CTL February Newsletter

The CTL Newsletter is distributed electronically every month during the academic year.

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Faculty News

If you would like to send an entry to “Faculty News,” the deadline for the March issue is March 1. We prefer that you email the information to CTL@stjohns.edu. Please have your entries follow the style presented in “Faculty News.”

Remember:
The best place to look for faculty-related information is http://www.stjohns.edu/ctl.
Vincentian Mission: Opportunity and Responsibility-No. XXVI in the Series: Support for Heritage Languages

Peggy Jacobson (St. John’s College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, jacobsop@stjohns.edu)

In this Series of essays, Research Fellows from the Vincentian Center for Church and Society and the Vincentian Chair of Social Justice share their experience in actualizing the Vincentian Mission through their research, teaching and service. In this column, Associate Professor Peggy Jacobson, Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders in St. John’s College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, shares the finding of her recently completed study (NIDCD-NIH Grant) on Support for Heritage Languages. Her research has particular import for the very diverse areas of our nation and particularly New York City. She stresses the potential for cultural enrichment inherent in heritage language programs and presents the social justice implications for academic progress for children in poverty and those with language impairment.

The demand for greater participation in our increasingly global society has brought to light the distinct advantage of knowing more than one language. “Heritage speakers comprise a growing portion of school age children who use a language other than English” at home. Approximately one in seven children residing in the U.S. falls into this category (U.S. Census Bureau, 2001). Although heritage language use in America is hardly a new phenomenon, attitudes towards its merit are shifting. Whereas earlier policies encouraged and favored rapid assimilation accompanied by first language loss, educators and policy makers are rethinking the need to create strategies that promote the maintenance of heritage languages. It is a shift that parallels a greater appreciation of other languages and cultures, and is consistent with a widening of global perspectives.

Despite growing enthusiasm for heritage language support, two groups of heritage speakers are unfortunately blocked from achieving full participation in language maintenance programs: children in poverty and those with language impairment. Children from privileged backgrounds are often given extraordinary opportunities to become bilingual because their parents understand the social and academic advantages afforded by knowing other languages. However, children living in poverty face a twofold problem: (1) ironically, children in poverty receive less encouragement to retain their heritage language; and, (2) some persons believe that dual language instruction constitutes too much of a burden for children already confronted by adverse socio-economic conditions. In spite of this, recent research reveals that children from low socioeconomic backgrounds are capable of maintaining their home language while learning English (Montrul & Potowski, 2007).

Children with language impairment experience problems with listening, speaking, reading, and writing, placing them at risk for academic failure. Distinguishing between typical development and language impairment is problematic because heritage speakers arrive at school with distinct language and cultural experiences. Developmental screening practices based on monolingual expectations result in a disproportionately high number of students who are referred for special services. For similar reasons, the identification of language problems is complicated. For children with language impairment, early identification is essential for optimal educational and therapeutic outcomes. And yet, when compared to their monolingual peers of similar socio-economic status, children from bilingual homes, and in particular Latino backgrounds, are significantly under-represented in early intervention and therapeutic preschool
programs. On the other hand, they are more likely to be recommended for grade retention, and are over-represented in special education programs in and beyond the third grade.

Similar to the obstacles facing children in poverty, children with language impairment have been discouraged from maintaining their first language on the assumption that they lacked the cognitive and linguistic resources for dual language use. However, these views have also been challenged by newer research (Paradis, Crago, Genesee, & Rice, 2003), including my recently completed study (NIDCD NIH Grant 5R03DC 07018-03). Data collected from a predominantly Central American immigrant community show that children with language impairment are capable of maintaining their first language while learning English when it is supported in the early grades, and spoken at home. Moreover, the profile of language impairment resembles that of monolingual impairment, yet differs from that of typical development on several language measures including oral narrative production and the use of grammatical morphology in Spanish and English.

In this country, second language instruction is mandatory, though largely unsuccessful because of the limited and inconsistent input for languages other than English. Obviously, children whose parents use a language other than English at home are uniquely advantaged for fostering proficiency in that language. Neglecting or ignoring this opportunity to conserve heritage languages would diminish these children’s promise for full involvement at home, in local communities, and in broader academic and social contexts. Furthermore, when we foster the development of heritage languages, we convey our respect and appreciation for the richness and diversity of our immigrant communities. When we fall short of doing so, we fail to accept the significance of their potential contributions.

References:

National Institutes of Deafness and other Communication Disorders / National Institutes of Health, NIH Grant 5R03DC 07018-03, *Morphology in Typical and Atypical Bilingual Development.*


**Incorporating Global Themes Into the Classroom**

In its Strategic Plan the University is moving toward a new vision of global education which includes both study aboard and the incorporation of global themes in on-campus courses. Join us for a discussion of how faculty have added intercultural and international topics in their teaching. We’ll also explore resources that can help faculty globalize their courses.

**Date:** Monday, March 1  
**Time:** 12:15 to 1:15 p.m.  
**Location:** Rosati Conference Room, Staten Island Campus  
**To register:** Contact the CTL at ext. 1859 or email us at CTL@stjohns.edu
Faculty News

Dr. Sandra Schamroth Abrams (Curriculum & Instruction, abramss@stjohns.edu) published an article, “A Gaming Frame of Mind: Digital Contexts and Academic Implications,” in Educational Media International (December 2009).

Dr. Dolores Augustine (History, augustid@stjohns.edu) gave the talk, "Picturing the Nuclear Age/Picturing Socialism: Images of Nuclear Technologies in the East," at the American Historical Association annual meeting in San Diego, CA.


Dr. José G. Centeno (Communication Sciences and Disorders, centenoj@stjohns.edu) authored several entries in The Cambridge Dictionary of Psychology (Cambridge University Press; November 2009) and co-authored the article, “Frequency Effects on Verb Inflection Use by Spanish-Speaking Agrammatic Individuals: Theoretical and Clinical Implications,” in the International Journal of Speech-Language Pathology (January 2010).

Dr. Charles M. A. Clark (Economics and Finance, clarkc@stjohns.edu) coauthored the booklet, Rich and Poor: Rebalancing the Economy (London: Catholic Truth Society, 2010); published the article, “A Christian Perspective on the Financial Meltdown,” in American Economist (2009); was a Keynote Speaker on “Catholic Social Thought on Wealth and Poverty” at the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities 10th Annual Peace and Justice Meetings in San Diego, CA (January 2010); was a Plenary Speaker on “Practical Reason and Economic Theory” at the Business of Practical Wisdom: An Exploration of Virtue and Business within the Catholic Social Tradition Conference at Catholic University, Germany.

Dr. Maura C. Flannery (Computer Science, Mathematics and Science, flannerm@stjohns.edu) published an article, “Planned and Unplanned,” in The American Biology Teacher (January 2010).

Dr. Judith A. Ryder (Sociology & Anthropology, ryderj@stjohns.edu) presented a paper, “What I’d Tell My Daughter--What My Mom Should have Known. Narratives from Two Generations of Females Affected by the Crack Era,” at the annual meetings of the American Society of Criminology in Philadelphia (November 2009).

Professor Claire Serant (Mass Communications, serantc@stjohns.edu) was one of 12 college professors nationwide who received a fellowship from the Donald W. Reynolds National Center for Business Journalism at Arizona State University (January 2010).

Dr. Charles Wankel (Management wankelc@stjohns.edu) co-published Emerging Ethical Issues of Life in Virtual Worlds and Being and Becoming a Management Education Scholar (Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing, 2010); published the book review of Grown Up Digital by Don Tapscott in Choice (February 2010); his Encyclopedia of Business in Today's World (SAGE) was honored with the Outstanding Business Reference Sources Award by the American Library Association (2009); published the volumes: Higher Education in Virtual Worlds: Teaching and Learning in Second Life and Management Education for Global Sustainability (2009); served on the editorial
boards of Academy of Management Journal and Academy of Management Learning & Education; and published the article, “Management Education through Social Media,” in the Organization Management Journal (December 2009).

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St. John’s University’s Annual Student Research Week 2010
The Research Week Coalition and the Office of the Provost invites you and your students to participate in this series of events designed to showcase the academic research accomplishments of our students! Research Week 2010 is an expansion of St. John’s University’s “Student Research Day,” our annual presentation of student research, that takes place in April. This year, Student Research Day will be joined by non-poster research presentations, creating a series of days on which student research at St. John’s will be celebrated. Student Research Week 2010 will take place during the week of April 19.

You are all invited to get involved: Whether that means mentoring a student who wants to present their project, or letting students in your classes and faculty in your department know that this opportunity exists.

This year, we have added a number of venues to the list that allow students in any discipline to display professional level scholarship – not just quantitative research. Events include:
- Oral (Lecture Style) Presentation
- Panel Discussion Roundtable
- Fine Arts Exhibit
- Documentary and Film Showing in the Little Theatre
- Performance “Creative Display” of Research

The additional events create opportunities for students to tell us about their scholarly research and to be creative in a way that allows them to best reflect the academic accomplishment in their work. Visit www.stjohns.edu/studentresearch for registration information. Deadline is March 5th! Further inquiries can be directed to studentresearch@stjohns.edu.

Join us in guiding our students into the possibilities of academic accomplishment at St. John’s!

Library/Faculty Collaborations
In the Chronicle of Higher Education last year, Thomas Benton wrote of the university library as “A Laboratory of Collaborative Learning” http://chronicle.com/article/A-Laboratory-of-Collaborative/47518/. He described efforts at his institution to strengthen faculty-library links. The University Libraries and the CTL invite you to explore how teaching faculty and librarians can work together more closely at St. John’s. At this session, we will examine what such collaborations would look like, what the desired outcomes would be, and how to get started.

Please join us for lunch and discussion as we investigate ways to experiment together to create new academic linkages. Please RSVP at CTL@stjohns.edu or ext. 1859.

Date: Wednesday, March 3
Time: Noon to 1 p.m.
Location: Library room 110 in the Academic Commons, Queens Campus
Reading Suggestions

In case you have time on your hands and want to think about some topic related to higher education, your colleagues have some good suggestions. They scour the literature and pass their finds on to the CTL, and we are happy to then pass them on to you.

What Makes a Great Teacher?
This is obviously a question for which there are a great many answers. However, there are some patterns that have emerged from data collected by the Teach for America program. These are described in an article by Amanda Ripley in the January/February issue of The Atlantic (http://www.theatlantic.com/doc/print/201001/good-teaching). Though this does not involve college-level teaching, some of the results are definitely germane to any level of education. For example, the best teachers are never satisfied with their performance; they are always trying new approaches and working to better their skills. Also not surprisingly, they work very hard in the classroom—an essential in order to get students to work hard, too. Check out this article; it’s exhilarating and may be helpful as well. (Suggested by Bill Keogan)

Are American Students Lazy?
This article by Scott Jaschik is more controversial, but just as interesting. It appeared in the online journal Inside Higher Ed (http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2010/01/04/miller) and is a response to another article, “My Lazy American Students,” by Kara Miller in The Boston Globe (http://www.boston.com/bostonglobe/editorial_opinion/oped/articles/2009/12/21/my_lazy_american_students/). Miller is (or was) an adjunct professor at Babson College, and she argues that her students who were educated in other countries consistently out-perform the home-grown crop. So far, the article has generated over 600 reader comments, which range from total agreement to strong disagreement. You can read the article and come up with your own opinion. (Suggested by Basilio Monteiro)

Teaching Tips from Video Games
The gist of this article by Jeffrey Young which appeared in The Chronicle of Higher Education is that the way video games, especially those designed for educational purposes, are structured can give faculty clues as to how to interest students in class materials (http://chronicle.com/article/5-Lessons-Professors-Can-Learn/63708/). Young reviews the history of educational video games, including the things game creators have learned about what works and what doesn’t. Five observations that apply to teaching—with or without electronics are: 1. give frequent feedback; 2. Test before going live; 3. Answer the question: “Why are we learning this?” 4. Don’t be afraid to have fun; 5. Not every subject works as a game. (Suggested by Susan Schmidt-Horning)

Writing, Writing, Writing
On Super Bowl Sunday, a group of faculty prepared for the Big Game by spending the day in the Institute for Writing Studies working on their academic writing projects. This was supposed to be a two-day Writing Retreat, but the first day got canceled due to snow (or not). Yet even a single day of focused work seemed to benefit all the participants who are clamoring for more such events. In the meantime, a number of articles have appeared recently that might help you get your writing on track. The first was suggested by Patrick Flanagan, a Writing Retreat participant. It’s “The Habit of Writing” by Rachel Toor, and it appeared in The Chronicle of Higher Education (http://chronicle.com/article/The-Habit-of-Writing/64001/). Toor’s major point is that it doesn’t make a difference where you write or when you write, or even how frequently you write. The important thing is that you develop the habit of writing, and she compares the practice of writing to the practice of running. Since she is a long-distance runner, she makes this metaphor come alive and gives every writer something to think about.

There are two other good Chronicle articles on writing; they both appeared in the January 31 issue, and you can access them through the University Libraries’ website (http://stjohns.edu/libraries). “Almost Time to Write, Almost Time” is by Daniela Werner, a journalism student at the University of Alabama. She describes all the Web 2.0 tools competing for a writer’s attention—Twitter, MySpace, etc. She, too, sees a
need to focus and develop the writing habit. The same basic theme, but with a more serious tone, is presented in “Attention, Please! Your Book Is Calling.” Amy Benson Brown is both a writer and a “writing coach.” She describes the latest research on attention and what it says about getting your writing done.

Finally, on the level of improving the writing you do get done, there’s “Right Your Writing: How to Sharpen Your Writing and Make Your Manuscripts More Engaging” (http://tomprofblog.mit.edu/2010/02/09/997-right-your-writing-how-to-sharpen-your-writing-and-make-your-manuscripts-more-engaging/). Bob Grant provides direct and useful advice on how to make your writing more clear and engaging to the reader. The article is aimed at scientists but the information is useful for anyone trying to write well.

The Faculty Writing Initiative
Elaine Carey (St. John’s College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, careye@stjohns.edu) and Flora Keshishian (St. John’s College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, keshishf@stjohns.edu)

During a casual conversation in the fall 2009, Flora told Elaine about her desire to start a faculty writing group on campus. We agreed that this was essential, especially because it connected with Junior Faculty Research Colloquium that Tim Milford and Elaine began in 2004. Wondering how the Institute for Writing Studies (IWS) and the Faculty Retreat in Rome could be further developed, Flora and Elaine met with Anne Geller and Maura Flannery, who had also been in conversation, to discuss faculty writing and how to promote it more systematically within the University.

Research and scholarship/writing is a major aspect of our profession. However, many of us faculty members, junior and senior, do not have the means to undertake a life of intense scholarship. For many of us, transitioning from graduate students to faculty members is exciting. In the area of writing, however, that transition may also yield a more solitary intellectual environment. During graduate school, one has a group of collaborators and writing colleagues to discuss ideas, read each others’ work, and foster an intellectual environment. Once leaving graduate school, that community may be harder to recreate. With that in mind, the four of us began a series of conversations on campus to engender an atmosphere of writing that connects to teaching but also to our scholarly work. We have held three meetings, smaller groups have formed, and Anne and Maura organized the first writers’ retreat for February. These events were well-attended and well-received by professors from across the University.

On considering the significance of faculty writing within the greater STJ Faculty Writing Initiative, we identified eight areas of purpose and importance:

- **Create a Sense of Community for Writers/Researchers/Scholars by Bringing Them Together as a Community.** For many faculty members, especially those who are new to teaching or have just finished their doctoral dissertation or are juggling between their professional and personal lives, writing/conducting research can be quite challenging. A writing group can offer support. When together, faculty members can create not only a sense of unity, but also serve as a sounding board to discuss our research/work with colleagues to help crystallize our ideas. Having such support from a writing community can also encourage the faculty to write more.

- **Becoming Engaged and More Content.** Faculty who are more involved in their research and productive scholars tend to be more helpful to students. We agree that when we are productive, we also feel happier and more patient with our students. Through our writing, we become more engaged and, therefore, more sympathetic to the student researcher and writer. Finally, the more productive faculty members are in their fields, the more they help in placing students in graduate school and/or research projects.
• **Encourage Interdisciplinary Research.** Although all disciplines are interconnected, our training usually focuses on our own discipline. A writing community can provide a perfect opportunity for planting the seeds of interdisciplinary research and engaging in cross-disciplinary conversations.

• **Encourage Cross-Cultural Research.** Global education requires cross-cultural research. A writing community can bring faculty members who often come from diverse cultural/ethnic backgrounds together to work on collaborative projects. This can enhance scholarship and teaching, adding to the University mission.

• **Encourage the Scholarship of Teaching, Service Learning, and Global Education.** Writing groups on the qualitative as well as quantitative research on teaching and learning methodologies could be formed to assist in producing scholarship. For Elaine, some of her earliest peer-reviewed articles were in the area of the scholarship of teaching. Since we teach in a unique urban institution, this is an opportunity to critically engage in one’s methodology and pedagogy.

• **Enhance the “Research Leg” of the Three Legged Tenure Stool.** The very existence of a faculty writing group in any institution is a clear expression of the value that the institution places on research and faculty. Research/writing is one of the core tenure requirements for full-time faculty in any institution of higher learning. Faculty writing groups at an institution that requires research indicate that it supports research.

• **Peer Review Publications.** Writing groups can serve as the first internal peer review. Your colleagues bring fresh eyes, new ideas and approaches, different angles and perspectives. An internal peer review process toughens one’s skin in preparation to receive feedback from other scholars. Moreover, in writing groups, one can discuss reviews and revisions as suggested by outside referees.

• **Assist an Institution with Ranking and More Funding.** Many well-established academic institutions are known for particular strengths. Having a strong faculty writing community can help STJ gain further recognition for supporting research as well as strong teaching. Research, scholarship, and grants are tied together. It is far easier to gain funding if one has a proven record of scholarship.

We understand that writing is difficult, but we also believe that it can be less so, with the support of a writing community. From the first few meetings of the faculty gathered for the Writing Initiative, we have been impressed by the diverse projects, the level of conversation, and the collegiality. We wish to encourage all professors to participate whether by attending retreats, engaging in the greater discussions, or forming more smaller writing groups. We are interested also in the journey of our fellow scholars in their writing process. More importantly, we encourage the University to take a greater role in fostering a scholarly writing environment. That means recognition of scholarship and funding for continued research and publication.

**Working Women and Economic Independence, 1865-1920**

Lara Vapnek (St. John’s College of Liberal Arts and Sciences) with introduction by Sumitra Shah (College of Professional Studies)

Dr. Vapnek will discuss her new book, *Breadwinners: Working Women and Economic Independence, 1865-1920* (University of Illinois Press). From the end of the Civil War through the winning of woman’s suffrage, working women in the nation’s industrializing cities launched a series of campaigns to gain economic independence and political equality. Dr. Vapnek uncovers the stories of the visionary women who laid the groundwork for contemporary feminism. More than a century ago, these women demanded equal pay for equal work and full rights of citizenship, proudly identifying themselves as “breadwinners” capable of supporting themselves and their families. This book is available at the University bookstore at the customer service counter.

**Date:** Tuesday, March 2  
**Time:** 12:15 to 1:15 p.m.  
**Location:** Library room 110 in the Academic Commons, Queens Campus  
**To register:** Call the CTL at ext. 1859 or email us at CTL@stjohns.edu.
Faculty Research Forum and Research Reception

As part of Research Month activities, the Office of the Provost and the Center for Teaching and Learning are sponsoring the annual Faculty Research Forum. This event will provide an opportunity for all faculty, funded or not, to showcase their research through posters, interactive presentations, exhibits, and personal discussions with their colleagues. In furthering the University’s goal of fostering a culture of academic excellence, we hope that you will consider participating by presenting your research. If you have visual materials you want to share, there will be poster boards available (36x48 white tri-fold boards), or you can use your laptop to show slides, run a video, make a web presentation or use software you’ve developed.

Maybe your research is text-based and you feel leery about standing in front of a poster board with a 20-page paper set out page by page. You can take a different approach. Bring a few copies of your articles and share them with colleagues. We will have tables devoted to a variety of areas from the social sciences to theology. Still another alternative is for a group of colleagues to make a poster presentation together. No matter how you decide to participate, the important thing is to share your work because you will be contributing to the vitality of the intellectual life at the University.

Concurrently with this event, the Office of Grants and Sponsored Research will hold the annual Research Reception. This honors faculty and administrators who have secured new grants or continued funding support from external sources during the past year to further the education, research and public service missions of St. John’s University.

The Forum will take place on Thursday, April 8, 2010 from 11:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. in the D’Angelo Center room 416. Displays may be set up between 10 and 11 a.m. that day. The Research Reception will be held in the same location, with the annual presentation to take place at noon. If you are willing to make a presentation at the Research Forum, please contact Lisa Getman at the Center for Teaching and Learning (getmanl@stjohns.edu) by Tuesday, March 16, indicating (a) the theme of your presentation; (b) a paragraph-long abstract, 300 words or less, describing the research project which will be published in the brochure; and (c) whether you need a table or display board.

We will have an area set aside to display reprints of faculty authors’ publications. Please send at least two copies of a reprint to the Office of Grants and Sponsored Research by March 29 to be included in this display.

Blackboard Sessions

Join these Blackboard 6 workshops to learn the valuable skills needed to navigate the new Blackboard 6 with ease, in Sullivan room 205. This room has computers. However, if you have a laptop, it is recommended that you bring it to the workshop so you are working on a machine which is familiar to you.

Basic Intro, Announcements, Mail and Discussion Board
Tuesday, March 16, 12:15-1:15 PM

Students, Files and Backups
Thursday, March 25, 12:15-1:15 PM

Grades, Assignments and Quizzes
Tuesday April 6, 12:15-1:15 PM

For more information contact Edith Chasen-Cerreta at: chasene@stjohns.edu.
Junior Faculty Research Colloquium (JFRC)

Junior Faculty are invited to attend a colloquium where their peers present their research in an informal setting with an opportunity for discussion. All meetings are held from 12:15 to 1:15 p.m.

Savage Portrayals: How the Media Constructed the Central Park Jogger Story as a Tale of Deviance by Black Male Children

Natalie Byfield (St. John's College of Liberal Arts and Sciences)

This talk, focusing on Byfield's manuscript of the same name, is about the media coverage of the 1989 Central Park Jogger rape incident and the impact of the case on our racial culture. Utilizing, in part, an ethnographic report, the manuscript traces the case from the very beginning, when Byfield worked as a reporter for the New York Daily News. It examines our ideas about race in the U.S. and how the media, through its control of the public sphere, is able to shape these ideas. It culminates by arguing that the media coverage paved the way in the early 1990s for the ramping up of juvenile justice laws in 44 states across the nation that led to increasing rates of incarceration of young African American and Latino youths.

Date: Thursday, March 4
Location: Writing Center Seminar Room, Library room 150
To register: Contact Tracey-Anne Cooper (coopert@stjohns.edu) or Nerina Rustomji (rustomjn@stjohns.edu).

Remaining Spring 2010 Schedule:


Call For Papers:

Although our Spring 2010 program is full, we would like to get a jump start on arranging presenters Fall 2010, so please get in touch if you have research that you would like to present next semester. Contact Tracey-Anne Cooper (coopert@stjohns.edu) or Nerina Rustomji (rustomjn@stjohns.edu).