INCOMING STUDENTS: ARE THEY READY?

FACTC Focus 2009

Also – Compare salaries at Community and Technical Colleges across the state – full time and part time faculty, college presidents and district CEOs.

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The FACTC Facts Faculty, Presidential and CEO Salary Data

Grade Forgiveness: A Good Idea?

By Ruth Frickle, Highline Community College

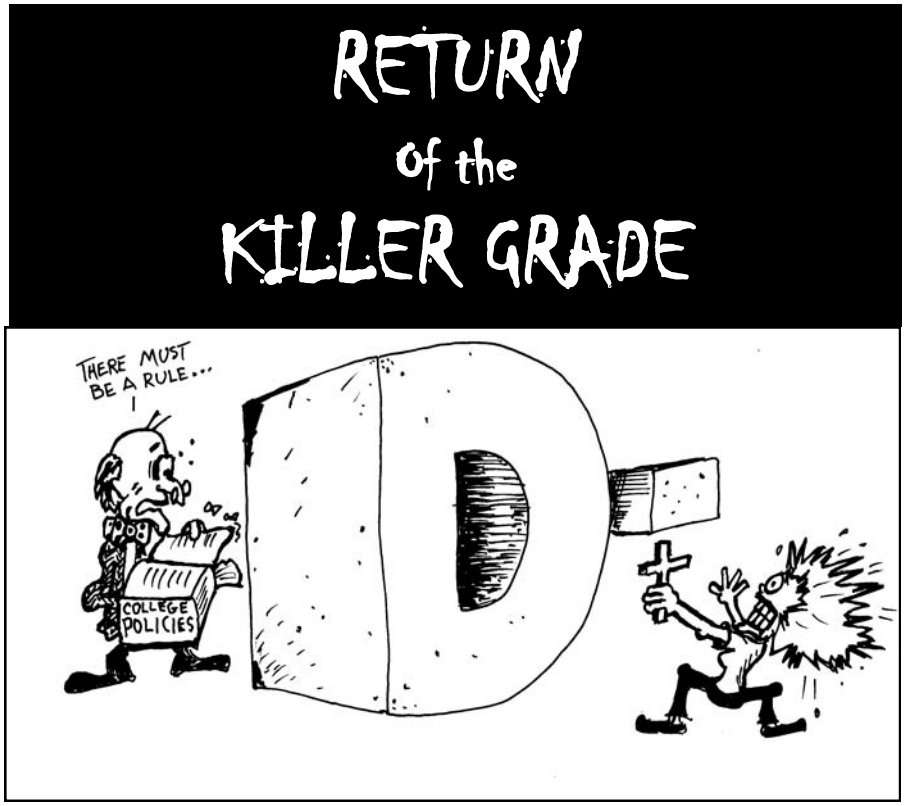
Earlier in the school year our registrar, Kate Bligh, brought an academic policy to the attention of the Faculty Senate, noting a recent uptick in the number of students availing themselves of the option provided by the policy. The policy in question was our "Statute of Limitations on Grades"; the name alone indicated a need for review. The Senate decided to review the language and to compare our policy to similar policies at other schools. In addition, we asked Kate to collect some data on the students who availed themselves of the policy.

The policy, like others of its type, allows students who had a rough time academically in the past to exclude grades from those previous enrollment periods from calculations of their current GPA. By and large these policies set strict parameters. Grades that have counted toward the completion of a degree or certificate may not be excluded, nor may selected grades be excluded. All grades and credits accumulated prior to the selected date are excluded from the current GPA calculation. The grades remain on the transcript and it is made clear that other schools may not (indeed probably will not) honor the exclusion.

In our research* we found that of the 31 community and technical colleges in Washington State, 18 have such policies and 13 do not (see table, page 5). In an informal survey of colleagues via a national list serve, I found that some universities offer similar policies and was privy to the personal stories of colleagues teaching at R1 schools who benefited from grade forgiveness in their undergraduate years (and it didn't seem to negatively affect their admission to a good graduate program).

When we initially took up the discussion, we didn't have enough information to know whether we thought this policy was a good one or one that should be revoked. Our registrar's research eliminated any concern we may have had. Since 2004, the option has been invoked by just 36 students. The grades and credits set aside dated back as far as 1972. As many as 110 credits and as few as 5 credits were set aside by individual students. Every student then went on to complete a degree or certificate and one third of them graduated with honors.

From this information it was clear to us that the policy is well used and, while ours needs some rewording and a new name, it works well. Students often come to us unprepared for college, indecisive and with too much on their plates. They do poorly or fail outright and they don't show their eventual potential, but sometimes they return to us ready to work and move ahead in their lives. When we allow them to set aside grades, they can complete their credential without having to take extra courses just to bring up their GPA. This improves efficiency (the dreaded 'lingering student' is avoided) and the student isn't unduly penalized for their earlier difficulties. Community colleges are often in the business of second chances, and this is one way of providing them in a way that is fair and economical.



*by a review of college catalogs

Grade Forgiveness Policies at Washington's Community and Technical Colleges

College	grade forgiveness policy	
	Yes	No
Bates Technical College		X
Bellevue College		X
Bellingham Technical College		X
Big Bend Community College		X
Cascadia Community College	X	
Centralia Community College	X	
Clark College	X	
Clover Park Technical College	X	
Columbia Basin College	X	
Edmonds Community College		X
Grays Harbor Community College	X	
Green River Community College		X
Highline Community College	X	
Lake Washington Technical College	X	
Lower Columbia College	X	
Olympic College	X	
Peninsula College	X	
Pierce College (Ft. Steilacoom & Puyallup)	X	
Renton Technical College		X
Seattle Community Colleges (Central, North & South)		X
Shoreline Community College	X	
Skagit Valley College		X
South Puget Sound Community College	X	
Spokane & Spokane Falls Community Colleges		X
Tacoma Community College	X	
Walla Walla Community College	X	
Wenatchee Valley College	X	
Yakima Valley Community College		X
	18	13

F **Focus**

GETTING PRE-COLLEGE STUDENTS CONNECTED

By Phil Venditti
Clover Park Technical College

A QUESTION OF APPROACH

If we want to help people become ice skaters, we can prepare them by explaining the mechanics of skating and discussing proper form. We can have them practice standing in skates. We can gather other aspiring skaters and hold classes with them. We can invite Olympic skating judges to our classes and have them describe what constitutes outstanding skate performance. How many of these people will actually become skaters, though, if they never enter an ice rink or observe a skating competition in person?

UNDERPREPARED STUDENTS—NUMBERS AND NEEDS

At least half of American undergraduates require some kind of developmental study. For a few, low motivation or an inability to meet the intellectual demands inherent in postsecondary education make it unlikely that they will ever complete their studies there. For others, financial and work-related demands will short-circuit their plans.

Roger Nix, ABE Instructor

Still others, however, possess sufficient intelligence, motivation, time, and money to make it through--but lack other necessary tools and understandings. Why is this? One reason is that most students doing pre-college work—many of

whom are the first in their families to attempt postsecondary education—neither visit college-level classes nor spend time with students enrolled in them. As a result, they fail to develop a vision of how to navigate through a course of study to the point of completing it.

THE CCSIP

A pilot program has been launched at Clover Park Technical College to address this phenomenon. The undertaking is being called the "Collaborative Cross-Course Student Involvement Project" (CCSIP).

The CCSIP is designed to provide mutually enjoyable, educational experiences for pre-college and college students which lead both cohorts to persist more readily toward their academic goals. Five faculty members and approximately 110 students are involved in the pilot, with invaluable support from the CPTC instructional administration.

A public speaking student taking notes in learning about a developmental English student

All the students in CMST& 220—the credit-bearing public speaking course whose title conforms to Washington's postsecondary common course numbering scheme—are being assigned at random to people taking ESL, adult basic education, or credit-bearing developmental English classes. Each pair of CMST students is expected to gather enough information about its "subject" over a six-week period to deliver a 10- to 14-minute speech about that person.

CHALLENGES

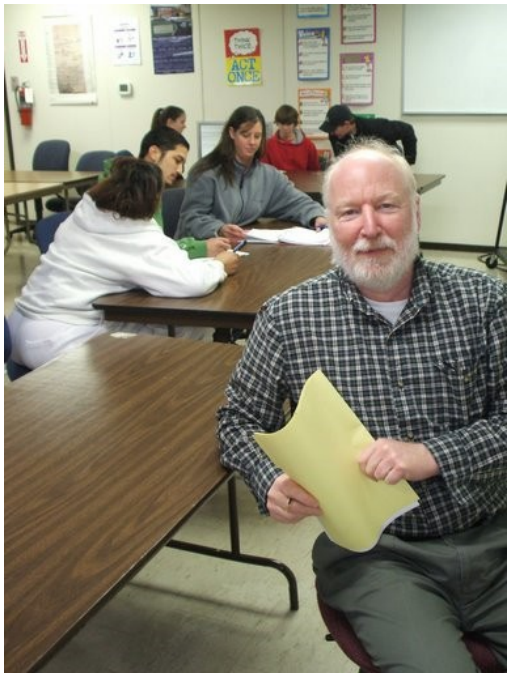
Nothing important comes easily. Several obstacles render a program like the CCSIP difficult to create and implement.

For one thing, a lot of planning and record-keeping needs to be undertaken. Coordinating meetings and keeping information flowing among participants takes time and ongoing attention. Because everyone is busy, maintaining a timetable of activities that fits everyone's schedules calls for extra effort. Furthermore, administrators and others outside the project need to be apprised of what's going on.

Likewise, ensuring that all CCSIP students meet initially with their "subjects" and then understand and fulfill their ensuing responsibilities requires careful planning and communication. Uneven attendance by individuals in either the pre-college or college cohort can further complicate keeping to a schedule.

Heather Stevens, ESL instructor, oversees public speaking students interviewing her students

Finally, change necessitates commitment and concentration. A venture such as the CCSIP represents a significant modification in the way academic professionals do business. Faculty and students in pre-college and college-level areas respect and appreciate one another but are not accustomed to working together shoulder-to-shoulder to plan and integrate activities outside their separate classrooms. A project of this nature must contend with and work within entrenched systems and patterns of behavior whose utility has been accepted for years.



Marion "Morf" Morford in his developmental English class during interview sessions.

PROJECT GOALS

If all goes well in the CCSIP project, we anticipate several positive outcomes. First, we hope that our college's public speaking students will learn how to work better in pairs. They should also learn to initiate contact with strangers and conduct interviews which lead them to understand the perspectives of adults whose academic status differs from their own, as well as how to organize and deliver a presentation which conveys interesting information about another human being.

Second, we hope that the ABE/GED/ESL and developmental English students will gain self-esteem from being the subjects of

interviews. Likewise, they should get to know other people who have selected Clover Park as a place where they invest their time and work toward life goals. Further, by visiting college-level class sessions they should develop a picture of how to plan their own academic pathways.

Finally, we hope that more ABE/GED/ESL and developmental education students than in the past will finish their studies in those domains and make a successful transition into college-level coursework. Returning to our initial analogy, we want people interested in learning to skate to end up knowing how to skate!

F Focus

ABBREVIATIONS CONFUSION:
ARE BANKS REALLY SELLING COMPACT DISCS (CDS)? IF THERE IS A "C" NOTE IS THERE ALSO A "B" NOTE?

Study conducted by Charles McKain & Minh Nguyen
Lake Washington Technical College

Ed note: McKain and Nguyen conducted a study on how well students recognized common abbreviations. This is appropriate to our general topic of how ready students are because it gives us some idea of what students know when they come into the classroom. Faculty also might consider what terminology they use when addressing students. A good question to ask is: Do student understand the language we use?

A simple review of the literature indicates that a plethora of dictionaries, glossaries and encyclopedias define and partially describe abbreviations. Most of these publications are specific to professional fields. Further investigation yields, with few exceptions, a dearth of studies involved with the people's ability to understand or define certain abbreviations, acronyms and mnemonic devices.

PROCEDURE:

Who would imagine that "PWS" means "Public Water Supply" when applied to our $8.00 per gallon, bottled water source?

In doing this study, the investigators considered this basic question: do people understand what advertisers are saying when they use initials, mnemonics and abbreviations in their advertising? Secondly, does a person's age show a differential level of understanding (that is, do those in the age category 16 to 24 understand the same abbreviations and so forth as those in the category 25 plus)? Fi-

nally, does the gender of a subject result in differential understanding in conjunction with the age delineations?

It was determined that data based on simple measures of an ability to correctly interpret common abbreviations were the only statistics required to sufficiently communicate the findings.

Over a period of thirty days, the primary investigator compiled a list of abbreviations used in advertising on television, in newspapers, on windows (painted signage) and in various mailings. All were found in Seattle, Washington and surrounding areas. Twenty-six abbreviations were randomly selected to be used in determining the participant's ability in recognizing such terms.

SUBJECTS

Subjects were students in Introduction to Psychology and Introduction to Sociology courses. The survey was administered from March of 2006 through September of 2007. A more detailed description of the participants including the participant's average ages and average number of years in school are presented in Table 1. This may be of interest for anyone who may want to target the various gender and or age groups.

The survey material was originally aimed at training people participating in an English as a Second language (ESL) program. It was finally determined that most of the general population is exposed to advertising, so the original ESL status was ignored and the survey involved all subjects participating with no one type of person or group selected out.

RESULTS:

The archaic term "2 bits" was particularly difficult for the *24 and Under* age group to correctly identify; only 3% of the males correctly identified the term while 0 % of females correctly identified it. Another older, less common term, "C note", proved equally taxing for the under 24 groups with 19% of the males making a correct identification and females scoring 8% correct identification.

The 25 and over groups, male and female, showed 32 % and 18% correct identification on "2 bits" and 62% and 23% on "C note".

At the other extreme, the *Males Under 24* group scored 96% correctly on "M.P.H." while females scored 92%. *Males Under 24* scored 49% correctly while Females 24 and Under scored 38% correctly in the average "across all items" category.

Males Over 25 had scored correctly 90 percent of the time in only one area and that was a 91% for "Gal." (they were 89% for "M.P.H.") and *Females Over 25* also scored only one 90% or higher and it was also Gal. at 91% (M.P.H. was 87%).

It would appear that if you are selling automobiles and you advertise "M.S.R.P." on "O.A.C." you may not be communicating clearly to Females or Males especially Under Age 24 (*Females Under 24* were correct only 4.7% of the time for each term); Males were 3.8% for "O.A.C." and 25.5% on "M.S.R.P". Over Age 25 showed much higher results especially for Males; Females found "O.A.C." difficult with only 18% defining it correctly.

All Under 24s showed a strong understanding of "CD" as a compact disc but were 90% plus unaware of a certificate of deposit "CD". *Females Over 25* also found this abbreviation to be especially difficult with only 16.7% defining it correctly.

Although unintentional, there were some items that can be grouped into categories:

1. MEASUREMENTS. - Tsp, Tblsp (sic), Gal, Pt, and Lb.
2. FINANCIAL/MONEY. - M.S.R.P., 2 bits, ATM, CD (certificate of deposit), OAC, 20K and APR
3. The remaining items do not configure into any discernable categories of more than two items

TABLE 1:

Gender and Age Comparisons

	Ave. Age	Ave. yrs in schl.*	Number in grp.	% Correct**
MALES AGE 24 AND UNDER	19.19	11.96	129	49.31%
MALES AGE 25 AND OVER	35.97	12.06	37	59.36%
FEMALES AGE 24 AND UNDER	19	11.58	107	38.46%
FEMALES AGE 25 AND OVER	36.24	12.9	78	50.59%

*some students hadn't completed high school; others were in their first or second year of college. **percent correct of the 26 items

The tables for Gender and Ages and all items tested, are presented below:

Percentage correct for each item "24 and under males and females

TABLE 2:

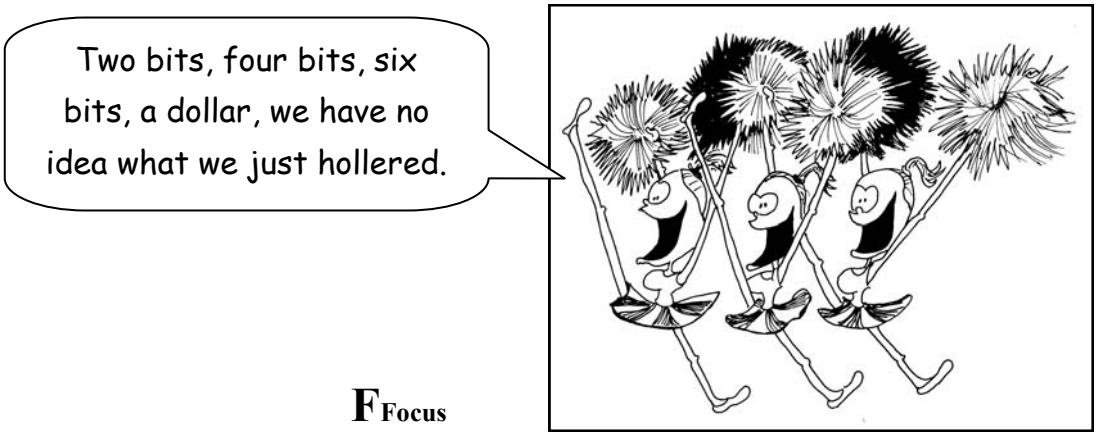
	Under 24			
Terms used	**# of Males**	**Correct %**	**# of Females**	**Correct %**
M.S.R.P.	33	25.58%	5	4.67%
C Note	25	19.38%	9	8.41%
M.P.G.	100	77.52%	44	41.12%
2 bits	4	3.10%	0	0.00%
R.A.M.	51	39.53%	5	4.67%
Tsp	109	84.50%	95	88.79%
A.T.M.	81	62.79%	33	30.84%
CD(compact)	103	79.84%	58	54.21%
CD (certif.)	10	7.75%	8	7.48%
Pt*	66	51.16%	61	57.01%
D.O.A.	61	47.29%	20	18.69%
Bio (Biology)	51	39.53%	57	53.27%
Bio (Biogra)	51	39.53%	35	32.71%
IQ	74	57.36%	39	36.45%
TLC	51	39.53%	48	44.86%
ROTC	11	8.53%	1	0.93%
RR**	34	26.36%	21	19.63%
OAC	5	3.88%	5	4.67%
C.E.O.	31	24.03%	15	14.02%
U.F.O.	102	79.07%	64	59.81%
Lb.	92	71.32%	70	65.42%
Tblsp{sic}	120	93.02%	97	90.65%
20K***	107	82.95%	64	59.81%
M.P.H.	124	96.12%	99	92.52%
A.P.R.	36	27.91%	17	15.89%
Gal.	122	94.57%	100	93.46%
Average % Correct		**49.31%**		**38.46%**

* Pt was scored correctly as Pint or Point; ** RR was scored correctly only for Railroad, not rest & relaxation; *** 20K was scored correctly with 20 thousand or 20 Kilometers. Percentage correct for each item "25 and over, males and females"

TABLE 3:

	Over 25			
Terms used	**# of Males**	**Correct %**	**# of Females**	**Correct %**
M.S.R.P.	20	54.05%	17	21.79%
C Note	23	62.16%	18	23.08%
M.P.G.	30	81.08%	45	57.69%
2 bits	12	32.43%	14	17.95%
R.A.M.	15	40.54%	13	16.67%
Tsp	26	70.27%	69	88.46%
A.T.M.	29	78.38%	52	66.67%
CD (compact)	24	64.86%	47	60.26%
CD (certif.)	16	43.24%	13	16.67%
Pt*	14	37.84%	33	42.31%
D.O.A.	25	67.57%	42	53.85%
Bio (Biology)	17	45.95%	41	52.56%
Bio (Biogra)	13	35.14%	30	38.46%
IQ	21	56.76%	50	64.10%
TLC	30	81.08%	48	61.54%
ROTC	13	35.14%	9	11.54%
RR**	14	37.84%	28	35.90%
OAC	16	43.24%	14	17.95%
C.E.O.	17	45.95%	38	48.72%
U.F.O.	26	70.27%	56	71.79%
Lb.	27	72.97%	58	74.36%
Tblsp	30	81.08%	68	87.18%
20K***	31	83.78%	53	67.95%
M.P.H.	33	89.19%	68	87.18%
A.P.R.	15	40.54%	31	39.74%
Gal.	34	91.89%	71	91.03%
Average % Correct		**59.36%**		**50.59%**

* Pt was scored correctly as Pint or Point
** RR was scored correctly only for Railroad not rest & relaxation
*** 20K was scored correctly with 20 thousand or 20 Kilometers



FFocus

How Ready Are They?

By Tom Pickering, Pierce College

In August of 2006 Karl Fisch of Arapahoe High School in Littleton, Colorado created an awesome PowerPoint presentation titled "Did You Know?" Here are a few excerpts …

Did You Know?

The 25% of the population in China with the highest IQ's is greater than the total population of North America…in India, it's the top 28%. Translation for teachers: They have more honors kids than we have kids.

The U.S. Department of Labor estimates that today's learners will have 10-14 jobs by the age of 38…one out of four workers today is working for a company they have been employed by for less than one year. More than one out of two have worked less than five years at their current place of employment.

The top 10 in-demand jobs in 2010 didn't exist in 2004. We are currently preparing students for jobs that don't yet exist…using technologies that haven't been invented…in order to solve problems we don't even know are problems yet.

There are over 2.7 billion searches performed on Google each month…the number of text messages sent and delivered every day exceeds the population of the planet.

The amount of new technical information is doubling every two years…and predicted to double every 72 hours by 2010.

Predictions are that by 2013 a supercomputer will be built that exceeds the computation capability of the human brain…by 2049 a $1,000 computer will exceed the computational capabilities of the *human race*.

This presentation has provided a forum for a discussion with my students about life, events and drastic change. Students intuitively know that to be the best at what they want to do, they will need to be proficient in three areas: communications, creativity, and collaboration.

Students need to be able to communicate clearly and concisely in both written and oral communications and have an intermediate–advanced level of skill in computer applications such as Word, PowerPoint and Excel, maybe Access. Of

these, writing is the cornerstone. Kenneth W. Davis, author of The McGraw-Hill 36 Hour Course: Business Writing and Communication states "In this knowledge economy, writing is the chief value-producing activity…" Students would love to think this is relevant when it comes to their web persona and in their use of social networking media. Ah, creative writing beckons.

I am part of the "fandom," of Sir Ken Robinson. He speaks eloquently of the loss of creativity in our students. Somewhere in the K-12 system this essential artful development has been mitigated. We must reboot it and nurture it so that innovation becomes part of a student's essence. As Stephen Covey says…" sometimes we have to rearrange our molecules." Or, to paraphrase Sir Ken Robinson …"finding your passion changes everything." It enables you to rekindle that creative spirit and inherent talent. In his book, The Element, he defines *the element … "*the place where the things we love to do and the things we are good at come together." We must enable students to realize that tapping into their creativity plus pursuing their passion will produce satisfying work and allow them to make significant positive contributions.

Work can be cool! Work can be fun! Students should experience the power of collaboration and teamwork, both in virtual projects and those requiring a give and take F2F with others to accomplish and achieve more than they think they can and in less time. This requires using technology and social media robustly. Collaboration is vital and student project goals should be designed to produce a "masterpiece" with every endeavor. Well designed team projects will prepare students to better integrate people, technology and time management into a formidable force multiplier for solving our most pressing challenges.

In reflection, maybe the more correct question is How Ready Are Colleges For Incoming Students?

- Do we have programs and the structure in place to foster communication skills?
- Have we thought about how to rekindle creativity and innovation that enables and inspires students to embrace

change?

- How can we improve curricula to provide the tools for students to discover and capitalize on the many powerful technology opportunities for virtual team endeavors?
- How should we encourage students to understand how collaborative projects can organize work through conflict, establish standards and perform at the highest level, thereby resulting in rewarding work? Cool and fun work, of course.

Writing that is demanding, creativity that is encouraged and nurtured, and collaboration that uses those tools that motivate today's students will help to prepare those who want to join us. Now we know, right?

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Notes

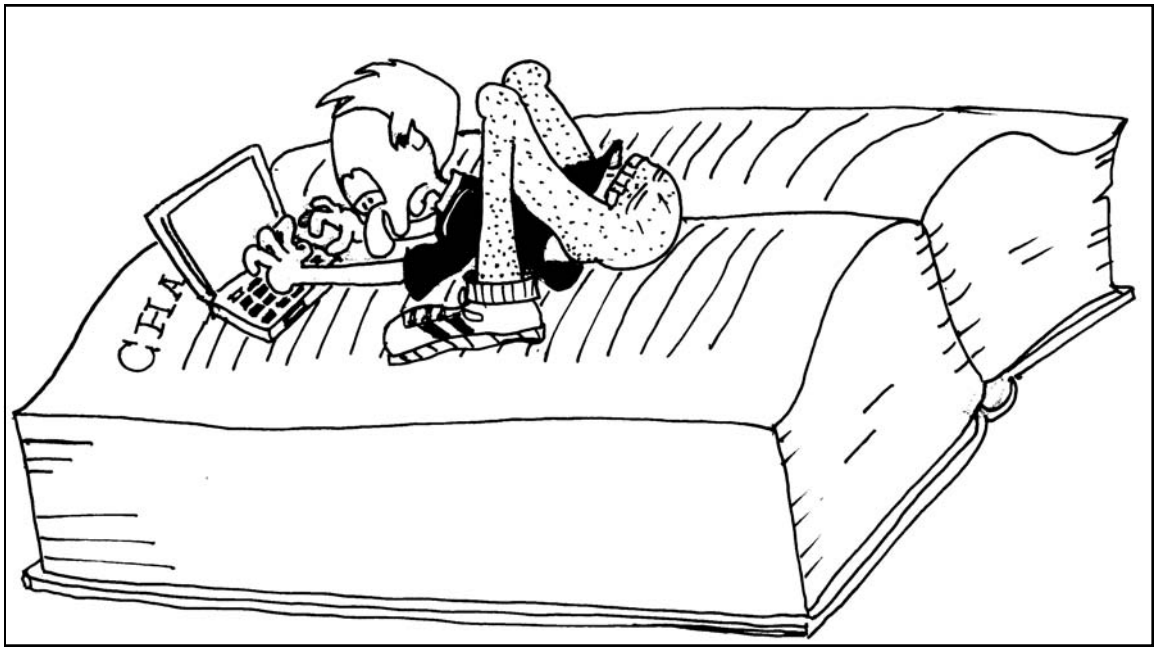
A quick link to The Fischbowl is: http://thefischbowl.blogspot.com

My context and perspective on this subject is through the prism of the courses I teach which are: English Composition, Business Communication, Business English and Records Management and I cannot pretend to speak for those who teach Math or Science Courses or otherwise.

My thoughts have also been shaped by my students. I would like to thank one student in particular, Tiffany Alexander, from my Business Communication class in the winter term of 2008.

Rising Junior Meets a Librarian, a Database and a Book, and Finds True Authority

By Jan Wingenroth,
Spokane Falls Community College



Remember that report you did in elementary school? Perhaps there was an oral report on the longhorn versus the black angus, an essay about who first made the pencil, or a written presentation on a state or the 13th president. It required you to consult Encarta or World Book depending on your generation. You may even have checked out a twenty page book from a library. As your schooling progressed, the reports got a bit longer. Some may have even used two or three sources!

Those days are for the most part gone. Public librarians in our town inform me that there has been a very notable decline in the number of school reports be-

ing written at all levels. The decline seems to be pretty nearly indexed to an increased fear of that strange animal, the toothless WASL. Most students' lack of familiarity with any form of research beyond the Google box is verified every time I teach a class in our library. I ask, "if you have used a book for research purposes or have looked for a book in some kind of computer catalog or database please raise your hand;" the question usually gets no more than three hands. A show of hands for those who have used an article database such as Proquest gets a few more raised hands but usually not the same students that knew the book.

My own GPA 2.0 daughter became a research marvel for the local branch of a large national non-profit organization when she, in two hours, completed and corrected six months of work by the organization's previous intern. She accomplished this by calling the library and finding out that she could connect to a library business directory which would allow her to download business information in a spreadsheet suitable for formatting mailing labels or calling lists. The previous intern had been trying to compile the list by Googling companies based on type of business. In this case, it was tackle, bait and fly-fishing. One can only imagine the results the discouraged intern was forced to sort through.

These are some of the many reasons my eyes dilated and my mouth dropped open as I read a document revealed to me by a library colleague employed at a regional university: "Information Literacy Learning Outcomes for Rising Juniors at Washington State Higher Education Institutions." On seeing my reaction, my university colleague quickly added - "Don't worry we're not there yet either."

"Rising Juniors" is not a term related to binge drinking or other illicit drug use. This is an optimistic description of those students matriculating from community college to our state universities after six, eight or ten quarters bouncing in and

out of our campus. The standard agreed to by provosts of the universities in Washington State suggests that students meet fifteen information literacy standards. No reasonable person would complain that the standards are too picky, too stringent, outdated or unnecessary for 21st century lifelong learning.

Some of the fifteen particular outcomes that seem to challenge our students:

- *Demonstrate a basic understanding of the types of information resources available and distinguish which ones are relevant to the task; formulate effective search strategies.*
- *Understand that there are multiple approaches to research; be flexible, creative, and resourceful in using research strategies.*
- *Practice critical assessment of sources (i.e. usefulness, authorship, currency, point of view, bias, use of evidence, etc.)*
- *Gain a sense of when and what type of web sources are appropriate to a given research project*

And this is perhaps most troubling to librarians and faculty because students have difficulty in accepting this notion:

- ***Understand the role of library professionals and faculty** in guiding them towards reliable information resources and effective research methods.*

There are plenty of contributors to this last deficit There is Google with that one simple search box as opposed to what have sometimes been puzzling screens and onerous 15 digit barcode logins and passwords required to enter library databases.

Occasionally we librarians and teachers overzealously urged students to use our databases "because they are good valid sources." Our students found that they could easily answer their simple questions with a reasonably reliable source in Google. We lost credibility. Whatever the reason, the credibility problem is real. I have had faculty tell me that they provide students with a list of relevant reliable resources for an assignment only to have students proudly boast, "I didn't need

those sources you gave us—I Googled," and then proceed to turn-in a bibliography of .com and questionable personal websites.

I knew I'd lost my authority when I could not dissuade a student from using a personal site on "Buhudism." He had managed to locate a web site where the author matched his own erroneous spelling. The student only wanted me to show him how to cite his unsigned personal web page in MLA format.

I have an impossibly and simple solution that will help students hone their research skills and learn to more efficiently grapple with the breadth of information available to them: **research, research, research.**

- Require students to do research at all levels of their education. Google and Wikipedia are probably fine for elementary school, but by high school students should do a research project or two that is suited to using a BOOK for research. This will probably be in the area of history or literature. Let them use an e-book if that is what available but force them to deal with continuous text that is more than 10 pages long. All students should have used an article database for science and current events research before they leave high school.
- Faculty should make sure students aren't citing two pages from three different Google books. Students only see small snippets of information with Google books, and some students believe this is the same as reading the information in the context of the book. Google books are fine for a quick answer in middle school but they aren't sufficient for college students understanding complicated subjects. Students should see information in the context of a larger discussion.
- Faculty must teach smart and handle student research project requirements individually. Please don't require a student writing on recent breakthroughs in cloning giant pandas or gene therapy for the spotted owl to locate a book on the subject.
- Don't ban Wikipedia! Just remind high school and college students that

as with a personal web page they will need to find the Wikipedia author's name and check credentials for anything other than common knowledge. They will learn so much about how Wikipedia is made and about its authors by trying to locate author information.

Perhaps with luck, your rising juniors will enjoy the research process enough to become an outstanding Wikipedia contributor. The best Wikipedia articles show that the contributors have read both books and scholarly articles on their topic, and of course, some editors fastidiously cruise Wikipedia articles for poor writing and grammatical errors. You could do worse than producing a rising junior Wikipedia contributor.

Document link http://ilago.files.wordpress.com/2009/01/icclinformationliteracyfinalrevisionjan31061.doc.

FFocus

STANDARDS?

By Tim Scharks, Green River Community College

Washington State community colleges should set universal entrance standards (prerequisites) for social science courses. Right now underprepared students coming into my geography classes are likely to fail, a fate for which we are setting them up by not having uniform entrance standards.

I'm not thinking of incredibly high standards. A few anecdotes: right now I find some students in my classes unable to read 30 to 40 pages of a college-level textbook each week; unable to understand how per capita measures control for population size (a concept taught in fifth grade in many school districts); and unable to divide a two-digit number by 10 (again, a concept taught in 5th grade if not earlier).

How can I start discussing college-level concepts in class when an appreciable proportion of my students haven't mastered elementary school concepts?
I am happy to help underprepared students as much as I can, and I make offers of extra help repeatedly—but sooner or later the very nature of a college-level course must assume a certain level of knowledge and ability coming into the course, or otherwise it wouldn't be college level. This presents us with a dilemma: either we teach courses to a certain standard given that they are meant to prepare students for further college coursework, or we "dumb down" our courses to a glorified version of high school.

Either way, we are not helping our students. Those who are fundamentally underprepared and fail are sent a powerful signal that they don't belong in college. Those who complete many courses not taught at the college level achieve a two-

year degree of lower value or are surprised at the level of difficulty they face on transfer to a four-year school.

The enforcement of a prerequisite (e.g. certain reading comprehension and math scores on the COMPASS test) would help underprepared students to take the courses in reading, writing and math that they need to succeed at the college level instead of placing an unfair burden on them, their teachers, and their classmates when they attempt a class for which they are simply not prepared. Math and other divisions have recognized this long ago; you can't start calculus unless you have demonstrated a thorough knowledge of algebra.

Some faculty (including my colleagues, with whom I share this spirited discussion) disagree. They think that 100-level courses offer a chance for students to have a true college experience and learn at least a few things about the world and a particular discipline. Students thereby receive a positive signal that they are succeeding, improving the chances that they will stay enrolled and eventually graduate. Because of these beliefs, I can't move unilaterally to impose prerequisites on my entry-level classes. Students would simply select away from my courses instead of taking the basic skills courses in reading, writing, and math that universal entrance standards would necessitate.

The idea of an accepting, open course with very low standards but an ego boost to the underprepared student is an appealing one for reasons already mentioned. Unfortunately, there are two powerful arguments against it. First, by accepting all comers to our classes regardless of preparation, we automatically handicap our ability to teach at a college level: pace, content, and theory must be attenuated so that those less prepared can still succeed, costing the experience of those who are prepared. Second, and more importantly, our classrooms are not infinite: each seat occupied by an underprepared student represents a real cost to the state, and colleges are being increasingly held accountable for the success of their students in achieving a two-year degree and transferring to four-year institutions. We may soon have to face whether our courses are truly preparing students for this experience.

Student Retention or Student Detention?

By Mike Hickey

South Seattle Community College

In my seventeen years of English and creative writing instruction, there are several things I've noticed about community college students:

- they are equal in talent and potential to their university counterparts, but not equal in confidence
- with a little encouragement, they will toil away with remarkable energy and enthusiasm, vastly exceed their own expectations and then credit the teachers!
- some will inevitably arrive at the conclusion that of all the places on this planet they belong, college is not one of them

Fortunately, the individuals who discover college is not their can of Red Bull are a rare breed and decidedly in the minority. But it would be a mistake to pretend they don't exist. Also fortunate is the fact that after they drop out, many return to school at a later date with a renewed sense of purpose, time management, and goal setting. They've seen what it's like out there without an education, without the ability to think, read, write, and communicate at an advanced level, and without the academic credentials to pursue a rewarding and challenging career. Those who return to the scene of the crime are the best students ever! I'd gladly take a whole classroom of them. But as for the select few who are clearly not ready for college, are we helping them or hindering them by doing everything imaginable

to retain their matriculation?

When asked if she thought creative writing programs stifle young writers, the great Southern fictionist Flannery O'Connor said, "In my opinion, they don't stifle enough of them." This comment is typical of Miss O'Connor's rapier wit, but if the truth be told, she's probably right. Statistics clearly show that a 25-year-old with a college degree earns more money than those without one. And while I'm convinced that knowledge is the key to life and education is the key to knowledge, there are different kinds of knowledge/education cocktails. Not all students have the intelligence, patience, or intestinal fortitude to sit through another 8:00 a.m. lecture by that teacher (you know the one) with the singsong delivery or lifeless monotone that invites deep sleep and rapid eye movement in an upright position. Should we doggedly attempt to "salvage" those reclamation projects like they're sunken ships with hidden treasure chests? Shall we continue to coerce and cajole those who have no aptitude or attitude for college in an effort to convince them to tough it out? Is there a better solution?

Yes. An increasingly overlooked and undervalued alternative is a career in one of the trades: pipefitting, masonry, carpentry, plumbing, etc. I have a friend whose son dropped out of school and landed an apprenticeship as a bricklayer. By the time he reaches the ripe old age of 21, he'll be making a minimum of $50,000 a year, probably more than that early morning instructor with no voice inflection. Not that money is the only consideration. He is also extremely proud of his developing skills, his ability to pay taxes, and the chance to be completely self-supporting. For many, not only are there tremendous opportunities available in the trades, but there are also veteran craftsmen and craftswomen who are approaching retirement and eager to share the knowledge they've accumulated over the years.

On the first day of class, I review the syllabus and make it clear to students that I take attendance every day, that participation is built into the grade, that the harder they work the more successful they'll be and the more fun they'll have. So when a student misses a class, or two or three, and upon his or her return asks,

“Did I miss anything?” my first inclination leans toward that sarcasm of Miss O’Connor. “No, you didn’t miss anything. As soon as I noticed you weren’t here, I cancelled the class.” But of course, I’d never say that. (At least not without tenure.) But I might ask if they’ve ever seriously considered a career as an iron worker.

FFocus

THE FACTC FACTS

Faculty and President/Chancellor Salaries At Community and Technical Colleges and Districts in Washington State

Washington Community and Technical Colleges FY2007-08 Full-Time Faculty Average Salaries Comparison by District.

District	Average Salary	Average Starting Salary	Masters w/ 13 Yrs Experience	Highest Salary	Lowest Salary
Shoreline	$60,535	$54,383	$62,054	$62,054	$40,957
Highline	60,416	50,412	57,122	71,762	47,362
Bellevue	59,321	47,260	61,761	63,574	45,447
Clover Park*	59,109	49,245	70,696	70,696	45,809
Renton	58,877	53,025	61,228	69,597	33,010
Tacoma	57,853	47,856	55,500	75,917	41,500
Skagit Valley	57,619	48,233	54,614	62,220	43,476
Green River	57,526	51,696	56,308	60,161	38,253
Yakima Valley	57,444	51,998	54,599	58,205	51,998
Bellingham	57,243	52,114	57,799	65,559	34,537
Wenatchee	56,840	48,727	59,116	59,116	37,040
Edmonds	56,750	50,279	54,176	60,360	41,463
Olympic	56,602	48,967	45,342	63,303	35,671
Bates*	56,587	55,778	68,708	89,769	47,029
Lower Columbia	56,236	48,819	57,016	65,213	45,220
Columbia Basin	56,167	45,000	48,000	75,424	45,000
Centralia	56,134	47,014	47,014	64,027	40,230
Clark	55,955	42,724	53,500	64,192	42,080
So. Puget Sound	55,615	45,518	52,586	66,825	45,518
Cascadia	55,360	48,250	51,000	63,899	45,424
Spokane District	54,365	42,194	45,405	64,589	41,565
Lake Washington	54,198	50,329	57,229	61,521	41,309
Walla Walla	54,092	46,000	46,103	64,258	43,000
Big Bend	53,323	46,430	51,723	58,822	43,271
Pierce District	51,925	42,324	49,364	69,301	41,575
Seattle District	51,631	51,650	52,362	65,406	46,636
Peninsula	50,933	53,453	51,739	60,976	39,074
Grays Harbor	50,498	44,575	44,831	58,074	33,888
Whatcom	48,375	43,339	37,753	61,424	33,973
Everett	47,609	48,377	51,501	63,146	43,946

*Majority of faculty on eleven/twelve month contracts and are included in the starting, highest and lowest salaries reported. However, the average salary includes only nine/ten month contracts.

See a color coded version of this chart on the SBCTC website. The SBCTC budget office prepared these graphics. To see this chart, go to http://www.sbctc.ctc.edu/College/_f-salaries.aspx

Charts from previous years are also available at this site and in past editions of the FACTC Focus. This and past editions plus other information can be seen on FACTC's website:
http://factc.org/

5-Year History of IPEDS Average Salaries	
FY 2007-08	$52,520
FY 2006-07	50,766
FY 2005-06	48,883
FY 2004-05	48,202
FY 2003-04	48,303

Top Quarter #1
Quarter #2
Quarter #3
Bottom Quarter #4

Part-Time Faculty Annualized Salaries 2008

	FY 2007 Average Annualized* Part-time Faculty Salaries	FY 2008 Part-Time FTEF	FY 2008 Allocation for I-732 (COLA) Increases @ 4.4%	FY 2008 Allocation for Increments	FY 2008 Average Annualized* Part-time Faculty Salaries
Bates	$46,086	5	$43,976	$1,160	$47,029
Bellevue	38,168	230	399,891	67,552	30,417
Bellingham	20,239	23	54,984	8,698	21,523
Big Bend	27,976	36	64,530	10,727	30,129
Cascadia	30,015	47	74,272	13,047	31,613
Centralia	27,340	47	101,151	17,685	30,210
Clark	27,046	190	297,013	56,245	29,135
Clover Park	32,006	75	110,384	17,395	33,189
Columbia Basin	22,434	106	186,291	35,661	26,230
Edmonds	29,631	158	272,484	44,648	31,270
Everett	31,140	125	268,272	38,560	33,633
Grays Harbor	24,230	37	68,744	12,467	26,760
Green River	28,703	148	274,881	45,228	31,322
Highline	29,523	121	242,959	36,241	31,747
Lake Washington	43,785	75	144,039	23,194	43,140
Lower Columbia	27,078	36	84,513	13,626	29,176
Olympic	22,897	105	161,806	36,530	25,241
Peninsula	30,039	51	92,790	16,236	30,039
Pierce	26,416	180	218,702	57,695	27,819
Renton	35,378	58	104,561	20,585	37,342
Seattle	38,725	347	832,071	109,881	41,481
Shoreline	35,435	100	233,781	35,371	35,811
Skagit Valley	22,095	94	164,466	30,152	23,609
South Puget Sound	28,883	99	158,288	31,312	30,472
Spokane	27,859	241	402,759	74,510	30,403
Tacoma	31,928	98	182,759	31,312	33,561
Walla Walla	25,977	56	107,733	19,135	27,156
Wenatchee	30,338	64	111,249	19,425	33,838
Whatcom	26,414	80	103,766	24,064	28,134
Yakima Valley	24,300	93	151,531	29,282	27,542
System Total	$29,736	3,126	$5,714,646	$977,624	$31,299

*These salaries are calculated representations of how much part-time faculty would earn at each district if they worked a full-time load at the district's part-time pay level. Annualized average part-time faculty salaries are displayed as reported by districts.

the SBCTC Operating Budget Office February

Presidents and District Chancellor Salaries

District Chancellor or CEO Directs all affairs and operations of a higher education system or district. Each subordinate campus has its own President or Provost, administrative offices and independent programs. President of a college directs all affairs and operations of a higher education institution or of a campus within a system.

COLLEGE/DISTRICT	ANNUALIZED SALARY		YEARS OF SERVICE IN PRESENT POSITION	SUBSTANTIAL OTHER DUTIES	REPORTING RELATIONSHIP
Bates	$170,688		4		Board
Bellevue	$165,900		20		Board
Bellingham	$163,200		1		Board
Big Bend	$155,075		14		Board
Cascadia	$172,259		4		Board
Centralia	$152,754		7		Board
Clark	$166,260		3		Board
Clover Park	$173,686		2		Board
Columbia Basin	$185,000		1		Board
Edmonds	-		-	-	No Report
Everett	$186,664		3		Board
Grays Harbor	$149,000		5		Board
Green River	$179,520		26		Board
Highline	$173,400		3		Board
Lake Washington	$173,400		1		Board
Lower Columbia	$165,240		11		Board
Olympic	$178,957		6		Board
Peninsula	$180,500		8		Board
Pierce-District 11	$186,612		4		Board
Pierce-Ft. Steilacoom	$148,223		3		CEO Multi-Campus
Pierce-Puyallup	$148,223		4		CEO Multi-Campus
Renton	$148,612		8		Board
Seattle-District	$215,000		0		Board
Seattle-Central	$141,191		6		CEO Multi-Campus
Seattle-North	$141,191		8		CEO Multi-Campus
Seattle-South	$138,422		V		CEO Multi-Campus
Shoreline	$186,921		3		Board

(continued) Chancellors, CEOs, Presidents Salaries

COLLEGE/DISTRICT	ANNUALIZED SALARY		YEARS OF SERVICE IN PRESENT POSITION	SUBSTAN-TIAL OTHER DU-	REPORTING RELATIONSHIP
Skagit Valley	$160,037		6		Board
South Puget Sound	$168,422		3	Y	Board
Spokane-District 17	$183,215		8		Board
Spokane-SCC	$147,900		1		CEO Multi-Campus
Spokane-SFCC	$147,900		8		CEO Multi-Campus
Spokane-IEL**	$142,800		2		CEO Multi-Campus
Tacoma	$187,500		12		Board
Walla Walla	$157,570		25		Board
Wenatchee Valley	$170,963		4		Board
Whatcom	$178,500		2		Board
Yakima Valley	$139,961		14		Board
**Institute for Extended Learning					

2008-09		2007-08	
AVERAGE	**$165,694**	Average	$160,605
MEDIAN	**$166,260**	Median	$162,000

FACULTY ASSOCIATION
OF COMMUNITY &TECHNICAL COLLEGES

Comments, replies, letters to the editor can be sent by e-mail to the following e-address:
markd@spokanefalls.edu

FACTC is our Network

Faculty at Community and Technical Colleges in Washington State must be active in the discussion of important community and technical college issues. We network with each other, with other higher education organizations, with legislators, and with state board staff and administration. If your community or technical college is not represented at FACTC, we invite you to join us.

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Editor of this issue of FACTC Focus: Mark Doerr, Spokane Falls Community College, who also did the artwork
For information about FACTC, contact
Phillip N. Venditti, Ph.D.
Instructor, Speech Communications
Clover Park Technical College
4500 Steilacoom Blvd. SW
Lakewood, WA 98499
(253) 589-5595

Check out FACTC's website:
http://factc.org/