



Contents

- Promoting Teaching Beyond the Classroom: Linking Teaching, Research, and Service
- Teaching and Nursing: Complementary Roles
- Taking the Preparation of 21st Century Science Education Doctoral Students Seriously
- Teaching in our Contemporary World: A Perspective
- Copyright Can Lurk Anywhere
- The Argument for Student-Centered Learning
- Teaching with Second Life
- An Open Letter to Faculty: Some Thoughts on Plagiarism from “Colonel Cheatbuster”
- A New Way to Connect with Your Students Online

Promoting Teaching Beyond the Classroom: Linking Teaching, Research, and Service

Kerstin Hamann



Kerstin Hamann, Professor in the Department of Political Science, won the 2008 University Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching Award. She teaches courses in comparative politics and political theory and is the program advisor for the minor in European Studies. She previously won a UCF SoTL award as well as several college-level teaching awards, a Research Incentive Award, and a UCF Excellence in Professional Service Award.

Several of my colleagues at UCF have asked me what it was about my file that convinced the selection committee to pick me as the winner of UCF’s Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching Award. This I cannot answer; this is a question that is more appropriately put to the selection committee itself. It is also a question I have asked myself many times—while I was deeply honored to have been chosen as the awardee, I was at least as deeply surprised. Surely, UCF can boast a large number of committed, innovative, outstanding teachers, and I honestly do not know how my teaching record compares with all the ambitious and accomplished educators on campus. All I can say is that for me, commitment to excellence in undergraduate education is a multi-faceted endeavor that takes place on many levels and links all aspects of my professional life—teaching, research, and service.

When I started teaching at UCF in 1995, I considered teaching, together with research, as the most integral part of my job. I never changed this attitude towards teaching, though since then teaching has become both easier and more complex. It has become easier for

several reasons—obviously, I have gained more experience, and not all of my courses are new preps anymore. It has also become easier because UCF has since developed a broad infrastructure of helpful teaching resources, including the Faculty Center. At the same time, teaching has become more complex as I began to teach in different modalities, as class size increased, and as teaching has permeated both my research and my service activities. In this article, I want to outline briefly how these two processes have been intertwined.

As a relatively new faculty member at UCF, I was thrilled when the Faculty Center opened and I was one of its first “customers,” eagerly embracing its services. From brown-bag lunch brainstorming sessions to the first Summer Conference, I found that these opportunities to discuss teaching and hone my teaching skills were important not just to improve my instruction, but also to take teaching out of its isolated position, confined to the classroom. Instead, I realized that others shared my problems or had solutions worth trying. These early experiences taught me a lesson that stuck: It is as valuable to make teaching issues public as it is to make my research public. Although the term “Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL)” was not part of my own or my colleagues’ vocabulary at the time, I joined roundtables on “research on teaching” and thought about how to evaluate and assess my own teaching, especially when I began to teach online during the early days of the virtual classroom. While I had convinced myself I had a fairly good “feel” for what and how my students learned in my face-to-face courses, I was clueless when it came to my teaching effectiveness in the online environment. I had little interest in wasting my own or my students’ time by teaching in a modality that might not “work” well, and I thus gladly participated in a grant from the Pew Foundation on designing and assessing partial online instruction, which was led by my colleagues Hutch Pollock and Bruce Wilson as co-PIs. When the results showed that students overall benefitted from learning online, I was hooked and decided to pursue this line of research further: How do students learn online? What is it about

continued on next page...

online learning that enhances learner outcomes? How could I maximize the benefits of online teaching for my students? My SoTL agenda evolved around these questions. Together with my co-authors, I discovered that students learn well online when the courses are structured around active learning modules, when the classes are broken up into small discussion groups that are gender-balanced, and when students read their peers' discussion postings. These findings have encouraged me to teach online, structure my online courses accordingly, and to involve online components in my face-to-face courses also. Many of these findings have been presented at conferences at UCF and at Political Science conferences and have subsequently been published.

Teaching thus “encroached” into my research agenda long before SoTL was a catch phrase or UCF offered SoTL awards. As I continued to pursue SoTL research (while continuing my research in my primary area in comparative politics), teaching also began to constitute a growing share of my service activities. I became active in the Education section of the American Political Science Association, serving on its executive board and then as vice-chair as well as program chair for the annual APSA conference. When APSA instituted its first Teaching and Learning Conference in my discipline five years ago, I was one of the 40 nationally selected attendees and have since attended every annual conference, also serving as proposal reviewer and working group leader. My experiences at these conferences led me to initiate the publication of a co-edited book on *Assessment in Political Science*, which APSA is publishing this month. I was also invited to serve on the inaugural editorial board of the only discipline-wide journal on teaching and learning in the discipline, the *Journal of Political Science Education*. Continuing my professional service in the teaching area, I have just begun to serve a three-year term as the chair of APSA's standing committee on Teaching and Learning, appointed by the association's president. In this position, I hope to be able to further teaching and learning issues in Political Science on an international scale.

At UCF, I have attempted to enhance teaching and learning in many different ways, through participation in Faculty Center events, presentations, committee service centered on teaching or curricular issues, reviewing assessment plans for other programs in my college, serving on UCF's *Undergraduate Research Journal's* editorial board, and coordinating UCF's CASTL initiative, among other things. Through these efforts, I hope to have contributed to excellence in teaching and learning at UCF, but most of all, my own understanding of teaching and learning has benefitted tremendously.

Teaching and Nursing: Complementary Roles

Mary Lou Sole



Mary Lou Sole, PhD, RN, CCNS, FAAN is a Professor in the College of Nursing. She has been employed at UCF since 1991, and has helped in the development of both the master's and doctoral programs in nursing at UCF. Her primary area of clinical and research experience is critical care nursing.

As the recipient of the 2008 Pegasus Professor, I was asked to share a few words about my teaching perspectives. I believe I was always meant to be a teacher. Early in high school I wanted to be a kindergarten teacher or a Spanish teacher! I loved Spanish, and I don't have a clue as to why kindergarten sounded interesting! Later in high school, I decided to pursue a career in nursing like my mother and grandmother had. I grew up in the era and environment where the main options were to become a teacher, nurse, or secretary. Now, I have achieved all three roles!

Within a year of working as a staff nurse in critical care, I was approached by the Director of the Hospital and School of Nursing—Nancy Martin—about pursuing a job as a faculty member at my alma mater. At the time, I did not yet have my bachelor's degree. I told her I would consider the position after I completed the degree within the next year. The rest is history. I assumed my first teaching role very early in my career and loved teaching in both the classroom and clinical setting. I went to many workshops to develop my teaching skills, since these were not taught in my nursing program. I learned how to be a lecturer, write tests, and how to teach groups of students in the clinical setting (role modeling and experiential learning). I learned to become an expert on a variety of critical care nursing topics. That beginning led to further positions in academia as senior level coordinator and then a move to collegiate teaching upon completion of my doctorate. I have progressed through each rank in academia, from instructor and assistant professor (in Texas) to associate and full professor at UCF. I have grown personally and professionally as both a nurse and a teacher.

I have learned through the years the importance of:

- Staying clinically current while in the teaching role. Throughout my teaching positions, I have always maintained connections with clinical settings. This has involved per diem appointments and maintenance of certification. Most of the time I did this by working in a staff nurse role on weekends or in the summer. Now it is by working as a clinical nurse scientist with a local hospital. Maintaining clinical currency helps to prevent the “ivory

tower syndrome,” a disorder that is common in academia. It also provides numerous opportunities for collaboration, and lots of examples to share in the classroom setting.

- Continuous quality improvement. It is important to stay abreast of current and new teaching methods and opportunities to share with students. I refine courses and requirements every time I am assigned a new section. I believe it can always “be better.”
- Mentorship, role modeling, and coaching. I have been fortunate to have several individuals that influenced my career, starting with that first Director of Nursing. Her invitation and challenge to me to become a teacher jump-started my career. I continually try to “pay this forward” by mentoring students (undergraduate through doctoral students) and colleagues in teaching, professional development, research, and scholarship. If individuals are interested in working with me, I will find something meaningful for them to do, and coach them in the process. Generally, this takes more time, but the rewards are many. Seeing their success in teaching their first class, developing their first poster, or having an abstract, article or chapter published means as much to me as it does to them. And I know a positive experience will motivate and assist them for success in future projects.
- Establishing partnerships. Collaboration with students, staff, colleagues, and individuals from other disciplines has enhanced my abilities as a faculty member. My teaching, research, and scholarly accomplishments are much stronger by establishing partnerships and sharing knowledge, expertise, and workloads among all.
- Taking advantage of opportunities. Many opportunities are presented and offered (such as becoming a teacher). Throughout my career, I have been active in professional organizations, an author (long before it was expected in the role), a journal editor, a book editor, and a researcher on several teams. These opportunities came by being involved in professional organizations, and being aware of numerous activities that are available. It is important to weigh the pros and cons of each invitation; however, I have found that most of these activities keep me energized and excited about what I do.
- Having high expectations. I have high expectations for both my students and myself. It is important to set goals that are high, yet achievable. Adjustments are sometimes needed, but that is part of the continuous improvement.
- Being creative. Teaching can be mundane or fun. I believe that by being creative, teaching can be fun. Thinking of innovative and creative ways of making content real and meaningful to students makes teaching much more rewarding. When my students can laugh and engage in a research course, and achieve the learning outcomes, I know my job has been accomplished.

- Embracing technology. Technology—love it or hate it—must be incorporated into the teaching role. Keeping abreast of technology and applying it to the teacher role is important. That often means learning it along with the students, or asking them to help you learn the technology.

I love being a nurse and a teacher. I am fortunate to have been able to combine both careers into one. The complementary roles have ensured that I am not bored in what I do, and that I can influence the next generations of nurses, nurse-teachers, and nurse-researchers. And, they will achieve much more than what I have accomplished!

Taking the Preparation of 21st Century Science Education Doctoral Students Seriously **Bobby Jeanpierre**



Bobby Jeanpierre is an Associate Professor of Science Education in the Department of Teaching and Learning Principles of the College of Education. She teaches graduate level courses in the master's and doctoral science education programs.

In 2007–2008, the first cohort of science education doctoral students in the College of Education began their program of study. This new beginning was both exciting and challenging for professors and students alike. As a member of the science education faculty, I am excited about all of the many possibilities a new science education doctoral program presents and challenged because of the awesome responsibility I have to prepare future 21st Century Science Education Professors and researchers that can make a difference in the education of future pre-service and in-service teachers. In this article, I share some of the thinking that went into the development of a 21st century Science Education program and the plan to meet the academic needs of a diverse cadre of prospective students.

In the education literature on 21st century schools there is substantial discussion about the importance of rigor, relevance, and relationships in student learning experiences. It could be argued that rigor (quality of learning), and relevance (importance of learning) have been integral to the development of most graduate programs for many years. Yet, it is less clear as to the emphasis that graduate program developers have placed on the importance of relationships as an explicit component of doctoral program development. In the doctoral science education program, rigor and relevance are specific aspects in the development of the courses, and relationships are integral to the instructional delivery of the courses. Therefore, in the development of the program, I incorporated rigor and relevance in the construction of courses and integrated what I

have learned about building professional learning communities during instruction and student-teacher interactions.

I wanted the program to be dynamic, fluid, and relevant to the 21st Century graduate science education student. Lee Shulman, an eminent education scholar, in the article "Taking Learning Seriously" warns that, if any institution takes learning seriously, it must monitor the effects of amnesia, fantasia, and inertia in program development. He provides important insights on these three pathologies to those who want to develop programs that work for the 21st century scholar. Schulman argues that amnesia is detrimental to learning because students forget what they have learned in classes. If you survey your graduate students a year after completing a course you taught, what do you think they would have remembered? Of course, this would be quite telling about what and how the subject matter was taught; hence, student amnesia should be an important consideration in the development of any program. Why do so many students' memories of their learning experiences end up in the "sea of forgetfulness?" As Shulman writes, "We need to reexamine much of what we teach and how we teach it." I agree. "Fantasia is illusory understanding or persistent misconceptions." It could be argued that fantasia is more dangerous than amnesia because students think they absolutely understand something but they do not. I can see these students being extremely difficult to interact with in a learning community where relationship building is a key component of the program because they are simply not open to what it is they do not understand. These students often hold on to misconceptions, which may interfere with deep understanding of concepts and ideas. The last pathology Shulman presents is inertia. Inertia refers to ideas that simply lie dormant and do nothing. These ideas are remembered but not used. It is not just what you know but what you can do with what you know. Inertia implies that there can be a disconnect between knowledge and the actual application of learning. That is, a student may have earned an "A" in science curriculum development course, yet not be able to develop a useful science learning curriculum unit. I would call the pathologies that Shulman presents three pitfalls of program development that must be attended to if program developers are to provide programs that are relevant, rigorous and situated in the context of an effective professional learning community where students flourish and are not stymied. In the development of the doctoral science education program, I am confident that Schulman's warning was taken to heart.

In the development of the science education program courses, special attention was paid to not just doing what we as professors had done in our graduate programs but allowing students to think through how they can alter assignments that still meet course expectations and their learning goals. For example, in the assessment and evaluation course, students are encouraged to complete the evaluation of a state or national science standardized test of interest to them, and they also self-select and evaluate science/mathematics educational programs that they are connected to in their current work, and/or one which is of interest. In all program courses, there is student choice

in the selection of projects to demonstrate their understanding. Decisions about course projects are made in close consultation with the professor of the course taking in to account student-learning needs. No single assignment blueprint meets the needs of all students, and variation is a welcome aspect of the program. Interactions and discussions between faculty and students are integral to building relationships that are supportive and respectful. I believe that if I want to avoid the pitfalls of amnesia, fantasia and inertia as explicated by Shulman, our students must have opportunities to construct their understanding through relevant experiences in a supportive learning environment.

I began this article stating the need to prepare graduate science education students who can succeed in 21st Century institutions of higher education. They in turn, are equipped to prepare 21st Century pre-service and in-service teachers who are in turn equipped to educate future scientists and science educators. Our commitment to taking the education of science education graduate students seriously is imperative, and its effects extend beyond the College of Education to the community and the world at-large. Rigor, relevance and relationship building are also integral components in the development of the program. In the newly developed science education doctoral program, I take seriously the preparation of teachers and teacher-researchers who can be successful in a multicultural, global world, and the journey has just begun!

Teaching in our Contemporary World: A Perspective

Pedro F. Quintana-Ascencio



Pedro F. Quintana-Ascencio was born in Mexico where he studied Biology at the Universidad Nacional Autonoma de Mexico and a Master in Botany at El Colegio de Postgraduados, Chapingo. He obtained his Ph.D. at the State University of New York-Stony Brook. His work centers on the demography of Florida plant endemics and fire. He currently teaches restoration ecology, population modeling and plant ecology at the Department of Biology at UCF.

For me teaching science is a dialogue with people in a mutual opportunity to increase our ability to explore, enjoy and understand the universe. I consider it essential to start by recognizing that I am also learning and that in the process of presenting and evaluating facts and values, everybody has relevant previous experiences and information. I am convinced that it is essential to recognize the diversity of experiences and background of my students to adapt my role and assistance to promote the maximum achievement from everyone. I encourage reexamining our backgrounds in the context of learning new information. In this way, we expose and discard

our preconceptions and misinterpretations, and take advantage of available skills and information. In the context of these dialogues, students have enriched my classes, and advisees and colleagues improved my ability to contribute to our collaborations.

I recognize that the best way of learning is by practice. As much as possible, I create situations that allow the evaluation of the facts behind the studied principles. My classes have a strong component of fieldwork and exercises to guarantee exposure to basic principles and analytical tools. As a science teacher, I maintain and promote skeptical thinking. It is fundamental that science students learn to discern testable statements on repeatable actions open to rejection and confirmation. I make my best effort and encourage my students to provide clear research hypothesis based on conceptual or mathematical models that are testable and unambiguous. Because of the probabilistic nature of phenomena in nature, I emphasize the use of statistics as a rigorous tool for contrasting these hypotheses.

I strongly believe that learning is an individual responsibility and encourage independent study and exploration beyond what we share in class. I am also always open to suggestions and promote continuous discussion and collaboration. It is a rule among my advisees to help each other to collect field data and with data entry and analysis. I encourage their mutual criticism of their research projects and the interchange of information. In the past, several of them have acknowledged the experience gained by participating in other people's research and the synergistic effect of their collaborations.

But the most remarkable ingredient is that, as a biology teacher, I am fortunate to have an opportunity to share my passion for understanding the relationships between living organisms and the development of principles to practical environmental problems.

Copyright Can Lurk Anywhere

Natasha N. Hellerich



Natasha N. Hellerich has worked as Associate General Counsel for UCF since 2002. Her practice includes dealing with intellectual property issues pertaining to copyright and trademark law. She holds a J.D. degree from the University of Florida and worked at a downtown Orlando law firm prior to joining UCF.

Recently, our office has received a number of questions pertaining to the use of materials obtained from the Internet. Many individuals simply assume materials found on the Internet are not copyright protected. That assumption is incorrect.

Copyright protections also govern the use of video, audio, images, text and other material on the Internet. Educators and students should exercise caution in using material downloaded from the Internet, because there is a mix of works protected by copyright and works in the public domain on the network. Some copyrighted works may have been posted to the Internet without authorization of the copyright holder. Thus, one should assume that materials such as documents, images, video clips and similar materials are copyrighted.

This surge in Internet-related as well as other copyright questions has demonstrated the need to reiterate some of the most pertinent aspects of copyright law as well as point members of the UCF community to the provisions of the University of Central Florida's Use of Copyrighted Material Policy.

Pursuant to United States Code, Title 17, Section 101, federal copyright law protects original works of authorship fixed in any tangible medium, which includes works of literature, music, drama, film, sculpture, visual art, architecture, and other creative media.

Copyright attaches automatically when the work is created and the work's creator also owns the copyright thereto, unless a work-for-hire scenario applies, in which case the employer owns the copyright. The copyright owner can also assign his or her copyright to another person or company; e.g., the author of a book usually assigns copyright to the book's publisher. The copyright owner's rights include the right to do or to license others to do any of the following: reproduce or make copies of the work, prepare derivative works based on the work, sell, rent or lease copies of the work, perform the work publicly and display the work publicly.

Typically, the copyright owner must provide permission for another person to exercise the copyright owner's rights. However, copyright law limits the copyright owner's exclusive rights, allowing fair use of any work for educational, scholarly, and informational purposes in accordance with the provisions of federal copyright law, as further described below. Therefore, whenever fair use applies, the law does not require the copyright owner to grant authorization in order for another person to copy or distribute the copyright owner's work.

United States Code, Title 17, Section 107 sets forth a four-pronged test to determine whether an intended use of a copyrighted work is fair:

- 1) the purpose and character of the use, including whether such use is of a commercial nature or for nonprofit educational purposes,
- 2) the nature of the copyrighted work, including whether the work is factual or fictitious, published or unpublished,

- 3) the amount and substantiality of the portion used in relation to the copyrighted work as a whole, including whether a use constitutes the heart of the work,
- 4) the effect of the use upon the potential market.

Because this test is highly subjective, it is difficult to know whether your application of the test will stand up in a court of law. For that reason, UCF has chosen to follow a set of guidelines widely followed by universities around the country rather than to ask its employees or students to apply the four-factor test set forth above.

As stated in our Use of Copyrighted Material Policy, UCF has adopted the Agreement on Guidelines for Classroom Copying in Not-For-Profit Educational Institutions with Respect to Books and Periodicals, the Guidelines for Educational Music, the Fair-Use Guidelines for Electronic Reserve Systems, the Educational Fair Use Guidelines for Digital Images and the Fair Use Guidelines for Educational Multimedia.

These guidelines set forth specific limitations on the amount of material that can be used from the various copyrighted works without obtaining the copyright holder's permission. Even if you follow these guidelines, it is theoretically possible that a plaintiff could sue you and UCF for copyright infringement, but the copyright law sets forth a good-faith fair use defense, and a successful claim for this defense will likely result if you follow these guidelines. Whenever you use copyrighted material in accordance with these guidelines, be sure to credit the sources and display the copyright notice ©.

It is our policy here at UCF that permission from the copyright holder has to be obtained for any use which exceeds the limits set forth in these guidelines. For additional information pertaining to the guidelines referenced herein, the University of Central Florida's Use of Copyrighted Material Policy and/or other questions regarding copyright law (including other exemptions besides fair use that may apply to your intended use of a copyrighted work), please contact the UCF General Counsel's Office at gcounsel@mail.ucf.edu.

The Argument for Student-Centered Learning

Eileen Abel



Eileen Mazur Abel, Ph.D. is an Associate Professor of Social Work. Her primary areas of research relate to evidenced-based practice with vulnerable populations and the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning. She is the recipient of three UCF TIP awards, a UCF SoTL Award, the COHPA award for "Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching" and the COHPA award for "Excellence in Graduate Teaching."

As a social work educator, I was quick to realize that good clinical social work practice and good pedagogy have a lot in common. In client-centered social work, the goal is to let the client lead; to try and understand the issues from the client perspective so that the worker can be a more effective helper. Similarly, as a student-centered educator, I strive to understand my students' learning styles and experiences so that I can help them to become more effective learners.

Social work is a field characterized by practitioners who promote an accepting, empathetic, and respectful attitude towards their clients. Social workers aspire to empower individuals so that they may recognize their personal strengths and become more effective problem-solvers. The best social work practice is client centered, client focused, and evidenced-based.

Student centered learning shares many of the same ideals and qualities of the social work profession. Just as in social work practice, one must believe in clients' ability to change and grow, so must the student-centered instructor believe that students want to learn. I trust that students are willing to become involved in the learning process and that they, along with me, will become active learners and teachers in my classroom.

Student-centered learning builds on the core value of social work's system's theory. It is the interconnectedness of the systems, the students, the instructor, the content, and the process of learning, that drives the outcomes in a learner-centered teaching model. (Hirumi, 2002) The focus of attention is not on the passive learning style of the traditional teacher-centered model but rather, the focus is on the relationship between student and teacher and the dynamic interplay of content and process.

Over the years, I have found that both client-centered social work practice and student-centered teaching demand a high level of empathy, genuineness, respect and interconnection. Ac-

cordingly, I make every effort to connect with the students in my classroom. I make a point of learning their names quickly (even if it means studying the pictures on eCommunity), making eye contact with each student, smiling, nodding, and employing an open posture and stance as a walk about the classroom.

I begin each semester by telling students not only about the purpose and objectives of the course, but also about the background and experiences of their instructor. I use “real life” examples from my professional experience and background and encourage students to do the same. I begin each course with ice-breakers and activities so that I can make a more “personal” connection with the class participants. Students know right away that our classroom is going to be interactive and informal. I make it clear that they will not be passive learners. On the contrary, I stress that we will all be involved in the learning and teaching process. Then, I follow through making sure that every class session involves interactive methods such as Problem Based Learning, “think-pair-share,” or case analysis.

I strive to create what Weimer (2002) calls an environment of mutual “ownership” of the education process. In this regard, I see myself as a “coach” guiding the student through the learning process. I work hard to create a classroom atmosphere that is characterized by cooperation, collaboration and trust. I try not to stay in the front of the classroom. Rather, I tend to move around so that I can be “with” my students.

In some ways, this informal, collaborative, interactive style tends to shift the balance of power from the instructor to more of a shared relationship of instructor and student. This process is reminiscent of “client empowerment,” another core value of the social work profession. Pedagogical approaches that I use for student empowerment include student presentations, student-selected case analyses, and classroom role-plays. By empowering my students to share the responsibilities for teaching and learning, I believe that I also facilitate their appreciation of the collegial nature of the profession of social work.

Lastly, in order to promote both the concepts of evidenced-based practice and assessment-oriented learning outcomes, I include a wide variety of evaluation mechanisms in which to grade student work. My goal is that students learn from the assessment process. As Huba and Freed (2000) note, authentic learning is enhanced when students are able to learn from their errors. I let students know that in my classroom, assessment is viewed as both a process, where they are free to learn from mistakes, and a product that will result in a final grade.

Teaching with Second Life

Steven Hornik



Steven Hornik is a faculty member of the Dixon School of Accounting at the University of Central Florida, College of Business Administration. His research interests include the impact of virtual worlds on the social context of technology mediation in learning and training, the effectiveness of technology mediated learning for training and higher education, and the social implications of technology. He was a 2005 UFC Fellow of the Academy for Teaching, Learning and Leadership. Dr. Hornik has published in several journals include the *Journal of Global Information Management*, *IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication*, *Journal of Organizational and End User Computing*, *International Journal of Human-Computer Interaction* among others.

Imagine holding a class discussion 400 meters off the ground on a platform in the sky with the soothing sound of a light wind in the background, or perhaps flying to the very top of a Saturn V rocket with your students. If you are a water lover, what better place to hold a class than under the sea in a Pacific Ocean kelp forest (without clumsy scuba gear to get in the way). All this and more are possible with an exciting new learning platform—Second Life™.

Second Life and Student Engagement

Many of us are increasingly faced with the challenge of engaging our students, despite the promise and practice of active, constructivist and collaborative learning techniques that many of us have adopted. One potential hurdle to the lofty objective of increasing student engagement, with its promise of more time-on-task and deeper learning, is the mechanisms available for delivery of our course content. Let’s be honest, WebCT, blogs, wikis, etc. are nice tools, but they don’t afford much presence in and of themselves. They are as the saying goes—flat! What Second Life™ offers is a platform that by definition creates presence and immersion, feelings of “being there” and closeness with other students, course content and, yes, you the instructor.

Using Second Life for Financial Accounting

I have been using Second Life™ asynchronously, as a learning platform since fall 2007. On my parcel of land, leased from the New Media Consortium, my students can meet with me for office hours, leave messages, and use a communal white-board for small study group work.

Another thing they do that is much more difficult in the world of the flat web is watch lectures in a group setting. Rather than

feeling isolated watching via WebCT, they watch and learn in a social learning environment. They can watch and, at the same time, use group text chat or private IM, as well as voice chat to have a running commentary with questions and answers as the lecture streams into Second Life™.

And finally and most importantly perhaps, they can interact with accounting concepts that are intangible in the flat world of the web and textbooks. In Second Life™, the Accounting Equation comes to life in 3-D and listens for students to chat about accounting transactions. The model reacts to this chat by increasing or decreasing the various parts of the equation: Assets, Liabilities and Stockholders' Equity, providing important feedback to the students as they use it. The students actually become a debit or a credit in a game developed to help their understanding of normal account balances.

Initial results from the use of Second Life™ indicate that these tools can help to increase student engagement and this increased engagement leads to significantly greater performance on exams. There is also indication that time-on-task increases. Results indicate that when given an assignment which can be ended after 5 minutes, students spend on average 30 minutes working on it! Lastly, observational results indicate that when students come into the class in Second Life™, they linger, and they ask questions to other students, to my TA, and to me. Unlike the flat web where they may submit an assignment via a Browse and Submit button, in Second Life™ they stay even after submitting an assignment. They stay to help others, to watch the models working, to continue learning, and best of all, to have fun.

Getting to Know Second Life

Second Life™ is a 3-D Multi-User Virtual Environment (MUVE) created by Linden Labs. The platform supports social interactions via text and voice chat between individuals and groups, user-created content, and persistence of that content. Second Life™ is not a game as it does not have any specific goals or objectives. To use Second Life™ you first need to create an account that is tied to an avatar. An avatar is your virtual representation or presence within Second Life™ and the means by which you will communicate and interact with other avatars and objects. Within Second Life™ I am represented by my avatar, named Robins Hermano (if you are in SL also, send me a friend request). Second Life™ content is created and owned by users who retain IP rights to the content. The content creation tools are integrated into the Second Life™ viewer, which is one of the differentiating factors between Second Life™ and other virtual platforms (e.g. Croquet, Sun's Wonderland, Forterra, etc.). The materials required to build objects are provided for free and are infinitely available, but also constrained by the amount of land (or server space) you own or lease. Second Life™ uses a land metaphor for the server space that is used to render the 3-D content. In addition to ownership rights, Second Life™ has a currency, the Linden Dollar, which trades at approximately \$250L to \$1US. Lindens are used for buying and selling content created by

residents and services rendered (real and virtual). As a MUVE without any specific goals, but with content creation tools, the Second Life™ grid has become home to many diverse interests with education as an active, vocal, creative, collaborative part. These education islands numbered approximately 30 in late 2006, but there are well over 1,200 educational islands today, with many more higher education institutions with a presence smaller than an island in Second Life™.

Limitations

While offering virtually (pun intended) limitless opportunities constrained only by one's imagination, the Second Life™ platform is not plug and play. This means that once imagined, the content needs to be created and scripts written to create the desired functionality. As of now there is limited connectivity to LMS, though some support exists for Moodle and hints of support for BlackBoard, WebCT and Angel coming soon. There are also limitations to the number of avatars one island will support, ranging from 40–60. Since I use the platform asynchronously, this has not been an issue even with a course this fall of over 900 students. Lastly there is a learning curve that students and instructor will need to overcome when first using this type of learning platform.

Second Life™ resources to get started:

- Second Life™: <<http://secondlife.com>>
 - Second Life™ for Educators: <<http://secondlifegrid.net/programs/education>>
 - Second Life™ Educators e-mail list (SLED) <<http://secondlifegrid.net/programs/education>>
- This list has close to 5000 members and is very active. While there is a lot of email traffic, no educational community is more helpful.
- New Media Consortium SL registration: <<http://sl.nmc.org/join/>>
 - New Media Consortium Campus Observer: <<http://sl.nmc.org/>>
 - SimTeach Wiki: <http://www.simteach.com/wiki/index.php?title=Second_Life_Education_Wiki>
 - SLED blog: <<http://www.sl-educationblog.org/>>
 - My blog where I document the use of SL in my accounting class: <<http://mydebitcredit.com>>

UCF and Second Life™

Various faculty and researchers have been using Second Life on campus, perhaps informally and without knowledge of what others are doing. We would like to encourage everyone using or thinking of using Second Life for teaching and/or research to attend a meeting at 12423 Research Parkway and we are the SFC Paul Ray Smith Simulation & Training Technology Center, Research and Development Command, U.S. Army on October 24th at 10:00 AM. When arriving ask for Tami or Jeff at the front desk. At this meeting we will share some of the work being done by: Research and Development Command, U.S. Army; IST as well as a demonstration of my classroom tools. Any questions regarding this meeting or Second Life in general, please contact me at shornik@bus.ucf.edu.

An Open Letter to Faculty: Some Thoughts on Plagiarism from "Colonel Cheatbuster"

Nancy Stanlick



Nancy Stanlick is Associate Professor of Philosophy. She teaches a variety of courses in ethics and social philosophy, logic, and the history of philosophy. She is a past recipient of TIP, SoTL, and Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching Awards. Her recent publications and research include works in ethics, teaching methods and theorizing about academic communities, and the history of philosophy.

During the summer term of 2008, some interesting and disturbing occurrences took place in two of my classes. Six of my students (that I am aware of) cheated on quizzes or examinations or plagiarized papers. Two of them wrote me e-mails admitting that they cheated either on the final exam or on quizzes, and both of them told me that they felt guilty, and this is why they ratted on themselves. Four other students plagiarized significant portions of essays/papers (these students didn't rat on themselves and apparently didn't feel guilty enough—or they didn't feel guilty at all—to self-report).

The reason I'm relating this story is that, after long experience teaching (27 years including graduate student teaching eons ago, serving as an adjunct for many years, and full time faculty appointments over the past 13+ years) and after dealing for the past seven years with cheaters, plagiarists, and others who are sent to the academic integrity seminar that I teach here at UCF, it is time for all of us to take a stand on the problem by providing appropriate instruction to our students and by following up on those who engage in dishonest actions.

I know that some of you don't use turnitin.com at all or on a regular basis. This is completely up to you. But all four of the plagiarism cases that I detected in the summer term were detected using it, and were not detected by my eagle-eye for such things, nor did I suspect it while reading. This is because plagiarism is becoming more and more sophisticated by being committed with less and less sophisticated sources. I'll explain, briefly.

One of the ways in which we commonly detect plagiarism is when a student's paper, riddled with errors otherwise, suddenly contains sections or paragraphs that are written with the beauty of Hobbesian style (and yes, for those nay-sayers about content, Hobbes' writing is still beautiful) or Shakespearean eloquence. When this happens, many will resort to a quick Google search for suspicious phrases and think that enough has been done when the search yields results (or fails to do so). We also may think we've done enough when we read a choppy, ill-structured paper and believe that even though this may not be an instance of work of stellar proportions, it is at

least the student's own work and writing. This, however, is not necessarily the case. Simply put, our belief that we have some intuitive means to detect plagiarism, or that a quick Google search will find what we need, are no longer effective in detecting plagiarism.

Students are now snatching entire sections of papers from blogs, news sources, personal web sites, and other online sources that are simply neither academically sound nor very well written. I would not have detected these particular instances of plagiarism without the use of turnitin.com because there were no red flags that came up in the process of reading papers that would have indicated something was amiss. Nor would I have put them in a Google search since they weren't all that well written and nothing in the content or structure of the papers indicated to me that it would be a good idea to submit the papers for electronic review. Further, Google searches are tedious and time-consuming when the number of student papers to be reviewed is large while an electronic detection system is not. I previously made use of turnitin.com only sporadically. Things have changed.

In the summer of '08, I decided on the spur of the moment simply to submit all student work from that term to Turnitin.com. The result of doing so was four papers showing a very significant percentage of the writing coming from a wide variety of very mediocre or simply badly written and non-academic Internet sources.

I am not surprised by finding that four of the papers were plagiarized. What surprised me was to find that these papers were plagiarized and I would have never expected under ordinary circumstances that those four papers were plagiarized at all. They were not eloquently written, there were no "red flags" that arose for me when reading them, and the students in question had done solid enough work in the courses earlier in the term. Because this is the case, I began wondering (again) why students who otherwise appeared to be solid academic citizens would resort to plagiarism. After reflecting on the academic integrity seminar and informal discussions with students who attend it, I think that some of the comments below will be of some interest to other faculty members.

The seminar that I created and teach, the Office of Student Conduct/Department of Philosophy Seminar in Academic Integrity, was created in 2001 at the request of Patricia MacKown from the Office of Student Conduct and Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities. Over the past several years, I have had some interesting discussions with students who attend the seminar. Some of the things they say and indicate are important for all of us to know. Below are some things they say when explaining or excusing themselves about academic dishonesty.

1. Of course I copied the information in that paper. I couldn't have said it any better myself. This was my position to begin with, and I simply found an author who agreed with me. So why write it all up myself? (I heard this one during

- a seminar in summer 2008.)
2. It is that professor's fault that my paper contained uncited material. The requirements shouldn't have been so hard. So the professor should have been taught to teach better, and then I wouldn't have plagiarized. (I heard this one in the spring term 2008 and many times in the past.)
 3. All professors have different requirements. How am I supposed to know what to do in this class (i.e., the one in which the student plagiarized)? (I've heard this one so many times I can't count them.)
 4. I don't know how to do research, so it's not my fault. Nobody told me. (This is very common.)
 5. I didn't have time to write down all the sources. It was all a big mistake. (This is standard.)
 6. My friend/roommate/spouse, etc. wrote the paper for me, so I didn't plagiarize, that person did. (Rare, but I've heard it more than once, and check out the irony in it.)
 7. It's not in my major. Who cares? (VERY common.)
 8. I would NEVER do anything like plagiarize. Prove to me that I did. (That's not hard to do.) (This I recently heard from a student from one of my own classes. I proved to him that he did by showing him content from his paper and from web sites that are identical. He apologized. Too little, too late.)
 9. I put all of it into my own words. (Very common, and generally not even true. Most students don't know that paraphrasing requires citations.)

And the list of really bad excuses and reasons goes on and on.

So, being that I deal with these issues both for the university on the whole with the seminars, and for myself in my own classes, I'm writing this simply as a reminder that turnitin.com is free for UCF faculty members to use. UCF pays for it. You can have your students submit their papers, or you can submit them yourself. My personal preference is the latter since it is possible for the student to submit one paper in hard copy to you that is plagiarized and one to the site that is not, in which case, unless you look at both versions, you won't necessarily know that the one you're reading is the plagiarized one. This rarely happens, but it is something to watch out for. The solution is to read only the version submitted online. Further, turnitin.com now comes with a "Grade mark" feature that lets you create your own rubric and grade papers online for students to pick up online at the site. I personally use my own macros in Word for online grading (it saves an amazing amount of time to be able to hit Alt-G to have "grammatical error" pop up right in the text, for example), but in any case, these things are there for you to use. I think it is a good idea to take advantage of its availability.

It is not perfect. It also picks up direct quotations and shows you the source from which they came. This is not plagiarism. So you can't just look at the report code and see that, for example, 29% of the paper is a match with sites and other papers submitted to turnitin.com and determine from there that the student plagiarized. You DO have to look at the paper and

compare the sites. But it is well worth the time and it is very little effort.

It is not an indication of poor teaching to detect and report instances of academic dishonesty. It is, in fact, the opposite. If you let these instances go, you are contributing to the problem. We are all REQUIRED at UCF to report them (as indicated in the UCF Golden Rule). But in any event, we should report them. Academic dishonesty is an insidious problem that, in many instances, can be seen as a symptom of our society's anti-intellectualism and the attendant and common attitude that academic requirements are "elitist." But that's for a paper that I'm currently writing, so I'll stop right here concerning that. I write this to all of you as a foot soldier in the war on academic dishonesty who has risen in the ranks, with battlefield commissions, to officer status. Just call me "Colonel Cheatabuster."

A New Way to Connect with Your Students Online

Donald Merritt



Don Merritt is the Coordinator for ITV and Videoconferencing in the Office of Instructional Resources and a student in the Texts and Technology PhD program. Feel free to contact Don directly at dmerritt@mail.ucf.edu.

Beginning this semester UCF has entered into a partnership with Adobe® to offer hosted licenses for Adobe® Connect to UCF faculty and staff. We would like to take a moment to answer some questions about Connect and how it is being used at UCF. These are by no means the only questions but they are some of the more common ones we have had so far. If you have others, feel free to contact me directly (dmerritt@mail.ucf.edu).

Q. What is Adobe Connect?

A. Adobe Connect is a program in Adobe's Acrobat line of software that allows you to collaborate over the Internet. You can share your computer screen, create whiteboards, text, audio and video chat, and several other functions all through your browser window. You can also easily upload Flash and PowerPoint files to share with others in your meeting. Adobe describes it as "high impact web conferencing." The idea is to bring web tools together in one place to allow you to do more work with less hassle.

Q. Is this a replacement for Webcourses?

A. Adobe Connect is not being offered as a replacement for any teaching modality currently in use at UCF. It is not the same kind of Learning Management System as is provided

by Blackboard. However, Connect can be used to supplement your online and face-to-face classes in a variety of ways.

For instance Dr. Rudy McDaniel in the Department of Digital Media uses Connect with Webcourses in his Information Architecture graduate class to assist students with programming assignments outside of the class meeting times. Connect allows Dr. McDaniel to review the code of their assignments or can allow students to collaborate together to solve their problems. Anyone can share their computer screen so instead of describing a problem, it can be demonstrated.

Q. Is this just for faculty use?

A. Not at all! Connect is used in a variety of ways including help desk support, recruiting and other sorts of collaboration when face-to-face doesn't always work or isn't feasible. Feel free to contact us with questions as to how Connect might fit into your workflow or save your office or department travel costs.

Q. What do I need to use Connect?

A. Adobe Connect uses Flash technology. At a minimum you need a modern web browser with a current version of Flash installed. Flash is one of the most popular browser plugins and is already installed on most computers. There is a small applet that may download to run the meeting full screen and allow for screen sharing, but that's it. While you can use a webcam to share audio and video it is not required to participate in or host a meeting. A broadband Internet connection is recommended but dial-up can be used with a loss of some functions (especially audio and video). Adobe Connect can even be used over a wireless connection (with audio and video).

Q. How does this hosted licensing work?

A. We are using Adobe's own servers to host our meetings. When you purchase a license you are given a link to log into your account under UCF's services. As a Host you can create as many meetings as you like and as many as 100 people can participate in each meeting. Your participants do not need to have a Connect account of their own—you can set the permissions for your meeting rooms to allow anyone in or only people that you invite.

As a requirement of your license, though, you must be logged into the meeting in order for it to run—you cannot start a meeting and then log out. If you do the meeting ends for everyone when you leave, whether they have a Connect account or not. Licenses cannot be purchased for a department or organization—a single user's name must be associated with the license and their information will be tied to that account.

Q. How do I get a license?

A. Licenses can be purchased through the UCF Computer Store. The cost is \$250 for a year license. UCF's licenses

renew on September 1 of each year and the cost of your license will be prorated based on when you purchase it.

Q. How do I get started?

A. One of the advantages to Connect is that there is a large community of enthusiastic users ready to share their knowledge of the system. For instance, the Adobe Connect Users Group (<http://connectusers.com>) has tons of resources for those new to Connect and those who have been using it for a while. We strongly encourage everyone interested in Connect to visit their website for examples of best practices, applications for its use, troubleshooting tips, etc. There are also training sessions offered by our vendor, Clarix, every Monday free to UCF staff and faculty.

Adobe also offers free 30-day trials of the Connect software via their website. However, please note that these trial accounts are managed solely by Adobe. The information and work done in these trial accounts cannot be moved to a UCF license purchased later. These trial accounts are best used to become familiar with the technology and not for actual application.

Not all of our support is off campus! Direct support for Connect is provided on campus by me, Don Merritt, in the Office of Instructional Resources. Feel free to send me an email (dmerritt@mail.ucf.edu) with any questions or concerns you might have. I am also available by appointment to help you set up your account and to adapt the meeting space to your particular needs. With advance notice, demos of the technology or group training sessions are also available.

We look forward to helping our users become familiar with this exciting technology! I'm personally excited to see what novel ways we come up with to use it as well. Let's share our ideas and really make this technology work for UCF!

Submissions

The *Faculty Focus* is a publication for all instructors at the University of Central Florida. This includes full-time and part-time faculty and teaching assistants at all UCF campuses. Its purpose is to provide an exchange of ideas on teaching and learning for the university's community of teachers and scholars. It is envisioned that this publication will inspire more dialogue among faculty whether in hallway discussions, departmental meetings, or in written articles. This represents an opportunity for faculty to reach their peers throughout the growing UCF community. The *Faculty Focus* invites you to contribute your ideas on teaching and learning in a short essay.

See the guidelines for submission online at <<http://www.fctl.ucf.edu/Publications/FacultyFocus/submission.php>>. Please send your submissions to fctl@mail.ucf.edu.

*Faculty
Center*

**Check us out online!
www.fctl.ucf.edu**



Karen L. Smith Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning
P.O. Box 160066 CL1-207
Orlando, FL 32816-0066
407-823-3544