



*June 18, 2008*

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Nomination for Governor's Award  
UM-St. Louis, 2008

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    - c. Rob Good, [rgood@ladue.k12.mo.us](mailto:rgood@ladue.k12.mo.us)
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## 1. Nomination Letter

June 19, 2008

To Whom It May Concern:

I am pleased to nominate Dr. Virginia Navarro for the Governor's Award for Excellence in Teaching.

I have known Virginia since 1999, when I arrived at the University of Missouri-St. Louis. I have grown familiar with her teaching for both the Division of Teaching and Learning and the Division of Educational Psychology, Research and Evaluation as a colleague (we both have secondary appointments in the latter Division), as the director of a grant on integrating technology into teaching, and in the past year as her Chair.

Her commitment to and success at teaching has impressed me in general, but I have been especially gratified to see her efforts at continuous improvement, her personal and extensive feedback provided to students, and her ability to engage students in difficult but worthwhile material. Virginia's commitment to continuous improvement is exemplified in her efforts to meaningfully integrate technology in her teaching, such as through having students develop web pages and utilize multimedia and web-based resources. As a former English teacher, Virginia appreciates the power of well-crafted writing and reflection assignments for student learning, and she gives extensive commentary on each of her students' many writing assignments, to a degree that is rare in higher education. In addition to this written feedback, Virginia conducts extensive discussions in all her classes, where she strives to involve all students, and she is known as an intent listener. Virginia is also a bridge to difficult concepts for undergraduate and graduate students. She has helped countless students to better understand the connections between complex theories of development and learning, and everyday practices of teaching. She also challenges students to think about and unpack difficult issues such as social justice, gender and racial equity, and culturally competent teaching in ways that help the College fulfill its mission of educating teachers who can effectively teach *all* students in our society. As you will see in her records of teaching evaluations, students really appreciate the effort Virginia puts into her teaching, the knowledge she shares with them, and her passion for the subject material. I know that graduate students I teach who have taken Dr. Navarro's classes are extremely well-prepared, and frequently apply notions they were introduced to in her classes.

Virginia has also impressed me as an advisor to students in the Career Transitions Certification Program, and doctoral students. She takes the time to help them navigate complex requirements and meet their professional goals, all while developing rich and supportive relationships with them.

Finally, Virginia's service to the university and the broader community is truly exceptional. She is one of those rare faculty members that a Chair can rely on to help develop and implement ideas, step up when we have needs that are difficult to meet, and be sure to carry through. She has served on numerous ad hoc and standing

committees during her entire tenure at the University of Missouri-St. Louis. For instance, she has taken on a good deal of responsibility for helping the division develop, collect, and analyze student survey data.

As you will see in this application, Virginia Navarro is an outstanding candidate for the Governor's Award for Excellence in Teaching, due to her contributions to student learning and success, her excellent advising, and her service.

Thank you for considering this nomination. Feel free to contact me with any inquiries, by email ([polman@umsl.edu](mailto:polman@umsl.edu)) or phone (314-516-4804).

Sincerely,

QuickTime™ and a  
TIFF (LZW) decompressor  
are needed to see this picture.

Joseph L. Polman, Ph.D.  
Associate Professor and Co-Chair, Division of Teaching and Learning  
Associate Director, E. Desmond Lee Technology and Learning Center

### 3. Philosophy of Teaching Statement

The roles of teacher and learner are an integral part of my identity: as an academic in higher education, as a former high school English and journalism teacher, as a parent of four adult children, and as a developing social justice activist. I would like to highlight what I feel are three strengths I bring to the role of teacher educator:

(1) The first is my ability to engage students in a dialogic model of human learning through active listening and respect, along with a strategic sense of how to organize curricula in dynamic ways to provoke critical thinking. By this I mean that students, teachers, and texts reciprocally negotiate meanings in order to clarify assumptions and beliefs, challenge prior knowledge and misconceptions, and increase complex understandings from multiple perspectives. Because I believe that learning takes place through focused dialogue in an intellectually safe environment, I listen to what students try to articulate and partner with them to develop and refine their thoughts. Students perceive that I authentically care about and value what they have to contribute and so willingly engage in reading and thinking about the subject matter, thus increasing learning.

(2) Another capacity that I have worked hard to develop over the past five years involves learning to engage in dialogue around social justice issues with students and colleagues in effective and culturally relevant ways. If higher education instructors are not comfortable modeling appropriate ways to foster civil discourse and debate issues of human differences and perspectives, how can we ask our students to raise such issues in their own classrooms and workplaces? I believe teaching is a moral and ethical activity and that teachers make a difference in the lives of their students in either positive or negative ways. Modeling "best practice" is especially salient to education faculty charged with preparing tomorrow's teachers. My recent research that examines the experiences of new teachers as they struggle to meet the needs of diverse learners has made me more cognizant of how higher education educators might also need to become more adaptive to specific student needs. This work has led me to reflect on my own teaching practices and assumptions, including the ways I might unintentionally alienate students from the role of successful learner. Participation in professional development opportunities, such as the New Faculty Teaching Scholars program, Dismantling Racism Institute for Educators sponsored by the National Council of Community and Justice (NCCJ), and, most recently, the Knapsack Institute: Transforming the Curriculum, has deepened my understandings about diversity and teaching/learning processes. My goal is to become a stronger advocate for providing access to the intellectual and social tools needed by all students to become successful learners.

(3) A third contribution, on the program development level, involves developing several assessment feedback tools. Too often student voices are only sought on end-of-semester teacher evaluations. As the result of discussions with colleagues on various committees, I initiated constructing online surveys as evaluation tools to accomplish the following goals: seek student feedback about the design and structure of programs, ask what types of support might enhance the university experience, and elicit practical ideas to negotiate bureaucratic barriers to success. Improving the overall context within which teaching/learning opportunities are structured is critical to sustaining quality programs. Several survey instruments I have designed, often in

collaboration with colleagues, are included in the appendices as evidence of my commitment to the importance of regular evaluation and reflection on teaching/learning experiences. These survey instruments include the *Doctoral Program Assessment for Teaching & Learning*, a *Formative Assessment of the Teacher Education Program*, and a *Student Dispositions Assessment* (required for NCATE accreditation). I also researched student responses to working in schools using a *Field Work Assessment Survey* to gauge the impact of increasing the number of courses that require students to spend time in schools. In my individual courses I use a feedback form that focuses on individual student contributions to the learning process (See Appendices). Actively seeking out student voices and opinions, creating forums for sharing and discussing feedback, and pressing for improved service delivery represent some programmatic contributions to improved teaching.

Finally, integrating technology into both my in-class and online teaching assignments results in creating more options for assigning and assessing student work. Two published articles with colleagues have resulted from collaboration around integrating technology into teaching. I have presented at the UMSL Technology and Teaching Conference on topics such as gender in the classroom and developing online surveys and in 2004 received recognition for exemplary use of My Gateway. Since I believe regular communication among course instructors, adjuncts and Teaching Assistants enhances teaching, as Level I Leader I created and developed Organizational Sites in My Gateway for all instructors of three required teacher education Level I courses. When I received an external grant from Character Education Partnership with Marvin Berkowitz to infuse character education into preservice teacher education, I developed another Organizational Site called Future Educators of Character as a warehouse of articles, links, information, and character education opportunities.

### *My Teaching Credo*

My teaching credo embraces the following beliefs about the nature of the teaching/learning process: (a) Learning is an interactive partnership based on participation in and understanding of social and cultural practices; (b) Teachers are knowledge brokers and inquirers; (c) New knowledge must be intentionally connected to prior knowledge; (d) Both students and teachers should be open to change as a result of engaging in the teaching/learning process; (e) Challenging attitudes and beliefs to broaden perspectives is generative intellectually; (f) High expectations and maximum support enhance individual engagement and learning; (g) The goal of learning should be to understand conceptually so that knowledge can be used practically; and (h) Multiple teaching methods and assessment tools support learning for diverse groups of students and diverse learning styles.

This credo is utilized for both graduate and undergraduate learning. In the qualitative research methods class, for example, I include content on both “why” and “how to” aspects of becoming a qualitative researcher by assigning a set of progressive skill-building activities before the final case study assignment. With undergraduate education courses I spend 10 to 20 hours a semester in schools, so we can together process the links between theory and practice. By creating opportunities for *minds-on* as well as *hands-on* activities, I model strategies that students can use in their own classrooms. In 2000 I received a Chancellor's Award for Excellence based on letters of support from colleagues and students about the effectiveness of my teaching. My work with many doctoral students in all four Divisions of the College of Education attests to the value both these students and their advisors see in my contribution to dissertation problem

identification, method design, and dissertation development. Advising sessions at local area coffee shops afford me the opportunity to build relationships, listen without interruption, and help students discern potential dissertation topics and designs.

My work as a professional teacher is a lifelong effort to invite students into the life of the mind by providing rich opportunities to read thoughtful texts, to share new ideas collaboratively through spoken and written communication, and to engage in new experiences and activities. I see both formative and summative assessment as integral to the teaching/learning process, including self-reflection and specific written feedback from the instructor on oral and written work. Expectations should be clear, but I also work to resist scripted artifacts that undermine self-directed learning. Developing one's own "voice" requires a higher level of thoughtful engagement than just studying for a test or following a narrow model. To confront the inherent tensions in a pluralistic society, students must learn to think logically, listen empathically, and be open to change. I try to model these skills in my teaching.

My teaching philosophy is closely linked with my philosophy of life. Human activity is deeply meaningful and complex and those who take on the role of teacher should illuminate aspects of the natural and/or social world with the intent of improving the human condition through systematic problem-solving activity. As I talk with K-12 teachers and re-think the construction of knowledge in an information age, I am convinced that technological tools are already transforming the way we teach and learn. Problem-based learning will intentionally connect theory and practice as major funding streams demand collaboration with local, regional, and global partners to develop interdisciplinary strategies to research complex issues. My goal is to inspire lifelong learners who become advocates for their students and responsible citizens of their communities – including thinking globally but acting locally. Teaching should spark intellectual excitement and guide students into seeing the world and its inhabitants with new eyes. I believe the teaching/learning process is enhanced through relationship-building and trust. Knowing our students and their stories will enhance our capacity to effectively engage and challenge learners in a culture of research and inquiry. I am blessed to love what I do - creating opportunities to explore challenging questions and issues in collaboration with other teachers and learners, making a difference in the lives and futures of my students, and brokering information to build new knowledge for tomorrow.

#### **4. List of courses taught and other teaching and advising work**

- a. Table of Courses Taught
- b. Independent Studies and Research Internships
- c. Doctoral Committee Work
- d. Course and Program Development Achievements
  - i. Emerging template with core components
  - ii. Technology tool integration
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  - iv. Career Transition curricula
  - v. Published articles on aspects of teaching
  - vi. Other teaching activity

**Table of Courses Taught at UM-St. Louis**

**\*\* Designed & Developed Course**

DESIGNATION	COURSE #	COURSE TITLE	DESCRIPTOR	LEVEL/ (# OF STUDENTS)
TCH ED	5311 (4 Hrs.)	Foundations of American Education	First course for Career Transition students	Graduate (25-35)
**ED PSYC <b>On-line &amp; in-class</b>	6109 (4 Hrs.)	Learners & Learning in Secondary School Settings	Post-degree & Alternative Certification Course	Graduate (15-35)
ED PSYC	6111	Psychology of Education	Graduate Level Learning Theory	Graduate (20-35)
**ED PSYC <b>On-line</b>	6215	Psychology of Early Childhood	Early childhood masters level course	Graduate (10-20)
ED PSYC	6225	Psychology of Adolescence	Grades 6-12 teachers, reading specialists, counselors	Graduate (20-25)
**TCH ED	6350	Gender, Language & Identity	Cross-listed with WGST 5450 & Graduate Certificate	Graduate (10-15)
TCH ED	6910	Teacher Research Capstone Course for M.Ed.	Final Action Research Projects for Masters Students	Graduate (10-25)
**ED PSYC	7642	Sociocultural Perspectives in Educ.	Doctoral seminar on Vygotskian theory.	Doctoral Sem. (4-15)
**ED REM	7781	Qualitative Research Methods I	Required doctoral research course in education	Doctoral Sem. (15-25)
**TCH ED	2311	Foundations in Urban Educ. & Social Justice	New course in 2007 for urban strand	Undergraduate (10-25)
**TCH ED ED PSYC	2212	Introduction to Learners and Learning	Level I (Exploration): Child & Adol. Development	Undergraduate (25-40)
TCH ED ED PSYC	3312	Psychology of Teaching and Learning	Level II (Analysis): Learning Theories & Strategies	Undergraduate (25-40)
**Honors College	Honors 3030	Gender, Language, & Identity,	Cross-listed with Women & Gender Studies	Upper division Undergraduate
**Honors College	Honors 300	Gendered Learning Cross-listed IWGS	300 Social Science seminar	Upper division Undergraduate

**2008 Courses & Numbers to Date**

ED PSYC	7642	Sociocultural Perspectives in Education.	9 students
TCH ED	6910	Teacher Research Capstone Course for M.Ed.	10 students
ED PSYC	6109 (4 Hrs.)	Learners & Learning in Secondary School Settings	12 in-class section 21 online section 33 total

**Research and Independent Study Projects**

- 2008 Carolyn Brown, Social Justice in Higher Education
- 2008 Jill Johnson and Douglas Eaves, Research Internship
- 2007-2008 Rachelle Artis & Lisa Paredes, dissertation hours
- 2006-2008 21 Career Transition Teacher Work Sample Projects

2006-2007	Lisa Paredes, dissertation hours
2004-2005	Bryan Wessling: dissertation hours
2004-2005	Rachelle Artis, dissertation hours
2004-2005	Laurie McManus, funded Research Assistant, Looping & Learning project
2004-2005	Pat Suess, funded Research Assistant, Future Educators of Character grant
2004-2005	Kala Naraiian, Methodological issues in Researching Identity Construction.
2002-2003	Craig Waddell: Research Assistantship, Field-work survey research
2001-2003	Marcia Tennill: Funded Evaluation Project/Ferguson Florissant District
1999-2000	Janelle Vincent: Issues of identity in gender and sexuality

### College of Education Doctoral Proposal and Dissertation Committees

- Karen Buehler, April 2001 (Jim Walters, chair) *Personal Learning Theories of Early Elementary Students with Mild Disabilities: Implications for Educational Planning.*
- Janelle Vincent Fall 2001 (Theresa Cristiani, chair) *The Role of Abuse-Related and Disclosure Events in Moderating the Impact of Child Sexual Abuse.*
- Julia Smith, March 2002 (Scot Danforth, chair) *A Study of Autonomy Development among College Women.*
- Donna Russell, March 2003 (Joe Polman & J. Landis, co-chairs) *The Mediated Action of Educational Reform: An Inquiry into Collaborative On-line Professional Development and Unit Implementation.*
- Craig Waddell, July 2004 (Peggy Cohen, chair) *The Effects of Negotiated Written Feedback within Formative Assessment on 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Students' Motivation and Goal Orientation.*
- Stephen Jeanetta, (Paulette Isaac-Savage, chair). *Finding Voice: An Exploration of a Community-Based Adult Learning Process.*
- Anne Bryan Wessling, May, 2005 (Virginia Navarro & Dianne Ferguson, co-chairs) *A Case Study of the Life History of a Waldorf School through the Lens of Parental Participation.*
- Nancy Little, December, 2005 (Charles Fazzaro, chair), *Professional Development in Education: Construct and Deconstruction, Tension and Criticism.*
- Steve Taff, July, July, 2005 (Phil Ferguson & S. Danforth, co-chairs) *The Phenomenology of the Backward Child: A History of School Failure in Progressive Era America.*
- Kala Naraiian, Spring, 2007 (Phil Ferguson & S. Danforth, co-chairs). *Of "Illustrators," "Narrators," "Editors," and "Readers": Describing Relations between Significantly Disabled Students and their Peers.*
- Marcia Pfeiffer, Proposal, September 6, 2007 (Kent Farnsworth, chair) *Preparing Community College Presidents: The socio-cultural influences on leadership development.*
- Bill McIlwee, April 2007 (Charles Fazzaro, chair) *The Role of Sacrifice in the No Child Left Behind Act of 2002: A Critical Enquiry through a Roberto Calasso and Michael Foucault Framework.*
- Sarah Schafer Huisman, April 4, 2007 (Susan Catapano, chair), *Preservice Teacher Efficacy: The influence of field placements*
- Laurie McManus, October 23, 2007 (John Henshke, chair), *Mathematics Teaching in Community Colleges.*
- Mary Beth Ottinger, Proposal, January 30, 2008. (Kent Farnsworth, chair), *Understanding Why International Students Attend US Community Colleges: A Narrative Inquiry.*
- Joy Harris, June 16, 2008, (Paulette Isaac-Savage, chair), *The Impact of Gender Socialization on Women's Learned Technological Helplessness and its Andragogical Implications.*
- Michael Rankins, July 11, 2008, (Mark Pope, chair), *Same-sex Marriage: Voices of Married Male Couples in the United States.*

- Lisa Paredes, September, 2008 (Virginia Navarro, chair), *Language Attitudes, Linguistic Knowledge, And The Multicultural Education Of Pre-Service Teachers: A Sociolinguistic Study*. Outside Dissertation Committee Member
- Peggy Neufield, April 2, 2002 (Jim Wertsch, chair, Washington University), *Narrative Use in Communities of Learners: Reconstructing Wellness in Persons with Multiple Sclerosis*.
- Travis Osborne, February, 2004 (J. Stake, chair, Clinical Psychology Department). *Gender Role Conflict and Perceived Social Support: Predicting Help Seeking in College Men*. Psychology Department, UM-St. Louis.

### **Course and Program Development Achievements**

As I reflect on the development of nine courses over the last ten years, I realize that I have evolved a type of boilerplate template that includes course components that I believe are successful with a range of students. This insight galvanized me to try and briefly outline the major components as a first step in articulating a potential model of syllabi development. The focus here is on face-to-face classes since the online environment has a different set of demands because of the medium of delivery.

There are always elements of choice in my courses around some of the readings; furthermore, the students always participate in the facilitation role for assigned class readings. Both of these basic components stem from my belief in the importance of student voice in provoking engagement and intrinsic motivation to learn. I lean towards thoughtful edited collections that mix classic literature in the field written by original authors with contemporary interpretations of major concepts or constructs. The basic text is then supplemented with (a) one of 3 to 4 "choice" books that I rotate every few semesters, and (b) a set of 4-6 required peer-reviewed journal articles. I preview the "choice" books the first day of class and then send around sign-up sheets for each student to pick one they want to read. Towards the end of the semester, I then have groups do a book panel to share big ideas with the class. Although this is a group grade, I also have each student write a critical analysis of the text that is individually assessed. This allows opportunity to develop group skills and leadership but insures individualized feedback on interpretations and questions raised by the choice text.

Inviting students to play the role of teacher in the class by facilitating one assigned chapter reading creates a class environment that is open to sharing power and voice. By week three or four in a semester I observe students entering the classroom talking with each other about the readings or previous discussions in class. Students by then have engaged in multiple small group exercises and opportunities to interact. These exercises include a *pair/share* exercise, a structured dialogue that allows each partner to comment on a question uninterrupted and then listen to a partner for three uninterrupted minutes; a *case study* group that uses structured analysis protocols to discern best solutions to an ill-structured problem, and/or a *traditional group dialogue* with a recorder who shares out ideas generated by the group. Subtly, these procedures move the class away from looking to me as the font of all knowledge to a distributed model of intellectual inquiry within a dialogic setting. When students facilitate readings, I often will assert my authoritative voice by providing a mini-lecture on a point that is raised by giving some history, context, or suggested readings to extend shared knowledge. I think when I offer such commentary (a practice that does involve having deep knowledge of your field), students are more open to accommodating new conceptual frames as they are invited to think more complexly about the topic.

Since I have taught a few courses online, I find that more and more I am creating hybrid courses that utilize My Gateway tools for in-class courses as well as online courses. Each year I try to acquire and play with one additional tool. I began with introducing the Discussion Board by inviting students to continue class conversations by posting their ideas and responding to at least two peers. I create about 5 to 6 Discussion Boards over 15 weeks. This affords those individuals who are not comfortable sharing verbally in class an opportunity to reflect on their ideas before articulating them in writing to the class in asynchronous time. It also allows us to extend our dialogue time together. Other features I have explored include the following:

- Virtual classroom where we all log in at the same time and communicate via a chat room environment
- Live classroom where we all log in but use microphones to actually talk to one another
- A class Blog which I set up for the first time this summer to talk about any procedural questions or comments for the online learners

Each time I teach a course, I add complexity by including on the My Gateway site the PPTs of earlier students, new articles and web sites of note, and current events in St. Louis that might be of general interest to students and teachers. This means that I am creating an informational space that goes beyond course requirements as a resource to further inquiry.

At the doctoral level, I have developed two seminars, *Sociocultural Perspectives in Education* and *Qualitative Methods in Educational Research I*. Students in the *Sociocultural Perspectives* class explore translated texts by Russian theorists Vygotsky and Volosinov. Students then present their ideas through facilitating seminar discussions and developing slide shows on additional selected texts that apply sociocultural theory to specific research interests. In the qualitative research course students teach a concept such as hermeneutics, post-structuralism, or validity to peers. They also hone their observational skills by using thick description to capture a setting both literally and interpretively; students conduct formal interviews and code transcribed manuscripts.

In fall, 2007, I developed a new foundation level course for teacher education majors who know they want to become urban teachers. *Foundations in Urban Education & Social Justice* is a field-based course that examines a set of case studies along with related readings that explore the complexity of decision-making in schools with high poverty rates. Although the enrollment was low this first time, I was fortunate to have a mix of African American and White males, straight and gay persons, and visiting students from Korea. We drove together to an urban international magnet school every Wednesday afternoon and debriefed afterwards at the school. They got to spend time in classrooms, work with kids, and journal their ideas; they had opportunities to ask the principal and teachers questions about what they observed. My commitment to preparing urban educators continues to grow.

I was also lead instructor for several years for *Introduction to Learners and Learning*, a course on child and adolescent development. Student groups create web pages about a developmental age or issue, and despite varying technology skills, students learn to critically identify Internet sites as tools for teaching/learning. With grant support I have worked to integrate content about teaching diverse students, character education, and the use of technology into the core curriculum for teacher education. As Level I Leader, I coordinated multiple sections of three foundation courses in the teacher education program, assisting with scheduling sections, orienting new teachers to the curriculum, creating and maintaining an instructor site on My

Gateway, and helping coordinate the field placement at partner schools. Additionally, I represented the COE at the Professional Development School Collaborative (PDSC), an umbrella organization of school/university partnerships. Because of our innovative work to redesign the undergraduate teacher preparation program, a group of COE colleagues and I received Faculty Performance Shares from the UM-System in 2001. Finally, I have developed two Honors courses, *Gendered Learning* and *Gender, Language, and Identity*. The second course I now teach as part of a WGST graduate certificate program as well as COE graduate students.

For the last few years, I have been Co-Director of the Career Transition Certification Program (CTCP), an alternative pathway for people who want to move into teaching from other jobs but need to be employed while acquiring the skills and knowledge to complete certification. For 10 years this funded partnership with St. Louis Public Schools has developed urban teachers in critical need areas of math, science, special education, music, and art. I co-teach the foundations course and teach the adolescent development course for these students. With Dr. Gayle Wilkinson I plan a two year course of study for all CTCP teachers, interface with the Division of Elementary & Secondary Education (DESE) to insure state standards are achieved, and oversee online portfolio assessments and the 1-hour independent study exit course to advise students on Action Research Projects. I continue to learn by attending and giving professional development on multicultural issues. As part of the Dean's Committee on Social Justice, I will share what I learned at the Knapsack Institute on Transforming Curriculum with colleagues in the COE and also with Institute of Women & Gender Studies' members who helped support my trip.

### **Publications on Teaching**

Navarro, V. (2005). Acculturating into urban schools: Voices from the field. *Urban Learning, Teaching, & Research*. 21-44.

Navarro, V. (2005). Constructing a teacher of qualitative methods. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology* 8(5).419-435.

Hoagland, C., Scordias, M., Catapano, S., Navarro, V., Bielema, C., Hickman, C., & Suess, P. (2003). Developmental stages of on-line instruction: Lessons learned. *Society for the Advancement of Technology in Education*. 8 pp.

Polman, J. L., Mastin, J., Beyer, K., & Navarro, V. (2001). Putting the pieces together: Systematic change for technology integration. In J. Price, D.A. Willis, N. Davis, & J. Willis (Eds.), *Proceedings of SITE 2001*, pp. 63-67. Norfolk, VA: AACE.

### **Other Teaching Activity**

As part of my responsibilities as Co-Director of Career transition Program, I meet monthly to train Teacher Coaches from SLPS who are assigned to each CTC teacher. We discuss how to best mentor adult self-directed learners, how to both nurture and challenge a novice teacher to stretch and extend their repertoire of pedagogical strategies while developing caring connections to the students they teach. I am impressed with the hard work and dedication of most urban teachers who negotiate daily the challenges of community poverty, white privilege, and internalized racism.

In the last three years I have been invited to guest lecture on qualitative methods for Dr. Kim Stiglitz of nursing, mixed method research for the CISTL cohort of doctoral students by Dr. Chuck Granger, and Teacher Education preparation for citizenship by Dr. Wolfgang Althof. I also organized a panel presentation on using mixed method for the 2006 Qualitative Research Conference. I founded this Conference in 2001 to encourage dialogue among faculty and doctoral students about aspects of qualitative research; the Qualitative Conference (QUARC) is now held every two years and draws participants from several states. My continued involvement on the planning committee reflects my commitment to create opportunities for dialogue and rigorous intellectual work. Such conferences allow doctoral students to gain experience with the process of submitting a proposal, revising work based on feedback, and increasing publications. Another contribution to doctoral students involves Teaching Assistants who ask to visit my classes as part of their 15 hour certificate in teaching work. I enjoy talking with them about pedagogical choices.

A final supplement to my formal teaching responsibilities is the delivery of a Character Adventure Day each semester for student teachers. Originally designed and delivered with the YMCA leadership development staff with a federal Teacher Workforce Replenishment grant, I have built a team of character educators, retired principals, and interested parties to continue this experiential day of team-building activities to focus student teachers on their role as educators of character. We model activities that can be used in K-12 classrooms; curricular guides tied to Show-Me-Standards are distributed and Marvin Berkowitz, our endowed professor of Character Education, guides students through a series of reflective and informative activities. I am proud that we have been able to sustain this professional development opportunity beyond the grant support.

## **Assessment Contributions**

### **Program Assessment Survey Instruments**

As someone with an educational psychology background, I strongly believe in formative assessment as a tool to improve practice and invite reflection. I have developed both course and program evaluation tools and continue to work to share my analysis and interpretation of findings to peer colleagues so we can continue to improve program based on multiple perspectives and inputs. Most recently I worked to develop an instrument with input from the Division of Teaching & Learning Graduate Committee to assess and document the experience of our doctoral students at various points in their program.

On the undergraduate level, I helped develop and administer a short online Formative Assessment of the overall Teacher Education Program. After meeting regularly with the Level I and Level II Leaders for the preservice teacher education program, along with Dr. Helene Sherman, Associate Dean in the Teacher Education office, we also designed an instrument to assess student dispositions in several areas that correlate with successful teacher profiles. Our purpose was to identify potential problem areas, document changes in individuals' positions on these issues and finally, to call student attention to certain behaviors and attitudes that are expected in the workplace before they reach student teaching.

### **Self-Evaluation Tool**

In my individual courses I regularly provide a self-evaluation sheet to students as well as the normal anonymous Division evaluation sheets. Students are asked to write their names on the form and answer several Likert scale items about issues such as the amount of effort they put in compared to other courses in their programs, the percent of the readings they completed, the quality of their verbal and written contributions to the class, a rank ordering of all the course components for that class in terms of their own learning, and room to make suggestions for better supporting their learning. I am always amazed at how honest students are on these sheets, marking that they only read half the material or ranking their written work low, etc. It also becomes clear that the same assignment can be the best learning tool for one student and the worst for another. I keep these self-evaluations in a folder with class grades so I can compare their perception and my perception of performance, discussing any major differences by setting an appointment.

### **Course Assessments**

In 2006 I presented and published a paper that compared two chapters on formal and informal assessments in each of four popular educational psychology textbooks. Future teachers need to have university instructors model good practice in designing and using assessment tools. In all my courses I always have at least 5-6 assignments; some points are assigned for individual work, some for group work, and some for attendance, leadership, and Discussion Board participation. I give extensive feedback through written comments in the margins (or using Word Editor for online papers). I post a few paragraphs in My Gateway to describe each assignment in detail with guidelines and rubrics if appropriate. I resist providing sample work because I want students to push themselves to figure out what they have to say on a topic, not what they think I want to hear. If students do not use appropriate citations directly from the readings and demonstrate the capacity for critical thinking, they will not get full points. Being pragmatic, I also run random sentences through a Google search as an additional motivation not to plagiarize (This is in the syllabus). As an ex-English teacher I also correct spelling and grammar errors and refer students to the writing lab if they have severe problems in these areas. I feel I am conscientious in assessing student work, contribute my knowledge and skills to improving program assessment processes for the Division, and model thoughtful practices by utilizing a variety of ways to evaluate student progress and collect data for reflection and action. I regularly sign up for mid-semester feedback through the Center for Teaching Excellence and have presented several times at for campus Conferences on Teaching.

### *Publications*

#### Books

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- Danforth, S. & Navarro, V. (1998). Speech acts: Sampling the social construction of mental retardation in everyday life. *Mental Retardation*. 36(1) 31-43. (R).
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- Polman, J. L., Mastin, J., Beyer, K., & Navarro, V. (2001). Putting the pieces together: Systematic change for technology integration. In J. Price, D.A. Willis, N. Davis, & J. Willis (Eds.), *Proceedings of SITE 2001*, pp. 63-67. Norfolk, VA: AACE.

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- Navarro, V. (2006). Primer for multicultural literacy [Review of the book *The intersection of cultures: Multicultural education in the United States and the global community* (3rd. ed.) by J. Spring]. *PsycCRITIQUES—Contemporary Psychology: APA Review of Books*, 51 (47).

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