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The Voice of Scholarship in Education

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AERA Special Coverage
April 7-11, 2006 - San Francisco, CA

TUESDAY, APRIL 11, 2006
Design-based Research: really that good
Having become heavily interested in the field of design-based research, I was pleased to find that the leaders in this field are as engaging as their written works. The presentations by Sasha Barab, Paul Cobb, and Joanne Lobato were especially compelling. This past semester, I wrote a literature review (albeit very rushed) on the developments in design-based research. Please check it out on my blog if you are interested in this emerging area. Another great resource is a book in the works called *Handbook of Design Research Methods in Education*, edited by Kelly, Lesh, and J. Baek, which looks very promising.

Posted by Anthony Cocciolo at 2:25PM | print | email | comments(0)

TUESDAY, APRIL 11, 2006
Preparing Future Faculty and Other Reflections
This year's AERA conference in San Francisco was one of the best conferences that I have ever attended. From the pre-conference for graduate students/new faculty focused on crafting a balanced academic life to the main part of the conference filled with sessions, receptions and general networking, I found myself inspired by what I was hearing and excited to think about joining the professoriate once I graduate. The rain that was predicted for the entire week even held off for the most part.

Yesterday I attended several sessions focused on doctoral education and preparing future faculty. One of the interesting themes that arose from the session called "Educating Integrated Professionals or Training Fragmented Faculty? Theoretical Perspectives on Preparation for the Professoriate" focused on this idea of how doctoral students are trained to think about the professorial life. Carol L. Colbeck from The Pennsylvania State University argues that most graduate programs and most assessments of faculty look at the different facets of the academic life – research, teaching and service – as separate and fragmented activities. Yet, faculty roles in reality are not that fragmented – what one does to prepare for teaching is often also related to research, etc. I find this idea of thinking about the integrated nature of faculty life uplifting since even as a graduate student, I focus on ensuring that the different facets of my life are synergistic and integrated. It is comforting to learn that this synergistic and integrated approach to my own graduate student life will prepare me well for the faculty life.

Posted by Kim Pereira at 11:34AM | print | email | comments(0)

MONDAY, APRIL 10, 2006
Cultivating Questions
Sophie Haroutunian-Gordon's presentation in the same session—excerpted from her book *Cultivating Questions: A Focus for Schooling in the Twenty-First Century* (forthcoming (2007) from the Yale University Press) developed Burbules' sixth example of tacit teaching: Asking questions to get students to a place of true—not one that the teacher controls by asking 'pointed' questions—uncertainty.

How can a teacher *hear* the questions that students are not asking? All too often—I found myself doing this more times than I would like to admit when I taught—teachers let their students off the hook by asking questions that do not get down to the root of a student's interest. Instead of using a student's interest as the means to forming questions that will challenge a student to engage with the subject being studied, a teacher—too often—only asks questions with answers that are of little interest to her or her students. When a teacher does this, she tacitly teaches her student to disengage and she keeps her students from asking meaningful questions themselves.

Professor Haroutunian-Gordon used a case study to show how teachers can help their students ask more meaningful questions. This case study was compelling; it really helped me visualize what a classroom practice would look like that embodied this approach to cultivating questions.

It would not be an overstatement to say that this presentation was the highlight of my trip to AERA; I am only upset that I will have to wait until 2007 to read Professor Haroutunian-Gordon's book.
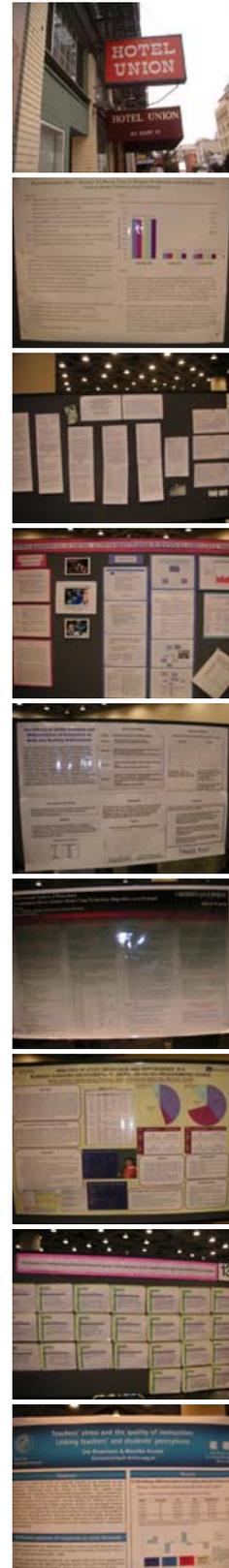
Posted by Jeff Frank at 9:18PM | print | email | comments(0)

MONDAY, APRIL 10, 2006
Prayer does not heal the sick, study finds
In a SIG (TACIL -- Technology as an Agent of Change in Teaching and Learning [Note]) session of AERA, Dr. M.D. Roblyer quoted a study "Study of Prayer's Healing
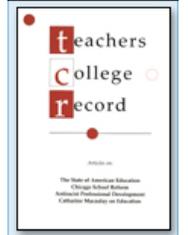
Snapshots of AERA

Power on Surgery Patients Finds No Effect." I will cite the findings from Times online [A similar report is also available at Washington Post]:

"Praying for the health of strangers who have undergone heart surgery has no effect, according to the largest scientific study ever commissioned to calculate the healing power of prayer.

In fact, patients who know they are being prayed for suffer a noticeably higher rate of complications, according to the study, which monitored the recovery of 1,800 patients after heart bypass surgery in the US."

The findings of the decade-long study were due to be published in the American Heart Journal next week, but the journal published the report on its website yesterday as anticipation grew."

From the findings, Dr. M.D. Roblyer concluded (jokingly) that:

- It's possible to do a randomized, true experimental study and still not learn a blessed thing.
- True experimental design is not always intelligent design.
- If you're in the control group, you don't have a prayer.

Dr. M.D. Roblyer's comments were funny and insightful. To me, the comments pointed out the importance of asking the right questions in research.

Note: TACTL (http://www.ahec.osrhe.edu/tactl/) is a Special Interest Group (SIG) of the American Educational Research Association (AERA). Its purpose is to promote research on technology as an agent of change for reform and enrichment of teaching/learning practices at pre-service, in-service, and teacher educator levels.

TACTL 2005-2006 President,
Dr. M.D. Roblyer
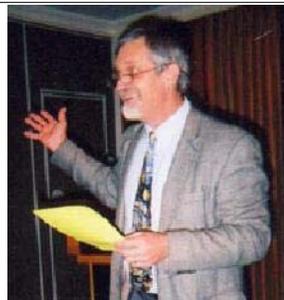
TACTL 2004-2005 President,
Dr. Gerald Knezek

Posted by Lin Lin at 9:17PM | print | email | comments(0)

MONDAY, APRIL 10, 2006
The tacit dimension of teaching and learning
In the session "The Role of Listening in Teaching", Professor Nicholas C. Burbules presentation focused on the question: Can everything that is learned be taught? This question cleared the way for an examination—using Wittgenstein's thought as a touchstone—of the tacit dimension of teaching and learning.

Burbules' presentation was lively and engaging; in it, he offered six different examples of tacit teaching to his audience. In the first type of teaching, the teacher does something and tells her student, "Just do it like this." He used the example of a child working in the kitchen with her parent; often, a parent doesn't explicitly teach a child how to cook, as it may be more effective to offer one's own practice as an exemplar for the student to follow. In the second type of teaching, the teacher—again a cook working with an inexperienced cook—uses analogies and indirect hints to teach. For example, the cook may say that the bread has to look or feel a certain way before you know to take it out of the oven. Similar to the second example is the third; the teacher uses negative examples: the dough should not look like this, or like this.

The forth example was of rule following. Burbules—directly echoing Wittgenstein—asked the audience to think about what it means to follow a rule; how does a teacher know when a student knows how to follow a rule? What role does the teacher have in bringing the student to that type of knowledge? The next example was the use silence as an educator. The teacher—through remaining silent (here Burbules used an example drawn from Chaim Potok's *The Chosen*—may be teaching what cannot be taught in any other way. Finally, Burbules thought through the way that a teacher can use questions to get students to a place of true—not one that the teacher controls by asking 'pointed' questions—uncertainty.

Burbules' examination of the tacit dimension of teaching was provocative. At the end of his presentation, I wondered what he would make of Emerson's idea that: "Character teaches above our wills. Men imagine that they communicate their virtue or vice only by overt actions, and do not see that virtue or vice emit a breath every moment." This idea implies that *all* teaching has a tacit dimension that cannot be controlled. If we take this idea seriously, then the way we prepare teachers, and think about teaching would change dramatically.

Further, I was interested that Burbules' examples—except the final example—seemed to involve only two people. As such, what lessons can be drawn from this presentation for classroom teachers; how is it possible to tell very different students, "Do it like this"; is it possible to find metaphors that will work for every student in a given class? These are not objections to Burbules' work; far from it. Rather, I think it is important for teachers and teacher educators to think through what this type of teaching calls for in cases where many individuals are involved.

Posted by Jeff Frank at 8:29PM | print | email | comments(0)

MONDAY, APRIL 10, 2006
More AERA posters
These posters are from a session titled, Technologies for Learning: From Preschool to College.
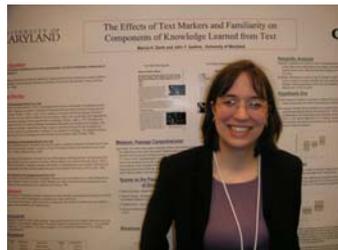
Dolana Mogadime & Terri Payk
Brock University

A conceptual Analysis of Life History Methodology: The Importance of Integrated Analysis

Pedro F. Hernandez
phernandezramos@scu.edu
Santa Clara University

Communication and Collaboration in a Teacher Preparation Program: From Learning Community to Community of Practice

Marcia H. Davis
University of Maryland

Effects of Text Markers and Familiarity on Component Structures of Text-Based Knowledge

Kathleen A. Bowes
Widener University

A Study of the Psychometric Attributes of the Mankato Scale: Responding to the Challenge of Valid Assessment of Technology Integration

Posted by Hui Soo Chae at 8:07PM | print | email | comments(0)

MONDAY, APRIL 10, 2006
On Moral Philosophy's Failure to Launch
Not knowing exactly what life will be like once I have my doctorate in hand, I was pleasantly surprised to see every chair filled at a roundtable discussion of Richard Osguthorpe's paper "On the Possible Forms a Relationship Might Take Between the Moral Character of a Teacher and the Moral Development of a Student."

After Osguthorpe briefly summarized his paper and current work, a lively discussion revolved around the difficulties of measuring changes in moral character. This was appropriate given that Osguthorpe's goal is to account for the complexities of the exchange of moral nature from teachers to students, which is a natural outgrowth of his earlier work under Gary Fenstermacher (he was a student of Fenstermacher's before taking a post at Boise State). In Fenstermacher's work, "manner" is a special name for the presentation of moral character in the classroom—a term which helps narrow the scope of inquiry toward a discourse on professional ethics.

There is a tension in this conceptualization of morality that does not go unnoticed by one's peers in research, as what counts as "moral" is still very much up for grabs (for philosophers and everyone else). On the one hand, there is a concern for "morality" that encompasses the ephemeral traits that we ordinarily (and loosely) associate with the term. On the other hand, there is a need to specify exactly *what* concerns us when we speak of morality. Is it honesty? Patience? Kindness? Fairness? The philosophical matter of how *granular* our inquiry should be quickly comes into

view.

The choice between a broad conception and a narrow conception of morality is a difficult one, and perhaps it is particularly salient for educational researchers—whose work is putatively for the sake of someone's *development*. It is a matter of what is important to the researcher, and what the purpose of his or her research is imagined (and made) to be. Unfortunately, in conversations about morality, various and diverse concerns for individuals' development (going by the name of Liberalism, humanism, or something else) tend to collapse into a messy heap. I wondered, as I listened today, whether we must be resigned to this state of affairs.

All too often the "on-the-ground" significance of a work of moral philosophy goes unmentioned in its professional form (e.g., introductions are brief). To be sure, there is often a great deal of hubris on the part of philosophers about the implications of their work, but what puts philosophers at an even greater disadvantage is that philosophical argumentation is sometimes too *impersonal* to take seriously—a person is written out of his own work. For this reason, I find myself interested in a researcher's non-philosophical impetus for embarking on a philosophical project, and hence, the opportunity of talking to the philosopher himself or herself (especially in person) is a real treat. There is a real chance for dialogue to occur.

Our discussion about morality was not entirely scripted—Osguthorpe's paper opened a space for us to learn from each other. Someone was interested in academic honesty; someone was interested in the positive effect of *immoral* teachers; and so on. (Even before the dialogue fully unfolded, everyone made him or herself *known*: perhaps it is the way one's clothes and posture connotes one's interests, or perhaps it is the way one's body language conveys the intensity of one's seriousness.) Representing to these points of view, however, did not yet constitute *collegiality*.

We learned from each other when disagreement emerged. A question was posed: "how is 'character' different from 'manner?'" We fumbled for words and concise definitions, and for five or ten minutes not everyone was comfortable with the tone and tenor of the dialogue—which soon turned into debate. But through this difficult process Osguthorpe's questions became *our* questions, and I was able to better understand why this man spent hours and hours of his life parsing the moral nature of education. It reminded me (or allowed me to grasp for a first time, once again) that it is not really *what we say* but rather *the way we say it* that best communicates our interests and intentions.

The point of a community gathering once a year, I suppose, is at least partly to remind us that there are real people on the other side of one's research. —Not the side on which there are people we write *about*, but the side on which there are those who have the ability to carry our inquiry forward. It is the nature of writing, it seems, to be an inadequate reflection of our inner purpose. Every idea is too big for a single paper or a single discussion—our writing can only be a mirror for us in lifelike repose. It is a mirror into which we invite others to look, but into which they must gaze deeply to themselves, and whose images are the reminder to be charitable, thoughtful, and attentive to each other... How easily we may forget, as a year wears on, that inquiry is not a solitary pursuit!

Posted by Brian Hughes at 6:40AM | print | email | comments(0)

MONDAY, APRIL 10, 2006
A picture(AERA poster) is worth a ...
Today I attended a poster session titled, "Multimedia Learning." There were a number of visuals that caught my attention. Here are a few (others will be featured in the photo blog shortly):

Florence R. Sullivan
University of Massachusetts-Amherst

Robotics, Student Learning, and Scientific Literacy: Exploring the Potential of the Robotics Curriculum
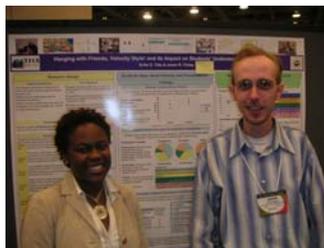
Ericka D. Tate & Jason R. Finley
University of California-Berkeley,
University of California-Los Angeles

Hanging with Friends Velocity Style! And its impact on Student Understanding

Madeleine Gregg
The University of Alabama

Studying Student Engagement in Third
Grade Poetry Class

Diane M. Monrad and Joanna Gilmore
University of South Carolina

Student Voices: Lessons Learned about
High School Transition

Posted by Hui Soo Chae at 4:20AM | print | email | comments(0)
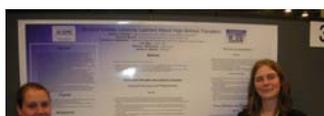
MONDAY, APRIL 10, 2006
Serendipitous Encounter
In between sessions this morning, I ran into
someone I had not seen or spoken to in over seven
years—my undergraduate advisor Dr. Fayneese
Miller. The first course I had with Dr. Miller was
"The Psychology of Race, Class, and Gender." It
was one of the best classes I took at Brown. Dr.
Miller also gave me my first opportunity to T.A. a
course (The Psychology of Teaching). She was a
mentor in the truest sense of the word. So I was
saddened to learn that Dr. Miller left Brown to
become dean of the College of Education and Social Services (CESS) at the
University of Vermont. Alas, Brown's loss is the University of Vermont's gain.

Posted by Hui Soo Chae at 1:59AM | print | email | comments(0)

SUNDAY, APRIL 9, 2006
Promoting the Public Good Through Investigations of Teaching

I chaired a session on "Promoting the Public Good through Investigations of
Teaching: Challenges and Possibilities" at 12:25 on Saturday. The session reported
on the results of The High Quality Teaching Study, a four-year project focusing on
what teachers do to help struggling fourth and fifth grade students succeed in
reading and mathematics.

In the first paper, "Ontological and Epistemological Threads in the Fabric of
Pedagogical Research," Patricia Alexander (presenting for co-authors Marilyn
Chambliss and Jeremy Price) used philosophical lenses to examine research on
teachers and teaching in general and the study at hand in particular. The second
paper, "Crossing the Borders Again: Challenges in Comparing Quality Instruction in
Mathematics and Reading," presented by Anna Graeber (for co-authors Kristie
Jones and Marilyn Chambliss), discussed the difficulties encountered in attempting
to apply the concept of cognitive demand across the subjects of reading and
mathematics. Linda Valli (presenting for co-authors Robert Croninger and Daria
Buese) delivered a paper entitled "Studying High Quality Teaching in a Highly
Charged Policy Environment" in which she discussed how the conditions in schools
and the contemporary policy environment pose challenges for research on
teaching, challenges that include multiple influences on student learning,
unexpected changes in what is taught and what kind of teaching occurs, and
narrowing conceptions of teaching quality. In the final paper, Robert Croninger
(reporting for co-authors John Larson and Daria Buese) discussed the challenges of
combining multiple methods as a strategy for representing the complexities of
teaching drawing on the complexities associated with potentially competing
perspectives on "quality" and the conditional nature in which "quality" manifests
itself in teaching as an example. More information on the project is available on
the project website.

Posted by Gary Natriello at 7:31PM | print | email | comments(0)

SUNDAY, APRIL 9, 2006
Ethics and Narrative
Although I know very little about narrative research, after attending some sessions
on this topic, I am struck by the ethical questions that a researcher using this genre
must confront. I think these ethical questions can be broken down into two broad
categories: (1) obligations to the reader, and (2) obligations to the individual(s) she
is researching.

The researcher using narrative methods must think about the expectations that her
readers have. The narrative researcher is putting her reader in a precarious
position; she is forcing her reader to ask the question: What am I reading, and how
should I read it? If the reader is familiar with fiction or creative nonfiction, then
she brings certain expectations to the work. If the reader is familiar with
qualitative research, ethnographic research or qualitative research in education,
then she will bring other—potentially conflicting—expectations to the work. Is it
possible for a researcher to navigate these potentially competing expectations?

What type of graduate training would prepare someone for this type of work? Should a researcher have both an MFA in writing and a Ph.D. from a school of education?

Having just finished watching *Capote*, I feel that a narrative researcher runs more risks than a fiction writer or a researcher working in other genres. A researcher using narrative must establish a very close relationship with the individual she is working with. What happens when the responsibilities of being a good researcher—or storyteller—conflict with the ethical demands of the relationship established with the researched? A fiction writer has a responsibility to her characters, but if she fails, then her book is a failure and that is all (unless of course the writer is Harry Block from Woody Allen's *Deconstructing Harry*). But what happens when a researcher fails to accurately capture the life of her researched; what happens if the researched cannot recognize herself in the story that is told about her?

Frankly, I think these questions are extremely difficult to answer. Nonetheless, I look forward to reading narrative research that manages to successfully navigate the ethical dilemmas of this difficult genre.

Posted by Jeff Frank at 6:28PM | print | email | comments(1)

SUNDAY, APRIL 9, 2006
Ruptures in the Technological Sublime?
One of the downsides of writing a group blog with colleagues that you spend 40+ hours a week with is that your views on certain things start to converge in assortment of ways. I can't help but bump into my colleagues from EdLab at some of the more high-tech and innovation-focused symposia at AERA. Hence, I must agree with Brian Hughes' observation that neuroscience may play a big part in the future of educational research, and Jeff Frank's acclaim for Alan Collins' forward-looking interest in radical forms of self-directed learning. Considering that we are all viewing the same content, are there any gaps for me to fill-in?

Perhaps the observation worth making are the rare but omnipresent discontinuities in the innovation and technology-focused agenda for education. Two such examples presented themselves in the two sessions I visited on Saturday. The first of which was Alan Collins' presentation, who was slotted to speak about intelligent tutoring systems (ITS), but instead described himself as a "fallen" ITS-guy who would rather focus on the more student-centered, self-directed learning angle. Such a movement is provocative in that it calls into question the needs and basis for such an area of research. It makes us think: gee, is ITS such a great idea after all? In sum, sometimes the anti-agenda can be the most fruitful.

The second example I can think of relates to the discussion of neuroscience. Judy Illes from Stanford discussed the convergence of neuroethics, imaging, and education, and Paul Howard-Jones from Bristol discussed holistic integrations of education and neuroscience. These two presentations were perhaps the best I have yet seen at AERA; if you are even somewhat interested in this area, these two presenters are a must-see. However, if one were to pay close attention, one would hear the somewhat divergent viewpoints offered by the two experts on the long-term effect of fMRI scanning. Howard-Jones was quick to point out that there are no longer term effects of such scanning, himself having been subject many times. Illes, who focused on the ethics of imaging, was more cautious and noted that there are no data regarding the longer term effects of such imaging. Is fMRI safe, especially over time in repeated fashion? May we conclude that even the experts disagree?

I mention these two examples not to nitpick at inconsistencies in scientific research. I am well of the messy and sometimes contradictory nature of science. However, I mention such instances to make us cautious of so easily succumbing to the innovation and high-technology agenda. We must ask ourselves: are these new educational methods, driven by new technologies and neuroscience, really ready to supplant older methods? I think we must be careful not to let an agenda cloud our reason.

Posted by Anthony Cocciolo at 3:13PM | print | email | comments(0)

SUNDAY, APRIL 9, 2006
Lifelong teaching…
In an earlier blog entry ("Are schools robbing students?"), I emphasized the importance of lifelong learning; towards the end of that entry, I found myself moving in a direction that I would now like to call into question, because I failed to emphasize the importance of a certain type of teaching.

My first AERA presentation experience was this morning. I have had the good fortune of working with David Hansen, Rodino Anderson and Kiera Nieuwejaar on a paper called: "This New Yet Unapproachable Education: Philosophical Underpinnings of the Progressive Tradition in Curriculum" (forthcoming), and today we presented our work. At the end of the presentation, I was struck by the response from Jim Garrison, our respondent. It was apparent that Professor Garrison had really thought about our work before the conference. Thanks to this, he was able to give us strong and provocative feedback. I wondered—and continue to wonder—why would he do this?

Immediately following my presentation, I attended the TCR Board meeting. This

group of individuals (particularly our editors) spends a tremendous amount of time working on papers, making editorial suggestions, etc. What do they get out of this?

To echo an earlier post (The Public Interest?), many individuals in our field take a real interest in education. As such, they are not content to pursues their interests, as if they were private possessions; instead—and this cannot be underestimated—they embody Dewey's notion of interest. This interest leads them to become lifelong learners, but equally important, it leads them to become lifelong teachers. The amount of time and thought that goes into thoughtful peer reviews, or thoughtful discussions of papers presented at conferences like AERA needs to be recognized and appreciated. Although there are things wrong with our field, so long as there are individuals who are committed to working in the interest of education, progress is ultimately still within our reach.

Posted by Jeff Frank at 2:54PM | print | email | comments(1)

SUNDAY, APRIL 9, 2006
Is Student Engagement Important to Student Success?
I went to a round table session on the topic "Is Student Engagement Important to Student Success? Lessons from the Cisco Networking Academy." This is a longitudinal dissertation study by Ali Korkmaz from Indiana University-Bloomington. The paper was presented by Barbara Bichelmeyer (and Hasan Cakir) because Ali Korkmaz had to cancel his trip.

To find out details of the study, you can download the paper at this site: http://mypage.iu.edu/~akorkmaz/papers/AERA06_final_revised.doc I will simply highlight some unique features and findings of the study by using the phrases from the PowerPoint handout:

Significance:
- Large scale (participants include 2,678 high school and college students, among which 1,896 from 540 community colleges and four-year universities and 809 high student students)
- Standardized curriculum
- Various dimensions of academic engagement
- Three forms of academic achievement/success
- Bridge between K-12 and higher education

Results:
Little connection:
- Between interaction with instructor and confidence (perceived learning)
- Between active participation and the CCNA2 (the Cisco Certified Network Associate program 2nd course) exam score
- Between CCNA1 (the Cisco Certified Network Associate 1st course) exam score and students' growth (basic skills/personal growth)

Discussion and further research:
- Usual suspects in prediction of success: Entry skills/ability and motivation: What can we do about this finding?
- Motivation important predictor for engagement
- Less prepared students interact more
- Female and male differences:
- Female benefit from the interaction with instructor but no male students
- Course achievement factors might be different for female students
- Less prepared college male student actively participate more

The following is a note from the author Ali Korkmaz with more details:

"The study is about Cisco Networking Academy students which you can find more details about the general study we are currently doing from our project website http://www.indiana.edu/~iuteam/ I am looking at how students' previous entry skills/ability and motivation are impacting students' engagement in the course and eventually how the interaction of ability/skills and motivation with course engagement impact student success. In this study I used three measures (interaction with instructor, active participation, and cognitive effort) of student engagement which was adapted from National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) (http://www.iub.edu/~nsse/) and three measures of student success (course achievement, confidence in the course objective, and personal and educational growth).

First, we verified some of the usual suspects: Previous ability/skill and motivation are strong predictors of student success in this highly challenging curriculum. There can be preliminary courses for students who are coming less prepared. This is somewhat done in college level through supplementary math or other courses. The other is that the courses should be relevant to students' goals. Students are expanding a lot of effort for courses that they want to be successfully. Those students are interacting with instructor and actively participating in the class.

Second, the students who are less prepared are interacting with teachers. Those students are also highly motivated students. So if students are coming not well prepared but motivated they got help from their teachers. But only female students are benefiting from the teacher interaction. Male students are not getting that much benefit from interaction. We know from gender studies that female students prefer talking on the issues and develop understanding through interaction. However, we need to develop ways in assisting male

students when interacting with them.

Third, the explained variance for course achievement differed really for female and male students. While the variables/constructs we used were explaining around .45 and .48 for high school and college male students, the same variables were explaining around .29 for college female students. So, in a highly challenging technology curriculum (female ratio is low), the factors impacting female students are much different than what impacts male students. We need to look at some other factors that impact student success in a technology courses. Is it the goals?

Fourth, motivation is an important factor for student engagement. These terms are usually used interchangeably in the K-12 literature. And usually motivation is used as an impact factor for student engagement in K-12 literature. However, in the higher education literature, when we are looking at student engagement usually environmental factors and demographic variables are usually analyzed to examine why and how students are different in engaging learning. Therefore, this study extends the K-12 literature to higher education literature and shows that motivation is indeed a significant factor for both high school and college students' engagement in learning."

Posted by Lin Lin at 4:14AM | print | email | comments(0)

SATURDAY, APRIL 8, 2006
Random Musings - Conference Room Size
Today I went to a session in Moscone Center South that was ridiculously small. There were five presenters, one chair, one discussant and only about 20 chairs. The audience quickly filled up the room well before the session was scheduled to start. Several people decided to miss the session because it was full or chose to listen from the hall. This made me think about how decisions are made about what sessions are placed in small rooms versus large rooms? I understand that certain sessions are expected to draw large crowds – Presidential sessions, big names in the field of education, hot topics such as the No Child Left Behind Act. But why does it make sense to use rooms that barely fit all of the presenters, chairs, and discussants in the rooms leaving almost no room for an audience? Just some food for thought.

Posted by Kim Pereira at 8:09PM | print | email | comments(2)

SATURDAY, APRIL 8, 2006
Education of Brains
With an interest in seeing how various fields deal with increasing emphasis on interdisciplinary work, I attended "Educational Neuroscience: Research, Ethics, Teaching and Application" this afternoon. The session provided both an overview of ongoing work in the growing fields of neuroscience, cognitive psychology, and related educational research, as well as a glimpse of future contributions from the emerging research on "educational neuroscience."

As a philosopher of art education, I was somewhat surprised at the use of the term "learning sciences" to refer to these disciplines, but apparently it's a huge field. Perhaps only because I had science on my mind did it occur to me that educational research, so named, speaks more directly to education in service of a scientific paradigm. That is, with increasingly complex models of the human mind, it seems we will be able to modulate pedagogy to maximize the efficacy of "bringing the next generation up to speed" (i.e., indoctrination into our shared projects). Dr. Judy Illes touched on this theme in her discussion of ethics, even if she only hinted at the upside and downside of brain scanning for education. (There's a bigger story to be told, but I'm afraid it involves cyborgs and a race of genetically modified superstudents...)

In all seriousness, neuroscience looks like the future of educational research. Daniel Franklin shared his vision for the Center of Excellence for Learning in Education at Boston University, and Stephen Campbell gave an overview of his new course on neuroscience at Simon Fraser University. Paul Alexander Howard-Jones discussed his recent "integrated investigation" on neuroscience and education.

I have no doubt I will have to integrate the findings of neuroscience into my work on art education in the near future (and somehow take on board a "cognitive neuropsychological" perspective). What may be surprising for some of my colleagues in the human sciences is that I look forward to it. If there was a nuanced model of the impact of arts education on the brain, I think we'd have powerful evidence to bring to both policy-makers and art educators. Of course, one still needs to know where (and how) to build the model... that's why educators should be compelled to enter into this dialogue.

Posted by Brian Hughes at 5:46PM | print | email | comments(1)

SATURDAY, APRIL 8, 2006
Art as Experience
Before heading off to my afternoon sessions, I stopped by the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. I was excited to see a painting by Giorgio Morandi and enjoyed the pictures by Henri Cartier-Bresson. Just a few blocks from the Moscone Center, SFMOMA is definitely worth a visit.

Posted by Jeff Frank at 5:21PM | print | email | comments(0)

SATURDAY, APRIL 8, 2006
Imagine a Virtual AERA
Yesterday, I was "locked out" of a session titled "Social and Cultural Perspectives
on Parent Involvement/Engagement." There were about 40 individuals packed into
a room intended for 20. People were sitting on the floor and standing in the
doorway (You can see pictures of the space in our photo blog). Later that
afternoon, my EdLab colleague, Anthony Cocciolo, and I went to a session on
Technology and Young Children but couldn't get in because of the crowds.

The popularity of these dissimilar sessions is a good sign for the Conference.
However, I am concerned by the problems created by the limitations of physical
space. A few small technological additions could address these issues. For instance,
technologies like Wi-Fi and webcams make it quite easy to broadcast meetings in
real-time over the Web. Attendees who get shut out of sessions because of space
could access the presentations and discussions from their computers (Assuming
there was Wi-Fi in the conference center). They could also use web conferencing
tools to interact with physical attendees/presenters. Technologies could even
serve to make the presentations more interactive. During a session titled,
"Implications of Race, Class and Sexuality on Gender and Gender Equity Research,"
Anthony and I were writing notes to each other to share our thoughts on the
speakers' comments. Imagine what the session would have been like if all the
attendees had access to a "back-chat" to IM (instant message) each other. Many of
our students are already using these technologies in their daily lives. Why aren't
we modeling "good" uses of technology at AERA? Maybe the EdLab should put
together a symposium for next year's AERA about what a virtual AERA might look
like

Posted by Hui Soo Chae at 4:59PM | print | email | comments(0)

SATURDAY, APRIL 8, 2006
Are schools robbing students?
The session: "Integrating Self-Directed Learning and Contextualized Tutoring: A
Research Agenda for Educational Reform" was very strong. In fact, part of me
wants to make the bold claim: Following the approaches put forward in this session
will lead to very positive educational reforms. In particular, I was struck by what
Allan Collins said.

In his conclusion, Collins made the following points:

- Before universal schooling, many students were self-directed learners.
- School has robbed youths of the responsibility for their own learning.
- Web and computers provide means to pursue one's own learning goals.
- Learning is powerful when learners decide what they are going to learn
  for themselves.
- Self-directed learning has high payoff in a society that values active
  thinkers and learners.

If we agree with all—or even some—of these points, it follows that: Society should
make it possible for students to pursue interests as deeply as possible by providing
web resources. This can happen when resources are invested in peer networks and
online courses. In peer networks, students with different passions—dinosaurs,
poetry, Chinese history—can interact with like-minded students. Online
courses—given this model—are still inchoate; if we take the idea of self-directed
learning seriously it is not exactly clear what a powerful online course would look
like yet.

I think there is a lot of exciting work that can be done around this way of thinking
about education. When I was in college, I took a class on Heidegger. The major
texts for the class were *Being and Time* and Herbert Dreyfus's *Being-In-The-World.*
Most of our class time was spent reading Dreyfus; the professor taught Heidegger
through Dreyfus. Though the class was good, I was frustrated when I found that
while I was taking the class, Dreyfus had posted his Heidegger lectures (in audio
format) on his website. I thought: Why would a take a class on a professor's
interpretation of Dreyfus's interpretation of Heidegger when I can hear Dreyfus's
Heidegger lectures (and the questions that these lectures provoke) directly, and
free of charge?

Since that class, I have found that I can learn deeply about almost everything I am
interested in—for example, Seamus Heaney's poetry—online. What would it mean
for the educational system to give me "credit" for this type of learning; if I listen
to all of Dreyfus's lectures on Heidegger and exchange notes and questions and
papers with other like-minded students, am I getting an education? If I can
find—using resources like MIT's OpenCourseWare—everything I need to get a great
self-directed education—and here comes the bold claim—do we really need schools?

I am not ready to jump ship just yet—there are a number of problems with this
approach—nonetheless, I think these are the right types of questions to start asking
with utter seriousness.

Posted by Jeff Frank at 2:42PM | print | email | comments(0)

SATURDAY, APRIL 8, 2006
Contributing to the Democratic Conversation

For my second session on Friday, I selected a Presidential Session on the topic, "Can Educational Research Contribute to a Democratic Conversation about Schooling?" that included a set of thought provoking and engaging presentations by TCR authors Madeleine Grumet, John Willinsky, and Megan Boler and future TCR authors Rita O'Sullivan, Amy Anderson, and Alex Molnar. Those of us looking for a way to enter the theme of the conference were not disappointed.

The session began with papers by Madeleine Grumet, Rita O'Sullivan, and Amy Anderson that told the story of their efforts to inject a bit of educational research into a local Chapel Hill/Orange County debate on the possibility of merging the wealthy Chapel Hill School District with the decidedly less wealthy Orange County District. As you can imagine, taking on this topic brought the researchers and the research to the attention of both their colleagues on campus and the residents of the country who had interests (but perhaps not a public interest – See the recent blog post by Jeff Frank on "The Public Interest?") in the prospects for the merger. The presentations hit the all the high points of this engagement of researchers with a high profile public issue, and the controversy was brought to life when a questioner in the audience who lived in the county district asked whether the researches had felt used in the political process.

John Willinsky began the next presentation by expressing his position that universities should be sources of understanding for democratic conversations, that knowledge should be free on the web, and that democracy involves the right to know. His upbeat assessment of the progress being made in putting research online (i.e., broad spread of internet access in public libraries, the rise of Wikipedia, the blogosphere, open access journals) was interrupted only near the end by his observation that educational research is not really online and freely and widely available yet. John neglected to mention his own new book on open access from MIT Press, a book freely available online.

Alex Molnar offered a somewhat less sunny view of the state of interaction between researchers and the public and noted particularly the corrosive effect of market forces on channels of communication. He argued that we need to rise beyond our own irrelevance, rescue ourselves from our own language and learn to communicate with real people. He cited the example of the the Educational Policy Studies Lab at Arizona State as an effort to reach out to a wider audience. He noted that the communication efforts of the Lab had paid off in thousands of citations to its work in a year. In this way the Lab engaged in democratic dialogue.

Megan Boler spoke about her current project, New Media Practices and Online Digital Dissent After September 11th. This study is examining four kinds of online materials: 1) political blogs, 2) the Bush in 30 Seconds Campaign, 3) the online networks developed about Jon Stewart's Daily Show and his appearance on Crossfire, and 4) independently produced memes. The project is examining the creation of new publics and critical dissent through digital media.

Together these presentations highlighted both the possibilities and the barriers to greater communication between the educational research community and the wide public. They called attention to specific actions that can be taken to enrich the contribution of educational researchers to the democratic conversation.

Posted by Gary Natriello at 2:39PM | print | email | comments(0)

SATURDAY, APRIL 8, 2006
The Public Interest?
Throughout his career, John Dewey managed to ask questions like: What would it mean for educational research to serve the public interest; does a public even exist that can be served? These types of questions would seem to undermine the very theme of the 2006 AERA conference. And yet, Dewey was not a cynic; he believed that asking these types of questions was the only way to growth and progress. This spirit—raising very serious questions so as to promote growth—was embodied in the presidential session "John Dewey, The Public Interest, and Educational Practice Today."

David Hansen's paper emphasized the distinction between interests, and what Dewey means by interest. Interests—according to Hansen—are like a possessions; one has interests. This is different from interest, which is an attitude, a disposition or a perspective. When Dewey concludes *Democracy and Education* with, "Interest in learning from all the contacts of life is the essential moral interest", Dewey is highlighting this very distinction. Interest transcends an individual's interests; interest is active growth away from a narrow individualism and towards an acknowledgement that what seems like a purely individual project, is in fact a project that involves many other individuals. As such, we are always engaged with others. Hansen argued that this is the only way—according to Dewey—that the public emerges. The public emerges when we begin to re-think our individual interests in the light of an interest in the consequences that our actions have on and for others. This leads Hansen to restate Dewey's conclusion to *Democracy of Education*, but with an important difference. The sentence now runs, "Interest in learning from all of the consequences of life is the essential public interest."

This sentence was developed by Donald Blumenfield-Jones in his presentation. Blumenfield-Jones—using a hypothetical case-study of a curriculum

committee—showed how difficult it is to think through the consequences of something as—seemingly—simple as adding new courses to one school in a school district. In a situation like this, how is it possible for an individual to act so as to advance the interest of the public, even when this interest goes against his individual interests? Blumenfield-Jones argues—in my mind, very persuasively—that this question presupposes a misguided view of individual interests. To have interests is to take a certain type of risk. Because one cannot have unlimited interests, one must *choose* one's interests. This choice brings one face to face with the possible contingency of one's interests. Why is it that I have these interests and not others; if I was raised differently, wouldn't I have different interests? And yet, to really take something as an interest, one must also make a commitment. If golf is truly to be one of my interests, I must set out to learn as much as I can about it; I must try to enter into the practice (or tradition) of golfing. Thus taking interests is already to acknowledge the limitations of one's interests—I could possibly be interested in something else—and the importance that tradition (the knowledge of others) has in the development of interests. These two acknowledgments—of individual limitations and of tradition—bring us back to Hansen's presentation; Blumenfield-Jones shows how interests—if thought through—will bring us to what Hansen described as interest.

To do educational research in the public interest—given the rich picture that emerges from these presentations—one must first know what it means to have interests. Thinking through our own interests will—if Dewey is correct—lead us to rethink what it means to act in the public interest and in so doing, will lead us to take the first steps towards genuine progress.

Posted by Jeff Frank at 2:37AM | print | email | comments(0)

SATURDAY, APRIL 8, 2006
The Complexity Underneath
Complexity theory would have helped. I remember my high school science classes vividly—I enjoy a challenge, and I was certainly confused, but I was also deeply troubled by the platitudes of the curriculum. Could the world really be so elegantly described, I wondered, by equations that were easily condensed into a few textbook pages? Adding to my doubt was the fact that my school organized the curriculum so physics came a year before calculus, which meant I grappled with the meaning of the concept of velocity before I understood the math.

No one told me about the problem of spiraling curriculum at the time—I simply coped. But at a session earlier today, "Why Complexity is Important for Learning," my frustration with physics was at least partially ameliorated. The Moscone Center South room was appropriately packed for such a moment of reparation, albeit somewhat unrelated to the professional significance of the event—people were standing in the doorway for the opportunity to wrap their heads around the challenges of teaching science.

David Hammer, the discussant, passionately (if enigmatically) summarized the problem: "One can't make the world think it is simpler than it is." I'm going to get this wrong—one should look to Olivia Levrini, Jeanne Bamberger, Orit Parnafes, Andrea diSessa for further elucidation—but the discussion hinged upon the conceptual distance between phenomenology and ontology, and the outcomes for education. The following questions resonated with me: How should the complexity that underlies physical phenomena be addressed in a curriculum that is increasingly myopic in its standardized form? Can teachers teach rudimentary (i.e., "wrong") science while foregrounding the matter of complexity at a "low" (i.e., microscopic) level?

The lesson for educators is that the matter of complexity in physics is a matter of complexity for education as well. It may or may not be possible to educate effectively for a "phenomenology of richness" in schools—the "phenomenology of elegant" is difficult enough. But for educators to do justice to the richness of science, there must be room for scientific discussions above and beyond the ordinary curriculum. And one conclusion stands out above all: students should be made aware that teachers (and teacher-researchers) worry about these issues!

Posted by Brian Hughes at 2:25AM | print | email | comments(0)

FRIDAY, APRIL 7, 2006
Is identity politics enough?
I was hoping to visit the session on Technology and Young Children this afternoon, but after realizing that the session was greatly over attended (my closet of a Manhattan apartment could host more people), I headed over to a Presidential Session (I figured a big room would come with such a grandiose designation). The session was titled *Implications of Race, Class and Sexuality on Gender and Gender Equity Research*. In this session, Aida Hurtado from UC Santa Cruz discussed gender issues in Latina/o research, and Kevin Kumashiro discussed implications of race, class and sexual orientation. Although both speakers delivered their presentations with enthusiasm and deep knowledge of the communities they serve, I couldn't help but think of the rationale for work which acts to *monitor* various cultural groups. By monitor, I am referring to the act of surveying, chronicling, and extensively describing the circumstances surrounding certain subsections of the

population. I wondered, would one be aware of the oppressions in educational opportunities for various minority groups without such scholarship? Does such scholarship play a role in reform and public policy? If so, how does such scholarship act to change?

As a queer individual, I do often appreciate the awareness that gets raised by such scholarship generated by queer theorists. However, I am concerned with efficacy of identity politics. Is it simply sufficient to identify minority group, and follow it with descriptions of the oppressions such groups experience? Is there more we can do beyond monitoring, identifications, and identity politics? My interest in educational technologies is somewhat driven from this limitation; or more nearly, I believe such technologies provide the potential to reach out to communities in need beyond simply identifying their needs. However, only time will tell if such technologies are able to substantively aid such communities (and hopefully not prove harmful or ineffective).

Posted by Anthony Cocciolo at 9:36PM | print | email | comments(0)

FRIDAY, APRIL 7, 2006
Protecting the Public Interest

I kicked off the convention by attending a session on "Protecting the Public Interest: What Research Has to Say to the Next Generation of Policymakers." The session featured TCR Board Member and author David Berliner, TCR authors Paul Shaker, Elizabeth Heilman, Joel Spring, and Daniel Laitsch, and future TCR authors Angela Valenzuela and Linda McNeil As you might imagine from the list of players, this was a high energy session with lots of ideas.

After a rousing tone-setting introduction by Paul Shaker that included a list of specific government attacks on the educational research community, David Berliner offered a series of major points to organize the activities of educational researchers. My two favorite points: 1) we must take a greater interest in our political lives and get actively engaged in practicing democracy by spending 1 night in 4 out engaging in social, political, religious, or community groups, and 2) government has a right to interfere in policy formation, but not a right to interfere in the conduct of research. Joel Spring followed by asking us to consider a new paradigm for education that would move us beyond thinking about education for economic development to thinking about educational opportunities that would lead us to long and happy lives. Angela Valenzuela discussed her work at the University of Texas – Austin to develop a new Educational Policy Alliance to address the vacuum in academic policy leadership in education in the state of Texas. Linda McNeil asked us to focus our work on significant issues, to document the harm done to those whose lives are being adversely affected by current educational policies, and to find a term other than "achievement" (now limited to test performance) to discuss the outcomes we would like from the educational system. Daniel Laitsch argued that educational research was now largely controlled by the government and cited several GAO findings of inappropriate actions on the part of the current administration. Elizabeth Heilman concluded by asking what kind of education we now need for progress and suggesting that we need to make ethical progress and moral progress more than we need to make scientific progress.

After all of this, I am left with just one question (with apologies to Stephen Colbert): NCLB, a great educational reform? Or the greatest educational reform?

Posted by Gary Natriello at 8:07PM | print | email | comments(0)

FRIDAY, APRIL 7, 2006
Achieving Balance and the Joys of Networking
My first two days at AERA were spent at a preconference session for new faculty and graduate students who aspire to become faculty in the field of higher education. The theme of the event was finding balance in an academic life. The two days were spent discussing the various ways that balance can come into play for faculty and how to prepare for the many challenges that we will face as academics. In summation, balancing the personal and professional aspects of an academic life is difficult, yet not impossible. For me, this thought is uplifting.

The preconference also gave me an opportunity to meet new faculty and fellow graduate students in my field. I find that meeting new people in my field is the most important and rewarding part of attending AERA. Each year that I attend this conference (this is my third year), I feel more comfortable and at home within my academic community as I get to know more people in my field. Conferences are about meeting new people – and I am pleased to say that I feel like I am off to a great start. I look forward to what the next five days will bring…

Posted by Kim Pereira at 7:25PM | print | email | comments(0)

FRIDAY, APRIL 7, 2006
Where's the WiFi?
After having discovered that the Hilton charges a hefty fee to use the Internet in one's room, and WiFi is virtually absent from the Moscone center, we were pleased to find the free WiFi at the Metreon Center, which is housed between Moscone center South and West. The center, flagshipped by Sony, features a slew of high-tech toys for sale and a range of restaurants. The outdoor terrace

on the second floor overlooks a lovely park, which would be great if the weather improved.

Posted by Anthony Cocciolo at 6:28PM | print | email | comments(0)

FRIDAY, APRIL 7, 2006
Food Review: Cha-Am Express
My EdLab colleagues and I had lunch at a Thai fast food "joint" called Cha-Am Express. The food was pretty good and the price wasn't bad. $7 for Pad Thai. $1.50 for Thai Ice Tea (definitely worth getting). Be prepared for long lines. They'll probably get longer as the convention runs on.

It's conveniently located across from the West Moscone Center Center (Howard and Fourth).

Posted by Hui Soo Chae at 6:14PM | print | email | comments(0)

FRIDAY, APRIL 7, 2006
A Starbucks on Every… What? One Corner?
Word on the street has it that one should avoid the lines at the lone Starbucks in the vicinity of the Moscone Center (the reputable source for this information attended MacWorld here in January). As a New Yorker, I find this dearth of franchising appalling. Nevertheless, a good alternative will be Peet's Tea & Coffee in Opera Plaza. This will put me in better standing with my brother who lives in Berkeley anyway, since Starbucks copied Peet's distinctive roasting and brewing technologies in the 1970's… a fact still begrudged by some "Peetniks."

Posted by Brian Hughes at 3:23PM | print | email | comments(0)

FRIDAY, APRIL 7, 2006
All the pretty crystal
Seated on a very plush sofa in the lobby of the Hilton in Union Square, San Francisco, taking advantage of the free WiFi, I cannot help but think of material divides. Looking at all the lobby's exaggerated faux opulence, designed no doubt to mesmerize the American bourgeoisie, I cannot help but think of my visit to Christopher Columbus High School in the Bronx borough of New York City. I remember the deterioration of the physical structure and the stern security staff that's metal detection process would rival most small airports. I can't help but wonder: can we, with such drastic material divides from the most needy members of our educational system, truly understand their authentic circumstances? Do these material divides shut us off from truly understanding?

Posted by Anthony Cocciolo at 3:12PM | print | email | comments(0)

FRIDAY, APRIL 7, 2006
Reflections on a Cat

Thursday was a travel day, as they say in the big leagues, so I did not generate much conference news except for some sightings of colleagues checking in at various locations. But there is always something to report. Meanings are often created, not discovered. So it was when I came upon this cat resting in the sun on the Hyde Street Peer amidst a great deal of foot traffic and noise. How much like the educational system is this cat, unmoved, unchanged and yet in complete control? How much like the educational research community are those passing by and making all manner of commotion that might at least be noticed by the cat? As I pondered this a bit in the sun on the pier a family with small children approached the cat and attempted engagement through first petting and stroking, and then poking and prodding. The cat remained in place, unmoved, and quite comfortable. The challenge of moving the cat appears to be enormous.

Posted by Gary Natriello at 11:52AM | print | email | comments(0)

FRIDAY, APRIL 7, 2006
Day One

Though I cannot speak for the man—alas, I failed to pack my Ouija Board (James Merrill would not have made the same mistake)—I can't help but feel John Dewey would have taken an interest in the events of today. It is not as if we did anything explicitly educational: we didn't go on any schools visits, the conference has not started; and yet, educational thought seemed intent on following our tourist wanderings.

To take just one example, we happened to come across groups of students on their way out of school. At three thirty this afternoon, the streets of San Francisco were filled with talk; the students who had just sat silent or reticent since seven this morning were now loud and active. This reminded me of Emerson, who wrote: "Do not think the youth has no force, because he cannot speak to you and me. Hark! in the next room his voice is sufficiently clear and emphatic. It seems he knows how to speak to his contemporaries. Bashful or bold, then, he will know how to make us seniors very unnecessary." Although Emerson is being intentionally provocative here, there is something to his admonishment nonetheless.

Posted by Jeff Frank at 11:05AM | print | email | comments(0)

FRIDAY, APRIL 7, 2006
San Francisco houses
This is my first visit to San Francisco. I'm impressed! The first things that attracted me were the colors of the houses. I have never seen houses of so many colors mixed and laid out so nicely together. Most colors are light -- pink, light blue, light green, lavender, canary yellow, light gray, and white; they look like pastel painted houses pulled from a child's story book.

As it turns out, there actually is something significant about the colors of these houses in San Francisco besides the city being known as the birthplace of "flower power" and an historic landmark. There are even books written about the colors of the houses, one of which is "San Francisco Houses" by Ana Cristina Canizares, who illustrated that the architecture and design of the houses are now "followed by a modern movement that favors a mixture of both minimalist and more decorative styles" (amazon.com)

As I heard, no visit to San Francisco would be complete without a down hill trip on a trolley car. I had my first one today. The car traveled a little slower than I expected but it gave the tourists more time to take in all the beautiful colors of those neighborhoods, soak up the city sounds, and absorb the pleasant sunshine.

Posted by Lin Lin at 3:36AM | print | email | comments(1)

FRIDAY, APRIL 7, 2006
Food Review: McCormick & Kuleto's Seafood Restaurant
My colleagues and I from the EdLab had lunch at McCormick & Kuleto's Seafood Restaurant yesterday. The décor was excellent and the scenery was breathtaking—we had a picture-perfect view of the Golden Gate Bridge. The seafood was also high quality. I recommend the "Special Appetizer Platter" for parties of 4-6. It includes popcorn shrimp, fried calamari, mini-crab cakes, and coconut prawns (along with three dipping sauces). The "Fish Tacos" was also popular. It's a great way to cap off a cable car ride to Fisherman's Wharf and/or a stroll through Ghirardelli Square. Lunch items were reasonably priced. The service was acceptable.

Posted by Hui Soo Chae at 2:25AM | print | email | comments(0)

FRIDAY, APRIL 7, 2006
AERA, Educational Technology, and then some…
I am pleased to have the opportunity to return to my home state and provide special coverage of AERA for the *Teachers College Record*. As someone who has spent the early years of his career working as a technologist, I look forward to expanding my knowledge of educational research by participating in such a

wide-ranging and epistemologically broad conference. For my first visit to AERA, I am eager to attend sessions related to the learning sciences and new educational technologies. In particular, I hope to attend sessions which focus on developments in simulations and serious video games, design-based research, and new technologies that are socially, (meta)cognitively, and affectively aware. I will be sure to catch sessions with professors of courses I am taking this semester at Teachers College (Chuck Kinzer and Xiaodong Lin), as well as snag some sessions with the leaders and innovators in the aforementioned areas.

In addition to participating in the areas I have mentioned above, I will also be sensitive to meta-context of AERA. In particular, as someone who is contemplating completing a doctorate degree in education, I am concerned with the efficacy of the field. In particular, does educational research afford the opportunities to substantively assist in the betterment of educational practice or situations? If it is (or is not) aimed at the practical, does it allow for the opportunity to ask curiosity-driven or critically-minded questions? Or does one only bother to ask questions which can be answered with "doable" studies? How are social science research methods being challenged by a world that is constantly changing (or is it really changing?) Do the methods work anymore (or did they ever work?) How might the evolution of US higher education affect the work of educational researchers?

Well aware that all fields have their limitations (financial, resource, scope, time, etc.), I hope that AERA will allow me to see if the benefits of educational research outweigh its limitations. If were lucky, maybe I will have my answer, or at least in-part, in time for my flight back to New York City.

Posted by Anthony Cocciolo at 1:28AM | print | email | comments(0)

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 5, 2006
instructional technology: past, present and future
The ability to attend this year's AERA conference is important to me on many levels, one of which is related to my own academic transition and milestones. As someone who will soon receive my doctoral degree in instructional technology and media and move on to a professorship, I am interested in tracing the history, present, and future of the field with its rapid growth so that I can (re)examine where I am in the midst of the research of the field. This is also important because in the past two to three years, I focused on a narrow (arguably, depending on what connections one may make) part of the field, online distance teaching and learning. I have somewhat put aside many other aspects of the field which I had become familiar with, the philosophical and historical underpinnings of technology, the political issues related to technology, the computer infrastructures in schools, and the various instructional design models. I was up to date with them before my certification exam, but after that, I sometimes could not even recall some familiar names in the field.

I would like to use this opportunity to find out new ideas and projects from some seasoned as well as new scholars (and some friends) in the field of instructional technology. I did a quick search and hope that I will be able to visit sessions by the following scholars: Sasha Barab, John Bransford, Larry Cuban, Chris Dede, Thomas Duffy, Gerald Knezek, Chuck Kinzer, Richard Mayer, David Johnassen, Xiaodong Lin, Roy Pea, Charles Reigeluth, Peter Shea, Karen Swan, and Young Zhao. I know I will miss many, so please feel free to email me (lin@tc.columbia.edu) any "blog-worthy" sessions, articles or experiences.

I cannot wait.

Posted by Lin Lin at 4:58PM | print | email | comments(0)

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 5, 2006
"I'm going back to Cali, Cali, Cali…"
This is the first time I'm going to AERA as an observer and I am very excited. As a participant, I never felt like I was able to take full advantage of the sessions. There's just too much to think about when you have to present. Last year in Montreal I presented a paper on the support networks of Korean-origin, working-class, high school students. It was part of a symposium titled, "Social Class, Refugee Status, and Special Education: Multiple Perspectives in Asian American K-12 Education." The year before that, I was involved in two presentations and one roundtable. They were titled:

> - Using Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Critical Latino Theory (LatCrit) to examine Black and Latino youth's negotiations of New York State high-stakes Regents Exams.
>
> - Korean American students at the margins: Using critical ethnographic playwriting to examine identity and education.
>
> - Using Critical Asian Theory to deconstruct master narratives of Korean American students in secondary school.

The CRT and LatCrit paper was done in collaboration with my advisor, Michelle G. Knight (I might post the aforementioned papers in PocketKnowledge or the EdLab website when I get back, but if you're really interested just send me an email).

So hear are my plans during AERA:

1) Go to sessions of interest and interview attendees about what they thought (I'll probably post a tentative schedule some time tomorrow).

2) Reconnect with colleagues who I haven't seen since the last AERA and find out what they've been up to.

3) Take lots of photos of AERA and San Francisco and post them on the blog.

This should keep me busy but not too busy to enjoy the city. I just hope the weather cooperates.

In the famous words of LL Cool J (and Notorious B.I.G.), "I'm going back to Cali."

Posted by Hui Soo Chae at 4:10PM | print | email | comments(0)

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 5, 2006
Prelude to a Defense
As a graduate student who will be defending a dissertation in two weeks, I will be seeking out a niche for myself in the world of AERA. Will my philosophical work in the field of art education eventually find an audience here? Do educational researchers need or want more philosophy? (Is San Francisco a good place to edit one's own philosophical writing?) We'll see… It looks like there is enough research at the conference to fill the bay with appendixes. Sessions I don't want to miss:

FRIDAY: "Why Complexity Is Important for Learning" (12:00pm - 2:00pm)

SATURDAY: "Educational Neuroscience: Research, Ethics, Teaching, and Application" (10:35am - 12:05pm)

SUNDAY: "Educational Research and the Culture of Science: Controversies Regarding the Future of Educational Work" (8:15am - 9:45am)

MONDAY: "Interweaving Boundaries: Art, Education, and Spirituality" (8:15am - 9:45am)

All four of these sessions seem like a fertile ground for conceptualizing art making as naturalistic inquiry. Admittedly, I'm going to the session on art, education, and spirituality to make sure the University of British Columbia isn't selling the humanistic soul of art to the devil. (For now, I'll give them the benefit of the doubt…)

Posted by Brian Hughes at 3:34PM | print | email | comments(0)

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 5, 2006
Preparing for the Conference
What would count as good preparation for the 2006 AERA conference? I thought—though I didn't follow through—about watching great films set in San Francisco: *The Lady From Shanghai*; *Vertigo*; *The Maltese Falcon*; and *Dark Passage*. Another approach I thought about—again, one that I didn't take (this is beginning to sound a little like Geoff Dyer's *Out of Sheer Rage*)—was reading some San Francisco poets: Kenneth Rexroth; Robert Frost; or Czeslaw Milosz's essays *A View of San Francisco Bay*. What, though, would any of this have to do with the reality of the 2006 AERA conference: namely, a few days spent indoors listening to educational research?

With these half-hearted preparations in mind, I finally sat down with the AERA schedule and plotted my week. I would like to think that I searched using a superior method: arranging every session on a NCAA basketball tournamentesque grid, letting educational researchers do fictitious battle for my AERA attention. But, eventually, I searched the catalog using rather simple criteria: I looked for researchers whose work I enjoy—Gert Biesta, Elizabeth Campbell—and for topics that I am interested in—philosophy of education and ethics.

Now, finalizing my plans (I am starting to get worried that I won't have a ride to the airport, or that I will forgot some important item) I am getting very excited about attending a number of sessions. In particular, I am looking forward to: "John Dewey, the Public Interest, and Educational Practice Today"; "Narrative Research, Ethics, and Relationships"; "The Role of Critical Thinking in Teacher Preparation"; "The Responsive Research Scholar"; Four Enduring Philosophies of Education"; "The Role of Listening in Teaching"; "Social Justice and the Ethics of Practice"; A Strategy for the Defence, Improvement and Promotion of Educational Research"; "The Double Character of Freedom"; and "Mapping Civic Potential".

Posted by Jeff Frank at 1:52PM | print | email | comments(0)

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 5, 2006
San Francisco, Here I Come!

Okay, so here I am preparing to go to yet another AERA meeting, and once again I am confronted with the dilemma of having the meeting in April every year. Just as the weather begins to turn nice here in the northeast, as you can see from this picture

out my window, I must plan a trip to a place where it will be no better (e.g., San Diego) and often worse (e.g., Chicago, Montreal). As for San Francisco, who knows, but the news of the continuing rain and the prospect of the mudslide in Sausalito does not bode well.

Nevertheless, there is much to look forward to at this year's meeting. In addition to all of the sessions on the meeting theme that we have been highlighting over the past week, of course, I am looking forward to the annual meeting of the *Teachers College Record* Editorial Advisory Board and the lively discussion of the journal that typically occurs. I am also looking forward to working with a group of five young scholars working on papers for publication as part of the Editors' Mentoring Program. I will be chairing a session entitled "Promoting the Public Good Through Investigations of Teaching" scheduled for Saturday at 12:25 PM. I will have more to say about these events in the days ahead.

This year for the first time I will have some special assignments as a member of the TCR blogging team. Along with my fellow bloggers, I will be highlighting interesting sessions and presentations. And I may even be highlighting some interesting hallway conversations, so if you see me in the halls, let me know of any news in the educational research community that you would like to share with the readers of TCR.

Posted by Gary Natriello at 1:33PM | print | email | comments(0)

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