



SCHOLARS IN ACTION: Interdisciplinary Research Creative Strategies across the Curriculum: Teaching Students to Think on Their Feet

A panel discussion featuring recent scholarship by WCSU Faculty

Wednesday, April 4, 2018 at 5:30 p.m.

Western Connecticut State University, Middtown Campus

White Hall Room 122

Please join us for a panel discussion featuring the research of Dr. Maya Aloni, Assistant Professor from the Psychology Department; Drs. Catherine O'Callaghan and Jody Piro, Professors from the Education and Educational Psychology Department; and Professor Thomas Miller, Assistant Professor from the Justice and Law Administration Department. The moderator will be Dr. Missy Alexander, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs.

About the Panelists' Research

Dr. Maya Aloni - The Effect of Discussion Role Assignments on Students' Perceptions of the Effectiveness of Class Discussions

Dr. Aloni will demonstrate how assigning students to discussion roles (e.g. leader, devil's advocate) can greatly improve the effectiveness of class discussion (De Wever, Van Keer, Schellens & Valcke, 2010). For example, discussion roles can increase students' knowledge construction as well as alleviate any issues of non-participation or domination of the discussion by certain group members (Strijbos & De Laat, 2010). During this session, Dr. Aloni will review the research findings on the effectiveness of discussion roles. She will then share the results of two studies she conducted on the effectiveness of implementing various discussion roles in her upper-level courses. Best practices on implementing discussion roles will be discussed and demonstrated.

Professor Thomas Miller - Moot Court as an Undergraduate Development-Oriented Andragogical Teaching Method

Professor Miller's presentation will show that although moot court (a mock appellate court at which law students argue imaginary cases for practice) is closely identified with law school, students in undergraduate criminal justice programs can benefit from participating in it. Moot court, above all else, teaches critical thinking and refines a student's ability to think extemporaneously in a practical, development-oriented setting. Future police and corrections officers can learn the valuable skill of how to quickly respond in an appropriate and logical manner when challenged. Future criminologists can learn how to critically evaluate information from a different perspective. Future lawyers, of course, will probably find themselves arguing before a real court before too long. Moot court also requires undergraduate students to research and write a brief before entering the mock courtroom. This kind of precise writing with detail-oriented analysis is required in every criminal justice profession. Regardless of an undergraduate criminal justice student's course of study, moot court can provide a benefit.

Drs. Catherine O'Callaghan and Jody Piro - The Teachlive Lab at WCSU: Using Avatars in Mixed Reality Simulations for Teacher Candidates and Professional Educators

Dr. O'Callaghan's and Dr. Piro's presentation will discuss the findings of a qualitative collective case study that explored the use of mixed-reality simulations to understand how preservice teachers understand threshold concepts and to prepare them for the profession. Part of the challenge facing teacher educators is the act of teaching itself. In order to teach effectively in today's diverse classroom, preservice teachers need contextualized preparation on high leverage practices in a supportive environment (Matsko & Hammerness, 2013). The use of mixed-reality simulation in pre-service education and administrator preparation has the potential to bridge the theory-to-practice divide for situated cognition, supporting the notion that what is learned cannot be separated from how it is learned and used (Brown, Collins, & Duguid, 1989).

Please RSVP for the panel discussion on *Creative Strategies across the Curriculum: Teaching Students to Think on their Feet* at: cunninghamj@wcsu.edu