

**NATIONAL SOCIAL SCIENCE PROCEEDINGS**  
**• Volume #72 •**

**National Technology and Social Science Conference, 2020**  
**Table of Contents**

<b>THE CONTROL OVER EDUCATION, DISSENT, AND CENSORSHIP IN SAUDI ARABIA AND IRAN</b> Mohsen Asadalla, Central Washington University	1
<b>Immunizations: A Biological and Legal Approach to Vaccines and Vaccine-Hesitators</b> Justin Burum & Sue Burum, Vermillion Community College, Mn & Minnesota State University, Mankato, Mn	14
<b>Honing the Practice Mindfulness for Educational Leaders</b> Thomas J. Buttery, J. Gary Stewart, Austin Peay State University	38
<b>PEDAG RELATIONSHIPS</b> Anita Chadha, University of Houston, Downtown	45
<b>From the Classroom to the Workplace: Foreign Languages, Technology, and the Future Workforce</b> Evelyne Delgado-Norris, Ph.D., Chicago State University	61
<b>Developing the Leadership Skills of Handling Difficult Conversations</b> Thomas J. Buttery and Gary Stewart, Austin Peay State University	73
<b>Our Political Parties and the Nation’s Great Dilemma of Minority Rights: A Review of Party Platforms</b> Richard H. Reeb Jr. Ph.D, Independent Scholar	78
<b>Addressing the Opportunity Gap: The Urgency of Equity</b> Tracy Reimer, PhD., Bethel University	89
<b>Precision Learning: “Failure is Not an Option”</b> Ronald Saltinski, Ph.D., National University	94

**Online Human Services, Social Work, and Social Science Rural Community  
College Students' Self-Reported Perceptions of Benefits and Challenges of  
Taking Online Social Science Courses in Their Program Curriculum:  
A Five Year Case Study**

Jeffrey T. Schulz, Central Community College—Grand Island, NE,  
Allen Francis Ketcham, Professor Emeritus, Texas A&M—Kingsville, TX

101

**Closing the Circle: Aristotle to Extinction Rebellion**

Rex Wirth, Professor Emeritus, Central Washington University

124

THE CONTROL OVER EDUCATION, DISSENT, AND  
CENSORSHIP IN SAUDI ARABIA AND IRAN

Mohsen Asadalla, Central Washington University

Education is an important tool for propaganda. Education has always been an imperative zone of influence for states. Because education plays an integral role in dictating the structure of a political system and the structure of the society, examining the impact of education in the Middle East would be vital for understanding the societies and their political systems. Moreover, in an attempt to explain the political structures in Iran and Saudi Arabia, there needs to be a focus on the treatment of dissidents and the control over the flow of information (censorship). Iran and Saudi Arabia will be the two states examined in the case study. Both states offer a different religious ideology (Wahhabism and Shiism) and political system that are integral in dissecting the issue of education, dissent, and censorship. The study will primarily focus on how education systems, treatment of dissents, and censoring information are a vehicle of political misinformation and political apathy. Furthermore, the research will look at historical events that have shaped the course of education in each country. The examination will be conducted by taking a closer look at the role of the governments in feeding the students/people a certain truth or ideology. Additionally, maintaining a monopoly over the truth impacts minorities, dissidents, and the flow of information in the state. In the final stage of the research, the oppression and injustice against dissidents and the censorship of the media will demonstrate why the status quo in Iran and Saudi Arabia are able to withstand any political change that is triggered opponents. The states' firm control over education, dissent, and censorship in Saudi Arabia and Iran has created an environment of political apathy that helps both regimes in maintaining their authority. In addition, suppression of dissent, control over education and censorship have discouraged the enthusiasm for a meaningful political change that could challenge the status quo. To observe these trends this research focuses on qualitative data collections from UN data bases, University programs, and prominent literature on the subject matter.

### **Historical events that shaped the course of education in Iran and Saudi Arabia**

Historical events are an important indicator for why the education systems are biased towards a certain ideology. Saudi Arabia as opposed to Iran has not experienced radical changes to the political system since its creation in 1932. Iran on the other hand, faced a radical change to the political system and social structures after the Islamic Revolution of 1979. As a result, Iran's education system was completely altered throughout history. "During the Pahlavi era, the schools emphasized modernization and Iranian nationalism as the primary objectives. Now the textbooks advocate jihad in defense of the homeland. . ." (Lee 209, 2014). The Islamic Revolution accounts for the radical change in Iran's education system. The Islamic Revolution redesigned the educational system and incorporated Islamic values to maintain the newly created political culture. Saudi Arabia's educational system was developed later than that of Iran. In the 1950's as the Saudi state started building their educational system, they struggled with finding local teachers to employ in schools because most people were illiterate. Therefore, the state relied on outsiders to teach in Saudi schools. The Saud family needed to reinforce the cultural norms that would sustain the regime's rule; the Wahhabi ideology still is the main tool for sustaining the Saud family's power in the state. Therefore, the education system that was created by the Saudi regime, and is still existent today, "needed to generate loyalty to the monarchy and support for the Wahhabi ideology" (Lee

252, 2014). Since then, the Saudi regime has ensured the incorporation of fringe Islamic interpretation of Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab in the educational system.

In the case of Iran, after the Islamic Revolution, the clerics filtered the heritage of Iran's non-Islamic elements and focused on Islamic features to ensure their own dominance in religious affairs. However, with the unexpected victory of the Islamic Revolution, Khomeini developed a system of allegiance to strengthen the power of the Islamic government. *Velayat-e Faqih*, Guardianship of the Jurist, is a concept that allows the clergy to rule in the best interest of the religion of Islam, until the return of the 12<sup>th</sup> Imam, Imam al-Mahdi (AS). The guardianship of the jurist was an important development because it is a tool that helps the state, clerics to be specific, maintain their rule. In short, *Velayat-e Faqih* legitimizes the rule of the clerics. This is a concept that emerged with the advent of the Islamic Revolution. In Iran as opposed to Saudi Arabia, education was secular prior to the Islamic Revolution. In Saudi Arabia, since the creation of an educational system, it has not been desecularized.

### **General problems with education in the Middle East**

Most countries in the Middle East have an educational system that is not reflective of building generations of critical thinkers. The general characteristics of education that most states in Middle East share undermine creativity, and suppress free thinking (Muasher 129, 2014). Glorification of country leaders is a common scene in most Middle Eastern states. In the Gulf states, students are obligated to study the achievements of the leaders and to know their duties towards the leaders. However, nothing is mentioned regarding the duties of the leaders towards their people. Moreover, there is a common problem in the educational systems that pertains to the acceptance of diverse ideas. Respect for diversity in education is not present. Education preaches a single absolute truth, and that is not to be questioned by the students. This generates people that are not open to accepting different ideas. Furthermore, students are not allowed to question the "truth" that is provided to them in the classrooms. ". . . There are plenty of examples in the Arab world of such methods, which produce graduates who not only are unaccustomed to questioning whatever "truth" is given to them but are often penalized if they do. A study in Egypt concluded that students spend most of their time memorizing and reciting texts with little regards to any other skills" (Muasher 132, 2014). These problems are true for most Middle Eastern states, especially in the Gulf states. As the result of the educational systems in place, there is a lack of political activity, innovation, and creativity. The lack of political activity or the lack of interest in learning about politics has been largely a result of the educational systems. The states are able to maintain their power because of the lack of political participation and lack of political knowledge among the populations. "The basic aim of the school systems has been to educate students to be docile and not to question what they are told" (Muasher 124, 2014).

### **The impacts of educational systems on the people of Iran and Saudi Arabia**

In both Iran and Saudi Arabia, the advocacy for a certain ideology by the state is explicit in the educational systems of both countries. Iran and Saudi Arabia, although both are Muslim majority countries, they have different Islamic ideologies. In Iran the Shia thought is the dominant ideology. Whereas in Saudi Arabia, the Sunni school of thought

is the dominant ideology, but Saudi Arabia is also associated with a more fringe ideology that is Wahhabism.

Education has been the main tool for dispersing these ideologies. In Saudi Arabia for example, the purpose of education is described as, “. . .acquainting the individual with his God and religion and adjusting his conduct in accordance with the teaching of religion, in fulfillment of the needs of society, and in achievement of the nation’s objectives” (Lee 252, 2014). Saudi Arabia’s purpose of education for its citizens, in short, is to generate obedient citizens that will not challenge the status quo. In addition, the Wahhabi ideology is seen as a tool for advancing the interests of the society. In Iran, the clerical elites turned Islam into the defining cultural characteristic of Iran’s identity. Like Saudi Arabia, this was created through an educational system developed by the state. “The post-revolutionary regime has certainly sought to transform these and other aspects of political culture through policies, propaganda, and changes in school curricula” (Lee 171, 2014). Shiism in Iran has become a powerful force because it has been taught all throughout the educational system. According to Saeed Peyvandi, an Iranian professor living in France, religious education is 12% of all education, before 1979, it was 6% (Iran Wire 2014). Religion in Iranian schools is four times the International average (Iran Wire 2014).

The integration of religion in the educational system is not an enormous issue in the case of Iran. This is because, Iran grants its non-Muslim population a choice of withdrawing from Islamic teaching classes. “Iran continues to permit non-Muslim religious groups to provide their own religious instruction and examinations. Non-Muslim students are exempt from examination on the Quran” (Lee 208, 2014). Religion in the educational system could be viewed as an issue in Iran, but it is not to the extent of that in Saudi Arabia. Religion in Saudi Arabia’s educational system generates intolerance and hatred towards non-Sunni Muslims. As a result, Saudi Arabia’s Shia population are not very fond of the government. Saudi Arabia’s intolerant rhetoric that is prevalent in the K-12 schools is a threat to global security. Although Iran’s educational system is biased towards the Shia school of thought, it does not generate an intolerant and hateful rhetoric like that of Saudi Arabia. However, this is not to say that Iran’s educational system is not flawed. It is important to note, however, that Iran and Saudi Arabia’s educational system have differences, and the intolerant and violent rhetoric that is evident in Saudi’s educational system is what differentiates it from the Iranian educational system. According to the Freedom House, the aggregate freedom score of Iran is 18/100, and Saudi Arabia’s is 7/100 (Freedom House, 2019). Thus, both states do not value freedom.

Minorities in both states are oppressed when it comes to educational systems. In Iran, Bahais are banned from accessing higher education (FreedomHouse.org, 2019). In the Iranian educational system, Bahais are referred to as infidels. “The texts call upon non-Muslim believers to join Muslims in opposing infidels (including Bahais)” (Lee 209, 2014). Although Jewish and Christian students can opt out of Islamic studies classes, Bahais are not offered the same privilege. In Saudi Arabia, the only minority group are the Shia’s. Although Shiites in Saudi Arabia make up 10-15% of the population, they are still oppressed in the educational system. According to Nina Shea of the Center for Religious Freedom, “Sixteen years after 9/11, Saudi Ministry of Education textbooks still teach an ideology of hatred and violence against Jews, Christians, Muslims, such as Shiites, Sufis and Ahmadis, Hindus, Bahais, Yizidis, animists, sorcerers, and “infidels” of

all stripes, as well as other groups with different beliefs” (Nina Shea, 2017). When it comes to the aggregate freedom score of both countries, the treatment of minorities plays a significant role in the low freedom index that both countries have.

Although religious ideologies play a significant role in the states’ control over the population, it is important to examine the content in the educational system that helps these governments maintain their dominance. Previously, the research examined the role of religion in education; hence, now the focus will be on the content that builds citizens that are obedient to the status quo. However, religion and education are impossible to separate when analyzing Saudi Arabia and Iran. In Iran, radical educational reform took place after the Islamic Revolution. A committee was created in Iran’s Ministry of Education, Religion Team of the Office of Planning and Compilation of School Textbooks, that accounted for advancing the states’ ideology and the Shia ideology that helps the state in maintaining its power (Lee 209, 2014). This committee designs textbooks that complement the Shia ideology and legitimizes the clerical rule. Moreover, the Bureau of Fostering Affairs was created in 1980 “to propagate the regime’s ideology and to create followers of the faqih” (Lee 209, 2014). The textbooks were adamant in holding up religious beliefs. Holding up religious beliefs then was connected to the idea of the Velayat-e Faqih that legitimizes the rule of the clerics in the name of safeguarding the religion of Islam. Textbooks advocate for Jihad in defense of Iran, which is referred to as Dar al-Islam, the house of Islam. In addition, the regime emphasizes the existence of external and internal threats to the homeland, Iran. “Framing the threat in terms of Islam and Shiite Muslims as oppressed victims versus ambiguous others directs feelings of patriotism toward the Islamic state and its clerical rulers” (Lee 209, 2014). Religion and education are used as tools for power maintenance in Iran. In Saudi Arabia, the case is similar. Although the main topic surrounding the Saudi educational system is the abundance of intolerant and violence promoting content, the focus on producing a generation that is obedient to the Saud family should not be forgotten. “The particular orientations of the Saudi educational system may condition the political culture in ways conducive to the maintenance of the monarchy and its Islamic legitimacy” (Lee 254, 2014). In an attempt to legitimize the al-Saud regime, the state emphasized fringe Islamic teachings that pertain to the Wahhabi ideology, which ultimately legitimizes the al-Saud regime. Saudi Arabia’s advocacy of the Wahhabi ideology has led it to prevent people from having the right to think freely. This is because Abd al-Wahab opposed the idea of freedom of expression, speech, and thinking. “. . .the regime tries to maintain its cordon sanitaire around the country, as one author puts it—none of these measures, individually or collectively, can prevent the newly educated generations of Saudis from thinking, reflecting, speaking, writing, and acting” (Lee 254, 2014). Saudi Arabia views the people educated on social and political issues as a threat to the al-Saud’s regime; thus, it tries not to educate its people on social and political issue throughout the K-12 schools.

Political Science degrees in both Saudi Arabia and Iran lack comprehensive teaching of politics. Politics is taught from the perspective of each state’s ideology. Dar Al-Hekma university in Saudi Arabia offers one of the most prestigious International Relations degrees. The students are assigned classes, and do not have the freedom of choosing from a pool of classes. International Relations degree has a heavy emphasis on Saudi Arabian law, foreign policy, and Islamic studies. Classes like; Foreign Policy of

Saudi Arabia, and Islamic Studies (students have to take two Islamic Studies classes) (Dar Al-Hekma University, 2020). Throughout their college education, students are not familiarized with systems of governance in other states (democracy for instance), different ideologies, and human rights classes. The program emphasizes classes like Saudi Foreign Policy and Islamic Studies, in which both are taught from the perspective that complements al-Saud. Similarly, Iran, Political classes that are offered do not provide students with an objective view of politics. Some of the classes that are offered at the University of Tehran; Ideology and Strategy in Iranian Foreign Policy, and Function of Religion in Regional Struggles (University of Tehran, 2020). Iran also emphasizes religion and Iranian foreign policy throughout its Political Science department. There is a lack of comparative politics, human rights studies, and learning about different systems of governance than that which exists in Iran. In both states, the Political Science degrees focus on politics from the perspective of each state, and ignore conveying different perspectives.

## **Dissidents and censorship**

### *Dissidents*

Dissidents in both countries face harsh penalties. Dissidents are often censored on social media platforms. This is because, it is on social media platforms that dissidents express their dissatisfactions with the government. Beginning with notable women dissidents from both Iran and Saudi Arabia; Masih Alinejad (Iranian) and Manal al-Sharif (Saudi Arabia). Women have been subjugated in both states; therefore, the rise of dissidents among the women in both states is noteworthy.

In the case of Iran, Masih Alinejad emphasizes her opposition to the mandatory veil that has been placed on women after the Islamic Revolution. “For the regime, my life is not as important as my hair, Alinejad said in an interview. They’re scared of me. This gives me power” (Ignatius, 2019). Because she has expressed her dissatisfaction with the Iranian regime and its treatment of women, Masih lives in exile in the United States. Alinejad has repeatedly stated that she does not reject the hijab (veil), but she believes that it should be a matter of personal choice rather than an obligatory duty for all women. Her focus is mostly on the hijab, as she calls it a “visible symbol of oppression.” In an interview with the Guardian, Masih Alinejad stated that, “Forced hijab is the most visible symbol of oppression against women in Iran, that’s why fighting for freedom to wear or not to wear hijab is the first step towards full equality” (Kamali. 2018).

On the other hand, Manal al-Sharif has been criticizing the Saudi government for different reasons, but both Manal and Masih seek equality for women. Manal al-Sharif focuses on the Saudi Guardianship Law. “It will culminate in a protest outside the Saudi embassy in Washington DC on 25 April, her birthday, to call out Saudi Arabia’s strict guardianship laws, which require women to have the permission of a man to do basic things, like go to school or to the hospital” (Aratani, 2019). Manal believes that women are subjugated because they do not have basic rights. In addition, Manal criticizes the Saudi state for the gender inequality that they practice. Manal is a victim of the guardianship policy because her son is her guardian. “I’m turning 40 today, and my son is still my guardian” (Aratani, 2019). In addition, Manal also extended her criticism of the Saudi regime to the United States. In which, she believes that the United States is



responsible for not holding their ally accountable. “If American citizens are aware that one of their biggest allies, Saudi Arabia, is accused of these huge violations of human rights, they should question their senators, they should question their representatives, they should question their government” (Aratani, 2019).

With recent uprisings in Iran, the dissidents living abroad emphasized to the world that regime change is possible in Iran. The National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI), which is based in France, has tried to raise awareness on the ongoing protests in Iran. “While Iranian authorities claim the uprisings were quelled quickly and rights group say about 150 people died, the exiled National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI) claimed Tuesday that more than 400 were actually killed during “anti-regime protests” that occurred in “some 176 cities throughout the country” (Taylor, 2019). The recent uprisings in Iran were fueled by the rise in prices of fuel and other essential products. NCRI has informants in Iran and has reported that although the protests began with a rise in the price of fuel, the protestors have asked for regime change in Iran. The ongoing crackdown on anti-government protests have been brutal in which hundreds of people were killed. This illustrates the measure that the regime is willing to take in protecting its dominance. The recent uprisings have shown that dissidents in Iran are abundant, but the states’ power overwhelms the power of dissidents. The people in Iran have illustrated their level frustration with Rouhani and Ali Khamenei in the uprisings by chanting “death to Rouhani” and “death to Khamenei” slogans (Taylor, 2019). Dissidents in Iran are facing a brutal regime that is willing to go to unprecedented levels of brutality to protect its power.

Unlike Iran, popular uprisings are not frequent in Saudi Arabia. Saudi dissidents either live in fear abroad or serve jail sentences that will eventually end in executions. Saudi Arabian dissidents that live abroad do not believe that they are safe because of the states’ continuous censorship in and outside of Saudi Arabia. In the wake of the killing of Jamal Khashoggi, it became clear to all Saudi dissidents how potent their government is. Jamal Khashoggi fled the country in 2017 because he has been critical of Mohammad bin Salman’s reforms because of Salman’s brutal crackdown on dissent. “As we speak today, there [are] Saudi intellectuals and journalists jailed. Now, nobody will dare to speak and criticize the reforms [initiated by the crown prince] . . .” (Khashoggi, 2018). In addition, Khashoggi’s popular criticism of Saudi’s humanitarian crisis in Yemen was a notable point in Khashoggi’s arguments against Salman’s reformist initiatives. Eventually, Khashoggi’s criticisms of Salman did not prove to be as effective as Salman’s cruelty and ruthlessness. As a result, Khashoggi was murdered in the Saudi consulate in Istanbul, by people close to Mohammed bin Salman. Saudi Arabia has proven, on many instances, that its brutality against dissidents goes beyond the Saudi borders. In another, more recent instance, the Saudi regime proved its seriousness in dismantling dissent. Buzz Feed News reported how Saudi Arabia infiltrated twitter to spy on dissidents. Mohammed bin Salman used two of his fellow citizens that work for Twitter, to spy on Saudi dissidents living abroad. Saudi Arabia was able to get confidential information on the Twitter users that were critical of the Saudi regime. Users that did not identify with their real names, were exposed by the two Saudi informants working for Twitter. In return, the two informants were given large sums of money by the regime. “Even outside of Saudi Arabia, the dissidents weren’t necessarily safe” (Kantrowitz, 2020). This has contributed to a growing fear among the current dissidents of Saudi Arabia. Omar Abdulaziz, a well-known Saudi dissident living

in Canada has been a victim of the Twitter spying. Although, Abdulaziz is not worried about himself as much as he is worried about the 'previously' anonymous dissidents in Saudi Arabia. "Although the alleged spying put Abdulaziz at risk, the deeper damage was done to those Twitter users in Saudi Arabia, he said. He believes some were arrested and tortured" (Kantrowitz, 2020). The Saudi regime has shown time and time again that it is relentless in its efforts to squash dissent. However, an incident of spying with the help of informants working for Twitter and killing a journalist in a foreign country are unparalleled cases of attempting to dismantle dissent. "In 2014, the government issued a new anti-terrorism law and regulations that Human Rights Watch said will "criminalize virtually any expression or association critical of the government and its understanding of Islam" (Committee to Protect Journalists, 2015). This law makes dissent of the government synonymous with criticizing the religion of Islam.

### *Censorship*

According to the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), with the 1<sup>st</sup> being the most censored, Saudi Arabia ranks 3<sup>rd</sup> on the list of most censored countries, and Iran ranks 7<sup>th</sup> (Committee to Protect Journalists, 2015). Censorship is a major weapon for Iran and Saudi Arabia to control the flow of information. Depriving their citizens from accessing sensitive information, wrongdoings of the government abroad or domestically, that could lead to the demise of the regime, is a tool often utilized to maintain power. In addition, preventing the outsourcing of sensitive information that could cause international pressure is another weapon for the control of information.

Saudi Arabia's censorship was clearly conveyed when a Netflix show, the Patriot Act, criticized the regime for killing Jamal Khashoggi and accusing the regime of war crimes in Yemen. "Netflix removed the episode in Saudi Arabia because a Saudi official cited a law that bans, production, preparation, transmission, or storage of material impinging on public order, religious values, public morals, and privacy, through the information network or computers." (NPR, Stewart, 2019). The episode illustrated how Mohammed bin Salman was involved in the killing of Jamal Khashoggi and the atrocities in Yemen. For Saudi Arabia, objective information on these incidents is not allowed in the country. For Saudi Arabia, criticizing the government is an impingement on public order. The information is considered sensitive; therefore, it could give rise to dissatisfaction with the actions of the regime. The people of Saudi Arabia can watch any other episode of the Patriot Act, but not the episode in which the sensitive information about Saudi Arabia is demonstrated. In addition, the new anti-terrorism law and regulation that was issued in 2014, will help Saudi Arabia maintain its image as the protector of Islam, while it is protecting al-Saud, but in the name of Islam and at the expense of its citizens.

In Iran, as is the case in Saudi Arabia, the regime should not be criticized in the media or any other social platform because the state is constantly censoring information. "In Iran the media is expected to depict the leaders of the state in a favorable manner, and refrain from criticizing them. ". . .it is unlawful to express views that are "detrimental to the fundamental principles of Islam or the rights of the public" (Council on Foreign Relations, Bruno, 2009). Iran also views itself as a state that protects the religion of Islam. Thus, censorship and persecution dissidents are all carried out in the name of protecting Islam. "Iran's constitution mandates complete control over television and radio

broadcasting, and organizational heads are appointed by the supreme leader; there are no private or independent broadcasters inside Iran” (Council on Foreign Relations, Bruno, 2009). Censorship is a constitutional right for the state to exercise over its people. Because the heads of media are appointed by the Supreme Leader, people only receive information that is not critical of the regime.

Furthermore, the Iranian regime’s censorship was emphasized during the recent outbreak of the Iranian uprisings that was sparked by the Ukrainian civilian plane that was shot down by the IRGC. Initially, Iranian officials denied the IRGC shooting down the plane. “Had the accident happened due to a missile strike, the plane would have exploded in the air. . .” (BBC, 2020). Not taking responsibility regarding the shooting down of the plane was also an act to deceive or hide the truth from Iranians. “The trajectory of the collision indicated that the plane was initially moving toward the west, but after encountering a problem, it turned to the right and was approaching the airport again at the time of the crash,” Ali Abedzadeh, the head of the Civil Aviation Organization” (New York Post, 2020). However, once the truth about shooting down the plane was revealed, Iranians demanded for the regime to step down. This incident illustrates the importance of censorship for the regime, and what would happen if an objective view was depicted in media. Not all incidents carry the magnitude that the Ukrainian plane incident did, and in many cases, censorship deprives many people from getting a full grasp of global issues. “The Iranian regime does not like that which it cannot control, surveil, or manipulate; it remains fearful that somewhere within the chaotic ether of Iranian social and political life lies the seed of its future demise” (Daraghi, 2019). Censorship secures the insecurities of the Iranian regime, which further empowers the regime.

### **Voting in Iran and Saudi Arabia**

People in Saudi Arabia and Iran vote for different institutions of the government. Although in both states the most powerful position is an unelected one. In Saudi Arabia, the monarch is an unelected and hereditary position. In Iran, the Supreme Leader is the most powerful man, and it is an unelected office. In both states the people do vote for government officials, but the power that resides in the hands of the government officials is minimal. In Iran, the people can vote for the president and the members of the parliament (Majles). In Saudi Arabia, people vote in municipal elections.

As it pertains to Saudi Arabia, political participation is only at the municipal level, not at the national level. In September 2011, King Abdullah granted women the right to vote (Omran, 2011). Women were not able to vote in municipal elections up until in 2011. Moreover, “Mohammed al-Qahtani, who heads a human rights group in Saudi Arabia. He said the voting rights announcement was simply "symbolic" and was not a signal of greater reforms” (Omran, NPR, 2011). In 2011, women were seeking the lift on driving ban because they did not see the importance of voting. For women, and for Saudi’s in general, voting would not bring meaningful change because municipal leaders are subject to the monarch’s orders. “The King's announcement did not change anything, he said lawyer and activist Waleed Abu Alkhair. . . The King's speech is not a big deal," he said. "It is just an attempt to improve Saudi Arabia's image abroad” (Omran, NPR, 2011). The lack of excitement on the right to vote for women was reflected in voting patterns. “Sarah Alkhalidi agrees that the elections won't mean much. "It's like giving me a cashmere

sweater when I need a place to sleep — that's the analogy I'm using," she says." (NPR, 2015). Only 130,000 women were registered voters. Only 1,350,000 males registered to vote. "Low turnout in Saudi Arabia's first poll open to women. . .About 25 percent turnout reported in historic municipal elections which were open to female voters and candidates" (Al Jazeera, 2015). The low turnout in Saudi Arabia can be explained by the awareness of people to voting. In addition, the people of Saudi Arabia have to believe that voting will bring about meaningful change. If not, then turnout rates will be low, as is the case. "First, it's just general awareness, right? This is something very new and it's a huge task to educate people - men and women - about voting, how you do it, why it's important. But a lot of women we spoke with here said they also just don't see how the election connects to their daily lives" (NPR, 2015). Because people do not believe that the election would bring about meaningful change, voting turnout rates were low. Thus, explaining the political apathy and indifference due to the states' control over all aspects of society. People know that if change was to take place, it should come from the monarch's position, and not from municipal elections.

In Iran, although voting turnout rates are much higher, people still do not believe that meaningful change will take place from presidential elections. This is because the power in Iran resides with the Supreme Leader, and it is an unelected institution. In Iran, people vote for more prestigious positions in the government than those in Saudi Arabia, Majlis and president. For the presidential election, the turnout rate was high. In the 2017 presidential elections, the turnout was over 70% (BBC, 2017). However, the hope for pragmatic change was low. "I voted in the past because I thought it would bring a little more freedom. It was a very different time," said one Tehran resident who manages a food company, who declined to be named" (Reuters, 2020). On the other hand, some Iranians believed that voting will only benefit the current administration, thus, refusing to vote. "The system is corrupt. My vote will make them remain in power. No vote," said Afshin, 25, a student in Tehran (Reuters, 2020). In another interview, Iranian citizens recognize that voting is their duty, but do not see it having enough weight to make a difference. "Setareh, 19, "I want to vote, this is my duty as a citizen. But I will vote in a free election. This is not a free election. Mehrnoush, 23, an unemployed woman in the capital Tehran, said: "Why should I even bother to vote when the result will change nothing?" (Reuters, 2020). In the recent (2020) parliamentary elections, low voting turnout rate was conveyed. In the 2020 parliamentary elections, the voting turnout rate was the lowest since the formation of the Islamic Republic in 1979. "Iran's interior minister has announced that the voter turnout in the recent parliamentary elections was about 42 percent, the lowest since the 1979 revolution" (Al Jazeera, 2020). Despite the Supreme Leader and the president encouraging people to vote, the turnout was low. The state was aiming for a turnout over 55%. However, like Saudi Arabia, in Iran people did not view the parliamentary elections as a vehicle for improving the state's condition. "Al Jazeera's Assed Baig, reporting from Tehran, said the low turnout was "very embarrassing" for the political establishment. "We knew this election would be controversial because the Guardian Council, the body that vets candidates, disqualified thousands of candidates, including 81 current sitting MPs," he said" (Al Jazeera, 2020). Iranians witness unelected institutions as the most powerful institutions in the state, and if any political and economic advances will occur, it is through those institutions, the Supreme Leader and the Guardian Council.

## **Conclusion**

Saudi Arabia and Iran have proven how their control over education, censorship of information, and persecution of dissidents are tools they use in maintaining their oppressive regimes. In both states, there is one absolute truth and questioning that truth is unacceptable. The truth that both states claim is advocated in educational systems, upheld by censorship and reinforced by the maltreatment of dissidents. Challenging ideas is not a theme that is present in educational systems. Creativity and innovation are not valued or encouraged features of education. Critical thinking is not emphasized. "The World Bank notes that the main activities in the classrooms in MENA continue to be copying from the blackboard. . . Group work, creative thinking, and proactive learning are rare" (Muasher, 2014). Therefore, a sense of apathy and political inactivity grows. Even when individuals show interest in political participation, they are only welcomed if they subscribe to the ideas of the status quo. Individuals that challenge political ideas are persecuted; hence, fear becomes a discouraging factor in becoming politically active. Political socialization has been severely dispirited by the states' absolute control over education, censorship of information, and the brutal crackdown on dissidents. Education is a major influence zone for authoritarian states to maintain their authority, but without censorship and persecution of dissidents, authoritarian regimes would fall at the expense of the public. Saudi Arabia and Iran comprehend the need to control main aspects of society; education, information (censorship), and dissent, to be able to preserve their status.

## Bibliography

- Al Jazeera. "Khashoggi: Saudi Arabia Can Never Be a Democracy 'on MBS Watch'." Saudi Arabia News | Al Jazeera, Al Jazeera, 3 Oct. 2018, [www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/03/khashoggi-saudi-arabia-democracy-mbs-watch-180323103543171.html](http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/03/khashoggi-saudi-arabia-democracy-mbs-watch-180323103543171.html).
- Al Jazeera. "Iran Announces Lowest Voter Turnout since 1979." Elections 2018 News | Al Jazeera, Al Jazeera, 23 Feb. 2020, [www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/02/iran-announces-lowest-voter-turnout-1979-200223135348311.html](http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/02/iran-announces-lowest-voter-turnout-1979-200223135348311.html).
- Al Jazeera. "Low Turnout in Saudi Arabia's First Poll Open to Women." News | Al Jazeera, Al Jazeera, 13 Dec. 2015, [www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/12/saudi-holds-election-open-women-151212042446945.html](http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/12/saudi-holds-election-open-women-151212042446945.html).
- Aratani, Lauren. "Manal Al-Sharif Wants Americans to Know of Saudi Arabia's Human Rights Abuses." The Guardian, Guardian News and Media, 12 Apr. 2019, [www.theguardian.com/world/2019/apr/12/manal-al-sharif-saudi-arabia-human-rights-abuses](http://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/apr/12/manal-al-sharif-saudi-arabia-human-rights-abuses).
- Bruno, Greg. "The Media Landscape in Iran." Council on Foreign Relations, Council on Foreign Relations, 22 July 2009, [www.cfr.org/backgrounders/media-landscape-iran](http://www.cfr.org/backgrounders/media-landscape-iran).
- Damavandan , Sara. "Religion in Iranian Schools: Four Times the International Average." IranWire, 15 July 2014, [iranwire.com/en/features/484](http://iranwire.com/en/features/484).
- Dehghanpisheh, Babak. "Disillusionment among Women, Youth Seen Dampening Iran Election Turnout." Reuters, Thomson Reuters, 20 Feb. 2020, [www.reuters.com/article/us-iran-election-women/disillusionment-among-women-youth-seen-dampening-iran-election-turnout-idUSKBN20E2MP](http://www.reuters.com/article/us-iran-election-women/disillusionment-among-women-youth-seen-dampening-iran-election-turnout-idUSKBN20E2MP).
- Dehghan, Saeed Kamali. "Second Woman Arrested in Tehran for Hijab Protest." The Guardian, Guardian News and Media, 29 Jan. 2018, [www.theguardian.com/world/2018/jan/29/second-woman-arrested-tehran-hijab-protest-iran](http://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/jan/29/second-woman-arrested-tehran-hijab-protest-iran).
- Diplomacy and International Relations - School Of Business and Law - Dar Al Hekma, [www.dah.edu.sa/en/academics/hsbl/programs/Pages/Diplomacy-and-International-Relations.aspx](http://www.dah.edu.sa/en/academics/hsbl/programs/Pages/Diplomacy-and-International-Relations.aspx).
- "Iran." Iran | Freedom House, 22 May 2019, [freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2019/Iran](http://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2019/Iran).
- Ignatius, David. "Opinion | Iran Is Brutally Suppressing Popular Dissent. The World Is Watching." The Washington Post, WP Company, 3 Dec. 2019, [www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/global-opinions/iran-is-brutally-suppressing-popular-dissent-the-world-is-watching/2019/12/03/2c07f568-1617-11ea-8406-df3c54b3253e\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/global-opinions/iran-is-brutally-suppressing-popular-dissent-the-world-is-watching/2019/12/03/2c07f568-1617-11ea-8406-df3c54b3253e_story.html).

- Kantrowitz, Alex. "How Saudi Arabia Infiltrated Twitter." BuzzFeed News, BuzzFeed News, 23 Feb. 2020, [www.buzzfeednews.com/article/alexkantrowitz/how-saudi-arabia-infiltrated-twitter](http://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/alexkantrowitz/how-saudi-arabia-infiltrated-twitter).
- Lee, Robert D. Religion and Politics in the Middle East: Identity, Ideology, Institutions, and Attitudes. Westview Press, 2014.
- Muasher, Marwan. The Second Arab Awakening. Yale University Press, 2014.
- "Research Orientation and Major Projects." University of Tehran, [ut.ac.ir/en/page/439/research-orientation-and-major-projects](http://ut.ac.ir/en/page/439/research-orientation-and-major-projects).
- "Saudi Arabia." Ggreene, 5 Mar. 2019, [www.ndi.org/middle-east-and-north-africa/saudi-arabia](http://www.ndi.org/middle-east-and-north-africa/saudi-arabia).
- "Saudi Arabia." Saudi Arabia Country Report, 14 May 2019, [freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2019/Saudi Arabia](http://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2019/Saudi%20Arabia).
- Shea, Nina. "Teaching Hate, Inspiring Terrorism: Saudi Arabia's Educational Curriculum." By Nina Shea, [www.hudson.org/research/13778-teaching-hate-inspiring-terrorism-saudi-arabia-s-educational-curriculum](http://www.hudson.org/research/13778-teaching-hate-inspiring-terrorism-saudi-arabia-s-educational-curriculum).
- Staff, NPR. "After Historic Elections In Saudi Arabia, What's The Future For Women?" NPR, NPR, 19 Dec. 2015, [www.npr.org/2015/12/19/459491653/after-historic-elections-in-saudi-arabia-whats-the-future-for-women](http://www.npr.org/2015/12/19/459491653/after-historic-elections-in-saudi-arabia-whats-the-future-for-women).
- Steinbuch, Yaron. "Ukraine Won't Rule out Missile, Terror Attack as Cause for Plane Crash in Iran." New York Post, New York Post, 9 Jan. 2020, [nypost.com/2020/01/09/ukraine-wont-rule-out-missile-terror-attack-as-cause-for-plane-crash-in-iran/](http://nypost.com/2020/01/09/ukraine-wont-rule-out-missile-terror-attack-as-cause-for-plane-crash-in-iran/).
- Taylor, Guy. "Dissident Group Claims Iran Uprising and Crackdown Much Bigger than Reported." The Washington Times, The Washington Times, 26 Nov. 2019, [www.washingtontimes.com/news/2019/nov/26/dissident-group-claims-iran-uprising-and-crackdown/](http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2019/nov/26/dissident-group-claims-iran-uprising-and-crackdown/).
- "Women In Saudi Arabia Can Finally Vote, So Why Is Turnout So Low?" NPR, NPR, 12 Dec. 2015, [www.npr.org/2015/12/12/459464261/women-in-saudi-arabia-can-finally-vote-so-why-is-turnout-so-low](http://www.npr.org/2015/12/12/459464261/women-in-saudi-arabia-can-finally-vote-so-why-is-turnout-so-low).

Immunizations:  
A Biological and Legal Approach to Vaccines and  
Vaccine-Hesitators

Justin Burum & Sue Burum, Vermillion Community College,  
Mn & Minnesota State University, Mankato, Mn



“In 1736 I lost one of my sons, a fine boy of four years old, by the smallpox, taken in the common way. I long regretted bitterly, and still regret that I had not given it to him by inoculation. This I mention for the sake of parents who omit that operation, on supposition that they should never forgive themselves if a child died under it; my example showing that the regret may be the same either way, and that, therefore, the safer should be chosen.”  
Benjamin Franklin (Goodreads, 2020).

Inoculation for smallpox has been around for a long time. China and India used the technique as early as 1000 A.D (Friedman, 2010). Benjamin Franklin was an advocate of inoculation. While it was not without risk, it was much safer than a natural infection. Having a very inquisitive mind, he had noticed that milkmaids, who previously caught cowpox, did not catch smallpox. He advocated taking the fluids from the blister of a milkmaid who was infected with cowpox and placing it under the skin in an upper arm of an uninfected person, often a child. The infected person would develop a mild fever and have discomfort in their upper arm joint. Nine days after, the person would feel cold and suffer from a loss of appetite. But the next day, the person was better. In the future, the inoculated person would also not develop smallpox when exposed to smallpox fluids (Friedman, 2010). Franklin did not inoculate one of his sons because the boy was sick with another illness at the time (Project Director, 2012). This was the son that died. In 1759, Franklin asked his friend, William Heberden, a London physician, to write a pamphlet on the process of inoculation. He wanted something anyone could read to learn the procedure. Franklin wrote the introduction to the pamphlet and had it distributed for free in America. Many parents in the 1700's avoided inoculating their children because they were afraid of hurting or losing them (Project Director, 2012). A minority of parents today avoid vaccines for fear of hurting or losing their children. Franklin's words are very relevant to the current world-wide conversation about early childhood vaccines. This paper will discuss the history of vaccines and analyze the law covering vaccines in order to address arguments presented by vaccine-resisters. This paper will also address advances in vaccines that may hopefully win more converts to vaccines.

### **Current Problems**

Many countries today are in the midst of measles outbreaks. The World Health Organization (WHO) reported 6.7 million cases of measles in 2017, with 110,000 deaths from the disease and its complications. In 2018, there were 9,769,400 cases of the disease with 142,000 deaths (WHO, 2020). Numbers for 2019 will not be available until July 2020. However, for the first three months of 2019, there was a 300 percent increase globally in the number of cases over the first three months of 2018 (Belluz, 2019). In the United States, measles was considered eliminated in 2000 (Belluz, 2019). The Center for Disease Control (CDC) confirmed 12 cases of measles in 2017. This number rose to 375 cases of measles in 2018 and 1,276 cases in 2019. The most recent death from measles recorded in the United States occurred in 2015 (CDC, 2020a). While not very many people in the United States are dying from the current outbreak or its complications, measles is still a dangerous disease.

The measles outbreak is not spread evenly across the United States. The disease tends to occur in clusters. One large cluster is Orthodox Jewish communities in New York City and the New York suburb of Rockland. These areas contain what the CDC calls “close-knit communities” (CDC, 2020a) These are communities of similar backgrounds who share values and beliefs and interact within their community often. What these communities have in common is lower vaccination levels. The outbreaks have been tied to international travel. The disease was acquired by American tourists who went to Israel, and from people in Israel who came to visit the communities in New York. Had these travelers utilized the measles vaccine, or if the New York communities had higher vaccination levels for measles, these outbreaks never would have happened.

Mumps is another disease that was nearly eradicated by vaccine but is now reappearing and posing problems. In the fall of 2019, the CDC reported 931 cases of measles in 57 different Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Customs and Border Protection (CBP) facilities in 19 states (Trovall, 2019). Mumps is rare in the United States since most Americans are vaccinated. However, the countries where the most recent immigrants came from did not routinely vaccinate for mumps until the mid 1990’s. To spread the virus, people must be within 3-6 feet of each other, where sneezing, coughing, talking, or sharing a drink can spread the virus. Due to the short-term nature of holding immigrants, they are not routinely vaccinated when they come to the centers. There is no evidence of the disease spreading to the communities outside of the detention centers, but mumps did spread to 33 staff members. The CDC has proposed a third dose of the MMR vaccine to boost the immune system and protect the staff, since the normal two doses of the vaccine are usually given in early childhood (CDC, 2020b). The communities surrounding detention facilities will need to be vigilant and encourage their populations to get the recommended two doses of the MMR vaccine and vaccinate children on the recommended schedule. This is not an immigration problem; it is a vaccination problem.

The measles and the mumps outbreaks are just two examples. There are many more clusters of these diseases, as well as many other diseases that are springing up in the United States. Extraordinary remedies have been tried to limit these outbreaks, despite resistance from anti-vaccination groups. On March 26, 2019, in Rockland, New York, County Executive Ed Day put in place an emergency order to deal with a measles outbreak that started October 2018 (Gold & Pager, 2019). The county had 153 confirmed cases of measles. The County had vaccinated nearly 17,000 people since the outbreak began, but only 73% of the children under the age of 18 in the county were fully vaccinated (Durkin & Aratani, 2019). Rabbis and other community leaders urged residents to get vaccinated. Most children did get vaccinated, but the total number of community members fully vaccinated in the county was below 95% (Gold & Pager, 2019; Novak, 2018). Anti-vaccine groups spread misinformation through a parent handbook and telephone hotline to residents of the tight-knit Orthodox Jewish neighborhoods. Inspectors were met with resistance when trying to investigate cases of measles (Gold & Pager, 2019). They were hung up on and told not to call back when they tried to reach out to citizens by phone. When they went out to homes of infected people, people would not discuss the disease and the inspectors were told not to come back (Durkin & Aratani, 2019). County leaders were very concerned for the health of the community and created a first-of-its-kind emergency order. It was common to exclude unvaccinated children from school during

outbreaks, and community leaders saw this order as a logical extension of that practice. The order was designed to target unvaccinated children to stop the potential of them spreading the disease. The order said that all children who were not vaccinated, whether they currently had measles or not, had to stay away from schools, shopping centers, restaurants, houses of worship, and all other indoor public places (Bever, 2019). Outdoor locations like parks and sidewalks were not covered by the order. There were medical exemptions to the ban, but no religious exemptions (Durkin & Aratani, 2019). Law enforcement did not actively ask citizens to show their vaccine records. However, parents who violated this order by not keeping their unvaccinated children away from public places were retroactively punished if they were found to have allowed their unvaccinated children to be in public spaces. Parents faced up to six months in jail or a \$500 fine for violating the order. The order lasted 30 days (Durkin & Aratani, 2019).

Some in the community raised objections to the order. For example, some rabbis feared the order could lead to harassment, discrimination, and maybe even attacks against Orthodox Jews. Others wondered if the order, which to some seemed like imprisonment of children, infringed on civil liberties. Others wondered if the order would create even more mistrust in the community and be seen as an abuse of authority (Gold & Payer, 2019). Acting State Supreme Court Judge Rolf Thorsen placed an injunction on the order April 5, 2019 (Brum, 2019). The county had 166 cases of the measles by the time they halted the order. The judge said the 166 cases did not rise to the level of an epidemic. Thorsen said that the order would cause healthy children to miss school and parents to incur monetary expenses when the children posed no threat to others, and there were no reported cases of the measles at the school. Children with religious exemptions could return to school. While Thorsen did not rule the way Day hoped, Day was happy that he tried to fight the disease and his efforts resulted in more Rockland citizens getting vaccinated. The court appearance to decide the fate of the injunction stopping the order was supposed to take place on April 19. However, at that point, the 30-day state of emergency would have almost been done and filing papers and arguing the case was deemed too expensive with little gain; even if the county ultimately won (Brum, 2019). The novelty of the order and the complexity of the issues it raised attracted world-wide attention. It is highly likely another jurisdiction will try a similar order, which could be fully litigated in courts, maybe even the U.S. Supreme Court.

### **Immune System Basics**

Vaccinations generally work by enhancing and optimizing the body's immune system against specific diseases. Therefore, before discussing how vaccines work and the different vaccination types that are used to help create immunity to certain pathogens, this paper will first need to briefly review the basics of and how immune systems work. The immune system consists of cells and organs designed to work together to protect the body from infectious agents, otherwise known as immunity. The immune system can be broken down into categories of defense. Innate defenses are not designed to target a specific pathogen. Instead, they serve as barriers and include different cell types designed to destroy any foreign pathogen. The second category of defenses is called adaptive defenses, also known as specific defenses. These are created and ramped up to destroy specific pathogens based on prior exposure (McKinley et al., 2019).

For an infectious pathogen, such as a virus or bacteria, to first gain access to the body, it must cross a line of innate defenses, consisting of a barrier with physical,

chemical, and/or biological properties designed to make it difficult for the pathogen to survive and pass that layer (McKinley et al., 2019). This first line of defense includes the skin, mucus found in the nose, tears from eyes, and natural flora of microorganisms found on the skin and the digestive tract. If the pathogen manages to pass through that line of defense, it encounters an additional layer of innate internal defenses in the form of different types of cells, chemicals, fever, and inflammation designed to destroy, consume, or direct pathogen-fighting cells and fluid to the site of infection (McKinley et al., 2019). A certain type of white blood cells, called macrophages, recognize invading microbes due to the presence of foreign markers found on the surface of the pathogen's cells, called antigens. Macrophages and cells of the host body have their own marker molecules that help to distinguish the body's cells from the invading microbes that need to be destroyed. Macrophages, along with other cells like natural killer cells, identify the foreign antigens of the pathogen, but do not discriminate between different types of invaders. Then, these cells either engulf the pathogen or release toxic chemicals and enzymes to destroy the invading pathogen. Some of these antigens from the invading microbes get carried to the lymph nodes. Once there, another category of white blood cells, called lymphocytes, can then recognize the invader's antigen surfaces and develop adaptive immunity to that particular pathogen (McKinley et al., 2019).

There are two types of lymphocytes that are important for the specific immune response. The first type, B-cells, are found in a person's lymph nodes, which are small, bean-shaped organs that form a network throughout one's body. When these cells encounter the antigens from invading pathogens, which are brought to them, B-cells make plasma cells that secrete molecular protein weapons, called antibodies, designed to bind to and inactivate foreign pathogens and toxins. Antibodies are custom designed to bind to specific antigens, meaning they only target one particular pathogen. This is how the body prioritizes one particular infection to seek and destroy. These antibodies circulate throughout the body and attack the invading microbes that have not yet invaded any cells. The antibodies can look for invading microbes in the blood and in the spaces between cells. The invading microbe rapidly becomes coated with antibodies, making the microbe unable to function or stick to the host body's cells (McKinley et al., 2019). This antibody coating alone can be enough to destroy an invading microbe. However, these same antibodies can also signal macrophages to more efficiently seek and destroy the specific type of microbe. When the infection is over, the body will stop mass-producing the specific antibody for that infection. However, some of the body's B-cells will keep copies of these antibodies and remain long after the illness is over. These are called "memory B-cells." Memory B-cells sit around in the lymph nodes, waiting for the target antigen to show up again. If these memory B-cells ever detect that specific antigen again, they will trigger the body to start mass-producing the antibody again. The body's work in fighting the same pathogen a second time is reduced because the body already knows how to make an effective antibody for that specific antigen. The immune system keeps a supply of different antibodies on hand to be prepared for any known invader. Either the illness will be milder and shorter compared to the first exposure, or the person might not experience any symptoms at all. Introducing a pathogen through vaccines, variolations, and chance infections alike can all cause this memory B-cell production. But, as effective as memory B-cells are, they do not always survive the rest of a person's life. Therefore, occasional booster immunizations can be necessary.

T-cells, the second type of lymphocyte to be discussed here, come in many different types that can work offensively or defensively. It should be noted that T-cells do not use the antibodies created by the B-cells, as described above. They have their own ability to seek antigens and conform their own surface proteins to match these antigens. In fact, it is a subtype of T-cell, called “helper T-cells,” which binds these antigens and brings them to the B-cells for antibody production (McKinley et al., 2019). Helper T-cells will also present the antigen to other T-cells, so that more T-cells can become armed against the target antigen. Once these T-cells conform their own recognition proteins to match a specific antigen, they become specialized to seek and destroy that specific pathogen with chemical weapons. These are called “cytotoxic T-cells” (McKinley et al., 2019). Some of these cytotoxic T-cells remain alive in the body long after the infection has been suppressed. These T-cells provide the immune system with additional memory, like memory B-cells, and are aptly named “memory T-cells” (McKinley et al., 2019). When antibodies begin to eliminate the invading microbes faster than the microbes can reproduce, the immune system finally has the upper hand and the invading microbes disappear. When memory B- and T-cells remain in the body, the immune system can quickly recognize and stop repeat infections. One final type of T-cell worth mentioning is “suppressor T-cells.” Suppressor T-cells recognize when the target antigen appears to be absent, which causes them to signal other cells to “turn off” the immune response (McKinley et al., 2019).

#### **History of Vaccination and How Modern Vaccines Work**

The basic purpose of a vaccine is to provide a patient with immunity toward a particular pathogen, usually a specific foreign virus or bacterial strain. Before vaccines were produced, one strategy that was used to create immunity for people was to take the virus or bacteria materials from a pathogen of interest or a weaker relative of that disease and intentionally infect those individuals. For example, Ben Franklin’s remaining children survived the deadly smallpox disease due to being intentionally exposed to fluid containing a similar, but milder, variation of the disease, called cowpox. Cowpox fluid was injected under the skin because one’s natural immunity is higher just under the skin than other parts of the body (Freidman, 2010). Therefore, a milder infection would result. This process is more properly called “variola” rather than “vaccination.” The goal was to make the individual sick to gain immunity, but in a controlled way using a milder strain of the disease than a chance infection from the deadly smallpox (McKinley et al., 2019). And, for clarification, “inoculation” simply means taking a sample of one biological thing and sticking it into a different biological thing. Strictly speaking, none of these three terms by themselves—vaccination, variola, or inoculation—mean that successful immunization has occurred. But, vaccinations, variola, and chance infections have been overwhelmingly successful in producing immunity from that disease’s recurrence.

Microbiologist Louis Pasteur (1822 – 1895) invented the first vaccines. Unlike variola, vaccination does not require the patient to get sick in order to become immune. Pasteur had studied variola to immunize chickens from cholera, among other common diseases in livestock commonly found around his community. In one notorious trial, he believed he failed to infect his chickens with cholera because his bacterial broth had “spoiled,” which was his term for saying the bacteria had died. He determined the bacteria had died because, upon feeding them, the bacteria were not producing bubbles in his broth (fermentation), nor did they seem to reproduce. However, he did not notice

this problem until after inoculating his chickens with the broth. So, he acquired a fresh batch of the bacteria and tried again, this time making sure his bacteria were alive first. When he inoculated all the chickens again, none of them got cholera. Some of the chickens he infected showed mild symptoms, but the symptoms quickly faded. These chickens would not catch cholera in the future by needle using dead or live bacteria or by chance infections passing through the area; they were immune. This was the first time that immunity was proven possible by inoculation with a dead form of the disease (McKinley et al., 2019). By using dead or inactivated bacteria there was virtually no risk of contracting the disease. Pasteur repeated this experiment for rabies in rabbits and anthrax in cattle. The same results occurred. Pasteur's preferred method of killing bacteria for these experiments was by mildly heating his bacterial broths. Today, we call this technique "pasteurization," and it is a standard industrial practice in food preservation. Furthermore, Pasteur discovered that the same immunity could be achieved by "weakening" bacteria, and not just by killing it. The bacteria he studied were particularly sensitive to the additional oxygen in air, compared to their normal residence in liquid broth. Those bacteria were weakened by stress. Thus, Pasteur gave us the basic strategy of gaining immunity to pathogens without needing to get sick: inoculation with dead or weakened forms of the pathogens (McKinley et al., 2019).

Many scientists all over the world have expanded upon these methods in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, developing vaccines for many different bacteria and viruses. Along the way, studies have discovered how sophisticated our immune systems are. According to the CDC, today's vaccines work by triggering a specific immune response by imitating an infection of weakened or dead pathogen that causes the body to create memory B- and T-cells specific to the certain pathogen, as described in the previous section of this paper. Human white blood cells cannot tell the difference between full-strength, weakened, or dead pathogens (CDC, 2018).

Vaccines are typically injected by needle, through the skin. However, they can also be provided by other means such as orally, through the nose, or intravenously commonly referred to as an "IV" (CDC, 2018). Some vaccinations, known as "live attenuated vaccines," contain a weakened version of the active virus or living bacteria. The reason for attenuated vaccines is to provide the closest thing to a natural infection without causing a serious disease in people with healthy immune systems. Sometimes killing the pathogen results in losing access to a specific antigen that would help your adaptive immune functions. This particular type of vaccine is used for measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) and chickenpox (CDC, 2018). A second type of vaccine, called "inactivated vaccines," contains an inactive or dead form of the microbe. These dead germs contain the antigens that can be used by the body to develop antibodies, but this vaccination contains no live material to cause infection. Often, multiple doses of inactivated vaccines must be given over a period of time to achieve or maintain immunity. Some pathogenic bacteria produce toxins that cause the disease. Here, a third type of vaccine, called "toxoid vaccination," is used. Toxoid vaccinations are designed to introduce weakened forms of the toxin, not the actual bacteria, to the body to train the body to fight off the toxin (CDC, 2018). A fourth type, called "subunit vaccines," incorporates only parts of the virus or bacteria, but not the entire pathogen (CDC, 2018). The goal is to introduce just enough of an invader to stimulate a long-lasting response. Similarly, "conjugate vaccines" combine a weakened antigen with a stronger antigen as a carrier so the immune system

will be guided into more strongly recognizing the weakened antigen (CDC, 2018). New types of vaccines strategies, such as DNA or RNA vaccines, are currently under development. It is hoped that these will be chemically stable, cost effective, and easier to manufacture than traditional vaccines (CDC, 2018). A DNA or RNA vaccine uses a portion of DNA or RNA molecules that codes for specific antigens of the pathogen with the goal of triggering the production of antibodies from the body. These vaccines could be used very quickly during an epidemic. Theoretically, these vaccines should be safer for patients, because they are not made with infectious elements (Prazeres et al., 2014).

While it is important that individuals be immunized against deadly pathogens, the ultimate goal is to vaccinate enough people in a community to achieve something called “herd immunity” (Beaubien, 2019; Tolsma, 2018). When a large majority of a population becomes immune to a disease, a pathogen cannot spread through it simply because there are not enough available hosts. In this fashion, individuals that are not immune to the disease can become protected from a disease by being surrounded by people who are immune, and incapable of spreading it. Perhaps these individuals who are not immune had medical reasons, such as age or allergies, or religious reasons for not being vaccinated. Yet, they still reap the benefit of vaccinations by being surrounded by those whom are vaccinated. The CDC recommends 95% of a community being vaccinated or being immune through chance infection for herd immunity to be effective (Beaubien, 2019).

### **Early Government Attempts to Regulate Vaccines**

Historically, the protection of the public’s health has been the primary responsibility of state and local governments (Phalen, 2019). When the Constitution was adopted, the states reserved the ability to make laws that affect the health, welfare, safety, and morals of their citizens. This became known as the police power of the state. In 1827, Boston became the first city to require a vaccination against smallpox for public school students (Woodward, 2016). Pressure was placed on the state to mandate vaccines statewide. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts provided for state-wide school vaccines in 1855. Other cities and states followed Boston’s lead, and the vaccine list expanded as new vaccines were created. Despite the passage of laws making vaccines mandatory, some people resisted. There was no real way of confirming that someone was vaccinated outside of the word of the parent. Parents who disagreed with vaccines could simply state that their children were vaccinated. Some resistance came from principals and school staff who did not enforce the mandatory vaccination laws. Because of these vaccine-hesitators , outbreaks continued to occur in schools. Even if it were discovered that a child was not vaccinated, the child could simply transfer to another school with less stringent enforcement (Woodward, 2016). This created cycles in communities where, when there were outbreaks, more children were vaccinated. When outbreaks subsided, fewer students were vaccinated.

### **Arguments from Vaccine Objectors**

Problems arise when communities cannot reach the 95% threshold of vaccinated people (Sampson, 2020). A whole country can believe a disease has been eradicated in the country. But, if people become complacent and more than 5% do not get vaccinated, then the disease can reappear among those that are unvaccinated. The disease is still alive in other countries. An unvaccinated visitor can come from one of these other countries and bring the disease. Also, an unvaccinated tourist could go to that other

country and bring the disease home. Either situation can create a dangerous outbreak and give the disease a foothold in the country again (Editorial Board, 2019). Some people are vaccine resisters or hesitators. Despite pleas to get vaccinated, not only to protect themselves but also to protect their neighbors, some people who can be vaccinated refuse to get vaccinated or vaccinate their children. The WHO refers to these people as vaccine-hesitators (Lambert, 2019). More commonly they are referred to as anti-vaxxers.

Three types of arguments are raised depending on the beliefs of the vaccine-hesitator. Some people refuse to get vaccines because of their religious convictions. Muslims among other groups, say it is “an attempt to subvert the will of God” (ProCon, 2019). Some Catholic groups oppose vaccines if they believe the vaccine was made using human cell lines derived from aborted fetuses. Other Christian groups believe mandatory vaccinations generally “violate their religious freedom” (ProCon, 2019). Also included in this first group are people who are not religious, but through study and reflection, or through intentional misinformation, have come to the belief that mandatory vaccinations are against their personal beliefs. It is argued these personal beliefs hold the same place in their lives as religious beliefs hold in the lives of religious people. This subgroup argues for philosophical exemptions.

The second group is composed of libertarians. They oppose government mandates, but they will get the vaccinations they choose to receive. This objection is not against vaccines per se but is based upon deeply held political beliefs. Among this group, there is a strong presumption against the government’s ability to compel medical treatment or any other violation of bodily integrity. A forced vaccination is considered a criminal assault on their body and a violation of fundamental liberty. They perceive mandatory vaccinations to be a slippery slope toward the government gaining greater control in people’s lives in other areas (Regoli, 2020). Some in this second group strongly believe in a conspiracy between doctors, pharmaceutical companies, researchers, and bureaucrats in public health agencies to push vaccinations for the purposes of increasing profits, leaving a personal legacy, or some other goal of a similar vein. People in this second group often concede that their objections to government mandates are not absolute. If there is an actual outbreak and a sufficiently dangerous disease is spreading, the government may need to respond with quarantines. But the government’s power should be less when danger is not so immediate (ProCon, 2019). To this group, preventive vaccines without any immediate danger should be optional.

The third group is comprised of people who believe in individuals’ abilities to balance risks and benefits for their own needs. This group is concerned about the safety and harms of vaccines. Arguments are made that vaccines contain toxic chemicals and these chemicals can cause problems like autism. They often argue that “natural” methods of preventing diseases are more desirable than the “artificial” method of vaccination (Burgess, 2019). Furthermore, these groups often cite very rare instances where some people have supposedly become seriously sick or died from vaccines to illnesses that are not, themselves, usually fatal. As deadly outbreaks occur, this group will see a greater risk to themselves and probably get vaccinated. If certain disease rates are very low or appear to be unlikely to infect and kill them, they will typically forgo vaccinations (Regoli, 2020). Often, individuals belonging to this group of hesitators listen carefully to anecdotal evidences of others in their social groups before making vaccination decisions. Mainstream scientific arguments are not always considered or trusted (Davis, 2016).



## Key Court Cases Governing Vaccinations

The earliest key court case occurred in 1830, in Vermont. In *Hazen v. Strong*, the Supreme Court of Vermont allowed a city to collect a tax to pay a doctor to inoculate the town against smallpox (Waterman & Fowler, 1925). The scheme and tax were challenged because there were no actual cases of smallpox in the town. The mandatory inoculation was simply a preventive measure, in case someone with smallpox would pass through the town. Most of the people in the town voted to approve the tax (Waterman & Fowler, 1925). The plaintiff refused to pay the tax. Because of this refusal, the constable seized and sold the plaintiff's cow to pay the plaintiff's tax bill. The plaintiff sued the city for the value of his cow. A county court ruled in his favor, but the state's Supreme Court reversed the decision. The court, in justifying the tax, said, "it becomes the duty of the selectmen to take the most prudent measures to protect the spread of the disease" (Waterman & Fowler, 1925). Many other courts followed this precedent and aligned themselves with the views of state legislators, schoolboard officials, and public health officials when faced with these decisions (Cammock & Baum, 2019).

The Supreme Court of Pennsylvania, in *Duffield v. School District of City of Williamsport* in 1894, continued this deference to government and school boards. The plaintiff wanted his son to attend school in Williamsport. The child fulfilled all requirements except for providing proof of vaccination. The plaintiff wanted the court to decide whether vaccinations were "right." Instead, the court said its job was to decide whether the mandatory vaccination regulations put in place by school boards were reasonable to protect the public good under the medical knowledge of the time. The court deferred to those in healthcare and education on what they believed to be in the interest of public health. "They [the proper authorities] are doing, in the utmost good faith, what they believe it is their duty to do" (*Duffield v. School District of City of Williamsport*, 1894). The court would not second-guess these experts on whether vaccines were safest and the best approach to use to protect society.

Not all states followed the approach of these two courts. In 1905, the U.S. Supreme Court, in *Jacobson v. Massachusetts*, addressed the subject of mandatory vaccines. The Court concluded that the states have the authority to make and enforce mandatory vaccination laws under the police power of the state; the ability to make laws that are designed to protect the health, welfare, safety, and morals of the state's citizens (*Jacobson v. Massachusetts*, 1905). Pastor Henning Jacobson was given a mandatory vaccine for smallpox in Sweden when he was a child. One of his sons also "suffered adverse effects" after being vaccinated as a child. The pastor did not agree with mandatory vaccines and said his vaccine caused him "great and extreme suffering" (*Jacobson v. Massachusetts*, 1905). Thus, he refused to have a needle of cowpox injected into him. He said the state was "restricting one aspect of his liberty" by forcing him to get vaccinated and thus was violating the Fourteenth Amendment (*Jacobson v. Massachusetts*, 1905). The Court had two primary rationales for allowing the states to require vaccinations. First, while individual liberty is important, the state may be justified in restricting individual liberty when there is great danger to the general public. The ongoing smallpox epidemic was a danger to the general public. Individual rights and liberty are subordinate to the state's obligation to eradicate disease and protect the safety of all. Second, the pastor argued that the law was "arbitrary or oppressive" (*Jacobson v. Massachusetts*, 1905). The Court rejected the argument because there was an ongoing

smallpox epidemic. Under the circumstances, mandatory vaccinations were a reasonable measure for eradicating smallpox. The \$5 penalty or imprisonment for violating the mandate was acceptable. No one would be forcibly vaccinated. A medical exception should be available for those who have medical reasons for not receiving vaccines, but the pastor did not meet the standards for this exception (*Jacobson v. Massachusetts*, 1905).

Anti-vaccine people mobilized after this case and used the Anti-Vaccine Society of America, which was founded in 1879, to promote the idea that natural health is the greatest safeguard against disease (Wolf & Sharp, 2002). They asserted that states do not have the right to demand that anyone be forced to impair their health with mandatory vaccines. They believed that vaccines were dangerous, and the intrusion of government and science into a person's private life was tyranny (Novac, 2018).

The Court reaffirmed the *Jacobson* decision in *Zucht v. King* in 1922. In this case, the Court held that a school system could refuse admission to a student who failed to receive mandatory vaccinations. The Court reaffirmed that the police power of a state allowed the state to require mandatory vaccinations. The plaintiff, while asserting an equal protection violation, did not present any evidence of impermissible discrimination (*Zucht v. King*, 1922).

In 1974, in *Reyes v. Wyeth Laboratories*, the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals required pharmaceutical companies to warn purchasers of dangers in the drugs they produce. In this case, an infant was diagnosed with polio two weeks after receiving its oral vaccine. The parents said no one made them aware of potential side effects of the vaccine and it was on the Texas vaccine schedule. However, the manufacturer had knowledge of the vaccine's harmful possibilities. Although this was a product liability case, the court considered public health in its opinion. The greater good of widespread vaccinations had to be balanced with the individual's right to be compensated under the doctrine of informed consent (*Reyes v. Wyeth Laboratories*, 2002). While the vaccine was mandatory in Texas, informed consent was important because there was an alternative vaccine for polio at the time. To ensure vaccines would continue to be made by companies, the case prompted the federal government to consider a compensation board for these cases.

Mandatory vaccinations have spread past children and schools to adults in certain occupations. In 2002, in *Morin v. MGH Institute of Health Professionals*, the Massachusetts Supreme Court interpreted a Massachusetts statute that required students in health sciences programs who encounter patients to be immunized against various communicable diseases. The plaintiff was a graduate student who refused to be vaccinated based on religious beliefs. Her program director informed her that the clinical training required the vaccines. If she did not get vaccinated, she would not be able to complete the clinical training and thus not be able to receive her degree. The plaintiff said Massachusetts allowed for religious exemptions to vaccines. However, the court disagreed and said vaccines were necessary to prevent the spread of communicable diseases. Her belief that "nature and the body are essentially one" did not qualify as a religious exemption (*Morin v. MGH Institute of Health Professionals*, 2002). Aligning with this case, several states have required adults in healthcare professions as well as schools with clinical programs to get vaccines in order to work in those areas. Without appropriate vaccines, the adult may be required to wear surgical masks or be reassigned to an area with no patient contact (Rhode Island Department of Health, 2020). A state may even

attempt to terminate the individual's employment, although courts would have to weigh in on the reasonableness of any termination of employment. If there is an outbreak, the states have more power to fight a public health emergency. Besides compulsory vaccine laws, governors have the power to quarantine those who refuse to get vaccinated, especially if there is contact with or exposure to an infected person (Cole & Swendiman, 2014). Quarantine involves confining a person to a particular place, restricting contact from those outside the quarantine area.

### **A Balanced Approach to Vaccines**

Today, all states provide for medical exceptions to vaccination laws. The CDC provides guidelines for these exemptions (CDC, 2020c). The CDC states that medical conditions that give rise to serious adverse reactions should be considered when requiring vaccines. Also, blood tests that can confirm that immunity has been achieved by merely surviving the disease should allow for a medical exemption. Given that immunity tests and medical exemptions, both, would require a physician's evaluation, this should be a streamline process. Therefore, this process should make it easier for states to enforce medical exemptions.

Most states allow for religious exemptions, although California, Maine, Mississippi, West Virginia, and New York do not. New York abandoned the exemption in 2019 after the measles outbreaks that predominantly occurred in religious communities (Gold & Page, 2019). Other states are considering following suit. The Supreme Court has become more sensitive to the religion clauses of the First Amendment, which include the Establishment Clause and the Free Exercise Clause. The Court may wish to reevaluate the states' right to regulate the health of citizens, and require vaccines, considering the possibility that a forced vaccine may violate a person's First Amendment's Free Exercise Clause. The peoples' rights in the Constitution are not absolute. The government can restrict these rights if the government can show a compelling need to do so (Schenk v. United States, 1919). Establishing a compelling need to do something is hard. However, the immediate threat of an infectious outbreak that endangers large numbers of people could establish a compelling need for a state to regulate. That compelling need could outweigh an individual's right to refuse a vaccine, even if getting that vaccine would violate the individual's religious beliefs. . If religious exemptions are allowed, there probably should be some form of verification that the vaccine the person wishes to avoid actually does, unambiguously, violate a religious doctrine. It is too easy for personal interpretation of religious doctrine to turn into a convenient excuse to avoid vaccines. A written explanation of how a vaccine violates church doctrine should be required from the church's leader. Courts should not be placed in the position of determining what church doctrine requires. There are some church doctrines that could raise Free Exercise Clause concerns to vaccines. Christian Scientists have clear religious objections to all vaccinations (ProCon, 2019). Jehovah's Witnesses object to vaccines made using blood products, but vaccines not derived from human blood are acceptable (ProCon, 2019). Islam and Judaism do not permit the consumption of pork, and some vaccines are manufactured using porcine gelatin, a gelatin made from collagen found in pig skin, bone, cartilage, etc. (ProCon, 2019). These are some examples where requiring vaccines may raise concerns about vaccine use conflicting with religious beliefs. These beliefs may raise Free Exercise concerns because, being forced to get vaccinated, could interfere with a believer's ability to practice their religious beliefs through their life choices.

Personal belief exemptions are falling out of favor. Only about one-third of the states currently provide for this exemption. California eliminated this exemption in 2015, and other states are reevaluating it (Aguilera, 2019). The common argument to eliminate the exemption is that it seems to be used as more of a loophole than an exemption that protects a person's constitutional rights. Personal beliefs are also very hard to verify because they are often just the person's word about how they feel. There is no way to verify the belief such as with a doctor or spiritual leader's written evaluation and statements. Courts have a hard time evaluating, and do not like to evaluate, a person's sincerity of belief (Adams & Barmore, 2014).

If vaccines are required, then perhaps the government should pay for those vaccines. Also, there needs to be a fair way to compensate people who are harmed by vaccines. In 1986, Congress passed the National Childhood Vaccine Injury Act (NCVIA, 2019; Congress.gov, n.d.). This act eliminated the potential financial costs that manufacturers could face due to injury from their vaccine. The removal of financial liability ensures a stable market supply of vaccines and provides cost-effective arbitration for vaccine injury claims. The National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program was created under the act to provide for compensation. The Program paid out \$4.2 billion in compensations for injuries and deaths since Oct 2019 (NVICP, 2019).

### **Biology Studies and Changes in Vaccines That Could Lessen Resistance**

One thing that biologists can do to enlighten this debate is to review the studies of their colleagues to prevent the dissemination of false conclusions. In 1998, Dr. Andrew Wakefield, along with twelve of his colleagues, published a study, conducted with only twelve children, in the *Lancet*. The study appeared to link the development of autism in eight of the children to their recent measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) immunization. Despite the small number of children in the study, the lack of a control group, and the speculative nature of the conclusions, the study received wide publicity. Vaccine-hesitators used the study to scare other parents away from vaccinating their children. Three main arguments were made for vaccine-induced autism. First, it was argued that the MMR vaccine damages the intestinal lining, causing encephalopathic proteins, proteins associated with brain swelling and fever, to be released to the rest of the body. However, biologists pointed out that MMR does not affect the intestines, which would seem to refute their first point. Second, it was proposed that thimerosal, the mercury-based preservative in the vaccine, caused central nervous system toxicity. Scientists showed that mercury poisoning and autism have different symptoms, and the level of mercury is too low to affect people (Burgess, 2019). Alternative preservatives to thimerosal were also created to avoid the concerns with that particular vaccine additive. Finally, it was argued that combined vaccines overwhelm and weaken a child's immature immune system, making the child more susceptible to autism. Again, scientists showed that this belief is not applicable either, as autism is not an autoimmune disease. A link between autism and vaccines was not proven by the study (Newman, 2019). It appears that Dr. Wakefield jumped to a conclusion based on autism diagnoses in children typically being made around the same age that MMR vaccinations are given. In other words, Dr. Wakefield asserted a false causal connection. Ten of the original twelve co-authors retracted their interpretation of the original data. The *Lancet* admitted that the authors failed to disclose that lawyers who represented parents in lawsuits against vaccine companies had paid for the study. The *Lancet* completely retracted the study in February

2010, admitting several elements in the paper were incorrect (Rao & Andrade, 2011). Regardless of the retraction, the study continues to be cited by parents who fear and refuse MMR vaccines. It is too bad that investigative journalists exposed the fraud for financial gain and the connection to antivaccine lawyers, rather than academic vigilance through the peer-review process.

Since its publication, scientists and organizations across the world have spent substantial time and money refuting the *Lancet* paper. Vaccine-hesitators seem to create excuses why newer studies do not support their beliefs. One example is people who argue that, although the vaccine might not increase the risk of autism in a large studied group, it might make a difference for children who already have an increased risk for autism. Another example is people who argue that the vaccine is associated with “a regressive form of autism.” A new large-scale Danish study focused on these concerns for connections to autism (Branswell, 2019). The researchers are from the Staten’s Serum Institute in Copenhagen, Denmark. They used data from the Danish population registry. They studied 657,461 children. In this group, 6,515 received an autism diagnosis during the ten-year follow-up. The researchers looked at factors that could increase a risk for autism which included a sibling with autism, low birth weight, maternal and paternal age, and smoking during pregnancy. They found no increased risk of autism from the MMR vaccine, even among children with these higher risk factors for developing autism (Branswell, 2019). The strength of this study was the large number of study subjects. Despite the size of the study, it is unlikely to change minds. The world now is very fact resistant. Other scientists propose not spending research money on these studies. Research dollars may be better spent trying for other vaccine breakthroughs (Branswell, 2019).

### **Current Areas of Vaccine Research**

Another area that scientists are studying include whether there is increased protection from other diseases beyond the disease the vaccine was designed to protect. This exploration is a contemporary version of Ben Franklin’s sons being inoculated with cowpox to prevent contracting smallpox. A 2019 study shows that vaccination with a weakened strain of salmonella will also protect against typhoid fever, influenza, and yeast infections (Brink, 2019). “Live vaccines have the very broad benefit of going much further than protecting just against the targeted disease” (Brink, 2019). If so, this provides additional benefits to people who weigh the risks and benefits from vaccines.

Sometimes, vaccine research can identify other unanticipated problems. NPR reported another study on May 7, 2015 about measles causing a kind of “immune amnesia”; erasing the immune system’s memory of how to fight off a disease it has previously conquered (Brink, 2019). Children who contracted chickenpox and became immune to it showed they could lose this immunity if they contact measles later. The measles vaccine, therefore, protects against measles and immune amnesia. How the measles vaccination protects against immune amnesia is unclear, warranting further study. However, one could surmise that immune amnesia is a result of a full-blown measles infection affecting memory B- and memory T-cells in some way that the vaccine does not. Other hypotheses, coming from a niche area of biology called “epigenetics,” propose vaccines, compared to chance infections, might cause affected cells to “forget to forget” via genetic means (Gautret et al., 2020).

Simpler problems can have easier solutions. Measles was reintroduced into the United States from overseas. Greater emphasis could be placed on vaccinating people in other countries so that travelers are protected. If people do not wish to get vaccinated, they might not be able to get passports or permission to enter the U.S. Another problem to overcome for vaccinating people abroad is to overcome refrigeration issues. Less developed countries do not always have the infrastructure to send refrigerator trucks to remote villages. Fortunately, some new, synthetic vaccines do not need such refrigeration. One example of this is the vaccine for the mosquito-borne virus, Chikungunya. This vaccine used a synthetic protein scaffold, which helps the protein to retain its shape, therefore function, without refrigeration (University of Bristol, 2019). This strategy could revolutionize how vaccines are designed, produced, and stored (University of Bristol, 2019). Though promising, these advances need to be combined with policies ensuring that vaccines are provided freely, especially to underdeveloped countries that do not have money to purchase them. In a connected world, this country can never permanently eradicate certain diseases if they are spreading and mutating in other parts of the world. Subsidizing vaccines for other countries can help protect our country.

Other concerns directly raised by vaccine hesitators can be addressed, too. Scientists can try reformulating vaccines with fewer unhealthy chemicals, as was done with the replacement of thimerosal, a compound which contains mercury, with other preservatives. Similar efforts can be made to replace components made from pig and aborted fetal tissues.

What else can scientists do? Vaccine technologies continue to improve with our understandings of the different microbes we wish to treat. Vaccines made with engineered proteins can help a patient be exposed to additional antigens that tend to not survive the process of killing or weakening the targeted pathogen (Rauch et al., 2018). There is even work being done to use viral vector-based vaccines where DNA or RNA encoding an antigen for a deadly disease is inserted into a modified live attenuated virus vector. The harmless virus would inject the antigen containing DNA or RNA vectors into the cell. The injected vector would provide the coded instructions for the cells' own machineries to produce antibodies against the more dangerous virus that comes along later. The antibodies would attach themselves to the latter virus's antigens, and direct that material to the cells lysosomes to be chemically broken down (Rauch et al., 2018).

Finally, scientists can continue to explore new vaccine options to chip away at other diseases that kill many people world-wide every year. For example, in this past year the first vaccine for dengue was approved by the FDA for children who live in endemic areas (Thomas, 2019). HIV is another disease that currently has multiple vaccines in drug trials and one in particular, Mosaico, was announced to be in a phase 3 in multiple sites in North America, South America, and Europe (NIH, 2019) Climate change may also result in new diseases normally found in the equator and southern hemisphere appearing in the U.S. more regularly. Developing vaccines for these diseases may be necessary and need to start being created now. The U.S. general population has not been exposed to these diseases, so the consequences of not having a vaccine could be dire. Booster vaccines may need to become the norm for people in outbreak areas, even though they had childhood vaccines, in order to hedge against immune amnesia.

## **Coronavirus**

Since this paper was written, coronavirus (COVID-19) burst upon the world. The first reported cases of the virus began in Wuhan, China, in December 2019. In January 21, 2020, the first confirmed case was reported in the United States in Washington State, from a man in his 30's who traveled to Wuhan. On February 26, 2020, the United States had its first case of local transmission in a patient in California with no history of travel to an outbreak area. On February 29, the United States had its first coronavirus death (Schumaker, 2020). By the time schools were starting spring break, they were closing, and classes were moving online. People were encouraged to practice social distancing. Shops, movie theaters, gyms, and many other places of business closed.

Scientists are searching for a drug, or combination of drugs, to kill the virus before it moves to the lungs and potentially becomes deadly. Some drug companies are trying to repurpose old antiviral drugs, others are mobilizing known technologies, and some are trying more futuristic approaches (Garde, 2020). Gilead Sciences is trying to determine whether their antiviral drug, Remdesivir, can reverse the infection. Remdesivir successfully inhibited viral replication in SARS-CoV-2 (an alternative name for COVID-19) in laboratory studies (Garde, 2020). It was tested, initially, on one person with COVID-19 in the US, whose symptoms improved. In addition, Tilorone is another drug being tested for efficacy against COVID-19. It is a broad-spectrum antiviral drug being tested in Russia and neighboring countries. Furthermore, Hydroxychloroquine has become embroiled in politics and there are some that believe it can help cure coronavirus due to a small study by French scientists (Gautret et al., 2020; Woods, 2020). Hydroxychloroquine, combined with an antibiotic azithromycin, was initially given to 26 patients and 16 patients served as a control (untreated) group. Six of the patients treated with hydroxychloroquine had to end their participation early in the treatment group. Three of the six patients needed treatment in an intensive care unit. Of these three, one patient died, one patient left the hospital on day three, and another stopped treatment due to nausea (Gautret et al., 2020). However, the results from the 20 patients remaining on the hydroxychloroquine regiment showed statistically significant lowering of viral loads compared to the 16 control patients. The small size of the study, lack of additional controls, and lack of multiple trials have been noted by others, including Dr. Anthony Fauci of the White House Coronavirus Task Force (Park, 2020). In addition, other issues regarding the drug have come up. Based on its promotion by political figures, some people started self-medicating with the drug, hoping to avoid COVID-19. Some of these individuals have died or been hospitalized due to overdosing (Park, 2020). Another problem has been shortages of hydroxychloroquine. Patients taking the drug for its accepted uses against malaria, rheumatoid arthritis, and lupus have not been able to have their prescriptions filled due to the sudden spike in demand (Park, 2020).

Scientists are also developing a COVID-19 vaccine. Moderna Therapeutics set an industry record of just 42 days after the virus was sequenced to create mRNA-1273, a vaccine candidate. It is a synthetic strand of messenger RNA (mRNA) that is designed to provide the body's cells with the coded instructions to produce antibodies against the virus (Molteni, 2020). CureVac is using synthetic mRNA to try to spur antibody production. They are developing a mobile mRNA manufacturing technology that will allow health care workers to rapidly produce vaccines at an outbreak site itself, instead of a lab that is hundreds or thousands of miles away. Sanofi is mixing some of the coronavirus's DNA with genetic material from a harmless virus that can create immunity in people without

making them sick (Molteni, 2020). While these and others are promising leads, a vaccine could be a year to a year-and-a-half away from large-scale use. Though a vaccine is the end goal, in the meantime, testing for the virus and treatments to keep the illness mild will be needed. A simple test to tell if a person has immunity to the coronavirus is also being developed. This test is very important, because it will allow people with immunity to go about more normal life and keep more of the economy going. Furthermore, individuals who have developed antibodies to the disease may donate blood plasma to current COVID-19 patients. This is a way of donating one person's memory B- and T-cells for COVID-19 to another individual, aiding the new patient's production of antibodies against the virus. This is how Ebola is currently treated, and this may work for COVID-19. A similar technology is being explored by Regeneron Pharmaceuticals. Instead of relying on humans to provide blood plasma, especially to avoid any other diseases a human may carry, Regeneron is inoculating mice with COVID-19 and mass-producing the antibodies made by these mice for use in humans (Garde, 2020).

From studying other outbreaks, some things seem certain. Scientists will be able to create a vaccine, and the first year it becomes available, everyone will want the shot. As time goes on, the pain and disruption from this pandemic will fade. The virus will mutate, like other cold and flu viruses. A vaccine for coronavirus will probably need to be reformulated each year and people will probably need a vaccine each year to be protected. Vaccine hesitators will begin to avoid the yearly shot and the country might not be able to have enough people vaccinated to reach herd immunity. The reasons for not getting the vaccine yearly will be similar to the arguments used for other diseases like mumps and measles. The coronavirus could then reappear again and cause another outbreak and maybe even more death.

### **Conclusion**

While pathogens will always be with us and new pathogens will rise, scientists cannot lose faith. They need to continue to anticipate potential outbreaks, and then develop vaccines and other drugs to fight these diseases. The United States needs to lead the way in vaccine development and use. Subsidized research money needs to be available for vaccine development. Companies can go broke developing vaccines that are not currently needed or do not require yearly shots. Therefore, they need subsidies to hedge against these risks. Vaccines need to be made in large quantities for people in the United States as well as people overseas. They need to be available to citizens and non-citizens alike, to provide the widest protection from spread. States and localities still seem to be the best for controlling healthcare. When outbreaks and even pandemics occur, they are not uniformly spread throughout the United States. States and localities are better at tracking and combatting outbreaks. The CDC is good for research, modeling disease, and testing. However, states should control quarantine and isolation of people. The CDC should suggest the "most important" vaccines, but local schools are best for enforcing compliance with vaccine laws as they are in the best position to enforce vaccine use by denying admittance to schools for those who are unvaccinated. Religious exemptions are important, but there is no such thing as a religion of one. This looks more like a philosophical exemption than a religious exemption. A religious exemption would require a leader in church to come forward and explain why a vaccine violates the religion. This is unlikely to be a problem as the vast majority of religions are not opposed to vaccines and consider the health of their members to be important. Medical exemptions



should also be allowed. However, the patient needs a note from a medical doctor to claim this exemption, and the doctor must state reasons for the exemption. Doctors can expect to be randomly reviewed on these exemptions and can expect their medical licenses to be in jeopardy if medical exemptions are abused. Finally, vaccines need to be paid for with taxpayer dollars in this country and underdeveloped/poor countries. The oceans that surround our country do not provide protections from viruses in this age of rapid travel. Benjamin Franklin did not inoculate one son against smallpox. He thought he knew what was best until his son died. These authors plead for vaccine-hesitators to humbly consider the case of Benjamin Franklin's son when they make decisions for their own children. These authors also plead for governments and individuals willing to diligently seek vaccinations to do so, and make them easy to acquire, so that herd immunity can cover those whom cannot, or will not, vaccinate.

## References

- Adams, B. & Barmore, C. (2014). Questioning sincerity: The role of the courts after hobby lobby. Retrieved from: <https://www.stanfordlawreview.org/online/questioning-sincerity-the-role-of-the-courts-after-hobby-lobby/>
- Aguilera, E. (2019). Five things to know now about California's new vaccine law. Retrieved from: <https://calmatters.org/health/2019/09/california-new-law-vaccination-medical-exemption/>
- Beaubien, J. (2019). U.S. measles outbreaks are driven by a global surge in the virus. Retrieved from: <https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2019/04/30/717473521/u-s-measles-outbreak-is-linked-to-global-surge-in-the-virus>
- Belluz, J. (2019). Measles has surged in some parts of the US: Some people might need a booster. Retrieved from: <https://www.vox.com/2019/4/29/18522521/measles-outbreak-2019-washington-rockland>
- Bever, L. (2019). Unvaccinated children banned from public spaces amid measles outbreak in New York suburb. Retrieved from: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/2019/03/26/unvaccinated-children-banned-public-spaces-amid-measles-outbreak-new-york-suburb/>
- Branswell, H. (2019). It's old news that vaccines don't cause autism: But a major new study aims to refute skeptics again. Retrieved from: <https://www.statnews.com/2019/03/04/vaccines-no-association-autism-major-study/>

- Brink, S. (2019). The unintended benefits of vaccines. Retrieved from: <https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2019/03/04/699328555/the-unintended-benefits-of-vaccines>
- Brum, R. (2019). Measles: Rockland emergency order halted by state judge; Day commends an uptick in vaccinations. Retrieved from: <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/324619.php#1>
- Burgess, L. (2019). Debunking the anti-vaccine myths. Retrieved from: <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/325371.php>
- Cammock, C. & Baum, J. (2019). Vaccination law 101: A guide for children's lawyers. Retrieved from: <https://www.americanbar.org/groups/litigation/committees/childrens-rights/articles/2019/summer2019-vaccination-law-101-a-guide-for-childrens-lawyers/>
- CDC. (2020a). Measles. Retrieved from: <https://www.cdc.gov/measles/about/history.html>
- CDC. (2020b). Mumps. Retrieved from: <https://www.cdc.gov/mumps/index.html>
- CDC. (2020c). Who should not get vaccinated with these vaccines. Retrieved from: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd/should-not-vacc.html>
- CDC. (2018). Understanding how vaccines work. Retrieved from: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/conversations/downloads/vacsafe-understand-color-office.pdf>
- Cole, J. & Swendiman, K. (2014). Mandatory vaccinations: Precedent and current laws. Retrieved from: <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/RS21414.pdf>
- Congress.gov. H.R.5546 National Childhood Vaccine Injury Act of 1986. Retrieved from: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/99th-congress/house-bill/5546>
- Davis, L. (2016). Note: who's calling the shots? Individual v. state: A look inside the exemption laws and the threats of foregoing vaccinations. *Suffolk Journal of Trial & App. Adv.* 21(372). Retrieved from: <https://advance-lexis.com.ezproxy.mnsu.edu/search/?pdmfid=1516831&crd=e8ddf897-7c28-44cab9fe7dcec9046b68&pdsearchterms=18+J.+Gender+Race+%26+Just.+313&pdstarti=hlct%3A1%3A1&pdtypeofsearch=searchboxclick&pdsearchtype=SearchBox&dqtype=and&pdpsf=&pdquerytemplateid=&ecomp=b7qgkkgk&earg=pdpsf&prid=6692e5e-3e86-4901-8e48-9c9c88140918>

- Duffield v. School District of City of Williamsport, (1904). 162 Pa. 476, 25 L.R.A.152, 29 Atl. 742. *Google Books*. Retrieved from: [https://books.google.com/books?id=6AgHEM4iluYC&pg=RA1-PA643&lpg=RA1PA643&dq=The+Supreme+Court+of+Pennsylvania,+in+Duffield+v.+School+District+of+City+of+Williamsport+in+1904&source=bl&ots=6qIJHL2JXf&sig=ACfU3UqJACWtDI1PoD989QbIW\\_F02JNQ&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjy6MXvm5bnAhUIZc0KHNUAa0Q6AEwAnoECAkQAQ#v=onepage&q=The%20Supreme%20Court%20%20Pennsylvania%2C%20in%20Duffield%20v.%20School%20District%20of%20City%20of%20Williamsport%20in%201904&f=false](https://books.google.com/books?id=6AgHEM4iluYC&pg=RA1-PA643&lpg=RA1PA643&dq=The+Supreme+Court+of+Pennsylvania,+in+Duffield+v.+School+District+of+City+of+Williamsport+in+1904&source=bl&ots=6qIJHL2JXf&sig=ACfU3UqJACWtDI1PoD989QbIW_F02JNQ&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjy6MXvm5bnAhUIZc0KHNUAa0Q6AEwAnoECAkQAQ#v=onepage&q=The%20Supreme%20Court%20%20Pennsylvania%2C%20in%20Duffield%20v.%20School%20District%20of%20City%20of%20Williamsport%20in%201904&f=false)
- Durkin, E. & Aratani, L. (2019). Measles outbreak: New York county bans unvaccinated children in public. Retrieved from: <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2019/mar/27/measles-outbreak-new-york-ban-children-rockwood-country-latest>
- Editorial Board, (2019). Measles isn't the problem: People are. Retrieved from: [https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/measles-isnt-the-problem-people-are/2019/04/07/c2ce11ce-5639-11e9-814f-e2f46684196e\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/measles-isnt-the-problem-people-are/2019/04/07/c2ce11ce-5639-11e9-814f-e2f46684196e_story.html)
- Friedman, S. (2010). *Science was wrong: Startling truths about cures, theories, and inventions "they" declared impossible*. Retrieved from: [https://books.google.com/books?id=2SxxDwAAQBAJ&pg=PT99&lpg=PT99&dq=Inoculation+for+smallpox+has+been+around+for+a+long+time.+China+and+India+used+the+technique+as+early+as+1000+A.D.&source=bl&ots=E6moSQH1FtjGYmE\\_Sa2IDog4g&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwiO8a2fjZbnAhVEZM0KHYZeOIQ6AEwE3oECA0QAQ#v=onepage&q=Inoculation%20for%20smallpox%20h%20been%20around%20for%20a%20long%20time.%20China%20and%20India%20used%20the%20technique%20as%20early%20as%201000%20A.D.&f=false](https://books.google.com/books?id=2SxxDwAAQBAJ&pg=PT99&lpg=PT99&dq=Inoculation+for+smallpox+has+been+around+for+a+long+time.+China+and+India+used+the+technique+as+early+as+1000+A.D.&source=bl&ots=E6moSQH1FtjGYmE_Sa2IDog4g&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwiO8a2fjZbnAhVEZM0KHYZeOIQ6AEwE3oECA0QAQ#v=onepage&q=Inoculation%20for%20smallpox%20h%20been%20around%20for%20a%20long%20time.%20China%20and%20India%20used%20the%20technique%20as%20early%20as%201000%20A.D.&f=false)
- Garde, D. (2020). A detailed guide to the coronavirus drugs and vaccines in development. Retrieved from: <https://www.statnews.com/2020/03/19/an-updated-guide-to-the-coronavirus-drugs-and-vaccines-in-development/>
- Gautret P., Lagier, J. C., Parola, P., Hoang, V. T., Meddeb, L., Mailhe, M., Doudier, B., Courjon, J., Giordanengo, V., Vieira, V. E., Dupont, H. T., Honore, S., Colson, P., Chabriere, E., Scola, B. L., Rolain, J. M., Brouqui, P., & Raoult, D. (2020) Hydroxychloroquine and azithromycin as a treatment of COVID-19: Results of an open-label non-randomized clinical trial. *International Journal of Antimicrobial Agents*. DOI:10.1016/j.ijantimicag.2020.105949
- Gold, M. & Pager, T. (2019). New York suburb declares measles emergency, barring unvaccinated children from public. Retrieved from: <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/26/nyregion/measles-outbreak-rockland-county.html>

- Goodreads. (2020). Benjamin Franklin:Quotable quote. Retrieved from: <https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/173227-in-1736-i-lost-one-of-my-sons-a-fine>
- Jacobson v. Massachusetts. (1905) 197 U.S. 11, 25 S. Ct. 358, 49 L. Ed. 643. *Cornell Law School*. Retrieved from: <https://www.law.cornell.edu/supremecourt/text/197/11>
- Lambert, J. (2019). Measles cases mount in pacific northwest outbreak. Retrieved from: <https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2019/02/08/692665531/measlescases-mount-in-pacific-northwest-outbreak>
- McKinley, M. P., O'Loughlin, V. C., & Bidle, T. S. (2019). *Anatomy & Physiology: An Integrative Approach*. McGrawHill Education. pp. 866-873.
- Molteni, M. (2020). Everything you need to know about coronavirus vaccines. Retrieved from: <https://www.wired.com/story/everything-you-need-to-know-about-coronavirus-vaccines>
- Morin v. MGH Institute of Health Professions, et al. (2002). Civil Action No.02-4484-F, 15 Mass. Law Rptr. 417 (Mass. Super. 2002). *Massachusetts Lawyers Weekly*. Retrieved from: <https://masslawyersweekly.com/fulltext/opinions/1990/01/01/morin-v-mgh-institute-of-health-professions-et-al/>
- NCVIA. (1986). National Childhood Vaccine Injury Act of 1986. 42 U.S.C. section 300aa-1 to 300aa-34. Retrieved from: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/99th-congress/house-bill/5546>
- Newman, T. (2019). MMR vaccine does not cause autism, even in those at risk. Retrieved from: <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/324619.php#1>
- NIH (2019) NIH and partners to launch HIV vaccine efficacy trial in the Americas and Europe. Retrieved from <https://www.nih.gov/news-events/news-releases/nih-partners-launch-hiv-vaccine-efficacy-trial-americas-europe>
- Novak, S. (2018). The long history of America's anti-vaccination movement. Retrieved from: <https://www.discovermagazine.com/health/the-long-history-of-americas-anti-vaccination-movement>
- NVICP. (2019). National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program Monthly Statistics Report. Health Resources and Services Administration. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services October 2019. Retrieved from: <https://www.hrsa.gov/vaccine-compensation/data/index.html>

- Park, A. (2020). President Trump called hydroxychloroquine a 'game-changer', but experts warn against self-medicating with the drug. Retrieved from: <https://news.yahoo.com/president-trump-called-hydroxychloroquine-game-180311116.html>
- Phalen, E. (2019). Note: Mandatory vaccinations in the United States and the European Union, 36 *Ariz. J. Int'l & Comp. Law* 537. Retrieved from: <https://advance-lexis.com.ezproxy.mnsu.edu/search/?pdmfid=1516831&crd=1e976480-f0c5-4709af206e2516b722ee&pdsearchterms=21+Suffolk+J.+Trial+%26+App.+Adv.+372pdstartin=hlct%3A1%3A1&pdtypeofsearch=searchboxclick&pdsearchtype=SearchBox&pdqtype=and&pdpsf=&pdquerytemplateid=&ecomp=b7qgkkg&earg=pdp&prid=ec8bae91-7565-4a0c-a286-5b6a44a8e6db>
- Prazeres, D. M. F. & Monteiro, G. A. (2014). Plasmid biopharmaceuticals. *American Society for Microbiology Spectrum* 2(6). doi:10.1128/microbiolspec.PLAS-0022 2014.
- ProCon.org (2019). Should any vaccines be required for children? *ProCon.org*  
Retrieved from: <https://vaccines.procon.org>
- Project Director. (2012). Epidemiologist Benjamin Franklin: The history of vaccines. Retrieved from: <https://www.historyofvaccines.org/content/blog/epidemiologist-benjamin-franklin>
- Rao, S. & Andrade, C. (2011). The MMR vaccine and autism: Sensation, refutation, retraction, and fraud. *Indian Journal of Psychiatry*, 53(2), pp. 95-96.  
Retrieved from: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3136032/>
- Rauch, S., Jasny, E., Schmidt, K. E., & Petsch, B. (2018). New Vaccine Technologies to Combat Outbreak Situations. *Frontiers in immunology*, 9(1963).  
<https://doi.org/10.3389/fimmu.2018.01963>
- Regoli, N. (2020). 20 biggest pros and cons of vaccinations. Retrieved from: <https://futureofworking.com/8-biggest-pros-and-cons-of-vaccinations/>
- Reyes v. Wyeth Laboratories. (2002). 498 F.2d 1264 (5<sup>th</sup> Cir. 1974). *Biotech Law Issue*. Retrieved from: [https://biotech.law.lsu.edu/cases/vaccines/reyes\\_v\\_wyeth\\_laboratories.htm](https://biotech.law.lsu.edu/cases/vaccines/reyes_v_wyeth_laboratories.htm)
- Rhode Island Department of Health, (2020). Summary of healthcare worker masking requirement when influenza is widespread. Retrieved from: <https://health.ri.gov/publications/guidelines/SummaryOfHealthcareWorkerMaskingRequirementWhenInfluenzaIsWidespread.pdf>
- Sampson, S. (2020). What is herd immunity and could it help prevent COVID-19? Retrieved from: <https://www.healthline.com/health/herd-immunity>

Schenck v. United States, (1919). 249 U.S. 47, 63 L. Ed. 470. Cornell Law School.  
Retrieved from: <https://www.law.cornell.edu/supremecourt/text/249/47>

Schumaker, E. (2020). Timeline: How coronavirus got started. Retrieved from:  
<https://abcnews.go.com/Health/timeline-coronavirus-started/story?id=69435165>

Thomas K. (2019) F.D.A. approves the first vaccine for dengue fever, but limits its use.  
Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/03/health/dengue-vaccine-sanofi.html>

Tolsma, E. (2018). Protecting our herd: How a national mandatory vaccination policy protects public health by ensuring herd immunity. *Journal of Gender Race & Justice*, 18(313). Retrieved from: [https://advance-lexis.com.ezproxy.mnsu.edu/search/?pdmfid=1516831&crd=e8ddf897-7c28-44cab9fe7dcec9046b68&pdsearchterms=18+J.+Gender+Race+%26+Just.+313&pdartin=hlct%3A1%3A1&pdtypeofsearch=searchboxclick&pdsearchtype=SearchBx&pdqtype=and&pdpsf=&pdquerytemplateid=&ecomp=b7qgkkg&earg=pdpsf&pd=06692e5e-3e86-4901-8e48-9c9c88140918](https://advance.lexis.com.ezproxy.mnsu.edu/search/?pdmfid=1516831&crd=e8ddf897-7c28-44cab9fe7dcec9046b68&pdsearchterms=18+J.+Gender+Race+%26+Just.+313&pdartin=hlct%3A1%3A1&pdtypeofsearch=searchboxclick&pdsearchtype=SearchBx&pdqtype=and&pdpsf=&pdquerytemplateid=&ecomp=b7qgkkg&earg=pdpsf&pd=06692e5e-3e86-4901-8e48-9c9c88140918)

Trovall, E. (2019). Why immigration facilities are struggling to contain a mumps outbreak among detained migrants. Retrieved from:  
<https://www.houstonpublicmedia.org/articles/news/in-depth/2019/09/23/346620/why-immigration-facilities-are-struggling-to-contain-a-mumps-outbreak-among-detained-migrants/>

University of Bristol. (2019). Powerful new synthetic vaccines to combat epidemics. Retrieved from:  
<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2019/09/190927102456.htm>

Waterman, J. & Fowler, W. (1925). Public health laws and regulations adopted during 1924: Hazen v. Strong, 1830. Retrieved from:  
<https://books.google.com/books?id=017BFCK8BUUC&pg=RA9-PA69&lpg=RA9PA69&dq=1830+in+Vermont.+In+Hazen+v.+Strong,&source=bl&ots=IYQYB42w&sig=ACfU3U1AnE4bnivo0kZ6bWuxDvEddxAfw&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKwjny5PMmpbnAhWLG80KHXSaBesQ6AEwAnoEAcQAQ#v=onepage&q=18%20in%20Vermont.%20In%20Hazen%20v.%20Strong%2C&f=false>

WHO. (2020). Immunization, vaccines and biologicals. Retrieved from:  
[https://www.who.int/immunization/monitoring\\_surveillance/burden/vpd/surveillance\\_type/active/measles\\_monthlydata/en/](https://www.who.int/immunization/monitoring_surveillance/burden/vpd/surveillance_type/active/measles_monthlydata/en/)

Wolf, R. M. & Sharp, L. K. (2002). Anti-vaccinationists past and present. *BMJ Publishing Group*, 325(7361), pp. 430-432. doi: 10.1136/bmj.325.7361.430

Woods, A. (2020). Old malaria drug hydroxychloroquine may help cure coronavirus: study. Retrieved from: <https://nypost.com/2020/03/19/old-malaria-drug-hydroxychloroquine-may-help-cure-coronavirus-study/>

Woodward, S. B. (2016). The story of smallpox in massachusetts. Retrieved from: <http://www.massmed.org/About/MMS-Leadership/History/The-Story-of-Smallpox-in-Massachusetts/#.Xpz6Jy2-JmA>

Zucht v. King. (1922). 260 U.S. 174, 43 S. Ct. 24, 67 L. Ed. 194. *Cornell Law School*. Retrieved from: <https://www.law.cornell.edu/supremecourt/text/260/174>

# **Honing the Practice Mindfulness for Educational Leaders**

*Thomas J. Buttery, J. Gary Stewart, Austin Peay State University*



A computer search of the word "mindfulness" renders a veritable cornucopia of definitions. The process emanates from the Buddhist and Hindu practice of meditation. It is not our intention to dwell on the religious association. For many, the spiritual origin and connotation of the tradition of meditation have hindered its acceptance. The development of Jon Kabat-Zinn's *Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR)* program in the 1970s began to forge a more secular consideration of mindfulness. Today it is accepted that mindfulness refers to a state of mind while meditation is its primary but not an exclusive tool of achievement.

Educational leaders are responsible for establishing school and college conditions that energize their teachers and professors. These milieus tend to be lively and complex habitats. Leaders must be informed about what is going on in their work environment. While they must consider what has happened, what is happening, and what will be happening, the condition of mindfulness concentrates on what is happening, being conscious in the current moment.

With so many responsibilities, leaders frequently rely on the concept of autopilot. This is the behavior that we all engage in when we attend to various tasks without paying great attention to what we are doing, almost doing it by reflex, such as checking attendance. The Harvard Gazette (2010) indicates that autopilot is our state of mind, approximately 47% percent of the time. Considering the demanding situations that leaders frequently find themselves, this state of *mindlessness* has its practical aspect in handling routine circumstances. But anything worthwhile doing is only beneficial in the proper amount – more is not better.

Just as pilots rely on an airplane's autopilot for part of their time flying time, they must also disengage it and take over the controls at different points. What do leaders need to do when they mindfully take over the reins? As a term, mindfulness encompasses the dual aspects of the state of mind and personal dispositions. Depending on which text you read, a kaleidoscope of merits and conditions compose mindfulness. For example, being in the present moment and paying attention, forming an intent, being nonjudgmental, listening, accepting, having curiosity and kindness is among its cited components.

### **Being in the Present Moment and Paying Attention**

In many conversations, we are planning our response rather than fully listening to the other person. You would not expect your physician to prescribe you medication before he diagnosed your problem. Inherent in the concept of being in the present moment is removing our thoughts and expectations from past events or future happenings. We become focused on the here and now, giving it our full undivided attention to the present moment. Jennings (2015) refers to the focus of the present moment as an awareness in which you detect everything in your consciousness. Sustaining this condition can be difficult, and we need to recognize that our minds will wander, but when we become aware of this, we guide our attention back to the present moment. Awareness of your distraction and reengaging in the present moment is the practice of mindful awareness.

Kabat-Zinn (2012) stipulates that paying attention is a trainable practice that leaders can fine-tune. At the same time, Gunaratana (2011) asserts that awareness is cultivated through the process of concentration. Meta-cognition is the psychological term for our understanding of our sensations, thoughts, ideas, and emotions, which lead us to consider our experiences more objectively. Gunaratana (2011) postulates that paying attention can enhance our understanding of our thoughts, words, and actions. More objective consideration of these attributes can lead to making better choices both on the job and in life.

### **Forming Intent**

As good leaders, we have developed value systems that enhance our motivation and nurture a visualization for the direction of our actions. Just as we have benchmarks for student progress in school, reflection on our practice can serve as a beacon to guide what we intended to do. For example, if I plan to remain calm when working with a particular difficult faculty member, and I begin to feel a bit agitated, I can remind myself of my intention and make appropriate emotional adjustments. Gunaratana (2011) observes that if we fail to see the consequences of our actions, we are destined to stumble. While Jennings (2015) notes that we do not have to have an endpoint, but rather have an inspiration that helps us stay on course. We should consider what it is we want to happen today and determine how we want to behave.

A sense of morality is directly linked to intended behavior. Both Gunaratana (2011), Piaget (1932), and Kohlberg (1973) all propose that there are three levels of moral development. And, in the case of Kohlberg, three sub-stages. The initial level is adherence to a set of rules and regulations that are prescribed by someone else. The next stage involves following stipulated rules, even when not being monitored. The highest stage entails not necessarily following rules that are dictated by authority but rather behaving on our principals. This final stage is frequently referred to as ethics. Within the third stage, one considers all the variables in a situation and attempts to act creatively and appropriately.

### **Being Nonjudgmental**

Elements of Covey's (2011) 7 Habits come to play in this section because individuals have to see and listen to the entire situation and give equal weight to their own needs and those of others. Gunaratana (2011) indicates that we need to be free from emotions such as greed, dislike, envy, and other self-serving actions that inhibit us from seeing the other person's perspective. Hence a deeper level of consciousness is needed.

Covey (1989) informs that successful leaders have a requirement to understand their stakeholders. To build listening skills for both spoken words and emotions. Covey goes on to convey that next to physical survival, the greatest need of a leader's stakeholders "... is to be understood, to be affirmed, to be validated, [and] to be appreciated" p. 241. After careful listening, a leader can then focus on prompting problem-solving

Being nonjudgmental is not intended to control or suppress our thoughts but paying attention to our experiences without judging them or attaching a label on them is essential. O'Brian (n.d.) expresses the brief that as we watch our behavior in this way we are less

likely to act upon chronic ways of thinking reflexively. Thus we experience a new sense of freedom and choice in selecting our behaviors. Buller (2012) further observes that while leaders are frequently under pressure to make decisions rapidly, hurried decisions do not predominantly relate well with the quality of our choices. Mindful leaders allow time to deal with our experiences as experiences and not judgments. Buller cogently observes that a leader should make two lists. The first list should be options that are likely to produce decisions that they will not wind up regretting. The second list is a list that they might potentially regret. Then they should think of what the outcome they most hope will result from their decision. Mindfulness increases a leader's conscious awareness of what events are happening around them and allows them to consider how their actions will affect the surrounding situations. Leaders recognize that what they do does matter. Buller believes that leaders should stop, take a breath, observe, and then proceed. Keeping in mind that the leader's presence and engagement with their stakeholders are vital.

## **Acceptance**

The concept of "acceptance" is commonly misunderstood. It does not mean that whatever we think we should accept. Kabat-Zinn (2012) postulates that the notion of "... acceptance means realizing how things are and finding ways to be in a wise relationship with them. And then to act, as appropriate, out of clarity of vision" p.130.

When engaging in various meditation processes, individuals are encouraged to observe their feelings simply. When both positive and negative emotions emerge, accept them; however, don't get constrained by them. It is nearly impossible to be objective concerning our thoughts if we are not willing to accept and acknowledge our thoughts as they occur. McKay and West (2016) contend that mindful acceptance aims to understand how to tolerate distressing emotions. Lindsay, Young, Smyth, Brown, & Creswell (2018) assert that the process of acceptance is a critical aspect of mindfulness training for reducing stress.

Acceptance should not be confused with inaction. Segal (2016) indicates that it not uncommon for people to struggle with the concept of acceptance, further suggesting that it is helpful to remind ourselves of three points. First, acknowledge negative sensations, for a minute, to consider appropriate action. Keep in mind that accepting is not synonymous with resignation. Second, rebuff the thought that the existence of negative emotions is risky to your mental health. Instead of being unwilling to acknowledge negative thoughts or feelings can lead to significant critical patterns in your mind. Finally, acceptance can empower you to work through the distasteful experience. Working through difficult emotions requires time and effort that is sustained over time.

## **Curiosity and Kindness**

Naumburg (2017) indicates that when we are curious, we are engaged in active exploration, positing that curiosity has the additional value of it is nearly impossible to be curious and angry at the same time. Further, Raffa (2020) denotes that a critical component of a successful exchange of ideas is the asking of salient questions. When questions surface and are fashioned from a place of inquiry, minus judgment, and/or bias, a different line of discourse and interaction emerges. She contends that communication is an art, and curiosity is its brush.

The concept of a growth mindset, as advocated by Dweck (2006) and Raffa (2020), specifies that the driving force behind a growth mindset is curiosity. Open-mindedness directly relates to how leaders approach new ideas. Additionally, Covey (1989) explains curiosity is an excellent attribute for leaders because people are naturally drawn to those individuals who show interest in them.

Leppma (2012) indicates that mindfulness meditation accentuates caring and a kind connection with others. Neff and Dahm (2019) add that when people grapple with challenging struggles, personal miscalculations, disappointments, and problems, self-compassion reacts with kindness rather than critical self-judgment, knowing that imperfection is an aspect of the collective human experience.

## **Meditation**

Earlier, we referred to mindfulness as a state of mind. Meditation is the primary, although not exclusive, means of achieving the state of mindfulness. Advocates of mediation consider it training or practice in achieving awareness and nurturing a healthy sense of perspective. When meditating, one does not try to create a void of thought or feelings; instead, you are developing a sense of observation that is not burdened with judgment.

In essence, meditation is a practice or perhaps an exercise. Consider golf as a form of exercise. As a beginner, you would not expect to play like Phil Mickelson or Tiger Woods. It is through instruction and repetitive practice that you hone your skills. Similarly, meditation requires sustained practice. This requires a sense of commitment. While few people think that they have an hour a day to sustain meditation, there are alternatives. Variations of meditation can take as little as five minutes per day, and Buller (2019) provides excellent options to classic meditation. Jennings (2015) describes two forms of meditation called focused attention and open monitoring. Focus based meditation involves sitting on the floor in an erect posture with crossed legs bringing attention to a set target, breathing being an example. This is not essential. For example, both authors have had knee replacements and spine surgeries that would be debilitating to this style of meditation. In comparison, open monitoring uses the flexible notion of attention, awareness, and acceptance. Buller's (2019) offers an array of open monitoring practices to foster mindfulness. He maintains that what is necessary is that you should position yourself in a way that encourages alertness but is not favorable to falling asleep.

Once in your comfortable position consider setting a timer for five minutes? For most neophytes to meditation, developing a focal point is recommended. Typically this is a concentration on one variable. Breathing is the most recommended focal point. Our breath is controllable but, by default, independent. One can choose not to breathe for just so long, and then the body will autonomously take over. Buller (2019) observes that there is a direct relationship between your breathing and mood that vacillates between cause and effect.

It is not our intention to provide a tutorial on the physical conduction of meditation. There is an abundance of literature available with a simple computer search. For those interested in guided instruction, consider Stahl and Goldstein (2010) stress reduction workbook that includes a CD with 21 guided meditations. Additionally, Stahl, Melo-Meyer, and Koerbel (2014) published a workbook for the reduction of anxiety that includes a downloadable guide to 24 meditations.

In summary, mindful leaders invest the time to know both themselves and their stakeholders.

This investment can pay high dividends, given that these leaders are more likely to lead by inspiration. We do not downplay set benchmarks and other metrics but keep in mind that these are only tools. It is the role of the leader to go beyond simple tools and cultivate inspiration.

## References

- Buller, J. L. (2019). *Mindful leadership*. Roman & Littlefield.
- Covey, S. (1989). *The 7 habits of highly effective people*. Simon & Schuster.
- Dweck, C. S. (2006). *Mindset*. Random House.
- Gunaratana, B. (2011). *Mindfulness in plain English*. Wisdom Publications.
- Jennings, P. A. (2015). *Mindfulness for teachers*. W. W. Norton & Company.
- Harvard Gazette (2010). *Wandering mind not a happy mind*.  
<https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2010/11/wandering-mind-not-a-happy-mind/>
- Kabat-Zinn, J. (2012). *Mindfulness for beginners*. Sounds True.
- Kohlberg, L (1973). *Collected papers on moral development and moral education*.  
Moral Education & Research Foundation.
- Leppma, M (2012) Loving-kindness meditation and counseling. *Journal of Mental Health Counseling*, 34(3), 197-204. <https://doi.org/10.17744/mehc.34.3.955g218326616282>
- Lindsay, E. K., Young, J., Smyth, M., Brown, W. & Creswell, D. (2018) *Panel Discussion*. *Psychoneuroendocrinology*, 87, 63-73. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psyneuen.2017.09.015>
- McKay & West (2016). *Quick tips for therapists*.  
<https://www.newharbinger.com/blog/mindful-acceptance>
- Naumburg, C (2017). *Mindfulness: Kindness and curiosity*.  
<https://www.carlanaumburg.com/2017/02/mindfulness-kindness-and-curiosity-5-of-6/>
- Neff, K. D. & Dahm, K. A. (2019) Self-Compassion: What it is, what it does, and how it relates to mindfulness. In D. Ostafin, M. D. Robinson, & B. P. Meier (Eds.) *Handbook of Mindfulness and Self-Regulation* (pp. 121-137). Springer Nature Switzerland AG.
- O'Brian, M. (n.d.). What is mindfulness? (And what does it mean to you?) <https://mrsmindfulness.com/what-is-mindfulness/>
- Piaget, J. (1932). *The Moral Judgment of the Child*. K. Paul, Trench, Turner.
- Raffa, A. (2020). *The power of curiosity*. <http://adelaraffa.com/rose-window-blog/2020/1/14/howto-stay-in-inquiry-amp-curiosity>
- Stahl, B. & Goldstein, E. (2010). *A mindfulness-based stress reduction workbook*. New Harbinger Publications.
- Stahl, B., Melo-Meyer F. M. & Koerbel, L. (2014). *A mindfulness-based stress reduction workbook for anxiety*. New Harbinger Publications.
- Segal, Z. (2016). Three ways acceptance helps you work with difficult emotions. *Mindful Mind, Healthy Life* <https://www.mindful.org/three-ways-acceptance-helps-work-difficult-emotions/>

**PEDAG RELATIONSHIPS**  
Anita Chadha  
University of Houston, Downtown

Research consistently demonstrates that online peer interaction engages participants in an egalitarian process in which they listen to each other, reflect upon ideas exchanged, ask for clarification of a peer's perspective and/or challenge them for a greater explanation while clarifying their own (Caspi et al., 2008; Chadha, 2019a; Kiesler et al., 1984).

In point of fact, researchers find that of the three types of interactivity that can occur online, student-student, student-instructor, and student–content, student–peer interaction is the strongest predictor of student performance (Chejlyk, 2006; Keeler, 2006; Kuo et. al., 2014).

The importance of peer interactive discussion-based learning has been emphasized for many years by a number of theorists who underscored the idea that deliberative engagement is beneficial on several levels (Andriessen Baker, & Suthers, 2013; Astin, 1993; Bender, 2012; Hurtado, 2003). In academic environments, deliberation produced positive and measurable outcomes such as higher grades, increased knowledge, motivation, and greater participation (Bode et al., 2014; Kenski & Stroud, 2006; Chadha, 2019a; Chadha, 2019b). While in practitioner environments, it promoted awareness of multicultural perspectives and differences in cultural or experiential interpretations leading to greater productivity among peers (Luca, 2015; Soltes, 2014; Baumöl et. al., 2016).

While in both academic and practitioner environments deliberations contributed to greater critical and reflective participation in formulating opinions and listening to the opinions of others as the puzzle through a common problem. The difference would be that in academia, it may be the deliberation over the idea of citizenship while for practitioners it may be the interchange in customer interaction on social media platforms or the engineering of microchips on cars across differing countries (Chadha, 2019a, 2019d; Englund, 2006; Grönlund et. al., 2014; Mandernach, 2018).

The deliberative back-and-forth dialogue further enhanced due to the benefits online spaces provide. One of these benefits of online spaces is in providing participants the time and space to respond which allows participants time for reflection before responding. While another benefit of online spaces is that they provide anonymity in that each does not know their peers' race, religion, course level, or modes of instruction. Anonymity allows for each to participate based on the content of the message rather than the identity of the sender. These benefits of being anonymous and free of time constraints allow for critical student reflection, response, visit, and revisit of spaces as they ponder over varying ideas while being inquisitive about and asking each other for their perspectives (Herring, 1993; Chadha, 2019a).

In addition, as they deliberate with peers who are not in a position of authority they build personal connections with them, such as offering personal identifiers or identifying with a peer (as in, "I feel the same way...yet."). Personalized connections make each participant comfortable while anonymity and unconstrained time allow for "free" discussion of ideas and opinions. Moreover, with budding relationships, natural inquisitiveness takes root as they ask for clarity of perspectives while providing clarity of their own. These interactive processes build relationships amongst peers as they listen actively, respond with reflection, ask them for clarity while providing their own thus building academically reflective deliberations (Hollenbeck et. al., 2011; Evans & Cuffe, 2009).



Theorists underscore that the continual process of thinking critically, applying the knowledge learned, being inquisitive in an attempt to gain greater academic knowledge furthers and lengthens pedagogical relationships (Bornstein & Brunner, 1989; Chadha, 2019b; Piaget, 1969; Vygotsky, 1981). Undoubtedly, each visit and revisit of discussions create talkative yet reflective deliberations which have been found to build academic knowledge as they welcome the exchange of multiple viewpoints coproducing content, deliberating in a way that voting cannot. (Boud & Sampson, 2002). Likewise, much research finds that being on the same level playing field, as a peer, contributes on par with peers using them as resources making equal contributions (Chu et. al, 2017; Johnson & Johnson, 1989). Insomuch that the pedagogical relationship among peers lowers a sense of isolation (Kuo et. al., 2014; Croxton, 2014) while increasing retention and promoting deeper and meaningful learning (Piaget, 1969; Vygotsky, 1981; Chadha, 2019c; Chadha, 2019d; Chejlyk, 2006; Keeler, 2006).

Furthermore, research consistently demonstrates that courses that involve students interacting with other students reported high levels of satisfaction and learning than courses without interaction (Chadha, 2019b; Swan, 2002). With the growth of university courses offering in distance learning environments a call is issued for research with statistically significant results on online deliberation (Anderson, 2003; Hamann et al., 2009). Also, a second call is issued for research that guides practitioners in distance learning environments (Lou et al., 2001; Luca, 2015; Soltes, 2014).

This research answers this double call and therefore is significant for several reasons. First, it answers the call for more research with statistically significant results by academics (Anderson, 2003; Hamann et al., 2009; Lou et al., 2001). Second, it answers the calls for more research by practitioners to use across multidisciplinary fields from the social sciences, to math and engineering making this research doubly significant.

Therefore, the central aim of this study was to examine student peer interaction online using an e-collaboration that was first created in 2002 as a pedagogical means to complement traditional discussions in face-to-face political science courses across the country. Specifically, this research examined whether students interacted with each other with academic reflectivity on an online customized, subscription-based website that was accessible to only those students who signed human consent forms or obtained parental consent. Academic reflectivity meant that the students had reflected, deliberated, or reconsidered views when they responded to questions or when they commented on peer-posts. This meant that the student was thinking critically, developing informed perspectives across issues, learning from opposing views of others, and interacting in a civil manner.

### Literature Review

Deliberative communication has been defined as an interaction where each participant “takes a stand by listening, deliberating, seeking arguments, and evaluating . . . in a collective effort to find . . . (Dis) agreement” (Englund, 2006, p. 503). These deliberations are sustained as peers reflect upon the content and peer responses, asking each other open-ended questions that extend the discussion in an attempt to further broaden the issue and or find an alternative way to think about a problem (Dixson, 2012) while also proposing new concerns and questions (Stromer-Galley et. al., 2015). The reciprocal process of reflection, adding information, asking for clarity of perspectives generates critical thought of content in an online environment and has have been found

to be comparable to face-to-face courses (Botsch & Botsch, 2012; Delli & Keeter, 1996; Chadha, 2019a) with retention rates on par between these modes of instruction (Bolsen et al., 2016).

#### *Benefits of online spaces*

Engaged deliberative communities are further supported by the benefits online spaces provide. For one, as students do not know the race, ethnicity, religion, or modes of instruction of the others in online spaces, this buffer of anonymity allows the focus to be on the message rather than the identity of the sender making for deliberative engagement on equal terms and the topic and content on hand (Herring, 1993). Second, the asynchronous design of online spaces provides students with time for reflection before they respond. Moreover, asynchrony provides the sense that 'someone is always listening' (Palloff & Pratt, 2007, p. 116), thereby personalizing and narrowing the dialogue just between just those involved (Rudestam & Schoenholtz-Read, 2009) furthering rigorous deliberations despite differences in viewpoints, time differences or geographic regions (Rudestam & Schoenholtz-Read, 2009). These multiple benefits of online spaces create a dynamic among peers promoting the asking of insightful questions and or clarification of their perspectives while challenging them for greater explanation (Caspi et al., 2008; Chadha, 2018; Kiesler et al., 1984).

#### *Peer to peer engagement*

Aside from the benefits of online spaces peer deliberations are further strengthened by the fact that participants are in the same position as them, i.e. not being in a position of authority. As peers they add personal identifiers such as being a single parent or having served in the military further building their relationships amongst themselves (Pollock et. al., 2011). Notwithstanding, these connections, peers become an academic resource, other than their texts, furthering their pedagogical relationships (Chu et. Al, 2017; Johnson & Johnson, 1989).

Peer-to peer relationships further a sense of familiarity amongst themselves as they deliberate current or controversial issues without reservation (Evans & Cuffe, 2009; Chadha, 2019c). In establishing comfort with each other they ask for clarity of peer perspective while being inquisitive of said perspectives lengthening deliberations (Boud & Sampson, 2002; Evans & Cuffe, 2009; Chadha, 2019c; Stitzlein, 2014). They play devil's advocate as they challenge a peer to account for their views (De Bono, 1985; Swan, 2002a). They seek clarification of ideas not understood and/or to flush out or clarify positions (Chadha, 2018; Stitzlein & West, 2014). This is not to say that participants simply ask for factual information but one where they are genuinely curious about varied perspectives (Guzdial & Turns, 2000). Inquisitiveness of peer perspectives as well as the rapport among participants as well as the benefits online spaces provide lead to lengthy talkative deliberations.

#### *Deliberative benefits for students or practitioners*

Deliberative research tied to the benefits of online spaces validates that interaction among participants build academic reflectivity as they are continuously involved in a process of thinking critically, applying the knowledge learned, asking for clarity, resolving conflicts while agreeing and disagreeing in an attempt to gain greater knowledge (Evans & Cuffe, 2009; Chadha, 2019c). Moreover, the exposure to diverse viewpoints aids participants as they develop skills to handle and resolve disagreements which include the

cognitive understanding of these differing viewpoints (Zuniga et al., 2002; Gurin et al., 2004; Guttman 2000), a skill useful in both academic and or practitioner environments.

#### *Calls for research*

With distance learning programs on the rise across both undergraduate and graduate programs, increased student demands for them and administrators keen to expand offering without committing physical space, various calls are issued for research on online collaborations. A call is issued for research with statistically significant results to support learners, teachers, and administrators as online education continue to grow (Anderson, 2003; Hamann et al., 2009; Lou et al., 2001). While another call is issued for research that would provide practitioners with practical solutions as technologies become the norm of communication (Lou et al., 2001; Luca, 2015; Soltes, 2014).

This study answers that dual call using a carefully designed digital learning strategy, an e-collaboration that has been used for the past twelve years and has shown to enhance student performance. In doing so this research is significant for several reasons. For one it answers both calls for research. Second, it provide statistical significant proof that online collaborations do engage students in academically reflective learning which is critical to educators, policy makers and administrators seeking ways to expand university mission and enrollment. And third, with evidentiary proof of deliberative interactions in a carefully designed online space this research is significant for practitioners from the social sciences to math, engineering and more.

#### *Methods*

The purpose behind the collaborative website was to provide an interactive means of discussion among students across two different yet identical courses taught by the same instructor, during the same semester and at the same university. Thus, the website was designed with student peer interactivity in mind. Before the start of the semester, the instructor designed both her courses to be identical in the course objectives, text, grades and collaboration requirements.

In particular, this research studied the reflective peer interactions of the students on the collaboration and used a mixed-methods approach. First, it employed content analysis followed by statistical testing through ANOVAs. Content analysis was used as it is a commonly used technique to code discussion boards (Chadha, 2019a; Hamann et al., 2009). As all coding was done by the instructor no inter coder issues existed. Pre- and posttest surveys formed the student perspective. Furthermore, students signed human consent forms prior to the start of the collaboration.

The intent of the collaboration was to provide an online complement to a traditional political science course, Introduction to American Politics course, by providing students a virtual meeting space to deliberate outside of class. The professor was mindful of various pedagogical goals in the collaboration. Specifically, that of encouraging and increasing student interaction and participation, development of and an understanding of opposing views, improving critical thinking, developing a deeper sense of community, and providing peer presence so that learner isolation did not occur.

#### *Academic comparability in the collaboration*

The instructor chooses to add a collaboration to her two “Introduction to American Politics” courses which was offered during the same semester, the same class level and

the same mode of instruction. The instructor distributed a common set of standardized instructions in her syllabi to both her classes, class X and class Y. These requirements were three fold. 1) First, students had to post eight (8) times and respond (8) eight times to the same minimum number of questions, for a total of sixteen times over the semester. The weekly post and response to discussion questions would build and maintain a discussion- oriented online community. 2) Second, were required to post and respond using a minimum length of 75 words. Other than the minimum word guidance and the requirement to respond and reply to the same minimum number of discussion questions, no other guidance was provided to the students, however, student conversations were monitored for signs that students were abiding by general rules of respect, decency, and civility. 3) Third, the professor assigned a course grade, 10% to this collaborative activity as shown in the comparability of course e-collaboration in table 1.

<i>Table 1</i>		
<i>Comparability of course e-collaboration</i>		
	Class X	Class Y
Course Name	Survey to American Government	Survey to American Government
Course Level	Lower (Freshman) level	Lower (Freshman) level
Collaboration requirement in Syllabus	8 posts and 8 responses 75 word minimum length 10%	

As shown in Table 1, the collaboration linked the identical course which was taught at the same level during the same semester and had three identical collaborative requirements. The course itself would cover the same content using the same schedule throughout the semester. In addition, the student body was comparable in the student bodies they represented as students were at the same university.

All students had to sign a consent form for the collaboration and were given a choice of an alternative project if they chose not to consent. Students then had to request permission to join the site, and after the instructor verified their signed consent, they were allowed to join the site. Any student 18 years or under had to have parental consent to join. Students were asked to take a pre- and post-semester survey. With comparability across courses and the intent of the collaboration to be an interactive space for deliberation of academic content, the dependent variable would test for student academic reflectivity.

#### *Variables coded*

The Dependent variable called, academic reflectivity, was based on past work by Van Vechten, et al., 2013. Academic reflectivity meant that the students had reflected, deliberated, or reconsidered views when they responded to questions or when they commented on peer-posts. This meant that the student was thinking critically, developing informed perspectives across issues, learning from opposing views of others, and interacting in a civil manner.

#### *Operationalizing variables*

1. Reflectivity meant that the student was thinking critically across issues and was involved in a dialogue seeking out alternative perspectives (Stitzlein, 2014). Such discussion, however, does not just talk for the sake of talking; it involved critically reflecting on one's own beliefs while simultaneously being open to learning other ideas or perspectives from peers (Stitzlein, 2014; Chadha, 2019a). Reflectivity was coded as 1; non-reflective a 0.
2. Civic application meant that the students were thoughtful citizens discussing civic issues such as the First Amendment or voting issues rather than just mentioning them. Civic application was coded as 1; no application a 0.
3. Posing an honest question was measured as students asking one or more questions that enlarged the scope of the discussions, rather than rhetorical ones that assumed answers. Posing honest question was coded as 1; no honest question asked a 0.
4. The academic text was measured by student references ideas to which they had been exposed in class or to those ideas mentioned by their professors or within class discussions. The use of text was coded as 1; no use of text a 0.
5. Media materials or outside links were measured by students' posting or citing media-related sources to external sites, such as a reference to court cases that would further student learning. The use of media materials was coded as 1; no use of media materials a 0.
6. The length was measured on a scale of 1–3 where 1 was a short response of usually 75 words or fewer, 2 was a medium response while 3 was a long response usually longer than 10 lines.

The study variables measured if the intent of the collaboration, to be academically deliberative created student posts and responses that were talkative, inquisitive deliberations while clarifying their own.

1. Posts and responses. A post was a student's academically reflective reply to the instructors' question while a response was an academically reflective reply to a student peer. Academic reflectivity in post or response was coded as 1; no academic reflectivity in post or response was a 0.
2. Talkative was not a measure of length. Rather it measured whether the students were chatty or loquacious in a friendly manner, one that pushed the deliberations further academically. Talkative was coded as 1; not talkative a 0.
3. Inquisitive was measured by students being curious or inquiring about peer perspectives furthering the deliberations. Inquisitive was 1; not Inquisitive a 0.
4. Clarification of perspectives was measured by students asking for clarification of peer perspective while providing their own. Asking for clarification was coded as 1; not asking for clarification a 0.

### The Hypotheses

The hypotheses would measure for academic reflective interactions across the two classes. The first hypothesis (H1) was that students' posts and responses would be academically reflective. The second hypothesis (H2) was that students would be talkative with each other with academic reflectivity. (H3) Students would be inquisitive with each other with academic reflectivity. And H4, Students would clarify their perspectives with academic reflectivity. These four hypotheses would test for academically reflective interactions among peers on an online space specifically created for interactivity.

### Findings and Discussion:

A mixed-methods approach was used to provide evidentiary results. First, content analysis of the thirty-three student posts and responses was performed across the variables outlined in the methods. These were followed by ANOVAS testing the content analysis. ANOVAS reveal statistical significance of reflectivity scores across the classes. Table 2 lists the mean and standard deviation scores of reflectivity across the two classes.

Institutions	Mean	N	Std. deviation
Class X	3.2158	278	1.51175
Class Y	1.5385	247	.77927
Total	2.4267	525	1.48171

The mean and standard deviation scores of reflectivity were approximately equivalent across the two institutions. ANOVAS were performed next which revealed statistical significance of reflectivity scores across classes and the four hypothesis. Students posted and responded with academic reflectivity across the classes ( $p < .000$ ) supporting the first hypothesis (H1) that students' posts and responses would be academically reflective. Students were talkative about the issues with each other with academic reflectivity ( $p < .000$ ) supporting the second hypothesis (H2) that students would be talkative with each other with academic reflectivity.

Students were inquisitive about the issues while furthering academically reflective discussions ( $p < .000$ ) supporting the third hypothesis (H3) that students would be inquisitive with each other with academic reflectivity. And students clarified their positions and issues with each other with academic reflectivity ( $p < .000$ ) supporting the fourth hypothesis (H4) that students would clarify their perspectives with academic reflectivity, each result providing evidence for the four hypotheses as provided in Table 3.

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	875.027 <sup>a</sup>	23	38.045	69.210	.000	.761
Intercept	191.207	1	191.207	347.838	.000	.410
Post/response	44.998	1	44.998	81.860	.000	.140
Talkative	29.491	1	29.491	53.649	.000	.097
Inquisitive	15.370	1	15.370	27.962	.000	.053
Clarify	7.980	1	7.980	14.516	.000	.028

Error	275.400	501	.550			
Total	4242.000	525				
Corrected Total	1150.427	524				

With the significance for these hypothesis, LSD post-hoc comparisons followed and are reported in table 4 with significant results ( $p < .000$ ).

*Table 4*

*LSD post-hoc significance of test differences in mean scores for reflectivity*

	(I) Interact	(J) Interact	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
LSD	0		-.6288*	.13615	.000	-.8963	-.3613
			-.5683*	.14510	.000	-.8534	-.2832
			-.5951*	.13935	.000	-.8689	-.3213
			-1.1993*	.15243	.000	-1.4988	-.8998

With the significance in ANOVAS and post hoc tests, this study provides statistically significant proof that an online collaboration is an academically viable strategy for students to discuss and deliberate academic issues, concepts while building pedagogical relationships with peers. What's is that online peer interactions encourage critical thinking and are the ingredients for knowledge construction and cognitive development promoting learning in open and distance learning environments.

**Conclusions**

The significant results in this study provide statistically significant proof that student peer interactions in an online space do engage students with academic reflectivity. In point of fact, online deliberation has a democratizing effect that is beneficial to both researchers and practitioners thereby answering the dual calls for research by researchers and users of distance education technologies.

*Academically*

Academically this collaboration has been used in the past twelve years linking students nationally and internationally across diverse characteristics such as race, gender, religion, ethnic profile, course level, or mode of instruction and among students of varying political beliefs with statistically significant results each time. These online collaborative efforts have increased academic achievement while providing an environment that mirrors the real-world.

Instructors involved in the collaboration have benefitted as their students are engaged with peers outside of class participating as citizens (Chadha, 2019b). Universities benefitted as they provided classes without the need for physical spaces on campuses, increasing their enrollment. Students benefitted as they learnt from differing perspectives while gaining an appreciation of and understand that others across the country are struggling with and debating similarly.

In point of fact, in semester end surveys students appreciated having a space to interact with peers outside the class. When asked if they were comfortable discussing controversial issues with peers online, 81% said that they were comfortable, 4% said no while 8% said maybe and 8% said they were not sure. While in an open-ended question they were asked what they liked or disliked about the collaboration a variety of responses ensued such as, “Opportunity to see viewpoints from others, not within my peer group, race, and culture”, “I like that people react to your comments”, “Disliked when only a few people participated” “The different point of views and gaining a better understanding as to why my peers feel the way they do” as shown in Table 5 providing support for the online deliberative collaboration.

*Practitioners*

Practically this research is critical in open and distance learning environments as these are a daily means of communication and engagement among practitioners across national and international boundaries. In point of fact, this collaboration was a pedagogical powerful tool when used across various U.S. states from Texas, California, Maryland, New York to New Jersey, and internationally from Texas to South Korea. In using deliberation as a guiding framework an informed and engaged participant base has formed across different countries, time zones, and across a range of topics such as math, medicine, and engineering. For example in medicine, the discussion of surgeries of conjoined twins used in Iraq was discussed and deliberated among various medical practitioners ranging from doctors, nurses, and support staff in Indonesia and around the world. Likewise, the discussion of apps and other constructs is used by engineers discussing car technologies and components from the U.S., Germany to Japan.

Table 5
Semester end survey asking what they liked and disliked about the collaboration
Nothing
I liked the topics
What I liked about the collaboration is that we had enough time to post our discussions. We were able to retrieve the questions, formulate our thoughts and then post the results to the page.
nothing to like until you have to turn it in late
Opportunity to see viewpoints from others not within my peer group, race, and culture
I like that people react to your comments
Disliked when only a few people participated.
The different point of views and gaining a better understanding as to why my peers feel the way they do about certain things.
I did not have any negative things about the collaboration
I like that it makes me think critically. What I dislike was that the number of personal post (8) and about peers' posts (8) is too much.
I liked how we can see other people posting on what we have to do also and not only turn it in to the teacher but to the class helped the classmates see what everyone thought.
the topics were the best
Loved it



I liked how it was weekly and kept you engaged throughout the week  
 I enjoyed the group discussions very much.

To conclude, an e-collaboration is an effective deliberative tool that enhances peer engagement across different subjects in academia and for practitioners across any field and is considered a best practice as applied through Chickering & Gamson's (1987) Seven Principles of Online Best Practices. Table 6 compares Chickering & Gamson's (1987) Seven Principles of online best practices to the benefits in academia and for practitioners showing that they are indeed comparable as they encourage cooperation, provide prompt feedback, emphasize time on task and respects diversity in talents.

Table 6		
<i>Comparing Chickering &amp; Gamson's (1987) Seven Principles of Online Best Practices</i>		
Chickering & Gamson's best practices	Academia	Practitioners
Encourages student-peer contact	Contact inside and out the classroom increases student motivation and involvement. It enhances their intellectual commitment and encourages them to think about their own learning and future plans.	Encourages and develops personal and professional relationships. Encourages them to think and rethink
Encourages cooperation	Learning is more of a team/collaborative effort than being solo. Sharing ideas and responding to others' reactions improves thinking and deepens understanding.	Sharing ideas and responding to others' improves critical thought/deepens understanding in decisions ranging from restaurants to voting behavior.
Encourages active learning	Learning is enhanced as active learning is a continuous dialogue students continually learn. In writing about it, relating it to their experiences, and applying it to their daily lives, active learning is continuously encouraged.	Continuous dialogue encourages time on task or changes to task actively.
Gives prompt feedback Emphasizes time on task	They have greater chances to reflect on what they have learned, what they still need to know, and with an emphasis on the task at hand assess themselves from multiple perspectives.	Time on tasks across app development, marketing and third party support keeps the focus on task.
Communicates expectations Respects diverse talents	Deliberations provide communication day or night. They provide for diversity of opinions. While allowing for relatability with others.	Interaction keeps communication on task while respecting diversity in accomplishment of task.

Undoubtedly much more research is needed and anticipated on digital learning platforms such that they extend pedagogical engagement. What is clear is that this research provides significant proof that online peer interaction results in thoughtful critical deliberation of the topic at hand. The future of collaborative strategies is indeed bright for both students and practitioners alike.

### References

- Anderson, T. (2003). Modes of interaction in distance education: Recent developments and research questions. In M. G. Moore & W. G. Anderson (Eds.), *Handbook of Distance Education*. Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Inc.
- Andriessen, J., Baker, M., & Suthers, D. (Eds.). (2013). *Arguing to learn: Confronting cognitions in computer-supported collaborative learning environments*. Dordrecht: Springer Science & Business Media.
- Astin, A. W. (1993). *What matters in college: Four critical years revisited*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Baumöl, U., Hollebeek, L., & Jung, R. (2016). Dynamics of customer interaction on social media platforms. *Electronic Markets*, 26(3), 199-202.
- Bender, T. (2012). *Discussion-based online teaching to enhance student learning: Theory, practice and assessment*. Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing, LLC.
- Bode, L., Vraga, E. K., Borah, P., & Shah, D. V. (2014). A new space for political behavior: Political social networking and its democratic consequences. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 19(3), 414–429. doi:10.1111/jcc4.12048
- Bolsen, T., Evans, M., & Fleming, A. M. (2016). A comparison of online and face-to-face approaches to teaching Introduction to American Government. *Journal of Political Science Education*, 12(3), 302–317. doi:10.1080/15512169.2015.1090905
- Bornstein, M., & Bruner, J. (1989). *Interaction in human development, the crosscurrents in contemporary psychology series*. New York, NY: Taylor and Francis.
- Botsch, R. E., & Botsch, C. S. (2012). Audiences and outcomes in online and traditional American government classes revisited. *PS, Political Science & Politics*, 45(3), 493–500. doi:10.1017/S104909651200042X
- Boud, D., Cohen, R., & Sampson, J. (2002). Making the move to peer learning. *Peer Learning in Higher Education: Learning From & With Each Other*. Kogan Page Limited, London, UK. Retrieved from <http://www.styluspub.com/>.

- Caspi, A., Chajut, E., & Saporta, K. (2008). Participation in class and in online discussions: Gender differences. *Computers & Education*, 50(3), 718–724. doi:10.1016/j.compedu.2006.08.003
- Chadha, (2019a). Engaging learners: A digital best practice in *Handbook of research on innovative digital practices to engage learners*.
- Chadha, (2019b). Deepening engagement—the intimate flow of online interactions. In *International Journal of Online Pedagogy and Course Design*.
- Chadha, (2019c). Personalizing and extending deliberation in the online classroom: future horizons. In *Journal of educators online*.
- Chadha, (2019d). Graduate online pedagogy. A framework for collaborative communities of learning. In *Fostering multiple levels of engagement in higher education environments*. This book chapter was accepted without a revise and resubmit.
- Chejlyk, S. (2006). The effects of online course format and three components of student perceived interactions on overall course satisfaction (Doctoral dissertation).
- Chickering, A. W., & Gamson, Z. F. (1987). Seven principles for good practice in undergraduate education. *AAHE bulletin*, 3, 7.
- Chu, H. C., Chen, J. M., & Tsai, C. L. (2017). Effects of an online formative peer-tutoring approach on students' learning behaviors, performance and cognitive load in mathematics. *Interactive Learning Environments*, 25(2), 203-219.
- Croxtton, R. A. (2014). The role of interactivity in student satisfaction and persistence in online learning. *Journal of Online Learning and Teaching*, 10(2), 314.
- De Bono, E. (1985). *Six thinking hats: An essential approach to business management from the creator of lateral thinking*. Boston, MA: Little, Brown and Co.
- Delli Carpini, M. X., & Keeter, S. (1996). *What Americans know about politics and why it matters*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Dixson, M. D. (2012). Creating effective student engagement in online courses: What do students find engaging? *Journal of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, 10(2), 1–13.
- Englund, T. (2006). Deliberative communication: A pragmatist proposal. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 38(5), 503–520. doi:10.1080/00220270600670775
- Evans, D. J., & Cuffe, T. (2009). Near-peer teaching in anatomy: An approach for deeper learning. *Anatomical sciences education*, 2(5), 227-233.

- Grönlund, K., & Himmelroos, S. (2009). The challenge of deliberative democracy online—A comparison of face-to-face and virtual experiments in citizen deliberation. *Information Polity*, 14(3), 187–201.
- Gurin, P., Nagda, B. R. A., & Lopez, G. E. (2004). The benefits of diversity in education for democratic citizenship. *Journal of Social Issues*, 60(1), 17–34. doi:10.1111/j.0022-4537.2004.00097.x
- Guttman, A. (2000). Why should schools care about civic education? In L. McDonnell, P. M. Timpane, R. W. Benjamin (Eds.). *Rediscovering the democratic purposes of education* (pp. 73–90). Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas.
- Guzdial, M., & Turns, J. (2000). Effective discussion through a computer-mediated anchored forum. *The Journal of the Learning Sciences*, 9(4), 437–469.
- Hamann, K., Pollock, P. H., & Wilson, B. M. (2009). Learning from “listening” to peers in online political science classes. *Journal of Political Science Education*, 5(1), 1–11. doi:10.1080/15512160802612011
- Hakkinen, P. (2013). Multiphase method for analyzing online discussions. *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning*, 29(6), 547–555. doi:10.1111/jcal.12015
- Herring, S. C. (1993). Gender and democracy in computer-mediated. In C. Dunlop (Ed.), *Computerization and controversy: Value conflicts and social choices* (476–489). Boston, MA: Academic Press.
- Hollenbeck, C. R., Mason, C. H., & Song, J. H. (2011). Enhancing student learning in marketing courses: An exploration of fundamental principles for website platforms. *Journal of Marketing Education*, 33(2), 171–182.
- Hurtado, S. (2003). Preparing college students for a diverse democracy. In *Minorities in the Chemical Workforce: Diversity Models that Work: A Workshop Report to the Chemical Sciences Roundtable*. National Research Council (US) Chemical Sciences Roundtable. Washington (DC): National Academies Press. doi:10.17226/10653
- Johnson, D. W., & Johnson, R. T. (1989). *Cooperation and competition: Theory and research*. Edina, MN: Interaction Book Company.
- Keeler, L. C. (2006). *Student satisfaction and types of interaction in distance education courses* (Doctoral dissertation).
- Kenski, K., & Stroud, N. J. (2006). Connections between Internet use and political efficacy, knowledge, and participation. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic*
- Kiesler, S., Seigel, J., & McGuire, T. (1984). Social psychological aspects of computer mediated communication. *American Psychologist*, 39:1123–1134.

- Kuo, Y.-C., Walker, A. E., Schroder, K. E. E., & Belland, B. R. (2014). Interaction, Internet self-efficacy, and self-regulated learning as predictors of student satisfaction in online education courses. *The Internet and Higher Education*, 20, 35-50. doi:10.1016/j.iheduc.2013.10.001
- Lou, Y., Abrami, P. C., & d'Apollonia, S. (2001). Small group and individual learning with technology: A meta-analysis. *Review of Educational Research*, 71(3), 449–521. doi:10.3102/00346543071003449
- Luca, M. (2015). User-generated content and social media. In *Handbook of media Economics* (Vol. 1, pp. 563-592). North-Holland.
- Mandernach, B. J. (2018). Jump, but don't run: A review of Jumpstart your online classroom: Mastering five challenges in five days. *eLearn*, 2018(1), 1.
- Palloff, R. M., & Pratt, K. (2007). *Building online learning communities: Effective strategies for the virtual classroom*. San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons.
- Pamental, M. (1998). What is it like to be a Deliberative Democrat? In S. Tozer (Ed.), *Philosophy of Education* (pp. 222–230). Retrieved from <https://ojs.education.illinois.edu/index.php/pes/article/view/2110/805>
- Piaget, J. (1969). *The intellectual development of the adolescent*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Pollock, P. H., Hamann, K., & Wilson, B. M. (2011). Learning through discussions: Comparing the benefits of small group and large-class settings. *Journal of Political Science Education*, 7(1), 48–64. doi:10.1080/15512169.2011.539913
- Rudestam, K. E., & Schoenholtz-Read, J. (2009). *Handbook of online learning*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Soltes, E. (2014). Private interaction between firm management and sell-side analysts. *Journal of Accounting Research*, 52(1), 245-272.
- Stromer-Galley, J., Bryant, L., & Bimber, B. (2015). Context and medium matter: Expressing disagreements online and face-to-face in political deliberations. *Journal of Public Deliberation*, 11(1), Article 1.
- Stitzlein, S. M., & West, C. K. (2014). New forms of teacher education: Connections to charter schools and their approaches. *Democracy & Education*, 22(2), 1–10.
- Swan, K. (2002a). Building learning communities in online courses: The importance of interaction. *Education Communication and Information*, 2(1), 23–49. doi:10.1080/1463631022000005016

Vygotsky, L. S. (1981). The instrumental method in psychology. In J. V. Wertsch (Ed.), *The Concept of Activity in Soviet Psychology* (pp. 264–274). New York, NY: M. E. Sharpe.

Zúñiga, X., Naagda, B. R. A., & Sevig, T. D. (2002). Intergroup dialogues: An educational model for cultivating engagement across differences. *Equity & Excellence in Education*, 35(1), 7-17.

From the Classroom to the Workplace: Foreign Languages,  
Technology, and the Future Workforce

Evelyne Delgado-Norris, Ph.D., Chicago State University

“In an ever-tightening job market and ever-expanding global economy, being proficient in one language is not enough. Fluency in another language opens up a wide range of interesting careers and makes you more competitive in an international market, where knowledge of languages and cultures is vital” (AATF). Why a second language? What are some of the skills and dispositions that are highly sought in the job market today and what career options open up for language learners? Finally, how do foreign languages programs prepare college students for the workplace in many specialized fields and particularly in foreign languages?

### **Foreign Languages as a Means to face the Real World**

Competency in a foreign language is a coveted skill valued by employers. It is obviously a must in international organizations and companies where individuals work directly with others who speak the target languages, but that is not the only reason. Michael Dubroff, a human resources specialist notes the following:

- A foreign language demonstrates initiative and a desire for self-improvement. “If one can learn a foreign language, one can surely learn an organization’s language, which for many workplaces is full of specialized terms, acronyms, new definitions of processes;
- Mastery of a foreign language is an indicator of leadership and human interest. “In many ways, language is the study of interactions, if you value language, you are also more likely to value other people.” (Dubroff, 2017)
- A foreign language points to the sensitivity to multicultural issues in the case of societies with multiple ethnic communities on the rise such as in the U.S.

Of note, the language diversity in the U.S. is tremendous. There are about 381 languages spoken in the U.S. Spanish accounts for about 38 million. Following Spanish, Chinese, Togalog, Vietnamese, French, Korean, and German leave above 1 million each. 1 in 5 people speaks a language other than English (American Community Survey, 2011). In addition, today’s global challenges are especially difficult. These range from democratization to climate change, clean water, health issues, movement of populations, conflicts and peace. The study of foreign languages and the way it opens learners up to global education and global issues as a whole is an extremely powerful tool for preparing citizens who will be engaged and find solutions to many of these challenges.

### **Foreign Languages as a Tool Skill**

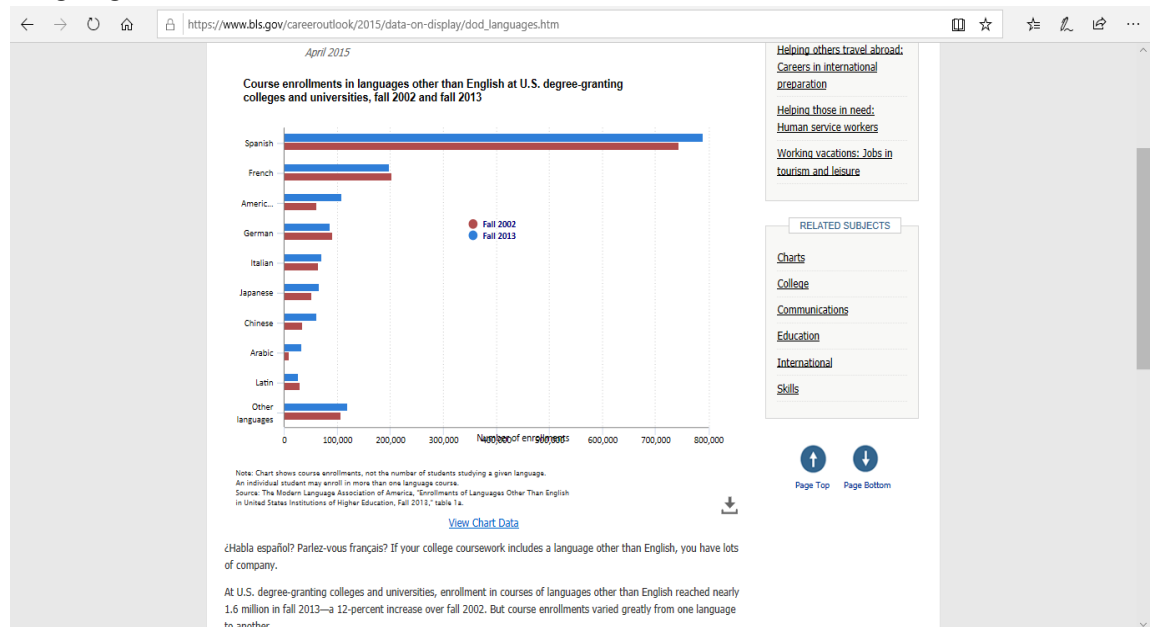
A foreign language can provide a tool which will be useful in the performance of other tasks:

- specific vocations such as translating, interpreting, and teaching;
- all areas of business such as marketing, and trade/sales can be combines with a foreign language for maximum effectiveness;



- researchers in all fields are able to read articles and collaborate with other researchers around the world when they can communicate in another language. Research articles take time to get translated or never get translated. You may claim that your research is innovative and original, when in fact someone else in another country has already tackled the topic.

According to the *Occupational Outlook Handbook* published by the U.S. Department of Labor, foreign languages are important for: business personnel, lawyers, civil service people, scientists, media personnel, performers, health professionals, social workers, librarians, ...travel and tourism, technical and engineering personnel, teachers, law enforcements, just to name a few. Each of the major U.S. corporations routinely employs between 5,000 and 6,000 persons abroad every year and this number has been climbing. Among these, IBM, Cargill, Dupont, General Motors, Caterpillar, and General Foods. Some 1,260 companies surveyed reported over 60,000 positions requiring a second language (Outlook, 2015). These figures project a very positive outlook for the field. Consequently, language studies are on the rise.



(<https://www.bls.gov/careeroutlook/2015/>)

The current 2019 handbook highlights the rise in demand for translators in particular. It mentions that “employment of interpreters and translators is projected to grow 18 percent from 2016 to 2026, much faster than the average for all occupations. Globalization and large increases in the non-English-speaking people in the United States will drive employment growth.” (Outlook, 2019). The handbook further mentions that “in addition, growing international trade and broadening global ties should require more interpreters and translators, especially in emerging markets such as Asia and Africa” (Outlook, 2019). Mentioning these

facts to those who study foreign languages is important to rebuke those who question the value of the humanities in a highly scientific and technical world.

The screenshot shows the Occupational Outlook Handbook page for Interpreters and Translators. The page title is "Interpreters and Translators" and it is part of the "Media and Communication" section. The "Job Outlook" tab is selected, showing a projected 18% increase in employment from 2016 to 2026. A bar chart compares this to other categories: Total, all occupations (7%) and Media and communication workers (6%). The text discusses factors like globalization, demand for specific languages, and the impact of technology on the profession.

Category	Percent change in employment, projected 2016-26
Interpreters and translators	18%
Total, all occupations	7%
Media and communication workers	6%

<https://www.bls.gov/ooh/media-and-communication/interpreters-and-translators>

## From the Classroom to the Workplace: Preparing the Global-Minded Citizen

How do we prepare students for the workplace? Experts who study trends in hiring mention global-mindedness as one of the hot skills for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The cultural dimension in foreign languages classes is often based on familiarizing learners with the target culture's history, geography, practices and expressions, exercises in intercultural communication, and deep analysis of cultural phenomena. Developing global-minded individuals encompasses going a step further to mirror what are new realities are: the fact that all countries exist in an interdependent world and that complex connections exist between nations and the people who live within. Thus, a more global approach in teaching culture must also be implemented: one that highlights the interconnections between nations and peoples, raises awareness about cultural, socio-economic, and political issues related to diasporas and their effect on national and international relations; finally, an approach that leads to reflections about global issues such as the environment, health, immigration, religion, economic disparities, and militarization. Today more than ever, nations do not live in a vacuum. The study of languages and culture must therefore reflect this reality and tackle this task with a "world as system approach" rather than the more traditional "world as nations approach".

In an article entitled “East of Gibraltar, West of Japan: Questions and Answers about Global Education,” Thomas H. Collins lists important features of global education which foreign language instructors can use as blueprint for the classroom. Among these:

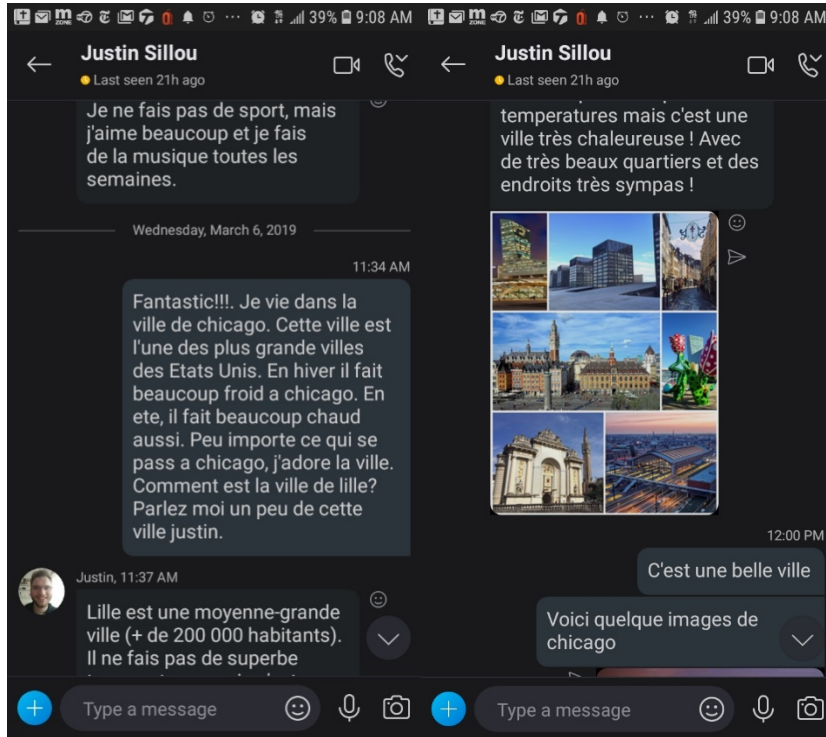
- Pay special attention to the concept of “systems” and “interdependence” and emphasize that problems, choices, and solutions are interconnected and must be dealt with in an integrated manner;
- View all subject areas as sources of data and not be limited to traditional content or sources of information;
- Include the study of important global issues at levels of sophistication appropriate to the students and according to their interests;
- Concern itself with informal, out-of-school learning and use local/global communities as mini-labs;
- Feature cross-cultural awareness and consideration of other people’s perceptions of issues and realities in a multi-ethnic, pluralistic society and the world.

We can begin to implement such globalization of our language classes (and others) in many different ways. An exciting way to integrate lessons with a “global eye” consists of using technology and internet-mediated activities in the foreign language curriculum.

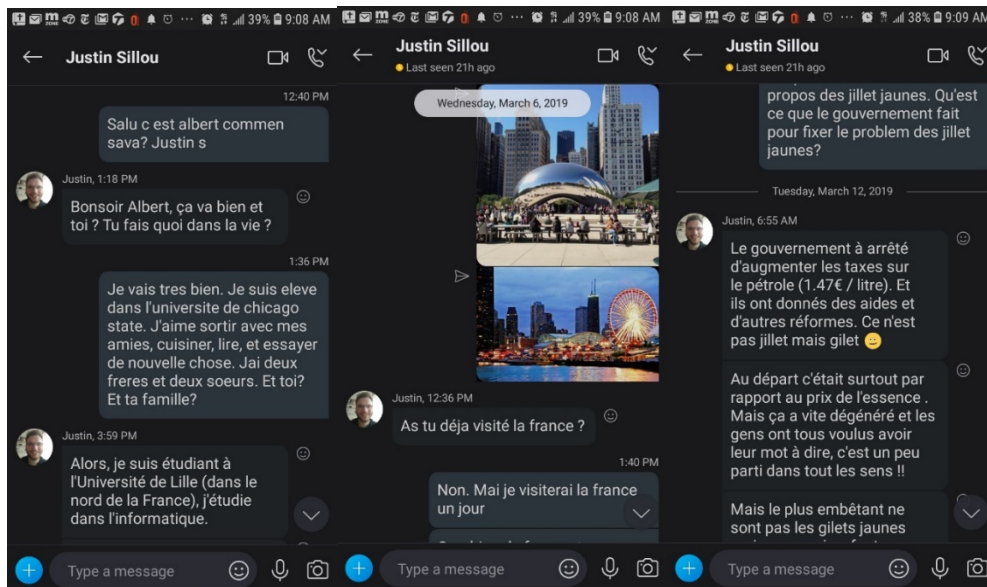
### **Building Language and Engaging Cross-Culturally**

Communication, collaboration, exchange of ideas, and decision making are at the heart of most jobs today. Connective technologies make it easier to work and communicate despite physical separation. Foreign language learners have the ability to not only sharpen their writing skills in the target language, they also receive more “authentic” input from native speakers. Also, guiding the exchange on a particular topic, enables learners to explore questions of cultural and global interest. A good example of connective activities is the exchange initiated by the French students at Chicago State University. CSU students connected with counterparts in France to exchange personal reports about their respective cities and communities, exchange pictures, and discuss current events and common issues such as multiculturalism and immigration. Through the experience, students also spent time on self-reflection, developing an awareness of how their perception of other people and places is too often determined by the fabricated, superficial, and ideologically biased images in the media instead of through *real* interaction and more direct sources of information. Easy and free collaborative spaces such as *epalsor Mixxer* and mobile apps can be used to connect with classrooms or individuals internationally. In the illustration below, an intermediate French student has paired up with a student in Lille (France) to exchange information and views in the target language. This regular exchange (over the span of a semester) allows for the development of communicative skills in a real-context with a native speaker. The student is gaining knowledge of the culture from within as the native speaker formulates his

opinions and feelings about certain current topics (Les “gilets jaunes” at that time). For classroom to classroom projects, iEARN-USA has compiled an online teacher’s guide to global, collaborative teaching around the world and makes available a list of resources and ideas of projects for educators. At the site [globalguide.org](http://globalguide.org), educators are also able to submit successful projects and inspire others to take the plunge.



(with permission)



For those who like to work on collaborative projects, the following slide lists many resources:

**Ideas for collaborative projects**

- ▶ ISTE's PLNs, including [Global Collaboration PLN](https://connect.iste.org/home) (must join to access)  
<https://connect.iste.org/home>
- ▶ **#Gloaledchat**: Every Thursday at 8pm Eastern time an international group of educators gathers on Twitter to discuss global education topics. **(On Tweeter)**
- ▶ <https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1EldyOTB85YwiDbQQJB5A7NSbEGDD2NhF7GWz6fYUD9w/edit?usp=sharing> **(Slides with resources)**
- ▶ A project of the U.S. State Department's "**The Collaboratory**" is working to help coordinate virtual exchange opportunities for educators.
- ▶ <https://eca.state.gov/programs-initiatives/initiatives/collaboratory>

Working person-to-person or collaboratively across borders, allows learners to also develop important soft skills such as “social intelligence.” The *Institute for the Future* reflected about the essential skills and dispositions for the workforce in times to come. Among these, “social intelligence” is highly ranked. The report defines social intelligence as “the ability to connect to others in a deep direct way, to sense and stimulate reactions and desired interactions.” Further, it mentions, “socially intelligent employees are able to quickly assess the emotions of those around them and adapt their words, tone, gestures accordingly.” This has been a key skill for those who need to collaborate and build relationships.

### **Information Management and Global Webquests**

Another important skill for the future workforce as stressed by the *Institute for the Future* report at the University of Phoenix is “cognitive load management”. It is defined as “the ability to discriminate and filter information.” We live in a world where information streams from all parts, in different formats, and incessantly. Organizations and workers will have to transform this massive data and information overload into what is important for decision-making. In an effort to use more authentic language and texts in the field of foreign languages, the World Wide Web is a great tool for language development, but also an exercise in filtering essential information and making judgements on what may be relevant, important and even true for the task at hand. A great technology-based activity to practice information management is the webquest. A webquest is an inquiry-based activity in which the information for completing a task is partially or totally drawn from the Web. In professional language courses, the webquest is an effective learning tool because it can be more specialized in nature and it allows learners to develop an understanding and practice the use of more field-based vocabulary and expressions. The

example below centers around an important world health issue, AIDS, designed for students in a beginning professional French course geared toward the health professions.

A Global Perspective on AIDS Webquest Introduction	Procedure
<p>This exercise is designed to better understand the complexity and possibilities for fighting the global spread of AIDS. Students will engage in critical readings of articles and personal narratives in English and in French which depict how individuals and communities have been affected by the disease.</p>	<p>I. Go to <a href="http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peter_Plot">http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peter_Plot</a> for a biography of AIDS research pioneer Peter Plot. Answer the following questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Who is Peter Plot?</li> <li>Give a quick synopsis of his background and current activities.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Objective</b></p>	<p>II. Go to <a href="http://WorldViewMagazine.com">WorldViewMagazine.com</a> Click on Archives (lefthand). Click on AIDS back issue. Scroll to and click on article "Exceptional Threat" by Peter Plot.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students will read an article by Dr. Plot (co-discoverer of the Ebola virus) that sets out goals for "an exceptional response" to the AIDS epidemic and use the strategies described as framework to analyze and report on AIDS and appropriate responses in different countries of the world.</li> <li>Students will be able to transfer information in the target language to write about and discuss AIDS issues.</li> <li>As a final product, students will produce a persuasive poster or multimedia publicity for fighting AIDS.</li> </ul>	<p>Identify the <b>four elements</b> of an "Exceptional Response" according to Dr. Plot. (transfer into the target language)</p>
<p><b>Materials</b></p>	<p>III. Students read personal stories about AIDS, learn about the disease and how it affects people in different parts of the world. Read the following stories:</p>
<p>Special Summer 2005 issue of <a href="#">WorldView Magazine</a> (Vol.18, No.2) Additional reading for enrichment by Gideon Mendel, <a href="#">Broken Landscape and AIDS in Africa</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"Hlatikulu Journal" (Swaziland) <i>story 1</i></li> <li>"Over the Rainbow" (China) <i>story 2</i></li> <li>"A Trader's Misfortune" (Senegal) <i>story 3</i></li> <li>"Illegal in the Republic" (Haiti) <i>story 4</i></li> </ul>
	<p>For each story, give in the target language 1/ a short synopsis of the situation and discuss how AIDS crosses borders; 2/ constitute a grid with the four elements of an exceptional response; 3/ for each story fill out the grid with elements that fit into each category.</p>
	<p>IV. Students will work in groups to develop a poster or multimedia publicity for fighting AIDS in the target language.</p>

(E.D. Norris, 2008)

When reading about the AIDS health issue, students learned language, but also more importantly, about strategic responses to diseases. Among the "exceptional responses," the exercise highlights: maintaining the health issue as a priority for action at global and national levels and sustaining activities and advocacy including education. The information management skills and the framework gained can certainly be used and transferred to other issues of national and international concern.

Other webquests designed for language courses at Chicago State University include learning about French cuisine and gastronomy as well as science and technology using resources exclusively in the target language. "Parlez-vous sciences?" (DO you speak sciences?) enables students to explore the central role of science and technology in France historically and in contemporary society to generate a report arguing for a field trip to France by a group of science and language students. This kind of webquest touches on the importance of interdisciplinarity and the use of foreign languages as tool in any chosen field, here the sciences specifically. Science students who take language courses that integrate somehow a science content get excited about their learning. They are able to explore and familiarize themselves with many prominent scientists and concepts in the target language and culture demonstrating that science goes hand in hand with language and culture on the global scene. Interdisciplinarity, which human resource people often call "transdisciplinarity" is highly valued in the workplace. It is "literacy in and ability to understand concepts across multiple disciplines. Many of our global problems are just too complex to be solved by one specialized discipline." (*Institute for the Future*, 2011).

While throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century more specialization was encouraged, the next century will see transdisciplinarity take center stage.

<b><u>Parlez-Vous..... Sciences?</u></b>
<b>(Adapted from AATF Resources)</b>
<b>(English Version)</b>
<b>Objective</b>
In this <b>Webquest</b> , you will explore the central role of science and technology in France the past and in contemporary society to generate a 4-5 pages-report/paper arguing for a 10-day study abroad/field trip to France for a group of science students from your university (who are also French language students!). <b><i>**Your websites must be in FRENCH at all times! Your notes, discussions, and final report must be in French.</i></b>
<b>Tasks</b>
1. Explore the websites provided and take notes and summarize to show the importance of these institutions and what they say about the central role of science and technology in France.
2. Put a <b>10-day “science-themed”</b> itinerary together.
3. Tie the information together to produce a 4-5 page report to your Chair to promote such as field-trip.
<b>List of sites</b>
<b>Cité des Sciences et de l’industrie</b>
<a href="http://www.cite-sciences.fr">http://www.cite-sciences.fr</a>
<b>Institut Pasteur</b>
<a href="http://www.pasteur.fr/">http://www.pasteur.fr/</a>
<b>Maison Ampère-Musée de l’électricité</b>
<a href="http://amperemusee.fr/">http://amperemusee.fr/</a>
<b>Musée Curie</b>
<a href="http://musee.curie.fr/">http://musee.curie.fr/</a>

## Palais de la Découverte (muséeparisien des sciences)

<http://www.palais-decouverte.fr/>

Site du Prix Nobel: <http://www.nobel.se>

Field experiences can add to the transdisciplinary aspect of learning foreign languages programs. During a study abroad to France, students were excited to know that one of our stops in Paris was to attend an expo/conference called “Futur en Seine.” It is one of Europe’s largest digital culture conferences and in 2017, it focused on all forms of intelligence which the organizers list as “artificial, human, disruptive, and unpredictable.” Students joined discussions about imagining the future and digital’s impact on society and the economy. Among the workshops attended:

- **Imagination in the Age of Artificial Intelligence (AI).** A discussion about the advent of artificial intelligences and the question of human creativity. Can human activity be modeled, simulated, or reproduced?
- **Hackers against Natural Disasters.** HAND, a French NGO, was set up in 2016 to encourage hackers to pool their skills in developing pre-and post-crisis projects and useful actions for areas at high risk of natural disasters.
- **The Re-Invention of Work.** A new economic model calling for the automation of many tasks will give rise to new opportunities, free up human time and rewrite the rules governing collaborative relationships. What new life choices can be made possible by instituting a universal basic income? What new collectives and tools bear the seeds of this new society?







### **Simulating Business Practices: Producing Authentic Documents Using Technology**

In the business and marketing world, tools such as blogs and websites contribute highly to name and product sales. These are common practices, so why not learn the basics in a world languages class? Michael Bush from Brigham Young University brings up these pertinent questions: “Why should ...efforts in school not reflect what they will be doing on the job, any job? Would the use of technology as a tool in the foreign language classroom not be an excellent preparation to use technology as a tool in other settings that our students will encounter” (Bush, 1997)? When listing important skills for the future workforce, the Institute for the Future also mentions the ever-important new-media literacy as a vital skill to possess. Media-literacy equips students to “critically assess and develop content that uses new media forms, and to leverage these media for persuasive communication” (IFTF, 2011). In foreign languages, blogs can be used to reinforce language and technology skills, but also when they are not written in the target language, as cultural commentary or reflective journal. In study abroad, blogging is often used as a way to share experiences with friends and family back home. The use of websites in the business world is widespread. Websites are the “storefront” of companies where the audience and potential clients create a given perception of your brand. With an eye on preparing students for the professional world, languages for specific purposes (LSPs) courses engage learners in writing content in the target language or bilingually for an imagined product or service. The example from a French business course simulates a clothes line business in the target language: <https://janakunzfrench.weebly.com>

Employers surveyed in the report from the *Institute for the Future* list 10 essential skills for the workforce in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and beyond. Among these: sense-making (critical thinking/logic), social intelligence, adaptive thinking, cross-cultural competency, computational thinking, new-media literacy, transdisciplinarity, cognitive load management (IFTF, 2011). A methodology of foreign language teaching with a focus on students’ production of authentic communication and authentic materials allows students to become more proficient in using the vocabularies and registers they will encounter in

the real world. Technology provides many easy tools for creating engaging tasks. But above all, authenticity and task-based activities will bridge that gap between the walls of a classroom and the work world with all the complex skills needed to function within it.

## References

Centers for International Business Education and Research. <http://us-ciberweb.org/>  
Retrieved 1/18/2020

Delgado-Norris. E. (2008). "Technology and Global Education". *Neos: Journal of NewTrends in Education*, 2008.

Dubroff, Max. <https://www.collegerecruiter.com/blog/tag/b-max-dubroff-hr-consultant/>  
Retrieved 3/10/2019

Epals by Cricket Media. <http://www.epals.com/#/connections>

Global Guide. <https://www.globaledguide.org/projects/climate-action>

Gunduz, M. (2016). "Promoting interaction through blogging in language classrooms". *International Journal of Research in Education and Science (IJRES)*, 2(2), 438-443.

Institute for the Future (2011). *Future Work Skills2020*.

# **Developing the Leadership Skills of Handling Difficult Conversations**

*Thomas J. Buttery and Gary Stewart*  
*Austin Peay State University*

An uncomfortable conversation is one whose main issue is potentially both contentious and sensitive, thus having the capacity to produce intense, complex emotions that can be difficult to foresee or handle. In short difficult conversations are those we dread or find it unpleasant to talk about with another person. Anyone in a leadership role will inevitably have circumstances where these problematic discussions are required.

Behrens and McCullough (2016) posit that the purpose of having an awkward conversation is to foster change. We want to render a selected condition as improved. They note that while each of us has a different tolerance for these types of conversations, avoidance in engaging the topic comes with a cost - the problem persists. The underlying condition for our reticence is commonly a fear of the unknown or uncertain outcome. We need to transform these uncomfortable conversations into learning opportunities. Stone, Patton, and Heen (2010) postulate that the variance between what we are thinking and what we say during the conversation is part of what makes it difficult. In short, we do not want to say what we are thinking overtly. In their classic book, *Difficult Conversations* (2010), Stone et al. advise that most awkward conversations have a typical structure. Understanding this structure is essential to improving the way we go about conducting these conversations. They divide awkward conversations into three strands. The What Happened? Conversation, The Feelings Conversation, and finally, the Identity Conversation.

***The What Happened? Conversation*** examines your narrative of the situation. This type of communication usually involves the who said what or who did what. The issue of who's right or what did the other party mean is common as the question of blame evolves. According to Stone et al. (2010), it is not typically getting the facts correct but rather understanding conflicting perceptions, interpretations, and values. The human dynamic becomes more important than the literal dimensions of the event. It is essential to consider that the language of logic is very different from the sentiment and emotion of language.

We need to avoid the assumption of harmful intentions from the other party, but rather understand the complex nature of intentions. Some aspects of intent can be positive, neutral, or negative. Our focus should not be on blame but rather an improvement. As the host of the conversation, a sincere desire to understand the other party's interpretations and judgment is essential. In general, people resent attempts to manipulate them.

***The Feeling Conversation*** consists of comprehending our mindsets. In many controversial conversations, it is only at the feeling level that problems can be addressed. Stone et al. (2010) share that the process of clarifying our feelings can result in a willingness to change them. They caution that we should not express our feelings to the other person until we understand them. Once we know them, and we express our feeling, the intention should not be to establish a sense of blame. Once we have removed the need to blame, we can move on to the problem-solving stage.

Covey (1989) identifies one of *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* as the capacity first to understand the other person and then seek to be understood. He notes that you cannot only put yourself in the other person's shoes because they have a different mindset. You would be processing information based on your frame of reference. He encourages empathic listening, which includes using your ears, and just as important, with your eyes and your heart. From a counseling perspective, Covey considers empathic listening as a deposit in the "Emotional Bank Account." He believes that when you listen with empathy, you give the other party psychological air.

Once we have listened empathetically, we want to be understood. There are three elements in attempting to be understood. The first is your credibility with the other party. The second involves a sense of feeling or empathy. The third aspect of critical listening is logic. In trying to resolve a problem, it is essential not to go directly to the left brain's sense of logic without first considering your credibility and the emotions of the recipient. Understanding the feelings of others is one of a leader's most significant challenges.

***The Identity Conversation*** is the third of the three conversations. In this mode of communication, we examine what we say to ourselves about what the conversation means to us. Some aspects of your identity will inevitably be attacked in the course of a problematic discussion, causing considerable anxiety. When your identity is challenged, it affects your sense of self-esteem. Consequently, it is crucial to maintain your sense of balance.

### **Piloting Difficult Conversations**

Sofer (2019) cautions that there is a fine line between being professionally kind and yet assertive enough to establish a point. He postulates that leaders cannot wholly avoid difficult conversations; however, they can learn to navigate them more adroitly. Below is a list of suggestions for adeptly handling awkward discussions that we have drawn from Behrens and McCullough (2016), Braime (2020), Clemens (2013), Martinuzzi (2013), and Sofer (2019).

- Determine in your mind what the need or reason for the conversation is. Do your homework; in the event of a complaint, verify that the incident or action has or is occurring. How do you want to change a particular situation? What is your desired outcome?
- Prepare what you want to say and consider how you can clarify what you need to share. Be clear about the issue. Avoid just jumping into the discussion. Acknowledge that this conversation is uncomfortable for you because it will be uncomfortable for the other party. An excellent axiom is good leaders don't test the depth of the water with both feet. Clarify for yourself critical points so that you can stay on target.

- Consider asking for the conversation in advance to avoid blindsiding a colleague. This courtesy shares the importance of this specific communication and conveys a sense of respect.
- Take into account where you want the conversation to take place. Calling the other party into your office may establish a sense of control for you, but it potentially puts the other party on the defensive and can inhibit cooperation. Discussing the issue in their office might draw the attention of the person's co-workers and create an embarrassing situation. Is there the potential for using a conference room?
- Be prepared to let the person share their perceptions or take on the situation. As a good leader you want to be open to clarifying any incorrect information and conveying a sense of inquiry, open-mindedness, and fairness.
- Have emotional sensitivity, what starts as an annoyance, can transverse into anger and even rage quickly. At all times, you want to maintain the other party's sense of dignity. Shaming and criticizing the other person can lead to a toxic future relationship with the other person. The handling of a problem today can have the potential for a bigger problem down the road.
- Focus on the event or situation. Avoid gross generalizations, which will diminish your credibility. Phrases like never, always, no one, or everyone are absolutes and are unlikely to be totally accurate.
- Inquire about the reason or source of the problem. Let the person consider the etiology of the problem and how they are part of the situation. Ask for suggestions about possible solutions.
- All discussions can have an ebb and flow. Be patient and use pauses in the conversation; they allow for breathing room and contemplation.
- Carefully handle impeding efforts such as accusing, sarcasm, and even stonewalling. Address unresponsiveness or stubbornness from the other party with direct but polite responses such as I don't know how to interpret your silence.
- Recap your conversation to review what changes are going to be forthcoming. Make sure the other person understands the outcome of the conversation and emphasize agreements that you have reached.

Handling difficult conversations successfully can be transformative in improving your organizational climate. As a leader, you have a vested interest in achieving an optimal outcome from the conversation.

## References

- Behrens, E., & McCullough, H. (2016). *Can we talk? Approaching difficult conversations with confidence*. Educause. <https://er.educause.edu/blogs/2016/6/can-we-talk-approaching-difficult-conversations-with-confidence>
- Braime, H. (2020). *5 tips to make difficult conversations easier*. Lifehack. <https://www.lifehack.org/articles/communication/5-tips-to-make-difficult-conversations-easier.html>
- Forrest, J. (2019). *How to have hard conversations (and maybe save the world)*. A Medium Corporation. <https://medium.com/@joe.forrest1/how-to-have-hard-conversations-about-controversial-topics-and-save-the-world-b51a71e8cffd>
- Clemens, D. (2013). *Difficult conversations: The E.A.S.I.E.R. method*. Quantum Workplace. <https://www.quantumworkplace.com/future-of-work/difficult-conversations-easier-method/>
- Covey, S. R. (1990). *The 7 habits of highly effective people*. Fireside.
- Martinuzzi, B. (2013). *12 tips for handling difficult conversations*. American Express. <https://www.americanexpress.com/en-us/business/trends-and-insights/articles/top-ten-tips-for-handling-the-difficult-conversation/>
- Sofer, O. J. (2019). *How to navigate difficult conversations*. mindful@home. <https://www.mindful.org/how-to-navigate-difficult-conversations/>
- Stone, D., Patton, B., & Heen, S. (2010). *Difficult conversations*. Penguin Books. (Original work published 1999)

Our Political Parties and the Nation's Great Dilemma of Minority  
Rights: A Review of Party Platforms  
Richard H. Reeb Jr. Ph.D, Independent Scholar



**“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness; that to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.” - Declaration of Independence**

Nothing has convulsed the United States of America more than how to integrate into society distinct minorities, primarily those of African descent but also, in recent years, others denominated as “people of color,” women and sexual non-conformists. It is sobering to contemplate the horrors of the Civil War that took hundreds of thousands of lives, both Union and Confederate, that brought an official end to slavery; the disappointing century of neglect following as rights promised were not protected; and the more recent wrenching civil rights struggles aimed at enforcing constitutional guarantees and even expanding their definition and categories. At our beginning, Americans, whatever their status or condition, affirmed and proclaimed the “self-evident” truth that “all men are created equal” in their rights to “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.” Given that truth, affirmation and commitment, the coterminous existence of a system of chattel slavery was a glaring contradiction and morally indefensible. But in the spirit of national unity for independence from Great Britain in 1776 and the establishment of a national government in 1787, that grave issue was seriously compromised, if not simply neglected, for “[f]our-score and seven years,” as Abraham Lincoln said at Gettysburg in 1863, and only weakly acknowledged for the next 100 years.

Political parties, frequently derided as mere factions in the years both before and since the Founding, have nevertheless been the vehicles through which the people of this self-governing republic have recruited, supported and elected their political leaders. These imperfect institutions accordingly struggled not only with issues of national security and commerce, the foremost powers of Congress, but with a massive contradiction at all levels of government to what the Declaration delineated truly as “the laws of nature and of nature’s God,” which establish equality, liberty and government by consent as the foundation for all *just* governments. Consent is obtained through periodic elections in which the winners typically are chosen by the greatest number or a plurality of voters in each state or district.<sup>1</sup> Inasmuch as this institutionalizes majority rule, there was always the possibility, and in the peculiar circumstances of the United States, a virtual certainty, that racial minorities would be oppressed by what James Madison in *The Federalist* No. 10, in another context, described as an “interested and overbearing majority.”<sup>2</sup>

This paper will examine the platforms of the major American political parties on the momentous and divisive issue of minority rights in a majoritarian regime. Majority rule has never properly been understood as the right of the majority of people to rule simply in their own interest; yet as Madison pointed out elsewhere, neither religious nor moral considerations can be counted upon always to restrain majorities. But short of general enlightenment, a constitution with checks and balances on political ambition and narrow interests was the best that could be devised.

|

It is important to acknowledge that the founding generation did make some headway against slavery, most notably with the Northwest Ordinance of 1787, authored by Thomas Jefferson and passed by the Congress under the Articles of Confederation (precursor to

the Constitution), which banned slavery in the region north of the Ohio River, west of the Appalachian Mountains, east of the Mississippi River and south of Canada. That was confirmed by the first Congress under the Constitution. That same Constitution authorized Congress to end the African slave trade in 1808 (which it did).<sup>3</sup> Unfortunately, that 20-year delay had the effect of a “going out of business sale,” as one estimate held that 90 percent of the slaves were purchased in that period. In mostly short order, states from New Hampshire to Pennsylvania abolished slavery. Some states allowed free blacks to vote.

The Constitution also authorized the return of runaway slaves to their lawful owners, which was not strictly enforced until the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850. Finally, it counted slaves as three-fifths of a person for purposes of representation in the House of Representatives, a figure drawn from the old confederation. While that provision has been criticized as derogating from the humanity of black slaves, the more pernicious effect was to swell the numbers for slave states in the House of Representatives (and in the Electoral College), over-representing the slave-state South at the expense of the free-state North.

The first federal elections never took up the issue of slavery, but by the Presidential election of 1800 the practical effect was the rise of a southern dynasty that commenced with the election of Virginian Thomas Jefferson and continued with fellow Virginians James Madison and James Monroe, Tennesseans Andrew Jackson and James K. Polk, and Louisianan Zackary Taylor, all slaveholders—not to mention pro-slavery Democrats Franklin Pierce of New Hampshire and James Buchanan of Pennsylvania. Neither National Republican John Quincy Adams of Massachusetts, nor Whig William Henry Harrison of Indiana (who died in office in a month, succeeded by Virginian John Tyler), nor Whig Millard Fillmore of New York (who succeeded Taylor, who also died in office) challenged that dynasty. (Democratic President Martin Van Buren of New York actually opposed the spread of slavery.)

The first serious threat to the nation’s relative tranquility over the slavery question was the attempt by the territory of Missouri in 1819 to be admitted as a slave state, thereby upsetting the careful balancing of free and slave states up to that point, a policy arising from the fact that then-Confederation Congressman Thomas Jefferson had lacked the votes back in 1787 to keep slavery out of the territory *south* of the Ohio River. Now, as an ex-president, Jefferson was alarmed at the Missouri crisis, calling it a “fire bell in the night,” which portended civil war. The crisis was averted by the invention of the state of Maine from within Massachusetts, and a prohibition on slavery in the old Louisiana Territory (purchased from France in 1803) north of 36 degrees, thirty minutes, Missouri excepted. This notwithstanding the fact that Missouri denied freedom to blacks not actually held in slavery, an alarming portent for future struggles.

Two other critical developments for our purposes here were the various slave revolts, most notably one led by Nat Turner in Virginia in 1831, and the rise of strident abolitionist newspapers and speakers, both of which terrified southern slaveholders.

While political parties up to this time were not much more than collections of local notables, as one observer has remarked, the 1820s saw a major split among Republicans (then the only political party as the Federalist Party had by then ceased to exist) into Democratic Republicans (led by Jackson) and National Republicans (led by J.Q Adams). By the 1830s the new and competing Democratic and Whig parties

held presidential nominating conventions and soon adopted platforms. The latter at first were short, as evidenced in 1844 by the Democrats' document of only 542 words, and the even shorter Whig version of just 60 words (dedicated to Henry Clay's statesmanship).

In what follows we will examine party platforms at crucial periods in American history, specifically 1840, 1844, 1852, 1856, 1860, 1876, 1896, 1912, 1932, 1948, 1964, 1968, 1972, 2008 and 2016.<sup>4</sup> These years were selected for their reflection of the continuing struggle over minority rights, covering the times of slavery, mandatory racial segregation, and the guarantees (and disappointments) in more recent times of federal civil rights laws.

## II

Let us begin by acknowledging the charge by skeptics and cynics that party platforms are filled with glittering generalities and false promises, designed to sway voters but not to bind elected presidents. But the review following should make it clear that those criticisms are, to say the least, overdrawn, and often wrong. Readers may judge for themselves. Whereas the struggling Whig Party's 1844 platform tellingly said nothing at all about slavery, the Democratic platform four years earlier had declared "That Congress has no power, under the Constitution, to interfere with or control the domestic institutions of the several States," which it made clear referred to slavery, while chastising "abolitionists or others, made to induce Congress to interfere with [it]." (Beginning in 1837, now Congressman John Quincy Adams presented petitions in the House of Representatives to challenge the ban on petitions pertaining to slavery.<sup>5</sup>) Soon the annexation of Texas (1845) was secured and then a war with Mexico (1846-48) was fought, both tainted heavily by the slavery question. While many prominent (and not-so-prominent) Whigs were critical of slavery, most avoided taking a stand, the fate of being a "me-too" party, which is to say, the weaker (less popular) of the two major parties then existing.

In 1844 the Democratic platform continued to denounce abolitionists, surely the least popular group in the country, and went on to accuse certain northern states of evading the requirements of the Fugitive Slave Law. Thus began that party's strong commitment to protecting and ultimately spreading slavery.

Matters predictably became even more heated following the Mexican War, which vastly enlarged the nation's western domains to the Pacific Ocean, opening up the possibility of the further spread of slavery. Hence, when California sought admission as a free state in 1849, another severe crisis arose, this one settled by a series of measures known as the Compromise(s) of 1850, which provided concessions to both the North and (primarily) the South to reconcile them to the new state. The most egregious measure put real teeth in the Fugitive Slave Act, permitting blacks alleged to be runaway slaves to be claimed solely on the owners' say-so.

Thus, the Whigs' platform of 1852 (their last), acquiescing in all the measures, particularly the Fugitive Slave law, "deprecat[ed] all further agitation of the question," and uttered not a word about slavery itself.

More emphatically, the Democratic platform of 1852 affirmed the right of the states to regulate their domestic institutions (a euphemism for slavery), denounced abolitionists and supported the Fugitive Slave Law.

All of the careful balancing of sectional interests fell apart in 1854 when the Kansas-Nebraska Act was passed by Congress. Its author, Democrat Sen. Stephen A. Douglas of Illinois, tried to forge a middle path between southern slaveholders and northerners

fearful of slavery expansion by permitting the first settlers of the territory rather than Congress to decide whether or not to permit slavery. However, the former demanded the repeal of the Missouri Compromise that forbade slavery in the territories, and the latter pushed hard against any attempt to introduce it there. So the attempt at compromise on the principle of “popular sovereignty” failed, as will become quite clear below.

The 1856 Democratic platform is practically a word-for-word reiteration of the previous one. But by that time the new Republican Party had formed, dedicated to opposing the spread of slavery into the western territories. In doing so, it reaffirmed the nation’s dedication to the true principles of the Declaration of Independence, drawing the conclusion that Congress had the right to ban slavery in the territories, and ending with a sharp denunciation of “those twin relics of barbarism — Polygamy, and Slavery.”

The U.S. Supreme Court the next year handed down its most outrageous decision, declaring in *Dred Scott v Sanford* that Congress had no authority to ban slavery in the territories and that “black men,” given the constitutional protections for slavery, “had no rights which white men were bound to respect.” Sen. Douglas was challenged in 1858 by a one-term (1847-49) Congressman, Abraham Lincoln, primarily on the grounds that the Senator was aiding the spread of slavery with his popular sovereignty doctrine’s “declared indifference” to its rightness or wrongness. Douglas was reelected.

The two men opposed each other for President in 1860, with two other candidates running. The Republican platform reflected the developments since the last election. It condemned the Buchanan Administration for attempting to force a slave constitution on Kansas, denounced the “heresy” that taking slaves into territories is sanctioned by the Constitution, affirmed freedom as the “normal” condition in the territories, warned of attempts to re-open the African slave trade, cited Nebraska and Kansas governors’ vetoes of bills prohibiting slavery as an illustration of the “boasted” democratic principle of non-intervention and popular sovereignty (embodied in the Kansas-Nebraska bill) as a “deception and fraud,” and called for the admission of Kansas as a free state.

For their part, the Democrats were reduced to defending the *Dred Scott* decision, calling upon “all good citizens” to respect future Supreme Court rulings consistent with it.

What followed was the greatest calamity the United States ever endured. The Democratic Party split between its slavery-indulging northern wing and its slavery-expanding southern wing, but not irretrievably. As the Civil War ended, the Republicans lost President Lincoln, their wartime leader and author of the Emancipation Proclamation, to assassination, and his Democratic successor, Vice President Andrew Johnson of Tennessee, resisted Congressional Republicans’ Reconstruction policies. The passage by Republicans (over Democratic opposition) of the Thirteenth Amendment abolishing slavery, the Fourteenth defining American citizenship and providing for equal protection of the laws, and the Fifteenth securing the right to vote for now-emancipated black citizens stirred great hopes but foundered, a calamity underscored by the end of Reconstruction as a result of the disputed 1876 presidential election. Republicans abandoned that policy in a tradeoff that put their candidate Rutherford B. Hayes of Ohio into office.

The two parties’ platforms in that year illustrate the gulf remaining between them. The Republicans’ platform sought “[t]he permanent pacification of the Southern section of the Union and the complete protection of all its citizens in the free enjoyment of all their rights...” While defending the rights of the states to govern themselves, the platform “denounce[d] the lawless invasion by armed force of the soil of any state or territory, no

matter under what pretext, as among the gravest of crimes.” That was a reference to the rise of the Ku Klux Klan and other armed groups who intimidated, terrorized and murdered both black and white Republicans.

In contrast, the Democratic platform merely supported “reform” in the southern states, and denounced what it called the “corrupt centralism... [which] inflict[ed] upon ten States the rapacity of carpet-bag tyrannies...”

Twenty years later the two parties were as far apart as ever. The Republicans in 1896 “proclaim[ed] our unqualified condemnation of the uncivilized and preposterous [barbarous] practice well known as lynching, and the killing of human beings suspected or charged with crime without process of law.” This was a clear recognition that hopes for racial justice had failed. Democrats, on the other hand, “denounce[d] arbitrary interference by Federal authorities in local affairs as a violation of the Constitution of the United States, and a crime against free institutions...” The rejected remedy, which was enforcement particularly but not only of the Fourteenth Amendment, would have made all the difference.

In the hotly contested 1912 presidential contest, Democrats succeeded in electing Woodrow Wilson, only the second President from their party since the Civil War (the first being Grover Cleveland). Continuing its defense of states’ rights, the platform declared: “Believing that the most efficient results under our system of government are to be attained by the full exercise by the States of their reserved sovereign powers, we denounce as usurpation the efforts of our opponents to deprive the States of any of the rights reserved to them, and to enlarge and magnify by indirection the powers of the Federal government.” This was ironic in that the new President took federal and presidential authority far beyond any of his predecessors.

While Wilson’s primary legacy is the rise of bureaucratic government (and moral crusades abroad), the native Virginian believed that blacks were not fit for self-government as he segregated the federal departments and armed forces by race and even held a private showing of the racist film “Birth of a Nation” in the White House.

The Republican platform continued to emphasize individual rights. “The social and political structure of the United States rests upon the civil liberty of the individual; and for the protection of that liberty the people have wisely, in the National and State Constitutions, put definite limitations upon themselves and upon their governmental officers and agencies.”

Neither party’s platform, it should be emphasized, made mention of the subordinate status of black citizens. But the Democrats’ continuing emphasis on states’ rights and the Republican’s stress on individual rights shed light on their respective attitudes.

### III

The historic election of 1932 portended a massive political realignment as the Democrats (as it turned out) replaced Republicans as the dominant party. The issues that party raised, however, were economic and social and mainly concerned white citizens. As Democrats were led by New York Gov. Franklin D. Roosevelt toward a New Deal for Americans, the only reference to states’ rights in the party platform upheld their power to “protect themselves against the importation of intoxicating liquors in violation of their laws.” That was a backhanded way of supporting the repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment forbidding any importation whatsoever.

Republicans, in a platform which has long since been forgotten, took a forthright stand on behalf of black citizens. "For seventy years the Republican Party has been the friend of the American Negro. Vindication of the rights of the Negro citizen to enjoy the full benefits of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness is traditional in the Republican Party, and our party stands pledged to maintain equal opportunity and rights for Negro citizens. We do not propose to depart from that tradition nor to alter the spirit or letter of that pledge."

Doubtless the primary reason this bit of history has been forgotten was the remarkable leadership on civil rights provided 16 years later by Democratic President Harry S Truman of Missouri, who finally took a stand, reversing President Wilson's racial segregation of federal departments and the armed forces. His party's new-found bravado shone forth in a remarkable claim:

"The Democratic Party is responsible for the great civil rights gains made in recent years in eliminating unfair and illegal discrimination based on race, creed or color.

"The Democratic Party commits itself to continuing its efforts to eradicate all racial, religious and economic discrimination.

"We again state our belief that racial and religious minorities must have the right to live, the right to work, the right to vote, the full and equal protection of the laws, on a basis of equality with all citizens as guaranteed by the Constitution..."

The Republicans reiterated their historic position: "Constant and effective insistence on the personal dignity of the individual, and his right to complete justice without regard to race, creed or color, is a fundamental American principle."

While Truman was elected in his own right in 1948, the Democratic party split once again on sectional lines, although this time, despite southern segregationists' resistance, it continued to dominate national and state politics until the election of California Republican Gov. Ronald Reagan as President in 1980 and 1984, followed by the Republican sweep of both houses of Congress in 1994.

During that period, civil rights legislation proposed to a Democratic Congress by Republican President Dwight Eisenhower in 1957 was watered down by southern Democratic lawmakers' resistance. But all of that changed when Democratic President Lyndon Johnson of Texas proposed dramatic reform in the Civil Rights Act of 1964, followed by the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and the Fair Housing Act of 1968, which finally put the guarantees of the Reconstruction era amendments into force. Southern Democrats predictably opposed all those bills, but with the aid of Congressional Republicans, the necessary votes were obtained.

However, the Republicans' presidential candidate in 1964, Barry Goldwater of Arizona, despite his years of support for racial integration in his home state, voted against these laws. He was dubious of federal authority, but for reasons different from those of Democrats for most of their history. Thus, he was in the curious position of voting against almost all of his party. The two parties' platforms illustrate the apparent shift in their respective stands on civil rights.

The Democrats in their platform strongly supported civil rights legislation while condemning violence by any party, whether in support or in opposition to it. More than this, it reflected the expressed views of Senate Democrats in opposition to racial quotas. (Sen. Hubert Humphrey of Minnesota, who became President Johnson's running mate that year, responding to the bill's critics, actually said he would eat the paper the law was written on if quotas were imposed.) It read:

“True democracy of opportunity will not be served by establishing quotas based on the same false distinctions we seek to erase nor can the effects of prejudice be neutralized by the expedient of preferential practices.”

Republicans, while warning against the danger of concentrated federal authority, reaffirmed their opposition to racial and other unfair discrimination and to lawlessness and violence, and supported the revitalization of local government. Like the Democrats they opposed “Federally-sponsored ‘inverse discrimination’, whether by the shifting of jobs, or the abandonment of neighborhood schools, for reasons of race.” This last was in reference to so-called “busing for racial balance” in local school districts.

Johnson won in a landslide but, confirming the civil rights acts’ critics’ worst fears, he promptly promoted quotas in federal contracts and any federally funded programs, and urged them in litigation on business corporations. In a speech at Howard University the President committed his administration to equality as a fact and not merely as a principle. “We seek not just freedom but opportunity. We seek not just equality as a right and a theory but equality as a fact and equality as a result. Equal opportunity is essential, but not enough.”<sup>6</sup>

Thus, despite the Democrats’ sharp turn toward civil rights for racial minorities, they immediately perverted it to racial preference. Interestingly, this position was consistent with its longer history of racial preference—for whites. The common denominator is the policy of favoring one race over another.

Four years later, while affirming their support for the 1964 Civil Rights Act, and the subsequent Voting Rights Act and Fair Housing Act, Democrats included identical wording from the previous platform in opposition to the very racial quotas which the Johnson Administration was supporting! They also continued to condemn lawlessness, but pointed to the direction in which the party was now going by seeking to *eliminate* its “social and economic causes,” a huge challenge for even the most dedicated lawmakers. Both parties, in fact, widened their concern regarding discrimination by extending the writ to include women and the elderly, and the Democrats also included immigrants.

The contrast between outlawing discrimination and seeking to go well beyond that to reshaping society would go far toward clarifying the differences between Republicans and Democrats, the former supporting the first object, the latter supporting the second.

Republicans pledged in their 1968 platform, in a section on the crisis in inner cities: “Energetic, positive leadership to enforce statutory and constitutional protections to eliminate discrimination; [and]

“Concern for the unique problems of citizens long disadvantaged in our total society by race, color, national origin, creed, or sex.”

But movement was evident four years later. While denouncing “an increasingly impersonal national government,” Republicans in 1972 claimed credit for leading the way toward equal rights and equal opportunity by ending *de jure* (by law) discrimination in public schools and committing itself to stricter and more comprehensive enforcement of federal equal opportunity laws. But they went further in citing Nixon Administration support for more minority hiring in the construction industry and for minority business enterprises, thereby raising the question as to whether it was also endorsing preferential treatment, which both parties had previously repudiated. More, the platform credited the Administration with supporting more minority bank deposits and minority hiring in the federal government.

All of this looks very much like what Democrats were supporting, thereby confirming the political weakness of the less popular, and thus, “me-too,” party. Surprisingly, the Democrats simply declared in their platform: “We believe in the rights of citizens to achieve to the limit of their talents and energies. We are determined to remove barriers that limit citizens because they are black, brown, young or women; because they never had the chance to gain an education; because there was no possibility of being anything but what they were.” Suddenly, identity became central.

#### IV

By 2008 Democrats had broadened the scope of victims of unfair discrimination to include the categories of “sexual orientation and gender identity.” In the same paragraph they bemoaned the difficulty of achieving the ideal in reality. To that end, they pledged to “restore vigorous federal enforcement of civil rights laws in order to provide every American an equal chance at employment, housing, health, contracts, and pay. We are committed to banning racial, ethnic and religious profiling and requiring federal, state, and local enforcement agencies to take steps to eliminate the practice.”

Besides implying that outgoing President George W. Bush was less than vigorous in enforcing federal civil rights laws, the platform in support of Illinois Sen. Barack H. Obama’s candidacy included yet another iteration of the discrimination problem by adding “racial, ethnic and religious profiling.” In doing so, Democrats elevated a statistical category to the status of a national problem.

The Republican platform of that year reaffirmed the party’s historic commitment to equal rights and opportunity, while emphasizing that just governments do not confer rights but protect them. Their categories are limited to “sex, race, age, religion, creed, disability, or national origin,” regarding which discrimination is “immoral.” Moreover, “As a matter of principle, Republicans oppose any attempts to create race-based governments within the United States, as well as any domestic governments not bound by the Constitution or the Bill of Rights.” That refers to any form of quotas. “Precisely because we oppose discrimination, we reject preferences, quotas, and set-asides, whether in education or in corporate boardrooms. The government should not make contracts on this basis, and neither should corporations.” On this issue, the differences between the parties had become very sharp indeed.

Finally, in America’s most recent presidential election in 2016 (in a platform of 26,088 words) the Democrats restated their opposition to unfair discrimination. “It is unacceptable to target, defame, or exclude anyone because of their race, ethnicity, national origin, language, religion, gender, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability,” the platform declared. Long gone was any concern about preferential treatment. That was underscored by the party’s condemnation of “hate speech [which] creates a fertile climate for violence” (now seen as both a cause and an effect of unfair discrimination).

Republicans for their part not only reaffirmed their historic position on unfair discrimination (in an even longer platform of an estimated 31,968 words), but provided a full exposition of the meaning of the principles enunciated in the Declaration of Independence, which teach that “discrimination based on race, sex, religion, creed, disability, or national origin” is wrong, but no less so “unfair preferences, quotas, and set-asides.” The ultimate question is not only which party is consistent in its position on unfair discrimination, but which understands the requirements of human equality fully and correctly.



## Conclusion

Our review of the major political parties' platforms illustrates both the depth of the ongoing dilemma of minority rights in a democratic republic grounded in "the laws of nature and of nature's God," and the successes and failures of their attempts to deal with it. Republicans and their supporters will find much comfort and some disappointment in this account, and Democrats and their supporters may find just the opposite. More concretely, it has been shown here that making majority rule consistent with the natural law principles that underlay that authority is a continuing challenge. Let the chips fall where they may.

More than this, the review shows that the animating principles of the major political parties are central to their positions on the fundamental question of how majorities govern minorities. America has rightly been called a democratic republic for it has democratic elections within a republican framework. That is, our system is not a direct democracy but a representative democracy. The contrasting preferences by some citizens for one principle or the other is not merely an accident but derives from what they most value in this modern version of a mixed regime. That what originally was called the Democracy should seek majorities with more attention to winning elections than securing justice for minorities is therefore not surprising. That the Republican Party should balance the claims of minority rights with majority rule is likewise not surprising. However much this distinction may strike some as an oversimplification, the record of the party platforms goes a long way towards confirming it.

We need both constitutive principles, of course, but the prudent combination of the two is to be preferred to simply one or the other.

## Footnotes

1. The Sixteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution applied this rule for the first time to the U.S. Senate elections, previously the prerogative of the state legislatures. Presidential elections in each state have, over the years, developed in the same way.

2. <http://www.constitution.org/fed/federa10.htm>

3. Thomas Jefferson's draft of the Declaration of Independence included a denunciation of King George III for refusing to end that trade, but southern delegates to the Continental Congress threatened to walk out if that section was retained.

4. Copies of party platforms are available at several different websites, including Wikipedia, Patriot Post and the American Presidency Project.

5. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John\\_Quincy\\_Adams\\_and\\_abolitionism#As\\_member\\_of\\_Congress](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Quincy_Adams_and_abolitionism#As_member_of_Congress)

6. <https://www.wyzant.com/resources/lessons/history/hpol/lbj/civil-rights>

# Addressing the Opportunity Gap: The Urgency of Equity

Tracy Reimer, PhD

Bethel University

## **Introduction**

Minnesota has some of the largest gaps in the nation on educational outcomes by socioeconomic status. The achievement gap, often referred to as the opportunity gap, is evident in standardized test scores, graduation rates, and college readiness indicators (Grunewald & Nath 2019). Disparities in opportunities, supports, and outcomes represent some students' limited access to excellence in all aspects of their education (Rimmer, 2016), which has ignited a movement for school change. Despite national and state level educational reform, the gaps have persisted. In fact, gaps in standardized test scores and college readiness have increased over time.

School leaders, now more than ever, must gain a thorough understanding of the pervasive nature of the gaps and long-term detrimental impact on our students and families experiencing poverty. Quality education is essential for marginalized students to break out of the generational poverty cycle. College/career readiness enhances a young person's potential for jobs that help secure an adequate standard of living and an opportunity to thrive in society (Cushing et al., 2019). The education system has a moral imperative (Fullan, 2014) to ensure that every student exits our schools with the knowledge, skills, and efficacy to access and succeed in college, careers, and communities (Rimmer, 2016).

## **Theoretical Framework**

**Structural ideology** Educators with a structural ideology understand that outcome measure disparities are the result of structural barriers in and out of school rather than moral deficiencies or grit shortages in families experiencing poverty (Gorski, 2016). Students from low socioeconomic status homes likely have fewer opportunities than their wealthier peers to engage in enriching life experiences such as traveling and the arts. Families experiencing poverty often have less access to Internet technology, books, tutoring, and other resources that support school achievement (Lineburg & Ratliff, 2015). Within schools, class-based inequities are evidenced in disproportioned access to experienced teachers, honors or advanced curriculum, engagement with authentic learning, arts education, and cocurricular programs (Dudley-Marling, 2015). A structural ideology contends that as long as barriers exist, education outcome disparities will exist. School leaders must position themselves to become a threat to the existence of inequity in schools and districts.

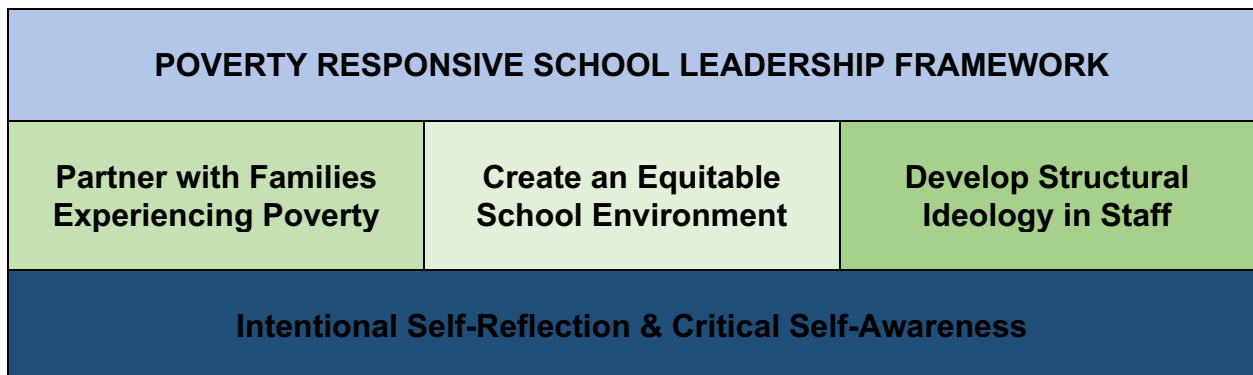
**Culturally responsive school leadership** Culturally responsive school leadership has gained significance as demographics continuously diversify (Gay, 2010). The disparate between students of color and teachers and leaders of color amplifies the importance of amending facets of education such as policy, funding, and administration to be culturally responsive. School leadership preparation programs need to address race, culture, language, national identity, and other areas of differences (Khalifa et al., 2016). Even more, preparation programs must focus on developing students' critical self-awareness: awareness of the values, beliefs, and natural tendencies that ground their practice (McKenzie et al., 2008).

## Methodology

The primary researcher was a program director of a Minnesota university's administrative preparation program. Data collection occurred through focus groups comprised of practicing elementary and middle school principals. Forty-two principals participated in 12 focus groups ranging in size from two to six participants. Each session included an explanation of the principles of equity and structural ideology as well as a summary of culturally responsive school leadership. Focus groups were tasked with being mindful of a structural ideology and the tenets of culturally responsive school leadership while listing the practices implemented in their school to meet the needs of students and families experiencing poverty. A reiterative analytical process with participant feedback guided framework development.

## Conclusion

The Poverty Responsive School Leadership Framework is a tool to guide administrators in effectively addressing the opportunity gap and better serving students and families experiencing poverty. Intentional Self-Reflection & Critical Self-Awareness constitute the foundation of the framework. Leaders steeped in this foundation will be more successful in the remaining framework components: Partner with Families Experiencing Poverty, Develop Structural Ideology in Staff, and Create an Equitable School Environment.



## Intentional Self-Reflection & Critical Self-Awareness

Self-awareness is understanding your personality, strengths, weaknesses, thoughts, tendencies, and emotions. It includes understanding how other people perceive you, your demeanor, and your interactions. One of the simplest ways to gain self-awareness is through introspection. School leaders focused on leading for equity prioritize self-reflection. They grapple with critical self-awareness of their personal beliefs about teaching and learning and the capacity of all students to master rigorous academic expectations (Rimmer, 2016). Intentional reflection bolsters leaders' integrity as their beliefs are exhibited in daily practice.

## Partner with Families Experiencing Poverty

School leaders realize that families experiencing poverty are the experts of their own experiences and are partners in any effective approach to address class-based inequities. Leaders increase family engagement through planning evidenced in childcare provided at family/PTO events and conferences, flexible conference times (am/pm), and

transportation provided to attend conferences. Practices in these schools include establishing a Family Resource Center that provides family health care and social services. The school displays authentic care and acknowledgment of struggles to meet basic needs through grocery scholarships, weekend backpacks, food pantries, and clothing closets.

### **Create an Equitable School Environment**

School leaders focused on equity work role model investment in building relationships with students and families. Leaders advocate for practices such as free or shared school supplies, providing iPads/MacBooks, no or limited homework, and free homework support. Leaders implement a no fee or sliding scale policy for activities such as field trips and before/after school care. To improve attendance, the school schedule accommodates late starts and the building's budget funds a second round of transportation. In addition, school leaders arrange for health services (dental, mental, vision) impacting academic performance to be available in school.

### **Develop Structural Ideology in Staff**

School leaders committed to removing structural barriers require staff members to participate in equity focused professional development so that there is a shared ability to identify and address in and out of school barriers stifling student success. Distributive leadership is evident when leaders create school equity teams tasked to use data to identify and address (SES, race, culture, disability, etc.) gaps in opportunities, achievement, and discipline. These schools hold all students to high standards and have the pedagogical capacity to support student success.

## References

Cushing, E. Therriault, S. & English, D. (2019, March). Developing a college-and career-ready workforce: An analysis of ESSA, Perkins, and WIOA. American Institutes for Research. Retrieved from <https://www.air.org/resource/developing-college-and-career-ready-workforce-analysis-essa-perkins-and-wioa>

Dudley-Marling, C. (2015). *Preparing the nation's teachers to teach reading: A manifesto in defense of "teacher educators like me."* New York: Garn Press.

Fullan, M. (2014). *The principal: Three keys to maximizing impact.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.

Gay, G. (2010). *Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, research, and practice (2nd ed.)*. New York, NY: Teacher College Press.

Gorski, P. (2018). *Reaching and teaching students in poverty: Strategies for erasing the opportunity gap.* New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Grunewald, R. & Nath, A. (2019, October 11). A state-wide crisis: Minnesota's education achievement gaps. Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis. Retrieved from [https://www.minneapolisfed.org/~media/assets/pages/education-achievement-gaps/achievement-gaps-mn-report.pdf?la=en](https://www.minneapolisfed.org/~/media/assets/pages/education-achievement-gaps/achievement-gaps-mn-report.pdf?la=en)

Khalifa, M. A., Gooden, M. A., & Davis, J.E. (2016). Culturally responsive school leadership. *Review of Educational Research*, 86 (4), 1272-1311. doi: 10.3102/0034654316630383

Khalifa, M.A. (2018). *Culturally responsive school leadership.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.

Lineburg M. Y. & Ratliff, B.C. (2015). Teaching students in poverty in small and mid-sized urban school districts. *Advances in Educational Administration*, 22, 85-108.

McKenzie, K. B., Christman, D. E., Hernandez, F., Fierro, E., Capper, C. A., Dantley, M., & Scheurich, J. J. (2008). From the field: A proposal for educating leaders for social justice. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 44, 111–138. doi:10.1177/0013161X07309470

Rimmer, J. (2016, February). Developing principals as equity-centered instructional leaders. *Equity-Centered Capacity Building: Essential Approaches for Excellence & Sustainable System Transformation*, 93–106.

Precision Learning: “*Failure is Not an Option*”

Ronald Saltinski, Ph.D.  
National University

## Introduction

Given the current Covid-19 pandemic there are serious considerations to be taken regarding the mode of education in our society in the near future. Education Week reported in early March 2020 that over 130,000 public and private schools have been closed across the United States leaving some 55 million students without a classroom. With millions of students across the nation, even the world, there have been efforts to move instruction to “remote learning.” These efforts have been frantic at the PK-12 level and chaotic at the college/university level. In the past, the factory system of education has endured wars, famines, and even pandemics without changing. That will no longer be the case. The factory system of education has now been shown to be vulnerable and only superficially aligned with the modern era of digital technology. Given the circumstances, this state of affairs is understandable. Yet, there can be no hope of “business as usual” for education when the pandemic, as with all pandemics, abates and moves on.

Given the success of online instruction across many higher education institutions there remains the need to look to advancing technologies to supplement, replace and “automate” the process of teaching across all realms of learning. The role of human-based teaching will become marginalized.

For many years the concept of Precision Learning was always considered the “holy grail” of education where instruction would be personalized for the unique qualities of the individual learner. Every learner would have no choice but to be successful ensuring that self-satisfaction with success would drive the learner’s motivation not to fail. Such a task was indeed not possible given the factory model of education. Teaching millions of students with a diversity of cognitive and socio-emotional states of being was well beyond the expertise and capabilities of the industrial model of education.

### Precision Learning

Consider an education model that encompasses grades PK-12, through undergraduate school, graduate school and beyond, where minimizing failure maximizes learning. That model is Precision Learning. Precision Learning is an ideal model for the utilization of present-day computer technologies, near-future advancing technologies, and ultimately artificial intelligence (AI). Everyone, in the context of Precision Learning can continuously learn whatever, whenever, wherever, to maintain a life of personal and social wellbeing. The past times of imprecise learning with attendant imprecise teaching guided by an imprecise curriculum can now give way to models of universally designed



learning. Precision Learning can conceptually maximize the full spectrum of the learner's cognitive and affective skills such that almost anything can be taught to whatever degree the learner chooses to learn.

Ulrik Christensen (2017) raised the matter of educator humility in considering the role of Precision Learning. "Developing learning models requires a great deal of humility. Educators cannot assume they know how to address each learner's needs—that "most" or "average" is a proxy for "all." Worse, the basic idea of an "average" student is fatally flawed. The biggest challenge for many educators is acknowledging the vast diversity in the way people learn. Precision education starts with the premise of meeting an individual's needs. It brings together research, technology, and education policies to ensure that all students benefit from a more effective approach" (p. 3).

Precision Learning is based upon courses of given subject matter that are redesigned into micro-competencies: discrete skills and concepts. Each micro-competency is provided with an array of guided resources that include web-based tools, video and audio options, simulations, collaborations, and instructor presentations.

Students in a Precision Learning course are first pre-assessed for course-related knowledge and skills. The pre-assessment determines where in the spectrum of micro-competencies the student begins their learning. As students move through a sequence of micro-competencies, they must confirm their mastery of a given micro-competency by continually "passing" post-assessments. Those students who do not "pass" are provided with an array of alternative and diverse pathways to master the given micro-competency.

Institutions across the country are seeking to implement precision learning models that maximize student learning, success, and retention. One institution, National University based in San Diego, California, has embraced *The Precision Learning Initiative*. This effort calls for redesigning courses that will provide a basis for students to self-pace their path through a given course with discrete micro-competency-based content that is continually managed via micro-assessments.

#### Programmed Learning: The 1950s-1960s

The concept of Precision Learning had roots in the late 1950s through the 1960s with a model of learning (Operant Conditioning) pioneered by the psychologist B. F. Skinner (1968). Referred to as programmed learning, Skinner proposed that learning is most optimal when self-paced with information provided in small, incremental steps with immediate reinforcement or reward upon demonstrating the desired learning. The model

worked effectively across mediums whether books, manual machines, and eventually computers. (Evans, 2010)

Skinner's model for programmed learning took the form of linear, or straight-line programming, and branching programming. Linear programming immediately reinforces student responses that approach the learning goal. Responses that do not lead toward the goal go unreinforced. Each bit of learning is presented in a "frame," and a student who has made a correct response proceeds to the next frame. All students work through the same sequence, and a low rate of error is necessary to ensure continued positive reinforcement of correct responses.

Branching or intrinsic programming provided the student an item of information, a situation requiring a multiple choice or recognition response, and on the basis of that choice instructed the student to proceed to another frame, where the student learns if the choice was correct, and if not, why not. A student who responded incorrectly would either be returned to the original frame, or routed through a subprogram designed to remedy the deficiency indicated by the wrong choice. A student who selected correctly advanced to the next frame in the program. This process was repeated at each step throughout the program, and a student may be exposed to differing amounts of material depending upon errors made.

#### Computer-Assisted Instruction (CAI): The 1980s-1990s

In the early 1980s with the advent of the personal computers the way was paved for Programmed learning to evolve into computer-assisted instruction (CAI). Skinner again emerged as a champion of personalized learning with his book, *The Technology of Teaching*. (1968) Personal computers provided a medium in which software (programs) of varying nature could be utilized to support traditional classroom learning.

The role of personal computer software to support student learning took the forms of tutorial, drill and practice, and simulation programs. Some software also was designed as tools to enhance student learning in areas like the arts with graphics programs, music composition programs, and analytical tools like statistics.

Another visionary during this early period of technologies in the classroom, computer scientist Seymour Papert created the computer programming language *Logo* to improve the way in which students cognitively and creatively solve problems. Today even elementary students code web-based scenarios using "kid friendly" languages like Scratch and Python.

## The Internet: Online Learning

Computer assisted instruction proved to be an added dimension to learning that would be augmented by the advent of the Internet. The Internet finally freed learners from the need to be classroom-bound for whatever educational objectives they may wanted to pursue. Online students are largely independent of an instructor with self-guided reading assignments, web-based assignments, and discussion boards. Online courses are generally designed as “one-size-fits all.” Although a vast array of resources, traditional and web-based, were available, such resources were self-selected by learners, recommended at large by the instructor, or built in by course designers.

Online courses continued to have a limited semblance of the face-to-face classroom experience with a live instructor whom the students could access synchronously via audio and video web-based mediums. These collaborative live sessions between instructor and students, and students with students would occur a given number of times during an online course. The human element was there but it was just very remote.

Millions of learners today use the Internet for online courses, primarily at the post-high school level. Yet, PK-12 learners are largely exempt from this platform for learning. The Covid-19 pandemic has forced school systems to move their industrial platforms onto the Internet. Teachers, instructors, and faculty who have still been conducting face-to-face instruction are now leading online classes without having been trained to teach in such an environment. Nor have students had the preparation for wisely selecting web-based resources. Professional educators entrenched in the industrial model of education could not have anticipated the dilemma of moving millions of students to an in-home “remote learning” environment.

## Smart Machines and Artificial Intelligence (AI)

However, the Internet was deep in resources, tools, and services that could provide the online learner with added capacity to learn, these resources were more often than not chaotically available without reference to a learner’s specific needs. It remained that teaching institutions create online courses that strategically organized web-based resources, tools, and services with a pedagogical based rationale that maximizes a personalized pathway to successful learning.

Institutions across the country are seeking to implement precision learning models that maximize student learning, success, and retention. One institution, the Sanford National University based in San Diego, California, has undertaken The Precision

Learning Initiative. This effort calls for redesigning courses that will provide a basis for students to self-pace their path through a given course with discrete micro-competency-based content that is continually managed via micro-assessments.

Yet, the case for redesigning existing academic courses that encompass the spirit of Precision Learning may prove too daunting. The task may simply be too overwhelming for human-based instruction. Enter the smart machines, close digital relatives of artificial intelligence. Smart machines learn. They are adaptive systems that when integrated into a Precision Learning environment) can monitor students, interact with students, learn from students, access massive data bases for precise resources and sequences of assignments such the student will learn successfully. (Holmes, et al 2019) “Smart machines using voice recognition and predictive analytics, and immense resource selection capabilities, will be capable of collaborating with learners to “sense” what excites and challenges them.” (Hauser, 2017)

## Conclusion

Our society will never be the same nor can the manner in which learners have been production lined throughout their academic life. Precision Learning is the model, smart machines are the medium.

## References

Christensen, U. (2017). Why education needs a precise approach.

<http://precision-frontiers.com/2017/01/13/Why-education-needs-a-precise-approach-2/>.

Education Week: Coronavirus and School Closures.

<https://www.edweek.org/ew/section/multimedia/map-coronavirus-and-school-closures.html>.

Evans, James L. (2010) *Principles of programmed learning*. PACE Learning Systems. Tuscaloosa, Alabama. <https://futurism.com/ai-teachers-education-crisis/>

*Scratch and Python and Five Best Coding Languages for Kids.*

<http://gocoderz.com/blog/5-best-programming-languages-kids>

Holmes, Wayne, Bialik, Maya, and Fadel Charles. (2019). *Artificial intelligence in education*. The Center for Curriculum Redesign.

Houser, K. (2017). *The solution to our education crisis might be AI.*

<https://futurism.com/ai-teachers-education-crisis/>

National University Precision Learning Institute. (2019). <https://precision.nu.edu>.

Skinner, B. F. (1968) *The technology of teaching*. Meredith Corporation.

Papert, S. (1980). *Mindstorms: Children, computers, and powerful ideas*. Basic Books.

Kranz, G. (2000). *Failure is not an option: From mercury to apollo 13 and beyond*. Simon & Schuster.

**Online Human Services, Social Work, and Social Science  
Rural Community College Students' Self-Reported  
Perceptions of Benefits and Challenges of Taking Online  
Social Science Courses in Their Program Curriculum:  
A Five Year Case Study.**

*Jeffrey T. Schulz, Central Community College—Grand Island, NE*

*Allen Francis Ketcham, Professor Emeritus,  
Texas A&M---Kingsville, TX*

**Abstract:**

This case study of community college students examines five years of data collected from online human services, social work, and social science majors at a community college in rural central Nebraska. It examines their self-reported perceptions of benefits gained from taking online social sciences courses as a part of their program curriculum. There is virtually no existing research on this topic. This research examines how 62 rural community college students studying human services, social work, and social sciences as their majors responded to a series of 13 demographic questions and two open-ended questions. The two open-ended questions are related to self-reported benefits of taking social science courses online for their program curriculum, and how these students will benefit from them in both their majors and future careers. Data was collected from fall 2012 through fall 2017. The online social science courses used in this research include the following courses: Introduction to Sociology, Social Problems, and Gerontology. The purpose of the study is twofold. First, to assess the perceived value of taking social science classes online for their majors at a community college; and second, to assess how it will affect their careers.

**Introduction**

The purpose of this study is twofold. The first aim of the study is to examine the 62 human services, social work, and social science majors at a rural community college in central Nebraska and determine what their perceptions are of the benefits of taking online social science classes for both their majors and future careers. The second aim is to answer the questions: 1) why these students are taking a social science course online at this community college and 2) what are the primary reasons they are taking other online courses at this community college.

Gregory and Lampley (2016) suggest the sheer convenience and flexibility online education offers to students living in rural areas is attractive to students. Rural community college students especially benefit from online classes, because unlike their four-year counterparts, many students are nontraditional and have both work and family obligations which may make attending a lecture class impossible.

Austin (2010) states: "Developing courses that provide a global perspective and are multicultural can be especially important to rural community colleges and their students who may not have other chances to learn about or experience other cultures" (p. 31). Building on Austin's (2010) idea, many of the rural community college student respondents in this study reported similar reasons for taking online social science courses.

Five Human Services student quotes from our study show the value of taking online social science classes to students living in a rural area. These randomly chosen quotes are shown below:

*Student 1:* "Social Science classes help me in my major learn about differences in people and their cultures along with factors that affect people differently. I enjoy learning about the items that sociologists point out and ways that they find theories about certain points that can relate to everyone."

*Student 2:* "As I previously stated, it will make me more aware of and have a greater ability to respond to different situations people I may "treat" in the future are facing. It gives me a better understanding of where people are coming from and how to properly address the issues they may face. Also, it makes me more aware of my own flaws so I can address

my own false beliefs...which I was shocked to realize last semester I had unknowingly been generalizing and stereotyping Asian Americans without even realizing. I had to write a paper about how they are portrayed through media, and it made me aware that the stereotyping of the media soaked into my brain. I had a kind of epiphany while I was answering that question; I realized that I had in fact always assumed that Asians are all extremely intelligent and found out that was a generalization and stereotype that I had come to see as reality when in actuality, my false assumption was based solely upon media portrayal. This is partially because I have never known any Asians, so I had no frame of reference to alter my ill-founded belief. I was grateful that the class required me to analyze media and form my own opinion, for I was SHOCKED to know that I had been so quick to just buy into what I had seen on TV.”

*Student 3:* “Social science classes are going to help me in my career be able to understand the difference in people and also norms of their culture. Taking these classes help me kind of have a relevant idea on different factors of a culture. The one point I have to understand though that is the key factor to make my career a success that everyone is different.”

*Student 4:* “Taking sociology classes online can benefit anybody in any career because it allows you to be more tolerant and understanding towards others who may be different from what you are used to.”

*Student 5:* “Having a better understanding of all types of social backgrounds will help me to better assist patients I may treat. If I have prior knowledge of what types of obstacles a person or family faces, it will be much easier to help me navigate their way beyond those barriers and become successful and socially well-adjusted human beings. I could never begin to understand other people without this type of course, and without that understanding, I would be unable to offer advice that would be beneficial. By knowing the issues people face, I will be better informed how to help them.”

### **Demographics**

During the 2016-2017 academic year this rural Midwestern community college served a total of 21,708 students (9,238 were full-time or part-time, credit seeking students); 88.4% or 19,198 of the students were in the 25-county Service Area this college serves in rural central Nebraska (Enrollment Report, Central Community College, 2016-2017). The five most popular majors on campus as of the 2016-2017 academic year were: Academic Transfer, Business Administration, Nursing, Early Childhood Education, and Information and Technology Systems (Enrollment Report, Central Community College, 2016-2017). College-wide, approximately 60% of the students were women and 40% were men. Approximately, 9,237 were credit-seeking students. College-wide, approximately 74.9% were White Non-Hispanic; 19.7% Hispanic/Latino; 2.1% Black Non-Hispanic; 1.7% Asian/Pacific Islander; 0.7% Native American; 0.2% two or more races; and 0.7 race unknown. This college has three primary campuses, a Learning Center in Kearney, Nebraska, and several smaller satellite campus sites in the 25 county region of central Nebraska it serves (Enrollment Report, Central Community College, 2016-2017).

### **Purpose of the Study**

The fields of Human Services/Social Work/Social Sciences are popular majors for many community college students nationwide. The primary function of the human services profession is to assist individuals and communities to function as effectively as possible (<http://www.nationalhumanservices.org/what-is-human-services>; retrieved on January



25<sup>th</sup>, 2018). A person with a strong desire to help others, strong communication skills and the ability to manage time would make a strong candidate for this field.

There are many aspects of this major that may lure a student into this field regardless of their age, race/ethnicity, socio-economic standing, or gender. Many of these traditional and nontraditional aged students majoring in Human Services are interested in helping others as their full-time profession. A few examples of jobs one may secure upon graduation with a Human Services degree include: Community Health Advocate, Substance Abuse Counselor, Life Skills Instructor, Gerontology Aide, Halfway House Counselor, Adult Day Care Worker, Child Advocate and Crisis Intervention Counselor to name a few (<https://online.grace.edu/news/human-services/what-is-human-services>) and (<http://www.nationalhumanservices.org/what-is-human-services>).

Estimates from 2013 suggest approximately 30% of U.S. higher education students are enrolled in at least one online course (Gregory and Lampley, 2016). Many community college students are nontraditional students with adult responsibilities such as work and family commitments which may make attending lecture classes impossible. (Gregory & Lampley, 2016; Xu & Jaggars, 2014; Austin, 2010 and Leist & Travis, 2010).

Thus, this study seeks to answer how Human Services/Social Work/and Social Science majors view taking online social science courses as beneficial to both their major and future careers. These three aforementioned majors are in the “helping professions” and this study seeks to discover what skills students believe they will obtain.

Essentially, this study is an in-depth examination of how rural community college students view taking online social science classes as a benefit to both their majors and future careers. We wanted to learn what self-reported skills, if any, students plan on obtaining in the online social science classes that may be able translate into their future careers.

### **Review of Literature**

According to several different sources in the popular press, the fields of human services and social work are two of the fastest growing fields of study at many community colleges and four-year colleges. A recent article, retrieved on January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2018, from the Grace College Human Services website, states that the field of Human Services will grow 22% by 2022 (<https://online.grace.edu/news/human-services/what-is-human-services>). Another source states that the field of human services is expected to grow even faster than the national average for all occupations which is 7% (<https://www.allpsychologyschools.com/human-services/what-is-human-services/>).

Another website from the community college used for this study suggests: “The job outlook is excellent. The need for human services workers is expected to grow by nearly 28% between 2010 and 2020” (<https://www.cccneb.edu/humanservices/>). According to Moore, et al., (2015), the predicted job growth for social workers between 2010 and 2020 is 25%. Last, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, retrieved on February 20<sup>th</sup>, 2018, social science occupations are projected to grow 10% from 2016 to 2026, which is faster than the average for all occupations (<https://www.bls.gov/ooh/life-physical-and-social-science-science/home.htm>). In sum, all three fields represented in this study are experiencing upward growth and promise which will benefit both our current and future citizens in need of help.

Thus, human services, social work, and social science majors have a very promising job outlook. This research examines community college students in rural central Nebraska who are majoring in human services, social work and the social sciences and their

attitudes toward taking online social science classes and how those classes may benefit them in their majors and future professions. The student respondents were asked two open-ended questions related to taking one of three online social sciences courses: Introduction to Sociology, Social Problems, and Gerontology.

This section briefly discusses what human services, social work and the social sciences are as major fields of study and what type of employment graduates in this field typically secure. First, the differences between Social Work and Human Services will be discussed. In a recent online article submitted by Grace College on January 25, 2018, it states that both human services and social work are careers based on serving the needs of people, but in different ways. Human Services professionals focus on larger populations and seek to serve the needs of a group of people, not just individuals. Social Workers, on the other hand, focus primarily on helping one individual with a problem (<https://online.grace.edu/news/human-services/what-is-human-services/>). Social scientists, on the other hand, study all aspects of society, including the past and present, human behavior and relationships in groups.

The National Organization for Human Services (NOHS) has identified six major statements of knowledge, skills, and attitudes that future human services employees must possess to be successful in this field. First, understanding the nature of human systems: individual, group, organization, community and society, and their major interactions. Second, understanding the conditions which promote or limit optimal functioning and classes of deviations from desired functioning in the major human systems. Third, skill in identifying and selecting interventions which promote growth and goal attainment. Fourth, skill in planning, implementing, and evaluating interventions. Fifth, consistent behavior in selecting interventions which are congruent with the values of one's self, clients, the employing organization, and the Human Service profession. Sixth, process skills which are required to plan and implement services (<http://www.nationalhumanservices.org/what-is-human-services>).

According to Xu and Jaggars (2014), distance education, through online education, has experienced strong growth, especially at community colleges nationwide. This growth has been largely attractive to nontraditional students. According to Leist and Travis (2010), many rural community colleges have incorporated online courses into degree and certificate programs to enhance their reach of students over large geographical distances. They also believe there is an economic benefit for both the community college and their students. Moore, et al., (2015) state the benefits of online social work programs in a variety of situations. First, it is valuable to rural students. Second, it is valuable to students who do not want to physically attend as a result of financial or career reasons. Third, it may help active-duty military personnel or their spouses to receive a high-quality education. Fourth, and finally, it allows students to personalize their education by seeking out programs that have their own personal specialized curriculum. This is the crux of what our study is about: program students, specifically, human services, social work and social science students at a rural community college, seeing the value in taking online social science courses for both their majors and future careers. What skills or skill sets do they believe they will obtain from taking online social science courses? Will it be the same as what current literature reports? Will our students report developing other skills outside of what the existing literature reports?

There isn't any current literature available that specifically addresses our two research questions. Other studies focus on building online programs in rural or urban areas in these majors and report how beneficial online courses are for those living in rural or urban areas, but not for the purposes of their majors or future careers. That is what makes this study unique. Our focus is student-centered and specifically focused on what rural community college students' attitudes are toward perceived benefits of online social science classes for both their majors and future careers. In other words, our students are reporting what they perceive to be the value of online social science classes. This exploratory research endeavors to discover what self-reported skills online rural community-college social science students in a Midwestern state are planning on receiving in these classes that will translate to being successful in both their majors and future careers.

### **Methods**

This research follows the case study method and is exploratory in nature. It uses data collected from 62 rural community college students majoring in the fields of human services, social work, and the social sciences over a five-year period. The survey instrument is offered each semester to all online social science students in three different social science classes: Introduction to Sociology, Social Problems, and Gerontology. It is not a mandatory class requirement. It is voluntary. Students can either elect to complete it or disregard it.

The study examines rural community college students' self-reported perceptions of benefits and challenges in taking online social science courses as part of their program curriculum. This study further seeks to answer why human services, social work, and social science majors are taking online social science courses and asks them how the online courses will benefit them in both their majors and future careers. Since these three majors are in the "helping professions", we believe the data collected for this research between the fall semester of 2012 and fall semester of 2017 to be valuable for examining this topic of study.

Data was collected from three different community college campus sites, including a learning center (all three campus sites and the learning center were within one community college system, some just in different geographic locations). At these locations, students were taking online social science and online human services courses. Two of the sixty-two online student respondents were from two different four-year colleges in the state of Nebraska. Also, two online student respondents were from the state of Iowa. The three campus sites and the learning center are all operated by the same community college represented in this study. It covers a 25-county area in rural central Nebraska.

Students were administered a 23-item survey instrument in which they were asked to answer 13 demographic questions and ten open-ended questions. Only two of the ten open-ended questions were used for this research. The instrument was only administered to online social science students at the 100 and 200 level at this rural community college in central Nebraska.

This instrument asked the students questions such as highest level of education they had completed, highest level of education both parents had completed, major area of study, gender, age, political affiliation, income, race, and mother and father's occupation. Two of the ten open-ended questions asked in the instrument are addressed in this study. They are in the "Findings" section below.

## Findings

This case study focuses on two open-ended research questions. First, “How is taking a social science course online going to benefit you in your major?” Second, “How is taking a social science course online going to benefit you in your career?”

There were 62 online respondents over the course of five years who participated in this study. The only students included in this study were those who planned to go into a “helping” field upon their graduation from this college. Therefore, only three different majors were included in this study. They included: Human Services majors (45), Social Science majors (13), and Social Work majors (4).

In the next two sections of the paper, a summary of comments made by students representing these three majors will be explored. Their responses to the two primary research questions in this study are typed out exactly as they appear on the instrument used in this study. There may be grammatical errors appearing in some statements made by the student respondents. The principal investigators of this research believed it necessary to not correct grammatical errors in this section of the paper, as it could perhaps take away “the effect” of what the student respondents were trying to convey in their answers to the two questions. The first question of this case study follows.

### **How is taking a social science course online going to benefit you in your major?**

This section examines a sampling of 30 students’ responses to the question above. The purpose is to gain a perspective on how Human Services, Social Work, and Social Sciences students believe taking online social science classes at the local community college will benefit them in their major. Only two of sixty-two student respondents did not answer this open-ended question.

The reason why these 30 student respondents’ answers were selected is because they best represented the main themes of this open-ended question/section. The conclusion section of this paper offers a synopsis of the answers to the question above.

*Student 1:* “It gives me more flexibility so that I can possibly serve in AmeriCorps position and also gives me the opportunity to figure out some health challenges.” *Student 2:* “Social Sciences are a large part of Social Work. I believe that it will help me be able to relate to more individuals and it will help direct me in what I need to explore while obtaining my major.” *Student 3:* “It is going to help me to achieve a certification in Human Services. It will help me to better understand the elderly population which I am choosing for the people I want to work with.”

*Student 4:* “My major at the moment is in Social Services, so knowing what is going on in the world will help me help my clients. There are different difficulties that go on in different cultures, so I can apply that to helping them. I can use what I learned in Introduction to Sociology and in this class, Social Problems, to make helping them easier.” *Student 5:* “I’d like to major in social science, so it has given me a feel for it.” *Student 6:* “I will be working with the elderly population and this helps me to know how to interact with them.” *Student 7:* “There are a couple of ways that taking gerontology will benefit me in my major. I am currently working toward my human services degree at Central Community College. It is required that we take some form of social science course in order to fulfill the degree requirements. I also plan to possibly work with the elderly when I am finished with the program, so this gerontology course will benefit me in many ways. I have learned a lot throughout the course and have also had on site experience at an assisted living home for this course.” *Student 8:* “It is going to benefit my major because there may be

situations where I only communicate with someone over the computer and never see them face-to-face, so this course online helps me to becoming familiar with communication over the computer.” *Student 9*: “Social Science is a major part of human services as human services deals with a variety of populations from every social class. The information learned can be used to better help those who are different than myself.” *Student 10*: “It will greatly benefit my major, as my major is Human Services, which requires an understanding of how social environments factor into a person’s behavior.” *Student 11*: “I am going into Human Services to work with families that have children with behavioral, mental, and etc. to help their families to become well and to help them find resources etc.” *Student 12*: “This course is going to help me understand how people operate. It helps me to understand the world around me and what people classify as social problems. That is huge for my major, because as a therapist, I will see many different people who have many different problems. In order to be able to respond appropriately, I will need to know as much about social sciences as I can. It is preparing me for classes that I will be taking in my bachelor’s degree.” *Student 13*: “It helps open my views and thoughts on different issues and perspectives of things I haven’t really looked at. I have learned a lot about the process of aging and things that I should have been educating myself on long before I was 30. It also helps me understand things that I may soon face with future clients, family members, and myself.” *Student 14*: “It may help me decide what population I want to work with in Human Services. And, to help me gain more knowledge and skills in other areas.” *Student 15*: “I believe that by taking this course I will have a better understanding of a population that will grow and require assistance within the human services field.” *Student 16*: “I am hoping it will give me greater understanding of other social situations to which I have not been exposed.” *Student 17*: “Taking this course will benefit my major if I decide to work with this population of people in the Human Services field.” *Student 18*: “I think it will go hand in hand with my psychology major. In order to understand humans, you need to know the different situations that might influence their thought process.” *Student 19*: “This Gerontology online class is going to educate me on what I need to know when working with these groups of people. I will get a better understanding of the aging process and some issues that affect them as they reach certain ages.” *Student 20*: “Taking a social science course online is going to benefit me in my major because I get to learn the social problems that are happening among one another. All of the conflicts I will be learning in this class can help me problem solve when I get into my major.” *Student 21*: “Taking a social science course online is going to benefit me because it is required to take one for my degree. Taking it online will show that I have worked with computers.” *Student 22*: “This benefits my current career (major)—as it simply reinforces what I have been instructed in that position—that policies are best practice for changing society. My career—it helps to gain the broader spectrum to see how impactful public policies/laws/identified social problems impact people as individuals. Also, will help to be aware enough to advocate when a social problem has not yet been identified publically.” *Student 23*: “The social science class online will help me because I will be doing this on my own and when I finish my class to graduate, I will have to do paperwork and other important things by myself.” *Student 24*: “I am planning on majoring in social services at UNO spring 2018. This course was suggested to me by my advisor but I also feel like this course is very interesting and I can see how it can be beneficial to my major.”

*Student 25:* "I think it will provide me with a well-rounded variety in my education." *Student 26:* "The first thing is I have to have it for my generals. However, the main reason I took this class is to learn more on how sociology views problems. Before I took this class, I had some ideas about why people are poor but after reading I realized it has more to do with than just not wanting to work. I want to learn about how people live and what is the issues people are facing that I might not know or understand." *Student 27:* "By learning about the world's social problems, I will have a better insight in my job as a counselor." *Student 28:* "This is going to benefit me by letting me see what problems there are surrounding us and have an open-mind to the problems that people face every day." *Student 29:* "I am going into Social Work to eventually work in a lockdown facility as a social worker and this helped me focus on how society acts in a whole." *Student 30:* "I will be taking lots of sociology/psychology type classes in order to better understand people and their tendencies. Understanding why people do what they do, and how they think will be very beneficial and crucial in making good solid judgments."

### **How is taking a social science class online going to benefit you in your career?**

This section examines a sampling of 28 students' responses to the question above. The purpose is to gain a perspective on how Human Services, Social Work, and Social Sciences students view taking online social science classes at the local community college as a benefit to their future career. Only three of sixty-two student respondents chose not to answer this open-ended question.

The reason why these 28 student respondents' answers were selected is because they best represented the main themes of this open-ended question/section. The conclusion section of this paper offers a synopsis of the answers to the question above.

*Student 1:* "Social Work takes discipline and taking an online course helps me be intentional about meeting what is expected of me." *Student 2:* "Web classes require a tremendous amount of discipline which is difficult for me without building a relationship with classmates and instructors. I crave group settings; not too fond of doing it alone with no one around me." *Student 3:* "Social Science classes will benefit me in my career because it will give me the opportunity to empathize and reach out to a wider variety of populations."

*Student 4:* "The reason that taking this course will benefit me in my career is because if I do choose to work with the elderly population with human services, I have learned a lot of information about different aspects related to the elderly population throughout this course. I will be able to incorporate the information I have gained from taking this course into my professional life." *Student 5:* "It is going to benefit me in my career by knowing more about computers and how to properly and appropriately communicate over the computer." *Student 6:* "I have chosen to work with the elderly population so this course will give me the information I need to succeed."

*Student 7:* "I would like to work with older adults and the courses I am taking contain updated information focused on gerontology." *Student 8:* "I am working on my Master's degree in social work, so the classes I am taking will directly affect my career as a CPS worker, which is my ultimate goal." *Student 9:* "Hopefully, as I mentioned before, I may be able to assist people that I may not have understood where they were coming from if not for this course."

*Student 10:* "I am going into Human Services to work with families that have children with behavioral, mental, and etc. to help their families to become well, and to help them find

resources etc.” *Student 11*: “The more social science classes that I take, the more I will better understand individual relationships to society. Society is everything to us, in other words, it affects all of our lives entirely. To better understand why a patient may not feel that she is pretty enough could be because society makes “thin” girls out to be the prettiest. I need to know about how society affects us so that I can understand what steps I need to take to remove its effects on us.” *Student 12*: “It helps give me experience using the web, a computer, and finding different methods to do research to further my education and are tools I can use in my career as well.”

*Student 13*: “I will be able to have a certificate on top of my degree which will provide proof that I have been educated in several different areas of the human services field.”

*Student 14*: “To help me relate to other people with backgrounds different from mine or those that I have encountered throughout my life.” *Student 15*: “Taking a social science course online will benefit me in my career of becoming a child protective service because there can be problems that can happen between a family and I can use what I learned in this social problems class to apply it to the problem to simply aide the situation.”

*Student 16*: “Taking this class will benefit me in my career because it helped me learn more about using computers and showed me that I am great at figuring different websites out as well as using google docs and different types of files. (PDF, RTF, DOC, and etc.)”

*Student 17*: “This benefits my current career—as it reinforces what I have been instructed in that position—that policies are best practice for changing society.” *Student 18*: “I feel like taking social problems allows you to see the many different problems that people of all classes deal with, along with problems of different classes, races, gender, etc. This course, I hope, will give me better understanding on how to handle problems as they arise with others in an open-minded manner.”

*Student 19*: “This course has helped me in seeing not only the patients from different cultures, but how they operate and what is expected from me. Without this course, I just thought cultures were strange, and did not understand them at all.” *Student 20*: “Taking a social science course online will allow me to become certified to teach all 5-12 social science courses in Iowa. Also, it will make me more marketable to smaller school districts in Iowa, which rely on their social sciences teachers to teach more than one social science discipline.” *Student 21*: “I believe taking a variety of courses which help me to have a better understanding of people’s culture, situation, and concerns will help me to be more understanding and more effective in the helping profession.”

*Student 22*: “I will have a better understanding of others and their social problems. This class made me think about things I would not have if it wasn’t for this class.” *Student 23*: “I will have a better understanding of other people’s backgrounds and “where they’re coming from” as their counselor.” *Student 24*: “It will help me with cultural differences with my patients.”

*Student 25*: “This particular course assisted me in obtaining a better understanding of the elderly population. Working with the elderly population is something I am interested in.”

*Student 26*: “This class will help me understand the social problems that are around and not be judgmental about these problems.” *Student 27*: “With this course being a convenient online course, this course will be helpful to me in the future when I have completed my schooling, and this course may also help me in my everyday life; with the information that I will be gaining.” *Student 28*: “I want to go into law so I think it will be

very beneficial in the way of understanding people in the context of society, which I will need to do often!”

### **No Answer/Negative/Unsure**

Out of the 62 student respondents in this study, there was variation on how many students did not answer the two open-ended questions. For the first open-ended question, “How is taking a social science course online going to benefit you in your major?” only two students didn’t answer the question. For the second open-ended question, “How is taking a social science class online going to benefit you in your career?” only three students didn’t answer the question.

There were a few students who had outright negative points of view on one or both of the two open-ended questions asked on the instrument. In this section, a few student responses will be shared. Five student responses follow. Responses have been typed exactly as students responded. *Student 1*: “Don’t know if I will do well in this web-based course as I struggle with them. I do much better in lecture classes.” *Student 2*: “Taking this class online does not benefit my major, except for more insight.” *Student 3*: “It does not help me obtain my degree, however, it will help further down in my education career, and it will help to work with others and have a concept how one social problem may lead to another one.” *Student 4*: “I would rather take it in a classroom setting, but I was unable to do so, and being able to take this online will help me continue the work I need to do and learn and have a better understanding of various issues.” *Student 5*: “I would not take web-based classes ever but presently I have no other choice. I simply have no choice in this current situation.”

### **Limitations**

There are numerous limitations to this study. First, although there were four different campus locations included in this study, it was all a part of one community college system. This study focuses on rural Midwestern community college students and the potential barriers they may experience in obtaining higher education through online learning. Some barriers our student respondents mentioned included: driving distance, band width issues, access to internet in very rural areas, access to internet based on socio-economic status, family obligations, single mothers finding reliable childcare, time management issues, and lack of confidence in using technology to name a few.

Students at much larger community colleges in an urban setting, for example, may not experience some of these issues. Also, students at other rural Midwestern community colleges or rural community colleges in other regions of the country will most likely have their own unique set of issues which may be significantly different from this community college.

Certainly, this case study could have been strengthened by including the three other rural community colleges in Nebraska into our study. Yet another way this study could have been enhanced would have been to distribute the survey to other rural community colleges in surrounding Midwestern states.

Another limitation was gender bias. There were 55 women respondents which represented 89% of student respondents in the study. There were only 7 male respondents, which represented 11% of the study. There was also racial bias in the study as 90% of respondents were white, 5% Hispanic/Latino, 3% African American and 2% Asian American. The researchers would like to point out that both the gender and racial bias may be related to the types of majors represented in the study. The fields of human



services, social work, and social sciences are predominantly female. Additionally, for the 2016/17 year at Central Community College, exactly 60% of the students were female and 40% of the students were males (Enrollment Report, Central Community College, 2016-2017).

Other limitations include: 1.) This study only surveyed online rural community college adults in three different majors; permission was not granted for the survey to be administered in other online social science classes. 2) Only three social science courses were permitted to be used for this study. 3) If future research is conducted on this topic, other rural community colleges around this state and other rural community colleges around the country will need to be examined to better generalize outcomes. 4) Certainly, many more online social science courses will need to be included from various fields such as psychology, philosophy, anthropology, and political science in strengthening future studies. 5) More student respondents would also strengthen future studies on this topic.

### **Conclusion**

This case study addressed two primary questions as they relate to online Human Services majors, online Social Work majors, and online Social Science majors at a rural community college in the Midwest. The two questions guiding this 5-year case study project included: 1) How is taking a social science course online going to benefit you in your major; and 2) How is taking a social science class online going to benefit you in your career?

All of these students will be in the “helping professions” once they graduate. They will serve as advocates, counselors, case managers, educators, along with too many other professions to list fully here. The purpose of the study was to examine these three majors at a local community college to really get the online social science students to think about how they could use the information learned in the online social science classes and see how they apply to their majors and careers.

As was mentioned earlier, the study is limited in a variety of ways. Perhaps the three biggest limitations include only having 62 cases to examine, examining only four different campus locations at one rural community college, and finally, only using three social science courses. There were other limitations, but these were key limitations the authors would like to mention, and we realize that the results reported may be skewed by these factors and that the results of this study in no way can be generalized to all rural Midwestern community college students or any other rural community college students. Rather, we see this study as both a starting point to examine the perceived usefulness of online social science classes for people in these “helping professions” and we hope it leads to further investigation on a grander scale.

Many of these rural community college students’ responses are in line with what the literature reports in terms of benefits of taking classes online. For example, students reported that the online social science classes would help them understand various cultures, various religions, family backgrounds, being sensitive to the LGBTQ community, understanding older adults in retirement, children’s behavior based on their family situations, group behavior in general, understanding people from different backgrounds, how to interact and socialize with the elderly population, learn about class and socio-economic issues, understand public policy and laws, understand current issues, and understand the world’s social problems.

The existing literature related to rural online social science community college students does not address perceived “soft skills” and professional skills online social science

students believe they may learn from taking online social science classes. Our study attempts to address this gap in the literature as it pertains to only rural online social science community college students and both their majors and future careers. This study examined the “soft skills” and professional skills rural community colleges students from three different “helping profession” majors expected to gain by taking an online social science class as part of their major. Some examples of expected findings in the study include: time management/budgeting time; flexibility in completing tasks; learned a lot about using the computer; complete tasks online related to my major and career; dealing with situations where I only communicate with someone over the computer; appropriate communication over email; learn my field over the computer; help me problem solve in my major; confidence of working with computers in my field; work independently and complete paperwork online; how to work with others; making good solid judgments on the job; sensitivity and how to address the issues clients are facing; and makes me aware of my own flaws.

This study also examined the “soft skills” and professional skills rural community college students expected to gain by taking an online social science class and how it may be useful in their future careers. Some examples of expected things learned include: Be intentional about what is expected of me; discipline to complete work independently; incorporate information learned from course into professional life; learn to comprehend things online; appropriate communication over the computer; obtain current information from course and use in my future profession; all classes I am taking will help me as a future CPS worker; better understand my clients after taking course; accept peoples’ differences; gain experience using the computer, the web and find different methods to do research I can use in my career; apply knowledge from the social problems class when I work for CPS; help me learn more about using computers and how to use google docs and different types of files such as (PDF, RTF, DOC and etc.) and figuring out websites; give me better understanding on how to handle problems as they arise with others in an open-ended manner; certified to teach all 5-12 social science courses in Iowa; more marketable; understanding other people’s culture will make me more effective on the job; utilize learned theories from the class and apply them on the job; tolerance; understand obstacles a person or family must overcome and help them navigate around them; and understanding people in the context of society will help me as a future lawyer.

Future studies related to this topic need to include many more rural community colleges, more cases (student respondents), and examine a variety of social science classes in the sample. Doing these three things would certainly strengthen a similar study in the future. The researchers would like to thank the 62 students for their time, honesty, and the candidness of their responses. Without them, this case study project would not have been possible.

## References

- Austin, G. (2010). Administrative Challenges and Rewards of Online Learning in a Rural Community College: Reflections of a Distance Learning Administrator. *New Directions For Community Colleges*, no. 150, Summer 2010, 27-36.
- Central Community College. (2017-2018). Central Community College Enrollment

Report. Retrieved from <https://webcentral.cccneb.edu/infosites/Admin/ir/Documents/20162017%20Enrollent%20Report%20Final.pptx>. Pp. 1-22.

Central Community College. (2017-2018). Central Community College Human Services. Retrieved from <https://www.cccneb.edu/humanservices/> Pp. 1-2.

Gregory, C.B., & Lampley, J.H. (2016). Community College Student Success In Online Versus Equivalent Face-to-Face Courses. *Journal of Learning in Higher Learning*, Fall 2016, 12(2), 63-72.

.Leist, J., & Travis, J. (2010). Planning for Online Courses at Rural Community Colleges. *NewDirectionsFor Community Colleges*, no. 150, Summer 2010, 17-25.

Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations (February 20<sup>th</sup>, 2018). Retrieved from <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/life-physical-and-social-science-science/home.htm> Pp. 1-4.

Moore, S.E., Golder, S., Sterrett, E., Faul, A.C., Yankeelov, P., Mathis, L.W., & Barbee, A.P. (2015). Social Work Online Education: A Model for Getting Started and Staying Connected. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 51, 505-518.

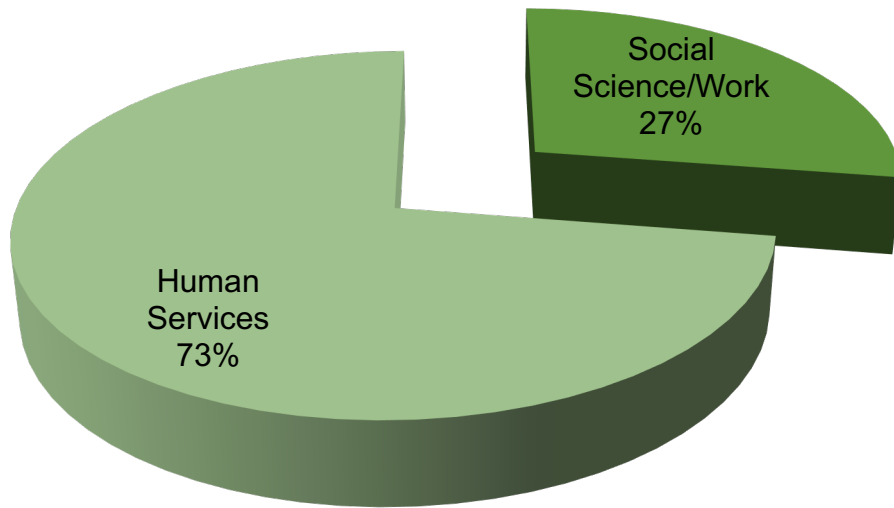
Serving Your Community: A Guide to Human Services. (January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2018). Retrieved from <https://online.grace.edu/news/human-services/what-is-human-services/> . Pp. 1-11.

What is Human Services? (January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2018). Retrieved from <http://www.nationalhumanservices.org/what-is-human-services> Pp. 1-5.

What is Human Services? (January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2018). Retrieved from <https://www.allpsychologyschools.com/human-services/what-is-human-services/> Pp. 1-6.

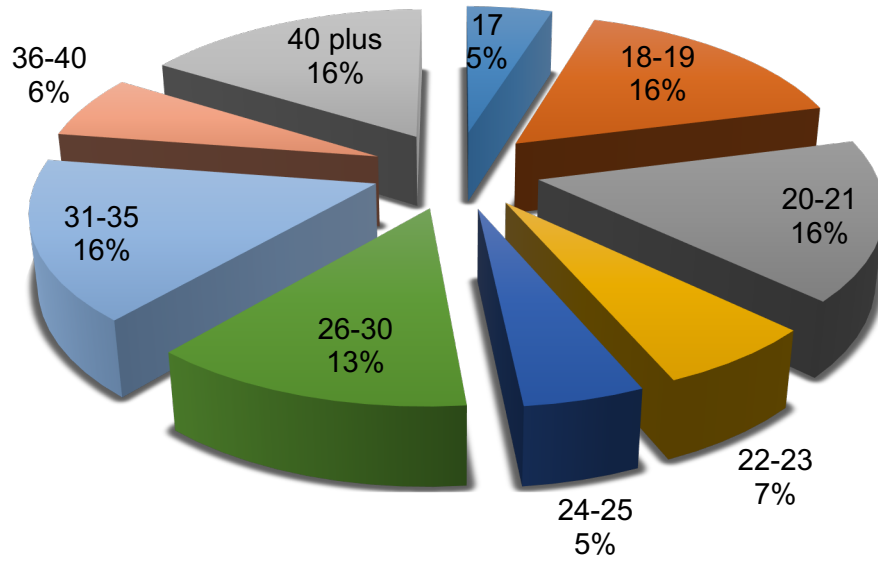
Xu, D., & Jaggars, S.S. (2014). Performance Gaps Between Online And Face-to-Face Courses: Differences Across Types of Students and Academic Subject Areas. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 85(5), 633-659.

### Area of Study



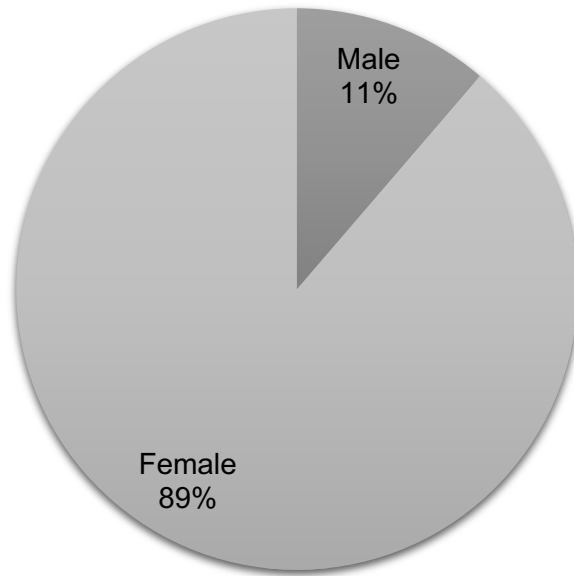
Major	Raw #s
Social Science/Work	17
Human Services	45

### Age of Respondents



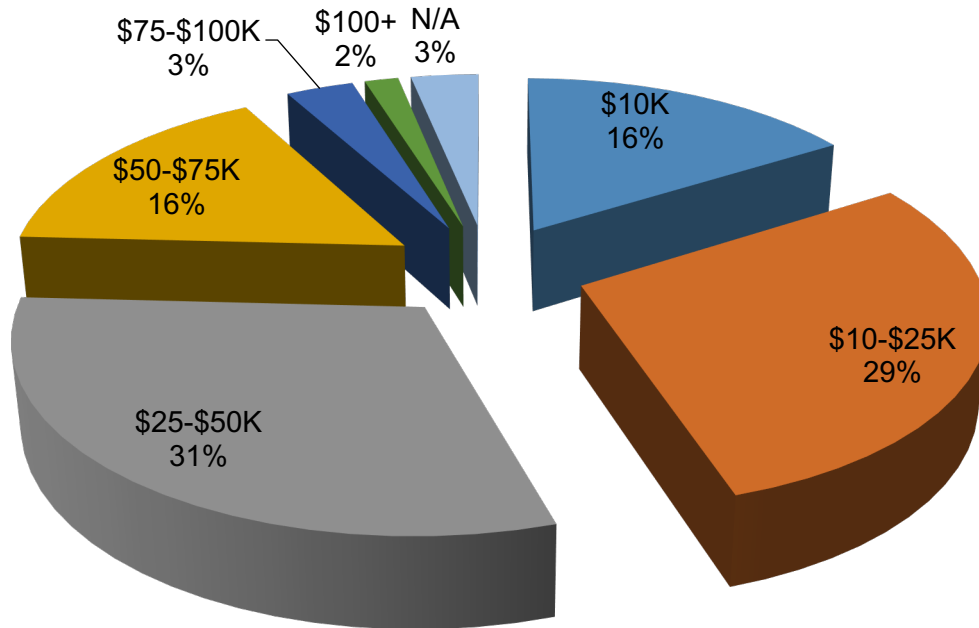
Age	Raw #s
17	3
18-19	10
20-21	10
22-23	4
24-25	3
26-30	8
31-35	10
36-40	4
40 plus	10

### Sex of Respondent



Gender	Raw #s
Male	7
Female	55

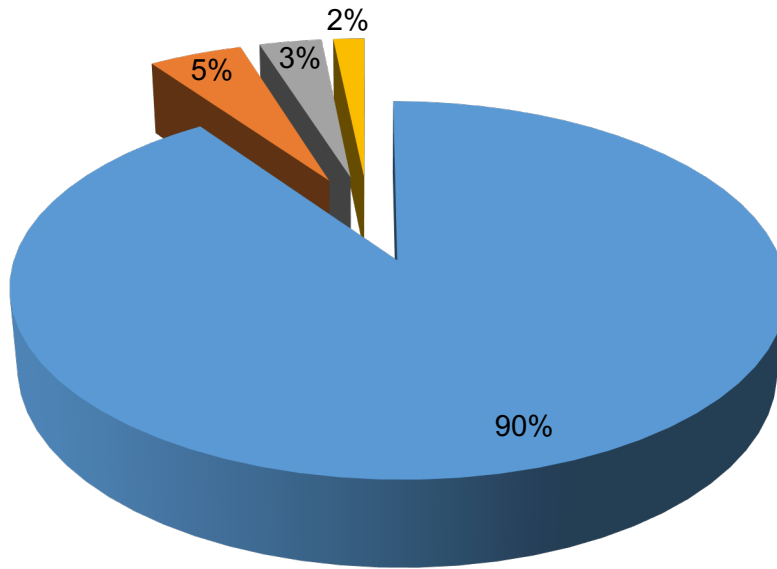
### Family Income of Respondents



Income	Raw #s
\$10K	10
\$10-\$25K	18
\$25-\$50K	19
\$50-\$75K	10
\$75-\$100K	2
\$100+	1
N/A	2

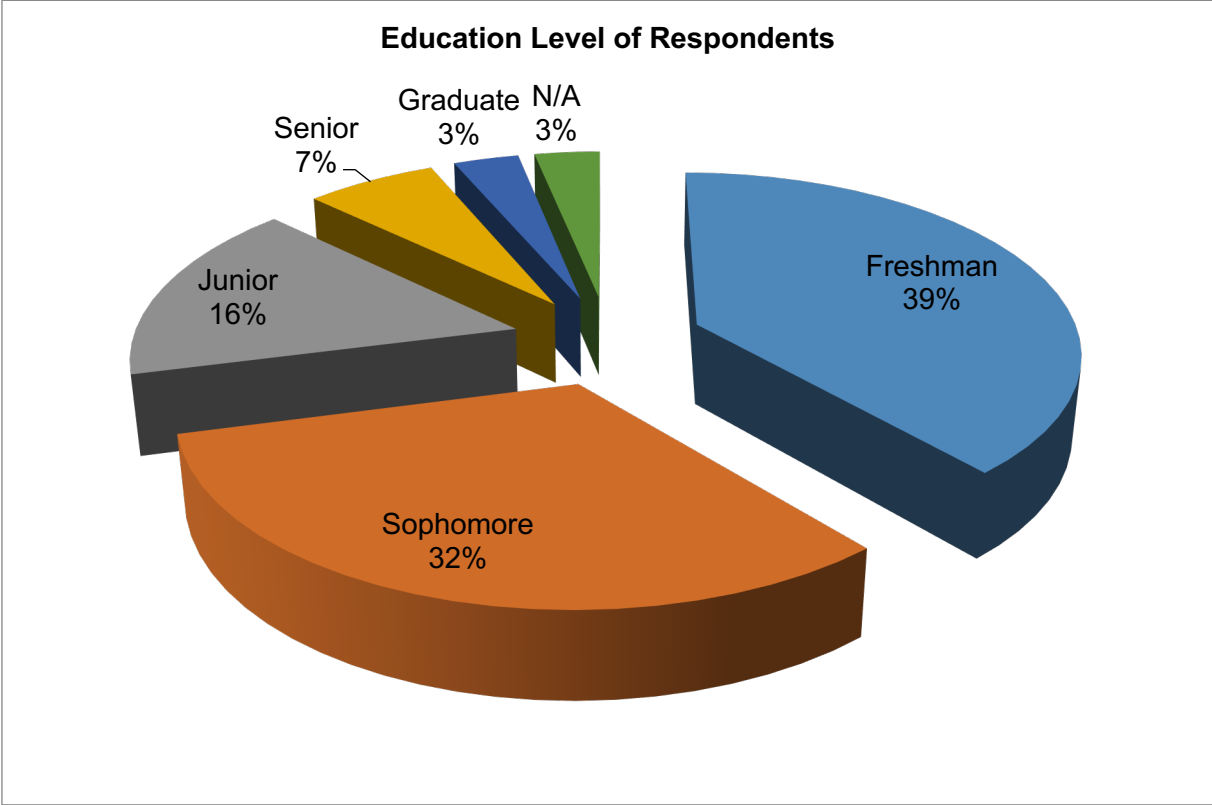
### Ethnicity of Respondent

■ White ■ Hispanic ■ African American ■ Asian



Race/Ethnicity	Raw #s
White	56
Hispanic	3
African American	2
Asian	1





<b>Class</b>	<b>Raw #s</b>
Freshman	24
Sophomore	20
Junior	10
Senior	4
Graduate	2
N/A	2

**Q1. How is taking a social science course online going to benefit you in your major?**

to be aware of my flaws

to build computer confidence

to complete paperwork online

to complete tasks online

to deal with situations via computer

to develop time management

to foster better problem solving skills

to increase my sensibility to client

to learn computers

to learn flexibility in completing tasks

to use good judgment

to work independently

to work with others

to write appropriate emails

**Q2. How is taking a social science class online going to benefit you in your career?**

to accept peoples' differences
to better understand my clients
to build tolerance
to figuring out websites
to help me as a CPS worker
to help me as a future lawyer
to help me get teacher certified
to incorporate course information into my professional life
to increase my marketability
to learn appropriate computer communication skills
to learn to comprehend online information
to learn what is expected of me
to understand obstacles clients must overcome
to understand problems as they arise with others
to understand research methods
to understanding other cultures
to use PDF, RTF, DOC
to work independently

Closing the Circle: Aristotle to Extinction Rebellion  
Rex Wirth, Professor Emeritus  
Central Washington University

Recently I was watching the *Frontline* feature on artificial intelligence (AI) where one of the experts expressed disappointment because he had not generated the graph he was presenting. When it appeared, it showed what he called civilization developing slowly over millennia until the start of the Industrial Revolution after which it changed from a very gradual horizontal slope to a straight vertical climb. This was good news because the latest revolutionary cycle, propelled by AI, would continue to accelerate us on the new trajectory. This is no doubt good news, better than the Christian “Good News” for true believers in technology and the kind of science that sees it as our salvation.

For a “doubting Thomas” it looks more like development that was once sustainable, run amok. There are a large number of “doubting” scientists who see it as bad news and give us a ten to twenty-year window to reverse the trend or die. They have inspired a counter-revolutionary movement, Extinction Rebellion. It is counter-revolutionary in the sense that it opposes rocketing along current trajectory of the Industrial Revolution. In effect it seems to me that they think we can build on our accomplishments by finding out where we went wrong, changing direction and coming together to create a global *Polity* in which everyone enjoys the leisure to be a full citizen—everyone freed by green machines.

### **Democratic Words v. Systems Truth**

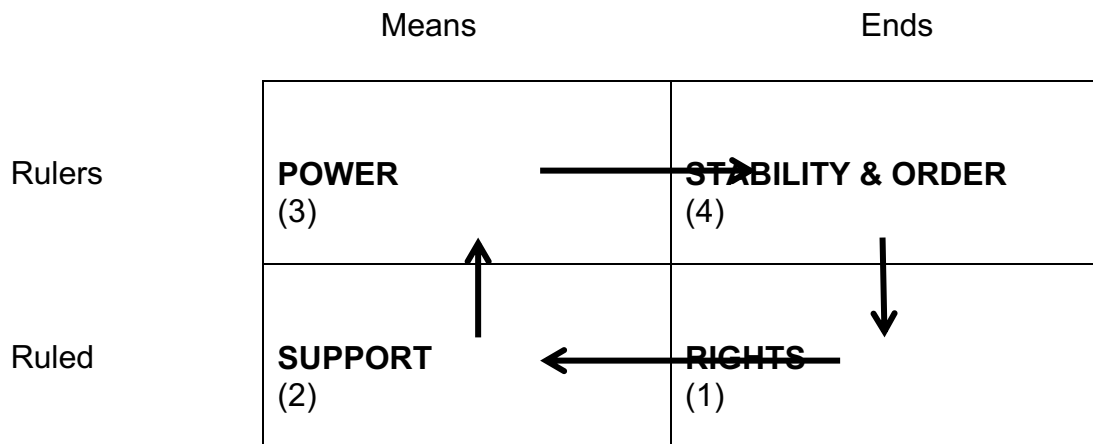
I don’t know if Socrates, Plato or Aristotle ever considered salvation through mechanization, but they did settle on the idea of the “polity” as the second best and doable form of governance. The best was, of course, Plato’s *Republic* ruled by philosopher kings and queens in accordance with the idea of the good where the objective was Justice. David Apter diagramed the structure and logic of both the ideal and the theoretically doable modes and subsequent actual arrangements in *Political Analysis*. All of them except the polity have distinct structures of Rulers and Ruled where the rulers are a separate system of government. The polity by contrast is a community in which rulers and ruled are the same group—neither to rule nor to be ruled. Since the Greeks remain the starting point for speculation about politics and governance in the West, we continue to wrap whatever we do in their idealistic language. Madison’s “extended republic” was more modest than Plato’s in that it intended merely to remedy the pathologies of democracy, first elaborated by Aristotle, through competing interests and elected rulers. The presence of rulers made it incompatible with Aristotle’s ideal polity where the pathology would be eliminated by getting rid of all rulers. Neither to rule nor to be ruled became government of the people, by the people and for the people in support of “democracy” as we morphed Aristotle’s polity into its opposite—school children learn nothing of the polity, but they learn to love Athenian democracy.

It took eleven years to formulate and settle upon *The Constitution*—it is a very realistic document that lays out the plan for our Liberal system where Justice remains the first requisite of a perfect union. *The Declaration of Independence* on the other hand is a very idealistic document that sells the cause of freedom. While the Constitution, in the end, rejected Aristotelian idealism, its rhetoric had been preserved forever in Jefferson’s *Declaration*. John Locke, the prophet of Liberalism and the source of the ideas, was quite idealistic, nowhere near as pessimistic as Madison, but not as optimistic as Jefferson. When George left his chair at the convention to become President of the United States of

America, the sun that rose was a ruthless Liberalism wrapped in the idealistic promise of the polity. It works and, therefore, is good—The American Way.

For thirty-six years I used Apter’s diagrams to get my students to see this mixing of Madison’s realistic Liberalism and Jefferson’s Greek idealism and the consequences for them and our public life. The beginning point for us is not the Greeks; it is the Enlightenment and our Liberal revolution. Liberalism is the fighting ideology of modernity that brought a new understanding of Human Nature and the human condition—one suited to industrialism. American Liberalism sees history not as a sequence of cycles with the Liberal revolution as the beginning of a new cycle, another circle to be completed, but as linear progress toward heaven on Earth. The new objective requires a new kind of revolution—not the start of a new cycle, but a change of trajectory. The big change was the belief that through human industriousness the full potential of the planet could be put into the service of humanity, but first nature had to be conquered. The engine of progress in this conquest grew into “The Free Enterprise System”. Only the successful conquest of nature which gives us control over all the resources of the planet can support the new, undefined, Eden. The plan to get us there is not a pretty one; after all war is hell.

**APTER’S LIBERALISM: THE ENLIGHTENMENT CULTURE OF THE "REAL WORLD"**



Here thinking starts with rights. Rights of the individual are #1: The most important thing. Rights are the focus of all of our political thinking. The problem of government is, then, to secure these rights. In order to do this, it must have power, but to get power it must have the support (#2) of the people: VOTES & MONEY! So, we must support the government so that it will have the power (#3) to create and maintain a predictable context (#4) that makes it possible to rationally exercise our rights. Anytime things get out of hand we must increase our support so that they will have the power to fix the problem (drugs, terrorists, etc.) for us. The real world is a tough place where one cannot have enough rights or protection. Everything in this view can be seen in Madison’s Federalist 10.

We talk freedom and we get rights. Property rights—seldom discussed—of the individual are the ones that really count, consequently, the government’s job is to protect property. We also have to have the right to use our physical and mental capabilities to acquire property. Locke called it liberty, but it must be controlled, there must be rules/laws.

Government now has two more jobs; it must define rightful acquisition and certify title so it knows what to prevent and what/who to protect. In short, we cannot use our rights without stability and order—government must ensure a predictable context or rights are useless. Locke imagined a benign “state of nature”, but American revolutionaries were realists who accepted the Hobbesian view of life without government as “nasty, brutish and short”.

“No more Kings”—the revolutionaries feared and hated government power. The engineering was brilliant. The Constitution set up a government to protect the citizens from their own government while at the same time making that government the sole protector of their private property. This made the citizens totally dependent on a government they feared. The logic is air-tight. The government’s ability (power) to do its job of protecting the right to acquire property and the private property itself depends on the support of the people. Whenever things go wrong, become unpredictable, the only recourse for individuals is increased support for the government so it will have enough power to do its job—restore stability and order.

Even though we all live it, no American will or probably would buy it. We seem to accept property as the most important thing, but prefer to think of it as happiness. Students can see this logic, but when it comes to votes, Aristotle rules. Votes are not support; votes are choices. Observing that everything in the USA was thought of as a choice Dwight Waldo called it our ethic—the Unquestioned Ethic of Choice. Choices, however, won’t work in the logical structure; choices don’t increase power. When it comes to the functioning of systems, it is behavior not intention that counts. Everyone can believe that they are making choices as long as their behavior supports the system in accordance with its logic; we do—the Constitution works.

Jefferson started the whole thing when he borrowed from Aristotle and established the pursuit of happiness as America’s third inalienable right. We have been using the language and vision of the polity to talk and think about what we are doing ever since. We seem to maintain our myths in this "real world" by using words and ideas that come from an ideal world: Aristotle's Prudential Polity.

**APTER’S POLITY: OUR IDEAL WORLD**

	Means	Ends
Citizens	<b>CHOICES</b> (4)	<b>PRACTCAL WISDOM</b> (3)
The Polis	<b>MIXED CONSTUTION</b> (1)	<b>HAPPINESS</b> (2)

All Americans are familiar with everything, but our understanding and use of the words is nothing like Aristotle's. For him the mixed-constitution was the actual structure of society, the division of labor across the economic, social and political dimensions of the polity—all connections: how and where citizens live together. So that when a new and better way of organizing was discovered by a citizen/ruler, shared, deliberated, adopted, and implemented; everyone in it and the entire polity were happier. Happiness instantly increased because they were living in closer accordance with the good as a result of the latest contribution by one of them.

We weave the ideals and vocabulary of the Polity into an ever-changing tapestry that makes the mechanizations of our system of government good, no matter what. We even retain the old Greek faith in perfectibility. When we say, "The American system isn't perfect, but it is the best ever." we reaffirm our faith that one day it will be. We really do have freedom of speech; creativity in the use of supporting language is encouraged, indeed required, as long as in the end it supports the underlying reality: Law and Order. All of this has serious implications for us as individual citizens, but the beauty of the tapestries that surround us mask it completely unless or until we are seen to violate the law or the order in our words or deeds. Here's my diagram of this dream world of words that we play with and use so effectively and beautifully.

### OUR DREAM WORLD OF WORDS

Elected Servants	<b>MIXED CONSTITUTION</b>	<b>LAW AND ORDER</b>
	Separation of Powers/ Checks and balances	Rule of Law
We the People	<b>CHOICE</b>	<b>HAPPINESS</b>
	Unquestioned ethic	Highest standard of living

It all starts with the nastiest rub of all. Jefferson didn't give us the right to be happy, only the right to pursue it—to chase it until we die. Even if he had given us the right to be happy, it would not mean we are, were or could be. Unlike in the Polity where change produces actual happiness, the best rights can do is give each of us a chance to improve our individual situation. Individual rights mean it has to be done alone. Fear not, choice is better than rights. One can chose to be happy. So, in our dream world we are happy and with every new and improved product we acquire we become happier. Any unhappiness is a consequence of bad choices. The dream too often goes bad, but if you are unhappy/unsuccessful there is no one to blame but yourself. It might be logic or just a trap, but either way there is no escape—maybe it is a perfect system.

### The Way In Is the Way Out

*Perhaps in time the Dark Ages will be thought of as including our own.*

What is a dark age? Aside from the bad old days that we look back on to assure ourselves that we live in the best of possible worlds, it merely amounts to being stuck in a rut. Locked



into a way of living by beliefs that no longer work. It's not a question of how long it's been going on. Sustainable life ways can continue indefinitely without ever creating a rut. Ruts are the product of changed conditions where the automatic behaviors produced by beliefs no longer work. Getting stuck is the simple, almost inevitable, consequence of being human. Whatever the faith, the faithful always believe that if things are going wrong it's because they are not behaving. Being stuck means doing the thing that is not working, that is causing the problem, better in order to fix the problem. The solution that got us out of the last Dark Age was revolution—a new direction, a new way of thinking about our history. Progress, the conquest of nature or faith in the human capacity to change the world, became the driving force that generated a new world through new automatic behaviors. Progress it turns out is a very tricky idea; it can't be an end, only the means to an end. When we straightened history out and started doing progress we were headed somewhere, but now we seem to believe in and pursue only progress, infinite progress—preservation of the system seems to have become the only goal.

In the old world where history was cyclical, revolutions were simple transitions. The rational revolution of the enlightenment changed that and we can't go back. When doing this new thing the same way only better became counterproductive, things didn't slow down to make the need for change obvious like the rut of a bad king or a corrupt oligarchy; they accelerated and rocketed blindly along the new trajectory toward the edge of the Earth. Our rut is a real suicide course. We need a counter-revolution to slow things down so that we can create a sustainable track before it's too late. There is real "good news"! The things we know how to do will work to do things differently. There is no doubt that the tools we are using to destroy our world and our happiness can be used to save one and promote, even secure, the other, but first we have to define the goal.

Our problem is similar to that of those trapped in Plato's cave, but we know how television works and how it could work. We know the way out; we don't need an AI augmentation of *Twitter* to help our rulers show us the way. Individualism run amok has trapped us in uniformity and only a new individualism can get us out. Somewhere along the collective path that brought us to the brink of destruction lies the point where its truths became counterproductive. That is to say the point at which progress replaced the real goal—where the liberal revolution became Liberalism. To take individualism seriously each of us must find this juncture and recognize that it will lie at different points for each of us. Then, as individuals each with a unique understanding of our collective problem, we will be ready to become the citizens who rule. Counter-revolution is the coming together of these future citizens in a real updated polity to do it—share, deliberate and choose.

### **Ideas, Art and Rebellion**

We can only retrace our path by following the ideas, bread crumbs, left by those whose thought was compelling enough to survive. All of them were visionaries. They shared the same advantage. They got to imagine how things would be if they were believed and they didn't have to worry about or deal with the consequences of society accepting and doing it. That was left for future generations. They are related in that all of them did sequentially what all of us must now do simultaneously. The consequences of the ideas of "dead scribblers" are a catalyst for the new ideas that get societies out of ruts. Of course, as

with the denizens of the cave, if people can't see that they are in a rut, new ideas will be rejected—unnecessary. All of their creative effort will go into adapting; rethinking situations so that established truths hold or get stronger—new and improved. In the rational world of the Enlightenment that amounts to rationalization. The thought process involved is the same as that of rational analysis, but the purpose is very different. The latter might get us out of the rut; the former keeps us in it.

If one uses a rubric for critical thinking, it can't be critical! It is critical that each individual turn and start following the crumbs home. Back to the situation or idea that inspires them. Vision quest is not a modern idea, but there are a lot of things to be learned from older long-lived cultures that relied on it. Back when we were young, fighting wars against poverty at home and communism in Vietnam, hippies, civil rights movement and Woodstock, David Schuman found the idea of rightfittingness. He thought that it was an idea whose time had come. Unfortunately, to date he is wrong, but we're not dead yet. Put simply, rightfittingness is the opposite of "fitting in". Democracy, as we have come to think of it, assumes that every individual is unique. If we are not, it is nonsensical. Rightfittingness takes uniqueness seriously. It means that each person when they think about it, sees their world fitting together in a good and beautiful way—the one way that is best for that person. Uniqueness means that no other person could, can or will ever be able to see it that way. Living together in society most of us have to see most things the same, but for Liberals it's the freedom to be unique that counts. That is why John Stewart Mill absolutely opposed any censorship. It is the motor of Aristotle's Polity—virtuous rule by the many/ all.

Fortunately, most of the people we still read have shown us the way, they followed the crumbs back, found the catalytic juncture and showed us how to find the way back to rightfittingness. They shared it and the everyone learned something new that made the world a better place to live. Albert Camus gave us some very good stories to experience and learn from, but in *The Rebel*, he shows us his trip to rightfittingness. It's quite the trip; there's one crumb that really grabbed me, the Comte de Lautreamont. Banned everywhere, even in Paris, it used to be hard to lay hands on *Les Chants de Maldoror*, but they had everything at Vanderbilt and during the summer of 1980 I learned what John Stewart was talking about. So, what is the idea of the rebel that came out of Camus' journey? It was an updating of Descartes: Instead of "I think, therefore, I am." The rebel says, "I rebel, therefore, we are".

It is this personal rebellion against the pressure to fit in that societies exert on everyone that launches an individual on the quest for rightfittingness. Once found, as with the denizen of the cave who after being forced to be free and finding the good had to return to those still in the cave with the good news, it must be shared with the rest of the community, society and humanity because being unique it contains truth that everyone and the whole need to augment/complete their understanding(s). Extinction Rebellion is composed of communities that form within and across national societies where individuals share their perceptions of the dangers posed by global industrialism—Capitalism is not a real thing; it can't be the problem. Refusing to fit in for different reasons each rebel is forced to find rightfittingness, but they are no longer forced to return to the national society that will reject/kill them. Instead they find each other and form new civic societies that have the same goals and dynamics as those Aristotle imagined for the ideal city state.

More good news, Aristotle's concerns about scale really can be overcome by technology—we can do government by all at the scale of humanity.

Extinction Rebellion and many other civil society, even independence, movements talk about self-governing communities and they are right to do so because with advances in technology, unlike Plato's city-states where it was self-sufficiency or luxury (Imperialism), empathy can be extended globally to connect communities of different scales together in different ways to achieve the common goals of the Polity—wisdom and happiness.

Adam Smith and the rest of the classical economists did political economy; today we have the Council of Economic Advisors that provides mathematized economic facts to guide our elected rulers. No politics involved that would be corruption. Politics is no longer about economics, it's about power understood as the ability of A to make B do something B does not want to do. No wonder we hate politics and it's easy to see why we should rebel—there are very few good places to fit into. Somewhere in Cornford's translation of Plato's *Republic* I drew a lesson. I don't know if it was while reading the introduction or the text and it doesn't matter; it doesn't even matter if it's there in black and white or not. As soon as one of us writes something and shares it, it is a gift to whoever reads it, a guide for them on their quests and with luck it provides a catalyst that opens on rightfittingness for some of them. On to the lesson that without Cronford and Plato I would not understand: *If someone wants a leadership position that disqualifies him/her*. This explains why the Greeks drew lots as well as most everything that's going on in American democratic politics/elections today. We hold a completion every four years to find out who wants to be president the most and we give them the job. Not understanding the lesson, we are always surprised when they turn out to be the worst one for the job. It's not just the president, we elected a half-million worst-leaders.

So, we have theories of political economy that determine who gets what, when and how and Democracy, Aristotle's corrupt form of rule by the many, that keeps us busy looking for the one who will do the worst job and both are working exactly as they should to keep our systems stable. Hannah Arendt explains this in *The Human Condition* as she provides the key to virtuous governance of the Polity. For the ancient Greeks the household was the realm of necessity composed of slaves and women upon which the whole depended for the production of the wherewithal to live. Survive or thrive economic necessity ruled, but beyond mere survival the household provided the leisure that allowed the citizens (men) to devote themselves to politics. Politics was considered the highest form of human activity through which they created public space and entered the realm of freedom: The Polity. Freedom, the bedrock of the Polity and the obsession of Liberals, is being undermined by industrialism, Europeans call it Fordism, as it pursues another Cartesian idea: the world machine paradigm.

Economics, as with the Greeks, governs our realm of necessity. For us, as Carlyle said, economics remains "the dismal science" because it still deals with scarcity. If there is scarcity in a city-state it cannot be a Polity because there can be no leisure, therefore no freedom. Economically a Polity had to have done what Carlyle and other hopeful economists—the ones we still read—hope(d) to do, change economics into the "gay science" of abundance. For Locke it was elimination of waste, for Smith it was the wealth

of nations and both worked. We have abundance, but machines can't see it. They just keep on producing/functioning and, as functioning parts, we keep improving them. Fordism where people first became machine parts is a relic as we enter the fourth industrial revolution. The wealth of other nations is now the threat, and waste keeps the dismal science alive as we depend on those in power to save the machine and create service, tech and knowledge jobs for us and our children (STEM will save them.) to fit into. Everyone has been sucked into the production process, an all-inclusive realm of necessity. Our global household has become the realm of consumption where no one can be free from the law supply and demand.

### **Extinction?**

The extinction rebels have to convince everyone else that there is a threat. After all, threat works! But, even if they do, China is causing it and we know how to deal with the Chinese threat—a communist threat turned economic threat it just keeps getting worse. Nothing new yet, all we need is more and better now. Rebellion is close to revolution and we know that communist revolutions destroy democracy and capitalism, our system of government and freedom itself. Rebellion may be worse, after all those Confederate States tried that. In a nation-state that was born of a rebellion that we call a revolution: why is revolution such a threat? It seems to me that it is part of our faith in progress; the movement to linear history made ours the last revolution. Marx saw Capitalism as the unjust, but necessary and progressive final stage before the socialist revolution that would end pre-history and with justice mark the real beginning of Human history. Our problem with Marx is that we know that we have already done that and with “rule of law” codified, forever, in the Constitution his pre-history ended. Think about it: All those good people, who can be seen as the worst for the positions they've been elected to fill, swear an oath to “protect and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies foreign or domestic”. That's a real threat to extinction rebels because the rest of us have to back those leaders.

The new factor, possibly the decisive factor is Science. The true sacred cow of the enlightenment, our source of innovation and the motor of progress. That's why we attribute any failure/slowdown to our educational systems failure to produce scientists. When it's working right, it takes us to the moon; when it's not, we're losing the economic race. Our enlightenment faith in science is the most fundamental; progress depends on it, as well as, the freedom to continue to accumulate property for the Constitution to protect. Because of the constitutional separation of church and state, religion still saves souls, but here and now the system depends on Science—Science Saves. STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) will save us, but not without economics, that is to say, the science of it.

Looking backward our history was told as a story of these elements working together in accordance with laws of physics and human nature until these positive linkages became axiomatic. Progress is a virtuous cycle wherein as science discovers new resources or new uses for old ones, technology is created to exploit the opportunities and systems are engineered to reap the benefits. Whenever, superior replacements are not discovered before an essential resource approaches exhaustion it is self-correcting. The law of supply and demand takes over causing the price to increase spurring innovation because innovators can find and bring alternatives to market at a lower price—

scarcity covers the startup costs. Rationally and scientifically the solution to such problems really is to use it up as fast as we can. Remember when “Peak oil” was environmentalists’ hope for the future?

Within the automatic cycle scientists have real jobs. Production always generates waste and something must be done with it. Whenever, disposal creates problems we look to science to save us from them—smog and ozone depletion for example. While looking for waste problems and solutions, they also monitor the impacts of innovation. Some profitable/desirable products do turn out to be dangerous, like asbestos and DDT. We depend on working scientists to keep us safe from the unanticipated consequences of progress and we usually, if begrudgingly, accept what they have to tell us. This goes back to unquestioned assumptions about progress. Science is the motor of progress, but progress came to be understood as industrial advancement, the ongoing revolution that brings an ever-higher standard of living. The association is so close that progress and industrialism are virtually the same thing. As long as scientific corrective measures support this dynamic, they are acceptable. Even when they target useful products within the overall system, they stimulate the virtuous cycle by bringing externalities into cost-benefit calculations. Laws banning products can be passed because the threat creates a willingness to pay more for safer alternatives.

Why do so few accept what scientists, doing their jobs, tell us about global warming/climate change? Global warming is different because it threatens industrialism itself, the entire Free Enterprise System. Peak oil was triggering innovation for a transition to solar, wind and hydrogen, but the cycle was broken and peak oil was averted by competing efforts to conserve oil-based industrialism. Technical innovations accessed seemingly unlimited oil reserves. The feared scarcity that was triggering a new cycle vanished and with it the need for change/sacrifice. In this case the scientists could not quite. The science that sustains their continuing effort was fully developed and established when Henry Ford engineered his first industrial plant. It showed that one of the results of his revolution was the warming of the atmosphere due to increased levels of carbon. Science’s main contribution to increased productivity is a better understanding of the physical world. This understanding of our biosphere revealed not only opportunities, but limits. They came to understand that there is a limited temperature range that is conducive to human, even animal, life on the planet. As their measurements, taken for all kinds of system supporting reasons, began to show increasing temperatures and specifically a pattern in the increase that corresponded with established science; the world listened and set up UN mechanisms to monitor things closely. As long as peak oil seemed to be sparking a new cycle with a non-carbon energy base monitoring was enough—scientists are firm believers in science and progress. When the euphoria of transcending the limit of peak oil accelerated movement toward the limit, they panicked and put together a carbon budget that gives us ten years to avoid catastrophic consequences. Greta paid attention! She is really afraid and is out to convince the rest of us—she is *Time* Person of the Year. Trump ignored it, knows it’s a Chinese hoax and rejects international efforts to do anything about it in the name of economic growth—he is the runner-up @ *Time*.

## **Counter-revolution**

People are already dying from causes related to climate change, but there's nothing that can't be rationalized. If we bust the carbon budget, vulnerable populations will start dying en masse. That might be the spur to action and save some of us, but by then overshoot will have made life as we know it impossible. It's more likely that we/they will stick with the time-honored logic of Scrooge, "Let them die and reduce the excess population." Santa isn't coming, we are the counter-revolution and the key for each of us lies in our collective past—finding the wrong turn. Maybe it was the "Conquest of Nature". Lots of our dead scribbles said it, but what did they mean? Surely not, "Let her die and eradicate the Human population." Although some of our new high-tech gurus seem to be saying just that, they are part of Christmas present. The ghost of Christmas past is found by reading. It lets us live in past worlds and feel the joy of the visions and hopes our dead scribbles had for us. Like Scrooge, when educated middle-class beneficiaries of the industrial system go back and see what could have been, the future becomes clear. Knowing that it need not be, they set out to change it—I rebel, therefore, we will be. Rebellion isn't new. Individuals in small groups have been reading, sharing, writing and changing the world for better and/or worse for a longtime. Extinction is new, but we don't believe it. We still talk of saving the world from capitalism or communism, even Fascism, while in reality we must save the world for humanity—the Extinction Rebellion.

It is only extinction on a global scale that is new. Many communities of people are gone, but thousands are still here clinging to their places, tittering on the brink of extinction—cultural and physical. Their contemporary classification is indigenous peoples. They are the peoples of place who know, once knew, everything about and are/were an integral part of their homeplaces. Industrialism has already destroyed most of them and their lifeways by taking and changing their lands. We don't need a ghost to guide us; they are still here. As the first/next to go those remaining have been resisting for a longtime, they are still on the front lines now fighting extinction, their histories and plights are the projection of our Christmas future. It was massive destruction of the remaining pristine land in indigenous homelands that saved us from peak oil. Waste on the output side is now doing to our global home what securing the inputs of industrialism has been an is doing peoples of place since we started doing it. As their long struggle shows us, resistance is not enough unless everyone rebels, we are finished.

Many peoples of place share a creation story. In the beginning all the people were living below ground. There was an entry to the earth high above them, but they had no way to access it. One day the Creator lowered a ladder for them to use. As the peoples emerged in groups or as individuals, they set out to explore their beautiful new world looking for the best place. Each people found and became part of the place that was best for them. They did politics, Aristotle style, and created rightfitting cultures that supported self-sufficient and self-sustaining communities. As long as they lived happily, satisfied with the best life in the best place, they became and remained part of the balance of nature, but as Plato illustrated with the Greek city-states, as soon as one group chose luxury over self-sufficiency imperialism upset the balance. Resistance at that point often contained ambitions and restored balance, but it was a wider balance for a larger space. Where ever luxury won it was the end of self-sufficiency, balance and rightfittingness/happiness for everyone—Judeo-Christian equivalent of eating the apple. The only way out of this new kind of hole seemed be expansion—a bigger hole. Holes

proliferated and merged until the world wars of industrialism reduced them to two. When the cold war ended, we were all together again. This time on the brink of extinction.

We are once again back in a deep hole of our own making. With no creator to help us we have to build our own ladder(s). Maslow, doing what McGregor called fruitful science, built one. Maslow's ladder, hierarchy of human needs, works for me. After reading my undergraduate thesis, my advisor asked me why I hadn't cited Maslow. I responded that I hadn't used his work. After a few years in the academy I realized what had happened, I had just picked it up from reading about Maslow's theory in text books across most of my classes. Just think back on your college texts and tests that featured Maslow and you will realize how fruitful his theory is. How it causes others to generate their own new theories and/or use his in new ways—for better or worse. Established theories of history and markets—progress, dialectics and development—provide us with road maps, but they turn out to be road maps to nowhere because while glorifying individualism they eliminate people. There is no destination, only prescribed movement that became procedural truth; the competing processes that are industrialism's rut/hole. People with goals turn road maps into ladders; Maslow by bringing people back, not as abstract individuals, but as persons shows us the way out of process and back to the original idea of the Polity—virtuous rule by many/all.

### **A Way Out of the Hole**

When it comes to ladders in holes one must start at the bottom. Self-actualization/rightfittingness is at the top—the most elevated of human needs, but as with any ladder we can only get there one rung at a time. To get to higher levels, lower level needs must be satisfied. While peoples of place with their creators' help lived at the highest level, we chose to have the knowledge of good and evil and with the demise of Universal Christendom we looked to the Greeks and settled on Enlightenment as our out. The first thing, first rung, was to restore the abundance that we traded for the knowledge. John Locke and Adam Smith provided the first rung and we began to climb, but soon the pursuit of material prosperity and the perfecting of the means of achieving it turned the first step into the last—you probably recall texts that saw Maslow's ladder as the map to success with self-actualizing CEO's at top.

Locke and Newton, as contemporaries, mark the beginning of our scientific ways, two-hundred years later McGregor pointed out a fundamental mistake that had grown out of attempting to perfect these means through the scientific study of what we were doing. In *The Human Side to Enterprise*, he concluded that we had inverted cause and effect. We had erroneously claimed that behaviors consistently observed overtime scientifically established attributes of human nature that supported the validity and effectiveness of established management theory. McGregor, however, pointed out that since only people who were subject to the accepted approach had been observed, the behaviors could be consequences of the way people were treated. He proceeded to make the case that they are and introduced a new management theory based on a more adequate understanding on who we are. McGregor stressed that when it comes to motivation, a satisfied need can no longer motivate human behavior. Consequently, motivation in his new theory was based on belongingness needs, but to get to this rung requires more than merely meeting physical/biological needs; people have to believe it. The second rung, the safety need,

compounds the cause and effect problem. McGregor thought there was a difference between safety and security: a safety need can be satisfied, a security need cannot. By demanding security at the lowest level, we create a need that material progress cannot satisfy—we are stuck chasing an ever-increasing material standard of living.

Maslow's theory was completed in the 1950's as McGregor worked out his ideas. It would have been a good time to change direction, but at the societal level we asked the wrong questions and any benefits that accrued from new insights to management helped corporations, armies and states use people better to function more effectively. We could have asked, "How many cars do we need?" Instead we asked, "How many cars can we sell?" Labor saving devices turned wives into "cake winners", but labor-saving machines and the doubling of the workforce resulted in unemployment and made it the top policy concern for government in the emerging luxurious/consumer society. That our increasing capacity for meeting physiological needs actually made everyone less secure brought widespread resistance in the 1960's, but the ongoing Cold War reinforced material competition on both sides and eclipsed rebellion at all levels.

That activists keep trying to recover, relive the sixties, indicates that they see them as an opportunity, a juncture where a new direction that could have been taken was discovered. We can take a couple of lessons from this: we cannot change when we are and that solutions to problems stemming from nationalism and the bomb, race and inequality were found and have been institutionalized. Terrorism brought new enemies both foreign and domestic. Hate crimes became domestic terrorism that criminalized unacceptable protest and the continuing terrorist threat abroad limited anti-war efforts. To guide the planting of the ladder we need to find a broader context that is like the present situation, but where the issues of war and equality can be dealt with in the broader context of sustainability and safety that can cope with extinction. Boston 2000 was a place, Edward Bellamy imagined for us. Unfortunately, his hopes for us were never realized. While using his classic, *Looking Backward*, in classes for over the past thirty years I noticed that we were recreating once again the same conditions that he experienced in the 1880's when he gave the world his famous stagecoach analogy and fought for a new direction.

So, what happened at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Competition ended in monopoly and something had to be done. Bellamy proposed climbing up to safety, but change is hard and we opted instead for the great American experiment that saved the capitalist mantra, "more is better" by restoring competition through government action to undo and prevent monopoly and promoting individual economic opportunity. What Bellamy was able to see was that we had achieved real material affluence that made it possible to satisfy the safety needs of society through equitable distribution. If we had done it, established motivators of behavior at the level of material needs would no longer have worked. We would have had to find replacements for the hierarchy of merit that motivated competitive behaviors to generate material prosperity.

The error that keeps us caged in the prison of outmoded beliefs is the assumption that creating material affluence is the same as maintaining it. If Redistribution leads to leveling and lack of motivation in the context of scarcity, competition and hierarchy lead to irrational difference maximization and waste in the context of affluence. The second



rung although hard to reach, holds no temptation to linger as long as there is faith in the permanence of universal affluence. To sure up that faith Bellamy proposed an industrial army to fight the war against want so that he could move on to belongingness with a new a mantra to replace “more is better” as the basis for the story problems that teach children socio-cultural truths while they learn math and prepare to do science. Bellamy’s new truth, “Everyone’s best is equal” provides the basis for a whole new motivational structure that frees individuals to find their belongingness within the family, immediate community and beyond.

He confined hierarchy to the Industrial Army which as the society’s household more than met all material needs and provided the means to satisfy the desires that flow from individual uniqueness. The belongingness rung is the last one that is a societal concern; it is the organizational basis of the polity where politics alters the constitution’s mix (structure) to more closely approximate “the Good” and increases the happiness of each and all. In his Christian community/nation all men are really created equal. His new covenant rests upon the old truth “where much is given much is expected”. Consequently, “Endowment equals duty” and the Creator’s self-evident truth is understood to be “Everyone’s best is equal.” Integrity and honor as motivators at the level of Ego needs are nurtured and grow in the young as they discover what they are best at doing with the help of family, community and friends.

### **Climbing Out**

Bellamy was counter-revolutionary in the sense I use the term in two respects: he kept the Constitution as written although it’s meaning changed completely as he adapted it to deal with belongingness and he stuck with the technology of 1887. There is nothing in Boston 2000 that was not known in his time. No science fiction, he did not look to science for a technological fix. If the 30,000 Bellamy Societies had carried the day, the 20<sup>th</sup> Century would have been completely different. We would have avoided two world-wars, the bomb and the cold war—no Pentagon, no moon shot, no car culture, no suburbia, no airline industry. Counterfactuals are fun, but I’m running out of space. We have to plant the ladder here, 2020. When and Where we are. Bellamy, not having experienced the Century of Carnage, couldn’t see the dark underbelly of military and corporate organization that he chose as his guarantors of public safety and freedom. Looking backward with 120 years of history to draw on, I would predict that such institutions in one of his corporate nations would have succumbed to luxury’s lure giving us either Rollerball or a Mormon-like corporate theocracy in Boston 2000, but probably not extinction.

There are lessons to be learned from the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, but to finish up I will concentrate on the main problem of post-war prosperity. From the early days when smog started killing people, our real problem was that jobs were killing us, but we refused to believe it preferring to think that the choice was between jobs that kept us secure and ecological purity that would starve us. Now that jobs have brought us to the brink of extinction it is clear that we were trapped. Rationality would have told us to get out of the trap and give up jobs, but rationalization kept us on the job digging our grave. The rationalizations that supported outmoded shibboleths for so long have become tangible targets for the rebellion and the universal education, widespread higher

education and advanced technologies for communications and analysis that came out of jobs creation are now available for a rational assault and reconstruction.

With very limited communications capacity Bellamy proposed to eliminate both jobs and the state by combining all production in a single corporation owned by the nation as individuals—one equal inalienable share for every person. That’s how he saved property law. To deal with the same problem as industrialism matured and more and more property belonged to corporations, we came up with the fiction that corporations are legal persons. Now they own everything. It’s gotten to the point where human persons who make too much money have to incorporate themselves to keep it. It’s pretty much safe to say that all productive property (capital) is now owned by corporations. We acknowledge this every time we say Free Enterprise System and in doing so we recognize that corporations are free and we are not. Corporations were invented to pool the money to build plant and rapidly increase production to eliminate scarcity. When that was done instead of scraping them and moving on up the ladder, we turned to them to solve the problem of unemployment. They became profit making persons that maintained the scarcity that competition requires by giving us ever more and better now and creating the jobs to do it. Millions of real human beings pretend that they own their own homes by renting them from the banks and other financial corporations so that millions will have jobs in the real-estate industry. Corporations are fake people, chartered legal fictions, we can cancel them. That would leave all their fake market screens blank and give the real people, who have been using the technology, full control of it to make the world livable, safe, humane and just.

Bellamy eliminated jobs by breaking the link between work and pay. He said that there was no money, but he provided equal annual income (credits) as the dividend from shares of the Great Trust. After the rebellion when the corporations are gone, there are no employers, no stockholders and no elected corporate offices just real people maintaining and using all existing plant and infrastructure as they did the day before to produce and distribute goods and services. There will be no problem with supply, but the Rebels, that’s everyone, will now use facilities to do the things they’ve always wanted to do and find creative ways to deal equitably, cooperatively and justly with demand and inventory issues solving the money problem and inventing the “gay science” with a new balanced belongingness economy.

**Consolidated Rebel Paradigm**

	Means	Ends
Citizens (Individuals Ruling)	(4) <b>CHOICES</b> Political Deliberation Freedom to Create	(3) <b>PRACTCAL WISDOM</b> Rightfittingness Self-Actualization
The Polis	(1) <b>MIXED CONSTUTION</b> Improvements	(2) <b>HAPPINESS</b> Rightfittingness

Safety & Belongingness	Social & Ego Needs
------------------------	--------------------

Working to meet the safety and belongingness needs of all nurtures individual growth that simultaneously satisfies social and ego needs and prepares everyone for citizenship in the emerging polity. The work of citizens requires that each one discover their own uniqueness so that they know exactly who, not what, they are. Self-knowledge is the beginning of the quest for rightfittingness and the building of a more rightfitting society for all. Self-actualization, as the highest rung, opens the world of politics to the fully formed individual whose sense of rightfittingness contributes to the accumulating pool of societal wisdom and provides the alternatives that fuel politics. In this Aristotelian realm of freedom, the lessons drawn from the unique understanding of each citizen are fully deliberated by all and choices are made that change the constitution to incorporate each individual's contribution to societal wisdom into daily life—a more perfect union with liberty and justice for all.

### **Boston 2050**

Everyone wants to learn how to do and do everything. Equality is realized through equal access. The underlying assumption is that at any given time someone will want to do everything that needs to be done in the pursuit of self-actualization. Competition remains but with a new emphasis that supports cooperation. It's competition against the clock. Success is measured by accomplishment not money. There is no money, therefore, NO DEMAND only NEED. Social and belongingness needs are not collective. Problems and solutions are defined in terms of the real personal needs of others in society. NOTHING CAN BE ACCOMPLISHED WITHOUT NEEDERS. We are each as essential as needers as we are as providers. Without someone to help and help where one needs it self-actualization is not possible. Facilities provide for the continuous supply of goods and services through the creation and sustainable maintenance of public capital and public space provides the arena where individuals can satisfy high-level needs providing for the physical, social and spiritual needs of others. The people share public capital through the universal communication system that provides equal access to all information about societal needs and personal opportunities so that individuals can live their right fittingness together.

**Readings:**

Apter, David (1977) *Introduction to Political Analysis*, Cambridge, Mass: Winthrop Publishers

Arendt, Hannah (1958) *The Human Condition*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press

Barker, Ernest. *Trans.* (1958) *The Politics of Aristotle*, London: Oxford University Press

Bellamy, Edward. (1887) *Looking Backward*. Boston: Ticknor

Camus, Albert (1956) *The Rebel*. New York: Vintage Books

Cornford, Francis MacDonald. *Trans.* (1941) *The Republic of Plato*, London: Oxford University Press

Locke, John (1690) *Second Treatise of Government*. London: Awnsham Churchill

Madison, James (1787) "Federalist #10", *The Independent Journal*

Maslow, Abraham (1954) *Motivation and Personality*, NY: Harper Brothers

McGregor, Douglas (1960) *The Human Side of Enterprise*, NY: McGraw-Hill

Schuman, David (1977) *A Preface to Politics*, Lexington Mass: D.C. Heath

Schuman, David & Rex Wirth (2015) *A Preface to Politics*, San Diego: National Social Science Press

Stewart, William (2010) *Understanding Politics*, San Diego: National Social Science Press