

APRIL 4, 2022

Happenings at the *Faculty Development Center*

Director: Dr. Jeffrey L. Bernstein | jbernstei@emich.edu
734.487.2530 | faculty_development@emich.edu | www.emich.edu/facdev/

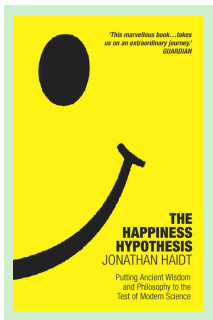
Thanks From an Eagle

In the spirit of appreciation stirred up by the FDC's upcoming Thank-an-Eagle program, this year we have invited faculty and staff to take a walk down memory lane to thank some of our very own mentors. Keep an eye out for "Thanks From an Eagle" posts on the FDC social media pages, where we will be shouting out the people who have made an impact on EMU faculty through the years. Each post will feature words of gratitude as well as a throwback picture of the faculty member with their mentor. Follow us on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter so you don't miss out on these posts, and to be in the loop on all things happening at the FDC! And, let us know if you would like to offer your own thanks in a "Thanks From an Eagle" post.

[f EmichFDC](#) | [emichfdc](#) | [EmichFDC](#)



book spotlight



This week we feature *The Happiness Hypothesis* by Jonathon Haidt. This is a book about ten Great Ideas that have been discovered by several of the world's civilizations. Haidt questions them in light of what we now know from scientific research, and extracts the lessons that still apply to and can enrich and transform our modern lives.

click [here](#) to read the full spotlight or to check out this book, or others, from our library

teaching spotlight



Dr. Ebrahim Soltani

Associate Professor
Political Science

click [here](#) to read about how Dr. Soltani uses his experiences to enrich and engage his classes

Teaching Blog

I Taught Good, But Boy Did They Learn Bad!

Jeffrey L. Bernstein



Jeffrey L. Bernstein

*Professor of Political Science and
Director of the Bruce K. Nelson Faculty
Development Center at EMU*

Opening Day of baseball season is this Thursday. Those of you who know me will realize is one of the most festive and holy days on my calendar.

As a political scientist and lifelong baseball fan, I appreciate Dwight Eisenhower's remark that being President of the United States and managing the hometown baseball team are the two jobs that everybody thinks they can do better than the person currently doing it. I resemble this remark, particularly concerning the New York Mets, with whom I have a lifelong love affair. I long ago gave up the vision that I could someday play for the Mets, but still spend a lot of time imagining what it would be like to manage them. Suffice it to say, I have strong opinions.

In his book *I Managed Good But Boy, Did They Play Bad*, the late Jim Bouton, noted pitcher and counter-cultural baseball iconoclast, celebrated some well-known (and lesser-known) managers throughout history. The lament contained in the title – that they managed well, but the team did not respond – is a common one, which has always made me think about teaching. How often have we lamented the fact that we taught the material effectively and yet our students seemed not to have learned what we wanted them to learn? How often have we looked through exams and papers and complained about students who simply were not doing what they were supposed to do? What if we “taught good” but they actually “learned bad?” We’ve all been there.

To be fair, sometimes we do teach well, our students don't learn the way we would like them to, and the fault is not with us. Just as the best manager in the world cannot bend down to stop a little roller up the first base line from going between his fielder's legs, it is hard to blame the instructor if a student skips class, or does not do the reading, or blows off studying for the exam. As I frequently tell my students, I can only meet you halfway: I can't offer wake up calls in the morning, nor can I sit there as you study and force you to focus on course material rather than on the social media apps on your phones.

Often, however, there is a disconnect. We do what we believe to be effective, our students do what they should do, and yet, students do not learn as well as we would like them to. While we could sit in the comfort of the dugout (our offices) and blame the players on the field (the students), a more productive approach might be to ask ourselves if we could approach things differently to enable our students to succeed. That is where the job of the baseball manager and the teacher coalesce - our job is to position the players in the field, or the

students in the classroom, to do their job well, and maximize their chances of success. We cannot learn for our students, just as baseball managers cannot throw the nasty curveball for strike three, but we can create conditions to maximize the likelihood that learning will occur.

As our colleague John Koolage noted in this space last week, effective teachers spend a lot of time in the act of assessment, specifically using student work to determine if they are achieving the learning goals they have for their students. Sometimes, we succeed. If we do not, our next step should be to consider how to change our instructional practice in a way that will support the learning goals.

Doing so makes us vulnerable. It is not easy to admit that, despite our best efforts, we have not succeeded. I've had to do this, and it is incredibly hard, especially when you pride yourself (as I do) on your teaching. But we are not infallible, and we must accept that sometimes our best efforts fall short. This is a struggle, but also an opportunity: interrogating our less successful moments enables us to improve upon our teaching in profound ways.

With this said, I would argue that there is a missing piece of this equation, the student voice. I have spent much of my career maintaining that we ought to give more attention to student voices in striving to understand student learning. Inspired by the work of Carmen Werder, Peter Felten, and others, I have noted that we have much to gain by bringing students into this conversation. This can take the form of having students assist us as quasi-teaching assistants, or formally soliciting midterm feedback from students, or even just stopping class one day to ask how things are going.

I've done all of these, and learned a great deal from listening to my students (and am happy to facilitate your doing the same!). While students likely have no basis to judge my expertise in my field, there is nobody better than my students at determining whether I stimulated their interest in the course material, or whether I created a welcoming classroom environment where students felt as if they belonged. In these matters, the student voice is of paramount importance.

As you wrap up this term and think about the next one, I urge you to consider how you will incorporate student perspectives into your teaching and learning. Involving students in these conversations will be a central goal of the Faculty Development Center next year; I invite you to join us as together we explore the positive outcomes that will arise from these important conversations. As we consider what we can do to improve our students' learning, I hope we will consider how their voices can help us assess the effectiveness of our practice, and how we might find ways to do even better. Let us resolve to not only teach well, but also to have our students learn well.

Thanks for listening.

S u b m i t a B l o g P o s t

We welcome blog posts from faculty, lecturers, and interested others on teaching and learning topics. Email us at faculty_development@emich.edu with your blog post idea for the opportunity to be featured in future newsletters!

What's Coming Up

Click or scan the QR codes for more info

Universal Design for Learning Session #4

Tuesday, April 5, 2022, 2-3:15pm | via Zoom

- This interactive session, facilitated by LaMarcus Howard, Andrea Zakrajsek, and Kat Naish, will revisit universal design principles, with a focus on universal design for learning, and strategize how these principles may contribute diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives within an institution of higher education. This session will provide an opportunity for participants to discuss their experiences of promoting inclusive learning practices in their classes, programs, and other services they offer to EMU students. This session will give participants the ability to reflect on universal design principles in higher education, and develop an action plan for universal design at EMU. Recordings from previous sessions can be found on our website.



How to Use R for Statistics Session #2

Monday, April 11, 2022, 3:30-4:45pm | 109B Halle or via Zoom

- Part one of this workshop provided a hands-on introduction to R, a very popular and open-source statistical software for statistical computing, graphing and analysis. Part 2 of this series is an activity-based hands-on workshop for participants who have never used R and have interest in learning statistical software for basic statistical analysis. Facilitator Dr. Khairul Islam will work with getting data into R and then work through how to implement R for basic statistical analyses such as t-tests, analysis of variance (ANOVA), chi-square tests, simple linear regression, etc. Hand-outs will be provided with examples and applications. The recording of the first workshop can be found on our website.



Final Session: Addressing Misinformation, Bias, and News Literacy

Wednesday, April 6th, 2:00pm-3:30pm | via Zoom

In the previous three sessions, we have addressed misinformation, bias, and news literacy (recordings available on the FDC website). Now, join us to share what we have learned and trade ideas for adding strategies and assignments to our courses. This open discussion will be facilitated by Sara Memmott and Sarah Fabian of the University Library. It will also feature an introduction by library faculty Bill Marino of our just revised "Evaluating News Sources" online tutorial, which is available for use by individual students or in classes.

REGISTER TODAY!

Click or scan to QR code to register or learn more about this workshop, or to access recordings of previous sessions.

Questions? Contact us at faculty_development@emich.edu

