

# The Neumann University Core Experience

January 2016

## Newsletter

Volume 5, Issue 2

Dear Colleagues,

Thanks to faculty and staff members who supported the undergraduate Core program by participating in the *Communication* assessment process, offering feedback related to the *Comprehension* and *Compassion* learning outcomes, and sharing strategies to promote reading comprehension and critical thinking! Thanks especially to members of the Core Committee and the ad hoc Reading Comprehension committee.

During the Fall 2015 semester several faculty and staff members reviewed the results of the assessment of *Comprehension* and *Compassion* learning outcomes and offered feedback. These responses have been integrated into the *Comprehension* and *Compassion* Assessment reports which are available on SharePoint. A sampling of strategies identified to improve student achievement of the Core learning outcomes are included in this newsletter.

During the past semester members of the Core Committee conducted lengthy discussions about the results of the Core assessments of all learning outcomes. The Committee identified the need to increase academic rigor and to help faculty to understand the integral connection among reading, writing, speaking, listening, and critical thinking. The Committee enlisted the assistance of a small sub-committee to develop ideas to promote reading comprehension and critical thinking skills. Faculty and staff shared several strategies to promote these skills at the Faculty Development session held of January 12, 2016. Faculty can access the materials on SharePoint.

Blessings on this New Year 2016!

*Sr. Pat Hutchison, OSF*

### 2015-2016 CORE COMMITTEE

Megan Camp  
Sarah Cazella  
Jilian Donnelly  
Janelle Ketrick-Gillespie  
Julie Lanzillo  
Daniel McKee  
Philip Pegan  
Kathleen Swanik  
Sandra Weiss  
Mary Beth Yount  
Sr. Patricia Hutchison, OSF, Chair  
Lawrence DiPaolo, ex officio

### SENIOR CAPSTONES: HOPES AND CHALLENGES

Participate in conversations about Senior Capstones through Lunch and Learn sessions on  
February 8 (11:30 to 12:30)  
February 9 (11:30 to 12:30)  
February 11 (1:00 to 2:00)  
February 12 (12:40 to 1:40)

Topics will include the variety of Senior Capstones offered by different majors, the purpose and structure of the “culminating project/experience,” lessons learned from “Transformation Papers,” and implications for scaffolding within major programs.

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## READING COMPREHENSION AND CRITICAL THINKING

There is a clearly established link between Reading Comprehension and student achievement. The following resources may prove helpful as we strive to support student growth in Reading Comprehension and Critical Thinking:

[The Reading Process](#)

[Metacognition Log](#)

[Reading Response Double Entry Journal](#)

[Interrogating Text: 6 Habits to Improve Reading](#)

N.B. These resources and many others are available on SharePoint. Go to SharePoint, AA, Faculty Development, Faculty Development AY 2015-2016, then Core Experience – Promoting Reading Comprehension.

You may also appreciate the following videos from [Mentor Commons](#):

***How can I get students to take responsibility for their own learning?***

Christy Price, Ed.D.

Dalton State College

***How do I get students to read their assignments before class?***

Dr. Maryellen Weimer

Penn State Berks

*The Teaching Professor*

***How do I get students to come to class prepared?***

J. Robert Gillette, Ph.D.

University of Kentucky

Lynn Gillette, Ph.D.

Sierra Nevada College

***How can I promote deep learning through critical reflection?***

Barbara Jacoby, Ph.D.

University of Maryland College Park

***How can I help students develop critical thinking skills?***

Deb Moon, J.D.

Rob Jenkins

Georgia Perimeter College

Don't have time to watch the entire 20-minute program?

The script and excellent supplemental materials are available.

If you cannot access the programs, contact Sr. Janet Thiel.

## PROMOTING COMPREHENSION LEARNING OUTCOMES

Faculty and staff offered the following practical ideas for strengthening Comprehension:

### *LO 1.1 – Analyze and solve complex problems*

- ◆ Use scenarios, case studies, and simulations to teach students how to analyze information/data.
- ◆ Scaffold activities within the major program to promote increasingly complex problem-solving.
- ◆ Incorporate reflective practice techniques (metacognition) so students better understand the problem solving process.
- ◆ Introduce “real world” problems connected to the discipline.
- ◆ Model critical thinking and problem solving strategies.

### *LO 1.2 – Demonstrate quantitative reasoning*

- ◆ Emphasize quantitative reasoning as appropriate to the discipline/major.
- ◆ Promote understanding of the importance of quantitative reasoning in everyday activities.
- ◆ Have students identify and discuss the application of quantitative reasoning within texts (e.g. reading graphs or interpreting surveys and polls) and within research articles (e.g. quantitative data collection and analysis)

### *LO 1.3 - Demonstrate scientific literacy*

- ◆ Create lessons, reflections, observations, and discussions with emphasis on scientific literacy.
- ◆ Implement scientific research paper reflections and readings as appropriate to the major.
- ◆ Invite guest speakers to class to connect scientific literacy with the discipline or major.
- ◆ Highlight the connection of scientific literacy and current events.

### *LO 1.4 – Explore the relationship of contemporary and historical events and issues*

- ◆ Utilize case studies and simulations to promote students’ understanding of key historical and legal concepts related to the major/discipline.
- ◆ Integrate into courses and major programs assignments which invite students to compare and contrast past and present perspectives on events and issues studied.
- ◆ Promote understanding of how the past influences the present in various disciplines, careers, etc.

## PROMOTING COMPASSION LEARNING OUTCOMES

Faculty and staff offered the following practical ideas for strengthening Compassion:

### *LO 4.1 - Honor the worth and dignity of each person*

- ◆ Use case studies, simulations, reflections, and class activities which emphasize the dignity of every person, the importance of diversity, etc.
- ◆ Add a reflective component that incorporates the issues of diversity in relation to the course/discipline/major program.

- ◆ Encourage students from diverse backgrounds to share their unique perspectives on various topics within class.
- ◆ Provide students with skills to engage in “uncomfortable conversations” related to diversity in all forms.
- ◆ Integrate into courses diverse perspectives and issues as appropriate.
- ◆ Invite students to reflect on then discuss the Pillars in the Mirinda Center to promote respect and acceptance.
- ◆ Participate in and encourage students to participate in the exciting activities planned for Black History Month. See preliminary information on page 5 and watch for further information on the NU website!
- ◆ Use the story of St. Francis and the Sultan as a model of respectful dialogue. See description on page 6.

*LO 4.2 - Interact respectfully in the local and global community.*

- ◆ Emphasize the importance of “civic responsibility.”
- ◆ Encourage students to participate in short and long term study abroad and service immersion trips and encourage students to share their experiences with others.
- ◆ Provide opportunities for students to interact with persons of diverse cultures and from diverse areas (e.g. visit the United Nations, host a panel of refugees).

*LO 4.3 - Engage in service to promote the common good.*

- ◆ Create lessons, reflections, observations, and additional discussions with emphasis on promoting the common good.
- ◆ Use multiple media to promote service within and outside the classroom.
- ◆ Showcase the service in which students and graduates engage through multiple media (NU website, local papers, *Joust*, *Accent*, etc.)

*LO 4.4 - Demonstrate environmental awareness and stewardship.*

- ◆ Campus Ministry coordinates a Fair Trade Coffee House on Wednesday evenings. Campus ministers could help faculty, staff, and students to understand Fair Trade, how NU is already engaged, and opportunities to increase engagement.
- ◆ Be creative with the supplies needed to function effectively in various careers; encourage students to develop alternative ways to create (rather than purchase new) materials.
- ◆ Incorporate Pope Francis’ *Laudato Si* into classes as appropriate.
- ◆ Emphasize the connections between environmental awareness and stewardship to the discipline/major.
- ◆ Introduce students to careers related to environmental awareness, stewardship, and sustainability.
- ◆ Explore and utilize Catholic Relief Services free resources on [Climate Change and Fair Trade](#).
- ◆ Increase your own understanding of the Catholic Franciscan perspectives on environmental awareness and stewardship; visit [Mission and Ministry websites](#) (especially Care of Creation and Neumann Institute for Franciscan Studies) and explore resources and programs.

## BLACK HISTORY MONTH EVENTS AT NEUMANN

### **Lunch and Learn Sessions**

Tuesday, February 16, 11:30 - 12:30 (RAB 111)

Dr. Marisa Rauscher

*Culturally Responsive Teaching*

Wednesday, February 17, 12:40 - 1:40 (G-9)

Dr. Ramona Roberts

*White Privilege: Understanding its existence and impact on our students.*

Thursday, February 18, 1:00 - 2:00 (BMB ARC lab)

Dr. Al Mueller

*Micro-aggressions: What are they and what do we do about them?*

Friday, February 19, 11:30 - 12:30 (BMB 230)

Dr. Samuel Lemon

*The Case that Rocked the Country: The youngest person executed in Pennsylvania for a crime he didn't commit.*



### **University Events**

February 1-February 29– School Supplies Drive

Donations will be delivered to Neumann Alum, Kya Johnson,

at her Peace Corps Mission in Botswana, Africa

Locations for supplies: BMB Lobby, Life Center, RAB Lobby

Monday, February 1<sup>st</sup>- Prayer Service

Location and details TBD

Monday, February 1<sup>st</sup>– Cultural Fusion Kick-Off - 9:15 PM in Bayada Atrium, Mirinda Center

*This event will showcase a mix of African American culture as well as African culture throughout the years. There will be food, drinks and music from both cultures.*

Tuesday, February 2<sup>nd</sup> – Blood Drive, 11:00 AM to 4:00 PM in Bruder Life Gym

American Red Cross Penn-Jersey Blood Services Region Sickle Cell Donor Program

*When blood donors self-identify themselves as African American or black, an American Red Cross staff member will place a blue tag on the blood donation. This will mark the donation for a child with Sickle Cell Disease.*

Tuesday, February 2<sup>nd</sup> - 6:30 PM in McNichol Room, Bruder Life Center

Speaker: Anthony Carter

Saint Joseph's University graduate, currently in a doctoral program at Walden University

*Reflections on Navigating Undergraduate Life as an African American*

Wednesday, February 17<sup>th</sup> – Student Showcase, 5:00 to 7:00 PM in the Library

*Students celebrate with creative and scholarly expressions: songs and poetry, academic presentations, posters and works of visual art, or things utterly unique and inspired! Share community and refreshments!*

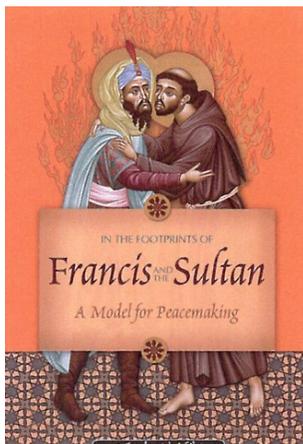
Wednesday, February 17<sup>th</sup> - 8:00 PM Men's Basketball Game

*The officers of the Black Alumni Chapter will be recognized on the court at halftime.*

Monday, February 22<sup>nd</sup> – 12:00 PM in Bachmann 114A

Minority Student Study Abroad Interest Meeting

## IN THE FOOTPRINTS OF FRANCIS AND THE SULTAN: A MODEL FOR PEACEMAKING



This two-part film by Kathleen Warren, O.S.F. and Jayasri (Joyce) Hart examines contemporary issues of interreligious understanding grounded in the timeless Franciscan tradition of tolerance, peacemaking, and social justice.

Follow St. Francis of Assisi as he travels to the Middle East to meet Sultan Malek al-Kamil in 1219. This journey becomes a historic symbol for peace as Francis crosses the battle lines of the Crusades and reaches out to the enemy. These countercultural efforts of Francis, a simple friar, and the sultan, the leader of the Muslim forces of the Levant, made these men most unusual in their time. Through them, we see an example that speaks to us today as we work to achieve understanding among peoples of different backgrounds, faith traditions, cul-

tures, and ethnicities.

### HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE:

- DVD featuring two segments of about 24 minutes each, complemented by free resource material found here: [FranciscanMedia.org/francissultan](http://FranciscanMedia.org/francissultan).
- A resource perfect for use in group study in church settings, classrooms, interreligious communities, and social-action networks
- Insights from experts and scholars such as Michael Cusato, Michael Calabria, Murray Bodo, and Fareed Munir, as well as Imam Yahya Hendi and Archbishop Michael Fitzgerald
- A look at how the Franciscan model for interreligious dialogue developed and how that openness to dialogue, rooted in a fundamental respect for the other, is a pathway to peace
- Exploration of issues and historical sites of interest to both Christians and Muslims

Copies of the DVD are available to borrow from the Neumann Institute library.

[Get the Resource Guide here.](#)

[To see a sample of the video, click here.](#)

Sample clips also available at: <http://vimeo.com/56483878>.