Faculty Focus

Volume 5 Number 2 April 2006

Contents

Teaching Legacy: Voices of Experience

Cheryl Green

Cheryl Evans Green is an Associate Professor of Social Work. She joined UCF in 1978. Her research interests include multicultural clinical practice, Black women in leadership roles in organizations, and addictions.

1. What teaching methods have you found to be most effective for your students?

I try different things. I usually have some type of experiential learning activity for students that allows them to have "hands-on" experience with the content. I'll do a lecturette highlighting concepts from assigned readings—I don't do long lectures anymore—and then students go through a simulation, role-play, case study, etc. used to clarify and reinforce the material. I plan to invite Theatre students to present client vignettes in a class so students can interact with them as they stay in character and confront students with the challenges of actual social work practice. When appropriate, I invite clients and practitioners to discuss practice issues in classes.

2. What was your most memorable teaching experience?

I guess I'm fortunate; there have been a number of such experiences over the years. I just love it when I have a class where I believe that I've really "connected" with students and utilized "real life" experiences to stimulate their thinking. In one class recently, for example, several students were able to directly tie the material to their own experiences in making difficult but critical decisions at different life stages. It was sort of a cathartic but validating teaching moment for me to witness the students' enthusiastic and rather impressive discussion of the content.

3. What single piece of advice would you give to new professors today?

Find people both inside and outside your institution who will give you solid advice about what is required to be successful, not only with your scholarship but also teaching and service. Learn from their accomplishments and failures. I think that few faculty have had the benefit of one, all purpose mentor who guides the way. Usually several people, including family and friends, contribute to and support the process, so cultivate and nurture your allies. New faculty need to find out what is needed for tenure and locate a willing and able person or two who will help them stay really focused. They need to also do selected things in their teaching and service activities that keep their souls alive. What I didn't do initially was link my research with my teaching, but there are ways to do that, such as the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning.

4. What kept you in the profession?

I discovered that I really had a passion for teaching. I come from a family of people who are all teachers, so they were absolutely thrilled.

5. What changes have you seen over your career with regard to student learning and how have you adapted to them?

I've seen the student population become increasingly more diverse. At first I saw this in cultural differences as more ethnically diverse students enrolled. Then I noticed the diversity of age as I realized that I often teach, in the same classroom, students who are 18, middle-aged, or even working retirees. Lately I've observed some rather troubling diversity in students' desire to learn. There's now, I think, a segment of students, and I hope this is a small number, who do not seem to want to learn that much. "Give me my degree and let me be" seems to be their mantra. Their presence in our classes, I think, challenges all of us to not give in to the demands for easy grades.

Benefits (and Fits) of Teaching on a Regional Campus

Betty Mayer
Scot D. Schraufnagel

Betty Wendt Mayer is a Visiting Assistant Professor in Nursing. She completed her MSN at UCF School of Nursing as a Family Nurse Practitioner and her Ph.D. in Nursing at the University of South Florida. She joined the UCF faculty in 2001 at the Daytona Beach campus. Her research includes nursing assessment and care in issues of interpersonal violence and child abuse.

Scot Schraufnagel is an Assistant Professor of Political Science assigned to the Daytona Beach campus in his 4th year at UCF. He received his Ph.D. from Florida State University in 2002. His research is on the topics of legislative redistricting, legislative term limits, partisan polarization in Congress, and judicial confirmation delay.

As UCF grows to serve the educational needs of our state, multiple regional campuses have been created or expanded. The flavor, tone and pace of these campuses differ greatly from the Orlando campus. In casual conversations with colleagues in the UCF regional campus system, it can be easily noted that there are perceived advantages and disadvantages to working on one of the regional campuses. We set out to survey our colleagues more systematically and report the results of a survey of eighteen regional campus educators in different departments throughout the university. The survey asked the faculty to report on what they perceive to be three advantages and three disadvantages of "being on the regional campus." The responses varied; however, there was much constancy as well. Below we summarize the three most commonly mentioned advantages and disadvantages reported.

Benefits of Teaching on a Regional Campus

Twelve of eighteen respondents make mention of smaller class size as one of the advantages of teaching in the regional campus system. The open-ended responses included comments such as "more intimate classrooms;" "smaller classes allow closer contact with students;" "smaller classes enhance student cohesiveness;" and "closer relationships are developed with students due to having them in multiple courses." It should be noted, however, two survey participants recognized large on-line classes as one of their disadvantages to teaching on a regional campus.

Second, eleven of eighteen respondents mention better administrative support as one of the advantages to teaching on a regional campus. In particular, faculty are impressed by the type and character of assistance they receive from office managers and their assistants. Comments were made about increased or easy access to copy machines and being able to "really know the office personnel" and depend on them for assistance. Although it may be its own category, one-third of respondents mention ease of parking, which is arguably a function of "administrative support." It can be noted that some of the comments in the category of administrative support seemed to be made about the nature of the support, relative to what regional campus faculty experience when teaching on the Orlando campus. Fifteen of the eighteen respondents report that they have taught courses on the Orlando campus.

The third advantage to teaching on a regional campus is related to a more collegial campus atmosphere. In all, we can count ten responses making mention of friendlier relations between faculty and students, faculty and administrators, and between faculty members. Some people were especially pleased with the opportunity to develop working relationships and friendships with faculty from different departments and colleges. Others argue that the regional campuses are more sociable and less frenetic than the Orlando campus. The following quote summarizes the base sentiment expressed by those who mention something about the general campus atmosphere: "With a smaller campus to deal with, there is a strong sense of community. You can avoid department politics and much of the problems inherent in large bureaucracies, having more solidarity with other faculty."

Other advantages to working on a regional campus that received more than a single mention were 1) closeness to home; less driving, 2) being able to work on research with fewer interruptions, 3) less service requirements, and 4) more flexible schedules.

Disadvantages of Teaching on a Regional Campus

The primary disadvantage mentioned in the open-ended surveys was a lack of departmental socialization and interaction. The lower level of the within-discipline interaction was perceived to make it more difficult to achieve tenure and promotion. Respondents suggested that it is "more difficult to have contact with, and form networks with the colleagues in my discipline," and that not being "in the loop" with departmental authorities causes them to feel "isolated from decision-making that affects my work." Others suggest that they are "out of touch with much that is happening in the department." Still others suggest, "We are often living in the midst of a sniping war between colleges and regional campuses." Overall, respondents seem to suggest that the exchange of academic information is underdeveloped, particularly when compared to the "large wealth of knowledge available from other faculty" on the Orlando campus.

Second, ten of eighteen open-ended responses can be categorized to suggest that faculty on regional campuses believe

there is more unwanted individual responsibility to make their program a success. Here, the gist of the argument being made is that faculty feel they are burdened to recruit students and administer fledgling programs (or majors). Some point out the considerable amount of one-on-one student advising that they are required to do. One respondent argues that there is "little support to promote my program and build it." Still others note that because the regional campuses are in a growth mode, faculty have student recruitment responsibilities beyond those experienced by colleagues on the Orlando campus. Recruitment often involves visits, sometimes multiple and all-day visits, to local high schools, community colleges, hospitals, and other institutions where potential students are located.

The third most commonly perceived disadvantage of teaching on a regional campus can be categorized as the special requirements of non-traditional students. Many regional campus students are taking classes while meeting full-time job and family obligations. This requires faculty to be cognizant of individual student circumstances, makes it more difficult to make course changes during a semester, and causes faculty to keep especially alert for community concerns such as hurricanes and changes in area driving patterns due to special events. Moreover, some faculty feel it forces them to have a more liberal attendance policy. It is noted that students are less inclined to feel a sense of loyalty to the university and are less likely to display an allegiance to the university by wearing UCF-branded items.

Among the other issues that were mentioned as disadvantages more than once were 1) the burden of attending meetings in Orlando both in cost and time, 2) duplication of tasks such as ordering books, and 3) more limited library access for faculty and students.

We feel that the results of this limited survey are illuminating and provide justification for a broader analysis of this subject matter. An inventory of likes and dislikes, advantages and disadvantages, seems a logical place to start when trying to better any institution. Any future study of this question needs be based on a larger, more random sample. Moreover, data ought to be collected on the colleges and backgrounds that individual respondents represent. For instance, it may be the case that some advantages or disadvantages are associated with certain colleges or instructors versus those in tenure track positions. As an aside, it can be noted that our pilot survey did ask respondents how long they have been teaching on the regional campuses, and there was no systematic evidence that the length of service altered perceptions of advantages and disadvantages. For now, smaller class size appears to be the most commonly perceived advantage of teaching on a regional campus, and the lack of interaction with colleagues in one's own discipline is perceived as the most significant disadvantage.

Winning with SI: A Faculty Perspective on an Academic Support Program

Howard Miles

D. Howard Miles is a Professor of Chemistry. He joined UCF in 1988. His professional interests include medicinal and synthetic organic chemistry as related to the discovery of new drugs leads for the treatment of cancer, tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS, and heart diseases. His recent accomplishments include the award of eight UCF patents on novel synthetics from Russia that have the potential to be new drug-leads for the treatment of cancer and TB.

Supplemental Instruction (SI) has been an important component of my large Organic Chemistry I and II courses since the Spring of 2003. This academic support program has been available at UCF through the Student Academic Resource Center (SARC) for nine years, resulting in grade improvement and student retention for historically difficult academic courses such as General Chemistry I and II, Organic Chemistry I and II, Biochemistry, Microbiology, Genetics, General Biology, General Physics I, Physical Science, College Algebra, and Geology. These courses are considered historically difficult because typically 30% or more students obtain D and F grades, or withdraw.

Supplemental Instruction (SI) uses regularly scheduled study sessions led by peers called SI leaders. SI leaders have taken the course before and received an A. They undergo continuous training in proactive strategies to conduct effective SI sessions. SI leaders attend all classes, take notes, and do all the assignments. They conduct four SI sessions each week. During these sessions, SI leaders help students apply study strategies to the course content. According to the SI coordinator, the integration of study skills with course content is what sets the SI program apart from other forms of collaborative learning.

By attending SI sessions, students are exposed to the most successful students. SI leaders are good role models for the students to follow because they provide a good example of how to learn the course material and the work involved. SI sessions provide opportunities to practice more problems and foster good study habits. Students who attend SI sessions benefit from seeing the material presented in different ways. The repetition and opportunity to hear the information from peers increase their level of understanding of chemistry.

The SI model is inspired on the theories of Piaget, Dewey, and Bruner, based on the notion that students can construct their own knowledge from previous knowledge and new experiences through collaboration, social interaction, exploration and application. In this manner, SI leaders help students work cooperatively using the textbook, lecture notes, and other materials to build accurate information, solve problems, work on sample tests, and predict possible exam questions. SI leaders do not re-lecture but use questioning techniques to promote critical thinking, create a comfortable atmosphere for teamwork and group study, and model effective study habits. In SI

sessions, students learn how to integrate course content and study skills while working together.

SI sessions are voluntary, anonymous, and free to all students enrolled in courses that offer SI. Students who attend SI have a wide range of academic backgrounds and ability. Therefore, they are not stigmatized for attending SI. Research shows that students who attend SI sessions on a regular basis can earn on an average one letter grade higher than their peers who do not attend SI. For example, in the Fall 2004 semester, students in Organic Chemistry I who attended SI sessions averaged a 3.0 final course grade vs. 2.3 for non-SI attendees. This difference was statistically significant, and the fact that SI participants had significantly lower incoming SAT scores than non-SI attendees indicates that SI attendance is probably the reason that SI attendees earned higher final course grades.

Organic Chemistry I and II are difficult courses for many students. Students who take these classes are typically science majors or in health and pre-professional career tracks. Students who have difficulty in these classes are afraid of organic chemistry, did not learn how to work hard in high school, and have difficulty with visualization. In SI sessions, students can learn what it takes to master the material from someone who was successful in Organic Chemistry. I recall a young man who came to see me in my office. He had scored a D on the first test. He asked me what to do; I talked to him for a very long time about the value of working hard, bringing his study habits to a new level, and increasing his study time. He finished the class with a B and got an A in Organic Chemistry II. He is now an orthopedic surgeon.

The benefits of SI extend to faculty members as well. I recommend SI support to other faculty members because the availability of group study time outside the classroom generates more academically prepared students who can meet the expectations of the instructor and make class discussions more interesting. SI sessions provide more practice for the student in regard to learning the material that the faculty member has presented. As more students experience academic success, there will be higher student satisfaction, which translates to better evaluations for the course and the professor. The amazing part of it all is that it does not take much time from me and the help is free to the student. Thus, SI is a real win-win situation for students and faculty members alike.

Further information about Supplemental Instruction can be found at SARC:

Student Academic Resource Center
Phone (407) 823-5130
Howard Phillips Hall, Room 113
http://www.sarc.sdes.ucf.edu/aboutsi.html

Video Game Playing to Enhance Learning

Michael Scantlebury

Michael Scantlebury is an Assistant Professor in the Tourism, Events and Attractions Department of the Rosen College. He joined the faculty of UCF in 2005 after completing his M.Phil. at The University of the West Indies, Mona, Jamaica, and his Ph.D. in the Recreation and Leisure Studies Department of the University of Waterloo, Ontario, Canada. His research includes community and enterprise relationships in heritage tourism and barriers to heritage tourism development.

"Wow, I got it, I understand, it makes sense!" These are words I long to hear from my students as I teach and the light of understanding goes on. I try many and different ways to encourage and direct students on the journey to understanding the business of theme parks and attraction management. This journey I hope will lead ultimately to greater individual self-awareness.

The fast-paced world, the distractions of student life, competition for time, the changes in technology and the seemingly shrinking attention spans of students have made the journey more challenging. I have long abandoned the style of my own undergraduate education under the British system, a rigid system of lectures with no scope for questions to the professor, tutorials with uninformed graduate assistants, and year-long courses. Now I endeavor to engage students and encourage them to be curious about the role and function of the theme park and attractions business.

This past semester I embarked on an expedition to change my section of HFT 4755: Theme Park and Attraction Management to take it much more into the comfort zone of my students. HFT 4755 is a core course in the Hospitality Management Bachelor of Science degree program. I instruct approximately 75 students per section of this course. I will be introducing the computer game SIM Theme Park as an active part of my HFT 4755 course in the fall 2006 semester. Unlike many of my students, I am not a video game player by any stretch of the imagination. My closest encounter with video games is Tetris. When I shared this with my students, many smiled politely, some laughed outright, and others asked, "What's Tetris?"

So I began the journey of becoming comfortable with my son's technology as a way of helping students conceptualize the conditions and controls associated with the management of theme parks. This has not been easy. Building the rides and other components of the park on the computer has taken some getting used to. I realize that you simply have to "just do it." It is frustrating and exasperating, but this is the world of many young people. I am the dinosaur. Ultimately, I hope that by playing the game and reflecting on the decisions and

the results, they will understand theme park operation. I'm still not totally comfortable with the game and the technology. I look forward to interacting with the students and learning from them. I will encourage them to be partners in the process of exploration.

A key ingredient to their success is reflection. Do students have time to reflect? They are already compressed between their two "part-time" jobs and the six courses they are taking. Am I expecting too much of the student lifestyle? It is not just about doing the readings, writing the papers, and responding to the questions on various assignments. When will the light go on to illuminate the path? When will I hear the EUREKA? I do not know, but by including a reflective journal in the course, perhaps it will make the epiphany happen sooner and for more students.

I will have the students play the game and reflect on how the game differs from the real world. How can they make the game better? Where does the game "mess up," and where does it deviate from reality? To ensure that they actually think about what they are doing, I'll be asking them to maintain a reflective journal for the period of the course when the game activity is conducted. I will review the journal weekly to monitor entries and assess progress on the journey. I will also maintain my own journal of my experience this fall. I can see that it will be a valuable one for me.

"Wow, I got it, I understand, it makes sense!" At the end of the fall semester as I do my reflection on the things that I did well and those that I will do better in the ensuing year, I look forward to hearing these words resound.

WebCT Upgrade and Conversion at UCF

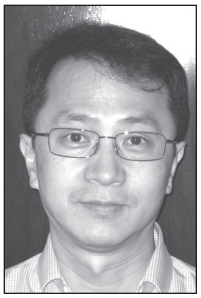
UCF is upgrading to WebCT 6.0 for Fall 2006!

Faculty must request their accounts be converted and should attend training.

Information, forms and dates for training are located at http://teach.ucf.edu (select "WebCT Upgrade")

Boot Camp Training for Hospitality Management Students in Accounting

Hyung-il Jung



Hyung-il Jung is an Assistant Professor in Hospitality Management. He completed his MS at Florida International University, and his Ph.D. in Hospitality & Tourism Management at the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. He joined the UCF faculty in 2005 at the Rosen College of Hospitality Management. His research includes issues of multiculturism and service concepts.

The main idea behind innovating my course can be best summarized as "repetition of concepts and techniques with real-life examples." In this context, the idea is not so much innovative as progressive. Throughout my teaching experience, I have noticed a constant and continuous tendency that students come to accounting classes with predetermined reluctance toward the subject. It is a trend commonly perceived in the area of Hospitality Management. Among the students of the Rosen College, it still exists, albeit much more benign. However, I noticed great potential to alleviate this negativity through progressive innovation of the delivery process in class.

Students' reluctance toward the subject often causes apathy that prevents them from engaging themselves in class activities. By reducing this reluctance, I think students will learn more effectively. The nature of Financial Accounting requires students to memorize numerous isolated jargon and rules. In addition, most jargon and rules do not make much sense, even when the learner has spent a year or two in the industry —simply because they seldom have opportunities to see their official accounting documents at work.

With this analysis in mind, I plan to implement a cyclical pattern of teaching. It is phrased this way because the method focuses on repeated practices of techniques and concepts. One more element to add is real life examples obtained from the Hospitality Management industry. However, repeated practice does not mean that students have to go through the same material over and over again. Whenever the techniques and concepts are repeated, the complexity of the material increases accordingly.

This approach will familiarize students with the techniques and concepts of accounting, which will encourage their engagement. Once this objective is accomplished, this method will continue into the next level course, Managerial Accounting, and then into Financial Management. In this fashion, I anticipate that our students will become competent enough to apply their knowledge to advance their career.

In the first phase, the fundamental concepts of accounting will be introduced in a simplified structure with the focus on how accounting products finalize the operations into a set of reports: the income statement and the balance sheet. Real life examples will be obtained through the Internet. Relevant jargon introduced in the textbook and relevant statements will be found in the sample reports along with definitions and GAAP (Generally Accepted Accounting Principles). Estimated length of time for this practice is about six sessions.

In the second phase, technical details of book-keeping procedures will be introduced. This is where many students start getting lost. The hidden reason is that most of them have failed to develop a clear understanding of the prerequisite concepts covered in the first phase. Continuous repetition of the techniques with relevant concepts will enhance students' comprehension of the material, particularly with incremental complexity. Estimated length of time for this practice is about six weeks (12 sessions).

The third phase takes only two weeks. It is designed to verify the competency developed by each student. At this stage, students are expected to demonstrate their ability to interpret real-life financial reports, and to predict a company's short-term financial performance. Parameters are given for their prediction.

At the last stage, students will learn to calculate technical variations of specific accounting concepts such as inventory, depreciation, accounts receivable and bad debt, and payroll accounting. They are expected to demonstrate the ability to tell the impact of different accounting methods on the financial reports. Since these are simple variations of what they have learned, these topics will be addressed mainly from a conceptual point of view.

The idea is a three-pronged approach: repetition, incremental complexity, and a real-life example. It has developed by applying the mixed perspectives of constructivist theory and cognitive flexibility theory. When this idea is successfully implemented, the goal is to combine constructivism with cognative flexibility into modified experiential learning.

You are invited to our 2006 Summer Faculty Development Conference

All faculty are invited to attend sessions in the 2006 Summer Conference on May 1-4. Please feel free to come to any and all sessions which interest you—no registration is required!

Additional details and the list of sessions can be found on our website:
http://www.fctl.ucf.edu/events/summerconference/

Disclaimer: This Course May Disturb You

Barry Mauer

Barry Mauer is an Assistant Professor in English, where, as a generalist, he devotes much of his time to work with Film, Digital Media, Simulation, Drama, and Sociology. His research is aimed at inventing new media practices for the academy and beyond, approached through a program based on grammatology and heuretics.

Some course materials in literature classes can be disturbing; at times students complain that they did not expect to deal with such texts. And they get angry with me. What can I do to help students cope with potentially disturbing material and preserve the goals of the glass?

"Modern Drama as Literature," an online class I will teach for the first time this summer, presents a perfect case. The material in this course might disturb, offend, even traumatize some students, yet it would be irresponsible to ignore the major works in this genre; many of these works were designed to be transgressive; their authors intended to attack cherished beliefs, provoke people, and divide audiences. If we can't learn about such works in a university, where can we learn about them?

The first word in the first play we will be reading is an obscenity. The play, Alfred Jarry's *Ubu Roi*, provoked an uproar when it was first staged in Paris in 1896. Here is an account:

> In attendance were "all the leading in the worlds of politics, journalism and letters." Grémier once again spoke the opening 'Merdre!' ('Shite'). The audience immediately burst out with a roar. Grémier was "unable to get a word in edgewise for the next fifteen minutes" (Lennon, 49). It was the first time that someone had spoken such a word on the modern stage. Gémier tried to silence the audience by blowing a tramway horn (Beaumont, 100). Many people left the theatre. A fight broke out in the orchestra pit, while Jarry's supporters yelled, "You wouldn't have understood Shakespeare or Wagner either!" (Lennon, 48). Others shouted, "Can't you see that the author is taking us for a bunch of damned fools?" (Beaumont, 100). When Grémier had finally gotten slight control of the audience, he spoke the second word—another 'Merdre'. Needless to say, the audience started to howl once more. They shouted at the stage and at each other. When things quieted down again, the play proceeded as planned. Smaller outbursts continued throughout the performance. In the days that followed, the violent battle for and against Ubu Roi would move on into the Parisian press. (http://www.milkmag.org/jarry.htm)

Later playwrights considered the uproar over Jarry's play to be a sign of success worth emulating! These plays, many of which we will read, dramatize sadomasochism, fascism, athe-

ism, and anti-authoritarianism. If my students are provoked and offended by them, then their reactions are understandable.

I asked several colleagues to help me prepare students to deal with this potentially disturbing material. They gave me the following tips:

1. Require all students enrolled in the course to attend a live chat session before we go into any of the course material. The session will include:
   a. A disclaimer stating that some material may disturb, but is included because it is essential to understanding modern drama.
   b. An account of reactions these plays provoked, such as the reception to Ubu Roi described above.
   c. Photographs of the plays in production, showing some of the scenes they will be reading about.
   d. A reminder to students that my assignment of a text does not mean I endorse its message or methods.
   e. A reminder to students that there is not a "proper" response to the plays, and that they will have a chance to argue about their merits or demerits in class assignments and in online discussions.
   f. A note encouraging students to bring their difficulties with the material to my attention.

2. Post the transcript of this session on the course website so that students adding the course during drop/add may see what we did.

I hope the chat session will help students make up their mind about whether the course is right for them. I also hope that it helps prevent situations in which students upset with required course materials blame the instructor. Finally, I hope the chat session prepares students to vent their negative feelings up front so that they might be more receptive to modern drama and the insights it has to offer.

myUCF Grades

We are pleased to announce a new electronic way to report grades to your students called "myUCF Grades." No longer will posting of grades outside classrooms or offices be necessary. Available for all courses beginning Summer 2006, a new pagelet will automatically synchronize with your official class rosters. The Faculty Center will offer workshops and one-on-one consultations on creating and maintaining Excel gradebooks or using the myUCF Grades pagelet for your courses. Faculty Center staff are also available to visit with your department to demonstrate this new way for students to access their grades.

Wikis: Helping One Group At a Time

Matt 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.

Perhaps the single most misunderstood topic of the digital boom centers on the use of wikis. Many cringe at the thought of a student using this technology for research and discount its value because of the popular Web site *Wikipedia*. While I agree that students should not end their research with *Wikipedia*, I do encourage them to use the site as a starting point. Before you get mad, allow me to explain.

According to *Wikipedia*, "wiki," besides being a fun word to say, is Hawaiian for "quick", "fast", or "to hasten." In its simplest form, a wiki is an online collaborative forum that allows any user to be an author and an editor. Though the nature of a wiki allows for documents to be produced quickly, there are questions when it comes to credibility — hence the problem with *Wikipedia*.

When I talk about the use of *Wikipedia* in my lectures, I will actually ask for a random topic and amend one of the entries. For example, if you go to *Wikipedia* and search "Michael Jackson," you will see a hyperlink marked "edit" along the right-hand side. By clicking this hyperlink, I am now becoming a *Wikipedia* author and editor without having to reveal any qualifications or credentials. I then post something ridiculous and opinionated on purpose to show the students the problems that can occur in this environment. Then we laugh and wait for the magic to happen.

The magic is *Wikipedia's* ability to correct entries. IBM has researched how long it takes the web site to correct the information. Their findings indicate that, in most situations, the time is less than five minutes. In my class, I have never had to wait longer than one minute for my ridiculous claim to be changed—perhaps it is because of the outlandish entries.

However, there has been controversy concerning *Wikipedia's* editing system. If you go to *Wikipedia* and search "wiki," under the heading "Vandalism," an addition has been made to the definition that states, "For an alternative view, see the 2005-11-29 *USA Today* editorial by John Seigenthaler entitled "A false *Wikipedia* 'biography'." The article references the false biographical information of John Seigenthaler, Robert Kennedy's administrative assistant in the early 1960s. Feel free to check out the article and remember I stress that this site is a starting point, not ending point, for research.

As you begin to familiarize yourself with *Wikipedia*, you will see that it does allow links to pertinent research at the bottom of every entry. Not only are many of these links authoritative web sites, several are also credible books. In fact, an exercise for your class might be to have students add more authoritative sources to the entry. If anything, this will serve a much larger purpose than just looking at the information provided.

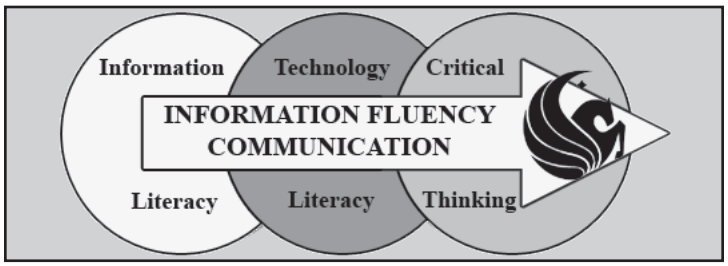
Wikipedia is just one example of how a wiki can be used for public document manifestations. Although the use of *Wikipedia* is debatable, the use of other wikis in the classroom for internal purposes is not. I use the word "internal" because in this environment the wiki is password protected. Using the web site *jot.com*, five students per group can set up their own free wiki for group projects (mainly internal document generation). In this situation, using a wiki alleviates two of the biggest problems with group assignments—time management and accountability.

Time management is a headache for student projects. Not only must students try to find free-time among five different schedules, they often meet to produce a document or PowerPoint presentation, which is highly inefficient. Using a wiki to store, generate, and edit a document for the project will allow the group to meet in a virtual environment. Of course the students will have to meet for an initial meeting to set-up the project outline and to assign tasks, but after that, they can enter the virtual world of wikis and progress on their own timetables.

The problem of accountability is not only a student concern, but a faculty one as well. Too often student projects end up in a "he said, she said" battle, and it becomes a professor's job to decipher the lies and accusations. When using a wiki, entry or change to a document is tracked. If the aforementioned situation occurs, simply ask the students to show how many changes were made to the project throughout the semester and who made them. Problem solved.

I have merely touched the surface as to what a wiki can do for a group project. Wikis eliminate a cluttered email box, and share knowledge among users, all in a safe, password-protected environment. Once you head over to jot.com and sign up for a free account, you can walk through their tutorial and begin setting up your own pages. In fact, if you are participating in any group research, you can use a wiki to manage the project. With a little fiddling, you could be well on your way to participating in the often misunderstood digital era.

Quality Enhancement Plan: Information Fluency



Learning from Each Other

Alice Noblin

Alice Noblin is an Instructor in the Health Information Management program. She completed her MBA at Georgia State University. She joined the faculty as an adjunct in 2001, and became a full time faculty member in 2004.

In the Spring of 2005, I developed HIM 3116, a health information management course which covers a broad range of unrelated topics. It is a mixed-mode course which must also accommodate distance learners. My first goal was to reorganize the information in this course. Instead of the seven original modules, which were redundant and overlapping, I divided the information into four major topics. Course Development and Web Services added the four new topics as buttons on the homepage. The semester will be split up to cover these four topics. Each topic contains links to course content. I will also redo/develop the course objectives to match these four major topics, with the plan being to streamline to 12 or fewer objectives for the course (from the original 25 objectives). In the process of this "chunking," I am able to see immediately where course content and assignments are needed.

The Joint Commission on the Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO) is a major accrediting body for hospitals. In Spring, 2005, I dusted off a JCAHO project which was well received by the students as I wanted to continue this project with improvements. The JCAHO regulations change yearly and therefore updating the project is important to maximize the learning outcomes. I prepared a detailed rubric which should be useful even as the assignment is adjusted each year. This project was incorporated in the critical thinking and communication areas of the Academic Learning Compacts (ALC) for Health Information Management, and the point value for the project was increased. I received guidance from local employers and incorporated their suggestions into the project as well.

Healthcare statistics are covered in this course as one of the four "chunks." Dr. Debbie Hahs-Vaughn has successfully used Camtasia (a program to capture screen clicks as video) to explain statistics concepts in EDF 6401. In conjunction with CDWS, I incorporated similar technology into my course. This required PowerPoint presentations to describe the concepts with accompanying audio. CDWS requires a Word document of the script for closed captioning in the event of an audio-impaired student in the course. The statistics workbook has 12 chapters, 8 of which I chose to prepare in this manner. I feel this will be of great benefit to the distance learners in the course as well as reinforcement for those participating in the face to face portion of the class.

A third "chunk" covers the State of Florida, including hospital licensure requirements, the Florida Legal Guide, and information about vital statistics, specifically birth certificates. In Spring, 2005, a guest speaker from the State told the students about the importance of the birth certificate reporting process for vital statistics. This presentation was taped by CDWS and the speaker provided me with an electronic copy of his PowerPoint presentation. To add streaming video to a course, the audio must be scripted and closed captioning provided, as mentioned above, for audio-impaired students. The result is that we will have the guest speaker introducing the topic, and on selected PowerPoint slides the students will hear the speaker give additional information.

The final chunk is "Medicare," which admittedly is a work in progress. Conditions of Participation provide an agreement between healthcare providers and Medicare for reimbursement. Prospective payment systems will also be included.

In the past, the Health Information Management program, which is a limited access program, consisted of only face-to-face courses in a lock-step progression. Currently about 75% of our coursework is online. This has caused fragmenting and lack of cohesion. The first step to correct this is increased interaction during the on-campus courses. For the distance learners, I will use private discussion board assignments requiring interaction among those students. The program director and I feel strongly that this networking will benefit the HIM students while here at UCF, and as they enter the work force.

The "New Learning Paradigm": Learner-Centered Instruction

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Originally published in the* On Course *newsletter, February 2006

In the mid-1990s, clarion calls were sounded for a "paradigm shift" in undergraduate education from traditional methods of instruction, which have focused on the teacher's behavior and the teaching process, to a "new learning paradigm" that focuses on the learner's behavior and the learning process (American College Personnel Association, 1994; Angelo, 1997; Barr & Tagg, 1995). This shift is well illustrated by comparing the themes of two national conferences organized by the once-influential American Association of Higher Education (AAHE). In 1986, its national conference theme was, "Taking Teaching Seriously"; in 1998, it became, "Taking Learning Seriously" (1998). This teaching-versus-learning distinction is more than a matter of semantics. The new learning paradigm suggests a new starting point for improving undergraduate education that begins with a focus on the learner and what the learner is doing, rather than focusing on what the instructor is doing (and covering) in the classroom. In the learner-centered paradigm, the definition and goal of effective teaching is facilitating student learning and, ultimately, promoting positive learning outcomes.

Among the major implications of the new learning paradigm for college instructors and student support-service providers are the following "shifts" in educational philosophy and practice.

1. Instruction becomes less teacher-centered and content-driven, and more learner-centered and learning process-driven. For example, instead of having students receive information-loaded lectures devoted exclusively to the coverage of course content, learner-centered instruction would involve engaging students in learning experiences that are designed not only to enable them to learn content, but also to learn process—the process of "learning how to learn" and developing "lifelong learning" skills.

2. The student's role changes from that of being passive recipient or receptacle of information to that of engaged learner and active agent in the learning process. Classroom teaching methods may be conceptualized as ranging along a continuum from instructor-centered to learner-centered. Extreme, instructor-centered teaching is best illustrated by the uninterrupted, formal lecture whereby the instructor does virtually all the talking and is in complete control of the class agenda. In contrast, learner-centered classroom instruction involves less instructor domination and shifts more communication, control, and responsibility to the students.

3. The instructor's role expands from that of a knowledge-laden professor who professes truths and disseminates factual information, to that of being a learning mediator or facilitator who assumes the following roles: (a) educational architect—designing learning tasks and creating conditions that are conducive to optimal learning; (b) educational consultant/facilitator—serving as an experienced coach/guide during the learning process; and (c) educational assessor—evaluating learning outcomes and using this assessment information as feedback to improve the teaching-learning process.

In the learner-centered paradigm, students would spend less time being "instructed" (lectured to or at) and more time engaging in learning activities that have them actually do something other than the rote recording of lecture notes. Lest we forget, the lecture method still remains the dominant pedagogical strategy used in higher education, showing remarkably little change in its frequency of use over several decades (Bligh, 2000; Bowles, 1982; Costin, 1972; Marris, 1964; Nance & Nance, 1990). Arguably the major force propelling the movement toward learner-centered pedagogy in higher education is the well-documented ineffectiveness of the lecture method for promoting higher learning outcomes.

The Need for Learner-Centered Alternatives to the Lecture Method

Research suggests that college instructors have a tendency to overestimate their students' level of cognitive involvement in

the classroom. For example, Fassinger (1996) surveyed more than 1,000 students in over 50 classes from a wide range of disciplines that met at the same time period; she discovered that students perceive themselves as less involved in the classroom than faculty perceive them to be. While we would like to think that students are engaging in reflective thinking while taking lecture notes, research demonstrating that student note-taking during lectures is often performed in a reflexive, mindless manner. Prolonged performance on a passive, repetitive task (such as continuous note-taking) eventually results in that task being assumed by lower centers of the brain that control automatic behavior, with limited involvement of higher (cortical) areas of the brain responsible for higher-level thinking (Bligh, 2000; Mackworth, 1970). This finding is captured anecdotally in the old saying, "During lectures, information passes from the lecturer's notes to the students' notes and through the minds of neither") Roland Christensen (1982), an originator and long-time advocate of learning through the case method (case studies), once noted that traditional lecturing is "like dropping ideas into the letter box of the subconscious. You know when they are posted, but you never know when they will be received or in what form" (p. xiv).

It may be that listening attentively to lectures for prolonged periods of time is simply not something that the human brain is particularly well equipped to do.

In studies of student behavior in undergraduate classrooms, it has been found that about half of the time during lectures, students are thinking about things unrelated to the lecture content (and up to 15% of their class time is spent "fantasizing") (Milton, Polio, & Eison, 1986). Student attention and concentration tend to drop off dramatically after 10-20 minutes of continuous instructor discourse (Penner, 1984; Verner and Dickinson, 1967). However, it is important to note that this attention "drift" during lectures also occurs among students in graduate and professional school (Stuart and Rutheford, 1978) and among learning-oriented (vs. grade-oriented) undergraduate students (Milton, Pollio, & Eison, 1986). Thus, attention loss during lectures cannot be dismissed as a student problem, such as lack of motivation, lack of effort, or an outbreak of attention deficit disorder among today's youth; instead, the problem seems to lie with the lecture method itself.

It may be that listening attentively to lectures for prolonged periods of time is simply not something that the human brain is particularly well equipped to do. In fact, some neurobiologists have argued that our brains may not be neurologically wired to process information for prolonged periods of time because it was more adaptive for our early ancestors to have shorter attention spans, which enabled them to react quickly to a predator or prey and then shift their attention to the next life-preserving priority (LaBerge, 1995; Sylwester, 1996). This suggests that the human brain processes new information more effectively in shorter, focused sessions (lasting no longer than 15 minutes), followed by opportunities to "act" on that information via activities that involve personal engagement and reflection (Jensen, 1998).

Even if students miraculously managed to maintain attention and concentration throughout a typical 50-minute lecture, research strongly suggests that important educational outcomes, such as higher-level thinking and attitude change, are less likely to take place when students listen to lectures than when they engage in more active forms of learning (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991; 2005). For instance, McKeachie et al. (1986) conducted an extensive review of the research literature on college teaching methods and concluded: "If we want students to become more effective in meaningful learning and thinking, they need to spend more time in active, meaningful learning and thinking—not just sitting and passively receiving information" (p. 77). Bonwell and Eison (1991) reached a similar conclusion following their review of the research literature: "The evidence suggests that if an instructor's goals are not only to impart information but also to develop cognitive skills and to change attitudes, then alternative teaching strategies should be interwoven with the lecture method during classroom presentations" (p. 10). More recently, Bligh (2000) concluded his extensive research review with this recommendation: "Use lectures to teach information. Do not rely on them to promote thought, change attitudes, or develop behavioral skills if you can help it" (p. 20).

Implications for First-Year Students

A substantial number of subscribers to this newsletter have professional responsibilities that involve the education and retention of first-year students. For these professionals, and the new students they work with, the implications of the foregoing research become even more significant when they are viewed in light of recent findings relating specifically to first-year students.

Students are entering college today with substantially higher self-reported levels of academic disengagement in high school—they more frequently report "feeling bored" in class, missing class, and spending less time on their studies outside of class (Astin, et al., 1997; Sax, et al., 2005). These characteristics apparently carry over to the first year of college, as evidenced by a national survey of first-year educators who were asked to rank 18 different factors in terms of their "level of impact" on first-year students' academic performance. These educators ranked "lack of [student] motivation" as the number-one factor (Policy Center on the First Year of College, 2003).

Admitting new students to college who report experiencing increasingly lower levels of academic engagement and higher levels of academic boredom in high school, and then immediately immersing these neophytes in lecture-driven introductory courses, appears to be the ideal formula for perpetuating their pre-existing levels of academic disengagement, passivity, and boredom. In his book, *Rejuvenating Introductory Courses*, Kenneth Spear artfully expresses the potentially danger-

ous consequence of subjecting new students to "disengaging" pedagogy: "In these formative experiences, [students] learn what it is to be a student, what is required to get by. If students are taught to be passive seekers and transcribers of information, that is what they become. Further, they set their sights accordingly in subsequent courses, often actively resisting our attempts in upper-division courses to get them to go beyond the information we give them" (1984, pp. 6-7).

These results are consistent with those generated by the Policy Center on the First Year of College, based on survey data collected from more than 60 postsecondary institutions and over 30,000 students. This national survey revealed that use of "engaging pedagogy" (for example, class discussions and group work) was positively associated with student satisfaction and self-reported learning outcomes in first year seminars (Swing, 2002). Similar findings emerge from research conducted by the Higher Education Research Institute on first-year courses in general. Based on data gathered from almost 25,000 students at 110 institutions, it was found that the pedagogical practices most strongly associated with first-year students' satisfaction with the overall quality of instruction at their college were teaching practices that emphasized involvement with peers, faculty, and the course itself (Keup & Sax, 2002).

Conclusion

The research reviewed in this article provides consistent evidence that the lecture method, which continues to be the dominant instructional strategy in college classrooms, is not the optimal vehicle for promoting student learning, particularly learning that involves higher-level thinking and attitudinal change.

My motive for presenting this research was not to imply that lecturing (instructor-delivered information) should be totally dismissed, displaced or replaced. Higher education should still be a place where knowledgeable, learned professionals are able to share their knowledge and model thinking processes that their students can emulate. However, the research reviewed here strongly suggests that the lecture method needs to be augmented, complemented, and punctuated by learner-centered strategies that empower students to take a more active and responsible role in the learning process.

It is beyond the scope of this article to identify and review specific, learner-centered alternatives to the lecture method. Contributors to this newsletter have already shared many inventive, practical alternatives to the lecture method. I would argue that all effective, learner-centered teaching strategies implement one or more of the following four, research-based learning principles.

1. Active Involvement—learning becomes deeper and more durable when students become actively engaged in the learning process, i.e., they spend more time "on task" and invest a higher level mental energy in that task (Astin, 1984, 1985a, 1985b, 1993; Kuh, 1991, 2001a, 2001b; National Institute of Education, 1984; Pace, 1984, 1990; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991, 2005).

2. Social Integration—learning is strengthened through student-instructor and student-student (peer) interaction and collaboration (Astin, 1993; Bruffee, 1993; Johnson, Johnson, & Smith, 1998; Slavin, 1996; Tinto, 1987, 1993).

3. Self-Reflection—learning is deepened when students "step back" and reflect on their learning strategies (i.e., engage in "meta-cognition"); and when students reflect on their learning experiences—transforming these experiences into a form that makes sense or has personal meaning to them ("elaboration")—enabling them to build relevant conceptual connections between what they are trying to learn and what they have already know (i.e., knowledge is personally "constructed") (Flavell, 1985; Joint Task Force on Student Learning, 1998; Piaget, 1972; Vygotsky, 1978; Weinstein & Meyer, 1991).

4. Personal Validation—learning is enhanced when students feel personally significant, i.e., when they feel recognized as individuals and sense that they matter to their instructor and their classmates (Rendon, 1994; Rendon & Garza, 1996; Schlossberg, Lynch, Chickering, 1989).

When learner-centered teaching strategies effectively implement these principles, they can be expected to exert simultaneous and synergistic effects on student learning, student motivation, and student retention.

Editor's Note:
A list of works cited in this article can be found on the Faculty Center Web site: http://www.fctl.ucf.edu/publications/focus/

Teaching and Learning Conferences

The Teaching Professor Conference 2006
May 19-21, 2006
Nashville, TN
http://www.teachingprofessor.com/2006_Conference/index.html

EduCause Southeastern Regional Conference
June 19-21, 2006
Atlanta, Georgia
http://www.educause.edu/SoutheastRegionalConference/1338

National Education Association(NEA) Annual Meeting
June 30-July 5, 2006
Orlando, Florida
http://www.nea.org/annualmeeting/futuremeetings.html

Professional and Organizational Development Network in Higher Education (POD)
October 25-29, 2006
Portland, Oregon
http://www.podnetwork.org/conferences.htm

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