



DEPARTMENT OF FOCUSED INQUIRY

YEAR END REPORT: 2021-2022



VCU

University College
Focused Inquiry

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR



Life in the Department of Focused Inquiry is never boring! In many ways, 2021-2022 was a year of reflection, transitions, and building toward the future. This report

highlights our ongoing pursuit of new and engaging ways to help VCU students succeed. Our many faculty-driven professional development activities and events are testaments to our unceasing desire to enhance our skills as teachers and to make this department a supportive and productive place for our students, faculty and staff.

Our work in the past academic year has included substantial curriculum revisions, modality shifts to better serve our students, substantial efforts to make our department and college more diverse and inclusive, and many other initiatives.

After nearly a year-and-a-half of most of our classes being offered in solely online modalities, we significantly increased the number of our courses being taught back in the classroom. As happy as our faculty and students were to return to in-person classes, we also realized that there are elements of the hybrid and online course modalities that helped us meet our students' learning needs and preferences. As a result, we offered more classes in the hybrid modality, combining in-person and online learning in ways that preserved flexibility, but also gave people the opportunity to build the kinds of in-person community and relationships that facilitate student belonging and success.

Culminating three years of intensive reflection, study

and experimentation, our tireless Curriculum Committee completed a redesign of the UNIV 200 curriculum built around a new focus on critical literacies. At its core, this redesign helps our students think and communicate in ways that are responsive to the dynamics of cultural and sociopolitical power structures in the world around us.

Like many institutions and organizations around the country, Focused Inquiry, and the entire University College, have initiated extensive conversations about equity and inclusion for our students and faculty. These conversations are not easy, but they are important to ensure that our students and faculty have equal opportunities to succeed and excel.

As part of our efforts to improve equity for our students, we started collecting and disaggregating data related to student achievement in our courses. We discovered that while there are significant equity gaps in UNIV 111 for underrepresented students, these gaps disappear after students have taken our third course, UNIV 200, which suggests the value of our courses, particularly for underrepresented minority students.

Finally, at the end of the year, we welcomed a new chair, Katy Hanggi, Ph.D., and six new faculty members: Jo-Jo Koo, Sara Laws, Deidra Lee, Brandi Neal, Dali Padon and Amy Tudor. We look forward to the many ways these new members of our community will enhance Focused Inquiry.

We hope this report illuminates the many exciting things going on within our department. We remain dedicated to providing our students with the best education possible. Thanks to our students, faculty and staff for their incredible work and goodwill!

Michael Abelson, Ed. D.

Associate Chair of Focused Inquiry and Interim Chair during 2021-2022

COLLEGE & COMMUNITY

Service Learning Alongside Citizens of Charles City County, Virginia

During Spring 2022, Associate Professor Beth Kreydatus, PhD., took a dozen service-learning UNIV 112 students to Charles City County where they presented their year-long collaboration project with Concerned Citizens of Charles City County (C5) at this organization's first-annual Earth Day event. The students talked to the community about the four films they made over the course of the year concerning the history of a Black school, Barnetts Elementary. Barnetts was founded in the 1910s, and Concerned Citizens of Charles City County is currently attempting to reclaim the property for use as a workforce development center. Over the course of the year, the students had interviewed members of the community using Zoom and put together incredible short films about the school's legacy. These films were shared at the Earth Day event, and also broadly on C5's social media. Professor Kreydatus and the students were invited to eat with the community, chat with local residents and ride horses. They loved the horses and spending the day together with this rural community brought everyone lots of joy.



Mentoring Future Rams from Local Community Colleges

During the Spring 2022 semester, seventeen Focused Inquiry professors had the privilege to serve as faculty mentors to Mellon Research Fellows from Brightpoint (previously John Tyler) and J. Sargeant Reynolds Community Colleges as part of the VCU Pathways Program. These impressive students undertook independent research projects in a wide range of topics from ancient Roman history to video games, and healthcare reform to pulp fiction. While they had the support of a mentor at their home institution, their Focused Inquiry faculty mentors provided an important link between the students' current community colleges and their future at VCU. Because these Mellon Fellows had the opportunity to develop relationships with the encouraging student-centered educators listed

below, they now have a ready-made support system in place to help make their transition as smooth as possible to ensure they continue to thrive.

Nicole Anderson Ellis
Frank Cha
Lindsay Chudzik
Meriah Crawford
Tara Burke
Thad Fortney
Josh Galligan
Mary Lou Hall
Christian Horlick
Nadia Inserra
Beth Kreydatus
Kiara Lee-Hart

Katie Logan
Amber Pearson
Kristin Reed
Stephanie Rizzi
Courtney Sviatko

Strengthening Reentry Services for Richmond Community Members



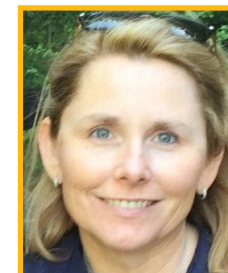
Professor Peter Henry, Ph.D., continued serving as the Board of Directors President for the post-incarceration program Opportunity Alliance Reentry (OAR), celebrating the program's 51 years of serving the Richmond Community. A leader in Richmond reentry services, OAR advocates for those affected by the criminal justice system and

provides evidence-based and person-centered approaches to empower those impacted by incarceration to find individual success. Professor Henry and the Board reported total annual expenses of \$1,685,695, a total revenue of \$2,176,818, and a total end-of-year net assets of \$1,380,613. Further, OAR served 4,623 clients with 11,180 hours of job search assistance and job preparation training, and clients successfully gained 268 jobs, 198 full-time and 70 part-time.

Professor Henry highlights a program participant, Mr. B, and his specific success gaining employment. "OAR was there for me, from the shoes on my feet to my ride to work," says Mr. B, who came to OAR in the height of the pandemic. At the time of his release, most service providers had closed. After assisting with getting his ID, Mr. B was able to achieve three job interviews. After successfully attaining a position with Dupont, OAR was able to purchase Mr. B's uniform attire and assist with providing three weeks of free transportation as part of their ride-share program. Success like Mr. B's continues to grow as Professor Henry and the Board help the program continue its transition back to offering full client services since the beginning of the pandemic.



Bridging the Equity Gap



This past academic year marked the first year of the VCU's new general education program, ConnectED. This was an incredible undertaking and was years in the making with collaboration between faculty representing various

units across the university, including Associate Professors Vicki Pallo, PhD., Julianne Guillard, PhD., and Ginni Totaro. The responsibilities for the gen education overhaul and maintaining the new ConnectED fall under the purview of two committees: the General Education Curriculum Committee (GECC) and the General Education Assessment Committee (GEAC), where Professor Pallo and Professor Totaro served as co-chairs for each committee, respectively. As co-chair of the GEAC, Professor Totaro is responsible for helping manage communications with all VCU faculty teaching ConnectED courses and establishing systems for regular curricular assessments for assignments and learning goals. When discussing the role of Focused Inquiry in the gen education redesign, she said, "All of this work is redesigning curriculum to meet the needs of a 21st century learner, and we are the heart of ConnectED." With Focused Inquiry's own assessment work, Professor Totaro has worked very closely with our course data and VCU graduation and retention rates to identify and mitigate any equity gaps in student success with particular student populations (underrepresented, first-gen, pell eligible, etc.).

"We can see that there is a greater variability in UNIV111 to UNIV112 than UNIV112 to UNIV200. By the time students enroll in UNIV200, the failure rates are almost closed—less than 2%," she noted. Professor Totaro will continue this vital work in the 2022-2023 academic year, identifying significant differences in grades in our courses and working with individual faculty members to help them understand their own class data.

"We can see that there is a greater variability in UNIV111 to UNIV112 than UNIV112 to UNIV200. By the time students enroll in UNIV200, the failure rates are almost closed—less than two percent."

Celebrating APIDA Graduates



Associate Professors Frank Cha and Paul Yoon helped organize and run the inaugural Asian Pacific Islander Desi American (APIDA) commencement ceremony in conjunction with the Office of Multicultural Student Affairs (OMSA). They are incredibly proud of

the students' work, and made sure the students knew this by celebrating their amazing achievements with them. Professors Cha and Yoon would also like to extend a special thanks to colleagues Assistant Professors Thad Fortney and Emily Williams.

Creating Community for Young Black Writers



In the summer of 2021, Instructor Nikki Fernandes brought to life her vision for a community of young Black thinkers and writers coming together to grow and learn from one another. Seven applicants between the ages of 18 to 25 were invited to spend a week in a communal space in Richmond Hill, participating in daily writing workshops designed to promote strong communication skills as well as provide opportunity for self-reflection and healing.

This program, called The Warmth, was conceived and facilitated entirely by Instructor Fernandes, who also raised funds through community donations to offer this retreat at no cost to participants. Participants from the first cohort said that The Warmth was “a place to stop and breathe and reassess,” and to find support from a community that “truly listens to your experiences as a black individual.” The Warmth welcomed its second cohort of thinkers and writers in the summer of 2022, along with former participants who were invited back to serve as mentors.



Building Critical Community for Educators

On November 6, 2021, members of the “Envisioning and Building Critical Community” Faculty Learning Community faculty Instructor Nikki Fernandes, Associate Professor Chris Jackson, Associate Professor Troy Martin, PhD., and Instructor Carver Weakley each presented an individual paper at an American Educational Studies Association (AESA) conference session titled “Community and Academic Labor: Healing in the Vise of Neoliberalism” in Portland, Oregon. The FLC began in Fall 2019 and started their work with ideas about “critical community” from educational studies scholars Sylvia Bettez, PhD., and Kathy Hytten, PhD. According to Bettez (2011), critical communities may be defined as “interconnected, porously bordered, shifting webs of people who through dialogue, active listening, and critical question posing, assist each other in critically thinking through issues of power, oppression, and privilege.”

Collectively, the group built a process-oriented FLC that valued open-endedness, shared time and connection, where members could explore community, institutional culture, and wholeness within our professional and educational context. As described by Instructor Fernandes, the FLC seemed defined by: an ethos of humility as disruptive to power; an openness to exploring the why and the who of teaching; a welcoming of

the process, an exploration of surprise, a trust in product as the natural byproduct of good process; and open and honest interrogation of the systems that fail students.

The FLC also read educator Parker J. Palmer’s *A Hidden Wholeness: The Journey Toward an Undivided Life* (2009), which helped form questions about “self-fragmentation,” “identity” and “integrity.” Through continued exploration and conversation, the group members recognized ways in which the intactness of both “identity” and “integrity” affects the community life of our students, colleagues and university.

After two years of reading, community-building, and focused discussion (and during a global pandemic), members increasingly saw their work as a radical departure from professional norms within higher education institutional life, and as a result, were accepted to present at the AESA national conference. Some take-away remarks from the session include:

“I came to understand critical community differently and more deeply, both theoretically and practically, as a way for us to share what we know, what we have experienced, and what we are still seeking as well as think deeply about power, oppression, and privilege, in order to,



American Educational Studies Association National Conference, November 2021, Portland, Oregon

as Bettez (2011) writes, engage in ‘community as an ongoing practice...fluid, decentered, shifting, and always in process’.” – Carver Weakley

“One thing that is so valuable about our critical community is that we make room for the forces inside of us that can interfere with community—ego and competition. We talk about these forces and the roles they play. Allowing these parts of ourselves to belong makes for more authentic conversation.” – Chris Jackson

“According to Bettez and Hytten (2013), critical community “... requires us to be welcoming, open, reflective, flexible, generous, improvisational, tolerant, and collegial, and to create institutional norms and structures that support these dispositions.” They continue to identify three important habits: dialogue across difference, looking outward to build connections, and patient trust in engagement rather than isolation or self-centeredness. When considering these dispositions and habits along with the academic labor expected of non-tenure track (NTT) faculty, we find them especially relevant and particularly difficult to hold. Studies report that NTT faculty feel less satisfied with a sense of collegiality (compared with tenured and tenure-track faculty) in their departments (Haviland, Alleman & Allen, 2017; Ott & Cisneros, 2015). Such studies, describing the experiences and perceptions of NTT faculty and finding less collegiality and inclusivity, add support to our sense of the importance of holding space for critical community-building.” – Troy Martin

INTERDISCIPLINARY SCHOLARSHIP ABOUT HISTORY AND MEMORY

A Collaborative Space for Learning and Teaching about Memorialization



Assistant Professors Hilary Levinson, PhD., and Katie Logan, PhD., helped lead “Memory and Monuments,” an interdisciplinary research group based out of the Humanities Research Center. The group uses memory studies to examine historical and social events around issues of race, power, physical structures, both in Richmond

and across the world. Their goal was to “foster conversation and creativity across conventional disciplinary boundaries by bringing together faculty and graduate students from different departments with common interests.”

“We loved what [Hilary and I] we’re doing... but we wanted to see what it could look like more broadly at the university level,” Logan said. “After taking it out to the broad university, and finding the HRC as a home for this, we got really fortunate.”

One of the many great things about this program is that it affords scholars the opportunity to examine voices that have been historically left out of narratives created by large—oftentimes government or educational—entities. “Where can we go to hear the voices that have been, whether purposefully or institutionally, excluded?” Levinson said. “I have often gone to literature to find those voices to make more complex what we understand about history—particularly during moments of political crisis.” It is when these voices are found, and contextualized within the existing narrative, that a bigger and more inclusive picture can begin to be constructed.

Logan and Levinson agreed that what makes “Memory and Monuments” special is the ability to bring their projects and work to the interdisciplinary research group and get feedback from a variety of perspectives when members are trying to fine tune research projects, class assignments and other projects.

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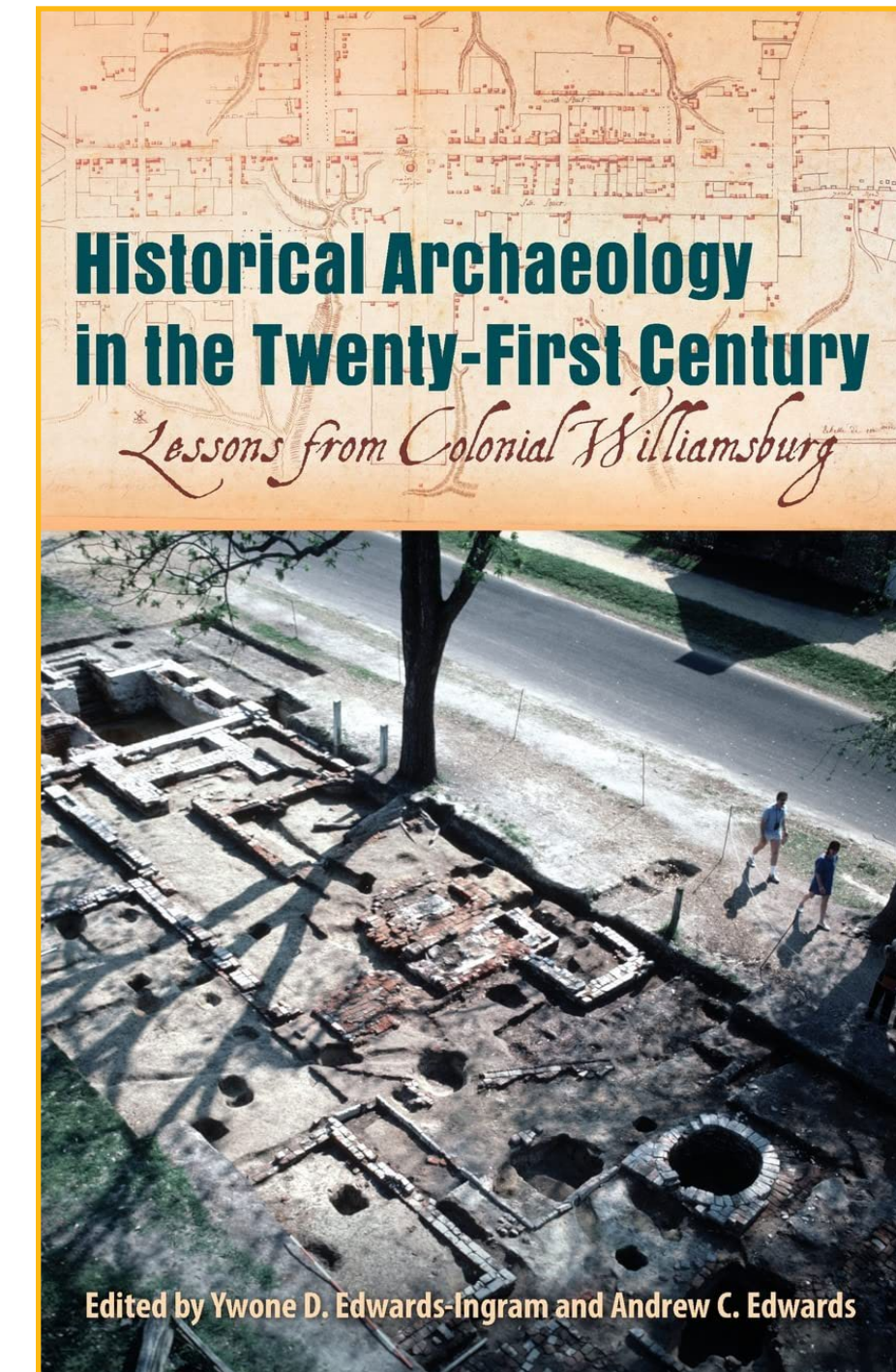
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A Collaborative Space for Learning and Teaching about Memorialization



Co-edited by Focused Inquiry Assistant Professor Ywone Edwards-Ingram, Ph.D. and Williamsburg-based archeologist Andrew C. Edwards, *Historical Archaeology in the Twenty-First Century: Lessons from Colonial Williamsburg* (published in 2021) reconstructs the history of Colonial Williamsburg and carefully examines the legacy of enslaved African Americans who lived there. In her

introduction, Edwards-Ingram writes, “While dealing with the specifics of their research data and topics, the contributing writers address larger theoretical and ethical questions about archaeology and reconstruction. For example, the issues of significance: whose heritage is strongly represented on the built historic landscape of today and why? What does reconstruction conceal as well as reveal?” (3). In her own chapter, “Reconstructing the Landscape of African and African American Burials and Commemorations in Williamsburg, Virginia,” she draws on more than twenty years of experience as an archeologist with the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation and researcher and educator at the College of William and Mary to reveal how cultural and religious practices of Williamsburg’s Black population, as well as discriminatory practices such as segregation, “influenced burial practices in predictable and unpredictable ways” (174).



PEDAGOGICAL AND CURRICULAR INNOVATION

Redesigning UNIV200



Associate Professor and Curriculum Coordinator, Julianne Guillard, Ph.D., shares her excitement with the UNIV 200 Pilot Redesign. The project's goal was to make this course not only more current but to give faculty more autonomy with how they develop their curricular goals and outcomes. The high number of faculty who chose to participate in the pilot reported very positive experiences teaching this new iteration of the course. Another goal of this pilot was to validate the bodies and voices of those who are already in the room through its course materials. To that end, this pilot reimagines how we view communication, research and writing for our students.

Cultural Responsiveness at the VMFA



Assistant Professor Hilary Levinson, Ph.D., focused on ways to instill global and cultural responsiveness as learning outcomes. As the culmination of this work, she conducted an optional field trip to the VMFA with her UNIV 112 online synchronous students (students could also opt for a virtual experience). The chance to see in person the themes and artifacts they'd been discussing all semester was a joyful experience, and she feels that such work with students is innovative, collaborative and focused on engaged learning, both for herself and her students.

Teaching Information Fluency with Memes



After several semesters of teaching through a pandemic, Assistant Professor Judy Topich wanted to give her students a multimodal assignment which would be fun and humorous, but also help them develop important skills such as information fluency and social responsibility. She asked students to create memes to raise awareness about COVID-19 vaccines and masking in order to combat the misinformation they were encountering online, especially on social media. While learning more about vaccinations in preparation for creating their memes, they students also learned how to separate reliable and unreliable information online and consider their own duty to be "better online citizens" and make choices that keep themselves and others safe. Although some students initially were hesitant to see memes as anything except jokes, they came to understand the power of this medium to get people thinking. One of the students reported that he convinced his vaccine-hesitant cousin to get vaccinated using information he learned while working on his project. After a successful and fun first iteration of this assignment, Professor Topich plans to repeat it in the upcoming year with topics related to mental health.

A Pedagogy of Polyphony



Professor Jeff Murray, Ph.D., is always looking for ways to reinvigorate his teaching and take advantage of the versatility of Focused Inquiry's interdisciplinary, skills-oriented curriculum. While participating in a "Habits of Mind" faculty learning community several years ago, Professor Murray began thinking about ways that teaching the core Focused Inquiry skills such as communicative fluency and ethical reasoning also helps students develop traits like empathy and civility. Building upon that idea, he began a project exploring the "Pedagogy of Polyphony," and designed a series of course assignments and classroom exercises emphasizing student voice, empathy and polyphony.

In the first of the three course units, Professor Murray helps students develop their own individual voice and reflect critically on their experiences. From there, students are asked to step outside of their own perspective and consider a classmate's experiences by conducting a series of interviews over the course of a week. The information they gather becomes inspiration for their Unit II Superhero Project, in which they create a hero character with the background, beliefs, values, hopes, dreams and fears of the classmate they interviewed. Students develop a plot, create a nemesis and sidekick, and do additional research to make sure their superhero character accurately reflects their classmate. For instance, if an interviewee reports that they have Autism Spectrum Disorder, the student creating the superhero would conduct further research on ASD as they strategize about ways to represent it in their project. The final unit project expands on this concept by asking students to incorporate not just one other perspective, but many (polyphony). Professor Murray has found that by requiring students to invest in learning about others and produce work that requires an in-depth understanding of different perspectives, they will be more equipped to navigate a world of "others" from a position of empathy.

This "Pedagogy of Polyphony" was embraced by the UC as part of the 2021-2022 First Year Pedagogy Initiative, which aims to increase pedagogical excellence specifically related to first-year college students, and Professor Murray plans to continue it in the 2022-2023 academic year.

Teaching the Ethics of Ethnography



In Fall 2021, Assistant Professor Jason Kirby, Ph.D., sought new ways to have deep conversations with his students and "awaken them to multiple perspectives in the world." Starting with an in-class viewing of "Paris is Burning," Jenny Livingston's documentary about New York's underground drag scene in the 1980s, he guided students through discussions about the ethics of ethnography. He asked them to, "hold two things in their mind at the same time," the importance of preserving a moment in history and documenting a culture, but also the problematic way that the documentarian positioned herself within that culture. Professor Kirby then assigned students to try their own hand at ethnographic research, first collaboratively during a class visit to Monroe Park, and then independently by visiting a site within Richmond and spending time documenting the human behavior they witnessed. This became the foundation for an observational-narrative essay. His favorite submission from that semester was a project about a local music festival, in which the student ethnographer made interesting claims about the insider/outsider dynamic at the event.

Legal Studies Across the Disciplines



Associate Professor Andrew Marx, Ph.D., J.D., received a 2021-2022 Faculty Development Award from the University College to develop a new course titled "Legal Studies Across the Disciplines" for students in Interdisciplinary Studies, as well as a section of UNIV299 "What's the Big Idea?" focused on the concept of a fair trial. Professor Marx was able to utilize his background in law and philosophy, as well as his years of interdisciplinary teaching experience, to develop a course that would be interesting and beneficial to students with a wide variety of career goals, not only those who intend to go to law school after graduating from VCU. He recognizes the need for legal literacy in a wide range of fields and is excited to offer these courses to help students grow this important skill, while also revisiting things from his own education and personal interests.

Gaming in the Classroom



In 2021-22, the goal of the members of the Let's Play Faculty Learning Community was to explore the use of games and play in Focused Inquiry curriculum and classrooms in ways other than classroom gamification. This group also supported each other's interests in finding play and joy in a time in education where many students and faculty have been feeling burnout and stress. The FLC began by asking VCU Multimedia Teaching & Learning Librarian Oscar Keyes to give a presentation on a wide variety of digital tools students could use for games and gaming. The faculty members then collected resources ranging from articles and texts exploring the connections between games and education to physical board games that could be used to develop lessons around FI curriculum, such as ethics or communication. They shared assignments developed by the FLC, either currently or in the past, for short classroom "games" lessons. Two major accomplishments of this group were major assignment-based. FLC members created and workshopped an assignment using the video game Bitsy for the 112 multimodal assignment, which Assistant Professor Amber Pearson, Ph.D., taught in Spring 2022 and Assistant Professor Jason Coats, Ph.D., plans to teach in Fall 2022. Another FLC member, Instructor Kim Zicafoose, constructed and taught a research assignment using the choose-your-own-adventure-style tool Twine. Student feedback on these assignments was positive for both curricular learning objectives and the FLC's broadest goal: fun.



Affordable Course Content

Associate Professor and Textbook Coordinator, Vicki Pallo, Ph.D., and Associate Professor and Curriculum Coordinator, Julianne Guillard, Ph.D., were awarded the Affordable Course Content

Award (ACCA) for the Project: Customize/remix an OER. This award is a follow-up to the 2017 ACCA for VCU Writes written by Vicki Pallo, Kristin Reed, and Michael McIntyre. The impetus for this project was accessibility based on equity gaps. According to Pallo, "[The project] is a better fit for our goals for DEI and better reflects how we want our students to see themselves." This project also aligns with the larger university's commitment to Open Educational Resources (OER), No-Cost or Low-Cost course materials.



SHOWCASING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENTS

During the 2019-2020 academic year, the Focused Inquiry Expo Committee set out to revise the long-running annual Expo. New co-chairs Assistant Professor Leslie Cohen-Gee and Instructor Courtney Sviatko planned a series of events, rather than the former single-day exhibition, to showcase excellent work by Focused Inquiry students, create opportunities for interactions between presenters and their audience, and generate discussions about the creative process in addition to the end product. After their work was interrupted by the pandemic, the committee was thrilled to launch the pilot of this series during the 2021-2022 academic year.



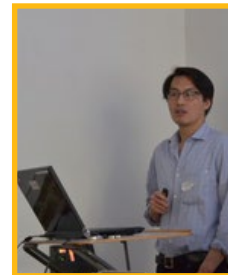
The first event in the Expo Series, "Essays Out Loud," featured essay contest winners reading excerpts of their writing and sharing insights into their process with a mixed audience of Focused Inquiry students, faculty, and friends and family who attended in-person and via a Zoom livestream. These students read from personal narratives, synthesis papers, research-based arguments, and reflective essays which moved and inspired listeners. They also shared advice for developing writers during the Q&A, emphasizing the importance of peer-review to learn about audience expectations and the power in working through an initial draft without self-editing.



The committee also hosted the "Multimodal Gallery" in the spring of 2022, celebrating the work of students from UNIV112 and 200 who incorporated artistic skills such as drawing and acting into a variety of creative communication projects. These student creators demonstrated an understanding of how arguments transcend the written word and how to skillfully deliver evidence using convincing, and sometimes unexpected, modes of persuasion. In addition to the live event, the Expo Committee shared a number of digital projects through their Kaltura media channel, allowing a wider audience to view and appreciate these students' ideas and compositions.

Associate Professor Jennifer Selman-Flanagan, one of the committee members, "left the Essays Out Loud event full of joy." She shared her pride in being part of "our FI community that helped support these students to create pieces of writing of which they were notably proud." She and the rest of the committee are excited to continue the series in the next academic year and plan to add an additional event featuring excellent oral presentations.

WELCOMING NEW FACULTY



The Department of Focused Inquiry welcomed six full-time new faculty members this year. Jo-Jo Koo, Ph.D.; Sara Laws, Ph.D.; Deidra Lee, Ph.D.; Brandi Neal, Ph.D.; Daliborka Padon, Ph.D.; and Amy Tudor, Ph.D. joined Focused Inquiry in Fall 2022 after a nation-wide search for teachers with a deep commitment to students, general education and interdisciplinary inquiry. Serving on a faculty search committee can be challenging, time-consuming work, but the 2021-2022 committee--composed of committee chair Assistant Professor Katie Logan, Ph.D. and members Professors Nikki Fernandes, Chris



Jackson, Beth Kreydatus, Ph.D., Alli Tharp Ph.D., and School of World Studies colleague Mark Wood--found the effort to locate and welcome new colleagues to campus a rewarding one.

Our new faculty represent a range of teaching experiences including programs for international students and middle school choir. Their work in the classroom introduces all of us to new critical pedagogies and encourages us to think about the unique challenges incoming students might be facing. They reinvigorate Focused Inquiry's commitment to interdisciplinary inquiry, as their academic backgrounds include everything from philosophy to ethnomusicology (Professor Logan notes that many of the committee members learned about the field of Thanatology for the first time when Professor Tudor shared her work focused on death and dying).

Welcome to Jo-Jo, Sara, Deidra, Brandi, Dali and Amy--your colleagues look forward to learning from your extraordinary work!

WHAT BROUGHT YOU JOY THIS YEAR?

“ Seeing my students connect with and enjoy their service learning opportunities, whether working in the garden, beside the river, or with kids making art after school brought me great joy.

- Instructor and Experiential Learning Coordinator,
Mark Meier

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“ It has been an ongoing joy to explore how we learn and how we encourage and evaluate learning in community with the Alt Grading FLC. Tara and Alli have created such valuable space for reflection on how grading structures shape the learning environment and demonstrate what matters to us. It has begun to revitalize my teaching. It's been a joy to hear that students feel good about the system, and have less anxiety about their writing and thinking.

-Assistant Professor, Emily Williams

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“ Getting to learn from my students!

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- Professor, Peter Henry, Ph.D.

“ Collaborating with faculty from various units on assessing our new general education program, ConnectED. It is easy to hunker down in our own silos but I loved getting to know my colleagues from Biology, Education, Honors, etc. while working really hard to get our assessment project off the ground. I know serving on University-level committees can be tedious and stressful at times but I found the rewards of friendship and multiple perspectives well worth the time and effort.

- Associate Professor, Ginni Totaro

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“ I found so much joy in watching my undergraduate teaching assistants become more confident through mentoring other students and challenging themselves to try new things, such as facilitating a class activity about wellness and stress management. Their energy, creativity, and compassion was inspiring every day.

- Instructor, Courtney Sviatko

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“ I felt the greatest joy in seeing students in classrooms, in real time, become more confident in their abilities to be present with and for one another. Small group workshops afforded them the time and space to get to trust one another with their stories and their opinions. Seems really important that this occurred, and I am super glad I got to witness it.

- Assistant Professor, Jamie Fueglein

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