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TSSA: Southwestern Anthropology Association Conference: Legibility Practice/Prospect

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TSSA Grants Report

Name: Kathleen Nadeau

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Term/Year of Award: Winter 2019

Name and Date of conference attended: *Southwestern Anthropological Association* Annual Conference, 'Legibility: Practice/Prospect in Contemporary Anthropology,' April 19-20, 2019.

 Teaching Skill(s) Studied

Legibility: a teaching approach in Social Sciences based on making complex concepts digestible and easy for a public audience to understand. This has to do with teaching students to write in plain language, as well as to be able to read and interpret dense theories, accurately. I attended the conference to learn about this approach for teaching- and learning, with the goal of incorporating it into some of my courses,

Salon Sessions: I also wanted to learn how to be better host Salon Sessions in a few of my classes in which student would present their short research papers. This method struck me as being more interactive and inclusive than a regular conference panel approach. I wanted to learn about this strategy is and reinvent it for use in a few of my classes.

Impact on Current Teaching (How was this info applied) Assessment/Evaluation

A modified model of legibility vis-a-vis salon session was adapted for use my class, immediately, after attending the conference. Also, I took two students from my Winter Quarter class (Anth 301, Anthropological Theory) to the conference held that Spring Quarter 2019. They presented their research papers completed in Anth 301. In two of my Spring Quarter courses, I applied the modified model, by pairing student partners who were asked in sequential order to kick off the discussion, which then opened up to engage all students into the participatory process. The idea of running discussions like mini salon sessions (salon sessions kick off an idea, quite briefly, and then are opened up for wider discussion, recognizing that every participant has something to offer) worked well. Every single student in the class had a turn to bring something to the table and all of the students joined in the follow-up conversations. Their homework prompts also were simplified to help them to better focus on what they were reading, so in addition to being responsible for specific sections, they also had to think about the reading as a whole. Prompts were open ended such as what did you take away from the reading, what is one question that you have, and what are you curious to learn more about. Overall, the salon session and encouraging the students to be clear and legible in explaining concepts and ideas was interesting and engaged them, interactively, into course discussions.

Date Submitted: April 3, 2020, [this report submitted by email, Spring 2019].