategic alliances of agencies and nonprofit organizations.

The students did appear to experience a positive novelty effect when first seeing their models in simulation mode. As shown in Figure 3, an Arena simulation can have the appearance of a simple multimedia game. Students found the interface aesthetically pleasing and intellectually stimulating as they watched entities race across the model and stack up in queues to wait for constrained resources to be available. The visual simulation that Arena provides enables its users literally to see the consequences of complex interactions that involve multiple entities and limited organizational resources. While it may be possible to guess which resources will become constraints without use of such a tool, it can be far more instructive to see queues forming on the screen while the simulation runs. Upon completion of the simulation, it is possible to study the data reports that Arena provides to observe average total service times and other measures. (See Figure 3.)

It should be noted that process modeling and/or simulation can be done with other software tools, including BEA AquaLogic BPM, Microsoft Excel, and Microsoft Visio. In our opinions, Arena is by far a superior tool for introducing process modeling and simulation to students. Visio does not support simulation, and Excel does not support model visualization. One of this article’s authors previously had taught using BEA AquaLogic BPM software, and found that some of its automated features were distracting and annoying. As a result, students spent...
too much time with the instructor, correcting modeling assumptions made by the BEA software. Nontraditional students and others may have “computer anxiety” and a low tolerance for frustration when working on computer lab assignments. Arena is a good choice for instructional purposes, because it does not anticipate the intentions of the user. It also does not interrupt instructional momentum very often. In simulation mode, it usually gives simple and relatively clear explanations of faults in the model that may prevent it from running as a simulation.

**Conclusions**

Instructors of MPA courses can use Arena software to introduce business process modeling into core courses with little or no cost. It is not necessary for instructors to become Arena experts in order to achieve modest pedagogical objectives in an MPA core course. Colleagues in Business Administration or Industrial Engineering who have experience with Arena software may be available to help MPA faculty members learn the basics necessary for using it in an MPA curriculum. In the present case, the instructor had attended Rockwell training, had previously taught with Arena, and had an intermediate ability to use the software. Instructors also must understand the basics of business process (re)design in order to make constructive use of the software. The explanations by Harmon (2007) are adequate and appropriate for this purpose. Knowing only the admonitions of advocates for business process reengineering is not an adequate preparation for teaching business process (re)design.

MPA instructors are advised not to give students an open-ended assignment for redesigning a business process in a core course. We instead recommend giving specific lab assignments that are similar to the first three assignments described in this article. A class assignment where the instructor provides a description of a simple, real-world process and asks students to produce a model and a simulation using Arena certainly is feasible. By defining the domain, and limiting the scope of assignments, the instructor can anticipate and respond to students’ questions. Students and instructors are less likely to face conditions that are relatively difficult to implement in Arena if each assignment has a defined domain and scope.

Instructors should take the size, composition, and mode of delivery of a course into consideration when creating computer lab assignments. Computer lab assignments can be stressful and time-consuming in MPA programs, partly because students may have anxieties about learning new computer skills. In large classes, it may be advisable to have students work in small groups rather than as individuals. If such assignments are to be included in an online course, the instructor can use a tool like Techsmith’s Camtasia Studio to produce multimedia demonstrations for the Web. Camtasia Studio is a program that records all or part of a computer screen, and integrates an audio-track explanation into the resulting video file. It runs on Microsoft Windows.
operating systems, and is relatively inexpensive and easy to use. Also, live classroom applications that support application-sharing can be used to help students at a distance, regardless of whether the course is delivered “on ground” or online. Application-sharing allows students to watch what an instructor is doing on his or her own local computer, in real time.

We conclude and believe that introducing Arena in a core course, and having modest pedagogical intentions, is important, appropriate, and feasible. The first time students see their model become an animated simulation, their eyes are likely to light up with delight. That moment alone can be worth an instructor’s entire effort. If insight accompanies that delight, the moment can launch the students into the kinds of critical thinking needed to manage in a world of business processes, strategic alliances, complex networks, and dynamic systems.

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Introduction of Government Process Modeling With Rockwell Arena Software


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