

Submissions

The *Faculty Focus* is a publication for all instructors at the University of Central Florida. This includes full- 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 Central Florida 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 <www.fctl.ucf.edu/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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Contents

- Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL)
- A Three-part Series on Self-Support, Self-Help and Professional Development
Part 3: Learning to Use Humor
- Service-Learning at UCF 2002-2004
- Service-Learning Annual Events
- The Golden Treasure of the Golden Knights: The PTDL at UCF
- Honors Service Learning
- Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL): A Sideline Activity for Interdisciplinary Inquiry
- Grade Inflation: It's Not Just An Issue For The Ivy League
- Graduate Teaching Assistant Certificate Program: Spring 2005
- Winter Faculty Development Conference 2004
- Faculty Center Showcases UCF Artists Linda Brant & Judy Welch
- Course Innovation Project: Spring 2005
- Teaching Related Conferences
- UCF Relay For Life 2005

Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL)

Bruce Wilson



Bruce M. Wilson is an Associate Professor of Political Science. His primary research concerns Latin American political economy as well as the impact of judicial reform in Latin America. He is the editor of *The Latin*

Americanist. He teaches classes in comparative politics and his teaching has been recognized by international, national, and UCF teaching awards. He has also published numerous articles on teaching.

I was drawn to the scholarship of teaching and learning early in my career at UCF as a result of two rapidly changing factors: first, UCF quickly became a huge university, which caused my upper division classes to expand from 20+ students to 70+; second, the tools available to me as a teacher were also changing. Principally, the internet became usable, my students were increasingly familiar with it and had access to computers, usable (if not user-friendly) communications software became available, and UCF set up the institutional framework and units to support faculty wishing to incorporate web-enhanced tools into their teaching.

Teaching the larger classes presented a series of problems and challenges that had not been present for the smaller classes. I sometimes felt that the students in the larger classes were being short-changed; there was necessarily less discussion and more lecture in class and student participation generally decreased as there was less interaction of students with each other or with me.

If growth had presented the problem, I thought that computer-enhanced technology might present part of the solution. In my attempts to compensate for large class size I tried to reengage the students in the learning

process through the creation of online discussion groups, interactive assignments, and simulations. I took advantage of the software supported by UCF, WebCT, that offered various functions allowing for the monitoring of students' active participation. While colleagues at different institutions were often skeptical of the use of computer-mediated technology, I found it a useful supplement for my classes and a valuable tool in overcoming some of the challenges of teaching large classes. Over time I became convinced that the extra work in creating and administering these assignments was effective, but I only had anecdotal evidence to back up my perceptions. Examples of the online modules employed are discussed in Kerstin Hamann and Bruce M. Wilson (2003).

In 1999 I was a co-PI on a large grant from the Pew Foundation Program in Course Redesign Award to redesign and evaluate the department of Political Science's General Education American National Government course. This class was traditionally taught three hours per week in a lecture format with up to 100 students. The redesigned format consisted of students spending only half the time in the classroom and using the rest of the class time to complete student-centered, interactive online modules. One part of the grant required us to evaluate the impact of the redesigned course on student learning outcomes. My co-PI, Dr. Philip H. Pollock, and I set up the evaluation in such a way that the reduced seat-time sections were compared with sections taught in the original format by the same instructors and with the same textbook. We were thus able to develop a quasi-experimental design holding as many variables constant as possible. We found that students actually learned more in the reduced-seat time format than in the all-lecture format. The methodology and results are available in Bruce M. Wilson, Kerstin Hamann, and Philip H. Pollock (2000).

...continued on page 2

This spurred my interest in the effects of the potential of active learning through online discussions for different courses. Together with Dr. Philip Pollock and Dr. Kerstin Hamann, I developed a research project that involved the coding of online discussions for different kinds of postings. Our focus here was particularly on the gender composition of the online discussion groups, and our research showed that students are more interactive in groups that are gender-balanced rather than the ones clearly dominated by women (due to course demographics, we were not able to assess groups that were almost entirely populated by male students).

In our early work in this area of male and female online discussion behavior, we analyzed data obtained from student postings to 50 discussion groups in three different upper-level comparative politics courses taught by two different instructors in multiple sections. This database allowed us to perform a content analysis of 1,908 messages containing 14,442 statements made by 453 students. We employed and trained four undergraduate students who coded the statements. To ensure the quality and consistency of the coded material, periodic tests were administered with all the coders coding the same content, which did produce a very high consistency rate across the coders. The methodology and results are available in Philip H. Pollock, Kerstin Hamann, and Bruce M. Wilson (2005).

I have found my research on teaching valuable and gratifying. As I try new things in the classroom, I keep wondering whether they "work". Substantively, my research on online teaching has helped me overcome much of my initial skepticism of utilizing instructional technology. I now use online components in all my courses, and based on my research, I am convinced that this truly enriches the students' educational experience. The scholarship of teaching and learning allows me to assess my work as a teacher independently from grades and students' course evaluations. I believe it has made me both a better teacher and a better researcher as I have found myself applying my research skills to a new context.

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A Three-part Series on Self-Support, Self-Help and Professional Development Part 3: Learning to Use Humor Sophia Dziegielewski & Cheryl Green



Sophia F. Dziegielewski (on left) is a full Professor and Director of the School of Social Work at the University of Cincinnati. Her educational qualifications include a MSW and a Ph.D. in Social Work from Florida State University. Dr. Dziegielewski is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker. She supports her research and practice activity with over 80 publications, six textbooks and over 400 professional presentations in the area of health and mental health.

Cheryl Evans Green (on right) is an Associate Professor in the UCF School of Social Work. She earned her master's degree in Clinical Social Work and her doctor in Social Work Administration, Policy and Planning from Atlanta University. Cheryl joined the faculty in 1978 as a visiting instructor in a grant funded project to develop case management training materials for state social service personnel. The following year, she was offered and accepted a faculty position to become director of the school's Field Education Program. She has served as Director of Undergraduate Social Work program and as Assistant Dean for Student Affairs in COHPA. Her research interests include multicultural social work practice issues, black women in leadership roles in the helping professions and higher education, and addictions, especially drug abuse and misuse among the elderly.

Humor is one of the most effective, and often overlooked, forms of communication that an individual can employ. Humor is such an essential ingredient in all types of communication that it has been referred to as a lubricant for social life (Zinker, 2003). Most people agree that humor plays a role in nearly every situation in which people interact. However, in many formal settings, humor—especially in the form of laughter—is viewed as unprofessional. To date, the effects of humor have been cited in areas such as education (Franzini, 2001), psychotherapy (Melnick & Nevis, 2003), training in leadership (Ziv, 1984), and the medical properties of combating stressful illnesses such as cancer, hypertension and strokes (Apel, 2002). Humorous laughter is also cited in music, literature and theater, often helping the artist to pinpoint incongruities in society (McGhee, 1979). Furthermore, the Bible refers to humor as a medicine to guide an individual to health (Proverbs 17:22).

In the professional setting, humor in the form of laughter can serve as a tension-reducer, thereby assisting with group cohesion and goal attainment. Humor can also be used as an ice-

Teaching Related Conferences

CIBER Institute Teaching and Learning Conference

January 3-7, 2005
Orlando, Florida

<http://www.ciberinstitute.org/TLCMain.htm>

2005 Lilly South Conference on College and University Teaching

February 18-29, 2005
Greensboro, North Carolina

<http://www.uncg.edu/tlc/lillysouth>

Society for Information Technology and Teacher Education International Conference

SITE 2005

Phoenix, Arizona
March 1-5, 2005

<http://aace.org/conf/default.htm>

AAHE 2005 National Conference on Higher Education

Courage, Imagination, Action: Rallying the Trendsetters in Higher Education

March 17-20, 2005
Atlanta, Georgia

<http://www.aahe.org/national.callfp.htm>

International Conference on College Teaching and Learning

March 29-April 2, 2005

Jacksonville, Florida

<http://www.teachlearn.org/final.html>

NISOD: International Conference on Teaching and Learning Excellence

A Whole New Rodeo!

May 29-June 1, 2005
Austin, Texas

<http://www.nisod.org/conference/index2.html>

CRLI 3rd International Conference

What a Difference a Pedagogy Makes: Researching Lifelong Learning and Teaching

June 23-26, 2005
Stirling, Scotland

<http://crl.gcal.ac.uk/conf.htm>

EDMedia 2005

World Conference on Educational Multimedia, Hypermedia & Telecommunications

June 27-July 2, 2005
Montreal, Canada

<http://www.aace.org/conf/edmedia/call.htm>



UCF Relay For Life 2005

The Relay for Life is the American Cancer Society's signature event and the number one non-profit special event in the country. UCF will host the Relay this coming year at the UCF track. If you are not on a team but would like to be, come join our team at the Faculty Center. For more information go to <<http://www.fctl.ucf.edu/events/relayforlife/>>.

Dr. Judy Welch, Dr. Alison Morrison-Shetlar, and Dr. Ruth Marshall are making another quilt as a gift for the Relay for Life. We are offering the quilt in a drawing which will be

made during the relay. If you would like to place your name in the bowl for the drawing to receive the quilt, please stop by the Faculty Center.

Proceeds go to Relay for Life
Donations are welcome.

Stop by the Faculty Center (CL1-207) and enter now!



Winter Faculty Development Conference 2004**December 13, 14, 15 2004****RFP Due: 5 p.m. Friday, November 12, 2004**

The Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning will provide sixty \$500/person grants for faculty members who are transforming their courses. Faculty will receive assistance for the completion of a project that modifies their face-to-face or web-enhanced courses for the purpose of improving teaching, learning, and evaluation. Faculty members from all colleges are invited to apply. All participants will work in teams of at least three members and faculty are strongly urged to apply as teams. Individuals applying as such will be grouped with others working on similar projects.

Some themes for the conference include Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, Assessment, Research, Interdisciplinarity, Student Engagement, and Service Learning.

Faculty will receive support from staff in the Faculty Center, OIR, CD&WS, and the Library, who will provide a series of hands-on experiences designed to help explore teaching techniques and student participation activities that have proven effective in teaching subjects with multimedia or web supports, as well as in large or small class settings. Participants in this project will be invited to serve as mentors during the 2005 Summer Faculty Development Conference.

Final decisions will be provided to all applicants by November 19, 2004.

Faculty Center Showcases**UCF Artists Linda Brant & Judy Welch**

characterize her current style.

Linda Brant is a watercolor artist as well as a licensed psychologist. Her paintings are inspired by her reflections, her dreams and her observations of life in all its forms. Linda had been painting since childhood. Most of her paintings are done with a combination of watercolor, gouache, and pen and ink. Interlocking patterns and layers of dots and lines



techniques, appliqué, and stained-glass effects.

Judith K. Welch is an Associate Professor in the School of Accounting, College of Business Administration. She currently serves on the FCTL Advisory Board. She is actively involved in the creation and assessment of technology learning tools to promote learning. Judy is passionate about quilting. Her fabric-art features traditional techniques, appliqué, and stained-glass effects.

Come by the Faculty Center in CL1-207 to view some of Linda Brant's and Judy Welch's artwork. Additionally, we extend an invitation to all faculty artists to consider showing some of their work at the center.

Course Innovation Project: Spring 2005

The Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning is calling for the submission of proposals by any UCF faculty who has an interest in improving a course. The following themes are suggested.

1. Ethics
2. Assessment and the documentation of teaching and learning
3. Active and collaborative learning
4. Problem-based learning
5. Service learning
6. Employing new technologies in the learning environment

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. Faculty will receive support specific to their project needs. By completing the workshops and producing a final project for dissemination, faculty will receive a \$500 stipend. Separate events will be held at Cocoa, Daytona, and Orlando campuses. For more information please visit

<<http://www.fctl.ucf.edu/events/courseinnovation>>

"Instruction always runs the risk of swamping the pupil's own vital, though narrow, experience under masses of communicated material. The instructor ceases and the teacher begins at the point where communicated matter stimulates into fuller and more significant life that which has entered by the strait [sic] and narrow gate of sense-perception and motor activity. Genuine communication involves contagion..."

John Dewey

breaker, a bonding tool and stress reliever, thereby allowing people to let their guard down and learn to relax (Franzini, 2001).

Don't shy away from humorous communications. It can be used to relieve tension and build cohesion.

Although it is difficult to define the concept of humor, two essential characteristics are usually present—laughter and smiling. Furthermore, interactions in this area are defined along two dimensions, the appreciation of humor and the creation of humor. For instance, if a person is pointed out as smiling, they also are perceived to have a good sense of humor.

Practice smiling at comments that are made to you. Keep practicing until smiling begins to feel natural to you. Smile to emphasize a point and people will perceive you as friendly and having a good sense of humor.

All individuals have the potential to laugh freely, although some may suppress this in terms of their ability for openness and creativity (McGhee, 1994). Others may not have developed an appreciation of humor due to their personal background. Professionals who are unable to appreciate humor in life may be unable to do so because of grieving due to a loss, chronic depression, an inability to comprehend the humor, or generally being unable to "let go" because of a desire to monitor their emotions.

Don't be afraid to laugh along with others. Humor creates an atmosphere that allows for openness, spontaneity and a unique perspective toward sharing, learning and teaching.

Additionally, humor can be used to motivate others to learn about a subject and raise curiosity. When thought-provoking material is presented in an entertaining way, it can contribute to the desire to learn and provide stimulus for retaining attention and arousal release. This allows laughter to provide a boost for the bored, inattentive listener increasing both learning performance and memory retention. Additionally, according to Fuhler, Farris, & Walther (1999), individuals who have been exposed to humorous materials and have been given the tools to express themselves will feel more at ease and share with others the positive message that everyone can find humor and hope in everyday life.

Give humorous examples or tell humorous stories whenever possible. When something humorous happens during communication, don't immediately dismiss it. Be sure to take a few seconds to laugh with others around you.

Humor, when utilized in communication, can stimulate creative thinking and the broadening of perspectives. Humor can be used to convert experiences that are upsetting to com-

ical situations in order to regulate unsatisfactory responses. Humor can help reorient perceptions, attitudes and behaviors that can lead to more balanced interactions. Humorous comments can stimulate others to share inner thoughts, feelings and conflicts. It also provides an opportunity to stimulate new ways of perceiving and understanding attitudes, behaviors and situations (Gladding, 1995). This broadening of perceptions allows for the opportunity to change.

Always try to see the humor in a situation. It can provide the setting for a problem-solving approach under less pressure.

Humor can be used as a vehicle to stimulate meaningful insights, such as words of wisdom, through recollections of past events or similar situations. Writers have reported that humor has helped individuals survive emotional and physical suffering, imprisonment, illnesses, loss and suffering (Granick, 1995). Solomon (1996) believed that humor allowed people to gain control by redefining situations as less threatening. Furthermore, embarrassing situations can be viewed as less serious and thus, under control. Regardless of whether a person is able to change or control an event, if the event can be redefined with the use of humor, a sense of control develops (McGhee, 1998). This suggests that individuals who use humor to cope with life stressors do so as a function of their ability to positively evaluate self-efficacy and self-control.

As with any of the communication skills learned throughout development, humor needs to be used in moderation.

Some suggestions before using humor in the professional setting are:

- ♦ Start with a smile and go slowly, waiting for the development of a connection before trying to use humor to make a point.
- ♦ Don't forget the importance of timing. Also, humor is most enjoyable when presented through incongruity, spontaneity and surprise.
- ♦ Take into account the setting and professional situation. These factors will always determine the type, timing and use of humor employed.

When not to use humor:

- ♦ When it is used to DENY and AVOID dealing with sensitive issues.
- ♦ When it is irrelevant to the subject matter being discussed.
- ♦ When it is experienced as a put-down.
- ♦ When the timing is inappropriate.

Some disadvantages of using humor in stressful discussions are that it can cause distrust between members, including suspicion toward the initiator's dedication or motivation. Another disastrous effect is that the organizer may simply not

be successful in using laughter, upsetting the team or group's previous balance. Another negative type of humor known as gallows humor can also be used to evaluate a new team member's sense of humor. Gallows humor, what some may call dark humor, is considered an exaggeration of the situation facing the group. The use of gallows humor in terms of strained laughter is used in high stress settings such as emergency rooms or police locker rooms. This laughter is rather cynical and demonstrates a coping mechanism that is used when there is no reasonable hope for improvement in the conditions that the group or individual is facing (Kuhlman, 1993).

On the positive side, laughter can serve to release tension—allowing members to behave impulsively without breaking societal taboos (Dziegielewski, 2004). This openness may allow for creative problem solving while encouraging team building. Humor helps to release tension and gives the participant a feeling of belonging. Furthermore, the use of humor in the form of private jokes or "inside jokes" can serve as a defense against strangers infiltrating a group (Morgan, et al., 1986). These jokes create a shared experience that allows the group to remain superior over the newcomer.

The evidence of the positive consequences of humor appreciation and production has led to the creation of a growing number of workshops and courses on how to develop or improve a sense of humor (Franzini, 2001). Just as with any other communication tool, humor should be utilized to create a non-threatening environment, facilitate communication and ensure the development of a trusting communication patterns. Humor is an important coping skill in dealing with life stresses and can add a colorful dimension to our personality. In closing, don't be afraid to use humor in your communications, as it continues to be one of the most overlooked benefits toward improved interpersonal communication.

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Service-Learning at UCF 2002-2004

Linda Hargreaves



Linda Hargreaves coordinates the service-learning program at UCF. She has also worked with undergraduate research initiatives, the UCF common theme Brown v. Board: Cultural Awareness and Social Change, and is currently the campus liaison for The Washington Center internship program. She has taught courses in composition, contemporary women's fiction, and women in drama. Linda graduated as a "nontraditional" student from Rollins College in 1997 and earned her master's degree in English Literature at UCF in 2001.

Service-Learning is a pedagogical approach that integrates learning objectives with civic engagement. Students are asked to apply their course curriculum to service in the community and reflect on the experience. As Dee Dee Rasmussen, Director of the Florida Campus Compact (a coalition of college and university presidents committed to the civic purposes of higher education) once commented to me over a Diet Coke, "It doesn't take a rocket scientist to understand the concept." It does, however, take a dedicated faculty member and up front preparation to teach a service-learning course.

At UCF, we define service-learning as a teaching method that uses community involvement to apply theories or skills being taught in a course. Service-Learning furthers the learning objectives of the academic course, addresses community needs, and requires students to reflect on their activity in order to gain an appreciation for the relationship between civics and academics.

While there were several faculty members at UCF who used service-learning in their courses prior to 2002, most of the campus community was unfamiliar with this pedagogical approach until Dr. Rick Schell, Dean for Undergraduate Studies, received a \$50,000 grant from the Florida Campus

men are enrolled in at least one remedial reading, writing or mathematics course, the highest enrollment being in math. According to Lynn Steen, a mathematics professor at St. Olaf College, 80 percent of all student work in college math is remedial.

If they're not smarter or better prepared, perhaps they're working harder? This doesn't seem to be the case either. The assumption behind most college courses is that students will spend two hours studying for every hour they spend in class, but that is rarely the case. The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) reveals that not even 15 percent of students come close to this ideal.

George Kuh at Indiana University Bloomington, who directs the NSSE, says that students get higher grades for less effort because of an unspoken agreement between professors and their students: "If you don't hassle me, I won't ask too much of you." Kuh is sympathetic to the plight of many college instructors, who often are responsible for teaching hundreds of students. "College teachers have too many students and not enough time, so it's easier to give good or at least pretty good grades rather than have to explain to an angry student how a grade was arrived at."

Someone ought to tell students how unimportant good grades are once they leave the campus. Grade-obsessed students probably assume that high grades lead to better jobs and more money, things they care about. In 1993, 57 percent of students said that the chief benefit of a college education is increased earning power, and that number has been going up. Thirty-seven percent of students say they would drop out of college if they didn't think they were helping their job chances.

What is correlated with success is what is called "engagement," genuine involvement in courses and campus activities. Engagement leads to what's called "deep learning," or learning for understanding. That's very different from just memorizing stuff for the exam and then forgetting it. As Russ Edgerton of the Pew Forum on Undergraduate Learning notes, "What counts most is what students DO in college, not who they are, or where they go to college, or what their grades are."

Colleges shouldn't be let off the hook either. They should be focused on the "value added" of the student experience. In today's society, the need to educate for understanding—not just grades—has never been more important. It's just as critical in community college as in the Ivy League. What should students be learning, and what kinds of learning matter most? What kinds of teaching and student engagement promote "deep learning"? Can that learning be measured? What is the evidence? As basic as it sounds, few institutions in America can answer these questions with any certainty, even though learning is ostensibly the core purpose of higher education.

Some in higher education are trying to get a handle on what really happens in the classroom. The aforementioned

National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) looks at the classroom activity which we know enables significant learning, while the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) directly measures student learning and the "value added" of each campus. Both are challenging ranking systems like those in *U.S. News and World Report* as measures of college quality.

There is also the issue of educational purpose—whether or not students and faculty have common goals. In October 2002, a report, "Greater Expectations: A New Vision for Learning as a Nation Goes to College," asserted that every student, not just those attending elite institutions, should receive a liberal education, not liberal in a political sense but "liberating," i.e., opening the mind.

In short, rooting out grade inflation by publicly shaming easy graders would be a band-aid, and nothing more. The larger issue is the intellectual life of a campus. It appears that there is still much work to be done to reclaim the priority of undergraduate teaching and learning on our nation's campuses.

Graduate Teaching Assistant Certificate Program: Spring 2005

The Karen L. Smith Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning invites Graduate Teaching Assistants to enroll in our GTA Certificate Program. Students will receive group and individualized instruction by Faculty Center staff and experienced UCF professors, as well as textbooks and materials. GTA's will attend a 12 week, non-credit program.

Themes

1. Presentation skills and practice
2. Course design and management
3. Delivery of instruction, teaching strategies
4. Giving assessment and soliciting feedback
5. Building a peer support network
6. Professional survival skills, ethics, legal issues

Please refer interested graduate students to register online at <www.fctl.ucf.edu/events/gta> and follow the instructions. Participation is limited, so please have them enroll early.

Two classes will be offered:
Wednesdays (5:00-8:00pm) Jan. 19th - April 13th
Fridays (2:00-5:00pm) Jan. 21st - April 15th.

Please register by January 14th, 2005.

Register at <www.fctl.ucf.edu/events/gta>

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fctl@mail.ucf.edu
www.fctl.ucf.edu

stream of scholarly investigation and dissemination. Each of these drivers involves personal convictions for which there are no correct or incorrect answers.

I choose to define my academic discipline in very broad terms. In fact, I view the academy as a plethora of fields of interest. I believe that patterns of interdisciplinary relationships exist among the findings of numerous and varied fields of study. As a "career-change" academician (known as a re-tread in some circles), I naively lack a complete comprehension of the Rules of Containment that segregate fields of study. Otherwise, I might understand the argument that SoTL lies within the exclusive domain of the College of Education.

As a result of my naiveté concerning disciplinary segregation, my intent is to generate scholarly contributions to interdisciplinary audiences. In my case, this involves colleagues from the fields of business, education, hospitality management, and technology. In fact, it was my training in technology that led to SoTL investigations as an early adopter of the now popular method of distributed learning systems. The audience of our work in this area consists of fellow educators from relevant disciplines.

This stream of inquiry has helped to shape my personal definition of self as an educator. I have been blessed with the opportunity to generate and disseminate findings that seem to be appreciated by other educators in their roles as both teachers and researchers. In my case, I attend very few SoTL conferences. Instead, I present SoTL topics at mainstream conferences relative to my discipline. The audiences of fellow academics continue to be interested in what myself and like-minded colleagues have to disseminate in these forums.

Finally, I think most would agree that scholars must possess a passion for their pursuits. I think most researchers have had the experience of delivering passionate presentations to glazed-over audiences. No one is as interested as us in our own scholarly works (if that makes any sense). It seems to me that certain academics really love the types of research that fall within the label of SoTL. Personally, I just became familiar with the term, SoTL, only to realize that I have been SoTLizing for almost ten years.

I can't speak for other members of the academy. I can only tell you that my work in SoTL related topics has been satisfying to me in terms of my quest for interdisciplinary study, purpose of contributions, definition of myself as an educator and my level of passion for making contributions that are appreciated by fellow academics. For me, SoTL is a sideline endeavor that comprises less than one-third of my output in the research areas of human resource management and technology. My approach is to pirate some time to generate SoTL studies in addition to expected output levels within my discipline. This results in balance for me and satisfies the expectations of my academic unit. As the anonymous saying goes, "Do what you love and the accolades will follow."

Grade Inflation: It's Not Just An Issue For The Ivy League

John Merrow

John Merrow, who reports on education for *The NewsHour* with Jim Lehrer and *Frontline* for PBS, is a scholar-in-residence at The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. This piece comes from Tommorrow's Professor listserv and a version of this piece appeared in the March/April 2004 edition of the *Dartmouth Alumni Magazine* and a February 2003 issue of *USA Today*.

While back, Randy Cohen's regular column, "The Ethicist" in *The New York Times Magazine*, focused on the evidence that "grade inflation" is a big-time issue. A professor had asked whether he should raise grades because those he was giving were below the departmental average. And last week, students and professors at the University of Oregon debated whether grade inflation exists on that campus in an article for the student newspaper, *The Daily Emerald*. Even in the UK, the *Telegraph* questioned whether the university degree in England was "losing its meaning" because of grade inflation.

I've interviewed a number of students on this issue. Here's what I found: Matt Mindrum of Indiana University says he studied a total of eight hours for his four semester exams, while Parvin Sathe of New York University says he studied for 20 hours. Marc Hubbard of Colgate reports putting in about 60 hours, but another Colgate student, Bonnie Vanzler, says she studied for just 12. All four made the Dean's List at their respective institutions.

These days it seems as if nearly everyone in college is receiving A's, making the Dean's List, or graduating with honors. What's more interesting is that college students in general are spending fewer hours studying, while taking more remedial courses and fewer courses in mathematics, history, English, and foreign languages. Students everywhere report that they average only 10-15 hours of academic work outside of class per week and are able to attain "B" or better grade-point averages.

In a study for the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, former Harvard Dean Henry Rosovsky found that in 1950 about 15 percent of Harvard students got a B+ or better. Today, it's nearly 70 percent. Last year 50 percent of the grades at Harvard were either A or A-, up from 22 percent in 1966, and 91 percent of seniors graduated with honors. Eighty percent of the grades at the University of Illinois are A's and B's, and 50 percent of Columbia students are on the Dean's List.

If today's college students were smarter or better prepared, that would explain the higher grades, but that doesn't seem to be the case. Over the last 30 years, SAT scores of entering students have declined, and fully one-third of entering fresh-

Compact to support UCF as an "emerging service-learning campus." The focus in that first year was to introduce service-learning to the UCF community and to educate faculty. A committee of approximately 70 UCF staff and faculty members was formed to work together to create awareness of service-learning as a teaching method, address concerns, plan training events, and imagine possibilities. Dr. Melody Bowdon, a veteran service-learning faculty member in the English Department and key member of the committee, noted that "service-learning may never be a component of all or even a majority of UCF classes, but we simply want to support a solid core of faculty members who choose to offer such courses."

In July 2003, the Office of Undergraduate Studies hired me as the program coordinator to devote 50% of my time to invigorating service-learning at UCF. Working with the committee, we established annual events to engage faculty, enhance service-learning on the campus, and communicate with community partners. In August of 2003 and 2004 we hosted a Community Partners Breakfast to show our appreciation for the community agencies with which S-L faculty work and to open a conversation about their needs and expectations. Service-Learning Day with nationally recognized speakers was held on February 18, 2004. Almost 100 faculty members attended to hear about how to infuse high quality service-learning into the curriculum and assessment of service-learning outcomes. On April 1, 2004 we held our inaugural Service-Learning Student Showcase. In a showcase setting, 73 students presented to faculty members, fellow classmates, and a panel of five judges what they accomplished in service-learning courses throughout the year. President Hitt and Provost Hickey were observed contemplating the displays and listening to students give testimonials of their service-learning experiences. UCF's Student Government Association donated \$5,000 in scholarship awards, and students from English, Art, and Engineering were awarded \$2,500, \$1,500, and \$1,000 respectively.

Also in April, the Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning held the Summer Faculty Development Conference which had a service-learning track. Faculty who wanted to redesign their existing courses into service-learning courses spent three days working with a recognized S-L facilitator. Faculty members from Psychology, Criminal Justice, Business Management, and Education participated, and a few English members wandered over from SoTL to listen to Kerrissa Heffernan of Brown University talk about S-L course construction. Both the summer and winter faculty development conferences will continue to offer service-learning tracks. Additionally, a Service-Learning Faculty Fellow maintains office hours at the Faculty Center in order to answer S-L questions or engage colleagues in conversations about teaching practices, course criteria, assessment, or theory. This year, Dr. Diane Wink, Nursing, and Dr. Kathy Hohenleitner, English, will share the duties of S-L Faculty Fellow at the FCTL.

In May 2004, Florida Campus Compact awarded the service-

learning program at UCF a Continuing Impact Grant in the amount of \$10,000. This grant, in addition to funding from the Office of Undergraduate Studies, will enable the service-learning program to broaden and deepen at UCF. The coordinating committee can continue to imagine possibilities.

Perhaps the most influential change for service-learning was the allotment of special funding for S-L courses. Beginning with the fall 2004 semester, the provost allocated an additional 15% per SCH funding for service-learning, internships, undergraduate research, and honors courses. The Service-Learning Coordinating Committee appointed a sub-committee to create course criteria and an approval process in order to set a standard and identify those service-learning classes that would receive the extra funding. While faculty are not obligated to send their service-learning syllabi for approval, only those courses that successfully go through the course approval process receive the enhanced funding. Approved courses carry an SL designation in the schedule. Sixty-two courses were submitted in the first course approval cycle: 55 were accepted, 2 withdrew, and 5 were denied. Of the 55 accepted, 45 were on the fall 2004 schedule. Once a course is approved, it does not have to be resubmitted each semester.

In 2003-2004 students were encouraged to share their enthusiasm for service-learning by forming the Student Service-Learning Coalition (SSLC). Although the group is inchoate, they are creative and eager to promote service-learning on campus. During registration last semester they designed and passed out flyers that proclaimed, "Get More Out of Your Major—Take a Service-Learning Course!"

In the spring/summer 2004 issue of the *Campus Compact Current*, a student from the University of California at San Diego remarked, "At the end of their four years, many students are equipped with a degree in one hand and a stable job in the other, but lack the tools that are necessary for them to become citizens in our democracy." At UCF, faculty who understand the rigor and spirit of quality service-learning are working with interested community partners and a supportive administration to provide students with those tools.

Service-Learning Annual Events

Service-Learning Course Approval:
Summer 2005, Fall 2005, Spring 2006
November 1, 2004

Faculty Development Winter Conference
December 13-15, 2004

Service-Learning Faculty Reception
February 16, 2005

Service-Learning Day
February 17, 2005

Service-Learning Student Showcase
April 14, 2005

Faculty Development Summer Conference
April, 2005

The Golden Treasure of the Golden Knights: The PTDL at UCF

Jason Martin



Jason Martin is a reference librarian at UCF. His subject areas include patents and trademarks, history, finance, and marketing.

As the only major library on campus, the University of Central Florida's library works hard to meet the needs of the students and faculty. UCF's library houses over 1.5 million volumes and continues to grow as does the university. In addition to meeting the research needs of the student body and faculty, UCF also serves a diverse population from the surrounding metro area. One of the largest draws of the library is the Patent and Trademark Depository Library (PTDL) collection. Established in 1989, the PTDL at UCF works with the Patent and Trademark Depository Library Association (PTDLA) and the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) to provide access to patent and trademark information to any and all library patrons. In order to become a PTDL, a library must pay a yearly fee of \$50.00, acquire and maintain a back-file of at least 20 years, provide free access to the materials, and actively disseminate patent and trademark information.(1) As a PTDL, the UCF Library has access to over 200 years of patent and trademark information, making it a valuable collection for both the public and the university as a whole. Several times a week someone either visits or calls the library with a question about patents. Some are simply curious about a patent a relative may have held or an unusual item purchased while on a weekend outing to the flea market. Others are inventors who are serious about their chance to achieve an Edison-like greatness and make the world a better place through their inventions.

The UCF Library physically houses patents in several forms. On microfilm the library owns copies of utility and design patents from 1957 to present. These patents are also available electronically on DVDs used with the CASSIS computer located in the patents reference area of the library and via the Internet at <http://www.uspto.gov> from 1790 to the present. The library also owns tools used in searching patents in paper and on microfilm such as Index of Patents (microfilm 1842-1973 paper 1927-1996) and The Official Patent Gazette (microfilm 1872-1926 paper 1927-2002). Plant patents are available in paper from 1931 to the present. Plant patents are granted for asexually reproducing plants and include full-color photographs of the often gorgeous plants.

To search the patents one may use the CASSIS computer or the USPTO's website. Both allow for full-text searching of patents from 1976 to the present and patent number and clas-

sification searching from 1790 to the present. Each method has digital facsimiles of patents available as TIFF images.

A quick perusal of these databases will show that the University of Central Florida has been busy receiving patents. According to the USPTO's website, from 1969-2000 the University of Central Florida was granted 75 patents. During that same period the University of South Florida was granted 117 patents and the University of Florida received 435.(2) But from 1999-2003 the University of Central Florida ranks 12th among all organizations in the state of Florida with 81 patents granted. The University of South Florida ranks 13th with 78 and the University of Florida charts at 4th with 157 patents.(3) Some of the patents granted to the University of Central Florida include "Treatment for Breast Cancer" (patent number 6,703,426), "High Efficiency Ceiling Fan" (patent number 6,039,541), and "Garden Table" (patent number 6,394,006).

A quick search of the Trademark Electronic Search System (TESS) shows that the University of Central Florida holds at least 67 federal trademarks. Some of these marks include "Managed Stormwater is Goodwater", "H2O4U", "From Promise to Prominence", and the Pegasus logo.

The resources of a PTDL prove crucial to the success of cash-strapped small businesses and independent inventors who can not afford to pay a third party for patent and trademark searches. However, a patent and trademark collection is not just for the use of inventors. The United States Patent and Trademark Office's (USPTO) webpage reads, "Patent trends reflect the rise and ebb of society's ever changing interests, habits, concerns, fads, and foibles."(4) Historians and genealogists benefit from researching patents just as much as chemists and biologists. Patent research may also prove to be a fun and engaging assignment for students. All questions and comments regarding patents and trademarks may be directed to Jason Martin e-mail: mjmartin@mail.ucf.edu.

Endnotes

- (1) USPTO, PTDL Overview, Internet on-line, <<http://www.uspto.gov/go/ptdl/ptdlgen.htm>>, [7 September 2004].
- (2) USPTO, U.S. Colleges and Universities Utility Patent Grants, Calendar Years, 1969-2000, Internet on-line, <http://www.uspto.gov/web/offices/ac/ido/oeip/taf/univ/univ_toc.htm> [7 September 2004].
- (3) USPTO, Patenting by Geographic Origin Breakout by Organization, Internet on-line, <http://www.uspto.gov/web/offices/ac/ido/oeip/taf/asgic/fl_stc.htm>, [7 September 2004].
- (4) USPTO, Patents: The Collection for all Reasons, Internet on-line, <<http://www.uspto.gov/go/ptdl/patreaso.htm>>, [7 September 2004].

Honors Service Learning

Mary Ellen Gomrad



Mary Ellen Gomrad is an Instructor in the Department of English, UCF. She earned her master's degree in the English Department's Technical Writing program in 1999. Mary Ellen teaches composition and technical writing courses and integrates service learning pedagogy into each course. She first began working for the English Department in 1994 as the Technical Writing Lab Manager. Since then she has been employed by the department in various capacities. In January 2000, she joined the English faculty as a Visiting Instructor and two years later she accepted an Instructorship with the department. In addition to her classroom teaching responsibilities, Mary Ellen has served as the Honors In The Major Thesis Consultant since 2000, working closely with HIM students as they complete their thesis requirements.

A university education is not just about career preparation. It also prepares students to become productive, contributing members of society. By working on real projects with clients having real needs, wants, and desires, students gain the kind of hands-on experience that will better prepare them for life and their professional careers. One proven pedagogical approach that can be integrated into various disciplines is service learning, which offers an instructional technique to meet the common goals of the student, university, and the community. Through service learning projects students can become full partners in the learning process. The Burnett Honors College welcomes faculty ideas to provide more service learning opportunities to their students.

At the Burnett Honors College you will find an interesting, diverse group of students who bring to class a unique array of talents. They are interesting, industrious students with problem solving skills, work ethic, and intellectual curiosity—attributes and characteristics we all look for in our students. Additionally, you will find students from various disciplines who have collaboration skills and are not afraid to take risks. However, the major benefit to faculty is the small class size: enrollment is limited to 20 Honors students.

Recently, I taught a technical writing course for the Honors College. My students worked with several agencies: Back to Nature Wildlife Preserve, Future Farmers of America, UWC, and the UCF Counseling Center's program ALLIES. The student groups worked with these nonprofits creating user manuals, handbooks, and an informational Website for their participating community partner. What impressed me most was that the Honors students took full responsibility for their service learning project and were all proactive in dealing with any problems they encountered.

In a successful Service Learning collaboration, the proof is in the partnership. The student requires the instructor to construct and facilitate the learning process by integrating sound theory with effective service learning pedagogy. In balancing this partnership, my students engaged in a collaborative learning experience helping each other analyze the rhetorical demands of their writing project while applying the practical skills with the theory they are learning in their course work. Using team building strategies, they worked extremely well together, forming an effective partnership and focusing on their goal of producing a high quality project.

The Burnett Honors College welcomes faculty ideas to provide more service learning opportunities to Honors students. There are many advantages of teaching an Honors Service-Learning course. The small class size promotes a learning environment where you can work with students individually. Honors college students are UCF's brightest students! They are a vibrant and dynamic community of student-scholars. If you are interested in teaching students who come to class mentally prepared, focused, and ready to participate and learn, consider teaching an Honors Service-Learning course. Teaching an Honors Service-Learning course is a win-win situation for all involved!

Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL): A Sideline Activity for Interdisciplinary Inquiry

Dana Tesone



Dana V. Tesone is an assistant professor with the Rosen College of Hospitality Management at UCF. His research areas are human resource management and technology.

A column that appeared in a previous issue of *Faculty Focus* announced an initiative on the promotion of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) at UCF. In that piece, the author provided eloquent answers to frequently asked questions concerning the definition, rigor and merit of scholarly inquiry in this area from the perspective of various academic disciplines. As part of the continuing promotional initiative, I have been asked to tell my SoTL story in this article.

In my view, there are four personal drivers that determine the stream of scholarly inquiry for some of us involved with the academy. First, there is the researcher's personal definition of his or her academic discipline. The second consideration is the scholar's intention concerning contributions to the field. Third is an individual's personal definition of his or her role as an educator. And the fourth driver involves the level of passion on the part of the researcher concerning his or her