NEFDC EXCHANGE

www.nefdc.org

New England Faculty Development Consortium

Volume 22 • Number 2 • Spring 2011

Who is your mentor?

President's Message - Spring 2011

Webster defines a Mentor as a trusted counselor or guide. This definition implies that there is a two-sided relationship occurring between a mentor (counselor/guide/teacher) and another person (student/colleague/etc.) that develops into a "mentorship". This mentorship would require an acknowledgement of the relationship: "I will mentor – you will be mentored". I think that mentoring is an activity that can manifest itself into a wide variety of experiences from the very informal to the very formal.

As such, even though I have been blessed with many people who have helped me in my life, I have never had a "mentor". My "people" have been an interesting collection of family, friends, teachers and colleagues. They have helped me learn facts and information and to understand concepts and situations. Most importantly, they helped me appreciate the importance of a work ethic, of persistence and the meaning and delivery of "quality". I often think of one of these people in particular. He was the Dean of Discipline at my small high school. (I must also admit that I also feared him because it seemed like every other week he was telling me to get my hair cut.) Fr. O'Hara's mere presence could make me work harder, jump higher (he was my basketball coach as well) and concentrate more. I felt that when he left the school at the end of my junior year that I lost something in the process.

Fr. O'Hara was many things to me….my Latin teacher, the Dean of Discipline, my basketball coach and my hair coach… his job was to teach me and his presence helped me. However, I was one of about 200 students at the school, one of his "many". He was not my "mentor". I never once went to him for advice, guidance or counseling. I'm sure he wanted to teach and guide us all but mentoring was not what it was called…so, is it mentoring just the same? Probably…just not with a capital "M" that would make it a two-sided relationship.

I'm sure that many of you could share a similar story. We are, after all, in the business of education and even though the pressures of accountability, shrinking budgets, assessment, and accreditation continue to rise we are still involved in a very human endeavor that depends upon our ability to teach and learn. We learn from each other, we learn from the past. In this process we all try to mentor and be mentored. This mentoring is often where the real joy in our "job" lives and if it can happen without a direct acknowledgement of the process occurring how much more impact could it have if we did acknowledge it and embrace it! I think that this designation is very important because it gets us personally involved in the process and only someone who gets actively and personally involved on a regular basis can truly mentor!

I hope you noticed that I entitled this message "Who is your Mentor"

…Is once a mentor always a mentor? My guess is "yes" as once you have established a mentoring relationship it can become such a resource that even though you might not talk anymore you will often think "What would my mentor do?" when you are confronted with a new situation. That is a gift that keeps on giving!

But, maybe you have never had a mentor either formally or informally. Dr. Gouri Banerjee from Emmanuel College brought up a very good point in an email conversation that we were having on this topic: "when we were younger, mentoring relationships were more informal and available. As we got older, and especially when we entered academia, mentors were much harder to find. Everyone is too

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busy. We do not even see our departmental colleagues any more, departments have shrunk in size and teaching and research loads have increased tremendously." So, what are we to do about this?

Well,…if we can learn from the past then it is déjà vu (all over again) for our Spring conference as one of the NEFDC's former presidents returns to give the keynote at our next conference. Mary Dean Sorcinelli will present "Global Mentoring" on May 20, 2011 at the College of the Holy Cross. Mary Dean will be our trusted guide through the discussion of mentoring in academia as we cover the various opportunities for mentoring between faculty, staff and students. Mary Dean and her co-author Jung H. Yun have developed an extensive guide to "mutual mentoring" which is a variation on the traditional concept of mentoring. The NEFDC has asked Mary Dean to expand her concept into "global mentoring" for our Conference theme. The guide states (www.umass.edu/ofd/mentoring/Mutual%20Mentoring%20Guide%20Final%2011_20.pdf) that mutual mentoring is an "innovative, flexible, and faculty-driven model ... that encourages faculty at all stages of the academic career to think differently about how they approach and engage in mentoring relationships." We hope that you will join us for interesting discussions on this new model of mentoring that is both mutually beneficial and could be shared across multiple departments and multiple faculty members.

I would also like to take this opportunity to recognize a few members of our board who will be leaving us after years of service. Dr. Jeanne Albert from Middlebury College in Vermont has been on the board for just about the same time and she has chaired conferences and been the editor of the Exchange for the last few years. Dr. Donna Qualters from Suffolk University in Boston has been on the board for two years and has brought a great perspective to the board as well as a wealth of ideas. Dr. Naomi Migliacci from Southern Connecticut College has been on the board for three years and has contributed her time at several conferences and worked as an editor for the newsletter. All of them will be missed and we can never truly express our appreciation for everything that they have contributed to our organization. They have each mentored us in some way and we wish them all the best in the future.

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Assistant Provost
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Sparks, insights, & affirmations:
reflections of a mentor

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SPARKS: As the Call for Proposals for the NEFDC Conference "Mentoring for Good Teaching and Successful Learning" reached my inbox, it jogged my memory of this e-mail:

From P.S., participant in Middlesex Community College's (MCC) Encore Career Faculty Training Certificate Program - Fall 2010:

To: Dr. M,
Thank you for your inspiring and entertaining presentation today at the Encore Workshop. You re-energized me and reminded me of my days in the classroom, and how I loved the challenge of working with students. Although I left teaching to take on some new challenges in advertising and corporate communications, and then to raise my family while caring for my parents, my heart never really left the classroom. Today I returned.
I thought you might appreciate this quote as it reinforces some of what you were saying today.

"Just remember... people are like sticks of dynamite; the power's on the inside, but nothing happens until the fuse gets lit." [Mac Anderson]

Thanks for lighting my fuse today! I'll be looking forward to some classroom observations.

P.S. When I signed on as a mentor in the Encore Mentor Program, I did not realize that I would learn more about myself as a teacher than the new teachers would learn from me. I certainly never thought of myself as a spark for a fuse! Through this partnership of mentoring would-be teachers through guided observations, debriefing, and coaching sessions, I learned not only why I do things, but where and when I learned the "how" of what I do. This program created mentor-partnerships between veteran teachers at MCC with over-50 professionals from many areas who wished to explore teaching at the community college as a second career. Most new teachers at the community college have a mas-

ter's degree and expertise in their particular field, however, they lack any pedagogical training. The Encore Program sought to fill that gap by providing workshops, as well as observations of, and conversations with, practicing professors in the trenches. Each mentor-professor had three or four mentees that would visit them in the classroom, debrief with in-depth conversation, and then the mentee would produce syllabi, policy statements, and lessons for the ongoing workshop series.
Through this effective partnership, I was challenged by both management questions such as:

"I was curious as to when and how you took attendance.

I like your effective way of getting students into groups. Were those Popsicle sticks?"

And pedagogical ones such as:

"How do you get non-talkers to talk or read essays?

Do the younger students readily accept older students? How do you foster inclusion in your class?

The content of this class was the same as the first, but you did make a slight change when it came to reading the essays in groups. In the first class you asked for volunteers to read the stories. In the later class, you asked each group to decide who had the best story to read aloud, rather than asking who would like to read aloud. Did you make this change on purpose?"

All of these questions, which to answer here would be beyond the scope of this article, took much explanation and discussion with the mentees. Seemingly minor events in the classroom brought up some interesting conversation. The last question, "Did you make this change on purpose?" was something that made me pause. Did I? Through our discussion, I began explaining that each group that the mentee observed was very different. Although both the same Basic Writing course, each section had different ability levels, personalities, and attitudes. Yes, I had done the same activity, but I had molded it to fit the group. Had I changed it on purpose? Yes, but intentionally? No, it was more instinctual. To delve into what has become instinct was eye-opening and refreshing for me. (I was also glad I had a pretty good answer to why I was doing what I was doing!)

INSIGHTS: As a teacher of many years, one develops instincts, habits, and procedures that are ingrained and automatic. The process of interpreting a situation and reacting appropriately only comes from experience. These things cannot be taught, they must be practiced. However, though intentional observation and the focused questioning of the actions of seasoned professionals, "newbies" can vicariously absorb some techniques and strategies to use when they begin teaching. They also begin to think through policies, procedures, and lesson plans that will serve them well in the classroom.

For example, one of my mentees felt confident enough to try to use the method and materials she observed. She wrote in an e-mail, "I enjoyed observing your two classes and watching you have such command of both sessions. Even though they were entirely different, it was very informative and an excellent learning experience. Your class preparation and syllabus were so complete that I went out and bought *Hole in my Life* after sitting in on your class and gave my 10 minute teaching demonstration on the final day of class on that book."

Another newbie was struggling with creating a policy on late assignments for one of the workshops. Her idea was not going over well with the Encore group. She wrote in an e-mail, "My policy on not accepting work late has been controversial. I noticed you have similar thinking about not accepting work submitted late. … Am I being too strict?"

In return, I wrote, "You can never be too strict! … My belief is that if you have a "late" policy, you invite "late" submissions. I make it very clear that I do not take late submissions, and then it is not a problem. They have to figure out how to make deadlines and how to plan their time. If given leeway, they will take it. Many students thank me for this."

She responded, "Thank you so much for the e-mail and your support of my thoughts on not accepting late work. To be honest, I was beginning to think I was the odd man out on this philosophy with the comments I've been receiving. … I was beginning to think my philosophy was outdated and not in sync with today's students. But then I found myself arguing with myself on this point. I think many students have become complacent and have also become quite good at making excuses for why they have failed to meet deadlines. If we are preparing them for life beyond the classroom, we must recognize the importance of self-discipline." When we sat in my office later, we had a long discussion about "today's" students, and through these discussions, the mentee became confident enough to stick with her beliefs and produce a strong "no-late" policy. (Her students will thank her later.)

These are only two examples of what can happen when curious minds combine to share ideas and insights. It is only through the give and take of master and apprentice that these insights occur. As a mentor, I have very strong beliefs, policies, and procedures that I use in my day-to-day world. They have been honed though many years of trials, errors, missteps, and successes. These elements of teaching need to be developed with both hands-on and vicarious experiences. These experiences as a mentor lead me to reminisce about my own mentors and revealed some insight to why I am the teacher I am today.

AFFIRMATIONS: As a young teacher, in one of my first classrooms, I had a principal that would roam the halls all day and "pop-in" from time to time. At first, this was unnerving. Each time I would see his head in the crack of the door, I would cringe and my heart would skip a beat. He would then quietly enter, sit in the back of the room, nod, and smile. A few minutes later, he would vanish. This became such a habit, that I became used to his appearances. Students were also used to this, as he visited most classrooms routinely. At meetings and evaluations, he would have substantial praise and critique. Always delivered in a constructive manner, he guided his teachers in a firm and friendly style. At the time, I did not realize that he was my first true mentor. He gave me the confidence as a classroom teacher who would feel comfortable with my door open. So thank you, Rabbi Tsvi Glass, you opened the door for me. It is now seldom ever closed. I often invite colleagues and mentees to join me in the classroom. I love to hear feedback about my classroom – both positive and negative - as that is the only way I can grow. As teachers, we cannot stand in our silos and hope what is happening in the classroom is effective. This was a lesson I never forgot, and one that I hope to instill in others.

In graduate school, some years later, I was asked to reflect upon my past teachers that I enjoyed and could model my own teaching after. I thought immediately of my high school English teachers who both were happy, energetic, organized, and most of all, interesting. Choosing relevant materials that spoke to young adults, they made reading and writing my passion. They did not force classic literary canon down the throats of apathetic teens, but rather, they used contemporary materials that made their subjects come alive. Shakespeare, Ethan Frome, and Beowulf lived in the library. In the classroom, Tolkien's trilogy of Middle Earth was a place to explore, as well as various then-contemporary titles such as The Martian Chronicles by Ray Bradbury, and the Odessa File by Frederick Forsyth. Courses entitled Mystery 101, Science Fiction 101, and War and Peace 101 (that did not include Tolstoy), were offered as electives. Interest and motivation were high, the love of reading and literature was born, and students wanted to explore the themes and subtleties of each of the texts. So thank you, Mrs. Fox and Mrs. Bourgeois, for instilling the need for relevant and significant materials used in the classroom in a future teacher.

As a teaching assistant in graduate school, I was honored to work with a professor who was a teacher, scholar, researcher, and writer. She was simply a dynamo. She literally filled the room when she entered, even though she was barely five feet tall and wore a size zero. Her lessons were to the point, filled with lively anecdotes and examples, and her assignments were real-world based. A no-nonsense bundle of energy, she challenged her students to be true academics, along with providing the research tools to build a future scholarly vocation. In publication after publication, she proved herself an expert who others sought out for advice. Her work in the field of reading, children's television, and education policy landed her a position as the United States Assistant Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education in 2001, under President George W. Bush. Working beside her, I learned to delve into real research, gather data, and present it in a comprehensible manner. So thank you, Dr. Susan B. Neuman, you remain an inspiration not only to me, but also to others who were fortunate enough to have crossed your path.

Another professor, who was known by his pipe smoke wafting down the halls, inspired me to be a writer. With a twinkle in his eye and a sideways grin, he would say, "Work on the book that is inside you, it pays better than articles for journals." As chairperson of my dissertation committee, author of textbooks that I still consult, and encouragement I still keep, thank you, Dr. Tom Devine, I hope my book is published soon.

I often tell my own students, "You'll thank me later!" when I am particularly demanding or hold them to high standards such as adhering to deadlines and specifications of assignments, being on-time and prepared for class, using Standard English in all communications, and practicing excellence in all they do - always. (No slackers need apply!) I hope in the future, even if they do not remember my name or my face, that they remember the lessons, and pass them along to their trainees, mentees, or newbies. As all of life is an apprenticeship, mentors are not only necessary, we cannot do without them. They instill dreams, show us the way to success, and mold us into what we ultimately grow into and become. So my challenge is this: instead of waiting until later, why not thank your mentor today?

Engaging students through social media to promote learning

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Faculty continually seek mechanisms to communicate with and engage students in learning. Over the last few years, I have found that using various social media tools has both helped me connect with students and enhanced my teaching as well. For those unfamiliar with various new media tools, they can be intimidating at first but are actually quite user-friendly.

To get started, if you use a tool outside your course management system, I suggest using a Google product such as Blogger, YouTube, Docs, Picassa, Alerts, and Reader. By using Google products you will be able to streamline your access by having one user name and password; all you need is a Google account.

EXAMPLES OF SOCIAL MEDIA TOOLS TO PROMOTE STUDENT LEARNING

Below are descriptions of various media tools and their uses which faculty might want to utilize in their courses to promote student learning:

What is a Wiki? A Wiki is a collaborative website which can be edited easily by multiple users. Wikipedia is one of the largest Wikis available. There are several things you can do in a wiki: create a multiple page website, see who added what to each page, see previous versions of a page, upload images, movies, and files, and link to other websites.

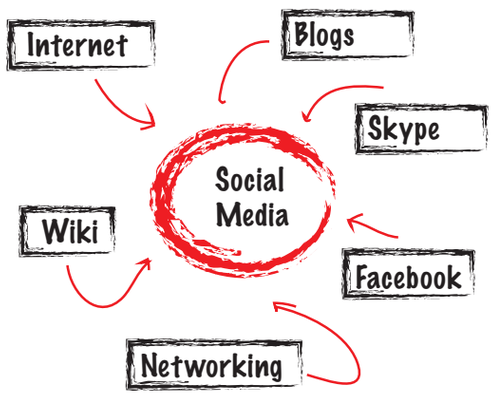
Why Use a Wiki? Wikis allow students to collaborate and share work and resources from a variety of areas. There are numerous ways you can use this tool. You can create a course website where students can add links to online resources throughout the semester, or create a "class notes" page and assign students different topics to fill in. You could also have students work together to create a Wiki page for a final project using text, video, images, etc. If you run out of time and can't finish a group activity in class, then move the activity onto a Wiki for collaboration before your next class. Use a Wiki to help students brainstorm ideas or to summarize the main points of an assigned reading; students can be divided into groups with their own group Wiki and each student is asked to contribute a main point not already listed. Create a program Wiki and use it as a data source for all classes and work. Keep in mind that it's easy to link your Wiki to your Learning Management System (LMS) course site.

Creating a Wiki: There are various websites that you can use to create a Wiki including pbwikiworks, wet paint, wikispaces, zoho wiki, curriki, and Sites by Google. I've personally used pbwikiworks and Sites (by Google); my preference is Sites. Sites is an easy access webpage, where you can use templates to create the finished product desired. From Google's main page you click on, 'create new site' and the program will walk you through the selections to create your site. You can restrict the access to this page or make it visible to the world.

Wikis can be an extremely useful tool for an educator, but do not assume that all students know how to use a Wiki. I typically show a YouTube video from the Common Craft®, to show the purpose of the site. I also demonstrate the use of the site in class which takes some time but is worth the investment so that students learn to use the site efficiently.

How Wiki's enhance students' engagement and learning: Wikis allow students to actively engage in the learning process as they collaborate with other students. Faculty can control the wiki and can observe students' progress in the design of their work.

What is a Blog? A blog is a website created by either an individual or a group of people for the purpose of commenting on a specific subject. Blogs are made up of entries that can include text, images, videos or links to other websites. Blogs are often used for online journals or conversations about a particular topic.



Why use a Blog? There are a different ways that blogs can be used. Students can create a blog throughout the semester to reflect on different topics or document a large project they are working on. The instructor can create different blogs on various topics for students to comment on or use a blog as a running discussion rather than a threaded discussion board. Create a blog and have students use it to post their weekly journal entries for a service learning project and encourage other students to comment on each other's experiences. If you have students studying abroad, they can create a blog reflecting on their experiences to be shared with students still on campus. You could also have students contribute to blogs related to their field of study.

Creating a Blog Two of the most popular websites for blogs are blogger.com (formally, blogspot) and wordpress. In keeping with the spirit of a one user name account, try Blogger which is a Google product. Once you follow the prompts, creating a new account is relatively easy. There are a variety of templates that exist in the program to make starting a blog very simple.

Ways to use a Blog You can do several things with a blog- - upload images and videos, link to other websites, and have more than one author. I work with four different blogs in my teaching: *1) Internship Blog:* On a weekly basis, students in my internship class write comments about what they are learning and share it with each other. I use a blog instead of a paper or electronic version of a journal because it archives the blog posts and can be read by future students. Additionally, students have the opportunity to comment on each other's experiences and allow me to comment on a post. *2) Work Experience Blog:* This blog is for students to share their insights during field experiences. Again, the option to read what their classmates are doing helps emphasize the importance of experience in the industry. *3) Service Learning Blog:* This blog is for students doing community service learning, which is a required component of my Hospitality Service Management class. Each student must post their weekly journal entry on the blog and then comment on each other's posts. *4) Introduction to Blogs:* This blog was a class assignment which required students to find two blogs and follow the posts of the bloggers for three weeks and then post a comment on the bloggers' page. Instead of a hard copy assignment, the students submit a link and answers to assigned questions on the blog. Not only did it get students to read material in the field, but it provided a great resource to other blogs for the industry as a reference point for students.

How Blogs enhance students' engagement and learning Blogs are a great tool for students to use individually or collaboratively. The archive feature allows students to return to their original posts to see progress in their writing. For the journal type blog, it provides a source of history to help students feel comfortable in an unfamiliar situation such as an internship.

What is Facebook? Facebook is a social networking site where people write to each other privately, publicly or within a group. Users can upload and share images and videos, and connect with other people by "friending" them.

Why use Facebook? Students are often on Facebook in their leisure time, so if you send messages via Facebook, they are likely to see it sooner than through the college email system. There are several ways that you can use Facebook. You can create a group within the site to share ideas, pictures, links etc. and can instant message (known as 'Chat') within the site.

Creating a Facebook account Start by going to www.facebook.com and follow the prompts to create an account. Facebook is constantly updating its security features found in the account tab. You can create lists and essentially file your 'friends' into various lists; this will help quickly organize access to content you want to share. Two other features, "Groups" and "Page," can assist you in communication with students.

Using Facebook Several features are useful with Facebook. You can conduct asynchronous chats using Facebook's instant messaging feature, upload images and videos, and post a link to other websites or articles and news feeds of importance to students in your course. You can send private or public messages to your class or create an event to which you invite students. Facebook will serve as a reminder for students to attend the event.

How Facebook enhances student engagement and learning The ability to post critical material via links to articles or websites can be a great way to enhance the learning experience. Students find it fun to follow some of my posts, so I try to make them entertaining and informative. By including an article or a reminder to watch a movie or television program, they will be more apt to follow-through, leading to some great conversations in the classroom.

What is Skype? Skype is a voice over internet protocol (VOIP) service. Skype allows you to call or instant message others on the computer with or without a webcam to include video. The download and use of Skype to another Skype member is free.

Why use Skype? Skype has many purposes. You can connect with your students outside the classroom or communicate with students studying abroad. An instant message feature on the site can be used in place of talking on the phone or in conjunction with phone communication. You can upload and share a document or file to review while on the phone. Webcams allow video access to see each other, but you can also just use the audio feature as if talking on the phone.

Creating a Skype account In order to get started, go to www.skype.com. Download the free software and create your account. The system will then walk you through a process to check that the microphone and webcam are working correctly.

Using Skype in class Using Skype in the classroom can be fun for students. For example, you can assign a field work project and have students report on location back to the class. You can participate in a collaborative project with students at another school or with students taking classes abroad. Consider using Skype for group work outside of class. If you are teaching an online class, you can have up to fifteen students on as a conference call at one time. My favorite use is to have a guest speaker join you yet who can't physically be on campus or in the classroom. When I have had speakers join my classes remotely, I set up my laptop with the webcam facing the classroom, and the speaker is projected on the large classroom screen.

How Skype enhances students' engagement and learning Skype has boundless possibilities, as I am able to reach out further in the professional community to help share experiences with my students. I've found on many occasions that I can repeat the same thing many times, but, my students don't quite 'hear' me, however, when I have a guest speaker say the same message, they connect!

As described, there are many options to engage students using new social media tools. If you don't currently use any of these tools, they may seem somewhat overwhelming. My suggestion is to select one tool to get started, and practice until you become more comfortable before adding the next tool to your education arsenal. As a resource, check out my link to a wiki, developed for use at the presentation made for the NEFDC Conference in Fall of 2009: https://sites.google.com/site/hospitalitywebtools/. As social media tools continue to grow in popularity, educators need to find ways to incorporate them to enhance the learning process.

Vampires, and zombies, and ghosts, oh my… run! The undead in the college classroom

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Vampires have been a mainstay of popular culture since the time of Bram Stoker. However, in recent years Stefenie Meyer's phenomenally popular novel/film series Twilight has breathed new life into our fascination with the bloodsucking undead. At the same time, *Economist, The New York Times,* and *Publishers Weekly* have noted the increasing popularity of the zombie, and Time magazine has proclaimed them "the new vampires." From the black comedy *Zombieland* and the satirical *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* to the deadly serious AMC series *The Walking Dead* and countless zombie-based video games, zombies appear to surround us. And thanks to the drama *Ghost Whisperer* and the "paranormal investigation" series *Ghost Hunters* and *Ghost Hunters International,* specters haunt the collective psyche of our students. The series *Being Human* (both the British original seen on BBC America and the North American reboot airing on the SyFy Channel) capitalizes on these individual pop culture darlings, featuring three twenty-something roommates – a werewolf, and vampire, and a ghost – who try to navigate the everyday demands of their generation's lifestyle while simultaneously trying to come to terms with their new "conditions."

It would be easy to dismiss these seemingly frivolous flights of fancy as yet another sign of the decline of Western Culture. However, in doing so we would be missing a unique opportunity to turn our students' interests out of the classroom into an opening to engage them in myriad academic subjects. This is especially important in the dreaded general education requirements, where students often come to the classroom with the mistaken impression that the topic we are teaching has no relevant connection to either their major or their everyday life. Below is a sample of concrete suggestions for faculty in diverse fields for integrating our students' fascination with the undead into our classrooms.

Critical thinking: A search of The Committee for Skeptical Inquiry's website http://www.csicop.org/ will yield numerous case studies of supposed ghost sightings. Students can review one or more of these case studies and then apply critical thinking skills to personal experiences of supposed haunting gathered from friends, family, or classmates.

Genetics: In *Breaking Dawn,* the fourth installment of the *Twilight* series, Meyer explains that while humans have 23 pairs of chromosomes, werewolves have 24 and vampires 25. How, then, can Bella and Edward produce a child, and how does a vampire's genetic make-up suddenly change when they are "turned"? Students can apply the concept of speciation to Meyer's series and discuss the problems of her supernatural genetics.

Physics: A paper by two physicists posted on the arXiv science preprint website in 2007 demonstrated why many of the supposed properties of zombies, ghosts, and vampires are inconsistent with basic laws of physics. Faculty in introductory physics classes may find this unique application of their class material just the ticket they need to engage reluctant students.

Ethics: A central theme in Season One of *The Walking Dead* was euthanasia. Characters struggle with the issue in terms of putting zombies out of their misery (assuming that they actually "feel") as well as pre-emptive "putting down" of those who have been bitten and are doomed to become numbered among the walking dead. Students may have emotional difficulty discussing the euthanasia of pets in class, so this theoretical exercise allows students to begin a dialogue about the various sides of the euthanasia issue in the abstract before applying it to the more controversial issue of human right-to-die laws.

History: In the film *I am Legend* a cancer vaccine gone awry turns 99% of the human race into cannibalistic creatures. A scientist conducts experiments on the mutant "Darkseekers" looking for a way to reverse the effects of the drug. In the *Resident Evil* series of zombie films, scientists working for the evil Umbrella Corporation openly conduct experiments on both zombies and uninfected humans, with predictably nefarious consequences. Unfortunately, human experimentation is not only relegated to the movies. From the atrocities committed in Nazi concentration camps to the infamous Tuskegee syphilis experiment, the twentieth century has all-too-often featured cruelty committed by man on his fellow man. Students can apply what they've learned about real history to the following questions: Do zombies and vampires have the same rights as humans? Do they have rights at all? What happens when society abridges the rights of one group by deeming them subhuman or nonhuman?

Statistics: In 2009 Canadian statisticians (Munz et al.) used the concept of a zombie infection outbreak to mathematically model how contagious diseases spread in real life. This example certainly differs from most examples included in statistics textbooks, and allows students to apply their mathematical knowledge to a popular culture application.

Social Problems: In the wake of Hurricane Katrina, several flu strains which some feared would develop into a deadly pandemic, and the Virginia Tech massacre and other campus shooting events, campuses across the country have not only developed detailed plans for dealing with natural and man-made disasters, but have attempted to publicize these plans so that students and staff will be aware of them. While this is certainly a serious topic of discussion, the injection of a little levity may make a discussion of these otherwise dry but important plans of action more palatable for students, especially in a freshman seminar class where students tend to glaze over (rather like zombies) when faced with yet another college policy. As part of their campus-wide disaster preparation, the University of Florida briefly included a Zombie Attack as one of their disaster preparedness scenarios, a light-hearted attempt to break up a normally humorless exercise. Although it is no longer found on their campus preparedness website (after media attention was drawn to the document), it has been archived by their astronomy department at http://www.astro.ufl.edu/~jybarra/zombieplan.pdf.

Politics and Public Health: The last two episodes of *The Walking Dead* focus on the Center for Disease Control in Atlanta. What do our students actually know about the CDC and its role in public health? Why are pathogens such as smallpox and anthrax stored there? In *The Walking Dead,* the CDC has failed in its mission and a single scientist remains, eventually committing suicide by remaining inside the facility as it self-destructs, rather than facing the zombie epidemic which has overrun the world outside the CDC. Faculty can use this example to discuss the government's role in protecting public health and the role of the CDC in recent health scares, such as the Anthrax-laden letters and the H1N1 flu outbreak.

Communication and survey design: As psychologists and statisticians have frequently warned, all public surveys have inherent sources of error. A short, light-hearted article published on arXiv in 2010 by Columbia University statistician Andrew Gelman uses the undead to draw attention to some of these issues, and can be used by other faculty as an engaging introduction to survey theory.

Astronomy: In the classic film *Night of the Living Dead,* the zombie outbreak is caused by a space probe that has returned from exploring Venus with a mysterious radiation. NASA is required by international law to conduct its exploration of space in such a way as to protect both our planet and others from cross-contamination from both biological and physical/chemical agents. However, the technology is not fool-proof, especially given the fact that our understanding of possible alien life is heavily skewed to our very limited concept of life –

Life As We Know It (LAWKI). Classroom discussions of space exploration and the possibility of alien life can incorporate lessons from the cautionary tales of zombie and vampire films such as the Romero classic as well as other works such as Fido, Night of the Comet, Teenage Space Vampires, Lifeforce, and The Invasion.

The undead have invaded the consciousness of our students. While we cannot stem the infection, we can certainly tap into it to engage our classes, no matter what subject we teach. In doing so, perhaps some faculty will become infected as well, but if it opens both our minds and our students' to the universality of multiple domains of human knowledge and experience, it's an infection we shouldn't try to cure.

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Munz,P., Hudea,I., Imad,J., & Smith, R.J. (2009). When Zombies Attack!: Mathematical Modelling of an Outbreak of Zombie Infection. In J.M. Tchuenche and C. Chiyaka, eds. Infectious Disease Modelling Research Progress. Hauppauge, NY: Nova Science Publishers, pp. 133-150.

Service learning as a way to engage students and serve the community

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I have used service learning projects in my undergraduate art history and related interdisciplinary classes to enable my students apply what they learn in the classroom in a real-life context with a community partner. The service learning projects allow students to experience the practical applications of art history and related interdisciplinary subjects and experience firsthand that their research and related work have direct application in the world outside their classroom. Students are required to use critical thinking skills in planning and presenting to others what they have discovered in the course of their research.

I have incorporated service learning projects in my both my lower-level and upper-level art history and interdisciplinary courses over the past several years. At Pine Manor College, I am part of an academic community committed to the College mission of promoting inclusive leadership and social responsibility, which includes our work with various community partners.

In my lower-level art history courses, students form small groups in which to design and present interactive learning activities for middle school and high school students. The content of these activities is based on the art and artists the students research over the course of the semester. Through their service learning projects, my college students introduce painting and sculpture to younger students who have little or no exposure to art. They assume the role of art educators in their design and presentation of informative and fun activities with the younger students.

For example, in my 19th century art course, students researched and wrote papers on a particular painting or sculpture depicting either a portrait or a scene of everyday life. These genres were chosen because they would be most accessible to middle school students with little or no art history background. In particular, the broader issues of identity and everyday life in a community would appeal to these younger students. The community partner for this class was the after-school program at a local middle school. Since there is no specific academic curriculum in this after-school program, my students and I were relatively free to design a learning activity of our choosing. With funding cutbacks in the school's arts education program, teachers were eager to have their students involved in our service learning project. Our project is part of a larger tradition discussed by Taylor (2002) where studio art is used in service learning projects.[1]

Beyond their research papers, my students needed to think about how to: a) share their knowledge with the middle school students, b) have the middle school students learn something

about nineteenth-century portraits and scenes of everyday life, and c) do all of the above in a series of fun/interactive activities or games. In small groups, based on the type of portraits or scenes of everyday life, students identified common elements among their paintings and sculptures as well as differences and used this information to come up with themes to be addressed in their service learning project. Finally, the students designed an interactive activity for the children.

Although the focus of this course was the history of nineteenth-century art, in the service learning project my students had to assume the role of art educators with their hands-on activities. For some of my students this was their first exposure to the academic discipline and potential career path of art education.

I have also incorporated service learning projects in my upper-level courses. In The City of Boston, an advanced interdisciplinary course, students worked on a semester-long service learning project. They were divided into different teams to research various aspects of the Boston Harbor Islands based on the needs and interests of the Boston City Archaeologist who was in the early phases of planning a visitor's center. Students consulted both primary and secondary sources for their research. Each team was responsible for an action plan, a rough draft, and a final version of its report and related work.

By the end of the semester, each team presented their research to me and the Boston City Archaeologist. Students were also required to write a reflective essay on their contribution to their group, their collaboration with their classmates, and the value of their service learning project to the community partner. Since this was a semester-long project, students were more invested in the service learning project and more personally connected to our community partner. A guided visit to some of the islands led by the archaeologist made this project real and tangible for my students. Some of the student work presented may be used in the future design of a visitor's center for the Boston Harbor Islands.

Based on these experiences incorporating service learning into my courses, I have found that there are three important considerations for incorporating service learning into a course. First, make sure that you select a service learning project that is appropriate for the level of the class in order to make sure that students have the necessary knowledge and skills required in the project. For example, an introductory or lower-level class most likely will not have the research experience required for a project with a community partner like the Boston City Archaeologist. Second, finding the right community partner is crucial. A community partner who is unavailable or largely uninterested can be detrimental to the success of a project. It is important to have a partner who is willing to communicate with the students and share information and ideas. Third, it is essential to listen to the needs of a community partner. The community partner needs to be invested in the process and genuinely believe that there is something to be gained by participating in your service learning project. Interest on the part of the community partner also emphasizes to the students the relevance and importance of their research.

Related to this third point is the issue of assessment. While my community partners have always commented on my students' work after each presentation or class activity, I now realize that I need to give community partners an opportunity to reflect more extensively on what they see as the value of the project, what went well, and how it might be improved upon in the future. In particular, I need to design an assessment tool that measures goals at the beginning of the project and then assesses how and to what degree those goals were met by the student work at the end of the semester. Assessment models are offered by Billig & Waterman (2003) and Payne (2000). [2] In the future I will use this assessment tool as a mandatory component in a service learning project contract between my class and a community partner.

The impact of adding a service learning component to my art history and related interdisciplinary courses on student learning was significant. The service learning projects resulted in students becoming more engaged in their learning as they recognize that their work has a larger impact in the community. Furthermore, students' critical thinking skills are enhanced as they do the research not just to write a paper, but must think about how their work can be used to benefit others. Service learning projects turned my students into active learners as they educate others in the community. My students' reflections and collaborative work revealed a better understanding of the practical applications of art history and related interdisciplinary subjects. This combination of enhanced student engagement and concern for the community lie at the center of my service learning projects.

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Notes

1 Taylor (2002)

2 Billig & Waterman (2003) and Payne (2000).

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Models for Effective Collaborative Learning: Student-to-Student Mentoring

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The significance of student-to-student mentoring for learning is well-known and has been largely documented in the collaborative learning literature (O'Donnell, Hmelo-Silver, & Erkens, 2006). In the collaborative learning model, learning shifts away from the instructor-centered approach to embrace the joint intellectual effort of students working together. Under the assumption that learning is an active and socially constructed process (Vygostsky, 1978) students are encouraged to work in groups to discover meaning and create new knowledge. Immersed in an educational situation of mutual engagement and dependency, students become immediately involved with the materials, with each other and their own learning. The range of skills developed by working collaboratively, (exploring ideas, contrasting and comparing opinions, providing mutual feedback, and reaching agreement), far exceeds the skills that can be attained by individual work. In the last decades, the focus of the research on collaborative learning has shifted from describing the parameters for effective collaboration (size of group, composition, communication media, etc.) to focus on the analysis of the role these parameters play for mediating interaction (Dillenbourg, Baker, Blaye, & O'Malley, 1996). The main interest of this study is the understanding of the interaction between students (student-to-student mentoring) and its role in supporting learning.

Purpose of the Study

This research looks at mentoring models as the key mechanism for facilitating communication and effective collaborative learning. We investigated and explored eight groups of students enrolled in an MBA class and the mentoring models that emerged from their interaction during the fall 2010 semester. The exploration focused on the identification of differences among the models and their influence on the learning experience of the students.

Definitions of Terms

Mentoring Models: refers to the different structures of relationships and responsibilities established within each group.
Project Managers: in each group, a small number of students volunteered to assume the role of project managers. They were responsible for communicating, planning and executing the project.
Wiki: a Wiki is a website that allows the creation and editing of documents via a web browser.

Methodology

The subject of study is a class of 160 MBA students. The class was divided in eight groups of approximately 20 students. Within each group, students were asked to carry out a research

project and to use a wiki to write collaboratively a "chapter quality" paper based on their individual field research and their common findings. Six groups met only online–these were online classes, and two of the groups met in traditional face-to-face classrooms. Volunteers were recruited from each group to act as project managers. The role of the project managers is to coordinate and manage the work for the group; keep the group on task, provide examples, set up communication channels for students to ask questions, provide feedback and collaboratively generate content and knowledge. Different numbers of students volunteered to serve as project managers in each group and as a consequence different mentoring models emerged.

The following two main models emerged:
One-to-Many: Figure 1: One student assumed the role of project manager

Many-to-Many: Figure 2 and 3
Two or more students assumed the role of project managers

Project managers had absolute autonomy in the organization, planning and distribution of the work. There were no restrictions on the communication channels chosen by the project managers and no monitoring of the quantity or quality of communication between project managers or among students.

Students were assessed on the quality of the final group project as well as on their individual contributions. Data about students' experiences were collected confidentially at the end of the class.

Discussion of Findings

In three groups the One-to-Many model emerged: one project manager coordinated the work and communicated with the other nineteen students. The other five groups adopted the Many-to-Many model with some degree of variation. The variation of the Many-to-Many models reflects the different degrees of interaction and engagement developed among project managers. As shown in figure 4 and figure 5, the levels of engagement and collaboration among project managers varied. Figure 4 shows a model with three project managers, two of which worked closely together. The model in figure 5 shows three project managers and their different levels of engagement: one main contributor (represented by the large square) and one minimally engaged in the project (represented by the small square)

Students' engagement with each other and the project managers also varied across the models. In figure 6 more engaged students are represented by being closer to the project manager's circle; students also "created" their own "work clusters" in which they collaborated, engaged and communicated with other peers (represented by squares that are closer to each other)

The Multi-Tier Model (Figure 7): One of the most remarkable findings is the emergence of the multi-tier model. In addition to the core group of three project managers, in this group other students took a leading role by coordinating and mentoring a part of the project. Each set of sub-project managers worked together with the core group to create, organize and distribute work. They engaged students by allowing them to assume leadership roles in different components of the project.

Multi-Stage in the Multi-Tier Model, (Figure 8: Stage 1; Figure 9: Stage 2 and Figure 10: Stage 3). In this model, different students acted as project managers. For instance, two project managers coordinated the work of the entire group in stage 1, assuming a leading role but relinquished it in stage 2 and 3.

Across the different models, 90% of the students rated the value of this learning activity as above average or extremely valuable for their learning (Appendix 1). A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to determine whether there were any significant differences between the means of the eight groups. One of the requirements for ANOVA is the homogeneity of the variances of the groups. The Levene's F Test of Homogeneity of Variance was met with a significance of 0.240 (table1). The significant level of the ANOVA is 0.346; this shows that the difference among the groups is not significant (table 2).

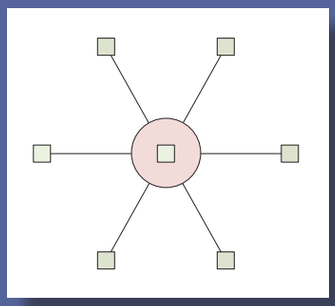

Figure 1: One Project Manager

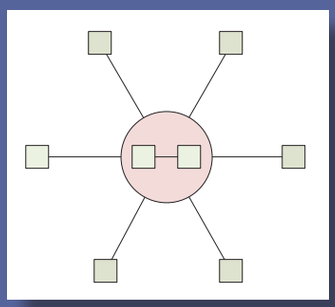

Figure 2: Two Project Managers

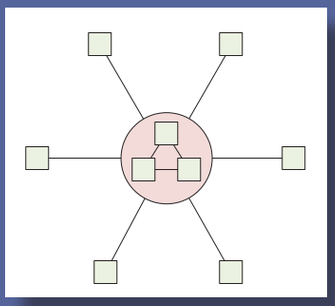

Figure 3: Three Project Managers

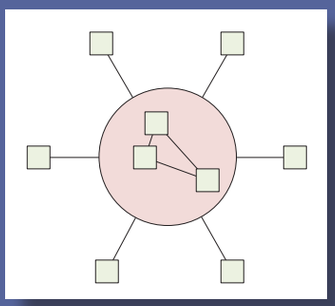

Figure 4

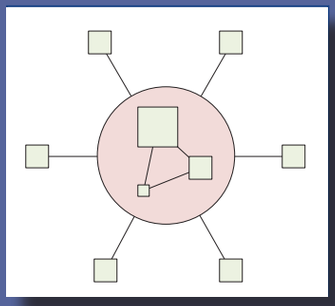

Figure 5

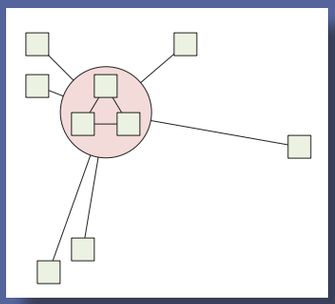

Figure 6: Group Interaction

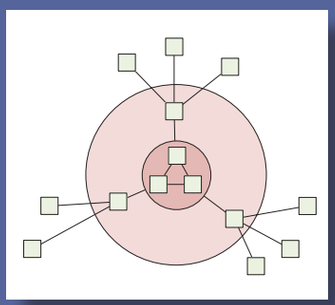

Figure 7: The Multi-Tier Model

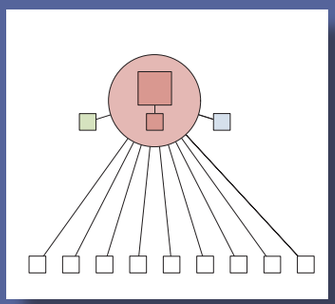

Figure 8: Stage 1

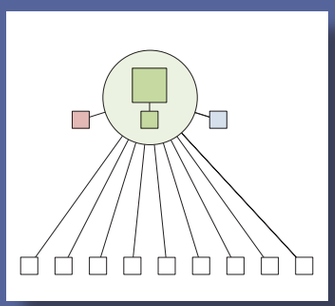

Figure 9: Stage 2

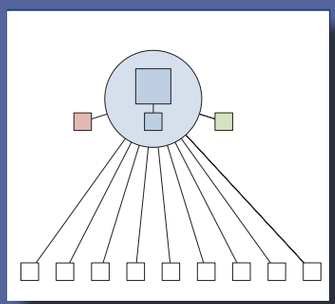

Figure 10: Stage 3

Table 1: Test of Homogeneity of Variances

Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
1.331	7	140	.240

Table 2: ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	4.604	7	.658	1.132	.346
Within Groups	81.315	140	.581		
Total	85.919	147			

Students especially liked the diverse perspectives that emerged in dialogue with their peers as well as the networking opportunities that mentoring made possible. Students recognized that the use of project managers in each group contributed tremendously to the progression of the assignment. Their main role was to communicate the goals and task to the group and to coordinate the work. Students said that the guidance of the project managers and their committed presence encouraged everyone's participation and engagement, and it was the success factor in the experience.

Project managers chose different communication channels to organize the work. Some used email, others the course management system's discussion board, telephone, or the wiki itself as a communication and planning platform. The research project was created collaboratively in the wiki, where students had the opportunity to see, edit and add to the postings of their peers. Email notifications were sent automatically to each member when new content was added. Students mentioned that this feature allowed them to keep abreast not only on what their classmates were thinking, but also reminded them of the group's objectives, the timeliness of their individual inputs and the final timeline of the process.

According to Slavin (1989) individual accountability, in addition to group goals, is an essential component for successful collaborative learning. A preliminary task, prior to the joint writing of the book chapter, was established. This preliminary task of the project involved interviewing experts in the field of expertise of each student. Groups were encouraged to work together in the development of common interview questions but ultimately, each student had to conduct the interview on his/her own. The instructor assessed the value of these contributions individually. Data suggests that students whose independent contributions were of better quality (higher value=higher grades) were more engaged and valued the collaborative learning experience more than those who did so poorly, however further analysis is needed to verify the significance of this factor.

Students said that the initial individual work required for the project helped familiarize, involve, and prepare every one for the group project. The wiki software offers a historic view on the evolution of its content, post by post with author and date stamp. This transparency was made apparent from the start and provided students reassurance on the accountability and responsibility expected from every member.

Students also commented positively on the multiple layers of the project. By design, individual contributions were recognized as well as the coherence and quality of the final collaborative product. This forced students to interact, collaborate, and support each other. The following student's comment well

describes the interaction made possible in the wiki: "the best part of working with wikis is that contributors can talk to one another at the bottom of the page regarding how to approach putting the document together, what type of changes to make, how to get agreement on contentious changes, etc.".

Implications for Instruction

According to the data collected in this collaborative learning experience, students engaged deeply in the learning process, and took responsibility for their own learning and the learning of their peers. At the end of the semester, the average quality of the projects created by the students in this study was higher than the average quality of the individual projects presented in previous years by comparable student cohorts. In addition to this finding, the purpose of this study was to determine the influence of each mentoring model on the students' learning experience. We found no significant differences among the groups based on the different mentoring models; however, there was consensus among students on the pivotal role played by project managers in making this learning experience a success.

It is interesting to mention that when we asked students how many project managers there were in their groups, only 61% of them were able to correctly identify their groups as having one versus more than one project manager. This interesting finding could mean that the structure of the group, the mentoring model itself does not need to be explicit to all members to be effective. The role played by the project managers, their capacity to engage, guide, and help in the task was a common characteristic of effective leadership mentioned by all students. This finding has significant implications for educators involved in collaborative learning. According to our findings, incorporating a mentoring model for group interaction can enhance the learning experience of all students. Students appreciate and value the committed presence of a peer whose role is to foster engagement, provide guidance, and offer support.

Teaching with these mentoring models requires the instructor to mentor and support project managers as they develop and implement their own strategies for collaboration and mentoring. It is essential to convey to project managers the need to continuously communicate with students and to encourage students to take initiative. It is also important for the instructor to show commitment to the project and to demonstrate presence on the wiki (i.e. provide feedback to students, set up wiki pages with examples and/or clear instructions, etc.). This instructor presence establishes a close relation not only between instructor and project managers but also between instructor and students. Instructors must also make explicit to all students the value of developing student-to-student mentoring skills for advancing their careers, enhancing their education, and building their networks.

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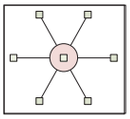
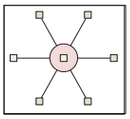
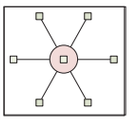
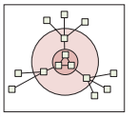
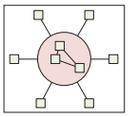
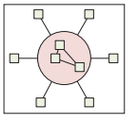
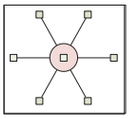
Appendix 1

GROUPS		LEARNING EXPERIENCE VALUE					
		Rank	Group Members		Project Mangers		Total
CC - ONLINE 19 students - 1 Project Manager (85% response rate); 1-many model	 Communication between PM & group mainly by email	Below Average	1	6%			6%
		Average	3	18%			18%
		Above Average	5	31%			29%
		Extremely Valuable	7	43%	1	100%	47%
EM - ONLINE 19 students - 1 Project Manager (100% response rate) 1-many model	 Communication between PM & group mainly by email	Average	3	15%			15%
		Above Average	9	47%	1	100%	50%
		Extremely Valuable	7	36%			35%
GF - ONLINE 19 students - 1 Project Manager (95% response rate) 1-many model	 Communication between PM & group mainly by email	Below Average	1	5%			5%
		Average	3	16%			16%
		Above Average	6	33%	1	100%	37%
		Extremely Valuable	8	44%			42%
BL - ONLINE 12 students - 7 Project Managers (91% response rate); 3-many mode multi-tier model (3+4 leaders)	 One PM designated as "voice of PMs" and manages all communication with group via emails and discussion board; sub-PMs communicate directly with subgroups	Above Average	7	63%	1	14%	45%
		Extremely Valuable	4	36%	6	86%	55%
IP - ONLINE 17 students - 3Project Managers (95% response rate); 3-many model PT - TRADITIONAL	 3-many with 2 PMs working closely. Communication mainly via email	Average	2	12%	1	33%	16%
		Above Average	9	56%	2 PMs that worked together	66.6%	58%
		Extremely Valuable	5	31%	0		26%
		Average	3	30%			25%
10 students - 2 Project Managers (100% response rate); 2-many model	 Above Average (here the 2 squares should be further away) 2PMs work together mainly via email. Communication with group via email and some real time face-to-face during class	Above Average	6	60%	2	100%	67%
		Extremely Valuable	1	10%	0		8%
RV - ONLINE 14 students - 4 Project Managers (100% response rate) 2-many, multi-stage model ; 18 responses	2-n multi-stage; PMs in stage 3 working closely together. Communication mainly via email from PM at each stage	Extremely Poor	1	7%			5.5%
		Average	2	14%			11%
		Above Average	6	42%	2	50%	44.5%
		Extremely Valuable	5	35%	2 main PM & Pm for last stage	50%	39%
SH - TRADITIONAL 24 students - 2 Project Managers (96% response rate); 2-many model total 25 students	 2PMs work closely together. Communication via wiki and some real time face-to-face during class	Average	2	8%			8%
		Above Average	13	56%			52%
		Extremely Valuable	8	34%	2	100%	40%

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