TO TRASH OR NOT TO TRASH

CAMPUS AS A LIVING LAB

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THEATRE AND DANCE DEPARTMENT

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THEATRE 230 & 330 STAGE CRAFTED IMPLEMENTATION: SPRING 2016

PROJECT / REDESIGN GOAL:
THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION
OF A LEARNING MODULE - THAT FOCUSES ON INCREASING
AWARENESS AND PRACTICE OF THE PRINCIPLES OF DESIGN FOR
DECONSTRUCTION, REUSE, AND RECYCLING (D2R2)

ESTABLISH FACILITIES AND PARTNERSHIPS THAT
SUPPORT MATERIAL REUSE AND WASTE STREAM SEPARATION,
AS WELL AS THE CREATION OF A TOOLKIT FOR PROGRAM / MODULE
TRANSFER TO OTHER DEPARTMENTS

LEARNING MODULE OBJECTIVES:
DEFINE AND IMPLEMENT TRASH MINIMIZING TECHNIQUES & METHODS

IMPLEMENT SUSTAINABILITY IDEAS AND PRACTICES INTO PRODUCTION
DESIGNS & EXECUTION IN THE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENTS & SCENE SHOP

DEMONSTRATE KNOWLEDGE OF SUSTAINABLE STAGECRAFT TECHNIQUES
THAT UNDERLIE BEST PRACTICES IN STAGECRAFT

SUCCESS OF THIS PROGRAM WILL BE EVALUATED BY MEASURING
THE CHANGE IN WEIGHT OF MATERIALS DIVERTED FROM LANDFILL
To Trash or Not to Trash

Pegi Marshall, Theatre & Dance - College of Liberal Arts (Lead Faculty)
Dr. Yarrow Nelson, Civil & Environmental Engineering
Kevin Dong, College of Architecture & Environmental Design

California Polytechnic University, San Luis Obispo

Course Name & Description: Theatre Stage Craft I and II (TH 230 and TH 330) are respectively - a major requirement and an upper division course in the CLA at Cal Poly. This course learning module was designed to incorporate and introduce the ideas and best practices of sustainability into the current course model. This module will increase the revelancy and value of this course to all theatre majors. It is designed to be a transferrable learning module that can easily be modified for classes in other disciplines.

Project Abstract: In addition to informing the redesign of consumer waste stream management, this grant proposes to address two specialized but significant waste streams created from set construction in the Theatre & Dance Department and from model construction in Architecture studios in the College of Architecture and Environmental Design (CAED). By leveraging this grant with a $6,000 Fellowship from the United States Institute for Theatre Technology, Pegi Marshall-Amundsen, a Professor of Scenic Design, is developing an innovative program called "To Trash or Not to Trash", that aims to change the way theatrical sets are designed, constructed, and then disposed of.

GE Credit (if applicable): No

Keywords/Tags: Sustainable theatre shop, green theatre

Institutional Delivery: Laboratory / Scene Shop

Pedagogical Approaches: Supplemental Instruction: Teaching Module

Class Size: 8-18

Background on the Redesign

Why Redesign Your Course?

- Current Course Description: Stagecraft I TH 230 - Basic stagecraft technique used in the entertainment industry. Construction and painting of scenery, building and gathering properties, hanging and focusing lighting instruments, and acting as running crew for department production each term. 4 laboratories.
- Current Course Description: Stagecraft II TH 330 - Prerequisites: Junior standing. Basic stagecraft technique used in the entertainment industry. Students construct and paint scenery, build and gather properties, hang and focus lighting instruments, and act as running crew for department production each term. Total credit limited to 8 units. 4 laboratories.

- The goal of the redesign is to introduce and incorporate sustainability into the courses. To change the perception of waste within the scene shop, and increase students’ awareness of making sustainable choices in respect to lumber, lowering toxins, and their local communities.

Course History/Background

- Currently these courses are both four unit lab courses required by Theatre Majors, and open to other majors.
- Student success in these courses means attending lab hours and supporting the build, installation and running of department theatre productions.
- TH 230 is a required course for theatre majors. Students attend the labs regularly are typically successful in the course.
- TH 330 is an upper division elective; students who are interested in theatre technology typically enroll in this additional class. Students attend the labs regularly are typically successful in the course.
- These courses are not part of a sustainability themed curriculum. And there are no elements of sustainability currently in the course; the ideas of sustainability are currently not delivered.

High Demand / Low Success Issues

Implementing the Redesigned Course

Which Aspects of Your Course Have You Redesigned?

- Course Structure: Before the redesign, the students would arrive and begin working on the production set. Now, the students begin their lab hours with a "round-up". The round-up is brief lecture / discussion period which provides space and time for discussions regarding sustainability and the progress of the current shop production project. Round-ups also cover topics such as reading assignment, mini-sustainability project reporting, muddiest point question and answer sessions, and tracking ongoing scene shop sustainability efforts - including trash weighing, material re-use and recycling.
- Syllabus: The CALL program greatly influenced my syllabus and the decisions I made in the redesign of the course by the inclusion of Facilities Outcomes and Cal Poly Sustainability Learning Outcomes to the syllabus. This allowed space for the outcomes to be covered through out the course. And afforded students the opportunity to think about the course and the topics covered from a different point of view. The CALL Program also enabled me to value students' sustainability efforts, in terms of grades, class participation, and at times extra credit.
- Tool Kits: A Sustainability Tool Kit was designed, created, and implemented. This toolkit includes, a metal fastener recycling can, three paintbrush handled tips booklets, brand stickers, and a roll of brand labeled tape for marking trash receptacles and areas.
- Website: A toolkit corresponding website was designed, created and implemented as a sustainability teaching tool.
- Sustainability Water Bottles: were designed, purchased, and distributed in order to share and pass on my gained knowledge. These bright green water bottles encourage and communicate the principles of sustainability while asking the question, "To Trash or Not to Trash". Through out my research, I found that when we ask people to change a habit it is best done through, leading by example, encouragement and recognition of effort and gentle reminders. These water bottles do all of this! Water bottles were distributed to the Theatre & Dance Department, the College of Architecture and Environmental Design, the Center for Teaching, Learning and Technology, the Zero Waste Club, Civil and Environmental Engineering, and many others on campus.
- Local Area Assessment / Report: Under my guidance, student assistant, Mia Shepard, a
Impact of Student Learning Outcomes/Objectives (SLOs) on Course Redesign

The outcomes of this project include: 1) Students will become familiar and understand the concept and ideas of sustainability as they apply to best practices in a theatre scene shop; 2) Student teams will design and execute mini-sustainability plans for the current production; and 3) Students will observe sustainability in action in the scene shop.

Current Course SLOs:

- Demonstrate and apply standards that underlie stagecraft best practices, used in mounting a realistic production.
- Differentiate between various theatre spaces, tools and techniques used in stagecraft.
- Identify parts of theatre spaces.
- Define production roles and theatre organization.

Facilities Outcomes (FOs) on course re-design:

- Campuses shall seek to reduce the solid waste disposal by 50%.
- Campuses will promote use of suppliers and/or vendors who reduce waste, re-purposed recycled materials, or support other environmental friendly practices in the provision of goods or services.
- The CSU will encourage the reduction of hazardous water to the extent possible while supporting the academic program.

Cal Poly Sustainability Learning Outcomes (CPSLOs) on course re-design:

- Define and apply sustainability principles within their academic programs.
- Explain how natural, economic, and social systems interact to foster or prevent sustainability.
- Analyze and explain local, national, and global sustainability using a multidisciplinary approach.
- Consider sustainability principles while developing personal and professional values.

Alignment of SLOs With Course Redesign

The course redesign will align with the SLOs in the following ways:

- Students will be able to meet every SLO. Additionally, they will be aware of and seek to meet the listed FOs and CPSLOs. Through our team project, students will plan and execute a sustainability plan, and they will observe how the shop reduces waste through re-use and recycling.

Assessments Used to Assess Students’ Achievement of SLOs

- I created a beginning and end of course survey to assess student knowledge of sustainability in scene shops and the SLOs. Students were required to make a report to reflect their experience of the planning and execution of their sustainability plans.

Accessibility, Affordability, and Diversity Considerations

- To support the ideas of sustainability in this course, materials were distributed through online resources, via Poly Learn and email. To make the class affordable for students, I created a textbook library. Students are able to loan the textbook for the quarter. With grant funds, I purchased the most current and relevant textbook on the topic, A Practical Guide to Greener Theatre - Introduce Sustainability into your Productions by Ellen E. Jones.

About the Instructor

Pegi Marshall

- I was an Assistant Professor at California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo. My areas of specialty include theatre, performance installation, parades and food performance. I am actively involved in socially responsible theatre practices that are sustainable and accessible. I have presented work in New Zealand, Serbia, Prague, and in many of the states within the United States.
- In fulfilling my role an as educator, I strive to effectively communicate and activate an exchange between my audience - the student and myself. My main concern is for my students’ growth and development and to help them become informed sustainable theatre professionals. I have a passion for scenic design and share with my students my professional design experiences.
and world theatre discoveries. My professional experiences in scenic design have taught me the value of a strong foundation in techniques and practices, as well as the necessity to maintain these skills as well as adapt and develop new skills. As a result, my teaching focuses on establishing a solid foundation of our craft while instilling in the student the desire to learn and grow independently. My teaching philosophy emphasizes empowering students through teaching collaboration, fostering critical thinking, and enabling them to understand their own thought processes in critical ways.

About the Facilities Staff Partner

Dennis Elliot

• Associate Director Energy, Utilities & Sustainability, who has worked for Cal Poly nearly twenty years in various roles. He has been responsible for Sustainability on campus since 2008. He received a BSc from Cal Poly in Mechanical Engineering.

Course Redesign Teaching and Learning Resources

CSU Course Redesign Website

• Course Redesign Website: This website is designed to help faculty at CSU East Bay exhibit their course redesign project and their findings.

MERLOT II Pedagogy Portal

• MERLOT II Pedagogy Portal: The MERLOT II Pedagogy Portal is designed to help you learn about the variety of instructional strategies and issues that could lead to a better teacher. The resources you’ll find in the Pedagogy Portal should apply to teaching a variety of disciplines.

MERLOT II Collection

• MERLOT II Collection: A collection of free and open online teaching, learning and faculty development services contributed and used by an international education community. The MERLOT II collection of open resources spans across a wide variety of disciplines and education levels.

CSU Course Redesign Website

• CSU Course Redesign Website: Below is the description of the CSU system-wide initiative supporting faculty redesigning their courses to improve student success.

Course Redesign Portfolio Example

• An example of an ePorfolio created by faculty at CSU East Bay to exhibit their course redesign project and their findings.

Student Impacts

Survey results: 11 surveys completed.

Question: How aware were you of Cal Poly’s Sustainability Learning Outcomes and Facilities Outcomes at the start of the class?

• 70% answered Not Aware–Somewhat Aware
• 30% answered Aware–Very Aware

100% of the surveys answered indicated that students gained information and understanding of the FOs and CPSLOs through out the class and their sustainability effort.

Lessons Learned & Redesign Tips Teaching Tips


• Mini-Sustainability Plans: Do as we did, have students do their own sustainability plans and see how well they and the shop do. Or you can create one plan for the whole class to follow. Then at the culmination of the course, evaluate how well the production did on a whole.

• Work with others who are responsible or involved with the course/production to plan how to incorporate sustainability into the course/production.

• Always reward and acknowledge sustainability efforts.

Course Redesign Obstacles

• CALL Champion Leadership: There was a major misunderstanding about this grant as to how it would be managed. Once the Grant was awarded I met with the CALL Champion’s Administrative Analyst to be planning. In this meeting, we were discussing time line and budget. The Analyst was under the impression that the grant was his to manage.

• To overcome this challenge, I consulted with my Chair, Meaghan Smith, Grant Coordinator at the Chancellor’s Office and Susanne Gartner, Grants Analyst at CP Grant Development Office. From that time forward, I took full responsibility of the grant and the course redesign.

• Co-Author Involvement: Dr. Yarove Nelson and Kevin Doug, although listed on this grant, made no contributions to this course redesign or other aspects of the project.

• Department Chair Support: For this grant, the Department Chair supported the creation a teaching module rather than a course redesign. His lack of support was evident throughout; he challenged my use of space within my classroom environment, was resistant towards my recommendation to lessen tasks in the paint shop, and threatened to end my research in the Spring Quarter by destroying project related materials if they were not removed in a timely manner.

• Overcoming this obstacle was a consistent challenge and hindered the CALL program. I met with the Chair on several occasions in order to answer questions and concerns related to the CALL program. I consulted with Meaghan Smith, Grant Coordinator at the Chancellor’s Office and Susanne Gartner, Grants Analyst at CP Grant Development Office. From that point forward, I took full responsibility of the grant and the course redesign.

• Staff Member Support: For these courses I was the teacher of record however, because of the nature of the course and its connection to the Theatre Department productions, a staff member was working with the course as well. He was in charge of the execution of the productions as well as the Scene Shop Supervisor. Throughout the CALL Program, he was resistant to my research and teaching of these courses, and my students. He wanted me to do other work. He was not comfortable doing anything he was not comfortable doing. We worked within his comfort zone. And in the end I believe he was becoming more comfortable with the various sustainability options and approaches the program introduced.

• Overcoming this challenge was difficult. Yet, it reinforced how challenging it can be to ask others to make changes. I never pushed or asked the staff member to do anything he was not comfortable doing. We worked within his comfort zone. And in the end I believe he was becoming more comfortable with the various sustainability options and approaches the program introduced.

• Adding sustainability ideas to any situation can be challenging. This topic has been presented and discussed in depth at several national professional conferences. This is the reason I created the 2T or N2T system, as it introduces the idea of sustainability in easy to handle small steps.

Strategies I Used to Increase Engagement

• Dead Time Elimination: In previous courses students expressed, in end of quarter evaluations, that they disliked “Waiting around for things to do.” Unfortunately, in a scene shop environment this is sometimes part of the reality depending on how the production build is managed. As I am not the technical director of the build or shop supervisor, I have little control over this aspect. However, by adding the sustainability learning module to the course, I was able to keep students engaged by creating routines and activities that supported their sustainability mini-plans.

List of some activities:

- Mini Sustainability Plan Team Carneyvores
  - This document shows the team's success plan.
- Sustainability Plan Reflection Team CervenyVores
  - This document shows the team's success plan.
- Mini Sustainability Plan Team Short Stack
  - This document shows the team's success plan.
- Sustainability Plan Reflection Team Short Stack
  - This document shows the team's success plan.

About the Staff Partner

Dennis Elliot

• Associate Director Energy, Utilities & Sustainability, who has worked for Cal Poly nearly twenty years in various roles. He has been responsible for Sustainability on campus since 2008. He received a BSc from Cal Poly in Mechanical Engineering.
Discussion of planning of and progress of mini-plans.
- Organizing materials in Green Zone.
- Measuring and marking stock lumber pieces and reorganizing them on storage racks.
- Measuring square footage of scenery to be painted in order to estimate amount of paint to be prepared.
- Mind Warm-ups: Part of the beginning of class Round-ups I included mind warm-ups to get them engaged at the start of our time together.

List of some mind-warm-up questions:
- How much does each piece of wood cost, if we bought x amount of lumber for x amount of money?
- What and how much did the class accomplish last week on the build of the set?
- What percentage of completeness are we at?
- Stump the designer: what happened with that piece of scenery?
- When should we use real boulders versus making fake ones?

Student Led Chapter Chats: Students were given reading assignments and on select days they led the discussion and answer session at the daily round-up. During these sessions, they shared what stood out for them, what questions they had, and their overall reactions to the readings.

Instructor Reflections
- Currently, I am in the process of writing an article for USITT Theatre Design and Technology periodical regarding my research and the "2T or N2T" project.
- I have been asked to and will present my research at ATHE - Association of Theatre in Higher Education Conference 2016 in Chicago, as well as CITI - Canadian Institute for Theatre Technology Conference 2016 in Winnipeg, Manitoba.
- The green water bottles have been distributed and will make an impact in Cal Poly courses and other organizations.
- The Website continues to make an impact and reach theatre companies and courses in the US and abroad.
- The work on this grant was further expanded by a Cal Poly Service Learning Fellowship to incorporate a service-learning element into an existing course. For that fellowship I worked with Anurag Pande, Faculty Liaison for Service Learning, and TH 430 Scenic Design course and the redesigned TH 230 & 330 courses. The developed idea was that TH 230 & 330 students would work to find new homes for unwanted scenery with in the community. Once placed, students from TH 430 course would work with the community member to find creative re-use applications of the newly acquired scenery.

Although, I am no longer employed by Cal Poly University, I hope they see the value in being sustainable and will strive to be a more sustainable theatre department and company. My hope is they encourage the future teachers of these courses to use the textbook and the informational materials provided for through CSU CALL Grant Funds.