Wright College’s General Education SLO #2: read, write, speak, and listen effectively so that the expectations of appropriate audiences in the academic, public, and private sectors are met.

Ever since Dr. Paul Heilker from Virginia Tech invited us during our Faculty Development Week to think of this year’s focus on gen ed SLO #2 in terms of literacy and to recognize how our literacies are our ways of “entering and engaging with our world,” I have noticed around our campus so many places and activities that offer opportunities for our students, faculty, and staff. Free books can often be found in boxes on the first floor. The library staff offers free magazines in the hallway outside of its second floor entrance. The Office of Ministry distributes pamphlets, the Learning Resource Center staff keeps computers available for students who access online databases like EbscoHost and JSTOR, and the Gateway prints aids for students to assist them navigate courses toward the path of graduation and fills the wall opposite its doors with handouts from the many colleges and universities students transfer to after reaching their goals here at Wright. Students gather together in the new Wright Emporium to decipher the teachings of Mathematics textbooks. Writing Center Consultants begin their appointments with students by reading over assignments communicated by the students’ professors. Faculty join together in the Center for Teaching and Learning for book clubs that meet regularly. In many ways, this building is itself one giant Book Club, and we are using the many books and writings that we share to communicate to each other in almost every conversation—What does the CCCLOC contract say about overtime?, How does this sign on the wall tell me to find my new classroom?, Which food items offered today in the cafeteria have the nutritional requirements I am looking for?, Where can I get my bus pass?, What 102 research topics interest me the most?, Why is this Center for Teaching and Learning session being offered?, When is Julius Nadas hosting a lunch for his birthday in the Faculty Dining Room?

The thing I am starting to see from all these ways Wright is engaging us and suggesting ideas to us is that WE have so many choices once we enter this building. And that to me is the real benefit of a real place—hallways, stairwells, computer links, and classrooms are physical realities that show us what we do not expect: an afternoon discussion on the meaning of life in the CTL, a fellow student who understands that piece of the Math puzzle that’s eluding us, a college or university I have never heard of that offers a more affordable program in the field I’d like to study, a free lunch.

Often I think that students see reading for our classes as something that complicates and challenges them—our textbooks are college-level material, right? But they are also worldly opportunities that present them, and all of us, with new ways of living and making our time on this planet worthwhile. So I want to thank everyone who posted a sign, sent an email invitation, shared a textbook, printed a study guide, and bought me lunch!

- Vincent Bruckert
Some instructors rigidly adhere to a specific lecture format. When we change the classroom in order to enhance the results, instructors may become frustrated. Therefore, we found it a good idea to try the flipped model. Instead, they should adapt the model to the material and the classroom dynamic.

The Flipped Model Makes it Easier for the Teacher
Besides feeling slighted, students may feel the flipped model is just an excuse to make the teacher’s job easier. We found it useful to involve the students in the process of developing and researching materials (YouTube videos) to watch. In this manner, students might realize the amount of work required. Their efforts seem to make the students value the process and the flipped model more.

Lab vs. Mobile Phone
Typically, the flipped model is implemented in a computer lab for both sessions. This is so the students can do Internet research in what had been the lecture session. While computers are not always available, we can take advantage of the fact that many students have Internet access on their cell phones. By working in groups, the students who may not have smart phones can still participate.

-Fred Hernandez

Books That Transformed Us Wright Faculty on the Readings that Introduce Their Discipline

Program Coordinator Timothy Andriano:
Gerontology is the study of human aging. To link classroom learning to the real world, I recommend that Gerontology students read Still Alice by Lisa Genova. The novel, which was made into a popular movie, tells the story of Harvard Professor Alice Howard, who, at the age of fifty, acquired early onset Alzheimer’s. The story traces her early denial and downward spiral as she loses more and more of her cognitive ability. The story is not only about Alice but also about the dramatic effects it has on her children and husband when their lives are turned upside down.

The novel is timely as the explosion of baby boomers reach sixty-five. In 2011, the first of the 77 million baby boomers turned sixty-five. For the following seventeen years, 8,000 people will turn sixty-five each day. With advanced medical treatment and technology, people are living longer. It is estimated that 50% of baby boomers will acquire dementia and Alzheimer’s for which there is no cure. Every 47 seconds, someone is acquiring the disease. In 2015, Alzheimer’s cost the nation $226 billion. The cost of caring for persons with Alzheimer’s will increase exponentially in future years.

It is imperative that Gerontology students have a solid background in the care of dementia and Alzheimer’s patients. Still Alice provides profound insights into how the disease affects individuals and their families.

(Accessed on page 3)
multiple genres and rigorous interrogation of complex works. It is only later, after the development of confidence in their abilities as readers and writers, that students acquire an interest in the discipline as a scholarly pursuit. Nevertheless, upon reflection, there is one work to which I return often, “Poetry Not a Luxury”, by Audre Lorde, to explore literate expression in ways that are both empowering and informative for my students. In this brief essay, through style and content, Lorde communicates the power of language and writing as well as the necessity of imagination and creative production to the struggle for agency and against hegemonic oppression in the contemporary world, all of which is essential for students, many of whom require this kind of awareness for success in their future academic, professional, and personal endeavors.

Professor Matthew Greif:
One book I would encourage all students interested in biology to read is 1984 by George Orwell. Superficially, this book has nothing to do with the study of biology. Set in a dystopian version of London, virtually every aspect of society is rigidly controlled by the government. Citizens are monitored continually for thought crimes and official messages are written in double speak, a language set up to reduce words and hence forms of expression. Unfortunately, such actions are not limited to fiction. Recently in Canada, the former government rigidly controlled how public servants, including many scientists, spoke to various media outlets. Scientists that studied climate change were often forbid from speaking out about their research to the general public. Additionally, public research collections and libraries were closed and in some cases the books and journals were physically destroyed under the auspices of efficiency, all to limit the ability of the electorate to make informed decisions and question government policy. It is only recently with the last elections that Canadian scientists are again free to speak about their research without government interference. I think it is important for biology students to realize how quickly our freedom to look and think it is important for biology students to look and think the social ramifications involved. We learn how “innumeracy” can negatively affect our lives, our decisions, and even our governmental policies. The author delves into several key math concepts most of us struggle with, and he offers clear mathematical explanations with plenty of examples I found helpful. Some of these misconceptions include our inability to comprehend and deal with large numbers, probability and coincidence, statistics, and how we can fall into believing the validity of pseudoscience. He also delves into the causes of math illiteracy and offers concrete steps we can take to overcome it. It’s common for even college students to have trouble with large numbers, especially the difference between millions, billions, and trillions. In fact, I’ve asked my students to suppose if a millionaire has one million dollars and a billionaire has one billion dollars, how many millionaires would it take to equal one billionaire? The answers I got varied from 10 millionaires to 1000. Many fail to comprehend it takes 1000 millionaires to equal one billionaire, and it takes 79,000 millionaires to equal one Bill Gates. Then, with our national debt now somewhere near $18 trillion (that’s $157,000 per tax payer) it would take 18 million millionaires to pay it off. These numbers are mind boggling to most of us. How did our national debt get so high? Who is to blame? Should we look in the mirror? Getting back to the book, our author gives a lesson in scientific notation, and offers suggestions on how to better comprehend very large numbers. He explains probability, the multiplication rule, and the way coincidence gets misinterpreted by the
innumerate. For instance, he gives an example of a brilliant stock market scam in which 32,000 letters are sent to potential customers (i.e., victims); 16,000 predict a certain stock price will increase, and the other 16,000 predict a decrease. The next week, new letters are sent to only the 16,000 who received the prediction of a price increase; 8,000 letters say the stock price will increase again, 8,000 say it will decrease. The next week, the 8,000 who received the stock price increase prediction letters are sent yet more letters; 4,000 with a predicted increase, 4,000 with a decrease. This goes on for 6 weeks, with 500 customers in the end getting 6 correct predictions in a row! They are then sent letters demanding $500 for the next week's prediction. This is of course an illegal fraud, but it happens all the time. The person who receives 6 correct predictions in a row thinks some sort of magic is happening, when it really is all just due to chance. There are many more such examples in the book, many even more thought provoking. So, it is worth reading. The good news is that mathematical innumeracy can be cured, and the author gives suggestions to those who want to be cured. Also, the mathematical concepts covered in the book are the same we teach in Math 118 General Education Mathematics at Wright College. I'm very happy our curriculum is addressing innumeracy for those who take Math 118, but I am a bit concerned for those who are not. So, I would recommend this book for anyone who is interested in math.

**Professor Andrew Kruger:**

There are different types books I suggest to my students. Some go deeper into the ideas we cover in class, while others make the concepts more accessible through illustrations or well-written explanations. But the books I recommend the most are those that put the classroom topics into a bigger picture of scientific knowledge, and a historical perspective that explains why the concepts were surprising and revolutionary when they were discovered. By putting the ideas in context, it gives students a better understanding of what they are learning and makes it more relevant. An excellent example is the book *A Short History of Nearly Everything* by Bill Bryson. This book gives clear explanations of what is known in many fields of science, including physics, chemistry, cosmology, astronomy, geology, meteorology, oceanography, biology, and paleontology, with great stories about their history and the significance of their discoveries. With such a large scope, this book creates a great context and overview for a majority of scientific knowledge. Books like this really make science interesting and accessible to anyone, and are worthwhile reading.

**Professor Jane McNiven:**

One of the most influential movies for becoming a member of the legal profession, and one which I frequently show in Civil Litigation, is *The Rainmaker*, starring Matt Damon and Danny DeVito. It's adapted from the John Grisham novel of the same name. *The Rainmaker* is the story of a recent law school graduate who takes on a large corrupt insurance company on behalf of a dying young man. A typical David and Goliath type of story but with everything that paralegal students see and do on a daily basis and, most of all, it shows the inner workings of a true civil lawsuit—the filings, the motions, the timeline. It's terrific in that it brings a case to life and shows real heart, real people, not just names on a piece of paper, but that what you are doing; the cases you file in court affect people and really matter.

**Professor Julius Nadas:**

The German mathematician Carl Friedrich Gauss called mathematics the "queen of the sciences" in 1856 because it functions as a consort and helpmate to all of the other sciences. Unfortunately, most of what is taught in math classes has been the use of tools that mathematicians have created to help them to solve problems instead of general methods for problem solving. About a century later, in 1945, George Polya published the book *How To Solve It* which quickly became his most prized publication. It sold over one million copies and has been translated into 17 languages. In this book, he identifies four basic principles of problem solving which can be applied by anyone in any field. These principles can be summarized as follows:

1) Preparation: Understand the problem
2) Thinking Time: Devise a plan
3) Insight: Carry out the plan
4) Verification: Review your solution to make sure it is right

**Professor Neill Sachs:**

*Undaunted Courage: Meriwether Lewis, Thomas Jefferson and the Opening of the American West* (1996) by Steven Ambrose is the story of a journey unmatched in its scope of adventure and wonder. The Lewis and Clark Expedition of 1804-1806 paddled their canoes up the Missouri River and literally into the unknown, all in the pursuit of researching and recording, for the first time, the geography of the Louisiana Purchase, the western-most reaches of a still young United States. This rugged and dangerous voyage of discovery is well documented by the author in this history of the expedition.

---

**2015 Holiday Potluck**

**Wednesday, December 9, 2015**

---

---