Learning Through Performance

According to Ernest Boyer, in Scholarship Reconsidered, teaching involves developing the knowledge, skill, mind, character, or ability of others. Teaching, he writes, “means not only transmitting knowledge, but transforming and extending it as well.” Teaching stimulates “active, not passive, learning and encourages students to be critical, creative thinkers, with the capacity to go on learning... It is a dynamic endeavor involving all the analogies, metaphors, and images that build bridges between the teacher’s understanding and the student’s learning. Pedagogical procedures must be carefully planned, continuously examined, and relate directly to the subject taught.” (Boyer 1990: 23, 24)

Chris Roark, associate professor of English, is the 2008 recipient of the Lucrezia Culicchia Award for Teaching Excellence in the College of Arts and Sciences at John Carroll University. Below is an edited version of the remarks he made to arts and sciences faculty in October 2008 when accepting the award. They aptly reflect Boyer’s vision of teaching as scholarly activity.

Teaching literature for me inevitably involves various kinds of “let’s pretend” moments to break up the classroom routine. One example is when students do lines from Shakespeare in a manner that imitates a figure from popular culture. A few years ago, a six-foot nine-inch English major (our tallest ever, I believe) did a good part of Hamlet’s “To Be” soliloquy as Chris Farley’s Matt Foley, the motivational speaker. I will never forget that one.

Some of these “let’s pretend” exercises involve much work: Two or three students will memorize 20 to 30 lines each, block a scene (deciding where and how they will move), and rehearse over and over as
they refine ideas about the characters they want the audience to grasp when it is performed in class. Because most of a Shakespeare course is spent analyzing characters from without, these exercises in imagining characters from within provide a nice contrast. Acting it out is a good way to remind students that Shakespeare himself was an actor, and that he went to the theater nearly every day either to perform in or watch a play.

Performing is also a good way to help students establish a kinetic relationship to the text: Shakespeare’s art, finally, is not about silent words but oral performance, not about students sitting in desks listening to a professor but bodies moving in space to make an audience pay attention. When it works, getting students’ bodies and voices involved makes studying Shakespeare playful and much less intimidating.

There are also, one hopes, benefits to such an approach beyond learning about Shakespeare. Students who put significant time into preparing a moment to perform, I have found, come back with stronger analytical skills when they write about Shakespeare (or other literature), perhaps because now they are better prepared to imagine in their heads, to see and hear, a text that previously was silent print. One also hopes that when a middle class male student from Ohio chooses to play an ancient Egyptian queen (Cleopatra), something in his efforts to bridge that gap makes him more open minded – perhaps better able to see the views of those who are not like him – when the course is over.

Getting student bodies involved in learning can also make their relationship to the text cathartic and pleasurable. I recall one student rehearsing a speech from *Macbeth* where he practiced leaping up on a table over and over, and then smashing a sword to pieces. He was extremely bright, and had a number of ideas he wanted to convey about both the moment and Macbeth. He also did not like sitting still in class. As he rehearsed, it was evident how much he enjoyed throwing his body into the work.

In this sense, learning about Shakespeare is child’s play. My three young children enjoy learning the most when their bodies are involved – when the experience is physical, tactile, oral, and gets the blood going. Working to inhabit a character, to play “let’s pretend,” involves the same elements.
Learning through performance also involves taking risks and failure (if a student freezes or has not prepared properly), or spontaneity when a carefully rehearsed moment changes in the heat of performing it. A few years ago, I had two students who spent hours rehearsing a quite athletic version of Hamlet’s final sword fight with Laertes, carefully choreographing it to convey a “real” sword fight but without any danger to the actors. During a crucial moment when Laertes was tackled by Hamlet, the two students mis-timed the blocking by a fraction of a second, and Laertes smacked his head against the floor with a loud “thunk” when he went down. The audience gasped – they thought it was a rehearsed part of the scene. Laertes still recovered to say his last lines. He must have had a good bump on his head the next day, but the unexpected change added an element that made the moment work for the audience.

I have to admit that I’m suspicious of crediting student success mostly to teachers, and thus also suspicious of most teacher-as-hero narratives – though any educational institution is in the business of producing such narratives as we sell ourselves in an increasingly competitive market for students. Such a way of thinking or writing about teaching always seems inaccurate on some fundamental level. Watching students perform a scene usually reminds me of this misperception. When a performance works well, it happens less because of what the teacher does, and more because students, often enough on their own, find a reason to make the effort and a way to enjoy what they are doing.

As a teacher, I prod students, plead with them, praise and criticize them, do what I can to position them so they can do what it takes to learn. But when it comes to learning about Shakespeare through performance, the students are the ones who put in the time and take the risks; more than the teacher, they are the ones who make the learning successful.
NOTES

Listed here are self-reported faculty accomplishments in research, teaching, and scholarly achievement along with other professional activities.

**BIOLOGY**


**CLASSICAL AND MODERN LANGUAGES AND CULTURES**


**COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES**


Dean Eisenmann gave an invited address to the Higher Education Collaborative at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign (September 2008), entitled “American Women and Higher Education: Understanding the Impact of Postwar Developments Following World War II.”

COMMUNICATION AND THEATRE ARTS

Peggy Finucane, with Lauren Bowen, AVP’s Office, participated in a professional development workshop sponsored by the Ohio Center for Law Related Education that focused on the “We, the People” curriculum, January 2009. This supports a service-learning project that allows John Carroll students to tutor 5th and 8th graders in urban schools about citizenship and the U.S. Constitution.

Jacqueline Schmidt presented the following papers at the National Communication Association Conference in San Diego in November: “Making Isomorphic Attributions in the Format of Intercultural Virtual Training,” with Zhanna Zaritskaya (Institute of Siberia); “Different and Similar – Russian and American Student Views of Work and Business Ethics E-Mail Project,” with Deborah Uecker (Wisconsin Lutheran College); “The Media Generation: Bridging the Unnatural Divide in the Classroom to Connect with the Millennials,” with George Wharton (Curry College).

ENGLISH


Prof. Colleran has also served as the outside reviewer for the outstanding teaching award at Marietta College.

HISTORY


MANAGEMENT, MARKETING, AND LOGISTICS


Paul R. Murphy participated in an immersion trip to Nicaragua sponsored by Campus Ministry, January 2009.


PHILOSOPHY


Prof. McWeeny had her translation of Renaud Barbaras’ most recent work “Phénoménologie de la vie” appear as “Life, Movement, and Desire” in Research in Phenomenology 38 (1): 3-17, 2008.

Prof. McWeeny recently had conference presentations, including the paper “When Life Exceeds Language: Murder and Emotion in Beauvoir’s L’Invitée,” at the 2008 annual meeting of the Society for Phenomenological and Existential Philosophy; and “Feminism, Veganism, Anti-Classism, and Anti-Racism: Theorizing Interlocking Oppressions from the Perspective of Resistance,” presented at the 2008 annual meeting of the International Society for Environmental Philosophy.

Prof. McWeeny is also the executive secretary of the Society for Women in Philosophy and is currently organizing the society’s 2009 conference “Feminism at the Crossroads,” which will take place at John Carroll University on Saturday, March 28, 2009.

ECONOMICS AND FINANCE

Jack Soper was awarded a grant of $78,250 from the Burton D. Morgan Foundation for the new Academy for Entrepreneurial Learning. This award will support John Carroll’s efforts to launch a new interdisciplinary minor in entrepreneurship through intensive faculty development in spring and summer 2009.

EDUCATION AND ALLIED STUDIES

POLITICAL SCIENCE

Jen Ziemke participated in the January service immersion trip to Mexico sponsored by John Carroll’s Center for Service and Social Action.

PSYCHOLOGY


RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Joseph Kelly gave presentations on ancient Jewish history to members of the Rose Institute of Menorah Park in Beachwood on Jan. 7, 14, and 21, 2009.


SOCIOLOGY

Susan Orpett Long published an article, “Does It Matter Who Cares? A Comparison of Daughters versus Daughters-in-Law in Japanese Elder Care,” with Ruth Campbell (University of Michigan) and Chie Nishimura (Tokyo Metropolitan Institute of Gerontology), in *Social Science Japan Journal*. The article appeared online through Oxford University Press and will be out in hard copy in summer 2009, col.12, issue 1. Prof. Long served as an external reviewer for a tenure application at Princeton University, and reviewed manuscripts for the University of Hawaii Press and for the journal *Dementia*.


Correction:

In the December edition, we reported that Cathy Rosemary, Department of Education and Allied Studies, was awarded $926,708.56 from the Ohio Department of Education, through Cleveland State University, for the Reading First project (Year 6) in September 2008. We neglected to note that Kathy Roskos, in the same department, was also awarded this grant. We regret the oversight.
A Celebration of Scholarship!

2009 Schedule

The eighth annual A Celebration of Scholarship! will be held the week of March 23, 2009, at John Carroll University. All events are open to the public unless otherwise noted. Events take place in the Dolan Science Center; see below for room locations. The Arts at Lunch! events are tentatively scheduled for the Lombardo Student Center Schott Atrium.

This is a preliminary schedule and is subject to change.

For more information, visit www.jcu.edu/celebration/2009/schedule.htm.

Monday, March 23, 2009

Noon – 1:15 p.m. 
Celebrate The Arts at Lunch!

2 – 3:15 p.m. 
Paper/Panel Session A
Pellegrene Room, A202
Moderator: Dr. Susan Orpett Long, Sociology
Panel: “Critical Social Issues in Contemporary Society”

Paper/Panel Session B
Pellegrene Room, A203
Moderator: Dr. Mary Weems, Education and Allied Studies
Panel: “Bringing Words to Life: Performance-Based Assessment”
Presenters: Jessica Driskell, Raynard Holmes, Irene Paparizos, Ashley Egson, and Krystle Sky Rivera

Tuesday, March 24, 2009

11 a.m. – 12:15 p.m. 
Celebrate The Arts at Lunch!

1 – 2 p.m. 
Scholarly Lunch Series
O’Connell Reading Room
Dr. Wendy Wiedenhoft: “Consuming Conflict: Touring the Troubles in West Belfast”; Dr. Scott Moore: “The Relationship Between Corporate Governance Ratings of U.S. Banking Institutions and Their Financial Performance”

2 – 3:15 p.m. 
Paper/Panel Session E
Pellegrene Room, A202
Moderator: Dr. Mindy Peden, Political Science

Paper/Panel Session F
Pellegrene Room, A203
Moderator: Dr. Barbara D’Ambrosia, Mathematics and Computer Science
Authors: Dr. Daniel Palmer: “The Second Life Classroom at John Carroll University – Content and Conduit”; Dr. Linda Seiter: “Computer Science and Service Learning: Empowering Nonprofit Organizations Through Open Source Content Management Systems”

3:30 – 4:45 p.m. 
Paper/Panel Session G
Pellegrene Room, A202
Moderator: Dr. John C. Soper, Economics and Finance
Panel: “Student Involvement in Entrepreneurship Activities at JCU”
Presenters: TBA

5:30 p.m. 
Opening Lecture
Donahue Auditorium
“War and the Environment: The Case of Japan During World War II”
William Tsutsui, Professor of History, University of Kansas
Mitsui Distinguished Lecture
Sponsored by East Asian Studies

Wednesday, March 25, 2009

1 – 2 p.m. 
Scholarly Lunch Series
O’Connell Reading Room
Wednesday, March 25, 2009 —continued—

2 – 3:15 p.m.

**Paper/Panel Session K**
Pellegrene Room, A202

**Moderator:** Dr. Phyllis Braudy Harris, Sociology

**Panel:** “CHAMPS Program: Evaluation: Community-Based Research”

**Presenters:** Max Cotton, Jillian Kaltenbach, Dan Pirchner, Jimmy Rudyk, Alyson Werner, Ashley Bukach, Billy Mather, Jeanie Muellner, Jessica Bader, Katie Durante, Erin Kelley, Theresa Prabucki, Mallorie Hennessey, Brittany Fako, Maricela Almendarez, Natalie Terry, Peter Rembusch, and Laura Heid

**Paper/Panel Session L**
Pellegrene Room, A203

**Moderator:** Dr. Brendan Foreman, Education and Allied Studies


3:30 – 5 p.m.

**Research Reception**

O’Connell Reading Room
By invitation only

5 – 6:15 p.m.

**Paper/Panel Session M**
Pellegrene Room, A202

**Moderator:** Dr. Susan Orpett Long, Sociology and East Asian Studies

**Panel:** “Packaging Japanese Popular Culture”


**Paper/Panel Session N**
Pellegrene Room, A203

**Moderator:** Dr. Greg DiLisi, Education and Allied Studies

**Panel:** “Project W.I.S.E – Working in Informal Science Education”

**Presenters:** Nicole Blanco, Caroline Clarke, Kelly Cooper, Rebecca Jennings, Jennifer Krauss, Brynn McNicholas, and Lianne Torok

6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

**Poster Session**

Muldoon Atrium

Refreshments will be served

7:30 p.m.

**Spoken Word Performance**

Donahue Auditorium
Richard Bausch

Sponsored by the English department

Thursday, March 26, 2009

1 – 2 p.m.

**Scholarly Lunch Series**

O’Connell Reading Room

Dr. Phil Metres: “Remaking/Unmaking: Abu Ghraib and Poetry” (a talk and poetry reading); Dr. Peter Kvidera: “Immigration and the Rhetoric of Americanization After 9/11”

2 – 3:15 p.m.

**Paper/Panel Session O**
Pellegrene Room, A202

**Moderator:** Dr. Luigi Ferri, Classical and Modern Languages and Culture

**Authors:** Garth Sabo: “September 11 and the American Literary Response”; Dr. Charles Zarobila: “Bishop John Carroll’s Eulogy for President George Washington”

**Paper/Panel Session P**
Pellegrene Room, A203

**Moderator:** Dr. James Martin, Bolet School of Business

**Authors:** Dr. Michele Scott Taylor: “The Learning Organization Concept as a Framework for Organizational Improvement”; Dr. Denise Ben-Porath: Dialectical Behavior Therapy

3:30 – 4:45 p.m.

**Paper/Panel Session Q**
Pellegrene Room, A202

**Moderator:** Dr. Richard Clark, Sociology

**Panel:** “The Sociological Perspective: Different Lenses for Our World”


**Paper/Panel Session R**
Pellegrene Room, A203

**Moderator:** Dr. Pam Mason, Political Science

**Authors:** Stephanie Besser: “Global Innovation: China and India”; Dr. Linda Koch: “The Economics and Politics of Royal Commemoration in Renaissance Florence”; Ann Schaeffing: “The Political Role of Indigenous Peoples in Guatemala”

5 – 6:15 p.m.

**Paper/Panel Session S**
Pellegrene Room, A202

**Moderator:** Dr. Zeki Saritoprak, Religious Studies

**Authors:** Melanie Faithwalker: “A Qualitative Perspective of Outreach Ministry from the Eyes of African American Women in Christian Ministries”; James Menkhaus: “Laws Restricting Feeding the Homeless: Implications for Labre Ministry”

**Paper/Panel Session T**
Pellegrene Room, A203

**Moderator:** Dr. Malia McAndrew, History

**Authors:** Jillian Kaltenbach: “Listening to the Voices of the Poor: Recommendations to Reduce Poverty”; Dina Baky: “The Effect of Conflict on Social Identification and Tolerance”; Megan Greene: “Environmental Factors of Domestic Violence”

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**FACULTY NOTES** March 2009

Published by the Office of the Academic Vice President

Submissions can be sent to facultynotes@jcu.edu. The deadline for the May issue is April 1, 2009.

Items of interest regarding faculty activity, including new publications, conference presentations, collaborations with students, community and professional service activities, teaching innovations, etc., will be included. Please include relevant details such as date and place of presentation.

Questions and comments should be directed to:

Lauren Bowen, Associate Academic Vice President for Academic Programs and Faculty Diversity bowen@jcu.edu

Issues are archived at www.jcu.edu/avp/fd