

Learning

What's It All About— Learning in the Human Sciences

Dorothy I. Mitstifer

Two recent articles by John Tagg (2004a, 2004b) challenged me to wonder about the state of learning in the human sciences. His first article in *About Campus* raised the question, “Why Learn?,” and his second one focused on “Alignment for Learning.” It seems to me that Tagg’s concern that higher education is encouraging grade-grubbing careerism is one that Kappa Omicron Nu should be concerned about. Our members have the grades, or they wouldn’t be members. So, what is our responsibility to make sure that serious scholarship is a deep approach to learning—studying for life? The difference may be that the learning task is approached in two different ways: performance goals vs. learning goals. The one way shows positive judgment about learning, and the other way seeks increased competence.

Surface vs. Deep Processing

A deep approach to learning requires that the learner engage in deep-level processing. This approach focuses on meaning—grasping the message, engaging with the underlying ideas. In contrast, surface-level processing concentrates on remembering as much as

possible about the material and the strategies described. The performance goal is an A, and the learning goal is understanding.

Marton and Booth (1997) studied the conceptions of learning and found that students that have performance goals defined learning in these ways:

- ◆ Learning as increasing one’s knowledge
- ◆ Learning as memorizing and reproducing
- ◆ Learning as applying

In this same study, students that had learning goals defined learning in these ways:

- ◆ Learning as understanding
- ◆ Learning as seeing something in a different way
- ◆ Learning as changing as a person



Thus a person’s perspective, what is believed, manifests itself in the goals. Learning goals are about change. When one achieves the performance, the learning can go away. The course is finished—on to the next. Dweck (2000) theorized that learners who have little faith in their own capacity do not set learning goals. They aim for easy, low-effort successes, and outperforming other students. Those with learning goals believe that their abilities are not fixed and that they are subject to development or decline. Thus effort, difficulty, and setbacks will be experienced even with high confidence in their intelligence.

What to Do?

Although it would be easy to place the blame on learners, they are reflecting developmental stages in realization of themselves as learners. The design of the learning environment has much to do with whether the learner gets “stuck” in the stage where performance goals are sought. If assessment places a value only on student work as quantifiable points, students will remain dedicated to performance goals. Students respond to the incentives in their environment, and education in this mode will continue to produce transcripts. Tagg (2004a) uses an interesting analogy: “Kellogg makes cereal; colleges make transcripts” (p. 3).

If the learning environment supports student development, institutions need to stop sending mixed messages—the need to think critically and develop own ideas but assessment with bubble sheets and graduate schools/employers mainly looking at grades. What the institutions say and do are not aligned. When persons select their own goals, they are important and valuable and worthy of hard work. The goals of personal significance

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indicate intrinsic motivations. Intrinsic motivation, according to Wenger (1998) emerges from *practice*: “Practice is first and foremost, a process by which we can experience the world and our engagement with it as meaningful” (p. 51). His *Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning, and Identity* explores how to construct and revise meaning through practice. Wenger proposes communities of practice as a means for negotiation of meaning. The tools consist of give-and-take with others—“assert, assess, and adjust meanings in light of personal and shared purposes. It is through practice that meanings grow into goals, that we shape our purposes in the matrix of contested possibilities that a community creates” (Tagg, 2004b, p. 12). Learning communities are an example of the communities of practice approach.

Learning Communities

Tagg (2004b) discussed “a cognitive economy that produces cognitive entrepreneurs, independent and reflective thinkers” (p. 14). Perkins (1992) studied what he called the “hot” cognitive economy and concluded that the following elements of the learning environment motivate the energy for deep learning.

- ◆ Goals – intrinsic goals
- ◆ Activities – frequent, connected, and authentic activities
- ◆ Information – consistent, continuous, and interactive feedback
- ◆ Time – long time horizon for learning through a connected curriculum
- ◆ Community – engaged communities of practice
- ◆ Alignment – related goals, activities, information, time, and community

Tagg proposed that the framework for a cognitive economy could be achieved through “learning communities, learning outcomes assessment, performance-based learning, portfolios, ability transcripts, capstone projects, self-assessment, first-year programs, service learning, undergraduate

research, collaborative learning, and abundant combinations of and variations on them all” (p. 16).

Now What

Although most institutions have programs and practitioners that value and use deep learning processes, the key challenge is alignment for learning. The mixed messages from most institutions reinforce performance goals. So, the need to keep an eye on the big picture is critical to ensuring that students move through the developmental stages of learning from surface to deep learning. Although it is unlikely that a top-down master plan for realignment for the whole institution can be sustained, alignment can be achieved through personal reflection and engagement.

The individual educator has three choices: alter or suppress values, criticize the institution, or change it. Each educator can use the tools of scholarship and reflection to discover meaning and revise practice. Communities of practice can form in concert with others who are reshaping their work. In this manner, the context can be changed from a

bunch of courses to alignment for learning. Kappa Omicron Nu can play a role by promoting the integration of academic and co-curricular goals. The Undergraduate Research Community (URC) and the “Kids and Careers” service learning initiatives are two examples of Kappa Omicron Nu commitment to alignment for learning.

I conclude with a plea: Look around the institutions you know and do your part as a volunteer, educator, or patron to identify the

institutional structures and processes that are misaligned with the goal of promoting deep learning. Then, do your part in establishing educational goals and aligning the policies and practices to them.

References

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A Matter of Ethics

Kappa Omicron Nu has the opportunity along with other members of the Association of College Honor Societies (ACHS) to focus on a collaborative project,

A Matter of ETHICS

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“A Matter of Ethics.” The ACHS rationale states:

The Association of College Honor Societies (ACHS) is spearheading this national ethics project in an effort to unite member societies to further one of our most important common goals: To lend support and encouragement to promising young adults as they strive to meet their full potential as future leaders in their respective fields.

Such potential is found not on the surface of a person, where the worthy goals of achievement and

KON CONCLAVE

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CHICAGO, 2005

knowledge shine brightly for all to see. Instead, a person's full potential can only be reached by building upon the core of one's character, by encouraging honesty, trustworthiness, integrity... ethics.

Because these issues cross all academic lines, you can exercise your creativity to promote the project across professional boundaries. We hope you'll take advantage of this unique opportunity to collaborate with your ACHS honor society peers.

Kappa Omicron Nu members are encouraged to visit the ethics program link on the ACHS Web site, www.achsnatl.org, to explore resources and a variety of thought-provoking and fun character-building activities.

Campus members can get involved by identifying an activity to sponsor, collaborating with other honor societies on campus, or you may choose to work with a professor to integrate academic and co-curricular goals. Professional members may be able to use the ACHS resources, including ACHS ethics program brochures and posters, to support various volunteer and career-related activities.

Kappa Omicron Nu Leadership Conclave & URC Undergraduate Research Conference

August 4 - 7, 2005

**Radisson Hotel & Suites,
Chicago, Illinois**

***Theme: Integrating Academic &
Co-Curricular Goals***

Make your plans now to join us next year for the eighth *KON Leadership Conclave and URC Undergraduate Research Conference* at the fabulous Radisson, Chicago. The Radisson is located in the heart of the Windy City's premier tourism and shopping district, one-half block east of North Michigan Avenue and just steps from the Magnificent Mile. It is just around the corner from Nieman Marcus, Saks, & Bloomingdales and within walking distance of the city's museums—just three blocks east to Lake Michigan and three blocks north to Water Tower Place.

More information can be found on the KON website, at www.kon.org/conclave/conclave.html.



New KON Fellowship

Kappa Omicron Nu is pleased to announce the new ***Marjorie M. Brown Dissertation Fellowship***. The purpose of the Fellowship Program is to support research in critical social theory. This award for **\$10,000** is intended to continue critical analysis of concepts central to the field and for dialogue toward acceptance by the profession.

More information about this exciting new award can be found by following the Fellowships/Grants link on Kappa Omicron Nu's website: www.kon.org.

Heritage of Home Economics

A presentation of the complete history of the profession from 1840 is available as a download (\$35) or on CD (\$75). See the New Initiatives link on the homepage of the Kappa Omicron Nu web site, www.kon.org, to order your copy or to get additional information.



Kids & Careers in Human Sciences: Career Awareness for Schoolchildren Ages 9-12

This program has been developed by Kappa Omicron Nu to give college students and professionals the resources necessary to share hands-on Human Sciences (HS) experiences with schoolchildren ages 9-12. This program intends to make a contribution to understanding of human sciences careers by showing children that:

- ◆ HS makes important contributions to everyday life.
- ◆ Children can use HS knowledge to improve their lives.
- ◆ Careers in HS can be fun and satisfying.

How does the program work?

The **Kids & Careers** program provides college students and professionals with kits of a wide variety of hands-on HS activities and demonstrations that are safe and age-appropriate. Existing activities will be collected in a central resource. Each activity will conclude with a short description of the applicable career, including how specialized knowledge is used in professional practice.

Program and resource kits for the **Kids & Careers** program are posted on the Kappa Omicron Nu Web site, see link at the top of the homepage at www.kon.org. The Kappa Omicron Nu Board of Directors launched the program with chapters at Conclave 2003. Other high school and college student groups are encouraged to participate.

Partners - Kappa Omicron Nu is pleased to announce the following partners. Other groups are invited to become partners and supply resource suggestions for an integrated approach to career

awareness of family and consumer sciences among schoolchildren ages 9-12:

- ◆ American Association of Family & Consumer Sciences and its professional sections and divisions
- ◆ Board on Human Sciences
- ◆ Council of Administrators of Family and Consumer Sciences
- ◆ Family, Career and Community Leaders of America, FCCLA
- ◆ Family Economics and Resource Management Division & Higher Education Unit, AAFCS
- ◆ National 4-H Headquarters

The Kappa Omicron Nu Team consists of: Sue Byrd, Missale Kumelachew, Barbara McFall, Angela Rushman, & Dorothy Mitstifer, Coordinator



KON Award Recipients

2004-2005 Awards

Chapter Awards

Scholar Program – Fifty grants for chapters

Doctoral

Omicron Nu Research Fellowship

Christine M. Proulx, University of North Carolina-Greensboro, Human Development and Family Studies

Kids and Careers

in Human Sciences

Kappa Omicron Phi/Hettie Margaret Anthony Fellowship

Sara Beth Brubacher, Iowa State University, Textiles and Clothing

Kellogg Foundation Grants 2003-2004

Paolucci Grant - Undergraduate

Amy Jensen, Grace Johnson, & Mary Reil – Northwest Missouri State University

Paolucci Grant – Graduate

Mira Ahn – Virginia Tech University

Melanie Crosby – University of Georgia

Hui-chun Huang – Kansas State University

2005-2006 Awards

Master's Fellowships

Eileen C. Maddex Fellowship

\$2,000 awarded annually from an endowment in the Omicron Nu Fellowship Fund in honor of her contributions as Omicron Nu Executive Director.

National Alumni Fellowship

\$2,000 awarded by the National Alumni Chapter.

Doctoral Fellowships

Hettie Margaret Anthony Fellowship

\$2,000 awarded for doctoral study from the Kappa Omicron Phi Fellowship Fund in honor of her as founder of Kappa Omicron Phi at Northwest Missouri State.

Omicron Nu Research Fellowship

\$2,000 awarded annually for doctoral research from the Omicron Nu Fellowship Fund.

Marjorie M. Brown Dissertation Fellowship

\$10,000 awarded for critical science research.

Research/Project Grants

Cross-specialization and integrative research is the research priority for the honor society. Multi-year proposals will be considered.

National Alumni Chapter Grant

\$1000 awarded annually as a project of the National Alumni Chapter.

New Initiatives Grant

\$3,000—awarded annually from the Kappa Omicron Nu New Initiatives Fund.

National Grants to Chapters

Scholar Program—Variable Grants

Awards will be based on the prior year's total initiatives according to the following schedule once each biennium: 1-10, \$150; 11-30, \$250; 31-50, \$350; 51 up, \$500.

New Chapters

Nu Lambda

Purdue University-Calumet

Nu Mu

Washington State University-Vancouver

Nu Nu

Southern Utah University

Nu Xi

Youngstown State University

Nu Omicron

California University of Pennsylvania

Nu Pi

California State University-Fullerton

Calls for Papers

Kappa Omicron Nu announces the following Calls for Papers for publication in upcoming issues of KON Forum:

Topic: Personal, Social & Corporate Responsibility in a Common World

Margaret Bubolz and Linda Nelson, Guest Editors

Topic: Diverse Families: A Dialogue about Reflective Practice

Katia Paz Goldfarb, Guest Editor

Topic: Critical Science and Critical Science Analysis

Sue McGregor, Guest Editor

Topic: Legacies for the Future

Sharon Y. Nickols, Guest Editor

Topic: Family Communication in the Information Age

Rebecca Dumlao, Guest Editor

Topic: Critical Thinking and Transformative Learning

Donna Kienzler & Frances Smith, Guest Editors

To obtain additional information or to download a copy of *KON's Guidelines for Authors*, please visit www.kon.org/CFP/cfp_gfa.html, or contact Dorothy Mitstifer via email at dmitstifer@kon.org, or by telephone at 517.351.8335.

*Announcing An Important New Service
for Our Members:*

***The KON Job Board
& Resume Bank***

JobTarget's Job Board & Resume Bank Software helps Kappa Omicron Nu serve its members with leading-edge service and function. JobTarget is an industry leader specializing in ASP software for the career services and recruitment markets. JobTarget's custom designed software solutions solve human capital issues for employers by connecting them directly with the membership of associations, trade groups, publishers, and other groups. JobTarget's fully-managed approach enables Kappa Omicron Nu to leverage the power of the Internet to assist with career services and recruitment needs. Kappa Omicron Nu members are encouraged to participate, both by posting job openings and by submitting resumes.

JobTarget manages custom-designed Internet solutions for associations, trade groups, web publishers, offline publishers, chambers of commerce, government agencies, universities, recruiting firms, corporations, and small businesses.

A link to JobTarget can be found by following the New Initiatives link on the KON web site: www.kon.org.

New Board Members

Sarah Shoffner, Chair
University of North Carolina
—Greensboro

Amelia G. Brown, Second Vice Chair
East Tennessee State University



***Human Sciences
Working Papers
Archive***

This Archive was initiated by the Kappa Omicron Nu Leadership Academy to fill an important niche—communication about working papers in the human sciences community. The “Rationale” and details “About HSwp” on the links reveal that the chief outcome can be described as ACCESS. Authors have access to readers and feedback. Students, professionals, and the public have access to new ideas and resources in a timely manner. Thus individuals, professionals, and society will benefit from the enthusiastic participation of authors and researchers. HSwp invites your participation. For more information, see: www.kon.org/hswp/index.html.

Following are brief overviews of some of the papers that can be read online through the Human Sciences Working Papers (HSwp) Archive:

Consumerism as a Source of Structural Violence

Sue L. T. McGregor

Capitalistic consumerism needs an infrastructure in order to continue to manifest itself. Components of that infrastructure include technology and telecommunications, corporate led globalization, the neo-liberal market ideology, world financial institutions, and complacent, or complicit, governments. Most significantly, the other component of this infrastructure is the consumer, and by association, the family and consumer sciences (FCS) profession. The basic premise of this paper is that this entire infrastructure is a key source of structural violence, enabled by consumers and FCS professionals who, knowingly or unknowingly, embrace the ideology of consumerism.

Consumer Entitlement, Narcissism, and Immoral Consumption

Sue L. T. McGregor

The premise of this paper is that a sense of an entitlement to consume, in combination with narcissistic pride, ego, vanity, conceit, and arrogance, leads to the untenable situation of morally irresponsible consumption decisions.

A Satire: Confessions of Recovering Home Economists

Sue L. T. McGregor

For the past 50 years, a few leading home economics thinkers have been sharing their thoughts about the mission, principles, and vision of the profession and field of study. Their think pieces are often very deep and lengthy due to the philosophical stance they take. Philosophy has a

language and body of knowledge of its own. To really understand Brown and others, we need a much more in-depth knowledge in philosophy than most of us have. To offset this philosophical knowledge gap, we offer this paper. It provides a way to move forward from the prevailing home economics belief system that has been accepted as the “way to do things” for the past 100 years.

Philosophical Well-being

Sue L. T. McGregor

In a recent graduate course, I had an epiphany and conceived of the idea of ***philosophical well-being***. I searched the web for articles on this idea and found very few so I decided to write this one. I did find a note in a chat room related to this topic. A person had collected the sayings that people attach to their e-mail tags (signatures) and sent them to her friends as a Christmas present with the note “I would like to offer my appreciation to all of you who contribute to our *philosophical well-being* by attaching ‘tag-lines’ to your messages.” If I could present this paper in a tag line . . . I would. So bear with me as I try to develop this idea for your consideration.

Typology of Home Economics Styles (With a Postmodern Critique)

Sue L. T. McGregor

Whether or not you consider yourself a home economist, we all have a home economics or related degree if we are in this profession. What is of significance is that we do not all have the same passion and commitment to the field or to professional associations and initiatives. Respecting this diversity is paramount if we want to appeal to the widening scope of emotions and compassion for the future of the profession. The premise of this paper is that one’s home economics

style influences one’s outlook, predispositions to the field, and beliefs about the profession and one’s role within it.

Transdisciplinary Research and Practice

Sue L. T. McGregor

There is a growing trend to forge bridges between disciplines as people in society attempt to solve complex problems and situations. Our profession has always advocated multidisciplinary and, rhetorically, interdisciplinary approaches as ways to solve problems that occur from generation to generation, in that sense, we were ahead of our time.

Reflection Matters: Connecting Theory to Practice in Service Learning Courses

Mary E. Henry

Service learning courses enable students to integrate academic study with service in the community to better understand course content through direct engagement in active learning. Reflection is a powerful educational strategy that enables students to make connections and derive meaning from their experience. Students have opportunities to reexamine and test their knowledge, assumptions, values, and beliefs about complex social issues as they combine their discipline-specific coursework with service in community-based, real-world settings. Integrating well-structured reflection exercises into course requirements has been found to enliven teaching and enrich learning in ways that are enduring. As students take more responsibility for their own learning, they are empowered by their active participation in important work that can make a difference in their own lives and the lives of others. Reflection *does* matter.



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Message from the Board of Directors

Sarah M. Shoffner

Greetings! Let's celebrate the future of KON! We are moving ahead with many exciting developments. In a variety of ways, "integration in action" remains a theme as chapter members and advisers continue supporting ways to integrate academic and co-curricular goals, embracing learning and research as a way of life, implementing our mission of empowered leaders, and promoting career awareness. Visit our ever-changing website at www.kon.org for updates and materials available for chapters and professional development of members.

Organized through our continuing commitment to policy governance, the Board of Directors met in January to review our successes, look at priorities, and plan ahead. Newly elected members were extended a hearty welcome and immediately went to work! Joining the Board were three student members: Erika C. Barnhart, East Carolina University; Renee Santos, Baylor University; and Catherine (Cathy) Schon, Carson-Newman College. Amelia G. Brown, East Tennessee State University, joined the Board as Second Vice President.

It seems that Conclave 2003 was so recent, and yet plans for the 2005 KON Leadership Conclave and Undergraduate Research Conference are well underway. Chicago, here we come! Mark your calendars now and begin making plans for August 4-7, 2005. The Radisson Hotel & Suites Chicago (160 East Huron Street), our headquarters / conclave site, is located in the heart of the city's premier district, one-half block off North Michigan Avenue and just steps from the Magnificent Mile. You will be within walking distance of Lake Michigan, Navy Pier, and the city's most exciting shops, restaurants, theaters, and museums.

Conclave—the biennial meeting of the Assembly of Delegates, the governing body of Kappa Omicron Nu—is an excellent opportunity for leadership development. Recently I chatted with a graduate student and former KON Board member about what we were planning for Conclave 2005. She beamed as she said, "Working with our chapter, attending Conclave and being elected to the Board, and continuing my alumni membership are the best things that ever

happened to me—KON helped me be the professional I was striving to be." The theme of the 2005 KON Conclave, "Integrating Academic and Co-Curricular Goals," will be implemented through the workshops and banquet address. Students and professionals will participate in sessions on the application of Reflective Human Action to organizational and personal issues and a focus on diversity will continue. Another feature of Conclave will be the third Undergraduate Research Conference with support from the Undergraduate Research Community for the Human Sciences (URC). Student Board Members will be elected during the Assembly of Delegates Meeting. The Assembly will also consider business of KON and participate in a forum to determine priorities for the "ends" (to achieve the mission) of Kappa Omicron Nu. The required program initiative, *Kids & Careers: Career Awareness for Schoolchildren Ages 9-12*, will be explored as service learning programs for chapters. Don't miss it! You'll make friends as you learn how making a commitment to the profession will enhance your professional development.

We are moving on! Future growth is evident in the petitions received for new chapters. During the past year, these new KON chapters have been installed: Nu Xi at Youngstown State University in Ohio; Nu Nu at Southern Utah University; and Nu Lambda at Purdue University—Calumet. California State University—Fullerton's Chapter, Nu Pi, will be installed in October 2004. California University of Pennsylvania and Washington State University—Vancouver are planning installations and others are in the planning stages. Also, KON announced the founding of Delta Tau Honor Society to serve dietetic technician and human sciences associate degree programs. The charter members of Delta Tau, Camden County College in Blackwood, New Jersey, were installed in Spring, 2004.

Elements of the Web site have been enhanced and others are planned. Check it out! www.kon.org. Look further in this issue of Dialogue for more details about KON "happenings." We have initiated new scholarship opportunities along with making awards this year. I look forward to sharing other developments as my Board term continues. Continue the "dialogue"!

Kappa Omicron Nu *Dialogue*, Volume 13, No. 2. ISSN: 1520-4855 - Executive Director and Editor: Dorothy I. Mitstifer. Assistant Editor: Lisa Wootton Booth. Board of Directors: Sarah M. Shoffner, Amelia C. Brown, Barbara A. Woods, Angela Rushman, Erika C. Barnhart, Renee Santos, Catherine Schon. © Copyright 2004 by Kappa Omicron Nu Honor Society, 4990 Northwind Drive, Suite 140, East Lansing, MI 48823-5031. Tele: 517.351.8335 ♦ Fax: 517.351.8336 ♦ E-mail: dmitstifer@kon.org