

Academic Year 2008 - 2009

“Humanistic Psychology, Creativity, and Teaching Writing” by Jenifer Augur, English/Communications Department

Humanistic psychology focuses on a person’s potential to self-actualize through the act of creativity, an anxious and exhilarating process, involving the blank page, the white canvas—a necessary “empty space” into which humans can grow, evolve, move about freely, be intentional and deliberate. Writers engage a similar process, scribbling forward with loose, inchoate ideas, giving them shape, and presenting them as product. Students worry about quality, audience and criticism, but they can be taught the nature of the creative beast, encouraged to embrace the Sisyphean task.

“Spreading Menace: Invasive Sea Squirts on the Pacific Coast of Panama” by Anne Goodwin, Biology Department

*The sea squirt *Didemnum*, a marine animal not native to the United States, is now found along both the Atlantic and Pacific coasts and is the dominant animal in some environments. There are no known predators of healthy specimens. *Didemnum* forms mat-like colonies that are acidic, but little is known about this defense mechanism. In collaboration with Stephan Bullard (University of Hartford-Hillyer College) and Mary Carman (Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution) and MCLA students, I am examining the acid defenses of these organisms at the New England coastline, and am surveying sea squirt populations along the Pacific coast of Panama. We have found that *Didemnum* specimens are more acidic than other sea squirts at Cape Cod, and that colonies growing on living substrates are more acidic than those growing on non-living substrates. We did not find *Didemnum* at any of our research sites near Coiba National Park in Panama, though we did find greater numbers and variety of sea squirts at sites with human population and boat traffic, compared to seldom-visited island sites.*

“26 Days in Europe: Fashion, Shoes and Fans, Oh My!” by Dawn Shamburger, Fine and Performing Arts Department

“Broadcasting & the “Johari Window” Effect” by Joseph Ebiware, English/Communications Department

Often times, people who see themselves on video and/or hear their voices on audio recording have an intuitive negative or positive assessment of what they see or hear. While some are comfortable and therefore, conclude that they like how they look and sound on tape, others think the opposite. Respondents’ conclusions about how they look or sound on audio-visual recording may be invalid from the perspective of the “Johari Window.” Joseph Luft and Harry Ingham who developed this “window” attempted to prove the various self-concepts we have in an inter-personal communication situation and also provide a graphic inventory of types of personal information that may influence the dynamics of inter-personal communication. The authors classify the four panes as “Open”, “Blind”, “Hidden”, “Unknown. According to them, the “Blind” pane consists of all the things (including, physical & personality attributes) about oneself that other people perceive but that are not known to one. While the study revealed that most people are not comfortable seeing or hearing themselves on tape, the reason for their discomfort is beyond the scope of the study.

“Improving Student’s Laboratory Report Writing Through Peer Evaluation” by Rob Harris, Chemistry Department

Peer-evaluation of works in the academic community is the normal means for the expansion of the knowledge base. Peer-evaluation also fosters academic discussions which ultimately lead to improved scholarship. Devising a system that would allow our students engage in the peer-review process would provide them with many of the same benefits. Using the on-line tools in Blackboard Vista and First class provided the students enrolled in CH201 (Organic Chemistry I) an opportunity to participate in the peer-evaluation process. During the first trial of this system, the students wrote a laboratory report and submitted it electronically. Each student then read three of their peer’s reports and evaluated using a provided rubric and excel spreadsheet. The students’ response to the peer-evaluation system as well as the plans for the expansion of the system to a non majors’ science course will be discussed.

“Critics to the Left, Critics to the Right: A Comparative Analysis of Position to the Security and Prosperity Partnership in Canada, Mexico and the United States” by Bob Bence, History /Geography/Political Science Department

In March 2005 at Waco, Texas, Mexican President Vicente Fox, Canadian Prime Minister Paul Martin and U.S. President George Bush agreed to form a Security and Prosperity Partnership (SPP). The stated purpose was to promote North American trade AND security. The SPP was driven in large part by international businesses and North American “integrationsists” seeking to establish a continental free trade zone inside a Bush administration circumscribed terrorism defense perimeter. Opposition to the SPP rapidly developed in all three nations. While there was some minimal overlap of goals and cooperation among critics in Mexico, Canada and the U.S., the distinct political cultures in each nation prevented effective trilateral political action.