

Welcome to the *Journal of Authentic Learning*



Greetings! It is with great pleasure and pride that I welcome you to this inaugural issue of the *Journal of Authentic Learning*. The inception of the idea for this peer-reviewed, online journal occurred not long ago through dialogue among several faculty members who hold appointments in SUNY Oswego's Department of Curriculum & Instruction. Through much collaborative effort over the past months, its co-editors have assembled an impressive ensemble of articles – each of which presents a unique perspective on authentic learning. Dr. Maina's opening editorial explains that there are numerous ways to define authentic learning, but informs us that all educators must develop their personal interpretations of what creates meaning for learners in the classrooms.

More than a decade ago, the faculty of SUNY Oswego's School of Education unanimously sanctioned a mission statement affirming that our “innovative educational programs will prepare individuals who will continually strive for personal growth and become socially conscious catalysts for change.” Further, “we will instruct, involve, challenge and care for all learners, children and adults, in the legacy of Edward Austin Sheldon” who is SUNY Oswego's founder. Given our mission, it is very appropriate that a journal, which critiques and celebrates educational research devoted to authentic learning initiatives, be published by members of our exemplary faculty. I am extremely proud of the enormous amount of work they have accomplished to deliver this online journal to you – its readers, authors and reviewers.

Years ago, my father told me that the sport of golf was one of the most humbling activities that we as humans ever engage in. For most of my youth, I really did not know what he meant by that statement. Today, I tell people that I learned to play golf at the young age of twelve years. I also tell people that I love the game of golf. However, after several decades of playing golf, I am still not very good at it. My brother, who plays golf with a “5” handicap, urges me to go to the driving range to practice my golf shots. Unfortunately, no matter how well I hit the golf ball off the plastic tee and Astroturf at the driving range, my game of golf on the actual grass and sand traps of the golf course does not seem to improve. My mother tells me that I need to get out on the golf course to practice more than once a week if I truly want to get better at the game. This advice makes the best sense because it includes the most authentic learning environment – regardless, a complete game of golf is very time consuming. Therefore, my sheer love of the game coupled with a desire to simply play it keeps me coming back each week throughout the summer.

This brief personal anecdote illustrates a few things about authentic learning as it relates to our educational profession. First, we learn by doing. Second, all educational professionals need a love/passion for teaching to keep them coming back to the classroom or laboratory each day, always seeking to improve. And third, an authentic teaching and learning environment is paramount to the process of preparing and educating pre-K-12 students, teacher candidates, adult learners, and all other educational leaders and professionals – thus enabling them to be fulfilled as socially conscious catalysts for change. Again, welcome to the *Journal of Authentic Learning*, a publication I know will flourish online and continually improve for many years to come.

Sincerest regards,

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