Faculty Focus

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Contents

Declining By Degrees

John Merrow

John Merrow, president of Learning Matters Inc. and a visiting scholar at the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, produced the documentary "Declining by Degrees: Higher Education at Risk." To learn more, go to <http://www.decliningbydegrees.org>.

Carnegie Perspectives is a series of commentaries that explore different ways to think about educational issues. These pieces are presented with the hope that they contribute to the conversation. You can respond directly to the author at <CarnegiePresident@carnegiefoundation.org> or you can join a public discussion at Carnegie Conversations. This article is reprinted with permission.

Of all the students I met during nearly two years of working on our PBS documentary about higher education, I continue to be intrigued by a sophomore named Nate. After proudly proclaiming that he was maintaining a 3.4 GPA despite studying less than an hour a night, he wondered aloud, "It's not supposed to be this easy, is it? Shouldn't college be challenging?" Nate was one of the more enlightened students that we interviewed.

"It's not supposed to be this easy, is it? Shouldn't college be challenging?"

He talked about his "boring" classes, including an English class he described as "a brain dump." We sat in on that class. The teacher had assigned students to write parodies of "The Road Not Taken", knowing that to do the assignment well, they would have to read and understand Frost's poem. She was meeting students at their level ... and trying to push them to go beyond it, attempting to move them out of their "intellectual comfort zone" and lead them in new directions. Tough job, because Nate and undoubtedly most of his classmates had obviously NOT read the assignment. Nate had succeeded in high school by figuring out what was going to be on his tests and doing as little as possible. And since that approach also got him into college and was now earning him a solid B average, he saw no reason to change. Ask Nate the purpose of college, and he would probably say something about "getting a good job." The learning part wasn't necessarily what he was paying good money for.

Although we found this English class stimulating, we could see how frustrating it became for the teacher because of the lack of student-directed engagement and motivation. In this case, the students' expectations didn't match the professor's. Teaching becomes a difficult transaction when students expect to get the diploma that they pay for without caring whether they learn anything in the process. The situation is made more difficult because professors begin classroom teaching at a disadvantage. Few have any training in how to teach. We were very impressed by Tom Fleming, a senior lecturer at the University of Arizona, who took advantage of a faculty development course offered by his institution on teaching theory and effective practices. Using technology in a huge lecture hall, he deftly engaged students, allowing very few to merely get by.

College used to be a "sink or swim" environment, but today, either colleges are giving much-needed "swimming lessons"—investing in student success—or they're allowing students to "tread water," giving decent grades for very little work. In the first case, students actually receive an education; in the second, they merely get a degree. It's all too easy for some students and faculty members to settle into a pattern of behavior that looks like an unspoken "non-aggression treaty," in which professors don't ask much of students and the students don't expect much from their professors (as long as they get A's and B's).

The good news is that many faculty members—those giving swimming lessons—work with energy and imagination to move their students beyond that simplistic "diploma=$$" formula. The relationship between Tom Fleming and his students falls into this category. Even more heartening is the fact that many students intuitively know that they're being denied an education and seek out campus experiences that give them what they need. But that 20 or so percent out there treading water are shortchanging themselves and future employers who think that a college degree indicates achievement as well as persistence. And those professors who find it more comfortable to demand little of their students are denied the satisfaction that good teaching affords.

The shift in the expectations of students and faculty members began around the time that America learned that college graduates made more money than high school graduates—as much as a million dollars more over their working lives. The mantra became, "If you want an education, then you pay for it." The old social contract—the idea that education of individuals is a public good and therefore should in part be publicly financed—is on life support and barely breathing. Instead, "Education Pays" is proclaimed on billboards around Kentucky, encouraging kids to go to college just to nail down that good job.

Kids arrive on campus determined to major in "business" and often remain impervious to the efforts of their professors to expose them to new ideas and new information. Our student financial aid system supports the "investment in me" approach by making less money available in the form of grants to needy students, and more in the form of loans to be paid back as a return on the individual's investment in themselves. The message our kids get is that they're not students; they're consumers. And if they're willing to settle for "purchasing" a degree that means nothing in terms of educational achievement, it's their right. It's their investment. In this environment, professors, colleges, and universities are forced into giving the customers what they want, not necessarily what they should want.

I admire students who squeeze as much as they can from the college experience, and I salute the teachers who dedicate their energies to seeing students succeed. Too much is left to chance, however, and too many lives are blighted by our national indifference to what is actually happening on our campuses during the years between admission and graduation. What we found is not the equivalent of a few potholes on an otherwise passable highway. Serious attention must be paid at a national level. Other countries are not standing still. Those that have not surpassed us already in educational attainment levels are clearly visible in the rear-view mirror.

A DVD of Merrow's documentary "Declining by Degrees" and his hardcover book of the same name are available for checkout at the Faculty Center's library. We invite further articles and commentary on this topic by UCF faculty; email fctl@mail.ucf.edu for more information.

One Instructor's Road to SoTL

Hutch Pollock

Hutch Pollock is a Professor in Political Science, and a 2004–2005 recipient of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Award from UCF. His interests include American national government, interest groups, public opinion, and elections & parties.

What innovative yet practical reforms can enhance student learning and student satisfaction? I have not yet discovered the answer to this question. But thanks to a certain amount of self-reflection—and a large dose of talented collaboration—I have found out where to look and how to conduct the search. Finding the "where" required that I shift my focus away from what I was teaching and toward how students were learning (or, as was too often the case, not learning). Finding the "how" required that I study my own students and my own classroom with the same methodological rigor and objectivity that I would apply to any interesting social behavior.

About seven years ago, I began to notice a paradoxical trend among my students in Scope and Methods of Political Science (POS3703), a research design and data analysis course required of all majors in Political Science. Despite a growing sophistication in their desktop computing skills, students displayed a heightened sense of alienation from methods and a belief that the course was less and less relevant to other substantive courses in the political science curriculum. What was going on? There are, I discovered, two key features of how students best learn methods. First, although their eyes glaze at the sight of tabular displays of data, they are quite adept at constructing and interpreting graphical representations of relationships. Show students a table depicting the huge difference between the gun control opinions of women and men and you will get befuddled looks and collective yawns. Show them a bar chart of the same information and the gender gap hits home. You get substantive understanding and spirited discussion. Second, students actually learn quite well in a more or less self-paced, step-by-step tutorial fashion. Despite our best efforts to make the classroom an open forum, receptive to different ideas and common confusions, some students simply will never speak up. But give them access to an online module or tutorial and they will take much fuller advantage of the material you have to offer. These two basic observations about my students—they can learn better with graphics, and they can learn (some things) better self-paced—led me to develop a series of Web-based modules. In the earliest of these, students used Excel to perform data analysis and create graphic output. Later, they learned to use SPSS, perhaps the most widely available data analysis package in education and business. Students' satisfaction increased, as did their successful acquisition of important required skills.

This admittedly anecdotal evidence nonetheless has helped shape my interest in a more serious collaborative search for generally applicable innovations, especially in the online environment. Beginning in January 1999, Bruce Wilson and I were named co-Principal Investigators on a teaching grant from the Pew Foundation Program in Course Redesign. The grant was aimed at determining the comparative advantages, if any, of reduced seat time (RST) instruction versus the traditional face-to-face lecture format. In the lecture format, students met twice a week and received substantive material and completed assignments in the traditional way. In the RST format, students met in the lecture setting once a week and supplemented this traditional instruction with a series of learning modules. The learning modules, designed using WebCT, heightened student-to-content interaction and focused students' research and critical thinking skills. Because of our quasi-experimental research design—both course formats had the same instructor, same textbook, and same exams—we were able to isolate the effects of format on learning outcomes. Our findings showed that, controlling for selection effects (students who signed up for the lecture course, for example, were more likely to be junior and senior level students), RST students posted larger gains in substantive course content. Further analysis revealed particularly beneficial benefits of the RST format for female students. This mode of computer-mediated instruction—asynchronous learning modules performed by individual students—yielded positive outcomes for all participants, and for female students in particular.

More recently, I have joined Kerstin Hamann and Bruce Wilson in their efforts to identify the most important element of "active learning," the notion that learning is best achieved through dialogue: student-to-material, student-to-student, or student-to-instructor interaction. We have been particularly interested in the gender composition of asynchronous online discussion groups, forums in which relatively small numbers of students (groups generally range from 7 or 12 students) interact and discuss course content. Our primary aim is to provide practical insight into how instructors, by determining the composition of these online forums, can achieve optimum pedagogical benefits. In addition to a general interest in describing gender differences in online rhetorical styles, we also are investigating the effects of gender composition on the level and character of student give-and-take within the group.

The research results thus far have been striking. We found that students in gender-homogeneous groups spent very little time interacting with one another. They tend to post relatively short, independent messages that take little account of other members' input. As group composition shades toward gender-parity, however, females and males alike write longer messages, moderate their use of independent postings, and increase their reliance on direct or indirect interaction. These findings have direct relevance for the way instructors can most fruitfully construct on-line discussion groups.

Student interaction may be an inherently good thing. On the other hand, student discussion may be less valuable if it is not in some way linked to enhanced student performance in the course. (We have all known frequent in-class "talkers" whose exam performance is less than stellar.) So Hamann, Wilson, and I have turned our attention to the connection between discussion group behavior and student outcomes. Surprisingly, the most "passive" component of active learning, reading fellow discussants' online posts, is more strongly predictive of course success than is either of the other two components: posting direct responses to group participants, or carrying the discussion farther with in-depth comments. But of course there is a twist. The relationship between discussion group reading and course grade is much stronger for low-GPA students than for students with better academic histories. These findings certainly are in keeping with the interesting and often counterintuitive character of SoTL research. They invite further scrutiny and will, I have no doubt, point us in new directions.

Technologies Affecting Communication Part II: Podcasts

Matthew Thompson

Matthew Thompson is an Instructor in the Nicholson School of Communication. His main interest is integrated marketing campaigns and how technology affects communication. Matthew has been published in the *National Teaching and Learning Forum* on the use of technology in the classroom and was a contributor for the AASCU conference held at UCF in June 2005.

Let me start by saying that since my last article, "Technologies Affecting Communication: RSS Readers," Microsoft has announced that RSS (Rich Site Summary) feeds will be displayed in Internet Explorer and Outlook by the end of 2005. Some of you might use browsers such as Firefox and Macintosh's Safari and are accustomed to this technology; however, with Microsoft's adoption, RSS truly is here to stay.

You may have heard about Duke University's initiative that distributed free iPods to every first time student entering in the Fall of 2004. They have since cut back their program, and now issue iPods for certain courses that can prove that the technology will enhance student learning. Instructors are finding a variety of ways to utilize the iPods, including the production of "podcasts."

Many people do not completely understand the technology and wonder how podcasts can be used in a classroom setting. Simply put, a podcast is a blog with a voice. I know many of you are rolling your eyes and discounting the credibility of blogs, and in many instances you are correct. However, consider this—our students gather information in a variety of ways and it is our responsibility to help them utilize critical thinking skills to accept or reject this information. One

of these information sources is a blog, and an extension of a blog is a podcast.

Podcasts, sometimes referred to as "time-shifted radio," allow a person or small group of people to record their thoughts, opinions and insights and disperse them to the masses. Anyone with a computer is a potential podcast producer as well as a podcast receiver. In the most basic case, the voice is recorded into a computer with a microphone. The resulting file is converted and compressed to an MP3 file. The distribution tool is RSS, a free, subscription-based feed that allows listeners to receive your podcast whenever you post it on your website. However, you could also just post your podcast to your website and allow listeners to stream the audio in using their media player.

The confusion surrounding the term "podcast" is embedded in the name. Many people believe that podcasts can only be played on Apple's iPod or that they must have some special technology to listen to the file. This is all untrue. Any MP3 player can play an MP3 file, and from informal research in my own class, about half of the students have these players. The students who do not have an MP3 player can stream the audio on their computer or burn it to a CD.

In the academic setting, a podcast can have a positive effect and allow auditory learners to listen to your discussion prompts in the car, walking to class, or sitting at their computer. In my SPC1600 large lecture class we plan to use podcasts for lecture supplements and discussion prompts. Of course we are conducting research to see if the podcasts are effective, and I will make our findings public when they are available.

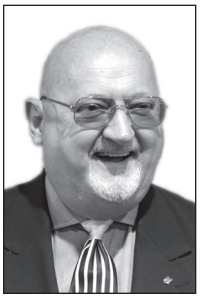
I think there are some important components to consider when using podcasts in your class:

- Use podcasts to provide examples and prompt discussion, not as a replacement for lecture.
- Keep them short. A six-minute podcast, when compressed into an MP3 file, will be approximately 3MB. You do not want to get carried away with the file size, and it is important to remember that a student only has 10 minutes between classes.
- Use all methods of distribution. Allow students to access the audio files from a website as well as RSS. Remind students that they can burn the file to CD, stream it in on their computer, and if they own one, download it to their MP3 player. If there are students with no access to computers, you could also make a handout (your "script") available.

If you have any questions pertaining to podcasts, please do not hesitate to contact me. I know new technologies can seem overwhelming, but in reality the creation of these MP3 files are simple and the good folks at the Faculty Center are more than willing to help.

Old Dogs CAN Learn New Tricks

Wilfried Iskat



Wilfried Iskat is an Associate Professor in the Rosen College of Hospitality. A career in hospitality spanning several continents and all aspects of restaurant and hotel businesses, especially training, led Wilfried to a position as lecturer and dean at a school of hospitality management. Active in professional organizations, he has earned several professional certifications from the Hotel Catering and Industrial Management Association and from the American Hotel and Lodging Association as well as the National Restaurant Organization.

After 11 years as Dean and principal lecturer in the Department of Tourism and Hospitality Management at a private college for international students, I had to muster all of my resources to become comfortable with facilitating learning to a crowd of students at UCF very different from those I had faced at my previous school. The much smaller size of classrooms and numbers of students there had lent itself to a different approach in teaching and communicating with my mostly international student body from over 100 countries. I now was working with a crowd of native English speakers who had grown up in high-tech households.

Initially teaching here felt like jumping onto a train moving at 70 miles per hour. A big part of the transition was learning to deal with all the new technology. Walking into a classroom populated by as many as 70 students, I found myself looking at a teacher's console equipped with a touch screen control panel, a video player, a DVD player, an overhead document camera, an additional optical mouse and laptop computer access, in addition to the regular computer.

My first teaching assignment as an adjunct was on the Orlando Campus, and included three courses I had requested. Teaching my first class at a modular unit outside of Classroom Building required that I bring and connect a laptop and a projection unit with me. The next class was at yet another building with a different electronic key card to enter the classroom and another computer access code to work the teaching console computer access. The last of my three courses was in a third building and it had a different classroom access key and of course a different computer access code was required. Some of my students were amazed that their teacher was not fluent with the apparatus; they were far better acquainted with the teaching console and its features than I was. Many of them were willing to show me "the tricks of the trade" so I would learn what keyboard strokes were required to connect the laptop computer to the projection unit, which diskette did work and which did not, and I even learned by trial and error that a sideways installed CPU would not be able to handle a mini-CD (because it would fall into the drive unit).

My new environment was most definitely different in character and appearance. This much younger public of 18, 19 and 20 year-olds, weaned on high definition TVs, constantly requested visual instruction in the form of PowerPoint presentations; they were most eager to receive electronic transmission of lecture notes; and they wanted 24 hour access to me via emails—sending messages overnight and requesting clarification of learning material on an individual basis rather than asking a question in class.

I was almost overwhelmed by all of these new impressions and certainly surprised by the multitude of instruments I had to be able to handle. And long before I saw all of these challenges in combination, I felt like a 9th-century traveler coming upon a magnificent castle—albeit with the drawbridge pulled up. But then I found the first of many rescuers, giving me hope that I would eventually enter that big castle of learning and look back at my previous efforts with amusement.

A young computer-savvy administrator rescued me from impending disaster by escorting me into my assigned classrooms and helping me to set up for class. A graduate of UCF and current graduate student, he helped me find materials and knew just whom to call the few times when he was puzzled by something I attempted to do. He made me aware of support staff that was available to help faculty—something that I had not ever seen at other institutions of higher learning. Within a few weeks I found that specialists of the Office of Instructional Resources could be called upon to exchange bulbs in the ceiling mounted projectors, to loan me video tape recorders so I could tape special events I had arranged, and to activate the computers at the teaching console in my class room.

Encouraged by this assistance, I boldly "charged" ahead (well perhaps "charged" is too dramatic a term; I ambled ahead) and was soon using a CD-ROM, having modified a previously composed PowerPoint program to provide visual outlines of my lectures. The next step in my journey of discovery was a helpful hand extended to me by the staff at the video collection of the main library, who assisted me in navigating the library catalog and helped me find a series of video tapes to support my teaching efforts with visuals. A huge collection of video tapes became my focal point, and I even found movie classics for my own entertainment, copies of foreign language films and many video recordings of training films I had used years ago in my position as a corporate human resource executive.

But the best was yet to come when I realized that I could call on a dedicated staff in the Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning to tackle any teaching-related effort, from learning about current classroom management techniques, to how to better engage my students in learning dialogue. The first help they provided was deciphering a 10-year old 10-inch floppy diskette. I had kept it because it contained a student-generated checklist for trouble-shooting a major meeting event. Since its restoration, I have been able to use it several times as a teaching example in a management course I am teaching now. From that very first support, I have become a regular visitor to this department, which for me has become a springboard to other support systems available. This department has by now become my "gateway department," because some suggestions to improve my own teaching style that I have followed came from fellow faculty members from other colleges of the university who regularly congregate at this center for events like "teaching circles," open house get-togethers, and from some of the presentations in a continuous program they hold throughout the year.

I have booked myself into several of the upcoming events at the Faculty Center. I'm looking forward to meeting new colleagues and sharing teaching memories and ideas that will assist me in furthering my own learning about classroom management and enlarging my teaching style repertoire. I have written up this memory of my getting started at UCF not as reminiscence of how I overcame what I saw as obstacles in my path, but rather to encourage "fellow travelers" on the same path to take note of the many support systems in place and helpful staff willing to assist.

Using Case Studies: Bringing Reality Into the Classroom

Robin DiPietro

Robin DiPietro is an Assistant Professor in the Rosen College of Hospitality Management. She has an extensive background in Restaurant Management, Multi-Unit Management and Franchising in the hospitality industry. Her research interests include training and its impact on the business results of an organization, as well as franchise studies.

As a new professor, I thought that the original format of the course for HFT 3807 Multi-Unit Foodservice Operations was very efficient for teaching the class. I felt that lecturing on the important topics in the textbooks and then talking about the reality of my life in restaurant management and multi-unit management would be enough for students to learn valuable skills and to gain knowledge of the hospitality industry from the restaurant and foodservice industry perspectives. After teaching the class for the first time, I had to start thinking about the delivery of the course material—did I want the students to learn about the concepts by listening or by active participation?

As I started digging a little deeper into what the main objective for the course was, I realized that I had a lot to learn about effective teaching and learning strategies. The overall course objective for HFT 3807 is to introduce students to the breadth of challenges, possibilities, opportunities and risks in multi-unit restaurant management. In reviewing my syllabus, I wondered if by lecturing rather than discussing, and testing rather than incorporating case study analysis or problem-based

learning into the classroom, was potentially short-changing my students. In order to be a great multi-unit manager, you must be able to process information and challenges in a way that was very different than the ways that I was teaching and assessing my students.

From the over-arching course goals, I chose one of the objectives of the course, "to introduce students to the various skills necessary to being a successful single unit manager versus a successful multi-unit manager," and determined that I would incorporate the case study method into my class to help students learn more deeply about skills required of these different positions. Traditionally, this skill was taught by using a group discussion where I divided the white board into two sections, one with the single unit manager skills listed and one with the multi-unit manager skills listed. The case study method is related to problem-based learning, where students are given a scenario and are asked to determine the solution based on the facts presented to them, previous discussions from the semester, textbook, previous experience, group dynamics, etc.

Using the new and "improved" course design, I set up four objectives for the case study exercise: 1) to use problem-based learning in order to help foster teamwork in the class, to get students to "stretch" their learning to incorporate and synthesize the lecture material and content with "real life" skills that they will need in their future careers; 2) to have students determine the skills needed to effectively manage one restaurant unit; 3) to have students determine the skills needed to effectively manage multiple restaurant units; and 4) to demonstrate the skills of critical thinking and problem solving.

"Through the use of the case study method, I was able to direct the discussions of the group to the goals and objectives of the course."

For the case study, I broke the class into 8 groups of five students each and had everyone read the case study. Their goal was to choose a leader for their group (the CEO), process through the case study, list the skills that single unit managers and multi-unit managers needed to be successful in their jobs, and then respond to the questions guiding the discussion of the topic. The questions were directed at choosing who in the case study organization would be the best multi-unit manager for the company based on the information they were given in the case study. I also asked questions such as: what traits or characteristics make these people the best fit for their role in the organization? and what can the company do in terms of setting up a development program for their employees to move them forward and make them ready to take over various management positions?

Through the use of the case study method, I was able to direct the discussions of the group to the goals and objectives of the course. By using the case study method, the students are able to synthesize the material previously presented in class, as well as their past experience in the workplace. My hope is that this will help in the retention of material and the assimilation of the material into their workplace experiences in the future.

I tried this new method of teaching (new to me at least!) in my class last semester and found that the students really enjoyed the challenge. The students were engaged in the process of solving the problem and coming up with logical ways to explain the material to each other. They seemed to be patient when explaining their rationale to other students yet very passionate about their beliefs. It was great to see them so engaged in class material. As I walked around and made sure that everyone was focused, I found myself feeling good about how well the students understood the material.

Halfway through the process, I intentionally threw a wrench into the works. Because I wanted to make this experience seem like "real life" in the multi-unit restaurant industry, I had the "CEO" or the person in charge of the group leave that group and move with their knowledge to another group. This caused a couple of minutes of disruption in the classroom. Some of the groups adapted quickly and moved forward with their discussion of the questions, while other groups had to find a new center and regroup.

Toward the end of class we got back together as a group and had a discussion about how the process worked. Some of the groups were stressed by the move of their leader, while other groups loved the process and said that, since many managers and CEOs leave companies, the experience of changing leaders was good practice. I was happy with the way that the students learned and explained the material to me. It was one of the best discussions that a class of mine has ever had. The discussion was thoughtful, inclusive of everyone in the class, and passionate, and it captured the essence of the course.

I believe that case studies or problem-based learning, when administered correctly, help process material that is presented in class. It is more work to prepare and process a case study than a lecture, but the rewards can be great.

Top 5 Things That I Learned Through This Process:

1. It's not about my "reality", but how the students process through the learning incorporating their reality.
2. Students need to be engaged in the learning when dealing with service and people tasks that are best learned in the "real world."
3. Incorporating things that actually happen in the business world in class can be done effectively.
4. Natural leaders often show up in case study groups who can use their leadership skills in helping other students.
5. Students and teachers can learn with each other.

Assessing Students Using Simulations and Video Case Studies

Laura Blasi

Laura Blasi is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Educational Research, Technology, and Leadership (ERTL) in the College of Education. She teaches graduate-level courses on research methods, measurement, and evaluation, and her research has focused on equity issues in education with an emphasis on the use of technology in K–12 education and in teacher education. She also researches the use of the microscope in high school science classrooms, specifically using the Virtual Lab simulation developed by NASA Kennedy Space Center.

> "It is the great prerogative of Mankind above other Creatures, that we are not only able to behold the works of Nature, or barely to sustain our lives by them, but we have also the power of considering, comparing, altering, assisting, and improving them to various uses."
> Robert Hooke, *Micrographia*, 1664

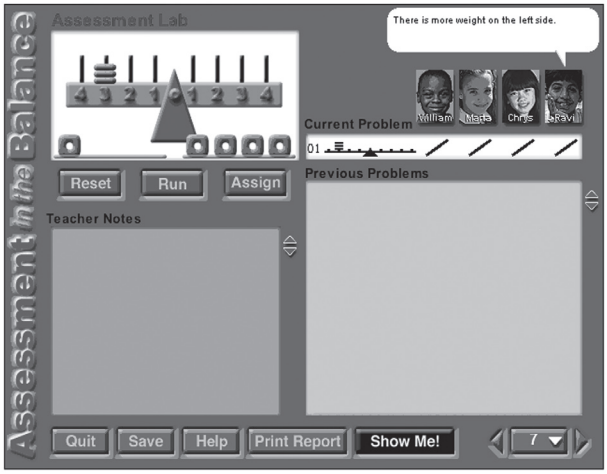
As a scientist and an early pioneer in the field of microscopy, Robert Hooke has described an inalienable right of humans not just to see, but to examine. In school systems in our state; the very best teachers in K–12 education go beyond reporting student performance to examine and then to strengthen student understanding throughout the year. They are not alone in this effort.

Leafing through any local newspaper, you won't look long before you find an article on our schools concerned with the Florida Comprehensive Achievement Test (FCAT) or the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB). Reaching beyond parents with children in the school system, the success or failure of K–12 students in terms of academic achievement has been framed as an issue of personal concern for all taxpayers. The K–12 system also has an impact on our professional lives as UCF recruits local high school graduates, and the culture for teaching and learning cultivated in the schools carries over into the university.

Many graduates from across the colleges at UCF become K–12 teachers either in their primary or secondary careers. Research shows that they will most likely begin by imitating how their own teachers taught (Goodlad, 1990); however, the teachers who remain in teaching will be prepared to use a coherent set of strategies for instruction and assessment (Kauffman, Johnson, Kardos, Liu, and Peske, 2002). The methods to assess and evaluate in K–12 classrooms that are required for state certification, and taught in the College of Education, are part of a class currently called Measurement and Evaluation in Education (EDF 6432.)

While innovating this course, I focused on incorporating video case studies of classroom teaching as well as a simulation of student learning designed to accompany our textbook. The construction of assessment instruments, the interpretation of basic statistics, and the application of new terminology are part of most courses on measurement taught in teacher preparation programs, but the multimedia experiences were incorporated to bring this new information to bear on real-life practices. After viewing the video cases in which the students were able to see short clips of teachers in action, students then perform the activities included on the CD-ROM simulation of student learning.

The simulation is more than a role play of classroom assessment. Instead it actually models different ways students can solve a problem in common and reach different conclusions. An initial task presents the viewer with a fulcrum with different weights and then a simulation of several students who guess the outcomes of different experiments. The students' guesses give clues to the misconceptions that lie beneath their problem-solving strategies. The goal is not just to test students for recall of facts, but to diagnose and correct misperceptions regarding a specific construct. Here is a screenshot of the simulation that was designed to accompany the text (Linn and Miller, 2005):



The video case studies and the simulations enable our discussion in this completely online course to extend beyond theory when examining actual practices. My work followed these steps after previewing the multimedia that would be used in the course:

- Identify a common framework regarding teaching and learning;
- Develop a set of common experiences working in the content area;
- Pre-test regarding content knowledge and assumptions related to the field;
- Identify the skills related to the content area evident in the multimedia;
- Develop instructional materials to structure students' initial viewing of the media;

- Develop materials that ask students to reflect, apply, and transfer the related skills;
- Ask students to revise the assessment they developed, taking into account the multimedia; and
- Post-test regarding content knowledge and assumptions related to the field.

For a common framework regarding teaching and learning, I used a textbook based on Bloom's Taxonomy that may be of interest to other UCF faculty (Anderson, Krathwohl, and Bloom, 2001). Following these steps, at the end of the course I have both pre-and post-test data regarding content knowledge and assumptions related to my field. I also have an example of student work prior to the viewing and after for comparison.

There are additional sources of formative and summative data possible for use toward the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL). Formative data is collected along the way and informs the development of the course, while summative data measures or documents final outcomes. In my own course I have students construct a narrative contextualizing several examples of their work in a final portfolio. While the narrative may mention the impact that the media had on understanding, I will also use a final anonymous survey in WebCT to document all student reactions to the multimedia and the way it is presented in the pilot of this course.

Hooke believed in the power of human observation and advocated the use of tools. Both the tools we have developed to measure student achievement and the tools we can use in class to simulate experience can serve to strengthen the skills and understanding we already bring as dedicated teachers in the classroom. In this way technology can be a means for positive change in education; not just by using tools alone, but by the use of tools with the purpose of strengthening teaching and learning. As Hooke would say,

"By the addition of such artificial Instruments and methods, there may be, in some manner, a reparation made for the mischief, and imperfection, mankind has drawn upon it self." (*Micrographia*, 1664)

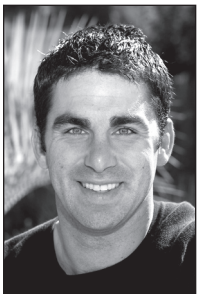
UCF Creed Video - New Updates

The UCF Creed Video is now available online as a streaming video: <http://engage.ucf.edu:28158/ramgen/col/cas/hanlon/spc1600a/ucfcreed.smil>. Also, starting October 15, a new version of the video with closed-captioning will be available upon request from SDES.

The Faculty Senate Ethics Task Force suggests that you engage your students in conversations about ethical conduct in your classes and in your discipline at the beginning of each semester. The UCF Creed video offers an opportunity to initiate such a discussion.

"Hands Online" Experience

Mitch Salter



Mitch Salter is a Clinical Education Coordinator for the Program in Athletic Training within the department of Health Professions. Mitch is currently enrolled in the Curriculum & Instruction Program at UCF. Research interests include the use of educational technology to assist instruction of "hands-on" skills in health-related fields.

Athletic Training education is more or less the "hands on" application of health-related principles. However, a recent move towards computer-based testing on the board of certification exam challenges athletic training educators to bridge the gap between physical and computer-learning environments. The human-computer interface offers many challenges, but not without foreseeable advantages. As an educator, I introduce computer-related resources and activities to students each semester through guided discovery on our practicum website.

I assess and document students' online experience through an end-of-term survey performed on WebCT. This semester the website simply includes a resource page, professional links, and class grades. Using survey results, I focus on activities that students report to enhance the teaching and learning of class material. Collected information is reported to students in support of class innovations driven by data. By constructing a continuous feedback loop from students, the progressive application of web-enhanced modules is measured. The survey provides direction for future possibilities such as online clinical evaluations, journal club entries, and discussion boards.

Online student and clinical site evaluations allow use of massive data to assign student clinical rotations and review needed skills. In the current hard copy form, evaluation results are not effective or easy to manage, and primarily serve the purpose of student grading. What if data could be organized to reflect quantitative reports on each student's competency areas or a clinical site's attributes? This can be managed effectively online.

Online journal club entries allow students to reflect upon their practicum experience while discovering current information using online professional journals. Journal entries, coupled with threaded discussions, promote sharing of new information among students while enhancing each student's comprehension of the material. Is this teaching? Yes, but not in the old classroom sense. An educator must now worry less about delivery and more about setting up a "learning cascade."

The discussion board solicits peer support while simultaneously decreasing reliance on the instructor. Students post announcements, questions, and answers to other classmates

through a highly operational communication mode. Is this how you build teamwork? Yes, build a team for tomorrow by encouraging student interdependence and resourcefulness.

I did not know a survey does all of these things. I simply asked and searched for my answer with help from the Faculty Center. Student learning relies on my ability to adapt to the current availability of resources. Why struggle up-stream when flowing down-stream is so fun?

How to Cover a Lot in a Little Time

Michele Gregoire Gill

Michele Gregoire Gill is an Assistant Professor of Educational Studies. Her research interests include models of belief change, epistemological beliefs, motivation, and teacher education. She has received two national dissertation awards, one from the American Psychological Association and one from the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, for her research on preservice teachers' beliefs about mathematics education.

Every semester I ask my students for feedback on how to improve each specific aspect of whatever course I teach, including texts, lectures, activities, exams, projects, papers, and discussions. For my class on Classroom Learning Principles, students consistently stated that they felt too much material was being covered in too little time. I agreed with them, but I didn't know what to do about this, as the content is a key part of their professional teachers' licensure exam.

I've come to think that I was most likely wasting students' (and my own) time by:

(a) focusing too much on teaching basic skills such as writing,
(b) grading too many assignments, and
(c) not assessing students' understanding on a regular basis as a means of tailoring my instruction to students' needs.

One difficulty with the Classroom Learning Principles class is that it is really two and half courses in one—theories of human development and principles of learning combined with classroom assessment and classroom management. Because the course content meets certain state standards for teacher licensure, there was little I could do to reduce the amount of content covered. However, I could implement quick methods of formative and summative assessment, along with the judicious use of technology, to help me focus on promoting student understanding, problem solving, and application of material rather than mere memorization of course content.

I re-envisioned the course along the lines of Bloom's taxonomy. I expected students to come to class with basic skills, such as writing. For those who lacked these skills, I would recommend texts such as *Revising Prose* for their independent review. Next, I would hold students accountable for obtaining a basic understanding of core course content through class readings, mini-lectures, and activities. I decided to use WebCT as an assessment and re-teaching tool, thereby freeing up class time for helping students apply what they were learning to possible teaching situations. I would create a short online quiz for each unit to test students' basic knowledge and understanding. I would then use in-class activities and group discussions to help students apply what they were learning to teaching situations. Finally, I would assess higher levels of thinking, such as synthesis and evaluation, through class projects and papers.

However, it was the addition of formative assessment techniques that really transformed my class. I adopted a strategy called the One-Minute Paper to start each class. The paper would eliminate the need to take attendance. The paper and pencil quizzes I used to distribute would now be on WebCT. For our class on behaviorist learning principles, for example, I would provide students with the following scenario:

> Martha was a five-year-old girl who attended preschool. She seldom played with the other children. Teachers at the preschool began praising and admiring Martha more than they had in the past. As a result, Martha's level of cooperative play increased. Is this an example of positive reinforcement?

As I collect these papers, it is fairly simple to divide them into groups of correct/incorrect, thereby providing students and myself with ongoing feedback on their understanding of the concepts of the day. I could then tailor my mini-lecture to address student misconceptions revealed by this assessment.

I decided to use students' quizzes combined with their One-Minute Papers and class discussions to identify areas where re-teaching was necessary, and then use WebCT to conduct that re-teaching for students who needed it, so as not to waste class time on re-teaching to a few students while everyone else gets bored, or checks their cell phones for text messages. I feel more confident now of my ability to explore course content in greater depth while ensuring that basic course content is mastered as well.

"Never discourage anyone...who continually makes progress, no matter how slow."

—Plato

Teaching Philosophies From a Few Winners of the 2004-5 Teaching Excellence and SoTL Awards

Richard A. Ajayi
My primary objectives are to inspire students to learn and to provide guidance and leadership in their self development. I view myself as a principal partner in a joint learning experience. In this respect, I establish the need for studying the discipline and provide the road map through lectures, readings, cases, personal experiences, group work, and exercises. The cornerstone of my discipline, and therefore the main driving force of my exposition, is internationalization or globalization. I am very passionate about imparting a well-rounded global perspective of the main business ideas. I challenge my students to be well-informed about major countries, major markets, major products, major currencies, major languages, major opportunities and major challenges. I hold myself to no less a standard. In addition, my teaching embodies important catalysts that I believe are necessary for success in the classroom. These include enthusiasm, innovation, practical applications, organization, respect for individuals, alliance with business community, and injection of the latest research on teaching as well as innovations from teaching and internationalizations workshop.

David Brunner
Making music a part of a performing ensemble is an experience that unites body, mind and spirit in an authentic and holistic way. My teaching of the choral ensembles at UCF involves the students in ways that unite the three aspects of themselves into one. Singing is a physical activity that coordinates muscles and breath in ways out of the ordinary; the mind participates in an active way of musical knowing; and the spirit enlivens the performance, the self and the community of singers. I teach to the integration of parts into the whole, involving the physical body in movement and vocalization; engaging the mind in making musical choices and aesthetic judgments; and stimulating the spirit to feel deeply, all within a stylistically diverse body of repertoire from many historical and cultural contexts.

Kerstin Hamann
I believe that my Scholarship of Teaching and Learning activities have helped me gain new insights into my students' learning and have thus helped make me a better teacher. My SoTL involvement has spanned various activities and accomplishments. My research on teaching has focused on assessing the effect of online instruction on learning behavior and outcomes. My research on gender patterns in online discussions, co-authored with my colleagues Hutch Pollock and Bruce Wilson, has won a "best paper" award by the undergraduate education section of the American Political Science Association. I have also published several articles in national, peer-reviewed journals. Some of my SoTL research has been made possible by grant money. Dissemination and facilitation of SoTL in the discipline has also included serving on editorial boards of national journals with a SoTL focus, reviewing SoTL articles for journals, acting as division co-chair for the undergraduate education division for the annual conference of the national Political Science Association, and presenting many workshops and papers at UCF and at conferences.

Russ Kesler
One of my goals as a creative writing instructor is to help my students think about literature as writers first, rather than primarily as readers. The focus in their literature courses demands that they approach good writing from theoretical and interpretive aspects. But in the courses I teach, the students must draw upon their experience while striving for honesty and clarity of expression. The role of reader/interpreter, the mode of interaction with literature with which many students are most confident, is made secondary to the challenge of finding the right word, the appropriate trope, the best structure to convey the truth hidden in the disorder and ambivalence of their lives. I model successful writing in appropriate genres, and have developed a variety of in-class and out-of-class exercises aimed at stimulating invention, honing students' skills at using important techniques, and revision strategies. These exercises are not graded, and are designed to encourage students to take risks with their writing while emphasizing the importance of craft. I hope that these practices instill in my students a new understanding of and appreciation for the achievements of the literary artists whose work and lives they study and hope to emulate.

Dr. Ronnie L. Korosec
My philosophy about teaching is that is should be highly 'student-oriented'. I see myself as a partner in education, and I work hard to help my students succeed. I also believe that the classroom should be an exciting environment for students—where they are exposed to new and innovative principles, challenged to think critically about the world around them, and encouraged to use their skills and knowledge to shape future events in a positive, meaningful way. I rely heavily on interactive methods where students are directly involved in the learning process. Some of these include role-playing, trivia challenges, collaborative group assignments, debates, and exchanges with practitioners in the field. I am dedicated to teaching models that stress hands-on, real-world applications of skills and knowledge. I have worked hard to find interesting ways to relay information that is sometimes boring or dry by creating web-based instruction and on-line assignments for students. I also believe that education is a life-long, evolving process, so I am frequently looking for new and better ways to present classes. It is my philosophy to provide the information I have to all students in an enthusiastic, caring, and quality-based manner.

Barry Mauer
Great teachers reveal how they learn. The teacher's demonstration of learning requires humility since it shows that the teacher cannot be all knowing, yet it signals to the student that learning is a life-long process of searching for truth. A key text about teaching and learning is Plato's Phaedrus, a scene of instruction in which the wise Socrates and a curious young person named Phaedrus converse. Plato's text shows teacher and student switching roles, with Socrates asking Pha-

edrus to be his teacher. Phaedrus does what researchers do; he frames problems and questions, gathers evidence, and renders his arguments in rhetorical form. Socrates demonstrates more appropriate methods by modeling the process for Phaedrus; by testing Phaedrus' arguments, he shows Phaedrus where erroneous methods lead to erroneous conclusions, and then Socrates demonstrates his own research methods. Phaedrus learns that he still has more to learn.

Kim Renk
During my time in the field of psychology, I have come to consider teaching to be a challenge and a privilege. As a result, I have tried to build good relationships with my students by being approachable and available. In my classroom teaching, I have tried to marry book learning with applied learning experiences, such as assigning research papers, clinical cases presentations, and the practice of applied skills used in Clinical Psychology. In addition, I attempt to make class time livelier with a variety of examples, thought provoking videos and role-plays, and interesting discussions on controversial topics. I also have had the unique opportunity to mentor a number of students outside of the classroom (e.g., working with research assistants, serving on Honors, Master's thesis, and Dissertation committees). Although I spend countless hours with my graduate students, who are eight of the finest budding psychologists I know, I consider the promotion of their learning to be one of the most important activities of my career currently. Overall, I hope that these activities are as valuable to my students as they are to me.

Peter Telep
One of my goals as a writing instructor is to abate students' fear and resentment of writing. I advise students that first drafts are not graded and that they should take risks. I provide holistic guidance in person, via email, or through WebCT so they can learn to pose questions of their work and uncover new meanings. In addition, I model for students how to use evaluation sheets to critique classmates' work and illustrate how to function effectively in pairs and larger groups. During these peer responses, writers engage in meaningful dialogues that help them overcome fears and see new possibilities in the work. When students leave my class, they have gained new perceptions about the nature and value of the written word. No matter what career path they choose, they have learned that they do not have to fear or resent the writing process. In fact, many discover that writing will play an important role in their lives.

"*The important thing is not to stop questioning.*"

—Albert Einstein

The 11th Sloan-C International Conference on Asynchronous Learning Networks (ALN) November 17–19, 2005 Orlando, Florida

Join hundreds of your online learning colleagues at the next Sloan-C International Conference on Asynchronous Learning Networks, celebrating its eleventh year. This year's theme focuses on The Power of Online Learning: Mobilizing to Expand Community, featuring more than 150 presentations on three exciting tracks—Growth Challenges: Access and Scale; Effective Online Instruction; and Institutional Transformation.

Presentations cover ways of expanding the online learning community by considering blended, K–12, global, and corporate learning. Others will report on online learning's more mature stage of development and evaluation and how student support, library, administrative, and faculty support systems are converging.

Dr. Jack Wilson, president of the University of Massachusetts, will deliver the keynote address, Reverse Engineering in Higher Education. Plenary speakers are Dr. Julian Lombardi from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and Dr. David P. Reed from MIT Media Laboratory, who will deliver a talk on the Croquet project, designed to mobilize cross-disciplinary learning networks.

The conference is sponsored by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation in conjunction with the University of Central Florida, University of Massachusetts Lowell, SCOLE and the American Distance Education Consortium (ADEC).

Spring 2006 Course Innovation Project

The Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning is calling for the submission of proposals by any UCF faculty member who has an interest in improving a course. Our Spring CIPs will occur on the Orlando, Daytona, Cocoa, and Rosen campuses. Faculty will participate in several workshops (12 contact hours) and receive support from staff in the Faculty Center and other support units as they develop new approaches and materials for their classes.

These workshops will include a series of hands-on experiences designed to help explore teaching techniques and learning activities that have been proven to be effective. Faculty will complete the workshops, produce a final project for dissemination, and write a short article for the Faculty Focus. Faculty will receive a $500 stipend for full participation. All applications will be evaluated using the following criteria: project focus, viability of project, benefit to the University, and specific plans for accountability of outcomes.

For more information and to download an application, visit <http://www.fctl.ucf.edu/events/courseinnovation>.

Submissions

The *Faculty Focus* is a publication for all instructors at the University of Central Florida. This includes full- and part-time faculty 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. 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/focus/guidelines.htm>. Publication dates will be the middle of the first and last full months of each semester, and submission deadlines will be the Friday of the week prior. MLA format is preferred. Please send your submissions to *Faculty Focus*, fctl@mail.ucf.edu.

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