

Sabbatical Leave Report

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Sabbatical: 2005-2006**

My 2005-2006 sabbatical was dedicated to developing 1) knowledge of the research on and practice of creativity and 2) knowledge of Third World Countries in general and Spanish speaking countries in particular. My goal was to use this knowledge to enhance my scholarship, teaching, and curricular contributions.

After a year-long exploration of the literature on and practice of creativity, I designed and taught two sections of a new course (as UN 1001) on "Creativity, Art and Everyday" in Fall 2006 (one was an honors section). The course was considered quite successful by my students, who evaluated it highly. I will be teaching two sections of the course again in 2007-2008. An additional intention is to incorporate a practice and understanding of creativity into the curriculum of the major in Communication and Culture Studies.

In bringing a creative dimension into my own scholarship and community service, I became involved in an interdisciplinary project involving scientists, educators, and artists designed to create an art exhibit (along with educational materials, scientific talks, and art talks) to help people relate to issues of global warming. This project is largely funded by the University of Wisconsin and the State of Wisconsin, but Michigan Tech has also provided some funding to support educational efforts when the exhibit visits the area (The Omphale Gallery in Calumet in September 2007). I was chosen to participate through a competitive process (as both artist and educator). During a three day workshop I gave a presentation on "Community Art," and will be giving a presentation in September on the interactions of scientists and artists. The traveling exhibit, "Paradise Lost? Climate Change in the North Woods," includes two of my pastel paintings.

To enhance my understanding of the Third World, especially Spanish-speaking countries, I traveled to Bolivia, Paraguay, Argentina, Brazil, and Guatemala) to learn about the life and problems of the "other" Americas. I studied Spanish in school in Guatemala, toured a cooperative venture in the countryside to learn about their success in building an economically viable and safe community where education of both children and adults is highly valued, and lived in a very poor community far out in the countryside to experience first hand their challenges. I bring my knowledge of these situations into the curriculum of the new major in Communication and Culture Studies, especially into the concentration in Communication in Human Interactions and Global Contexts. As vehicles for building the new major in Communication and Culture Studies, these efforts are being utilized used to address the curricular needs of students to respond creatively in the global environment.