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**ACS Blended Teaching and Learning Grant Final Report:
“Literary Landscapes: Writing the Natural State”**

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I am deeply grateful to the ACS for supporting both “Literary Landscapes: Writing the Natural State” and its sister project at Furman University “Sister Classrooms: Connecting Through Blogs and Grounded in Place,” directed by Dr. Carmel Price. The report that follows contains my description as assessment of the project, with contributions from Dr. Price where our shared work created overlap in our experience.

Goals and Objectives

The original goal of this project was to interweave two classrooms pursuing place-based studies from different disciplinary perspectives. In connecting these “sister classrooms”—my Writing the Natural State course in English at Hendrix College and Dr. Carmel Price’s Population and Environment Class at Furman University—Dr. Price and I aimed to foster an interdisciplinary conversation about the study of environmental issues, as well as to explore the use of blended learning in the place-based classroom. Specifically, I had hoped my students would:

- Gain an awareness of local environmental issues, as well as a more widely applicable understanding of how media (including novels, poetry, nonfiction, and print and electronic journalism) shape public understandings of environmental issues.
- Develop vital research and writing skills using a variety of resources, including periodicals, scholarly databases, field trips, and personal interviews with writers and publishing professionals.
- Collaborate to create a “Literary Landscapes” blog, in which students express their understanding of local environmental issues in a meaningful way, and simultaneously create a useful tool for other classes at Hendrix.
- Pair with a sister class at Furman University as it engages in its own place-based inquiry, exchanging research and feedback through their respective class blogs. This intellectual exchange will be mutually enriching to each class, challenging them to write meaningfully for an audience of their peers.

Although the original objectives of the course remained unchanged over the duration of the project, there were two major revisions to the schedule of course

activities: first, I cancelled the class trip to the University of Arkansas Library's special collections archive, and to the University of Arkansas Press. This change was made due to concerns both for time and pedagogical consistency; a lengthy trip at that point in the semester would have laid additional pressure on the students, and I had difficulty deciding how the trip would connect precisely and productively to the assignments I had already given the students. In the end, I found that the more effective way to accomplish the goal of introducing my students to Arkansas' rich literary landscape was to bring Arkansan writers to the classroom. By the end of the semester, we had conducted fruitful conversations with five writers/publishers active in local presses and publications, including: Dana Steward, Tyrone Jaeger, Hope Coulter, Mel White, and Mark Spitzer. The second major change I made to my original plans was to bring local writer Dana Steward to our class in the place of Jennifer Horne. While Ms. Horne is an accomplished alumna of Hendrix College, Ms. Steward seemed the better choice due to her longstanding involvement with the Ozark Society and its publications, as well as her publication of *A Rough Sort of Beauty*—an anthology of Arkansas nature writing co-produced with Hendrix students in 2001.

Student evaluations indicate that the first and third goals of the class—gaining an awareness of Arkansas' literature and environmental issues and using the blog to enhance students' communication and discussion skills—were richly achieved. The course syllabus used a number of different texts from and about Arkansas, ranging historically from contemporary to the early 19th century, and course discussion covered environmental issues such as the nationalization of the Buffalo River, endangered Alligator Gar populations, and the effects of racial segregation on the experience of a particular place. As another student put it, "In Environmental Studies courses, we all too often discuss large, abstract ideas and arguments, but I think it's important to always tie those back to actual places and scenarios, which this class helped to do. I think it was also important to study literature from across time, to see how perceptions of Arkansas have changed." The blog, which was introduced to students through a moderately structured assignment that required each to participate, helped students both to extend their learning to real-world examples (one student, for instance, wrote an entry about her high-school biology class's search for the Ivory-Billed Woodpecker), and to continue course discussions in a thoughtful and carefully articulated way. As one student wrote, "The blended learning really helped bridge the gaps between class sessions. The technology and out of class experiences kept me thinking about ideas brought up in class that I normally would have kept just in my classroom experience. It helped me see it as more of a semester long learning course rather than just, 'Oh, I'll worry about this class three times a week.'"

The blog also played a role in accomplishing my fourth learning goal—the creation of a learning community between the two distant classrooms. In one sense, this occurred through unstructured interactions between students in the two classrooms as students in each class read the work of students in their sister-class and offered comments and feedback. More commonly, however, the blog served as a

tool to prepare students for the teleconference sessions (three of which occurred over the course of the semester) that brought both classrooms together over discussion of a common reading. For instance, in the days before our joint discussion of a chapter from Henry David Thoreau's *Walden*, I created an informative blog entry with some guiding questions about the reading and invited students in both classes to read and comment. This helped prepare students for the discussion, while another blog post from one of Dr. Price's students, detailing their class excursion to the replica of Thoreau's cabin on their own campus, helped students in both classes to follow up on the video conference.

In another sense, too, the blended learning aspects of the class helped to build toward the second objective—improving students' research and communication skills. Although the sacrifice of the trip to the University of Arkansas archives meant I could not emphasize research skills in the same way, we did concentrate on developing communication skills through both conventional assignments such as literary analyses and creative assignments. The class blog, for instance, gave students extra time and space to think and write critically, while it also exerted a productive kind of public pressure on the care they took in expressing themselves. As one student put it, "The blog, in a sense, made me feel like I was contributing to something instead of operating within the school system: write paper, paper graded, paper handed back and filed. This is something that people, other people, could go on and see what this class was about, and how we, as individuals, think about certain issues." Beyond the blog, students also practiced their writing skills through a progressive assignment which asked them to first write a literary analysis of a course text and then, using instructor feedback, to reconceptualize their critique of the text into a digital story which treated their personal reactions to the text. In one particularly fine example, a student turned her initial observation about the stereotypes attached to nineteenth-century Arkansans in Thomas Bangs Thorpe's short story, "The Big Bear of Arkansas" into an internal monologue for that character, lamenting the industrialization of the Big Woods landscape the loss of that characters' sense of identity. Combining this familiar English Class assignment with the challenge of rearticulating, storyboarding, and editing their insights into 2-minute presentations helped students better understand the value of analytic work and to become more aware of the ways in which words powerfully shape experience.

My students' videos and blog posts can be accessed through our course website: <http://naturalstate.edublogs.org>. Dr. Price's students' blog can be accessed at <http://popandev.edublogs.org>.

Assessment and Evaluation

Dr. Price offers the following assessment of our joint work on the sister class project:

Dr. Hagood and I collaborated on the evaluation process for our two courses; we jointly designed the evaluation tools, and administrated them to our respective classes within a few days of each other. We developed both pre- and post-assessment tools primarily focused on the two unique components of our projects: place-based pedagogy and blended learning. The pre-assessment questionnaire was administered during the first week of classes and asked students to respond to four questions:

1. What role does the *place* in which your school is located—including things such as local culture, natural environment, or local political issues—*typically* play in your college education? Can you think of any specific examples?
2. What , if any, role do you feel that the *place* in which you are educated—including things such as local culture, natural environment, or local political issues—*ought to* play in your college education?
3. What role do digital communications—including things such as blogs, course wikis, teleconferences, or podcasts—*typically* play in your college education? Can you think of any examples?
4. What, if any, role do you feel that digital communications—including things such as blogs, course wikis, teleconferences, or podcasts—*ought to* play in your college education?

The post-assessment questionnaire was administered during the last week of classes and asked students to respond to a two-part survey with a total of four questions:

Part One. This class was taught with an emphasis on place. In some cases, this meant focusing on issues pertaining to a particular geographic area, and in others, it meant using examples drawn from the local environment to help you learn about more general concepts.

1. In terms of how it affected your learning, how do you feel about the amount of time we spent on place-based material or examples in this class? (Please circle one)

We spent too much time on place.

We spent a satisfactory amount of time on place.

We spent too little time on place.

2. How, in your opinion, did the place-based emphasis of this class shape your learning experience?

Part Two. This class made use of blended learning elements, including class blogs, teleconferences, and—in a more general sense—the digital presence of a sister class.

1. In terms of how it affected your learning, how do you feel about the amount of time we devoted to blended learning activities? (Please circle one)

We spent too much time on blended learning activities.

We spent a satisfactory amount of time on blended learning activities.

We spent too little time on blended learning activities.

2. How, in your opinion, did the blended learning elements listed above shape your learning experience?

The results from both the pre- and post-assessments validated the utility of our projects and illustrated the successes we had while also providing us with valuable, constructive feedback to help us learn and grow from our experiences and share our “lessons learned” with others. A summary of those results follows; please see the Appendix of this report for a copy of the evaluations in their entirety. The pre-assessment tools, in general, revealed that students did not feel like *place* had previously played a large role in their education but they were open to and liked the idea of incorporating *place* more into their curriculum. One notable exception, is that several students in the Population and Environment course were science majors (e.g., Biology and Earth and Environmental Sciences) and they reported that their local environment had played a large role in their Furman education prior to this course (i.e. taking water samples in the local river). These evaluation results echo my personal experience, as a Postdoctoral Fellow with a joint academic appointment, one in a physical science department (Earth and Environmental Sciences) and one in a social science department (Sociology), that the physical sciences often do a much better job of incorporating their local environment into their classroom learning objectives and activities than the social sciences and the humanities. This is one reason why our projects, which joined a humanities course and a social science course together in experiential place-based learning, are unique and impactful. Below is a sample of responses from students (with emphasis added):

The culture here is unique to the American Southeast, and different from what I was accustomed to before moving here, but **I don't think it has had much of an impact on my education.** I think Furman's education is similar to the education you would get from another comparable university. However, Furman does focus on the issue of sustainability much more than the average college, which was a big drawing point for me.

Well culturally speaking **the environment in which our campus sits is the source for opportunity and experience for the local student.** Festivals, fairs, and job opportunities such as internships provide ample opportunity to grow and

mature. **The natural aspect has the biggest effects on science majors.** My research and analysis group were able to look into the fungi levels of a heavily fowl populated lake.

The place should educate you, especially if it differs from your origin. Some classes I'm sure like politic science and environmental science go into Greenville topics, but no classes I've had did that.

I would love for the surrounding area to play a larger role in my classes especially. I don't know the area well, so I would love to learn about it through my classes.

I think it would be cool if every college were closely tied to their surrounding city and environment, but that's not always the case. It would provide a more holistic education in terms of getting out of the classroom and experiencing things. That is not always what gets focused on though.

The pre-assessment results for the blended learning component of the assessment tool displayed a relative consensus among students: technology has had varied roles in their previous learning experiences but they desire more. For example, students wrote "I follow many blogs especially that I think could be brought into the classroom more" and "I believe that **digital communications should play a huge role in college education.** This is the easiest way to connect with students now, and more information can be given to students" (emphasis added).

The post-assessment results were extremely helpful in assessing both the impact of our projects on students' learning and determining areas for improvement. The quantitative data from the post assessment is as follows:

<i>Assessment of Time Spent</i>	<i>Hendrix Students</i>	<i>Furman Students</i>	<i>Total</i>
Too much time on place	1	2	3
Satisfactory amount of time on place	13	11	24
Too little time on place	1	2	3
Too much time on blended learning	1.5	1	2.5
Satisfactory amount of time on blended learning	10.5	12	22.5
Too little time on blended learning	3	2	5

From the table above, it is clear that students from both classes enjoyed the amount of time spent on both the placed-based learning and the blending learning components of the course. (Note that one student from Hendrix College split his or her response on the blended learning question into two categories.) The qualitative piece of the assessment

provides us with more insight into the students who reported a desire for more or less time on the place and blended learning course components. For the most part, students reported that putting an emphasis on place really enhanced their learning experiences by making the material more applicable, relatable, and understandable. For the Population and Environment class, a theme emerged of students reporting that a focus on Greenville actually helped them better understand their “own place” (i.e. their hometown). And the Hendrix students reported that a focus on place and local landscapes was refreshing for their discipline (instead of the more frequent focus on people). For example, students wrote (emphasis added):

It really helped me understand Greenville better which I loved, especially being able to compare it to my hometown. I really liked that it gave me real examples of what we were learning about—especially community development planning. I liked being able to see examples of options that were being discussed in Greenville.

It was very helpful in that it brought real-life examples to the broad concepts that we studied. **Instead of just reading the topic in a book about far-off places and theoretical situations, I could apply them to my own area, which made them more accessible** in my opinion.

The place-based emphasis of this class was crucial for me (an English major) to understanding the environmental content of the class. I felt that field trips, local folklore, and visiting writers all **helped me to better grasp how some of the topics of the class actually play out in the real world.**

This class was great. I’ve never taken a “place-based” class before this one, but I have to admit, I was obsessed with it. I told everyone I know about this class on a very regular basis. I looked forward to coming to class every day and oftentimes wished I could bring a guest! **The place-based emphasis made it more personal. The examples were understandable and applicable.** We should definitely offer more of these at Hendrix.

Based on the post-survey responses, the blended learning components of the courses are the areas that we feel could be most improved upon. For the most part the responses were positive; students enjoyed the blended learning components and reported that it enhanced their learning. However, the students did offer a fair amount of constructive feedback, many of the suggestions we find to be excellent. For example, many students thought that the interaction between the two courses, especially the video conferences themselves, should have been more structured and longer. Students from Hendrix were slightly more critical of the video conferences between the classes than the students from Furman and the students from Furman were slightly more critical of the course blogs than the students from Hendrix. At this point we are guessing that these varied results are directly related to the different course structures and

instructional techniques that we utilized. As we engage in the reflection and writing process for our journal articles, we plan to further explore the post-survey results as they are related to our individual course organizational structures and personal teaching styles. Below are a select few highlights from the students' responses (emphasis added):

I think digital teleconferencing, and using that for academic work, is still in its infancy. Because of that, **the class conferences with our sister class were a bit rough, although they become more organized and effective as the class progressed.** Maybe small group projects or discussion among the two classes could improve this in the future? **The class blogs were a surprisingly great and interesting resource, and they helped me approach the material in a different way, and through other perspectives.**

I loved being able to share experiences with the sister class (it was one of my favorite parts). I think it's really important to get a variety of opinions, and I think our sister class provided that. The only thing I would have changed is the number of meeting we had with our other class. **I wish we could have seen them more and talked to them longer.** I don't know if that's possible with our schedule, but if it is possible, that is my recommendation.

The blogs were fantastic. Really gave me a chance to think out my ideas before stumbling through them in class! They promoted continued discussion away from the classroom, which I love, and forced us to stay engaged. The sister class—we needed more time with them! **Perhaps the meetings could be scheduled for 1.5 hours rather than 35 minutes. I always felt rushed.** Maybe just 1 hour would be good...I was just never ready to say goodbye.

I loved all of the different technological elements of this class. It contributed to my overall learning experience. It's nice to hear a different perspective from a sister class. I feel more cultured and connected when listening to their discussions and opinions during the teleconferences. Plus, continuing our learning over the blog was beneficial. **This class was a breath of fresh air compared to a standard, lecture-style class.**

I thought that it helped some. It was interesting to hear what our sister class had to say, but at times **I felt like the use of technology was a little forced.**

I really enjoyed the webinars with our sister class as well as the class blog. It was always interesting to hear from their group coming from a totally different literary place than ourselves. The class blog allowed me to focus on what I was most interested in, but also to hear from other students. I circled that we spent too little time for a couple of reasons. First, I wish the webinars were longer or that we had more of them. **It felt like 30 minutes was never enough. The blogs were also tricky. I enjoyed the freedom to write about any topic but the lack of structure was also a little worrisome.** I think it was probably a failure on the

part of the students but I think the blogs got lost and forgotten in the pace of Furman. Maybe if we had weekly, informal discussions of the blog it would have been utilized more.

Though the webinars were a bit awkward at first, I grew to really look forward to them. It was especially interesting in that the other class brought perspectives rooted in English/Literature, while we held sociological mindsets, but **in the end we were all approaching similar conclusions through different lenses.** The blogs were also good for this because we could find/share current events from our states that corresponded to concepts taught in class or discussed in the webinars. Overall, the use of technology/field trips really made the class interesting and made the material more interesting/applicable.

In addition to Dr. Price's review, I will offer a few additional thoughts. The most significant change I would make in a future version of this project would be to strengthen the relationship between the two sister classrooms. This could be done in a number of ways, including: 1) increasing the number of joint class sessions; 2) increasing transparency between the two classes with regard to learning goals and day-to-day activities; and 3) experimenting with small group work between the two classes. Although students noted the value of the "diversity" and the "scholarly atmosphere" that the teleconferences created, a significant fraction also posited that more time spent with their sister class would have allowed for richer and more rewarding conversation, rather than the feeling that the two classes were "talking at" one another. In essence, while the common-text discussions provided a shared ground from which to explore environmental issues—and resurfaced in later class discussions—some students struggled with connecting the teleconference sessions back to our traditional classroom learning.

Students' assessments suggest a variety of ways in which we might further connect, including more and longer teleconferences, grouping teleconferences into a week-long discussion, and small group collaborations between the classes that would take place largely through the blog, with presentations to both classes taking place through teleconference. To their suggestions, I would add the notion of greater transparency: I would be interested, for instance, in seeing students from one class prepare a lesson for the other class based on skills they have recently learned, and presenting that lesson through teleconference. This approach would not necessarily facilitate group discussion, but it would help students see more precisely how their colleagues in other disciplines tackle environmental problems. This approach might also be supported by exchange across class blogs, with students in each class querying their sister class with regard to certain information or skills that are not readily available within that class's particular discipline.

Impact

In terms of its potential impact, this project fell at a particularly fortuitous time for Hendrix College, with our Chief Information Officer (David Hinson) and our

newly-appointed Fellow in Digital Humanities and Pedagogy (Tim Lepczyk) making a concerted effort to expose faculty to the potential benefits of telepresence technology. As a result, I shared descriptions and “lessons-learned” from our project with three different groups of faculty and board members over the course of the semester, and our class also appeared in a news story on the Hendrix College website (<http://www.hendrix.edu/news/news.aspx?id=63283>). The same pedagogical issues Dr. Price and I worked through in completing our projects are now finding their ways into conversations in many quarters of campus. I was also able to share my students’ work on the digital storytelling assignment I gave them with Bryan Alexander of the National Institute for Technology in the Liberal Arts, who hopes to use them as examples for others seeking to do similar work in their own classes.

Our impact on our students seems to have been significant in both of our intended areas: the place-based aspects of our courses helped students grasp the lessons we delivered more concretely (and with a noticeable emphasis on the *emotional* as well as intellectual satisfactions of this approach), while the blended learning aspects of our courses helped them become more engaged and confident in communicating what they have learned. For more detailed information about the project’s impact on students, please see the “Assessment and Evaluation” section of this report, as well as the student surveys we collected from each class at the beginning and end of the project.

As fellow ACS Environmental Fellows at our respective institutions, Dr. Price and I were particularly well-placed to share our work with ACS colleagues. Last October, we gave a presentation on our developing work before an audience of ACS Environmental Fellows and Mentors at the program’s yearly meeting, sparking a productive conversation about the potential benefits and problems of blended learning in the liberal arts classrooms. More recently, I discussed this project at a roundtable presentation on Sustainability and Pedagogy at the January 2013 meeting of the Modern Language Association, and Dr. Price plans to present on the project at the Southern Demographic Association 2013 Annual Meeting in Montgomery, AL. Currently, Dr. Price and I are preparing our project and results for submission to multiple journals, including one co-authored piece for an interdisciplinary journal with a pedagogical emphasis (such as the *Journal of Environmental Studies and Sciences*). We also hope to author one piece each, with significant contributes from one another, for discipline-specific journals such as *Teaching Sociology* and *College English*. We plan to have our collaborative article drafted by the close of the spring semester.

Financial Statement

Overall, the project was far less costly than originally imagined, in large part due to the substitution of cost-effective, “locally-sourced” substitutions to some of the more ambitious items on the original budget.

- The originally-scheduled field trip to the University of Arkansas was omitted. Ultimately, it was deemed a less cost-efficient way of educating students about Arkansan literature and environmental issues than bringing Arkansan writers to the classroom. This substitution also helped to save money in the “Guest Lecturer” category, as the local writers required no lodging or travel reimbursements, and since our Creative Writing program agreed to assume some costs of advertising their visits.
- The field trip to Jewel Moore, where we conversed with Dr. K. C. Larson of the University of Central Arkansas’ Biology department served as an excellent “hands-on” introduction to local landscapes. A nominal amount was saved due to the substitution of a van for a shuttle bus (the van was large enough to seat all the students who could attend, and could be driven by me). However, I also elected to award Dr. Larson with a \$100 honorarium (drawn from the “Guest Lecturers” column) for her excellent teaching.
- The one irregularity not noted in the budget falls under the category of the Class Blog and the Curriculum Development Materials. I elected to use the “Pro” version of the Edublogs platform because of the additional storage space for course materials it allowed, as well as its comparative ease of use for myself and the students. This upgrade required a starting fee of \$14.95 (reflected in the budget), but also requires the renewal of this subscription every three months. I took this additional cost upon myself, since I plan to use the same subscription to create additional class web pages (hence no extra expense appears on the budget).

Appendix: Student Evaluations
Literary Landscapes & Population and Environment

Fall 2012

Literary Landscapes: Writing the Natural State

Student **Pre-Test** / Sept. 1, 2012

What role does the place in which your school is located—including things such as local culture, natural environment, or local political issues—typically play in your college classes? Can you think of any specific examples?

- #1 Not much, if any at all. Most classes I've taken exist as if in a bubble separated from the locality.
- #2 I grew up in Arkansas, so I'm pretty influenced by local culture, environment, and politics all the time. As far as within classes goes, as an English major, I spend a lot of time in the classroom, but as a creative writer, I spend a lot of time writing about the world outside.
- #3 Well, within [Environmental Studies], focusing on local happenings is stressed as much as global issues. The Ozarks have always been my home, and being so close and tied up with Arkansas really increases my passion.
- #4 I feel the typical Hendrix student is very insulated by the 'bubble' here. There are some students who seek to become very 'place-based' and extend outside the bubble to get involved. Having lived in Arkansas, I feel very connected to my 'place' here. I consider myself very much a part of the local culture and environment.
- #5 Well, I like to study outside, so the natural environment is important. I also have several classes that utilize AR environments—like my Ecology/Evolution class labs.
- #6 I can't think of how place has played a role in the majority of my classes except for Chemistry of the Environment, in which we tested local water supplies, and my Creative Writing classes, in which my writing reflects the local culture.
- #7 I was able to see the application of my environment in my botany class where we not only studied general botany but spent some lectures focused on Arkansas-specific plant life.
- #8 It can really play into discussion in class because it's something we are all exposed to while we are here, but I can't really think of any specific examples.
- #9 My science based classes generally overlook local culture or 'place', but my environmental courses like to incorporate the local culture and ideas into the discussions. It helps to bring the classes to a more real level and makes them a more to new ideas.
- #10 Having Hendrix in Arkansas means to me a chance to explore the Ozarks and recharge in nature on the weekends. The nature that surrounds Conway allows that earthly connection to remain whole as it maybe wouldn't in New York City.

- #11 I can't recall any examples. In fact, I don't think it really does. I think we try (at Hendrix) to pretend that we're not really here.
- #12 I can't think of any specific examples. As an English major, I haven't seen much of a connect between what I can learn in class and the culture of my school and its surroundings aside from general philosophical ideas about topics like boredom or friendship, etc. And recall that occurs on a rather personal level.
- #13 Many college courses are more focused on worldly issues than on local place. I have had few classes do so except for Ecology, which does lab work in the local environment.
- #14 Not a larger role. Communication among students plays the largest role in my personal learning experience.
- #15 Southern culture is evident to me particularly in social aspects as well as simple daily rituals such as the warmth and enthusiasm of the café ladies (wouldn't see that on West Coast university campus). Hendrix itself has a culture and sense of place that extends through generations (such as Shirrtails tradition)

What, if any, role do you feel that the place in which you are educated—including thing such as local culture, natural environment, or local political issues—ought to play in your college education?

- #1 I feel like place should have more of an important role than it does, but it is tricky to cultivate local involvement at college, because although we technically live here, the place doesn't really "belong" to us outside of campus.
- #2 I think every place is influenced by its location, whether it tries to be or not. It should be influenced. Hendrix should (and to a great extent does) embrace the fact that it's in the South, with the unique cultural and environmental opportunities that provides.
- #3 I believe that college "place" should be comforting. The people that surround Hendrix (and within) play the most integral role of all.
- #4 It would be foolish to assume that one is not effected by the place in which they are educated. However, I believe that place should be used to gain perspective and insight while not being too clouding or distorting experiences and learning.
- #5 I think local culture/issues should play a bigger role, though I'm not sure how. I also wish more classes utilized our beautiful environment—even if they just held class outside more.
- #6 I think it could play a larger role, since place is inescapable in any class, but in some instances, like War Literature or something, place may be named as irrelevant.
- #7 I think that local education should be used to highlight aspects of more general topics covered in class. It is important to see the applications of what you are learning in the real world around you, but to leave options open for

- future exploration, most education at the undergraduate level should remain general.
- #8 I think it would be great to focus on it a little more so that people coming from such distant locations could really feel included in their school environment.
 - #9 I think that the environmental classes do a pretty good job with talking about some local cultures (mostly food culture in my courses), but it would help to experience this aspect more.
 - #10 We should incorporate the environment into the classroom more. Yes, having it there beyond city limits is wonderful, but to learn about it in an academic sense would be fantastic.
 - #11 It should be implemented more. I'm from Conway (but I consider eastern Arkansas home) and honestly I'm not familiar with what is going on locally. Of course I'm to blame, but I do think it should be more a part of the college than it is now.
 - #12 I wish there were more opportunities to see literature in action—plays, museums, book festivals, etc. around campus. I think a school's environment should supplement a student's education, as often ideas discussed in classroom are applicable/relevant outdoors.
 - #13 I think it ought to play a larger role in education—that is what attracted me to this class. I think we are losing a strong sense of place and connection to our locality.
 - #14 I think being able to connect what you are currently learning to your immediate environment enables students to connect other aspects that they might not be able to otherwise.
 - #15 I would like classes to evolve themselves with the natural/social environments of Arkansas / the South on a larger scale. For example, in a sociology course, to study the social tradition of the South as compared to other areas of the country. I would also [like] to explore how this state is influential of a part of the bigger whole in terms of policy or beliefs.

What role do digital communications—including things such as blogs, course wikis, teleconferences, or podcasts—typically play in your college education? Can you think of any specific examples?

- #1 I use the internet frequently for research, but class blogs minimally.
- #2 I've had classes that used online resources to post assignments or keep track of page counts (fiction class in particular), but none of my courses so far have really utilized a lot of internet resources.
- #3 They don't play much. I did listen to podcasts for my Ecotheology course. It's good to hear a voice rather than read when a topic has impassioned the speaker.
- #4 Personally, I consider most of these methods as my out of classroom learning experiences. I keep up with business news and issues on the blogs while staying current with NPR podcasts.

- #5 Most of my profs don't use any of those things—usually just Educator/Moodle email.
- #6 They don't play a huge role in my college education, except for Moodle. I have a personal blog, though.
- #7 I used many online video and podcast-type tutorials to study for my MCAT. I found them helpful as a way of continuing to study after I was at the point of exhaustion with the more traditional review book and notes studying.
- #8 I have had a class use podcasts as a learning device, and a couple classes make use of Skype for talking to others in distant locations.
- #9 I would say none. We tried a blog/discussion board in Ecotheology, but no one stayed with it.
- #10 They don't play any part in my education thus far.
- #11 I have had very anti-digital communications (apart from email) in my past Hendrix years—up until this year. Majority of my classes are Moodle and blog based. (Although I admit I don't like it).
- #12 I use digital communication all the time—for research, conversations, graphic information, etc.
- #13 Many course don't use digital communications, but my Ecotheology class did utilize videos such as TedX.
- #14 Since I am a science major, research papers play a larger role in my education.
- #15 I have yet to experience a course that includes experimentation with any digital communications. I think it could expand/enrich a course grammatically.

What, if any, role do you feel that digital communications—including thing such as blogs, course wikis, teleconferences, or podcasts—*ought* to play in your college education?

- #1 I'm open to integrating more digital communication into class.
- #2 Resources like these can be helpful for communications and connecting with students beyond the classroom, but they can never replace face-to-face in class or in the world educational experiences. So, they're a good resource in moderation.
- #3 I'm not really sure. Connectivity? Expanded brainstorming?
- #4 I'm not quite sure honestly.
- #5 I generally don't care for class blogs, but teleconferences might be interesting and podcasts seem like a good way to vary the "reading" assignments.
- #6 I think education at every level is certainly moving toward the digital world. We should incorporate blogs, telecasts, etc. into classes so that we can stay up-to-date and well-informed with the rest of the world.
- #7 I think that digital communications should play a role much like they did for my MCAT studying—expansion and augmentation of more traditional learning and study methods.

- #8 I think it's great to use technology, because the world is becoming so technologically advanced and keeping up with the world around us I think is very important.
- #9 With technology growing, I think they can open our eyes to newer ideas and can enhance a course's learning, especially when discussing environmental culture.
- #10 They ought to expose us to different schools of thought to accommodate enough different perspectives so that a larger picture is attainable.
- #11 I do think they should be there. I haven't actually started blogging for my classes, but I know I'll have to start. Hopefully it won't be as big of a pain as I'm afraid it might be.
- #12 I think they play the role they should as described above.
- #13 I haven't given this too much thought...I don't think this medium is essential to an education, but it may have a lot to offer in regard to sharing ideas and experiences across localities.
- #14 Being able to access outside ideas can expand a student's basic knowledge and help prompt new ideas. Being able to use these resources effectively is very important.
- #15 I think it could broaden a classroom and add further insight beyond what's available with a certain pool of people.

Population and Environment
Pre-Assessment Answers 8/21/12

Question 1:

1. "Place" plays a role in my college education through culture. Since I am from Maryland, I had a large culture shock when I came down here. There is not much diversity in terms of race or religion here. Maybe if there were a wider variety in diversity I would learn more about different perspectives on a given topic.
2. The natural environment plays a large role in my college education. The city of Greenville has recently become very "green", implementing the use of more eco-friendly public transportation and the like. Greenville has also revitalized their parks programs and created walking trails throughout the city in order to encourage people to get outside in the environment more. My classes at Furman all try to focus at least a little bit on sustainability and renewable resources.
3. Greenville local culture contributed positively to my education here at Furman because the southerners are so friendly. However, the natural environment that is immediately off campus is fairly polluted and unsafe, so we all have to drive everywhere. I have also learned in my sustainability science class with Dr. Beymer-Farris that although Greenville has extremely clean water, we have terrible air pollution.
4. I think that the area that your school is in plays a huge role in your college education. As a rule, I feel like college is the first time that you get to truly use real life examples in

your learning. For me personally, Furman is located in a very different type of town than my high school. I think that just seeing how different every place in the world is has really helped me learn more about different people, politics, and environments. At home, for example, I had never seen a protest of any form. Here, because the demographic is so different, I have heard so much more about peaceful protests and even participated in some.

5. Furman is located in a conservative state which definitely impacts the type of students it attracts. As for the setting with a close proximity to Greenville, a city very much focused on sustainability, I see a lot of interaction between the school and the city to feed off each and promote each others' initiatives. Greenville also has an attraction to young families which I think gives Furman almost a role of responsibility to be a leader/"good" example for the community in a number of ways.

6. If people leave the campus and actually go into the city of Greenville, then they interact with locals and local topics. If you don't get involved with projects outside of school, it doesn't affect students that much.

7. During the school year, it did not play much of a role. Furman is fairly isolated, and the only time I spent off-campus was to get food or go downtown. But during the summer I travelled a lot throughout the SC Piedmont region doing river studies with the Bio department. In that case, the surrounding environment had a direct impact on my education.

8. The culture here is unique to the American Southeast, and different from what I was accustomed to before moving here, but I don't think it has had much of an impact on my education. I think Furman's education is similar to the education you would get from another comparable university. However, Furman does focus on the issue of sustainability much more than the average college, which was a big drawing point for me.

9. My school sort of serves as a safe haven from the environment in which it is located. Politically speaking, SC is very conservative and my education at Furman has been very well-rounded and unbiased for the most part. Furman has utilized the beauty of the environment, however, with its beautiful campus which, I feel, reflects some of the traditional architecture of the Old South. It is also right next to the mountains, which gives a lovely view, though I'm not sure how it has affected my education as much as it has my mood...

10. Furman is located in Greenville, SC. Greenville is a charming, small city in northwestern South Carolina. Two years ago a regional water conference regarding what to do with water sources and supply in the southeastern US and how to manage water issues, was held in Greenville. I was able to attend that conference because of the "global water issues" class I was taking. Downtown Greenville exhibits a lot of the local culture and is an excellent place I have gone to throughout my time at Furman. Greenville is also a very sustainable city in terms of the type of development going on, which has been a factor to increase my knowledge in sustainability science. Happy Cow Creamery is also a sustainable farm where I learned about their methods of farming and producing dairy.

11. The location of the school plays an important part in my education. Not being from the South was an easy adjustment, but the local culture, especially the Furman culture, helps me get the most out of my education. Local political issues do not directly affect my education, but they play a role in my life.

12. Location of school plays a large role in college education. Typically a school mimics the area that it is in. For instance, if a school is located in a strong republican area there's a great chance the school will be mainly republican. Location plays a large social role in college, cultural role.

13. Well culturally speaking the environment in which our campus sits is the source for opportunity and experience for the local student. Festivals, fairs, and job opportunities such as internships provide ample opportunity to grow and mature. The natural aspect has the biggest effects on science majors. My research and analysis group were able to look into the fungi levels of a heavily fowl populated lake.

14. -influence students ability to connect with the community

-Local culture- Poinsett project

-Those who are environmentally conscious may be more concerned with the state of our surrounding area than those who are not.

-Most directly impacted by political issues that relate specifically to our lifestyle choices and the area we live in.

-We live in the "Furman bubble", so we often avoid the direct impacts, whether they are good or bad.

15. It typically affects the way teachers and students think and how they teach the information. (ex. conservative beliefs)

Question 2:

1. I believe that no matter the place, students should learn about topics that can be seen nearby. I don't mean that should be the only curriculum, but when classwork can be applied to a nearby area it should be taken advantage of as a learning opportunity. Taking issues we discuss about in class to a place we all know could help us further understand the topic.

2. I feel as though the environment as a whole where I go to school ought to be very involved in my college education. I believe that being part of this generation should include more about how to care for our environment and protect the world we live in.

3. I think the surrounding natural environment of Greenville needs to be studied, tested, and improved for the locals. (On campus, obviously, Furman is lush and gorgeous.) I also love that southern culture of Greenville is contributing to a positive college experience for me.

4. It should play some role. Just being in a new place and meeting new and different people than you grew up with should open your eyes to a new way of thinking.

5. I think or I wish it played less of a role in my education. I especially think the idea of Greenville, SC as a conservative place, although not coming through my professors, is still present in the minds of others when I tell them I attend Furman. They have a certain idea of what a FU education is.

6. The place should educate you, especially if it differs from your origin. Some classes I'm sure like politic science and environmental science go into Greenville topics, but no classes I've had did that.

7. I would love for the surrounding area to play a larger role in my classes especially. I don't know the area well, so I would love to learn about it through my classes.

8. I think it would be cool if every college were closely tied to their surrounding city and environment, but that's not always the case. It would provide a more holistic education

in terms of getting out of the classroom and experiencing things. That is not always what gets focused on though.

9. I think that Furman has a lot of beautiful nature it can utilize (and it has to some extent) for educational purposes. I think the environment we are in would be a great asset for study, as well as the local culture and politics would be for understanding societies as well.

10. I enjoy Greenville, and I think exploring the city and discovering places that could be improved or learning more about the political atmosphere here should contribute to my college education.

11. I believe that the location should play a role in college education because it is the real world and that is what we are preparing for. Students should take in everything around them and learn about everything they can, especially in a liberal arts education.

12. I feel location ought to play minimal of a role. The most it should account for is climate. I feel when culture is forced into education it makes it more challenging and educational goals less achievable.

13. I don't really see a difference in what I believe location should influence and the influence I actually see.

14. -In any class, the area in which you live will contribute to your experience, the resources you have access to, and the opportunities available.

-Professors are often influenced by what is happening in the community, and this may trickle down into their teaching.

15. I feel that the place in which you are educated should not play a role in a college education.

Question 3:

1. Digital communication plays a large role in any students education as the world is becoming more and more digitized. It can be hard to find credible sources this way which has impacted my education.

2. Digital communication does typically play a large role in my college education. I receive emails almost constantly regarding classes and my school in general.

3. Currently, digital communication does not play a big role in my college education—instructors don't seem to use it very much, and I'm not very technologically savvy. However, I'd love to see more digital communication used in class—it's definitely the way things are headed.

4. They definitely keep news more accessible.

5. Digital communications are either used as a sort of kitsch thing for a one time class project or recommended for outside reading but hardly required.

6. We do use websites and technology a fair amount. I'm taking a digital communications class now actually, so it demonstrates all of the above.

7. Course Wikis are very important, I use them every day, but podcasts, blogs, etc don't play a large role. The wikis are extremely important in communicating with the professor and other students.

8. I have not had much experience using digital communication, other than Moodle or email in any of my classes.

9. I had to use blogs and other resources to find differing opinions and perspectives on subjects and occurrences. Things such as podcasts, wikis, and other internet resources are great for basic info or breaking down info into ways I can understand.
10. I have read a few blogs on sustainability science, but have little experience with other forms of digital communications.
11. Digital communications play a big role in my education. Most of my professors provide class readings online through Moodle or email. I also do some research on my own by reading online articles or blogs.
12. Digital communications allow for a whole community to speak and be heard. They are typically the voice for the college body; a way for things to get done.
13. They play a big role in modern classes. We read Japanese blogs to keep up on social issues. In my own organic chemistry class we made our own student study wiki- piece by piece.
- 14.- Social media and digital communication has become the basis for not only classes, but also many of our social interactions.
-We rely heavily on them as a way to promote ideas and share information.
15. Digital communication allows teachers and students to communicate easily and more efficiently. (ex: email)

Question 4:

1. I believe digital communication should play the role for opinion sharing and not as a credible source.
2. I feel as though digital communication ought to play the role that it does for me. It is my main source of class information from professors and about my classes.
3. I think digital communication ought to become a bigger part of my education, particularly because I am a communication major.
4. I think that they should at least keep us connected and up-to-date.
5. I follow many blogs especially that I think could be brought into the classroom more.
6. I think it should play a role, but I think hands on activities and actually first-hand, physically experiencing events and places is a great way to learn.
7. I think how they have been for me is enough, I think that too much technology can often make things too complicated and stop contributing to a class.
8. These resources could be valuable tools to a class, given that they are utilized in a productive way, and not just used for the sake of being used.
9. It is inevitable that technological use is on the rise, and I think all these things could be beneficial in many ways to education.
10. [Left blank]
11. I believe that digital communications should play a huge role in college education. This is the easiest way to connect with students now, and more information can be given to students.
12. I feel they play a great role and that role should be bigger.
13. I think they could be used a little more for exploratory means such as conferences in the studied language or more updates on important events in the field of study.
14. I think that these open us up to a variety of viewpoints.

15. I feel that they should be used for relaying important info or sharing assignments for class, but should not be a main form of education that teachers solely rely on to teach a class.

Literary Landscapes: Post-Tests (Dec 2012)

Part One. This class was taught with an emphasis on place. In some cases, this meant focusing on issues pertaining to a particular geographic area, and in others, it meant using examples drawn from the local environment to help you learn about more general concepts.

1. In terms of how it affected your learning, how do you feel about the amount of time we spent on place-based material or examples in this class? (Please circle one)

We spent too much time on place. -1

We spent a satisfactory amount of time on place. -13

We spent too little time on place. - 1

2. How, in your opinion, did the place-based emphasis of this class shape your learning experience?

- #1 I think place is very important, and the emphasis on place I appreciated. I do think it shaped my learning experience in that we always came back to place. It very much grounded the class. But I wish, perhaps, that we would have spent more time on place as metaphor rather than a real place—or at least in conjunction.
- #2 The place-based emphasis of this class allowed me to analyze and relate what we learned in class to this wonderful state I call my home. It provided a connection that I rarely if ever get out of literature class. I think the premise of place based learning should be continued.
- #3 I felt the place-based aspect of the class made it more unique to my Hendrix experience. My primary reason for taking this course was to take another English course, but what I enjoyed about this one was that it wasn't just any old English class I could take anywhere. It pertained specifically to the environment around Hendrix, an environment I didn't necessarily know about beforehand since I didn't grow up in Arkansas. It made the things I learned in class much more relatable to my life than a typical English course.
- #4 The place-based emphasis was very helpful because it offered very specific, concrete images and writing styles that pertained to a certain place, but these

- sources were different enough that they gave me a more universal and general sense for how place affects literature.
- #5 Place emphasis on location rather than events or people, which is a new way to write. Good to know how to do it, good to know how place influences people and events.
- #6 I really enjoyed place-based learning and I feel like it taught me a lot about myself overall. In being able to connect to a different part of myself, I was able to understand and talk about things in a very different light. I also enjoyed learning about everyone else's take on place via the movies we made.
- #7 I circled both because I would have enjoyed spending more time on the stories of Arkansas and how living here has affected them. I did, however, enjoyed the amount of time we spend on the geography and science/history of the state/surrounding areas. The place-based emphasis helped me think locally instead of globally, which is something we tend to do a lot of at Hendrix in the name of "unto the whole person." Thinking locally is important if we are to really understand a place or a people.
- #8 For a class focused on one state, place-based learning was an essential component of the experience. In Environmental Studies courses, we all too often discuss large, abstract ideas and arguments, but I think it's important to always tie those back to actual places and scenarios, which this class helped to do. I think it was also important to study literature from across time, to see how perceptions of Arkansas have changed.
- #9 The place-based emphasis of this class was crucial for me (an English major) to understanding the environmental content of the class. I felt that field trips, local folklore, and visiting writers all helped me to better grasp how some of the topics of the class actually play out in the real world.
- #10 (It would have been great to spend more time on place, but I realize that would cut out some other really great aspects of this class.) Most definitely. In fact I don't know how else we could have acted knowing about such a specific place and with the personal stories that were told about growing up here. Every day was like learning about my home. I could get excited about readings that described places and hour away from my home [illegible word]. Probably not everyone in this class shared that as some are not from Arkansas, but I truly enjoyed it.
- #11 Well, this class was a "place" study. So, of course we are going to spend a lot of time talking about place! Because I had taken "place" classes before, I grew a bit tired of it. BUT because the emphasis was Ar[kansas], I loved it. [Arkansas] is a difficult state to study because the literature seems so limited. Dr. Hagood showed us that the literature abounds!
- #12 Although it was an underlying concept throughout, we really addressed it directly—what it means, the concept of belonging to a place, how that relates to how we interact with a place. The Jewel Moore trip was great for experiencing the local environment and shaping our perspective of place here. Maybe more local, personal experiences of place would be good?

- #13 It showed many different ways that literature can be affected by place, especially in ways I hadn't considered before. We discussed whether it was right to apply our own definitions and thoughts to the environment, and how that could affect things.
- #14 This class was great. I've never taken a "place-based" class before this one, but I have to admit, I was obsessed with it. I told everyone I know about this class on a very regular basis. I looked forward to coming to class every day and oftentimes wished I could bring a guest! The place-based emphasis made it more personal. The examples were understandable and applicable. We should definitely offer more of these at Hendrix.
- #15 I think it made the criteria easier to learn, and the emphasis on place made it easy to cover a lot of history and several different topics without being overwhelmed. I particularly liked the "civilian" view of place and history that we got, especially with the Harington novel, the Big Bear of Arkansas, the Arkansas Traveler, and the like.

Part Two. This class made use of blended learning elements, including class blogs, teleconferences, and—in a more general sense—the digital presence of a sister class.

1. In terms of how it affected your learning, how do you feel about the amount of time we devoted to blended learning activities?

We spent too much time on blended learning activities. -1.5

We spent a satisfactory amount of time on blended learning activities. -10.5

We spent too little time on blended learning activities.-3

2. How, in your opinion, did the blended learning elements listed above shape your learning experience?

#1 I thought the blogging was the most effective. Teleconferences never really seemed to work out. Perhaps that was the time (class) differences, or the technology factor, that we're just not quite there yet, or perhaps I just don't know. It always felt like we were speaking AT one another rather than with one another. I also didn't entirely understand how our classes were connected to one another, particularly with our influence on Arkansas. I had a bit of trouble with the digital media presentation, and wish it hadn't canceled out our other academic plans (I love [Frank] Stanford).

#2 The blended learning really helped bridge the gaps between class sessions. The technology and out of class experiences kept me thinking about ideas brought up in class that I normally would have kept just in my classroom

- experience. It helped me see it as more of a semester long learning course rather than just, "Oh, I'll worry about this class three times a week."
- #3 The blended learning element of the course was interesting. In some regards, it was nice to have a sociology class offer different perspectives, but they weren't always present enough that it was a continuous consideration. If they had been included more, however, I feel that would have conflicted with the focus on place. Though Furman is a similar college in a similar environment, it is not in Arkansas and I wouldn't have wanted to sacrifice any of the attention on Arkansas in this course to talk about place in the broader sense with our sister class. That said, I think we did the best job of incorporating them (and the broader sense of place) in the limited amount of time we have in a semester.
- #4 I think digital teleconferencing, and using that for academic work, is still in its infancy. Because of that, the class conferences with our sister class were a bit rough, although they become more organized and effective as the class progressed. Maybe small group projects or discussion among the two classes could improve this in the future? The class blogs were a surprisingly great and interesting resource, and they helped me approach the material in a different way, and through other perspectives.
- #5 They were okay, but I think time could have been better spent by talking in class. I did learn from others through the blog—that was good.
- #6 I loved being able to share experiences with the sister class (it was one of my favorite parts). I think it's really important to get a variety of opinions, and I think our sister class provided that. The only thing I would have changed is the number of meeting we had with our other class. I wish we could have seen them more and talked to them longer. I don't know if that's possible with our schedule, but if it is possible, that is my recommendation.
- #7 (Sorry to circle two again). 1) I didn't like the blended learning that much—so in that sense we spent too much time. 2) If we were going to do it, I think we should have spent more time in teleconferencing. I felt 30 min was almost pointless because we could hardly discuss. Blended learning was helpful in that we came at the material from 2 angles. However, I thought the short teleconference was difficult to maneuver time-efficiently. Blogging was definitely helpful between the 2 classes but I wish it had been utilized more to continue the teleconference discussion.
- #8 The blog was a particularly beneficial addition to the class. I feel that our discussions online usually took conversation beyond that of the classroom. Further, it provided a different type of environment in which to express ideas...more people participated, and everyone was able to think through their thoughts, resulting in well articulated comments. I also think it's neat that we can share our class conversations with others. The teleconferences were less influential on my own experience, and I think the classes generally neglected the others' blogs. I wonder if the two could be more integrated to induce conversation between students, which might then make conferences more comfortable.

- #9 I really enjoyed having a class blog although at times it was frustrating to have to check often in order to keep up with the conversation. I have mixed feelings about the sister class. Perhaps because I am not used to that environment, I found myself spacing out a lot. At times it was like trying to sit still through a boring movie. I think our time used in class discussions where everyone was more dynamic in the room was better spent. I did however think that the sister blog was a great supplement. All in all I think the blended-learning was more peripheral than integral.
- #10 The blog opened the possibility to have thoughtful conversation regarding topics brought up in class. I don't think this could ever be a bad thing. The blog, in a sense, made me feel like I was contributing to something instead of operating within the school system: write paper, paper graded, paper handed back and filed. This is something that people, other people, could go on and see what this class was about, and how we, as individuals, think about certain issues. The sister class was amazing to talk to. There is only so much diversity within Hendrix that a class from a different university was a breath of fresh air. Also, it was just nice to meet with them in the scholarly atmosphere we did. I truly enjoyed this aspect.
- #11 The blogs were fantastic. Really gave me a chance to think out my ideas before stumbling through them in class! They promoted continued discussion away from the classroom, which I love, and forced us to stay engaged. The sister class—we needed more time with them! Perhaps the meetings could be scheduled for 1.5 hours rather than 35 minutes. I always felt rushed. Maybe just 1 hour would be good...I was just never ready to say goodbye.
- #12 This is the third time I've been in a class with a class blog and this was by far the best model. While teleconferences were fun, they weren't the most productive day of class and I wish there could have been more discussion between classes.
- #13 The blog especially gave me opportunities to participate in discussion where I felt more comfortable expressing my views because I could really think about my response and take my time, where it's not as easy for me to do so while in class. It might be nice to have more chances to meet with our sister class.
- #14 The blended learning elements were great. I felt like the class was so progressive and up-to-date with what's happening in the world. We were able to connect with other people (our sister class) and learn how to use advanced technology, but with an ecological mindset—how much more perfect could it be?! I think this class should definitely be a model for future classes at Hendrix and similar colleges.
- #15 I loved the blog, and I think we definitely spent a good amount of time utilizing it. The teleconferences didn't work too well, I don't think. Considering the size of the two classes, hav[ing] 25 minutes every few weeks just isn't enough time to get over the initial awkwardness of the teleconference situation. It might just be better if the classes could do a week of 3

teleconferences instead of spreading them out, and if one of them was spent doing icebreakers or something like that.

In terms of how it affected your learning, how do you feel about the amount of time we spent on place-based material or examples in this class?	
We spent too much time on place.	2
We spent a satisfactory amount of time on place.	11
We spent too little time on place.	2

Population and Environment: Post-Tests (December 2012)

Part One

How, in your opinion, did the place-based emphasis of this class shape your learning experience?

-I thought, especially for a class like this one, that putting an emphasis on place would really help increase our learning experience. We had a fair number of speakers and lessons that directly related to Greenville and the Upstate, but I think we could have done more.

-It made everything a lot more relatable. I could think about the topic in a way that I had seen before.

-I enjoyed the connections to Greenville- guest speakers, field trip, etc. Dr. Price showed a very strong commitment and a great deal of knowledge about it.

-It really helped me understand Greenville better which I loved, especially being able to compare it to my hometown. I really liked that it gave me real examples of what we were learning about—especially community development planning. I liked being able to see examples of options that were being discussed in Greenville.

-Yes and no. It was interesting to get a lot of knowledge of one area, but it got repetitive.

It was very helpful in that it brought real-life examples to the broad concepts that we studied. Instead of just reading the topic in a book about far-off places and theoretical situations, I could apply them to my own area, which made them more accessible in my opinion.

-Learning about demography with Greenville always in the back of our minds as a real life example was extremely helpful. The idea of place-based learning helped communicate topics in a real, concrete, easy to understand way. I especially enjoyed the guest speakers from the Greenville area. They got me thinking about demography in our community outside of the Furman bubble and certainly outside of the classroom. I also think including speakers on topics such as urban planning, stream development, etc. helped to create a larger picture/focus for the class rather than just straight, hard demography.

-It showed me how certain areas were affected more than others when it came to environmental problems. For example, areas in poverty suffered more from toxins in the air or from Hurricane Sandy because they did not have the means or resources to recover. Spatial stickiness has also hit immigrants who are trying to relocate or find better work. Different geographic areas experience different problems according to the natural landscape features. Mountaintop removal, hurricanes, tornadoes, river contamination all affect different areas depending on where the problem is located.

-Place-based emphasis allowed me to understand concepts, and apply them more easily, because I was able to relate the concept I was learning about to my familiar surrounding environment.

-Well, I learned a lot about Greenville which was nice, but I do not live in Greenville so I did not really understand much of the references.

-Place-based learning influenced my learning experience in a positive way. Through the various speakers we heard, I was able to have a better understanding of the material because I understood its environment. Our field trip to the Greenville Low Country Museum was very interesting and informative about the historical demographics of Greenville.

-Since this class was based on demography and the natural environment, we focused a lot on Greenville and the surrounding areas. This focus on place, and especially Greenville, made the class much more interesting. It also made what we learned much more applicable and understandable.

-Our class was slightly based on geographic location and area, so I would say the place-based emphasis helped.

-It made the class easier to relate to real-world examples or situations that I could pertain to my life.

-I feel like it helped me understand more about the Greenville area and my hometown.

Part Two

In terms of how it affected your learning, how do you feel about the amount of time devoted to blended learning activities?	
We spent too much time on blended learning activities.	1
We spent a satisfactory amount of time on blended learning activities.	12
We spent too little time on blended learning activities.	2

How, in your opinion, did the blended learning elements listed above shape your learning experience?

I think this is a good idea, and if it were widely used in practice, I think students would find it much more enriching and educational. Since it's still new and not widely used, I think we did not get as much out of it as we otherwise could.

-I thought that it helped some. It was interesting to hear what our sister class had to say, but at times I felt like the use of technology was a little forced.

- It was a very interactive experience; however, it was something very new to me that I had a hard time adapting into my “old-fashioned” learning.
- Too much emphasis; the mix was bad because nothing we learned from their class helped us understand anything in our class better.
- Blogging and skyping with our sister class gave us a new and different perspective on what we were learning. Since our sister class was an English class, they studied things from a very different perspective than we did. Their presentations were always very interesting and helped us to be able to look at different aspects.
- I thought the video conferences with our sister class were an interesting way to learn material. In these conferences, I found that every individual was able to make their own interpretation of our discussion. Hearing feedback from a literature class was surprisingly interesting and overlapped in some ways with our interpretations. I found their conferences to be an opportunity to expand my learning in a subject I was personally interested in.
- I loved the joint-class video conferences. I really wish we could have done more. However, blogs in general make me nervous so I was not a fan of that aspect.
- I loved the blended learning element of this class! It allowed class discussions to continue outside the classroom (via our class blog) and allowed our class to learn different perspectives on topics via our sister class.
- I loved all of the different technological elements of this class. It contributed to my overall learning experience. It’s nice to hear a different perspective from a sister class. I feel more cultured and connected when listening to their discussions and opinions during the teleconferences. Plus, continuing our learning over the blog was beneficial. This class was a breath of fresh air compared to a standard, lecture-style class.
- I really enjoyed the webinars with our sister class as well as the class blog. It was always interesting to hear from their group coming from a totally different literary place than ourselves. The class blog allowed me to focus on what I was most interested in, but also to hear from other students. I circled that we spent too little time for a couple of reasons. First, I wish the webinars were longer or that we had more of them. It felt like 30 minutes was never enough. The blogs were also tricky. I enjoyed the freedom to write about any topic but the lack of structure was also a little worrisome. I think it was probably a failure on the part of the students but I think the blogs got lost and forgotten in the pace of Furman. Maybe if we had weekly, informal discussions of the blog it would have been utilized more.
- Though the webinars were a bit awkward at first, I grew to really look forward to them. It was especially interesting in that the other class brought perspectives rooted in English/Literature, while we held sociological mindsets, but in the end we were all approaching similar conclusions through different lenses. The blogs were also good for this because we could find/share current events from our states that corresponded to concepts taught in class or discussed in the webinars. Overall, the use of technology/field trips really made the class interesting and made the material more interesting/applicable.
- Technology is today, so learning with it makes sense. The teleconferences weren’t very helpful though. They needed to be longer to be worth something. We didn’t have much interaction with the sister class. Maybe if we could have been paired up

with one student from the other class in particular and communicated for specific projects with them via email.

-It was really interesting to hear a literacy perspective on the readings—they always talked about things I never would have thought of. It would have been nice to have more time for the video conferences. I loved them, but I didn't think the blog was as effective for communication.

-I really enjoyed the webinars and think that the idea of the blog was great—but not everyone was committed to it.

-I definitely did get some really interesting information out of it, but there were differences between the class we paired up with that made some things difficult to understand, just because they focused a lot more on the literary aspect of the reading and we focused more on concepts.