

Getting Started: Idea Book on Pedagogy for New Faculty



Faculty Teaching Excellence Program

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO **BOULDER**

Office of Academic Affairs

Getting Started: Idea Book on Pedagogy for New Faculty

**Faculty Teaching Excellence Program
Office of Academic Affairs
University of Colorado at Boulder**

Contents

Foreword

Page

Remarks of Mary Ann Shea, Director, Faculty Teaching Excellence Program	iv
---	----

Section One: Teaching Strategies

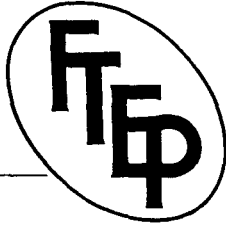
Student Feedback	1
Cognitive Development: The Work of William Perry	3
Women's Ways of Knowing	4
The Teaching Portfolio	5
The First Years of Teaching	7

Section Two: Essays on Teaching and Learning

Aloof Professors and Shy Students	10
Patricia Limerick, History	
Teaching the Thundering Herd: Surviving in a Large Classroom	16
Charles R. Middleton	
Active Learning in the University: An Inquiry into Inquiry	22
Marty Bickman, English	
Facilitating Discussion	39
R.G. Billingsley, English	
Professors, Students, and the Syllabus	46
Sharon Rubin, University of Maryland	
Quick Starters: New Faculty Who Succeed	48
Robert Boice, SUNY/Stony Brook	
Fostering Diversity in the Classroom: Teaching by Discussion	54
R.G. Billingsley, English	
Developing and Teaching an Inclusive Curriculum	56
Deborah Flick, Women Studies	
Fostering Diversity in a Medium-Sized Classroom	59
Brenda J. Allen, Communication	
The Influence of Attitudes, Feelings and Behavior toward Diversity on Teaching and Learning	61
Lerita Coleman, Psychology	
The Nature and Problem of Stereotypes	63
William Wei, History	

Section Three: The Faculty Teaching Excellence Program

Goals and Methods of the Faculty Teaching Excellence Program	65
The Five Dimensions of Good Teaching	65
Services to Faculty	66
Faculty Consultation Services	67
Teaching Portfolio Consultation	68
Publications of the Faculty Teaching Excellence Program	68
Research on Teaching	69
Toward Future Excellence	70
Appendix	
Pre-Course Questionnaire	71
Post-Course Questionnaire	72
References	73



Dear Professor:

This idea book on pedagogy was written as the University of Colorado at Boulder, Faculty Teaching Excellence Program becomes five years old and consequently grows and develops out of its infancy. Subsequent to this event, I believe that we can begin new emphases in teaching and learning in the Program.

One of those new emphases is a program for and support to new professors in becoming a teacher.

If it is true that good teaching is a process, and if it is true that good teaching is a combination of skill, talent and acumen exhibited by passion for learning and knowledge, then I believe that your reading of this book will provide occasion for inspiration and concrete teaching tips. But most important I hope your reading of the book becomes the topic of conversations about teaching with your new colleagues both in your own department as well as across the University communities. I hope also that two very important things will become a part of your lives in the University: one is that you will develop a community of faculty members who begin with you to share a passion for teaching and the scholarship of teaching; and, the second is your quick development of confidence in being a teacher of our students.

I believe that your efforts in the art and craft of being a teacher are now and will continue throughout your lives in academe to be effective and that you will teach not only well but proudly.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, which reads 'Mary Ann Shea'.

Mary Ann Shea, Director
Faculty Teaching Excellence Program

Section One: Teaching Strategies

Student Feedback

Obtaining written feedback on your teaching from students is simply a formalization of a process that occurs frequently on an informal basis while you are teaching. Most instructors find that it becomes second nature for them to look for clues to student reactions by scanning faces for signs of comprehension or satisfaction, boredom or puzzlement. Yet not many people can read faces as well as they would like, and not all faces are transparent enough to indicate what the students are thinking.

Formal written feedback instruments tend to produce more penetrating and valuable results than informal methods such as reading faces. Written forms provide a means of expressing a reaction to teaching to normally silent voices: shy students who are hesitant to speak out in class, students who fear retribution if their observations are misconstrued, and students who are hesitant about making positive and realistic proposals for improving the course.

Each of the feedback instruments described below has its own distinct advantages and uses. Pre-course questionnaires give an early profile of students, thus influencing some of the choices we will make during the semester. Mid-course questionnaires ask students to judge the experiences they are having so that mid-stream changes can be made. End-of-course questionnaires ask our students how the course could be improved for the next time around.

You can custom tailor all of these feedback devices to suit the particular parameters of a course. In addition, the results are destined for your eyes only, so you can feel comfortable in administering them.

Finally, in Section Three of this Guide other useful feedback devices are described—the 37-Item Survey, the Student Group Interview, classroom observation and class videotaping. These instruments, administered by the Faculty Teaching Excellence Program directly, will provide valuable information on the effectiveness of your teaching in addition to helping you discover ways to maximize your methods. Please contact us if you would like to try any of these feedback methods.

Feedback Instruments

Pre-course Questionnaire: Understanding the demographics of the group you will be working with can be helpful in making choices of teaching strategies. The strengths and weaknesses of the class can be estimated by giving them a pre-course questionnaire. Responding to the questions will also assist your students in focusing on the course and in seeing how it fits into their long-range goals.

To give a pre-course questionnaire, either prepare a form or ask the students to list and answer the following items on a sheet of paper: their current major, career goals, previous courses in the discipline, why they are taking the course, and what they hope to learn in the course. Have them put a phone number on the sheet as well so that you can contact them in case of a prolonged absence from class. (A sample Pre-Course Questionnaire is provided as an Appendix at the end of this Guide.)

The One-Minute Paper: This is a brief and anonymous feedback instrument given randomly during the semester. The One-Minute Paper can be administered one or more times during the semester at the end of any class when you are in need of feedback. It supplies you with both a local response to that day's class and a general picture of how students are responding to the course.

For the One-Minute Paper, simply dictate these two questions to your students:

- What is the most significant information you have learned from today's lecture?
- What question is uppermost in your mind from today's lecture?

The Mid-course Questionnaire: This is a midterm or in-progress evaluation that provides immediate feedback to both teacher and students, facilitating change in the classroom during the current term. You can conduct midterm evaluations in the middle of the semester or any time you would like feedback during the semester (for example, just after giving an exam).

Three questions that can be asked on a mid-course questionnaire are:

- What are the strengths of this course?
- What are its weaknesses?
- How many times have you been absent?
-

In order for midterm evaluations to be effective, you should stress to the students the importance of specific feedback. If you have been trying a new technique—such as small group discussions, ask them their response to it and how it might be improved. If you are in need of reassurance, you can ask them to note what they like about your class.

Mid-course feedback should be treated as a protective mechanism, designed to prevent the prolongation and escalation of latent problems. It has the potential to help you transform an inefficient teaching-learning situation into a pleasurable and profitable one before the end of the semester.

End-of-course Questionnaire: This is an instructor-developed supplement to the feedback received from the FCQ. It allows you to ask questions that are individually tailored to your course and gives you information for your exclusive use for course improvement.

Factual areas queried through this questionnaire might include:

- year of the student, gender, major, GPA
- credit hours of course load this semester
- reason for taking the course
- primary goal in taking the course
- self-estimated grade
- number of hours studied per week
- percentage of assigned work/reading done
- number of times absent from class
- number of times met with instructor outside class
-

You can add open-ended questions, asking for student opinions of the textbooks, assignments, and exams. Other items can query what they thought of your teaching methods, asking for their opinions of:

- the effectiveness of your presentations
- how well you handled specific aspects of the course
 - (such as class discussions)
- your performance as a class manager
-

Of course, it is better not to wait until the last week of classes to request student feedback; try using the End-of-course Questionnaire in addition to the methods mentioned above. Multiple checks during the semester will give you an indication of how the course developed. (A sample End-of-Course Questionnaire is provided as an Appendix at the end of this Guide.)

Here are a few points to consider when using any method of informal evaluation by students for feedback and improvement purposes:

- You can explain that the goal of in-progress evaluation is to improve your own teaching effectiveness and to monitor students' satisfaction with the course.
- Students' feedback must be anonymous and the process will be nonpunitive.
- The use of the results should be made clear before the evaluation begins.

Using Feedback

An oft-repeated truism concerning teaching states that good teaching is not something we are all born with, but is rather a learned skill. We can infer from this statement that the conscientious teacher is constantly learning and implementing improvements to his or her craft. What you

learn about teaching and what you change in your own methods need not always be very major in order to be effective; sometimes feedback can reassure you that you have made choices of materials and methods that are producing good results.

Obtaining feedback is relatively easy; putting the feedback to good use requires reflection on what you are doing—and sometimes courage as well. Here are three case studies illustrating the incorporation of student feedback into teaching:

1. Teacher X (Philosophy Department) discovers from giving a pre-course questionnaire that many of the students in her survey class are non-majors who have little or no previous exposure to philosophical theory. In the first weeks of the course, therefore, she makes a point of explaining both basic theories and the terminology needed to discuss them. The students seem to appreciate being given this grounding in the discipline.
2. Teacher Y (Mathematics), who has taught an introductory calculus course several times is disappointed that the first mid-term exam yielded grades that were much lower than usual. At the next class meeting he administers the mid-course questionnaire described above. From this he discovers that students are having trouble understanding the new textbook that he thought was excellent. He develops a series of handouts addressing areas where the text is most vague and makes a point of elaborating these points during lectures. Student grades show a measurable improvement on the next exam.
3. Teacher Z (Anthropology) is preparing to wrap up his course in physical anthropology with a review session to prepare students for the final exam. It is the first time that he has taught the course and being curious about student reactions to it he decides to give an end-of-course questionnaire. From the student replies he gets some quick ideas for improving the course that he will be teaching again the following semester. He decides to reduce the number of quizzes, drop a supplementary text, increase the small group work, and add an extra research project for next semester.

When written feedback is not enough, there are other avenues that can be tried to get outside input on teaching. Through its collaborative consultation service, the Faculty Teaching Excellence Program works with individual professors to address their individual concerns and to help them hone their personal teaching styles. The Program makes available research on teaching and learning and provides references to teaching methodologies and strategies, that assist faculty in choosing from a variety of pedagogy. Please see Section Three of this Guide for more details.

Cognitive Development: The Work of William Perry

After a short time in the classroom, most instructors realize that the traditional college year designations do not demarcate increasing sophistication of thought. That is, not all sophomores are better thinkers than freshmen. William G. Perry, a pioneer in the study of cognitive development in university students, has elaborated a very detailed scheme of how students' intellectual capacities evolve during their years in college. According to Perry's scheme, students typically pass through four levels of development:

- **dualism:** only black and white is recognized in the world of ideas with the learners task being to discover the truth
- **multiplicity:** diverse opinions and values are tolerated but only in areas where the right answers are not yet known
- **relativity:** contextual relativists realize that ideas need to be judged differently according to the contexts in which they occur
- **commitment in relativism:** choice of a career and set of values, coupled with attempt to reach equilibrium in one's internal personal conflict of ideas

Perry admits that actual growth is neither as clear cut nor as linear as his model would suggest: "We turn and turn again, and when we come across our own footsteps we hope it will be with the perspective of some altitude and humor" (Perry 1985). Still many of his observations have practical applications. They explain somewhat inconsistent student behavior, can help instructors compensate for student deficiencies, and provide strategies for aiding their intellectual growth.

Perry structured his synthesis of learning development by ranking cognitive growth in order of a person's increasing ability to comprehend and handle complexity of thought. His progression proceeds through nine levels from the elementary gatherer of facts to the sophisticated and discriminating scholar. In an ideal academic situation, first-year students would be at the bottom of the scale with recent graduates most advanced. However, real world growth is far less predictable. In terms of epistemology, Perry's scheme follows this progression (again in ascending order of sophistication):

- **What to learn:** knowledge is a collection of facts; the student is a passive receptor of facts.
- **How to learn:** knowledge is right or wrong; the student begins to compare and contrast ideas.
- **How to think:** knowledge can be defined only subjectively; the student begins to think independently.

- **How to judge:** knowledge is contextual and can be judged qualitatively.

Here are some effects on the characteristics of teaching used to reach students as they progress along the path of development outlined by Perry. As their intellectual sophistication increases—

- their need for tight structure decreases
- the instructor's role switches from the initiator of thought and source of truth to a resource person expert in the field
- the amount of vicarious (non-concrete) learning increases
- the complexity of learning tasks increases
- the language in which the teaching is couched becomes less absolute and more qualified

One of the values of Perry's scheme is that it helps explain some of the difficulties your students are experiencing in class. It is quite common in a large research university to have all possible levels of development present in the classroom simultaneously. An unfortunate conundrum resulting from this mixture of levels is that it may be impossible to match the instructional process to the students' capacity. Thus, while some topics may be well over the heads of less-developed students, lowering your expectations to suit this deficiency will be sure to bore more highly developed members of the class. You can help students to recognize and develop their intellectual capacities by trying some of these methods.

- Encourage lower-level thinkers in their struggle to adapt and grow.
- Be supportive by providing a clear context when introducing and explaining topics.
- Provide clear and written guidelines and directions for assignments.
- Sequence presentation of material so that increasingly complex issues are discussed.
- Reinforce the belief that alternative views are legitimate.
- Encourage students to develop and express their own viewpoints, especially by fostering risk-taking and classroom interaction.
- Ask open-ended questions.
- Demonstrate how to critique a theory or hypothesis.
- Require students to defend their ideas and analyses.
- Focus explicitly on the nature of knowledge in the discipline

More generally, you can assist students in their personal growth by leading them along the developmental path, aiding them, for example, to abandon a dualistic view of knowledge and advance towards a realization of its

multiplicity. You cannot expect a noticeable change in every student during a single semester-long course, but you can welcome change when it does occur and call it to the student's attention.

Finally, William Perry himself has pointed out the importance of cognitive development to all college teachers in these words: "Faculty development begins with an understanding of student development: students are our common purpose."

Women's Ways of Knowing

The above heading is taken from the book of the same name (Belenky et al. 1986) that supplements and adjusts Perry's work on cognitive development (see above Section 3.4). This is a necessary study, the authors of *Women's Ways* argue, because when Perry did his groundbreaking study at Harvard he focused on men's narratives and men's patterns. However, Mary Belenky and her colleagues argue, Perry's investigation "was poorly designed to uncover those themes that might be more prominent among women." Using the same method as Perry did—conducting lengthy interviews with students—Belenky et al. accumulated over 5000 pages of transcribed text for their study.

The results of this study are probably not surprising. Women tend to be less argumentative, less forceful in holding to one viewpoint, do not seek a standard view, are able to sympathize with conflicting views, and are less objective and more subjective in their approach to knowing.

What Belenky et al. also discovered was a pattern of intellectual development in which the women students they interviewed tended to treat learning and knowing as oriented to their own lives and experiences in a stronger way than is indicated in the lives of the men that Perry interviewed. However, they refused to extend their findings to all women and posit a definite split dividing women's thinking and men's thinking. Indeed, they traced a pattern of cognitive development in the women students they interviewed that was similar, but not identical, to Perry's stages:

- 1. received knowledge:** At this stage, the student, relying on authorities, believes that there always is a right answer and an external truth outside herself.
- 2. subjective knowledge:** Here the student regards truth as being personal and internal, deriving from her own experience that she carries with her in the form of intuition. She tends to make judgments in terms of feelings.
- 3. procedural knowledge:** Blythe Clinchy, an associate in the study, has written (1990) that "much of my own teaching is devoted to helping students reach this position," which is the key stage in learning at the

college level. The study of women's cognition has distinguished two main approaches to knowing at the procedural knowledge level: separate knowing and connected knowing. They credit Carol Gilligan (1982) with first using the terms "separate" and "connected" in describing two observed conceptions of the self. The predominant characteristics of each of these epistemologies are as follows:

- a. separate knowing:** the epistemology that has prevailed on American campuses throughout this century, adversarial, argumentation is the "primary mode of discourse," fostered in many classrooms where discussion is based on disagreement, playing "the doubting game," aiming to be "dispassionate, unbiased observers," emotion is outlawed, the text is an object ("it"), evaluation as a goal, the voice is argument.
- b. connected knowing:** the thought process that has long been considered to be unproductive in the academy, suspending disbelief, trying to understand other points of view, learning by being connected knowers not separate entities, "playing the believing game," emotion joined with reason, the text is a person ("thou"), understanding as a goal, the voice is a narrative voice.

The practitioner of separate knowing speaks in the male, patriarchal voice and tends to be suspicious and disrespectful of the connected, female voice. However, Clinchy stresses she and her colleagues consider these two disparate models of thought to be gender-related but not gender-exclusive. There are many men, she says, who are connected knowers and many women who are separate knowers.

- 4. constructed knowledge:** This is the integrated position that we hope all of our students can attain: the higher cognitive state when the two positions represented by separate knowing and connected knowing can be unified. This, according to Belenky and her colleagues, is the stage when women realize that "All knowledge is constructed, and the knower is an intimate part of the known." This stage is roughly similar to Perry's areas of contextual knowing.

The impact of this study of women's knowing on teaching is most keenly felt in classroom communications. If the classroom environment encourages students to attack theories, attack authors, and attack each other, only the separate knowers are being catered to. The silence of so many women students in such a situation is no surprise. They are reluctant to speak not because of any overt sexism on the part of the instructor, but because the classroom atmosphere of challenge and objectivity carries a negative charge for them.

On the other hand, a setting in which credence and understanding are extended to both kinds of knowing will allow more voices to be heard, thus broadening the educational experience of the group as a whole. To reach this ideal, you may need to adjust your view of discussion in the classroom from one in which participants wait to take the floor and present their opinion to one in which collaboration and group achievement is sought. Similarly, by encouraging students to view knowledge not as a body of objective facts, but as a group event in which we all participate as knowers, you will be facilitating your students' attainment of the constructed knowledge position.

Catherine Krupnick (Psychology and Social Relations, Harvard University) has studied teacher/student interaction at length through videotapes of classes at Harvard (Krupnick 1985). She concludes that generally male students speak more often in class than females and that this tendency increases in classes where the instructor is male. Confirming the conclusions of Belenky and associates is Krupnick's observation that men talk in longer, more organized speeches while women cluster their discussion contributions in overlapping supportive bursts with frequent interruptions by other women.

To foster equal gender representation in classroom discussions, Krupnick makes the following suggestions:

- Ask men and women students the same kinds of questions without reserving abstract questions or factual questions or difficult questions for one gender.
- Sequence participants' responses, so that neither gender has a monopoly.
- Protect speakers from interruptions.
- Intervene when rapid-fire comments prevent students from completing their contributions.

These and similar tactics, Krupnick believes, will "prevent inadvertent discrimination against women," by giving every student a fair chance to speak.

Eliciting and reacting to student papers and projects is a second area in which this separate/connected knowing dichotomy can inform teaching. While we want all students to consider our disciplines critically, what does that discipline gain if we ask our students to adopt an emotionless and adversarial position to be original or significant? Instead of demanding that our students destroy in order to create, you can emphasize the need to "stand on the shoulders of giants," to build on the work of others, to be collaborative learners.

The study of women's ways of knowing makes it clear that you can neither reduce all of the thought processes of your students to one way of thinking nor neatly separate men and women students according to their attitude toward knowledge. Tolerance, therefore, needs to be extended throughout the university by faculty, and the

practice of tolerance by your students should be encouraged.

The Teaching Portfolio: What Is Its Purpose?

In recent years there has been a steady call from the ranks of teaching professors to have teaching considered as roughly equal to research in promotion and tenure decisions. At the same time, on an increasing number of college campuses nationwide, administrators at the departmental and dean levels have concluded that student evaluations of teaching should not be the exclusive indicators of the quality of teaching. The continuing problem is exacerbated because research is widely perceived as quantifiable while teaching is not. This impasse has led to the demand for more documentation of teaching performance. A collection of teaching documentation called the teaching portfolio is now widely used to supply this information.

The teaching portfolio is a personal dossier of documents recording teaching performance that is compiled by a faculty member who wishes to join a growing trend toward documentation and recognition of the act of teaching. The portfolio serves three basic purposes:

1. It is an administrative instrument containing documentary evidence of teaching accomplishments. When personnel decisions are being made, committee members have before them a clear record of classroom performance. The portfolio is not an attempt to quantify teaching, but it does render teaching accomplishments both comparable and related to standards.
2. It is a means of improving the quality of teaching and, as such, is of value to both university administrators and faculty members. Chairs can be assured that members of their department are encouraged by the very process of creating a portfolio to reflect on and improve their teaching. Faculty members will be able to track their progress as teachers.
3. It is a means by which faculty members gain confidence in their teaching. By preparing a portfolio they see how their teaching has progressed with time. They are also pleased to have a forum in which to exhibit their efforts towards course development, problem solving, and innovation.

Thus, not only is the teaching portfolio being used in making personnel decisions on our campus, but it is also an extremely valuable tool in the self-evaluation and self-improvement of teaching.

What Is a Teaching Portfolio?

One of the leading proponents of the teaching portfolio in the U.S. today is Peter Seldin (Management, Pace University). Seldin proposed the portfolio as a significant document in his book *How Administrators Can Improve Teaching*, (1990) from which the following description is taken:

What is a teaching portfolio? It is a bringing together of a professor's most important teaching strengths and accomplishments. It houses in one place the scope and quality of a professor's teaching performance. The portfolio is to teaching what lists of publications, grants, and honors are to research and scholarship. It can be used to provide specific data about teaching effectiveness to those who judge performance or as a springboard for self-improvement. The purpose for which the portfolio is to be used determines what is included and how it is presented.

Seldin has also published a general guide titled *The Teaching Portfolio* (1991) that contains tips and samples to assist any faculty wishing in creating an individual portfolio.

Creating a Teaching Portfolio

The teaching portfolio can be a powerful tool for the college professor. The moment that you begin to create your own teaching portfolio you can take ownership for your teaching. The portfolio helps to refigure teaching as a complex set of actions based on choices made by you. This independence extends to the creation of the teaching portfolio, for in this document you have total responsibility for authorship. You choose what goes into the portfolio and what does not. You interpret your teaching experience yourself by describing your work in the personal narrative that is the center piece of the dossier.

Creating a teaching portfolio for the purpose of improving teaching will prompt you to act reflectively in your career development. The goal of looking back and creating a teaching portfolio is not a reconstructed or amended past, but a fresh start toward progressive improvement and achievement in teaching.

The Contents of a Teaching Portfolio

It is clear from our experience that a good deal of latitude is needed in the structure and content of a teaching portfolio to allow for differences in departmental requirements and faculty experience as well as to permit a certain degree of individuality in the final product. Generally speaking, the contents of a portfolio consist of many of the following components, which are listed under the three headings provided by Seldin:

A. Material from Oneself:

- A fairly lengthy personal narrative detailing the nature of your teaching responsibilities and courses taught, a description of methods used in teaching these courses, and an explanation of teaching philosophy, strategies, and objectives.
- Representative course syllabi and reading lists.
- Examples of course and curricular development, including innovative projects, assignments, and tests and quizzes.
- Steps that have been taken to improve your teaching (e.g., participation in programs of the Faculty Teaching Excellence Program).

B. Material from Others:

- Reports of student evaluations (FCQs).
- Statements by colleagues who have observed you teaching or who have examined syllabi, reading lists and course materials you have developed.
- Videotape showing you teaching a typical class period.
- Statement by the Chair assessing your past, present, and future teaching contribution within the department.

C. The Products of Good Teaching:

- Essays, creative work, field-work reports, lab workbooks, and student publications resulting from course work.
- Copies of representative student work (essays, reports, or term papers) showing grades assigned and comments.
- Student scores on standardized tests, before and after the course.

The overall tone of the teaching portfolio should be one of pride (toward your progress and achievements) tinged with modesty (reflecting the improvements you feel still need to be made) concerning your teaching. Seldin (1991) advises faculty to curb any temptation to inflate or exaggerate their performance when compiling a teaching portfolio:

All college professors have seen poor student work dressed in fancy covers. The point of the teaching portfolio is not a fancy cover. Instead, it is a careful, thoughtful compilation of documents and materials that make the best case for the professor's teaching effectiveness.

Reflecting on your teaching, assembling supporting documentation and writing the personal narrative can take a fair amount of time so it is best to begin a teaching portfolio long before the deadline set by a review committee. Obviously, the earlier you begin, the more complete your portfolio is likely to be when you submit it for review.

Organizing Your Teaching Portfolio

We recommend that you be selective in presenting your experience as a teacher. There is no need (unless depart-

mental rules suggest otherwise) to describe one's teaching goals and efforts in *every* course you have ever taught. What we prefer is that you select the best or most typical examples of your teaching practice, especially those aspects at which you excel, and then devote a section of the portfolio to these examples. We are particularly interested in seeing reflectivity and innovation: that is, demonstrations of how you solved a teaching problem, how you developed a new course, or how your teaching of a particular course changed over a period of time. We refer to these instances as teaching cases or teaching snapshots.

Here is a hypothetical example of what we are encouraging you to do. Let's say that an instructor in the social sciences begins to teach a required undergraduate course using materials that she has "inherited" from previous offerings of the course. Not satisfied with these materials, in subsequent offerings of the course she first selects new materials and then writes a course study guide, supplementing the texts, and distributes it to her students. During her sabbatical she writes a new textbook for the course and uses it in teaching the course. In her portfolio, this faculty member will include both a narrative describing her choices and actions in improving this course as well as documentation, such as some pages from the textbook.

This case represents an extremely rich example of the kind of inclusions we are recommending for the teaching portfolio. More typical would be descriptions of:

- a thorough revision of a course syllabus to reflect a radical rethinking in light of new discoveries in the discipline
- a new system of evaluating student work that yields both higher reliability of the results and increased student satisfaction
- the stages by which a student was assisted in writing an exemplary paper or completing a laboratory research project

We feel that it is important that each case study comprise two major components: first, an essay explaining the stimulus and your response; second, materials documenting your experience.

The overall organization of your portfolio might look like this:

- A personal narrative (perhaps 3-5 pages) describing what we regard as the centerpiece of any portfolio presentation. It will present your philosophy of teaching, your teaching objectives, and your teaching strategies. It can present an account of your teaching career. You will give a short autobiography of you as a teacher, telling of adjustments you have made as a result of your experience as well as some shortcomings—areas that you are trying to improve on. Finally, you can give a projection

of where you would like your teaching to be 2, 5, or more years down the line.

- Four or five cases from your more recent experience, each illustrating a separate dimension of your work as a teacher.
- Factual materials related to your teaching : a list of courses taught, a table showing the FCQ results for these courses (with a short explanatory essay), and any other documentation required by your department or school.

In terms of physical size, the whole portfolio might come to 35 to 50 pages. We recommend that an effort be made to present the portfolio in an as attractive a way as you can. Try some or all of the following tips:

- Ensure that any photocopied materials are of a high quality; omit any items that are poorly copied, no matter how tempting it may be to include them.
- Make the layout transparently easy to follow so that anyone picking up your portfolio will have no trouble navigating through it. This may mean including a table of contents.
- Prepare a cover page and have Kinko's put a spiral binding on the portfolio when you are finished assembling it.
- If this seems like too much work, remember that once you have created your teaching portfolio, your future responsibility will be only to update it periodically. You'll never have to start over again from scratch.

The Faculty Teaching Excellence Program offers assistance in reflecting on your teaching and selecting the aspects of that teaching that you wish to display.

Working within the guidelines established by your school or department, associates from the Program work with you in developing a personalized portfolio that suits your individual style and purpose.

The First Years of Teaching

Here is some advice for handling the first years as a college professor, taken from a study of new faculty by Robert Boice (Psychology, State University of New York at Stony Brook) (Boice 1991):

1. Have patience. Set aside enough time to develop your personal teaching style. New instructors have to curb the desire to devote most of their time to research and writing. Becoming a comfortable and efficient teacher may require much more time than you might guess during the first two years.
2. Content is important in any course, but content-rich courses can cause student indigestion—consider other

- dimensions of teaching, especially the need to assist students in their intellectual development. Try to keep yourself aware that teaching is far more than what has been called “facts and principles lecturing.”
3. Be relaxed and allow yourself to be caught making a mistake from time to time; students will still think you are an expert even if you don't know every iota of information in your discipline.
 4. Beginning teachers often unfairly blame student discontent with their teaching on external factors, such as the unreliability of student evaluations, unreasonably heavy teaching loads, and poorly prepared students.
 5. Instead of regarding your teaching load as an unfair burden, look for ways in which your teaching and your scholarship can interact.
 6. Approaching others for assistance with teaching often brings positive results, whether the assistance comes from a colleague or the Faculty Teaching Excellence Program. The autonomy you are granted as a faculty member will not be threatened by discussing the concept and practice of teaching with someone.
 7. Time management will be a concern that new faculty have to work through. Prepare lessons well, but not with a view towards establishing a fixed teaching repertoire to be used unchanged for the next decade.
 8. It is counterproductive to overprepare for classes. Students do not want to know everything; they would not be able to absorb it all even if they did want to; and they will have no use for it all if they could absorb everything.
 9. Undergraduates may be awed, but not enlightened, if you approach teaching them as a continuation of your work in graduate school seminars. Students need to be led gradually toward awareness and knowledge. Freshmen will not reach the graduate level in one semester, though you *can* take them towards higher ground.
 10. Remember that teaching can be improved—sometimes by making relatively small adjustments. Take notes during the semester on how each course can be more effective the next time you teach it.

In the same study, Boice studied 12 new faculty members at two large public universities who received good teaching ratings from students and observers. The careers of these high achievers were distinguished from those of colleagues who had not excelled at teaching by displaying these common features:

- Lectures paced in a relaxed style so as to provide opportunities for student comprehension and involvement.
- Positive attitudes about students at these state universities.
- Low levels of complaining about their campuses including collegial support.
- Evidence of actively seeking advice about teaching (especially the mechanics of specific courses), often from a colleague who assumed the role of a guide or mentor.
- A quicker transition to moderate levels of lecture preparation (i.e., less than 1.5 hours per classroom hour).
- A generally superior investment in time spent on scholarly and grant writing (mean = 3.3 hours per workweek).
- A greater readiness to become involved in campus faculty development programs.

Boice notes that involvement with faculty development programs assisted new teachers in two ways. First, they felt more comfortable with their teaching roles— “more relaxed pacing during lectures, more comfort with lecturing and with students”—and, second, they were able to manage their time better—“less overpreparation for lectures, fewer complaints about busyness, and more time spent on scholarly writing.”

Teaching and Research: Two Sides of the Same Coin

From a faculty member's point of view, the conflict between research and teaching centers around these issues:

- What is the relative worth of research and teaching to the university, the students, the world at large and to my career?
- What was I hired to do?
- Where can I find the time to satisfy the demands of research, teaching and service?

When the factors at work are so massive as these, it is easy to see why teaching duties tend to collide with research interests in the lives of faculty at many multifunctional universities. Unfortunately, this competition for the time and interest of faculty can cause the defensive polarization of faculty. On one side are those who consider themselves primarily researchers and who treat teaching as an imposition. At the opposite extreme are those who decry the isolationist tendencies of researchers and the supposed decline of teaching practice.

Kathryn Mohrman (Brown University) is one authority who disagrees with the notion that research interests are inevitably in conflict with one's teaching duties. In her article, “The Synergy of Teaching and Research” (1990), she says that “there are many more interesting, and positive, ways to address this issue than to talk about teaching versus research.” When she surveyed faculty members,

Mohrman discovered these rationales for linking research and teaching:

- One professor said that “without research you aren’t questioning ideas, you’re just retailing them.”
- A quantitative historian said that teaching a methods course helps him keep the basics of his discipline fresh in his mind.
- National Science Foundation equipment provided for research will also be used by students.
- A political scientist tries out his newest ideas on his students before presenting them to his peers for scrutiny.
- A geologist has his students write papers on geology because his own research entails writing papers as the end result.
- A sociologist has his students conduct research and write papers that he then applies to his own work.
- Science professors often find their students underprepared for understanding their advanced research, but faculty in the humanities often channel their research results directly into their courses.
- At some universities, access to research funds is tied to the degree to which research projects involve undergraduate advising, student participation in the project, or financial aid.

The theoretical and psychological relationship between the faculty member-researcher and the faculty member-teacher was explored by one professor when she told Mohrman: “The tensions between teaching and research are in time, not identity. The teaching ‘me’ is not different from the research ‘me.’” Those who can narrow the gap between teaching and research in this way will discover that both sides profit in the end.

Another proposal that has been put forth for resolving this conflict demonstrates not only that both research and teaching are necessary components of the work of professors, but also that they can be integrated into a continuum. Ernest Boyer (1990) reminds everyone in academia that faculty are basically scholars and that this scholarship can be expressed in various ways. Boyer then borrows a distinction from Eugene Rice by which the overlap of four functions of faculty work is demonstrated:

- the scholarship of discovery (i.e., research);
- the scholarship of integration (i.e., synthesizing knowledge, e.g., by textbook writing or multidisciplinary work);
- the scholarship of application (i.e., transfer of the fruits of discovery to real world practices);
- the scholarship of teaching (i.e., stimulation of critical thinking and bridge building between “the teacher’s understanding and the student’s learning”).

Thus, Boyer’s vision of the role of university faculty members traces a continuum linking research, synthesis, practice, and teaching all under the umbrella of scholarship. Such a view highlights the important role within the higher education system of multidimensional research institutions like the University of Colorado at which all four areas of scholarly activity are practiced. This view also explains why faculty in research universities may feel pulled in two or more directions at once as they try to fulfill professional roles in different areas of scholarship.

Section Two: Essays on Teaching and Learning

Aloof Professors and Shy Students

Patricia Nelson Limerick

A few years ago, late one night, I was reading over a set of class papers when I found one I wished I had written. I resolved to seek out the author, congratulate him on his gift for writing, recruit him for a senior thesis, and then ride to glory on vicarious achievement.

The next day, before the lecture, I approached the student, who looked like a very sophisticated and confident young man. "Could I see you after class?" I said, and then I ascended to the podium and took up the burdens of lecturing. When I finished, the student came up and told me he had remembered another appointment. Could he come to see me an hour later?

Months later, after Tom and I had become close friends, he told me that he had not, in fact, "remembered another appointment"—he had simply panicked over my request and gone off for an hour to try to calm himself down.

This misadventure aside, the rest of the scenario worked out. He wrote the senior thesis; all three readers gave it a *Summa*; the department gave it the best thesis prize; and I explored new frontiers in vicarious achievement, discovering that one can brag wildly about one's protege in a manner that would be most unseemly if applied to oneself.

Let us go back, however, to that precarious moment in the classroom. At 2 a.m. that morning when I read Tom's paper, and at 10 a.m. when I spoke to him, I was—equally on both occasions—moved by one feeling: the urge to encourage him to do more of his admirable writing. If he had seen me at the moment when the admiration struck (wearing a ratty sweatshirt and sweatpants, sitting on a pillow on the floor, surrounded by stacks of papers, propping myself up with occasional cups of tea), it is likely that he would have been surprised, but it is most unlikely that he would have been intimidated. But a few hours later, despite my own conviction that I was the same person I had been at 2 a.m., I was transformed into the "Professor," and my invitation to chat scared him to death.

It was never my intention to have that kind of effect on people, never my intention to make smart people witless. Certainly I wanted to inspire respect, but I did not want to inspire fear and trembling. The situation reminded me of a Halloween dilemma in my old neighborhood in New Haven. Two neighbors had dressed up as Richard Nixons, and went to call on another set of friends who had a four-year-old daughter. When the four year old saw the two Nixons, she began to cry, while the two neighbors struggled desperately to remove the Nixon masks and

assure Katie it was really just *them*. When students cower in front of my professorial self, I feel rather as if I were trapped in a Richard Millhous Nixon mask, perplexed and confused as to why they can't realize that it is *just me* underneath.

There are, of course, some morally distressing aspects to this problem, but there is also the more practical fact that students stricken with fear are boring. They are preoccupied with self-defense, and that preoccupation does not leave much room for the launching of innovative new ideas about a field of study. Frightened students are boring students; boring students make the teacher's life repetitive and unrewarding; and it is thus concretely in our interests to confront this factor of intimidation and do what we can to reduce it.

The process of exploration must begin with the proposition that aloof professors and shy students are actually birds of a feather. Both are creatures shaped by anxiety—the anxiety and tension of mutual evaluation. Professors will judge and grade students, and students will judge and evaluate professors, and that fact sits prominently in the first row on the first day of class, the equivalent of the snake ready, willing, and able to spoil Eden. Aloof professors and shy students, though they may appear alien to each other, have in fact adopted the same strategy of adaptation, the same response to tension. They are both creatures of retreat; they find the classroom a risky place, and they therefore choose flight as a variety of self-defense. Distance becomes the way to preserve at least a fragment of their embattled dignity. Professor or student, one is under obligation to appear in class now and then, and so one does—but only as a shadow of one's full self. Evasion then becomes the response to the accurate (not paranoid) perception that students and teachers are judging and evaluating each other. Why take the risk of exposing more of yourself than necessary to that potentially wounding evaluation?

The reasons why students might be shy and evasive are well-known. The causes for professorial shyness are considerably less explored—for the obvious reason that the strategy of self-defense by aloofness has worked, and held off most inquiries. But consider the remark once made by a classics professor at Harvard. "We must remember," he said at one meeting, "that professors are the ones nobody wanted to dance with in high school."

Surely there are exceptions to this rule, but the magnet of academic life does have a particular attraction for shy people, drawn to the contemplative life, capable of

sustained, lonely labor in the library or laboratory. They are drawn to the university, to grad school, and then an awful trick suddenly stands revealed. This is no retreat at all. Rather than retiring to a calm, private refuge, you are sent—the gentle Christian dispatched to the hungry lions—into the classroom, where you are placed at the center of things. All eyes are upon you, and you expect to awaken and say, “I just had the shy person’s worst nightmare. . . . I was just trying to get to the library, but there were all these people; they all had their notebooks open, and they were all looking at ME, expecting ME to do something entertaining, and at the end they were all going to fill out these forms and say whether they liked me or not . . . ”

But you don’t wake up.

Over 13 years, I have developed great affection for teaching. But the first class meeting each year puts new life in that shy person’s nightmare, and I would happily postpone the first class for a week, a month, better yet, a year. In a recently circulated article, a survey revealed that professors approach a first class meeting, thinking “Will they like me?” while the students enter, thinking, “Will I like the professor?” This is, altogether, a pathetic scene: the professor, syllabus in hand, walking to the podium, wanting to be liked; the students, consulting their humors, inspecting the product on display before them, and thinking, “Is this the kind we like?” It makes one think of Willy Loman in *Death of a Salesman*, using that wonderful line to describe failure: “He’s liked, but he’s not *well*-liked.”

And so there you are, on the way to your first class, a character in a play, and Arthur Miller is the playwright, and he wants YOU for the part of Willy Loman, the Willy Loman who tells his wife, “I talk too much; people laugh at me; I’m very foolish to look at.” Why, one can only wonder, did Arthur Miller make Willy a salesman, and not a professor?

Under those circumstances, the appearance of aloofness is a pretty good bargain. Who wouldn’t prefer to appear to the world as an aloof and uncaring person, rather than a shy and vulnerable one?

This inner drama is no doubt lost on the students (thank heavens). And there are certainly professors who do not regularly reenact the scene. Of course, the human instinct for self-defense through concealment being what it is, we’ll never know the proportions for sure. How many stride confidently into the classroom, pleased with the opportunity to be seen, judged, and evaluated? And how many would really rather be on their way to the library, or even on their way to wash dishes or clean ovens? Only recently did I myself move beyond the phase where I would have chosen oven-cleaning over lecturing—though the choice, alas, was never offered me.

Even with this stride forward, I still think lecturing is an unnatural act, an act for which providence did not design humans. It is perfectly all right, now and then, for a human

to be possessed by the urge to speak, and to speak while others remain silent. But to do this regularly, one hour and 15 minutes at a time, Tuesday and Thursday at 11 a.m.—for one person repeatedly to drone on while others sit in silence? Not to bring religion into public education, but I do not believe that this is what the Creator—of whatever denomination—designed humans to do.

And that brings me to my declaration of tense people’s rights. I follow here in the footsteps of William Sloane Coffin. Responding to pop psychology’s often oppressive messages of liberation, he used to say, “I’m not OK; you’re not OK, and that’s OK.”

I, for instance, am not a relaxed person. For 30 years or so, people have been saying to me, “You ought to relax, Patty.” It is the curious dilemma of those of us who are honestly high-strung, that we never get to respond in kind. People feel perfectly free to tell us, “You ought to relax,” but we never get to put in our side. “You ought to be more tense,” we never get to say, even when it seems fair and appropriate. “You ought to be more worried.”

Now I reach the Tense Teacher’s Declaration of Independence. It is okay to be nervous in the classroom, because the classroom is often a nerve-wracking place. We have—and I believe the Supreme Court would eventually support me in this—a First Amendment right to be nervous. In fact, telling us to relax only makes us more weird, adding yet another standard of excellence that we will fall below. The advice makes us especially weird when it comes in combination with the instruction, “Just be yourself in class.” But what if your self is a tense and nervous self? Under those circumstances, “just relax” and “just be yourself” are a prescription for madness. But here, many years’ experience as a tense teacher have shown me the way out of the labyrinth. If you are tense, don’t attempt to conceal it. If you are nervous, and trying to pretend that you are not, your struggle for concealment will affect the class—and students are veritable seismographs for this kind of discomfort. But if you are nervous (as any sane person would be), and frankly, comfortably nervous, the students will not particularly care. Try to hide tension and it manifests itself as weakness. Wear it in peace, and it registers, if it registers as anything at all, as an amusing and human eccentricity.

But why do such elemental insights take so long to figure out? And why do so many professors stay tense, reserved, aloof, and un-self-revealing in the classroom? For now, I would like to finger just one prospective culprit: the overaccenting of evaluations as a way to gauge teacher success. Professors who are trying to be scholars already lead an overevaluated life; they have barely survived the high-intensity evaluation ordeal of graduate school when they are applying for jobs, and waiting anxiously for department decisions; submitting proposals for convention papers, and waiting anxiously for program committee

decisions, writing grant proposals, and waiting anxiously for panel decisions; submitting manuscripts for articles and books, and waiting anxiously for outside-reader evaluations and editorial decisions; publishing books, and waiting anxiously for reviews. Professors need more evaluation about as badly as Americans need more cholesterol. Consider, for instance, the pathetic preoccupation with meritorious performance that I recently revealed. An acquaintance suggested that, as a Western American historian, I ought to know more about the actual working of cattle. I should, he said, know what it is like to sit on the hind end of a calf while it's being branded. "I don't think I'd be very good at that," I said, giving him the occasion to point out that submitting a performance judged to be "good" was not really the point in this particular exercise. It was just, he explained, that if I let the hind end of the calf get up and begin to rotate in a circle, the person holding down the front end would feel justifiably betrayed. But if they grade meat, I must have been thinking, surely the processors of meat, at every level, are graded too.

Putting too much weight on teaching evaluations makes professors, young ones especially, even more skittish than they already are. Overaccenting evaluations as a measure of success can create in teachers the same witless behavior that excessive concern with grades and grade-grubbing creates in students. Evaluations, moreover, can be more uncertain methods of communication. When I was in college, I liked some of my professors for reasons that now appear rather personal—because they were handsome, or because they were fatherly, or sometimes for that most compelling of reasons, because they seemed to like *me*. When I remember my own rather willful taste in professors, and when I remember that I took one class in graduate school that I did not particularly like until, five for six years later, I finally did the reading, then it seems to me that immediate evaluations do not say it all. And what they *do say can have* unfortunate side effects, deepening a teacher's caution and self-consciousness when recovery lies in exactly the opposite direction.

What, then, is the solution to the dilemma of the defensively aloof professor? There are, happily, thousands of solutions, and most of them become evident just at the moment you break free of caution and self-consciousness, assess a particular problem, and figure out how best to take it on. In one course with about 45 people, for instance, I wanted to learn everyone's name. Looking at 45 people who were looking at me, trying to distinguish Sallys from Susies, Jims from Joes, I simply could not do it. If only, I thought, I had a direct stimulus, something that would reward or shame me into learning. And there, immediately, was the answer. I began taking a container of cranberry juice to class. One does, after all, get thirsty during a lecture, and I knew that I would genuinely want that cranberry juice. The arrangement was that I only got

the juice if I successfully greeted a certain number of people by name—the first time, 10; the next class, 15; and so on. If I failed, a student of certified thirst got the cranberry juice, and I got a jab of shame. The device brought me to class a few minutes early and in a perfect learner's frenzy, eager to find out and remember 5 new names; the shame of failure and the pride of success both kept me working hard; the students were amused—and utterly convinced that I meant it when I said I wanted to know who they were; the exercise got the classes off to a pleasant, lively, informal start. I lost no respect or authority. If anything, I found that my capacity to hand papers and exams back *by name* to individuals I clearly knew, had a most stimulating effect on student performance.

That is a small example of the kind of miracles that result when the professor is free to think clearly about a problem and its solution, and not forced out of the direct path by the burden of defending a shy person's fragile dignity. Freed of that burden, one realizes the essential fact of all kinds of teaching, whether individual tutorial, seminar, or lecture. The student *must* be brought out of passivity. Ideas are terribly forgettable if the mind does not clinch with them, if the gears do not engage on the spot. But how can the teacher possibly accomplish that in a lecture class? One answer lies in what I call the youth poll. Its goal is to offer the students a momentary release from passivity, to ask them to think and evaluate on the spot. For the professor, the youth poll provides immediate information on whether the students are following your discussion or not; if they don't know what you're talking about, they'll be hard put to vote on it. But youth polls also allow one to go beyond *Time* and *Newsweek* in determining what young people are thinking these days. Youth polls enrich one's conversation; one takes on a cocktail party equipped with information on the mental workings of today's younger generation that the other guests will not have.

I first made use of the youth poll in History 152, America after 1865, a course which many students take to satisfy a requirement. There is an air of the conscript in the room, the air of a troop ship pulling out of port, bound for destinations that the passengers are not quite sure they want to see. To lessen that sense of conscription with at least a symbolic exercise of free will, I began early on to call for votes. I lectured on the Rockefellers, Carnegies, and Morgans, for instance, and then I called for a youth poll. These men have been characterized sometimes as robber barons and sometimes as wise captains of industry, I explained. Which characterization would the students find more appropriate? It was a landslide for the wise captains of industry which made me think, briefly, that I had figured the students out and confirmed the rumors of their narrow careerism and conservatism. But further youth polling eroded those simple images, and revealed a much more

subtle and complex group of people. More often than not, the polls left me bewildered and surprised—and I did not need a supplementary poll to tell me that *that* result pleased the students.

With more time, the youth polls prove workable for more subtle points of interpretation. In the upper-division course on Western American history, I describe the hunting and gathering life of Indians in the Great Basin, and then offer an interpretive choice: do we call that 10,000 years of ecological success and stability; or do we call it 10,000 years of stagnation and lack of progress? This leads to a very productive discussion of cultural relativism, ideas of progress, human relations with physical environments, and conflicting claims for legitimacy between natives and invaders. By opening the discussion with a youth poll, with everyone having voted one way or the other, each student begins with some stake in the discussion; even shy individuals can be lured into speaking, since they have already participated by raising their hands. Youth polls also legitimize dissent, making it clear that the course's requirements do not include compliance with any party line of interpretation. This not only sets the students free to do their own thinking, it stymies the "Accuracy in Academia" thought police in their efforts to interfere with instructor freedom.

Like the youth poll, a second technique—the class-contributed list on the blackboard—allows for maximum participation without a surrender of the professor's power to keep the discussion moving along toward a clear goal. In this exercise, you ask a concrete, focused question to help the students process information, but they do the essential work. We had read, for instance, the Crow Indian autobiography, *Two Leggings*, and I asked the class to list nine or ten mechanisms of social control in Crow culture, illustrated by particular examples from the book. In that kind of exercise, I am coaching them on how to read a book actively and productively, how to go beyond just turning pages to selecting elements out of the whole and combining them into a pattern of meaning, how to ground generalizations in particular pieces of evidence. One can then use the *Two Leggings* social-control list, for instance, to take care of any preconceptions of tribal life as an experience of total, untrammelled, "natural" freedom; just as much as Anglo-American behavior, the list says, Indian behavior was culturally and socially shaped. One could certainly make the same point in a lecture, but the staying power of an idea is considerably increased when the students put it together themselves.

I sometimes use the class-generated list at the very start of a course, to show that the slate is not blank and that minds can be already at work on the subject, before lectures and before readings. In the upper-division class, I wanted to launch an immediate attack on the stereotyped, simple frontier West, in which unlikely waves of traders,

cattlemen, miners, and farmers supposedly flowed across the continent in orderly sequence. I came to class with a sealed envelope in which I had placed a list of 30 significant Western occupations, beyond the ones that dominate popular stereotype. I then challenged the students to match my list—which they did and added 10 or 15 more. They also surprised and pleased me by nominating categories that were not ethnicity-specific—like soldier/warrior, or shaman/minister/priest—categories that launched us from the start into a framework of cultural comparison. From this exercise, using their own wits, the students began on the very first day with a fuller, more complex West in their minds than you would find in the minds of many venerable Western historians.

In another opening-day exercise, I described the Turner Thesis of 1893, the set of ideas which has so long dominated Western history, with its characterization of the frontier as the source and determinant of American character and democracy. I then asked the students to think this over, and then to nominate essential Western topics that the Turner Thesis left out. In this, too, the students were a considerable success. I could, of course, have saved a few minutes by simply running through the catalogue of Turnerian omissions myself (Indians, Hispanics, Asians, Blacks, women, business, arid lands, federal involvement, etc.), but it was many times more effective to invite the students to think up the list themselves. And, once again, they emerged from the exercise with a better, fuller critique of the Turner Thesis than you could get from many Western historians.

More practically, before the midterm and the final, if time permits, I have the class itself narrow the pool for possible exam identifications. Divided into small groups and assigned a particular topic, they are to report back a list of six or seven possible people, places, events, or acts of legislation that seem to represent the general issues of that topic. The small group discussions can be a considerable pleasure to eavesdrop on; they are, usually, shrewdly reviewing the material and carefully deciding which examples would be the most fruitful.

Gene Rayburn's "Match Game" provides another technique for evoking maximum participation. On the "Match Game," the M.C. gives the panelists an incomplete sentence with a word to be filled in, and the panelists then reveal their answers in hopes of a match. Moved from the television studio to the classroom, the "Match Game" can take a variety of forms. If you are discussing a secondary source, for instance, you can say, "The author's argument is weakest when he takes up _____." Or you can follow up on material from a lecture with a sentence like: "This (person, or group, or event) is most significant as a case study in _____." The "Match Game," of course, only works if the sentence allows for a variety of viable and legitimate responses. While the teacher is free to have a

predetermined “right answer” in mind, the students must also be free to come up with entirely different, but still workable answers.

The “Match Game” can reap surprising rewards. Ten years ago, discussing the very optimistic, turn-of-the-century irrigation promoter William Ellsworth Smythe, I asked a class to complete the sentence, “William Ellsworth Smythe, watch out for _____.” One student filled in the blank with the word “uncertainty.” As I thought more about the response, “uncertainty” seemed exactly the aspect of life that Smythe was trying to evade. Several years later, in a book called *Desert Passages* I was still thinking about that class discussion, and on page 83, you read the line: “Like many reformers, Smythe was engaged in an effort to outlaw uncertainty.” After a variety of these experiences, try to tell me that teaching and scholarship reliably get in each other’s way.

On a different level entirely, but on the same principle of bumping the student out of passivity and the professor out of preconceptions, I have over the years made considerable use of an all-purpose writing exercise. I use it in situations where a student either writes badly, or claims he can’t get started on a paper. In that sort of situation, if you listen sympathetically to the problem, you stand a better chance of getting mired in the swamp yourself than of pulling the student out. The alternative is to take two pieces of paper, the same size, and then explain the procedure: both the student and you will begin at the top and write to the bottom as fast as possible; as long as each line gets filled up, anything goes. You start out with a common topic, but after that, you can write anything—dump the topic and shift to disconnected fragments, if you like, as long as you continue to race to get to the bottom first.

This may seem like a silly use of the professor’s (and perhaps even the student’s) time, but the results can be astonishing. The student, who a moment ago claimed to be unable to write, begins to write, and to write fast—and while that is miracle enough, the student sometimes even has fun writing and, more often than not, writes better than before—short, sharp, clear sentences, not the convoluted mush he or she could produce given more time. What I think happens in this speedwriting exercise is that writing and speaking come back together again. In normal college life, writing seems to the student to be a weird and unnatural act that you only do under pressure. By that model, you do not just say what you have to say; you make the paper’s style as weird and unnatural as the assignment itself. But in the writing exercise, the pressure of time forces the directness that many individuals have preserved in their speech, while banning it from their writing.

This exercise not only rearranges the student’s assumptions about writing, it also gives me the satisfaction of

winning most of the time, reaching the end of the page a line or two before the student. But even this, I have learned, is not always the occasion for complacency. An unorthodox exercise like this can unleash startling and unexpected talents in a student. Consider, for instance, the young man who was evidently paralyzed by deadlines, who watched due-dates come down upon him in rather the same manner in which the young heroine tied to the railroad tracks watches the train approach. I undertook to do the basic writing exercise with him, and felt utterly confident about finishing first. Poor fellow, I even thought, so nervous about writing; perhaps I ought to hold myself back a bit. The starting topic was horses, and I wrote rapidly about horses—until I looked over and saw that my competitor was ahead of me. At that point, I began writing incoherent nonsense, simply trying to catch up and at least tie at the finish. Sadly enough, I did not. And even more sadly, John’s essay—composed at a literally breakneck pace—proved to be terribly charming and well-written, while mine, as I’d had reason to expect, proved to be utter nonsense. Here is John’s essay:

I’ve been riding horses since I was pretty small—we have always placed a great deal of importance on being able to stay on a galloping horse even through thick brush. Once while riding in the high desert of California, my saddle slipped off to one side and I was left there bumping along the ground, viewing the world at a disadvantage. But soon I managed to get both feet free and dropped to the ground. I watched the horse run away without me and decided that the only thing left to do was to pull all the little stones out from my arms and knees and walk back to the ranch. I have ridden horses in fog so thick that small and large juniper bushes look like various-sized cows. I have charged these cows on horseback and seen the horse give me funny looks as we plunged into thick painful small trees. I have been bucked by horses, but never have I ever hit a horse in anger because it bucked me, though I have hit various close-by fence poles and other painful hard things. The best horse I have ever known was a bay name Monte who once almost tossed me into a stream but nonetheless we remained great friends.

I do myself and the reader the kindness of omitting my own essay, and simply submit John’s as proof of the proposition: one learns not to underestimate students, even—or especially—the shy ones.

In all these exercises, my goals have been the same: to bump the student out of passivity, and to bump myself out of self-consciousness and sometimes out of complacency. When they work, these techniques make the thing that we are doing together a great deal more interesting than who we are as shy students or aloof professors. In a swift and unexpected way, the activity eases both parties past shyness, past fear of each other’s judgments. Even when the exercises lead to debate or disagreement, it is the kind

of open rivalry and channeled tension that makes opponents in sports respect and like each other even in the midst of the contest.

By contrast, the more conventional tensions of the classroom cause students and professors to fear making fools of themselves. Under those circumstances, classes become experiences modeled on the autopia rides at places like Disneyland, where individuals drive their little cars around on preset tracks, sometimes crossing each other's paths but never really contacting each other. What I have tried to set up is a sport closer to bump cars—where crowded intersections and forceful collisions are allowed and even expected, and where everyone (and this certainly includes the professor) at one time or another looks like a fool. The primal fact of bump cars is that if you decide to bump someone else, you had better get ready to absorb the collision yourself. Any action you take against someone else's serenity earns you an opposition and equal reaction for yourself. In a successful round of bump cars, everyone will bump and be bumped, and everyone will look foolish, and no one will care.

The underlying reason for holding class, whatever the subject of the course, has to involve the project of inviting students to think for themselves, to ask their own questions, and to pursue the answers with both freedom of thought and discipline of argument. If you issue this invitation to intellectual adventure in the framework of the ordinary, conventionalized classroom, there is such a disjunction between medium and message that the project will only work for a few. If you are inviting free and intense thought, and staying within the framework of rigid and calcified social ritual, your undertaking is undermined at its base. You are offering an invitation that shuts out more participants than it includes; the shy, uncertain, or hostile students are excluded, while the students who have mastered the conventions of normal classroom exchange do not receive the challenge to examine and reconsider their habits of thought and expression. And what is equally significant, neither does the professor. The trial and burden of adventurous teaching is that it never feels safe—you never sign a contract with the universe guaranteeing success in all your experiments. But there are two compensations for accepting the conditions of uncertainty: first, you never run a risk of boredom; and second, you nearly always end up with a classroom full of individuals who accept, support, and aid you in your experiments. In that atmosphere, the failures teach as much as the successes, and professorial aloofness and student shyness become relics of another, less interesting age.

Patricia Nelson Limerick writes about the history of the American west and teaches as a faculty member of the Department of History.

Teaching the Thundering Herd: Surviving in a Large Classroom

Charles R. Middleton

I am extremely pleased to be asked to write one of the articles in this important series on improving the quality of undergraduate teaching in the University. For too long we have been giving lip service to the importance of teaching and it is both timely and significant that we have begun to do many things to provide an antidote to that historical tradition.

The best place to begin this article is to tell something about my own background. This is a topic not entirely irrelevant to the way I approach teaching large lecture sections. I was an undergraduate history major at Florida State University and it was largely because of my experiences there that I developed my personal commitment to public higher education and to the promotion of both excellence and access in that context.

It was also in those happy years that I was exposed to the inherent possibilities and limitations of large lecture classes. In the course of this story I am going to introduce you to some of the faculty members who taught me and who have served as inspirations for me, at least insofar as the topic of the moment is concerned. The first is Joe Cushman, from whom I took Western Civilization as a freshman, and who convinced me to become an historian by persuading me of the value of devoting one's life to pursuing what one loves to do, even when it isn't the most lucrative. It is from Joe as well that I freely plagiarized the title of this article.

The thundering herd, you see, is not some obscure reference to the CU Buffaloes. Rather, it takes note of the herd mentality and behavior of students in large lecture classes and the challenge of overcoming it. In short, I intend to argue that despite the size of those classes, it is possible to personalize them in ways that are analogous to tutorials, at least in some intellectual sense.

Let us make certain that we all share an understanding of the phenomenon to which I will be referring when I write about teaching large classes. I do not mean those of 80 to 100, which though assuredly large can still be relatively intimate, as anyone who has taught in Hellems 199 or 201 can attest. To be sure, classes of this size are not exactly seminars. But when teaching them one can still see the whites of their eyes, even in the back row.

No, I am talking about classes of 200 plus, where the front row is under foot and the back row is perched just short of Outer Slobovia— and sometimes its occupants act that way. I've seen, for instance, every behavior from sleeping (which I do not allow) to petting (which I do). I mention this by way of confession that even when one works very hard on these classes certain events still

threaten to overwhelm you and can actually do so if you let them.

My intent is to suggest some ways to avoid becoming the victim of such things and to assure that you can be master or mistress of these classes. I am prudent enough to admit, by way of starters, that much of what I will write can be applied with equal truth to other classes of less vast proportions. This is exactly the point, that in a sense there is little difference between axioms for successful teaching in the smallest classes and in the largest. Nevertheless, I trust that even when this truth is self-evident, the particular application to the thundering herd will be all the more revealing.

Let us begin on that day when your chair calls you in to tell you that next term you will have such a class, once the miracles of the registration process have worked their wonders. I think that this is the moment when you actually must begin to teach such a class, because it is at this juncture that you must make some initial critical judgments about how you feel about this sort of assignment and how you intend to tackle it. Well over half of the battle in being successful in very large lectures can be won or lost based upon how you approach the responsibility. For in a large class all those feelings of concern about whether or not the students will like you, which are more paramount than we are sometimes wont to admit, are compounded by the fact that you won't be able to get much sense of personal contact to find out how well or how poorly you are doing in their eyes.

As a matter of practical advice for this critical juncture, therefore, it is important to think seriously about how you view those students who will be enrolling in your course next term. You also must carefully consider what you hope to be able to accomplish with them given the size of the class. In a sense, how you respond to these two issues will make or break the course. Everything that you do during the class, all that you hope for, in the end even how you and the students will reflect back upon the experience, depends on your initial reaction and planning in light of these two points.

In teaching large classes, as in teaching graduate seminars, you are sunk if you regard teaching as something that is done between stints in the library or laboratory. Our general attitude about our profession as teacher/scholars can either cloud or enlighten our endeavors in large as well as small classes. In my mind there is no higher calling, no greater or stimulating role for us as faculty members, than as teachers, and especially as successful teachers of large classes. Norman Graebner, a distinguished historian of the American experience, once reflected upon this very issue in admonishing his colleagues to take their duty to teach,

and to do it well, seriously: “. . . The ability to communicate well in writing,” he said, “is far more common [among professors] than the ability to communicate through the spoken word, especially for periods as long as an hour. The talent to speak clearly, logically, and persuasively day after day is, in my experience, far rarer than the ability to write good articles and monographs. During my quarter of a century of teaching, happily at excellent universities, I have had dozens of colleagues who have written excellent monographs. I have had far fewer who have made a special mark in the classroom” [“Observations on University Teaching and Research,” AHA Newsletter, 13 (Dec., 1975): 6]. And fewer still, we might add, who did so before the thundering herd.

There are those who will argue at junctures such as this that in the context of facing hundreds of students, when dialogue between teacher and student becomes impossible, teaching inevitably gives way to showmanship, by which they usually mean crass entertainment. I don't buy it. What these folk are really saying is that they can't hack it when the crowd appears and that somehow real learning isn't fun or truly entertaining anyway.

There is a good deal of pleasure, for me at least, in meeting the pure challenge of a task—any task—and in the hard work that I have to undertake to get the job done well. Perhaps this is why I make my large classes rigorous for the students, too. I like to spread the joy around.

So my first conclusion is that one should welcome the assignment of teaching a large class precisely because it is such a major challenge. Don't pretend otherwise. It is an invitation to do some real hard work and in the process to anticipate and experience the great satisfactions that come when such challenges are met and mastered. As Shakespeare said in *The Taming of the Shrew*, “No profit grows where is no pleasure ta'en.”

The goal may be easier or more difficult to attain, however, depending on how one views the students who typically take these courses. They are, for the most part, younger (freshmen and sophomores), and less intellectually sophisticated than the survivors who comprise the junior and senior classes. They are taking these large-enrollment classes principally because the course meets a distribution requirement, or meets at 10 a.m. MWF, or was the only thing available at drop/add, or, well, you name it. Some few are there because they share your love of the topic, but they are not usually numerous. Teaching the majority is one of life's truly great challenges.

In my experience, however, students will become what you expect them to be. It seems always to have been the case. In 1584, for instance, Marcantonio Mureto, a professor of rhetoric at the University of Rome, wrote of his classes that they were characterized by “the perpetual insolence of the students, who when a man goes to great pains to say something good and useful, respond with such cries,

whistling, rackets, villainies and other dishonest acts, that I know not sometimes where my brain has fled.” He concluded, “that I wishing to punish these ugly acts, have been many times during the past years hooted, threatened, as much as if to announce publicly that if I did not shut up, they would smash in my face.” Small wonder that he didn't teach well, and yet he still wanted a large pension!

Far better, it seems to me, to expect the best of our students and to appeal by word, by action, and by expectation itself to their better instincts. As John McElroy of Duke University has noted, young and eager as a group, “students are *very* difficult to disillusion. Only by systematic perseverance do we manage it” (“Graduate Education and the Humanities Faculty,” *Duke University Alumni Register*, 50: 5). So why not persevere another way, by working to bring out the best in them, even, or maybe *especially*, in the largest of our classes?

One final thing that I believe we need to keep in mind when viewing an assignment to teach large lecture classes is our responsibility to look within ourselves and ask how important the material we will be teaching really is. No matter how highly you might regard the students, no matter how you might see their potential to learn, if what you propose to teach them is not that important in your own mind, then you will surely fail.

In my own case the topic is usually some aspect of the history of England. I am confident that what I have to say on this subject and what I ask students to read in order to supplement my lectures *is* important, albeit on many levels of understanding.

Yet how do students know that this is how I feel? The surest way is to tell them, which I do in several fashions. First, thanks to a suggestion of Patty McNamara, who once took some courses from me and later went on to direct the President's Leadership Class at CU, I start every semester with the observation that the study of English history is important to me, that I work hard at it, that I am serious about it, that I expect them to work hard at it too, and that although I will entertain them, as I assuredly cannot fail to do on such matters as the wives of Henry VIII, I am still indeed serious about the material and its importance and that I will expect them to produce high-quality work.

Second, I prepare an accurate syllabus with all assignments unambiguously stated, and with a complete list of lecture titles and the days on which they will be given. This simple device informs the students that I know where I am going *and* how I am going to get there. Then I stick to the schedule, or if forced by unanticipated circumstances to deviate from it, I do so for reasons that I carefully explain. And I never deviate in a way that is to the disadvantage of the students. On the assignments, I never ask the students to read books on which they will not be tested, nor do I ask them to read books that are recapitulations of my lectures. I also ask them to write papers, the most success-

ful assignment being to go to the library and edit an historical document selected from a collection on reserve. They are told to identify all people, places, and events, and to provide an accurate transcription of the document itself. The assignment not only enables them to write, but teaches them library skills and establishes a camaraderie within the class, since all of them are over in Norlin bumping into each other in the stacks. In treating the students fairly and with respect, and in giving them demanding but interesting assignments, I believe that one reinforces the seriousness of the endeavor and emphasizes the importance of the material itself.

Third, and most important in one sense, I ascribe to the theory that each class meeting, each lecture, is itself an important occasion. I learned this lesson from three sources. The first was Winston Churchill who was asked to rebuild the House of Commons on a larger scale after it was destroyed by a bomb in World War II so that it would be large enough to accommodate all its members, a feature that had been noticeably absent from the previous structure. Came the reply, "that there should not be room for all its Members; that it should be designed to preserve . . . that sense of urgency and excitement to which our Parliamentary proceedings have owed a great deal in the past. . . ." (5 *Hansard's*, 407: 1003-4). I, too, try to give a sense of urgency and excitement to each of my lectures.

The second example is that of my freshman biology professor, whose name I cannot now remember, but who is as vivid in my memory as if he were here today. He was a dapper man of about 60 with a little mustache who always wore a grey three-piece suit. He lectured without notes and yet his lectures were identical at 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. each day, such was the mastery he had over his topic. He spoke in a low voice without emotion. It was the power of his mind that held us all in awe, coupled with the fact that he wasn't about to proceed without our undivided attention. He made this clear one day when after standing before a particularly noisy class for a minute he departed, not to return until two days later when he announced that he was taking up where he would have left off had he been allowed to lecture on the previous occasion. From this example, which I tell my class on the first rowdy occasion they present, I draw the conclusion that the mastery of the material in itself is sufficient to assure that each lecture is worth the price of admission.

Finally there was Professor Stephen Winters, a geologist, a man quite unlike the biologist. His style was to charge into the class at 8 a.m. and bellow, "Good Morning," and if we didn't bellow back he'd pick his books up off the table and exit, allowing time for the TAs to alert us to his expectations for cheerfulness on our part to match his own, and then return with another "Good Morning." He taught the principles of sedimentation by using the rows of differently colored tiles on the walls along the sides of the

auditorium where he ranged widely with chalk in hand writing on them, and he freely asked questions of individuals by referring to the seating chart to get our names. From Winters I learned the importance to successful teaching of energy and activity, a style that I try to bring to all lectures by constantly moving about the room and by not using set lectures but just referring to lists of the important points that I wish to cover.

The trick, of course, is in the end to bring all of these ideas together in support of each lecture. Given the diversity of the students in background, interest, ability, and purpose, it has always struck me that there are at least three levels of understanding that every lecture must incorporate. That is, every topic can be intellectually understood and presented simultaneously at simpler and more complex levels. In a large class these levels of understanding must be constantly at work. To ignore any of them is without question to lose the attention of sizable portions of your class, and when you lose their attention you cannot teach them. I recognize the fact that what each student takes away from my lectures is going to be unique and is going to reflect his or her interest, ability, and motivation. I believe, therefore, that to be successful in a large lecture format we must never fail to construct the material in such a way as to appeal constantly to the diversity of the student body. We must also test accordingly so that at whatever level the individual student is proceeding we can assess her or his progress.

What I propose to do here, therefore, is to discuss how all three levels of understanding can be simultaneously at work on any single topic. By way of example I have chosen an issue of great importance to our understanding of nineteenth-century British history, the rise of democracy. This is a subject that has implications, in a sense, for all other aspects of British history—social, economic, and intellectual alike. It is at the core of my subspecialty and the cause of much debate and even more publication.

For students, the first level of understanding on this as on all topics is just to get the facts straight. What happened? When? Who were the actors? The facts in my example require a discussion of the Reform Acts of 1832, 1867, 1884/85, 1918, 1928, and 1968, and what each did in turn by way of expanding the franchise. Those who can merely remember these things, or most of them, can pass the course with a grade of C.

Now it is my view that this getting of the facts is no mean feat, but without it one cannot advance to higher levels of understanding. If you don't believe how easily students can get the facts wrong, consider for a moment my own experience in Joe Cushman's class. I looked over my notebook from Western Civilization the other day, recalling that first day of class in 1962 and how we were keenly aware of being university students who were expected to take notes. Never mind that we weren't quite

sure what that meant. So what was the first entry in that fateful set of class notes? "The world began in 4004 B.C." That's it; no explanation; no indication of the source for such a remarkable statement (which was a nineteenth-century Anglican bishop trying to refute Darwin by the clever use of *Genesis*); no indication that I understood anything of what Cushman was trying to get across about the difficulty of arriving at accurate historical interpretation; just a statement of "fact." I remember this lesson every time I get up to speak. Just getting the facts, huh? *Jus?*

The facts in this particular story of the growth of democracy are easy enough to master. They open with the Reform Act of 1832, which abolished the worst of the old rotten boroughs and allowed the capitalists to participate in the electoral system on a parity with the landed classes of the traditional society. The critical vote on the bill was passed in the House of Commons by a vote of 302 to 301, all of whom were members of the old social order. With 608 members present, including the Speaker and two tellers for each side, this was the largest attendance of the House up to that time, in an institution which was already half a millennium old.

I could tell these facts this way but I don't. Remember, lectures are occasions, and never more so than when they deal with events which were themselves momentous. So what I do is describe voting procedures in the Commons, where the two sides of the political world sit facing each other during debate, where the House is packed when only 400 people are present, where when the vote, or division as it is called, comes, the opposition empties into the lobby and after the government's supporters are counted, reenters and is dutifully counted by its tellers. But, let us permit the sources to speak for themselves, in this case through the words of Lord Macaulay who was there for the fateful division:

Such a scene as the division of last Tuesday I never saw, and never expect to see again. If I should live fifty years, the impression of it will be as fresh and sharp in my mind as if it had just taken place. It was like seeing Caesar stabbed in the Senate House, or seeing Oliver taking the mace from the table; a sight to be seen only once and never forgotten. The crowd overflowed the House in every part. When the strangers were cleared out, and the doors locked, we had six hundred and eight members present—more by fifty-five than ever were in a division before. The Ayes and Noes were like two volleys of cannon from opposite sides of a field of battle. When the opposition went out into the lobby, an operation which took up twenty minutes or more, we spread ourselves over the benches on both sides of the House: for there had been many of us who had not been able to find a seat during the evening. When the doors were shut we were able to speculate on our numbers. . . .

As the tellers passed along our lowest row on the left-hand side the interest was insupportable—two hundred and ninety-one—two hundred and ninety-two—we were all standing up and stretching forward telling with the tellers. At three hundred there was a short cry of joy— at three hundred and two another—suppressed, however, in a moment: for we did not yet know what the hostile force might be. We knew, however, that we could not be severely beaten. The doors were thrown open and in they came. Each of them as he entered, brought some different report of their numbers. It must have been impossible, as you may conceive, in the lobby, crowded as they were, to form any exact estimate. First we heard that they were three hundred and three, then that number rose to three hundred and ten; then went down to three hundred and seven. Alexander Barry told me that he had counted, and that they were three hundred and four. We were all breathless with anxiety, when Charles Wood, who stood near the door jumped upon a bench and cried out, 'They are only three hundred, and one.' We set up a shout that you might have heard to Charing Cross, waving our hats, stamping about the floor, and clapping our hands. The tellers scarcely got through the crowd: for the House was thonged up to the tables, and all the floor was fluctuating with heads like the pit of a theatre. But you might have heard a pin drop as Duncannon read the numbers. Then again the shouts broke out, and many of us shed tears. I could scarcely refrain. And the jaw of Peel fell; and the face of Twiss was as the face of a damned soul; and Herries looked like Judas taking his necktie off for the last operation.

Gilbert Slater, *The Making of Modern England* (Boston, 1915), pp. 90-91.

It is clear where Macaulay's sympathies lay, and reading his words enables me on this occasion today to embark upon a discussion of the second level of understanding. The passage of the Act of 1832, of course, has meaning only in some context. The act is readily understood and its provisions mastered by our students at CU, who are really quite good at this sort of thing. But they must be pressed to go beyond the mere acquisition of information to ask a more difficult set of questions—those that make connections between and among acts. Here we are talking about argument, the marshalling of evidence to support an opinion or to sustain an interpretation. In moving to this level students can earn a grade of B in my classes, a statement that I make to them as an inducement for them to make the effort.

When we talk of argument and interpretation, we mean the search for context. Let us look, for example, at the Reform Act of 1867, in historical terms passed fast on the heels of that of 1832. For those of you who have forgotten it, its principal provisions for our purposes here were that it enfranchised the upper echelons of the working classes, the so-called Labour aristocracy, and it gave more seats to

the populous towns at the expense of the more sparsely settled counties. Lord Derby, who as prime minister had headed the government that passed it, had witnessed the complete revision of the original bill as his colleagues, a minority in the Commons, had for political reasons accepted amendment after amendment in lieu of resigning. Interviewed shortly after the act's passage and asked about its significance, Derby freely admitted that it was "a leap in the dark."

Recall that one of my purposes is to teach connections, or in the terms of my discipline to distinguish between the past, which is all that ever happened, both known and unknown, and history, which is the interpretation of the known past. In 1867 the actors could not make those connections, as Derby freely admitted, between past and present, between present and future.

But today's students can. When I ask them, they can tell me that the Act of 1867 was in a sense a logical outgrowth of that of 1832, for it further added to the number of it further added to the number of people who could participate in the franchise *and* it moved yet another step towards the equalization of electoral districts, a basic tenet of democracy in our own day.

That's a simple enough connection once you know the provisions of each act, and students readily make it. But embedded in this interpretation is a more complex one, albeit a second-level issue as well. It is that the Act of 1867 was in a sense a modification of the earlier work of the 1830s; that is, it *merely* expanded the franchise and redrew constituency boundaries. By design, it did not go further precisely because, leap in the dark that it may have been, many of those who passed it had been there under Macaulay's watchful eye in 1832 and those who hadn't still consciously followed the earlier model of how to proceed in reforming Parliament.

I have to tell the students these things, of course, which I do with great emphasis, going back and forth between the two measures, drawing comparisons and reminding the class of the specific provisions of each. All of them, as in the Doonesbury cartoon, will write this information down dutifully in their notebooks. Aren't students supposed to take notes? Most will remember it, though many of them will forget to put it in their blue books on exams, concentrating under pressure on the facts instead. And of those who get it on the exam, many won't know why it is true, thus turning a carefully constructed argument based upon empirical evidence into an assertion. Of such distinctions are grading scales devised.

More important, however, is that when asked in retrospect, each of them has learned something intangible from the exercise. They have learned to look for connections and they fully appreciate why it is a once more important and more difficult to interpret data than it is merely to learn it. It is my belief, after talking with many among them

sometimes years after they took my class, that this is the most valuable lesson to be learned at the second level, to search for meaning in the array of facts on every issue.

There is a third level of understanding, reserved for the most thoughtful students, a really select group who easily master data and with some skill regularly put it together in intelligent and thoughtful ways. This level is reserved for what I will call the "big questions," ones which ask what can we learn from all this information that will hold both the facts as well as the interpretations together. In the historian's terms, these are the questions that get at fundamental processes in human affairs. They explore intellectual ideas that hold event together and that have meanings which transcend the immediacy of the British experience. In other words, they have implications for our own times as well.

I don't need to be particularly mysterious about these questions. A with the facts and the connections of the facts, I merely tell the student what these larger questions are, though because of the nature of the questions themselves I do so only from time to time, not necessarily in each lecture. Let me give you one or two pieces of information that will demonstrate how this process works. The Reform Acts of 1884 and 1885 enfranchised all but the most indigent adult males and created electoral districts of equal population, rural and urban alike. The Act of 1918 enfranchised women, whose war contribution had been substantial, though only women over the age of 30 benefited, while that of 1928 finally gave all women the vote on a parity with men. Then in 1968 came the 18-year-old vote.

The students learn all of this data and more. It's an interesting story from which every student can extract useful first-level information. All of these acts are related in my lectures to the one that preceded them and to the ones which followed, as a sort of model of second-level analysis and understanding. The better students stay with this process even though at times it is a struggle for them. But only the best students, the truly excellent ones, the A's on our grading scale, can make the final leap of understanding to appreciate the broader historical process that was at work. Here was a society that in the course of 130 years or so systematically transformed itself upon a simple principle of fairness: as each group contributed to the economic and social well-being of the whole, it was accorded a share of the responsibility for directing the affairs of the society.

To be sure, my account here is the sanitized version, for I have no time to cover in this article what I can discuss at some length in my classes, that is, to present the riots, the other protests, the strikes, the sacrifices of each of these disenfranchised groups in turn (with the possible exception of the 18-year-olds), before they were admitted to full participation in the polity. To understand that part of the process fully you will have to rely on your own knowledge—or take my course.

But it still remains true that none of the groups had to overthrow the old order of its day to gain access to power. Instead, the old order moved aside just a little and incorporated the new, not just in politics but in other aspects of national life as well. The implications of this process of change for determining the British character far transcends the political arena and my own course. It speaks directly to human experience writ large.

Why is this example so important to our understanding about teaching the thundering herd, which you will recall is the topic of this paper? In my view, its significance lies in the notion that this method of teaching large classes takes into account the central purpose of all teaching, which is to take each student wherever we find him or her and to stretch their intellect as far as we can. To do this in a large lecture section as in a tutorial requires that we as teachers recognize that some will want to go further than others and that some will be able to learn more. In a small class or tutorial the individual variances can be directly addressed in a manner in which we are directly aware of our progress. In the scale of the large lecture, the process is less individualized, but the responsibility remains the same: to keep all the levels of understanding going constantly so that each student always has something from which to learn.

By teaching large lecture classes in this way we cannot avoid being successful, for each student may evaluate what they get out of the experience in the context of the particular way in which they approach the class. They all

recognize that you as the instructor are sensitive to and have taken into account their varying abilities and purposes for being there. It follows that you value them all for their own individual sakes and that you are in a real sense tailoring the course to their individual talents. I conclude by observing that in the large lecture the interaction between the professor and the student is only on the surface and to the untutored eye less personal than the interaction typical of a seminar. In fact, when a large lecture works, it is precisely because there is the awareness of a personalized relationship between the professor and the students, first as a group but then, at first gradually but with quickening pace, between the professor and individual students. Professor Graebner said it most eloquently: "The challenge for any teacher is to gain that point of proficiency where classes become alive and student response sets in motion that rising spiral of intellectual and emotional interaction which ends in a totally satisfactory student-professor relationship. Students—and too few realize it—are an essential element in any successful classroom experience. Yet the initial responsibility (for starting that interaction) rests with the instructor. Those who achieve it in varying degrees are generally known on any campus; those who do not are also known" ("Observations on University Teaching," p. 6).

Charles R. Middleton teaches English history and is the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.

Active Learning in the University: An Inquiry into Inquiry *Some Personal and Philosophical Perspectives*

Martin Bickman

I have always disliked the complacency of the couplet with which Robert Frost ends his early sonnet "Into My Own." The poet imagines himself disappearing into an endless forest, pursued by a party of friends who eventually catch up with him:

They would not find me changed from him they knew—
Only more sure of all I thought was true.

So it is with embarrassment that I find myself in a similar position as I reflect on my own journey as a teacher for almost two decades. This is not the story of a radical teacher become more sensibly moderate as he gets older, wiser, and tenured. Rather, it is the story of one who has returned with even more conviction to the attitudes and methods of what we called in the late sixties "open education" or "the free school movement." More exactly, it is the story of someone who only in the past three years has been able to turn these ideals into any kind of sustained practical effectiveness in the university classroom, and who wants to share some of his discoveries with his colleagues. This article also will explore some broader philosophical and institutional implications, and make some modest proposals as to how both students and faculty can approach the learning situation in more venturesome, lively, and productive ways.

Since one thing I have had to learn and relearn is that the deepest knowledge—however abstractly it is eventually formulated—evolves out of direct experiences, I will ask your indulgence for relating some of the personal background that shaped my approach to teaching. Much of my insistence that education be in itself an engaging activity, a living experience instead of just preparation for life, can be traced to the boredom and repression of my own schooling in Boston. Jonathan Kozol, who was to become my colleague in the Roxbury Basic Reading Program, wrote a book based on his experiences as a teacher in this system, *Death at an Early Age: The Destruction of the Hearts and Minds of Negro Children in the Boston Public Schools*, a title that seems melodramatic only before one reads the book. As a fairly docile white child, I was not subjected to the physical brutality Kozol describes, but the reigning atmosphere was one of intimidation and quiet grimness, particularly for a left-handed boy who constantly reversed his letters and numbers and could never master Palmer penmanship.

Later I took a series of busses, subways, and trolleys in an hour-long trek across the city to attend Boston Latin

School, the oldest high school in the country. Whenever one criticized the school to elders, one would hear that it had lapsed from its glory days—presumably when the students were predominantly yankee instead of the current ethnic stew of Irish, Blacks, Jews, and Italians—but still retained much of its tough academic standards and commitment to learning. It was with satisfaction, then, that I later read the journals of some of the more eminent earlier Latin School graduates, such as Ralph Waldo Emerson and James Freeman Clarke, who found the school in their time as intellectually dead and deadening as I did. For them, as for me, one's real education took place outside of the institution of school. As Emerson wrote: "The four college years and the three years' course of Divinity have not yielded me so many grand facts as some idle books under the bench at the Latin School." Although in my senior year I had translated the first four books of the *Aeneid*, it was not until college that I learned that the work was written in verse and that it had some cultural significance; I had known it only as a collection of datives and past participles used to discipline restless adolescents. In retrospect, and with the help of analyses such as Peter Schrag's *Village School Downtown*, it became clear that the last thing the Boston schools wanted to do was to help their students think but rather to "build character," to produce good, obedient citizens—a sort of boot camp for life's drudgery and monotony. While clearly the training didn't take in my case, I also did not immediately act or act out, but internalized my resentment in ways that may have kept it smoldering, a situation that was not the best for my immediate psychological health but kept me from fleeing the classroom completely. In my case, as I suspect in many others, an impulse for reform and revolution has been closely intertwined with an impulse for revenge or with the impossible goal of setting the past right.

My involvement on the other side of education began as an undergraduate volunteer with social action groups like the Northern Student Movement and the Commonwealth Service Corps. As teachers and tutors, we tried both to help the children we worked with survive in their inner city schools but also to provide them a chance to learn in a situation that was not intimidating and punitive. We found our students not to be the intractable, "culturally deprived" children that the school systems complained of, but alert and eager learners in the right circumstances. We came to feel that the schools themselves were at fault, not only for being inefficient but for being perversely obtuse and deliberately repressive. These conclusions were both

shaped and given expression by a series of books published in the late sixties, of which the most eloquent and powerful are George Dennison's *The Lives of Children*, James Herndon's *The Way It Spoiled To Be*, Herbert Kohl's *Thirty-six Children*, and Miriam Wasserman's *The School Fix, NYC, USA*. One of the most dramatic instances of the effects of traditional schooling is Dennison's example of Jose, who, when he entered school could read Spanish but not English, and after six years was unable to read either language. It was no wonder that the epigraph to John Holt's *How Children Fail* had such resonance for us: "If we taught children to speak, they'd never learn."

Although this sense that the schools did not need merely improvement—e.g. more teachers, more money—but radical restructuring came from direct experience and observation, it was made more acute and urgent by larger political and social contexts. Our antiauthoritarianism and distrust of institutions per se were sharpened by a government that was reneging on civil rights commitments and turning Vietnam into a smoking desert, a government that—we had learned in our schoolbooks—never fought an unjust war and never lost one. Many remember this time as one of turmoil and disruption, but it was also one of hopes and of beginnings.

The words of Emerson are again especially appropriate: "There are always two parties, the Party of the Past and the Party of the Future; the Establishment and the Movement."

And we were for movement—in everything that had been too long established, rigid, customary. Many of us especially concerned with the schools gravitated to the Harvard Graduate School of Education, where, at about the same time, people like Robert Coles, Harvey Cox, Edgar Friedenberg, John Holt, and James Moffett were teaching courses. Although it was never explicitly planned or articulated as such, the attack on traditional schooling was to be two-pronged: the infiltration of the existing systems by teachers who would subvert and convert them, and the setting up of alternative schools—in city storefronts or old farmhouses—whose successes would serve as models for what more liberated approaches to education could do. We were heartened by previous successes from the work of Maria Montessori and Sylvia Ashton-Warner to, more recently, the move toward more open, experiential learning in the primary schools of central England, and American adaptations such as that of Lillian Weber in the corridors of the New York City schools.

It is difficult to say exactly what happened to all our energies and good intentions. My own first regular teaching position in a large suburban high school could be scored Establishment 1, Movement 0. I was a poor disciplinarian—partly because of my own nature, partly because I could never take most of the rules I was supposed to enforce seriously—and thus lost the respect not only of my colleagues but of many of my students.

While many of my fellow teachers were basically kind and well-meaning, they devoted more effort to trying to make an unworkable system work than to helping students learn. My department head, who held a Ph.D. in English, spent more time ripping the always reappearing *Playboy* centerfolds from the ceiling of the boys' lavatory than teaching. (Friedenberg has noted that there are more kinds of lavatories in the public high school than there were in the Confederate Navy.) It was a formidable task for a student to enter the school library, especially if one's pass was not filled out exactly right. Ironically, children in the lower grades of the same school system had more autonomy and more individualized instruction; parents, teachers, and administrators were more willing to experiment with open schooling at this level, but as college admissions time approached, so did timidity and insecurity.

My next position, at the Lincoln School, a high school for gifted disadvantaged students supported by the state of Kentucky, allowed both the kids and the teachers more freedom. I became even more aware of how the institution itself shapes student behavior. At my previous school, two teachers were always on "lunchroom patrol," maintaining order by such tactics as allowing no more than four students at a table. As a result, order was always tenuously, uneasily, and only temporarily attained, with the threat of minor disruptions, often involving the aerodynamics of jello, always in the air. At Lincoln, it had apparently never occurred to anyone to set up such a patrol, and consequently there was never any need for one. Schools like my first were always drawing arbitrary lines in the sand, and daring their adolescent charges to cross them.

More importantly, the teachers at Lincoln had much more control over what and how they would teach. Towards the end of the year, I found myself increasingly abandoning the usual classroom structure and helping the students set up their own programs as individuals or in groups. I did, though, have several atypical advantages: it was a residential school and I lived on campus; the school had a full and accessible library as well as a budget with which we could get paperback titles within a few days; my colleagues also encouraged independent work, so I was not always swimming against the current. But one of the things we were unable to teach—perhaps because we had so little of it ourselves—was tact in politically sensitive situations. During the national anthem at a basketball game with the local high school, some of our students chose to give the Black Power salute, some the peace sign, some the one-finger salute. The Kentucky legislature meets only briefly and generally moves slowly, but Lincoln was closed with lightning speed and an ordinance passed that no school could ever again be set up on its accursed ground.

In some ways my own experience was a microcosm of the fate of the free school movement of the late sixties; we lost most of the immediate skirmishes, mainly by shooting

ourselves in the feet. Most of the free schools closed within three years either because of financial troubles or intramural squabbling or hardened into their own kinds of conventionalism. Some of us who did enter the public schools were effective—unlike myself—but too many of them left in frustration, burned themselves out, or were fired. Harvard undermined its own radical visions by succumbing to a kind of impatient elitism. The M.A.T. program was discontinued shortly after I graduated on the grounds that the education school could make greater strides by training administrators and supervisors rather than classroom teachers. Ironically, it was in courses there that I first read many of the books written by classroom teachers such as John Holt and Sylvia Ashton-Warner, and realized that there is a paradox in trying to impose openness and autonomy from the top of a system down.

I have sketched this background to suggest both the continuities and differences between the open education movement of the sixties and seventies and my current concern for what I have called here “active learning.” (I still feel uncomfortable with this term, because it’s a tautology—like “water swimming,” or “dirty politics”). In the more politically polarized atmosphere of the past and in my own need to separate myself from parental and societal authorities I was more interested in freedom, autonomy, self-direction in the classroom for their own sakes, as ultimate goals. Now I tend to see them more as a means to the end of more productive and intense learning situations. My commitment is less overtly ideological, more pragmatic, and yet at the same time more epistemologically self-conscious. I have no difficulty now with appearing paternalistic or even coercive in some aspects of my teaching—required class attendance, mandatory writing assignments accepted only on time—in the service of structuring my courses so that the students will learn more actively. And while I still chafe under the traditional grading system, I do not hesitate to use it in the competition with other courses for my students’ time and attention.

What has increasingly become my guiding principle is that active learning is not merely another approach or method to cover the same material, but the only way students can achieve real knowledge. I am still a radical, but primarily in the sense of going to the root issue of what learning is. I feel that the student who works out a problem or an interpretation by herself or himself has not just taken more time than the one who watches a professor do the work in front of the class. Even if the final formulations are exactly the same, the former knows where the knowledge comes from, how it works, what its ontological status is, what its uses and limits are. For to have knowledge is to make it, to construct it, not to record, absorb, or memorize it. What William James said of Louis Agassiz is true for everyone: “No one sees further into a generalization than his own knowledge of details extends” (Allen, p. 111).

If I had to distill the problem with current university teaching in one sentence, I would point to the fallacy that something can be taught merely by being told, that education is simply the transmission of already formulated facts and concepts from the teacher’s notes to the student’s notes and then back to the teacher again in the form of exam answers. Although we know better on a deeper level—after all, college professors by some means or other have all become effective learners themselves—in our teaching practice we lapse into the notion that there can be such a thing as what Imre Kakatos terms “instant learning” (p. 174). Part of our problem is that our ends forget their beginnings—a particularly ironic kind of amnesia at a research institution—and we come to think of an “idea” as a thing, a static entity that is somewhat coterminous with its formulation rather than an activity of the mind encountering something else (or itself). Perhaps this reification can be blamed on our grammar—the fact that “idea,” “concept,” “mind,” and “fact” are nouns—but the problem is more deeply rooted in our schoolmarmish and positivistic ideas about ideas. As Peter Elbow puts it, summarizing “cognitive psychologists’ functional, process-oriented model of the mind”:

Ideas aren’t things or even truths that the mind sits in the middle and knows, but rather activities that follow certain rules; or the dispositions to perform such activities. And the mind isn’t a thing or place or a knower but is the shape of those activities or rules. (p. 11)

At the center of the model that Elbow refers to is the work of Piaget, whose comments on the relation of what psychologists know about learning to the actual practice of pedagogy deserve quotation at length:

The essential functions of intelligence consist in understanding and in inventing, in other words in building up structures by structuring reality. . . . Whereas the older theories of intelligence (empirical associationism, etc.) emphasized understanding and looked upon invention as the mere discovery of already existing realities, more recent theories, on the other hand, increasingly verified by facts, subordinate understanding to invention, looking upon the latter as the expression of a continual construction process building up structured wholes. . . . The fact that intelligence derives from action, an interpretation in conformity with the French-speaking psychological tradition of the past few decades, leads up to this fundamental consequence: even in its higher manifestations, when it can only make progress by using the instruments of thought, intelligence still consists in executing and coordinating actions, though in an interiorized and reflexive form. (pp. 27-29)

In other words, and grammar is on our side here, “to know” is by definition an active verb. This Piagetian view of how the mind creates knowledge dovetails with constructivism, a contemporary philosophical movement

that, as Jerome Bruner suggests in his most recent book, *Actual Minds, Possible Worlds*, has powerful potential for reuniting philosophy with psychology. The two most important tenets of constructivism for our inquiry are that *what* we know depends on *how* we come to know it and that knowledge we construct does not so much *match* an external reality as *fit* it.

I will use an example first given by Paul Watzlawick (pp. 14-15) to illustrate both of these related ideas: It was a dark and stormy night. A sea captain without charts has managed to steer his ship through a long, narrow, dangerous channel. The very fact that he has survived proves his course did not directly conflict with the actual shape of the strait, but it also does not give us the only or the best course or the exact topography; in other words, in a functional sense, his course worked or “fit” the existing reality but did not necessarily map or “match” it. Most of our hypotheses and formulations have a similar status. We make them not in a vacuum but with certain goals in specific contexts. And only by making them ourselves can we be fully aware of their provisional nature, of the amount of hunch, serendipity, blind luck, false starts involved. As one of Zora Neale Hurston’s characters says, “You got tuh *go* there tuh *know* there” (p. 285). To return to Bruner’s title, there are a range of possible “worlds” that “fit.” Two common errors of traditional education are to make students think the world(s) we present to them in our courses really “match,” i.e., correlate directly with the structure of reality, and to simply give them our own final formulations, saving them the effort of making their own knowledge. For, as I have suggested, knowing is a set of active processes—perceiving, creating, inventing, formulating, articulating, and not necessarily in this or any other linear order. Truman Capote once harshly said of Jack Kerouac’s work that *it’s not writing, it’s typing*. Capote, I feel, was wrong here, but I have to say just as harshly of our educational efforts that most of it is not teaching, it’s talking.

Clearly, I did not at some point reach these formulations about learning and then try to put them into practice; rather they evolved in an interplay with my own teaching experiences, and when I could find confirmation and conceptualization of them in other writers such as Piaget and the constructivists, I shamelessly and eagerly appropriated them. The notion of evolution, though, is also misleading, for I think I could be teaching for 20 more years without making much more progress if it were not for a restructuring of my own teaching situation which I will describe in the next section.

Before I go on to describe my own experiences and methods in detail—which of necessity will be mainly about the English classroom—I do want to speak to the issue of active inquiry across the curriculum. When I have spoken about my methods to people outside my discipline, a

frequent response is that my methods may work in my own field, which lends itself particularly to individual interpretation and to process rather than content, but what about those in the hard sciences where we are trying to impart a certain body of knowledge in a limited amount of time? My answer is that I do not believe that one discipline is more susceptible than another to active learning; while my own particular methods may not be directly transferable, but may serve only as suggestive analogues, certainly there is no subject or discipline that naturally or intrinsically lends itself to the lecture format. Indeed, I would argue that it is even more important in the “harder” fields to give students a sense of where concepts and formulations come from, to make their learning experiential and active. I leave the specifics of this argument, though, to an extremely successful physics professor, Arnold Arons, whose article “Teaching Science” is cited in the bibliography, and to a briefer piece on teaching mathematics by G. Stephen Monk. Although I discovered the Arons piece after most of my own sections here were written, I agree completely with his vision of teaching, however strident and aggressive his tone may sometimes be. I dissociate myself only from his last section, where he is unduly cautious and pessimistic about what can be done in large courses. Indeed, the article by Monk speaks directly to what can actually be achieved by restructuring the typical large lecture classes.

Teaching Teaching

Three years ago I offered a graduate course with the pretentious title “Critical Theory and the Teaching of Literature.” It is now called simply “Teaching Literature,” but the original title reflects an immediate impetus for the course. Some recent developments in literary theory seemed to me to have deep and wide ranging implications for the teaching of English. Some French writers—sometimes grouped under the labels Poststructuralists or Deconstructionists—were taking aim at the very notion of interpreting. According to them, to offer an interpretation of a text is to do violence upon it, to impose one’s own will, to project a unity and coherence that the text could not possibly have. This polysemous quality is due not to the particularly ambiguous and emotive nature of literary language, as some earlier critics had posited, but to the very nature of language itself, which can never precisely or simply mean what an author or critic might want it to. A text is always at odds with itself, more profitably viewed as a field of competing meanings with modes that tend to untie themselves. Less self-consciously radical but more potentially fruitful for pedagogy is the work of other theorists interested of what has come to be known as “reader response.” In reaction to earlier critics who saw the main locus of meaning as the text itself (a reader’s “subjec-

tive” responses were often ruled out of court as partaking of “the affective fallacy”), most reader response theorists see the meaning of the text created in the interaction or transaction between the reader and the text. What I found disappointing in their work, though, was the scarcity of real readers; often an “ideal reader,” an “implied reader,” or a “narratee” was posited, leaving actual student readers and the teaching situation just as untouched as in traditional criticism.

Aside from these new developments, there were some tenets and attitudes that virtually all English teachers share but were rarely realized in a classroom. We all know that literature is emotional as well as cognitive, but we rarely allow time and space for the expression of feelings. It is, by the way, my hypothesis that everything the mind thinks has an affective aspect, a hypothesis supported by recent brain research. We all in some way or another acknowledge that literature generates a number of divergent responses, but in the classroom we usually work to get to some kind of convergence of closure before the period ends. And in the classrooms of both the older and the newer critics, the structures of authority and the patterns of interaction remain as unimaginative—and usually as unconscious—as ever.

In retrospect, I’m sure my own course would have ended up on the dustbin of theory and pious hypothesizing if it had not been built around an undergraduate class for whose teaching we all shared responsibility. As a graduate class, we met for an hour immediately after the undergraduate class to analyze it in terms of current theories about reading and meaning, to talk about what we did wrong, and to plan the next class. We also read carefully, and often as a group, the undergraduates’ written responses, so in effect the undergraduate class became the primary “text” for the graduate class. Before I describe what we learned from observing the undergraduate class, I want to note that the graduate students worked with much more motivation, responsibility, and intellectual intensity than in the more traditional graduate course I had taught. A partial reason for this was self-selection—students who took a course in which they knew they would have to put themselves on the line by teaching in front of a jury of their peers tended more to be risk-takers, to tolerate pressure in order to learn, and to be more open and flexible. But the structure itself produced an atmosphere where ideas were important because they had to be transformed into action, and vice-versa, and where cooperative effort was clearly much more appropriate and effective than competition.

The Lecture

“Lecture” comes from the Latin *lectio*, a noun related to the verb *legere*, “to read.” In the great medieval universities, when books had to be painstakingly copied by hand, one

of the main functions of a lecture was to disseminate book knowledge orally. One might expect, then, that after Gutenberg and certainly after Xerox that this format would be less widely used in university education. And yet it endures; it may even prevail. It has survived the severest kind of scorn, such as Ezra Pound’s comment: “The lecturer is a man who must talk for an hour. France may possibly have acquired the intellectual leadership of Europe when their academic period was cut down to forty minutes” (p. 83).

One of the first things the graduate students taught me was the huge gap between my perceptions of my own lecturing and what was really going on, an immediate example of how important it is to have observers not confined to the roles of teacher or student. As I lectured and looked around the classroom, I consistently saw upturned, interested faces. But I did not realize how much my looking affected the very behavior I was trying to see, how I was enacting a kind of Heisenberg principle. John Holt has described the process well:

A teacher in the class is like a man in the woods at night with a powerful flashlight in his hand. Wherever he turns his light, the creatures on whom it shines are aware of it, and do not behave as they do in the dark. . . . Shine where he will, he can never know very much of the night life of the woods. (pp. 33-34)

But it was not simply this perceptual difficulty that created the gap. The difference also has to do with the inherent differences between talking and listening, between being able to move about and being confined to a seat, between being a lecturer and a lecturee. I blush to say it, but I was never bored or tired by my own lectures—even when I had to fill up the hour and a quarter slot of our Tuesday/Thursday courses. And yet I know I cannot keep my mind from wandering during the same length of time when listening to even an excellent lecture by someone else. As Clark Bouton and Russell Garth put it:

The active role of the teacher in the traditional classroom contrasts sharply with the passive role of the students. It is not surprising that teaching is the best learning. The teacher’s activity makes the traditional method a very effective method of learning—for the teacher. (p. 78)

This realization helped explain why often what I thought were the most brilliantly original parts of my lectures lagged the most for the students: I was thinking things out for the first time, discovering what I hadn’t fully seen before, but these ideas by their very nature weren’t yet in a form that was particularly clear or incisive to my listeners. These were also my most enthusiastic moments of lecturing, but they clearly were not the ones that created the most enthusiasm in the students. I mention this for those who think enthusiasm works like a virus: if the teacher is

enthusiastic those in proximity will catch the bug. Although I had frequently made stabs at running discussions, particularly after my own lectures, my basic stance toward teaching was similar to what Stephen Monk describes:

Any mathematician will tell you that there is only one way to learn mathematics, and that is to do mathematics. From what I knew about my own lectures and from what I gathered about quiz sections and office hours, my TAs and I spent all the time telling students how we did mathematics. Their job was to imitate us when they did the homework. The message was that learning was to take place not on course time, but on their own time, away from teachers and away from one another. (p. 8)

The implication of all this—particularly as the graduate students began to do their own teaching—became evident. Why should we hoard all the wealth and shoulder all the responsibility? Why have just one person prepare for a class when every student could benefit from such preparation?

Before moving on to the alternatives to lecturing, I want to make a few more observations. One thing I thought I noticed in lecturing to this mixed group of undergraduates taking the course and graduate students observing it was that although the lectures were designed for the undergraduates and they were the ones most “responsible” for the material, it was the graduate students who seemed to be more deeply engaged as well as critically analytical. Since as suggested a lecturer should take his own perceptions of how he is received with a few pounds of salt, I checked this perception out with each group, both in conferences and class settings, and feel it is accurate. Although more work needs to be done here, the graduate students and I came to strongly suspect that the typical classroom structure of a university education is a pyramid that has been perversely inverted. It is our graduate students—as well, probably, as upper-level students in their own specialties—who can benefit from lectures the most. Aside from being more familiar with the professor’s modes of discourse, they have done enough work in the field themselves to sort out facts from informed opinion from playful speculation. To borrow a concept from Vygotsky, the “Zone of Proximal Development,” “the distance between the actual development level as determined by individual problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving through guidance” (p. 86), is more conducive for learning. Most teachers do not know enough about their beginning students to aim their lectures within this zone, and even if they did, there may be such variance among these students that the task is impossible from the outset.

What I am suggesting, then, is that if we need to give large courses where lecturing seems more appropriate we try to cluster them at the higher rather than the introduc-

tory levels of our disciplinary sequences. The main problem is student demographics—thousands of students may want to or have to take introductory courses while only a few may want to follow more specialized developments. And yet under scrutiny even this may be an artificial imposition. The introductory course in psychology, for example, here and in many other large universities, is something of a smorgasbord—a few weeks on the history of the field, on perception, cognition, social, clinical, etc. The students are given the impression—both through explicit statements and the very format of the course—that psychology is a unified field of study with scholars good-naturedly dividing up parts of the same elephant of the psyche. And yet not only are many psychologists studying different things; they come to that study with radically differing methodologies and epistemologies, most often at complete odds with each other. And again, these methodologies and the differences between them become comprehensible and significant only when the students work with them. So our “introductory” psychology courses could well be replaced by separate, smaller courses that follow a more focused inquiry in more depth with a larger course surveying the whole field and confronting the differences in a more intellectually honest way at the junior or senior level.

I should also mention that as far as my own lectures go I have not succumbed to complete abstinence. I still give lectures, although usually for no more than 30 minutes at a time and those times distributed throughout the semester. For one thing, it is difficult to give up completely the narcissistic satisfaction of having an entire roomful of people, an ideal captive audience, listening—or appearing to listen—to your every word. More important for the class, it gives me a forum where I can just say what I feel needs saying or what I want to say about a book or an author without trying to slip these ideas into or otherwise distort what should be truly open-ended discussions. Further, I ask my students to speak out clearly and strongly as part of the work of the course, and this charge carries a little more moral suasion if the instructor puts himself or herself on the line occasionally, however dubious the actual learning value may be.

There is one more reason for lecturing often mentioned as helpful by both the undergraduates and graduates but about which I am more dubious—that of giving “information” or “background.” But as suggested in the first paragraph of this section and as the research seems to support (Bowman, Thompson), the lecture is one of the least efficient methods for doing this. I sometimes run off for my classes authors’ biographies from a book like *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*. And while there is usually in each of these biographies a few points that I feel are omitted or overemphasized, it takes far less time to speak briefly in class to these points than to repeat the large amount of material with which I do concur. Further,

increasingly I've been able to find good short films on some of the authors I teach, such as *Emily Dickinson: A Certain Slant of Light*, which our media center owns, that make a greater impact on students than my own lectures.

To explain a last legitimate use I have for lecturing, I will have to get ahead of myself a bit. What we have found as the best alternative to the lecture format is the structured and prepared discussion—structured by the instructor by specific questions on which the students are to write, prepared for by each student in that act of writing. To run an entire class discussion without the students doing this writing is inevitably to have a discussion without the energy, depth of thought, and participation of the prepared discussions, an experience not only unpleasant in itself but sometimes inhibiting and demoralizing to a class' entire sense of being able to discuss productively with each other. To avoid burnout, though, and sometimes outright mutiny, one has to give students some vacations from writing, and the lecture format seems to work just as well—or just as poorly—if the student has not written for the class.

Writing for Each Class

It is impossible to overstate the importance of student writing in creating active learning. As the topic is positioned in this article, one might think that the main reason for having students write is to improve class discussion. And while I think it is the crucial tool for this, I am also convinced that if one were to teach a traditional lecture course and make the single change of having the students write for each class, the quality and nature of that course would be radically improved. Indeed, I taught one senior-level class recently, where, for a number of reasons—the class size of 50, the personality mix of students, my own ineptness in this case—the class discussions more often than not floundered. In an attempt to pull us out of our slough, I found myself spending an increasing amount of time constructing and responding to the writing assignments. The success of this extra effort in improving the classes themselves was barely perceptible, but the shift in focus saved the course for everybody. It was more highly rated by students than my two other courses that semester, which I had felt were going better in the classroom. On the item about how much of learning experience the course was, the students rated it an A+ (3.92 on a scale of 4.0), and on the space for comments under the most effective aspects of the course, the written work was most frequently cited.

As mentioned, in one way or another we've all managed to become effective learners, so we can often get important clues for improving our teaching by observing carefully our own work habits. In preparing for a lecture, no one I know just reads and thinks. The real work is done on paper,

whether we make notes and outlines, or actually write the lecture in sentences and paragraphs. In doing so, we acknowledge that writing is not merely the setting down of what we already know, of what is already in our heads, but is itself a method of discovery, a way of knowing. We push our vague, fuzzy thoughts to clarity; we find the very act of writing makes us articulate things we didn't know we knew. As W.H. Auden has said, "How can I know what I think till I see what I say?"

In an even deeper sense, my own experiences as a teacher have convinced me that knowledge is not truly one's own unless it is articulated. I have heard it said that you don't really know something unless you can articulate it; I would go further to say you don't really know it *until* you articulate it. Before it is written or spoken our knowledge remains locked in our own subjectivity, shadowy and inert. As we shape it into words, numbers, formulae, it becomes objective, something external scrutinize, examine, revise. Robert Scholes has pointed out a resonant analogy between teaching and psychoanalysis. In the latter, an insight has much more power to heal, to change a patient when it is actually articulated by that patient than when it is spoken by the therapist and only then given assent. Scholes goes on to discuss the writing the student does about a literary text:

Specifically, the text we produce is ours in a deeper and more essential way than any text we receive from the outside. When we read we do not possess the text in any permanent way. But when we make an interpretation we do add to our store of knowledge—and what we add is not the text itself but our own interpretation of it. In literary interpretation we possess only what we create. I hope I am saying nothing new here, only articulating what every teacher of literature has always known: that it is no use giving students interpretations; that they must make them for themselves; that the student's productivity is the culmination of the pedagogical process. (pp. 4-5)

The philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer is even more emphatic:

To understand a text is to come to understand oneself in a kind of dialogue. This contention is confirmed by the fact that the concrete dealing with a text yields understanding only when what is said in the text begins to find expression in the interpreters' own language. Interpretation belongs to the essential unity of understanding. One must take up into himself what is said to him in such fashion that it speaks and finds an answer in the words of his own language. (p. 57)

In the past few years those who have wanted to reunite reading and writing in my own discipline have made the point often and convincingly that the act of reading and the act of writing are essentially both acts of interpretation; to return to Piaget, to construe is to construct, to understand

is to invent. Writing about what one has read moves the whole process into a fuller dimension and makes the act of reading more active, more deliberate, more intense, and more relevant to none's immediate experience.

I would refocus Scholes' formulations only to suggest that writing is not simply the "culmination," but the central means and medium. It is as basic to the humanities and the social sciences as what Monk calls "doing math" is to his discipline. An English course in which only two or three written assignments are made is like a painting course where students meet in the studio only once a month. Most often, the amount of writing we assign is dictated by the amount we think we can read and still maintain our sanity; we often give less writing to large classes—although often these are the classes that need it most, since there is less opportunity for discussion. The graduate class in teaching gave us a chance to switch the criterion to the amount of writing that would actually be best for the undergraduates, since there were enough of us to divide the task of reading assignments without overburdening any one of us. Like many of our experiments, this at first seemed feasible only in our unusual situation, but with modifications became just as workable as we returned to our regular classroom situation. We saw, for example, that there really is no reason to read every word each student writes for every class. We can sample in a number of ways, such as reading the set of assignments only for some classes not announced beforehand or reading the assignments of a handful of students for each class. I prefer the latter, since I want some feedback on every assignment I construct, but all kinds of variations are workable. Even more effective is to have the students exchange and comment upon each other's work regularly. In any case the students should be encouraged to save, reread, summarize, edit, and draw connections and conclusions among their own assignments through formal papers or other tasks that ask them specifically to do this.

After a good deal of experimentation, the format for writing we've found most effective is something that has come to be known as the worksheet, although I would prefer to think of it as a playsheet. Basically, this is a list of questions to which the students are asked to respond informally, as if they were writing first drafts or journals, without worrying overmuch about spelling, punctuation, and other matters on which their ignorance may have been occasions for previous English teachers to clobber them. The care and imagination with which the instructor structures the worksheet is crucial. The findings of Bouton and Garth have confirmed what we had more impressionistically discovered in the graduate class:

Simply stated, effective learning groups seem to have two major elements: first, an active learning process promoted

by student conversation in groups; second, faculty expertise and guidance provided through structured tasks. (p. 73)

I try to bring to bear on constructing the worksheets all the insight and knowledge that I would previously have tried to dispense during the class hour itself. The greatest challenge is, though, to have the worksheets structured but still open-ended. The problem with several "discovery" approaches to learning is that what the students are supposed to discover is predetermined and carefully controlled; the fix is already in. This problem and some tentative solutions are discussed in more detail in a later section here and in the introductory portions of my *Approaches to Teaching Herman Melville's Moby Dick*, but we should examine them in terms of an actual worksheet.

My example is the first worksheet reproduced in the appendix, the one centered on Wallace Stevens's poem "Gubbinal":

That strange flower, the sun,
Is just what you say.
Have it your way.

The world is ugly
And the people are sad.

That tuft of jungle feathers.
The animal eye,
Is just what you say.

That savage of fire,
The seed,
Have it your way.

The world is ugly,
And the people are sad.

Earlier in my career I might have asked the class first what Stevens is suggesting here about the relation of language to perception. And I would have gotten the skimpy, vague generalities the question deserved. To say that this poem is about the power of articulation to shape our experience would not be wrong; it would just be banal and superficial. The worksheet asks the students not to simply find out what the poem means, to get to its bottom line, but to immerse themselves in it imaginatively. Questions about individual words and images are deliberately meant to make the reading more deliberate, to slow it down enough to allow the poem to resonate through the imagination. While there are no "right" answers to questions like "Are the images related? Is there a progression through the poem?," they are important in having the student see *how* one does—or does not—make meaning out of a poem. To ask, for example, how the sun is a *strange* flower, is to at once draw the students into the texture of the poem and to

generate a series of disparate responses. Some students seize upon the visual qualities of an orb that appears to radiate lines, as in a child's drawing of the sun. Others are more emotive, talking about feelings of natural freshness they associate with both. Others are more conceptual and scientific as they talk about both participating in cycles or growing from small beginnings. Even students who see no resemblances can help to underscore how the sun can be described as a *strange* flower. The very act of producing and sharing responses gives the students an intrinsic knowledge of what it means to say the "the sun,/ Is just what you say," a knowledge that they can then be asked to articulate.

To reiterate some of the ideas of the first section, generalizations about how metaphor works or how language can alter our sense of the world are intelligible to the student only to the extent to which these ideas emerge from and relate back to one's own experiences of metaphor and language. I have found Stevens' poetry particularly appropriate and helpful in easing students into the worksheet situation for several reasons. As the discussion above suggests, his poetry tends towards self-reflection; in a playful way it examines its own workings. And although all poetry does this to some extent, it is particularly aggressive in challenging and in involving the reader as a participant in the making of meaning. As David Walker has noted, a Stevens' poem often is "a poem whose rhetoric establishes its own incompleteness; it is presented not as completed discourse but as a structure that invites the reader to project himself or herself into its world, and thus to verify it as contiguous with reality" (p. 18). In other words, the student's own act of interpretation is not something added or superimposed, but becomes a key that "fits"—nothing but the poem itself would "match"—and unlocks the meanings. Further, Stevens writes at a level of difficulty that is just beyond the grasp of most students when they first read the poems, yet comes just within their reach as they begin writing about them. In response to the second worksheet in the appendix, the ones on Stevens' "The Comedian as the Letter C," the majority of students began with some statement to the effect that they had no idea what was going on in the poem, and then proceeded to write a couple of pages that contained some very powerful insights into it. Indeed, it is exciting for a teacher to see a student's mind unfold through the course of a worksheet and the course of a semester. One frequent movement is the students' increasing use of them to work things out for themselves—mnemonics such as diagrams, charts, drawings appear more often. A related trend is that worksheets get longer—sometimes six or seven pages—far beyond what a student would have to write just to please the teacher. In one class—admittedly an Honors Department seminar—the students felt lost in their class readings when I suspended worksheets so they could work on their

term projects, and asked me to reinstate them on a voluntary basis.

To say more about the relation of the worksheets to other kinds of course writing, I must recount one of our perennial surprises in the graduate class, the dullness of the students' first formal papers compared to their worksheets: for if we had only the formal papers to go on, as most teachers do, we would come to the same harsh judgment—that students cannot read, write, think critically, or whatever students are currently not supposed to be able to do. As in the classroom itself, to measure something is to change it. And whatever pleas and disclaimers I make before the papers are due, the situation itself activates the mindset with which students have approached the task in previous courses. Students that are lively and original in their worksheets—and most of them become so quickly—suddenly revert to a discourse that is stilted, tentative, vacuous. One gets introductions that begin with the nature of the universe and funnel down to some nearly tautological thesis statement, conclusions that merely reprint the topic sentence of each previous paragraph. The act of writing often becomes again for students an adversary situation, where the student's goal is to go get as quickly as possible through the minefield with the minimum of red ink exploding in one's face.

Since our initial shocks, we have found ways to ease students into the formal writing situation more naturally, having them read their drafts out loud to each other and revise them in small groups. But the disparities we found are instructive, and the reasons for them go beyond the procrustean forms of organization through which many students are taught to write and the error-centered approach by which they are graded. More fundamental are the premature demands placed on student writing for something called "clarity." When I go over papers and point out to students some elements in the text that seem to run counter to their "thesis," a frequent response is: "Well, I saw that, but it would have wrecked my whole paper to put it in." In our demands that students be clear, be immediately intelligible at tachistoscope speed, we often encourage their own impatience with complexities and contradictions, with the difficulties of process in order to crank out some kind of gradable product on time. The situation is exacerbated when writing becomes a separate course isolated from genuine academic inquiry and narrowly focused on issues of form and rhetorical strategy. For, to paraphrase Robert Frost, no discovery in the writer, no discovery in the reader. If the student is not actively engaged in learning something new but forced to write, say, a description of a room or a comparison-contrast paper on "anything," the prose, however neat and correct, is going to be deadly. The views of David Bartholomae and Anthony Petrosky are a welcome alternative:

It's this lesson that we want to teach students: that reading and writing begin in confusion, anxiety and uncertainty; that they are driven by chance and intuition as much as they are by deliberate strategy or conscious intent: and that certainty and authority are postures, features of performance that are achieved through an act of speaking or writing; they are not qualities of vision that precede such performance. (p. 105)

In helping students to write, then, we don't want to have them excise their most problematical writing but instead to push even harder on those knots, where the deepest kind of insights are likely to emerge.

Running Discussions

Even when we began using worksheets regularly I think we underestimated or overlooked some of the ways in which they improved classroom discussion. At an early stage, for example, I remember writing a worksheet on Denise Levertov's poem "Stepping Westward." I asked the kinds of detailed questions and invited the kinds of imaginative reconstructions as in the "Gubbinal" worksheet, but I covered only the first half of the poem. I felt once the discussion pump was primed, it would keep flowing; once we got into the poem we could do the rest of the work right there in class. The results were disastrously instructive. All the air hissed out of the discussion as soon as we came to the end of the worksheet questions; the second half of the class became one of those awkward times when the instructor can either admit defeat by talking on alone or wrench comments from the class with the same ease as a dentist pulling teeth without anesthesia.

How, then do the worksheets shape and create class discussions? The most obvious and important way is in the number and the nature of students participating. The pattern in most of the discussion classes I observe is that the number of students repeatedly speaking ranges from five to ten no matter what the size of the class itself. One reason for this—and I was unaware of the extent until we began to break my classes up into smaller discussion groups—is that many of the nonspeakers just haven't done the reading. I do not mean to bemoan student laziness; it is more that left completely to their own devices, many students prefer to do or end up doing the reading only after the class discussion—a strategy that may work for them as individuals but is unfair to the class as a whole. I often make the worksheets the ticket of admission to class discussions; if students come unprepared, I set off a section of the room, usually a corner, where they begin doing the reading or the writing right there and then. While there is clearly a punitive aspect to this, what I try to stress is the cooperative nature of the class as a place where students should not be allowed to take if they do not have at least the potential to give.

But even if one could insure that every student was prepared, the problem of just a few speakers would still remain, even if not quite as severely. Sometimes the students that do talk are the best in the class, but more often they are just the glibbest or the quickest, not necessarily the deepest thinkers. Preparing the worksheets gives the more deliberate and careful thinkers a chance to articulate their ideas, making them far readier to speak on their own. Further, the act of writing gives them not only an occasion to rehearse but gives them more of a stake in the discussion, increases their commitment to a position they have now formed. And if, as often happens, some of the brightest students are also the shyest, the least self-assured, the worksheets make it easier to call on them or draw them out in other ways with the minimum of embarrassment. I frequently begin classes by going around the room having each student say in a couple of sentences—or read from their sheets if they prefer—what they felt their most significant discovery was. In terms of process, this helps break the ice—everyone has already spoken—and in terms of content it puts a number of fruitful, provoking, often conflicting positions up on the table. After everyone has had a chance to speak, which usually takes no more than ten minutes in a 25-person class, it is sometimes difficult to moderate the flow of students wanting to speak, challenging and building on their classmates' statements.

A question frequently raised in our graduate classes, however, is whether it should be a primary goal to have everyone speak. If the discussion among a few students is animated and productive and if the other students seem to be following in with interest, why push to include everyone? My answer is analogous to my reasons for having everyone write: one learns more by articulating instead of just absorbing. Even students who speak only once or twice in the hour seem more engaged—judging by their expressions and body language—than those who try to be just bystanders. Further, as will be discussed in the next section, there are times in the rhythms of learning that one wants to generate as many and as widely divergent responses as possible, and what one gets from a handful of talkers cannot compare in richness to a symphony from the entire class.

In terms of preparing for the discussion, less important than the worksheets, but still of some significance is the physical setup of the room. The typical classroom formation, the charts according to which the custodians are to restore our rooms, it is one of the most inimical to discussion. All students are pointed at the teacher, and what they most easily see of one another are the backs of their necks. Far more conducive is a circular arrangement where the students naturally face and can turn to each other. There is no "front" of the room, except perhaps for where the teacher is seated, and he or she can alter this as the dynamics warrant by getting up and walking around the

outside of the circle, most often diametrically opposed to student speaking to move the discussion across the entire room.

Beyond worksheets and physical arrangements, though, there are other techniques, strategies, tricks that can help us in running discussions. In fact, I've found it particularly gratifying to work with graduate students and colleagues on these techniques because improvement is so rapid and dramatic. More often than not, it is a matter of giving up bad habits than of learning a new set of complex skills. One of these widespread habits is the hidden agenda, where the teacher really has his own points to make but tries to pull them out of the students instead of saying them directly. As mentioned above, I frequently have to purge myself of this temptation through the catharsis of giving my own mini lectures. Although the agenda itself may be hidden, the fact that there is one soon becomes apparent as student comments are either reinforced or rejected in accordance with their proximity to the teacher's line of thought and not weighed and examined in the open marketplace of class reaction.

Even when teachers renounce their own agendas, they sometimes retain some vestigial habits that inhibit open discussion. The most common of these is the feeling that the teacher must make some kind of response to every student comment, that he or she has to pass judgment or acknowledge in some other way—even with just an “uh-huh” what every student says. This blocks a normal flow of discussion by making the teacher a kind of central switchboard, to which all comments are addressed and only then sent back out to the rest of the class. I sometimes call this the “ping-pong-effect,” where the ball goes back and forth from class to teacher to class again. Having the students move their chairs in the circle pattern does help to break this up somewhat, but it will not entirely solve the problem. Just as we are used to speaking in response to each comment, students are used to speaking directly to us. Sometimes it is helpful, then to explicitly direct students during the first few discussions to speak to the entire class. If this seems too awkward or blunt, one can try the technique of not looking directly at the person speaking but instead out at the other members of the class. While students at first find this disconcerting, they soon get the message and themselves search the room for eye-contact with other students.

The habit of speaking after each student is a special case of our general tendency to talk too much, to not allow enough silence in the classroom and to not make the students themselves feel responsible for breaking the silence. I know what a difficult habit this is to break since even though I recognized the importance of silence from my first year of teaching, I really wasn't able to wait out the students as long as I knew I should until I had a group of graduate students looking over my shoulder, making sure I

practiced what I preached. One thing that helps is realizing that the silences are never as long to the rest of the class as they seem to the teacher who usually feels too much responsibility for them. Another thing to remember is that silence is not a vacuum; people don't stop thinking during silences, and, indeed, they are sometimes necessary for genuine thought to occur. Classes are rarely experienced as slow or boring because of too much silence but more usually because of too much superficiality, of people not really listening to and building on each others' comments.

Once one has learned to let an open discussion happen, though, certain anxieties remain. What happens if it gets too “open,” if students seem to become too diffuse, too anecdotal, too digressive? I used to handle my own feelings about this by mentally allowing each class period 10 minutes of what I thought of as a “bullshit quota” in the interests of keeping the flow of discussion lively and unimpeded. But as I spoke more to my students and the graduate class analyzed its own work, it became clear to me that one person's bullshit is another's insight. A more formal way of conceptualizing this is to use Vygotsky's “Zone of Proximal Development.” A more-advanced student may actually be able to teach a less-advanced student more effectively than a professor because the students speak the same language and are at a closer level of development. What may seem banal or intuitively obvious for the professor, who may have passed this way decades ago and forgotten his own learning processes, may need to be stated, clarified, reiterated, explicated by students for each other. What I've found to be increasingly important for good teaching—more so than intelligence or eloquence—is a kind of steady patience and confidence in the ability of the mind to construct its own orders and create its own patterns.

It is for these reasons that I have come to rely more on small student groups of from four to eight as a way of beginning many classes. The students share their answers to the worksheets, and then, more importantly formulate what questions or issues they feel are still unresolved and which they want to raise with the entire class. It was particularly encouraging to find that the groups could be rigorously tough with each other, and were rarely content with what they felt were partial or glib answers. There is a videotape—available from the Faculty Teaching Excellence Program or from the English Department office—that shows this technique being used in a class of 100 students that Stephen Swords and myself taught.

As this list of suggestions proceeds, it seems to have a teleology that can be described as the withering away of the teacher. And indeed after presenting these techniques at a colloquy for other professors here I was asked what is the University paying me for? I answered that my goal is to become the first Montessori teacher at a university level, that I see my primary task as setting up structures in which

learning will take place. Boulder already has enough gurus. But also behind the snideness of the question there is a suspicion that turns out to be true—that using inquiry methods usually takes less of a professor's time than the traditional methods, especially that of giving lectures for each class meeting. Much more time, of course, is spent preparing for each class session, but that time is distributed in a fairer and more effective way—by all the participants. Hopefully, we can diminish for ourselves what Finkel and Monk have called the “Atlas complex,” where a professor feels he has to shoulder all the weight of responsibility for every aspect of the course.

Convergent and Divergent Thinking

It will be helpful here to talk directly about an issue implicit in the last two sections, the fact that there are various styles and rhythms in the thinking process, although in traditional methods of education we tend to encourage the students to use only one phase, banning the rest to some realm beyond the classroom. Conceptually we talk about analytic vs. synthetic, classical vs. romantic (a formulation used by both Whitehead and Pirsig), logical vs. intuitive, convergent vs. divergent thinking. While these dichotomies are not quite parallel, our assignments and classroom activities have tended to focus almost exclusively on the first term in each pair, although a brief self-examination reveals that for all of us both are necessary for genuine thought, as the diastole and systole of a single process. It is because the divergent—the playful kind of thought that generates a number of possibilities—has been so neglected and stifled that I find I have to deliberately make room for it, create structures to elicit it—in the process of active learning.

One of the intentions, then, of the worksheets, of open discussions, of techniques such as having each student speak at the beginning of the class period, is to increase the number of “answers” and possibilities, to demonstrate how variously a mental task can be approached. Understandably, though, this situation can also generate anxieties in students and teachers—a sense of ever creating more questions and complexities and never reaching any solutions or even momentary stays against confusion, a sense of diffusiveness where the group never builds upon its own work. Again, a couple of specific examples may help.

To give students a sense of the way metaphor, simile, analogy works in poetry, I sometimes use the following poem written by a seventh-grade girl.

Some old people
Are like potatoes,
Mealy, and with eyes
That do not see.
My grandmother is

Like an apple,
Rich with the joys
Of the autumn of life.

An advantage here is that there is no difficulty with any paraphrasable “meaning,” so the students can focus on how the words work, not what they “say.” I ask the students, either on a worksheet or in-class exercise to write down all the ways they can think of that some old people could be like potatoes, supplementing the two examples already given in the poem. We then take about 20 minutes trying to get as many responses as we can on the board, without too much analysis comparison: some are wildly eccentric, say, about someone's old uncle who runs a potato farm, but most are clearly intelligible to the other members of the class, picking up on attributes like wrinkled skin or musty smell. We then do the same with the poet's grandmother and an apple, usually, once the ice—or the crust—is broken, getting more responses in less time.

So far, the activities have been almost exclusively divergent, intuitive, playful, using techniques similar to what in the fifties and sixties was called “brainstorming.” But then I ask the class to look more analytically and self-consciously at what we did to say what they can about the poem and their responses to it. One of the first things usually noted is the fact of divergency itself, how a single analogy can generate so many responses—responses that many in the class had not even envisioned before but that sometimes resonate strongly enough to create even more responses from themselves. We also note that the two analogies in the poem resonate powerfully off each other, so that the effect is not merely additive but multiplying. I often ask students to go through the list again noting which senses were brought into play. If we are lucky all are—sight, touch, smell, taste, hearing—but even if not, students sense how the experience of poetry is richly sensuous, how it is a means of relating the concreteness of the physical world to less tangible worlds of thought and emotion.

In practice, of course, it never works neatly that part of a class is divergent, the next part convergent, nor would one want it to be so. Invariably we get involved in questions like whether all those connections are really “in” the poem or whether we are reading them in, questions that stay with us the entire course. But the move towards self-reflection, to having the students observe the nature and significances of their own divergent responses is crucial. It would be self-defeating to try to force upon the class any kind of consensus or majority rule, but the act of observing and articulating different answers is itself a move towards closure, abstraction, generalization. If a teacher feels there is still too much intellectual chaos, too many loose threads at the end of the class, one strategy is to ask the students to

ponder further on the issues raised during the class period in their upcoming worksheet and see if they cannot at least individually come to some satisfying conclusions—which in turn can provide a natural way to begin the next class period.

A more complex example, one that does stretch over several class periods, is my teaching of Vladimir Nabokov's *Pale Fire*, for which a set of worksheets is included in the appendix. This "novel" consists of a long poem by John Shade and an even longer commentary by Charles Kinbote, who is an exiled king or a lunatic who thinks he is one. Although the commentary is much more about Kinbote's life or fantasies than the ostensible subject matter of the poem, the book is less a satire on misreading than a meditation and demonstration of how we actually do infuse those black marks on a page with so much livingness, so much emotion and meaning. I have students write their own commentaries on sections of the poem, then swap and read each other's to measure the distances between readings, to see if they can filter out what is really on the page from what is projected or superimposed. The class often becomes complex and self-reflective to the point of vertigo, but the strategy is not merely to help them see how complicated Nabokov is presenting the act of reading, but to share some of his frustration, awe, delight, and wonder at it.

Both divergent and convergent thinking, then, need space in the classroom. But particularly in the early parts of the semester and of each class, we have to be deliberately conscious of leaving space for the former, since the latter has been overstressed through the students' previous dozen or so years of school. There is a time for rigorous thought, certainly, for tightening up, but there must also be a time for loosening up, for a little regression in the service of the ego. It is difficult but possible to successfully fight years of the "right answer syndrome," of the constant emphasis on the final—final exams, final grades, final thoughts.

Evaluation and Grading

I find that there is no area of teaching that raises the curiosity and passions more than this one. And I was tempted to avoid it completely for fear of diverting too much attention from the more central and pressing issues of philosophy and method already discussed. But the subject would be just as conspicuous in its absence and its avoidance would make these methods seem less practicable than they are, so I will speak frankly and directly, while realizing that each teacher will still have to work out ways of grading he or she can live with.

While there are few things more crucial to learning than direct and specific feedback, there have been few impediments as crippling as the traditional grading system. Again, John Holt is observant as he shows in example after

example how a child's fear of being wrong stops thought cold:

The child *must* be right. She cannot bear to be wrong, or even to imagine that she might be wrong. When she is wrong, as she often is, the only thing to do is to forget it as quickly as possible. . . . Where she is told to do something, she does it quickly and fearfully, hands it in to some higher authority, and awaits the magic word *right* or *wrong*. If the word is *right*, she does not have to think about the problem anymore; if the word is *wrong*, she does not want to, cannot bring herself to think about it. (p. 21-22)

We put so much stress on grades—early in an emotional sense, later in also vocational and economic senses—that the student has so much anxiety about doing poorly he or she cannot learn from "wrong" answers; the entire strategy of learning by trial and error is closed off because the student cannot endure error. In one of Holt's examples, a class of students had 20 questions in which to find a number between 1 and 1,000. When they asked if it was below 500, they would cheer if they were told "yes," sigh if they were told "no," without realizing that they were getting the same amount of information in each case.

Needless to say, I do not put letter grades on student writing, either worksheets or papers. My own compromise with the fact that I have to give the computer something it can read at the end of the semester is hardly satisfactory, though, and usually in some state of flux. What I most often do is have the students write a self-evaluation at the end of the course. Part of this is as tightly structured and specific as the regular worksheets: I ask them how many classes and assignments they missed, what they've felt they've learned, especially after rereading all their work, and what kinds of time and effort they felt they've put into the course. I then ask them to put this self-evaluation on the top of their file of their semester's work and I meet with them individually during the week of finals to review that work along with the self-evaluations. At the end of the conference, I'm able to tell each student his or her final grade, although I allow some discussion and negotiation of the grade in this last conference, I make it clear that I have the final say—especially in the great weight I give absences and missing work.

Unlike those who unconsciously or precisely grade on a curve, I find my grades tend to cluster around two nodes—A's and C's. Students tend either to get so fully involved that they cannot help but learn and improve a great deal, or mistake my flexibility and informality in running the classes for a lenient attitude toward doing the work itself. Further, since I stress cooperative effort, whole classes of mine tend to do significantly better than other classes. Still, within these variations my grades do tend to be higher than those of my colleagues, a fact that has led myself and others to worry if I am furthering the basic inequities of an

unjust universe. I can at least temporarily assuage my doubts by remembering that grading is only one parameter of a course, albeit the one that students, teachers, administrators sometimes pay the most attention to. If meaningful cross-course comparisons are to be made, we also have to factor in items such as number of words read and written, meaningful hours spent, kinds of tasks that can now be performed, etc.

One of my own problems with the current grading system is its epistemological equivocality. We pretend to be measuring quantitatively and precisely—especially when we average out grades beyond the second decimal place—what are often only vague hunches or informed prejudices. If we had to evaluate students in a paragraph—as is done at some universities like the University of California at Santa Cruz—we would be at once more precise and more humane. Further, as already suggested, grading stresses the competitive, individualistic side of education in contrast to the basic idea of a university where people create communities to learn and to solve problems together. It is not that competition per se is evil, but it is woefully overstressed and more appropriate to playing fields than to laboratories and seminars. We have to remember that the only thing we should consider in a system of evaluation is whether it facilitates learning. We are under no obligation to act as personnel officers for prospective employers or admissions deans for professional schools. Let these institutions deal more directly with the students themselves and develop their own criteria for selection.

The biggest problem with letter grades is that they distort a process that should be—or should be made—intrinsically meaningful and gratifying—not always pleasant but sustaining and enlivening. Grades are a crutch and a diversion. They increase the adversarial nature of student-teacher and student-student relationships. In observing infants at play, one is struck by their strong, seemingly innate urge to learn, to experience the world fully, to make orders and connections within it. Often this urge is muffled and suppressed in the traditional process of education. The solution is not, then, to substitute for it a carrot-and-stick system of external rewards and punishments but to try to reawaken those capacities.

Unconclusion

This entire article should be viewed as a rough draft of a first chapter. If at times I seem to speak with more sureness and authority than I really have, it is to challenge and to provoke rather than to prescribe and dictate. Although there have been valiant and successful individual efforts, we have only in the past three years begun to seriously confront as an entire university the improvement of teaching. And although it is symptomatic of a university to blame its woes on external forces—constricting finances

and institutional inertia—we are now beginning to realize that the most constricting and conservative forces in teaching are our own timidities and the limits of our own imaginations. Unless we make a powerful conscious effort, we tend to lapse into the tired ways in which we were institutionally taught—instead of the ways in which we really learned.

One crucial step in educational innovation is to bring the students in as allies, not as mere “subjects” of experiments but as active self-conscious participants. They need to be encouraged to be more self-aware of how they learn, of what helps them and what doesn't. Each class meeting should be something of a laboratory, where new methods are tried, discussed, evaluated. Fortunately for everyone, this methodological scrutiny does not divert us from the business of learning but places us at the center of it, confronting the fundamental issues of knowledge within each discipline. Just as I feel “active learning” is a tautology, so too is “experimental education.”

To make some modest suggestions of a more specific nature, I urge that we expand our current program of freshman seminars, both within and beyond the College of Arts and Sciences. Not only should every freshman have at least one small, participatory course, but we should try to make that course cross-disciplinary, and use it as a forum to integrate some of the materials and methods of other courses being taken at the same time. One way to staff these without bursting our budget would be to have them run by our better seniors, who would receive some training and supervision in running such groups throughout the semester. And if the ideas presented here have some validity, the seniors should learn at least as much as the freshmen, so perhaps course credit as well as a stipend would be appropriate.

Another suggestion is to nudge more of us into teaching courses in which we are not the expert. Several people in my own department were disturbed because for a few years we had no one specialized enough to teach a graduate course in eighteenth-century British literature. The situation has since been remedied, but what was lost was a wonderful opportunity for a professor and a group of graduate students to set up such a course from scratch, confronting questions such as how one begins to approach a field one knows little about, who or what creates canons, how institutional pressures shape literary study. Instead of using the classroom as a receptacle for what we've already learned, we should do some of this learning cooperatively and publicly in our own classrooms. I've often wondered if in this respect teaching isn't like good sex, where one has to give pleasure to get it—that if a teacher doesn't genuinely learn from a class session or a course, there's a chance the students may not either.

My last suggestion is admittedly vague but most important. We all have to work together more on our teaching.

We have to visit each other's classroom for reasons other than evaluative ones. We have to do more of those things that in the business world are jargonized as "mentoring" and networking." We have to bring to bear on the classroom situation all the expertise we already have on campus about human learning, group interactions, the nature of knowledge. Through the Faculty Teaching Excellence Program and the Graduate Teaching Program we already have some important resources and structures in place—videotape consultations, workshops, and colloquies—that we can use to involve even more of us. I am even more optimistic about the future of active learning than I was 20 years ago.

Works Cited

- Allen, Gay Wilson. *William James: A Biography*. New York: Viking, 1967.
- Ashton-Warner, Sylvia. *Teacher*. 1963. Rpt. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1986.
- Bartholomae, David and Anthony Petrosky. *Facts, Artifacts and Counterfacts: Theory and Method for a Reading and Writing Course*. Upper Montclair, New Jersey: Boynton/Cook, 1986.
- Bickman, Martin, ed. *Approaches to Teaching Herman Melville's "Moby Dick"*. New York: Modern Language Association, 1985.
- Bouton, Clark and Russell Y. Garth. "Students in Learning Groups: Active Learning Through Conversation." In *Learning in Groups, New Directions for Teaching and Learning*, Number 14 (June 1983): pp. 73-82.
- Bowman, J.S. "Lecture-Discussion Format Revisited." *Improving College and University Teaching*, 27 (1979): pp. 25-27.
- Dennison, George. *The Lives of Children: The Story of the First Street School*. New York: Random House, 1969.
- Elbow, Peter. *Embracing Contraries: Explorations in Learning and Teaching*. New York, Oxford: Oxford UP, 1986.
- Finkel, Donald L. and G. Stephen Monk. "Teachers and Learning Groups: Dissolution of the Atlas Complex." In *Learning in Groups, New Directions for Teaching and Learning*, Number 14 (June 1983): pp. 83-97.
- Gadamer, Hans-Georg. *Philosophical Hermeneutics*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976.
- Herndon, James. *The Way It Spozed To Be*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1968.
- Holt, John. *How Children Fail*. 1964. Rev. ed. New York: Delta, 1982.
- Hurston, Zora Neale. *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. 1937. Rpt. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1978.
- Kohl, Herbert. *Thirty-Six Children*. New York: New American Library, 1967.
- Kozol, Jonathan. *Death at an Early Age*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1967.
- Lakatos, Imre and Alan Musgrave, eds. *Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1972.
- Lowman, Joseph. *Mastering the Techniques of Teaching*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1985.
- Monk, G. Stephen. "Student Engagement and Teacher Power in Large Classes." In *Learning in Groups, New Directions for Teaching and Learning*, Number 14 (June 1983): pp. 7-12.
- Piaget, Jean. *Science of Education and the Psychology of the Child*. Trans. Derek Coltman. New York: Orion, 1970.
- Pirsig, Robert M. *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*. New York: William Morrow, 1974.
- Pound Ezra. *The A B C of Reading*. New York: New Directions, 1960.
- Scholes, Robert. *Semiotics and Interpretation*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1982.
- Schrag, Peter. *Village School Downtown: Boston Schools, Boston Politics*. Boston: Beacon, 1967.
- Thompson, R. "Legitimate Lecturing." *Improving College and University Teaching* 22 (1974): pp. 163-164.
- Vygotsky, Lev. *Mind in Society: The Development of Higher Psychological Processes*. Eds. M. Cole, S. Scibner, V. John-Steiner, and E. Souderman. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1978.
- Walker, David. *The Transparent Lyric: Reading and Meaning in the Poetry of Stevens and Williams*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1984.
- Wasserman, Miriam. *The School Fix, NYC, USA*. New York: Overbridge and Diensfrey, 1970.
- Watzlawick, Paul, ed. *The Invented Reality: How Do We Know What We Believe We Know? Contributions to Constructivism*. New York: Norton, 1984.
- Whitehead, Alfred North. *The Aims of Education*. 1929. Rpt. New York: Macmillan, 1957.

Appendix

Name _____

We're going to begin by looking at some of Wallace Stevens's shorter poems that deal with the relations among the imagination, "reality," and language, and move on soon to his famous long meditation, "Sunday Morning." You should be reading at your pleasure through *The Palm at the End of the Mind*, but it's more important to read and reread carefully through a handful of poems than to try to devour Stevens whole. Enjoy the sounds, colors, images at first without worrying too much about what it all "means."

For Monday, then, read especially the following: "The Man Whose Pharynx Was Bad," "The Idea of Order at Key West," "A Postcard from the Volcano," "The Poems of Our Climate," "Add This to Rhetoric," "On the Road Home," "The Latest Freed Man," and "The Well Dressed Man with a Beard."

The poem you'll write this worksheet on is "Gubbinal," although I hope you'll bring to bear on it your reading of other poems. You might begin with the following specific questions, although don't just answer them in order without relating the answers to each other:

In what ways can the sun be said to be a "strange flower?" How specifically does the metaphor work for you? Similarly, what about the other images for the sun—"That tuft of jungle feathers," "That animal eye," "That savage of fire," "That seed?" Are the images related? Is there a progression through the poem? Why does the poem say "the world is ugly,/And the people are sad?" Why is it

repeated? What is the relation to the rest of the poem? In what ways is the sun “Just what you say?” (How might this relate to the man with the bad pharynx?) What questions do you have about this poem or his others, what issues would you like to see raised in class?

Name _____

Worksheet 5; due Friday, February 8

For our final class on Stevens, we’re going to focus on his long tour-de-force, “The Comedian as the letter C” and look closely especially at Sections I and III. I’m going to ask you to be Januses and look backwards to what we’ve already seen in Stevens and forward to the rest of the course in answering the following.

When we first see Crispin, is he journeying westward across the Atlantic? What is happening to his land consciousness, his European mind, in the sea? What implications and extrapolations can you make from this about the act of settling America?

The poem begins with the line “Note: man is the intelligence of his soil,” which changed in section IV to “Note: his soil is man’s intelligence.” Using the rest of the poem, what senses do you make of this?

As with much American literature, Stevens uses here the motif of the journey, particularly the sea-voyage, to discuss changes in consciousness, inner movements between the “real” and the “imaginative.” In this context, play with the lines:

Thus he conceived his voyaging to be
An up and down between two elements,
A fluctuating between sun and moon,
A sally into gold and crimson forms . . .

Further thoughts, questions, on Stevens at this point?

Name _____

Read carefully the note to lines 39-40 (pp. 49-50 of your text). The lines from Shakespeare of which we are given only the Zemblan translation are, in English:

The sun’s a thief, and with his great attraction
Robs the vast sea: the moon’s an arrant thief,
And her pale fire she snatches from the sun:
The sea’s a thief, whose liquid surge resolves
The moon into salt tears: the earth’s a thief,
That feeds and breeds by a composure stol’n
From general excrement: each thing’s a thief.

As you look back at the lines in Zemblan, answer what’s wrong with this picture. Be as specific as you can—what differences, for example, do you see, hear, feel between “silvery light” and “pale moon?” (This is an exercise both in imaginative and in close reading.) What do the differences—and similarities—imply about the book as a whole and whatever seems to be going on in it? The note refers you to yet another note, that to line 262 (pp. 191-193)—

Do, oh do, see this, and remark on whatever light it can shed on matters. Further, how does what you’ve written reflect upon (and vice-versa) the imagery in the following note, that to line 42 (pp. 50-51). How do you feel about writing this commentary to a commentary?

Name _____

Read pages 194-195 on what Kinbote considers the miracle of reading. I want you to examine that miracle closely in the form of your classmate’s response to the worksheet due this class. Read her/his commentary closely—what kinds of imaginative/analytic acts did s/he perform in reading it? Do you have any thoughts about whether what was said is really “in” the poem or “in” the person or what? What parts of the reading make “sense” to you and which do not? What else do you see in the quoted lines that you think of importance or interest? This worksheet, in other words, should take the form of a commentary on a commentary on a commentary. Be sure you note whose worksheet you are commenting on in this, your own worksheet. All clear?

Name _____

. . . Making ornaments
Of accidents and possibilities.

There are all kinds of hypotheses you could make about the levels of “reality” in *Pale Fire*, but here are four to begin with:

A. The poem is indeed written by John Shade, who is as “real” as any character in a work of fiction can be. The commentator is also real in this sense; he is currently in America under the assumed name of Charles Kinbote, but he is really, as he describes in this commentary, Charles the Beloved, exiled king of Zembla. The story of his reign, his captivity, his escape is basically true, if somewhat colored by his own egocentricism, prejudices, and vanity.

B. The poem is indeed written by a real John Shade. Kinbote is just as real, but is also insane, and imagines or hallucinates or fabricates the entire kingdom of Zembla and his own role in it. Zembla grows out of his own intense loneliness and longing.

C. Not only is the poem written by John Shade, but so is the commentary. He constructs the character of Kinbote, perhaps out of thin air, perhaps loosely basing him on a Professor Butkin who also seems to be on the faculty of Wordsmith. Some possible evidence for this is in line 939-940: “*Man’s life as commentary to abstruse/Unfinished poem*. Note for further use.”

D. There is no John Shade. Kinbote creates not only the commentary but the poem and its speakers.

Choose the hypothesis you find most likely—or some combination of the above or something else you find more workable—and support it with specific evidence from the

text. What does going through this process tell you about the text, about your own habits of reading, about your assumptions about the relations of art to “reality?”—big hard questions, but give them a try.

Name _____

At this point it should be clear, or at least semitranslucent, how *Pale Fire* is about the wonders and powers of the imagination, but also of its possible constrictions and potential destructiveness. Let's give these abstractions some texture and vitality by looking at how they work in the text itself. You can choose to write about any part of it for this worksheet, but I would particularly recommend the section about Queen Disa and Kinbote's “dream love.” Read especially the note to lines 433-434, pp. 136-144. What, particularly, is the “strangeness” Kinbote refers to on p. 138, without an appreciation of which there is no sense writing poems, or notes to poems, or worksheets? What is the relation of this dream-love to art—that of Shade's and/or Kinbote's—and to that of the “real life” of the characters involved? See, please see, the second paragraph on p. 140 especially. What is the significance of Kinbote's last glance at “Disa” which turns out really to be at Fleur de Fyler on p. 143? What is the relation of all this to, say, Gatsby's dream love for Daisy and to Fitzgerald's art? What questions do you have?

Name _____

Lovers and madmen have such seething brains,
such shaping fantasies, that apprehend
More than cool reason ever comprehends.
The lunatic, the lover and the poet
Are of imagination all compact . . .

—*A Midsummer-Night's Dream*

See the blind beggar dance, the cripple sing,
The sot a hero, lunatic a king;
The starving chemist in his golden views
Supremely blest, the poet in his Muse.

—Pope's *Essay on Man*

Write a commentary to the commentary on line 1000 of the poem. Who and what is Gradus and his relation to Kinbote, Shade, Nabokov, and you? Who is the “bigger, more respectable, more competent Gradus” mentioned on p. 203? What happens to the narrative voice on pp. 202-203. (Hint: what connections can you make between these closing paragraphs and the last stanza of Stevens' “Sunday Morning?”) Any “final” comments about the book on this your last worksheet on it? Remember, as Kinbote said, “for better or worse, it is the commentator who has the last word.”

Name _____

Worksheet #1; due Friday, January 24

[Some general instructions on worksheets: These worksheets should be quickly written as “first drafts” to allow you to start thinking about the issues. They should, though, include some a good deal of specific detail from the works themselves—merely giving us your “conclusions” isn't as helpful. The questions we ask are merely to point you in certain directions; don't feel you have to answer them mechanically in the order given. On every worksheet, feel free to also raise—and answer—questions of your own, and to make any other comments you would like on the work, the class, whatever.]

Reading: [from handouts] Thomas Morton, from *New English Canaan*

William Bradford, from *Of Plymouth Plantation*

Nathaniel Hawthorne, “The May-Pole of Merry Mount”

One way it might be helpful to view Hawthorne's “Maypole of Merry Mount” is as a confrontation between two competing mythologies, which for convenience we might label the pastoral vision and the puritan vision. Using both the story and the historical documents, how would you outline these two mythologies; i.e., what are their attitudes towards nature, both human and external, towards the goals of life, towards America itself? Which side, if any, does Hawthorne lean towards? Are the two reconciled in the course of the story? Here are some more specific questions to ease your way into the story:

—What are some of the factors that might help us account for the differences in the ways Morton and Bradford see and experience the American landscape?

—What differences can you see in their language, in the ways they turn landscape and events into words and narrative?

—In the headnote to “The Maypole of Merry Mount,” Hawthorne talks about a “sort of allegory”—how would you put that allegory into words, and why is it just “a sort of”?

—What time of year does the story take place, and what's the significance of this?

—What are the effects and meanings of certain key words being repeated, words such as “venerable,” “golden,” “flowers”?

—What is Edith's mystery?

—Why does Endicott cut down the Maypole, and what are some of the significances of this?

—How do you read the ending of the story? Is it a happy ending? Do you find it satisfying?

—What questions do you have about the story?

Martin Bickman has done extensive research on pedagogical issues and is a faculty member of the Department of English.

Facilitating Discussion

R.G. Billingsley

Teachers are often urged to shift their classroom approach more toward discussion or to set aside specific periods for discussion. And yet they often find when they do so that the “discussion” turns into a painfully tedious activity with students who are forbiddingly silent and unresponsive or who give brief and wooden responses. Such “discussions” often result in the teacher’s lecturing in much the same fashion he or she has done before, posing, as well as answering, a set of preselected questions.

How can we avoid such deadly activities in our own classrooms? What must we do to have discussions that are really lively and fruitful? It seems to me that it is not enough simply to learn a number of specific discussion techniques; we must also look at our fundamental convictions about teaching and learning. Discussion takes place within the larger framework of the instructor’s overall pedagogical assumptions and is shaped by those assumptions. If they are inadequate, any attempt at conducting discussions will be correspondingly weakened. In this essay I will deal first with the issue of adequate preparation in terms of general assumptions about learning and teaching, then offer a specific definition of discussion as well as techniques that follow from the general assumptions articulated in **Part I**.

Part I. General Assumptions about Learning and Teaching

We know that teaching is a humane art. It is done with people. Yet a variety of observers continue to report that teaching is all too often centered on a specific curriculum, or lesson plan, examination, textbook, or even that “holiest of grails,” a specific subject rather than the living student sitting in the classroom. Teaching must first, foremost, and always remain focused on students and their growth. Thus the questions we may ask ourselves every day, the questions that should direct all of our activities are: *Will this promote the growth of my students? Do I know what growth is? Do I know what kinds of growth I want?* When we have very specific answers to these questions, it is much easier to select a textbook, design a syllabus, fashion an examination, and conduct a discussion effectively.

We may not all agree on exactly what growth means, nor is it necessary that we do. What is essential for us as individual teachers is that we seriously and continuously query ourselves on this issue, and that we measure not only the student’s performance but our own by this criterion.

In my experience, the surest and most effective way to keep yourself aimed at the target of student growth is to

remember one essential concept: Learning and education start with a question.

People Learn When They Have Questions They Want Answered

The question is the heart of the educational experience. It is the engine that drives the process of learning. All of us can recall those moments, either as students or teachers, when the classroom was transformed into a very exciting arena through intense student engagement with a compelling question. And when a *living* question that seems relevant to the students is not present, real education is not present. Things may get memorized and mechanically filed in notebooks, but the exciting and transforming activity that drew all of us to teaching is not taking place.

A compelling question that transforms the classroom is hard to anticipate. We know what questions are engaging for us, but we can never be sure about our students. We have to be sensitive to areas of student-teacher differences so that we can make appropriate adjustments. Also, we must be aware that our questions may satisfy a number of different growth objectives. Meredith Gall (Gall and Gall 1976) lists four types of instructional objectives that can be pursued in discussion: subject-matter mastery, issue-orientation, moral development, and problem solving. When we are fully cognizant of our objectives, we can most effectively select the questions or issues that can engage our students.

Teaching Involves Overcoming a Paradox

It seems to me that by the very nature of the enterprise, teachers are caught in a difficult paradox that needs to be taken into account. Basically, the teaching performance rests on a paradox because first the teacher must try to set high standards of performance so that students can achieve the maximum possible growth, which can be very intimidating to students. At the same time, it is necessary to create a comfortable environment that nurtures student self-confidence. We have long suspected that anxiety has a negative effect on learning. The work of Sieber (1977) appears to confirm this suspicion. Anxiety seems specifically to impair attention on the ability to remember (Wittrock 1978). All of us have seen students so frozen that they cannot relate facts we know they possess. They are so terrified they can hardly even tell you their names. Such students are not thinking about the subject; they are worrying about defending themselves. Clearly, for such a person a discussion period is a total loss.

So what is a teacher to do? How do you make great demands on students and simultaneously enhance their sense of security and comfort? Logically it seems impossible. But fortunately, as with so many other paradoxes,

what might not seem possible in logic, is quite possible in fact. Witness parents who lovingly perform these two acts with their children day after day. We teachers must and can do the same thing. We can do it much more easily and more effectively if we are fully aware of the seemingly contradictory nature of our work. Still it requires great sensitivity on our parts to fulfill both functions without one cancelling the other out. We must constantly push students toward higher levels of achievement while simultaneously providing a safe, encouraging, and supportive environment for them.

Remember the Gap Between What Is Taught and What Is Learned

When we spend a lot of time carefully designing a syllabus or preparing a particular lesson, it is easy to fall into the illusion that our effort is matched by a comparable amount of learning. After all, I “covered” that material. I “taught” that last week. It is necessary to remind ourselves constantly that it doesn’t matter what we *taught*. What counts is what students *learned*. In the gap between the two lie thousands of student dropouts and hundreds of thousands of bored students who have learned, at most, how to second-guess the instructor and write hastily memorized material on an exam paper.

Failure to remember the gap between what is taught and what is learned is particularly a problem for those instructors who feel that they are teaching “subject matter”: “I teach subject matter; I do not teach students.” It seems to me that it is a false dichotomy, in any case. Subject matter takes on value as it is related to human lives. Each should animate the other. The point is to close the gap, to make a meaningful connection between subject and student, between what is taught and what is learned.

As we remember that what we taught may not have been learned, we are compelled to solicit different kinds of feedback so that we can adjust our teaching performance. In particular, one more vigilantly reads students’ faces when lecturing or conducting discussion, in order to measure their intake. Those faces can provide fairly reliable guides to comprehension. We become more aware that their incomprehension may sometimes indicate our lack of clarity rather than their low intelligence.

We need constantly to ask our students, “Is that question clear? Do you understand what I am asking you?” Anyone who has observed much teaching realizes that not only questions, but also many statements made by teachers are totally incomprehensible, although, to the teacher, they are crystal clear. The more we think about the gap between teaching and learning, the more we realize that our performances often are not as coherent and clear as we would like. The students are trying, often unsuccessfully to read us just as we must try in our questions and more formal examinations to read them. It is sobering to think

how bright they would think we were if they judged us on our ability to communicate. Yet when we test them, that is how we judge them.

Thus, in the area of student testing, there is also often a gap that requires caution and humility on our part. For example, are we really discovering how little a student has learned, or are we simply looking at the inadequacy of our own instruments of evaluation? I do not think these gaps between what is taught and what is learned, or between what students reveal on a test and how much they actually know, will ever be completely eliminated. However, we can diminish them by being continuously aware that they exist and by conscientiously working to reduce them. Perhaps of equal importance, we will inevitably be more circumspect and gentle in handling students as long as we are aware of the inherent limitations of our art.

Students Learn from Behavior

We like to think that we are conveying the techniques and contents of a particular discipline, such as literature or physics and, indeed, that may be our ostensible subject. But, in fact, what we are primarily teaching are our patterns of behavior. As Bandura (1976) and Eelen and D’Ydewalle (1976) have demonstrated, learning from observing behavior can be very extensive. Far more than many teachers realize, students may *learn* behavior modeled in front of them more completely than any particular content. Your teaching performance clearly conveys your sense of the discipline, the joy you have for learning in general and that subject in particular, your attitudes toward students, and your expectations, values, and views of the world. It is extraordinarily important to bear this in mind. The subject you teach cannot be separated from your performance in front of the students. Like it or not, you are teaching, in part, yourself. Thus it is essential to reflect on the ways in which your gestures, voice, chalkboard techniques, and entire mode of performing conveys ideas and values. It is by no means an exaggeration to say that, what they see is what they get.

Teacher behavior is especially crucial in discussion situations because they are contingent on a premise, usually unstated, of equality among participants. In trying to answer the question, “*What are the necessary and sufficient logical conditions for saying that people are engaged in the discussion of something?*” Bridges (1979) postulates:

1. They are putting forward more than one point of view upon a subject.
2. They are at least disposed to examine and to be responsive to the different points of view put forward.
3. They intend to develop their knowledge, understanding, and/or judgment on the matter under discussion (p. 16).

All three of these conditions demand that the discussion leader consistently *demonstrate* a belief in the equality and value of all participants in the group.

Concrete and Specific Examples Are Necessary

All disciplines that we teach are formed around a coherent core of ideas. These ideas are largely abstractions, and they often appear to be particularly recondite to beginning students. Both you and the students need the framework of abstractions that constitute the skeleton, so to speak, of the discipline. However, the students have an equally strong need for specific concrete examples to flesh out those abstractions in order to demonstrate how they work in real life, in *their* lives. If the learning presentation is going to engage the student fully it has to meet both the need for abstraction and the need for concretion.

You should *always immediately* tie any idea you present to a concrete example, preferably an example that can be received aurally, visually, and kinesthetically. I once saw a psychology teacher lecturing on the subject of tension. In order to make the subject more real, she held up her hand in front of the students and then slowly closed it into a fist. She asked them to do the same and then said, "Now squeeze down as hard as you can on that fist and hold it." After a wait of about ten seconds she said, "Continue to hold it, imagine that one more stressful thing comes into your life, generating even more tension . . . squeeze even more tightly." After another five-second wait the students were told to open their hands. The compressed fist provided a visual and kinesthetic experience of tension. The release gave the opposite experience of release and relaxation. It was obvious that the instructor's concepts about tension were more fully and experientially incorporated by the students. We need to look for similar specific examples to demonstrate the ideas that we introduce to our students. Soliciting such concrete personal examples from discussion participants is especially effective.

Students Are Strengthened by Acceptance

This may be the most important concept in this essay. Ideally our students glean from us valuable information, useful analytical tools, and meaningful values. What we often do not take into consideration is a factor that underlies—and is more important than—what we teach. We must consciously strive to strengthen the student by helping to develop a positive self-image and an increasing sense of her capabilities.

Without the belief that she can achieve, the student is permanently disabled, no matter how extensively gifted or broadly educated she may be from an objective standpoint. All of her gifts go for naught if she does not really believe herself capable of using them. Teachers are obviously in a critical position to advance or retard self-esteem. Once we

have accepted that principle, the most important thing we need to remember is this: *all students are all right*.

This means that we always accept students and we continually let them know that we do. This acceptance can be difficult to convey because our concern for academic growth requires that we be critical of learning performance. However, we can be both supportive and constructively critical as long as we remember that the students are not the narrow spectrum of the academic behavior being observed and graded.

The behavior that we grade is just a part of them. While we may not always find the behavior all right, *they* are always all right. We never cease to accept them as valued individuals. A "C" or "D" student is always regarded and treated as an "A" person. We must demonstrate to students our belief that they can achieve not only because they are gifted and have unknown talents, but, as people, they are inherently valuable.

This may seem obvious but, like many of our deeper held values, under the pressures of daily life, it can easily slip from our grasp.

Part II: Techniques for Facilitating Discussion

The six points developed in **Part I** are all aimed at increasing our awareness of how to provide a learning environment that stimulates the students' questioning process. The importance of students having questions that they sincerely want answered is probably nowhere more evident than in a discussion. Discussions really come *alive* when students want answers and when it is safe to explore possibilities, i.e., when there is no "right" answer that they must discover.

At this point, it becomes necessary to define briefly what is meant by discussion. Perhaps the best review of the literature on questioning and discussion is provided by J.T. Dillon. He makes it clear that it is important to discriminate between *recitation* where students "recite" what they already know or are coming to know through the *questioning*, and *discussion* in which teacher and students "discuss" what they don't know (1984, pp. 50-51). Further distinctions are offered by Gall, who characterizes recitation as a playback of information from student to teacher and discussion as basically an interchange between students involving sophisticated thinking and the possibility of attitude changes (Gall and Gall 1976, p. 168). The following remarks are based on the definitions of discussion offered above by Dillon and Gall.

A discussion is a group process. It is essentially a voyage of discovery undertaken by informed equals. Any time you are working with more than one student you are engaged in a group process, but the dynamics of that process are quite different when you shift from a lecture to a discussion. A discussion is no longer a simple back-and-forth communication between teacher and student. With discussion, where the objective is to elicit a variety of points of view, the number of combinations of exchange are potentially infinite; part of your job as discussion leader is to enlarge the number of these possibilities. You are trying to maximize the sharing of ideas and experiences. You want to create as many different combinations of exchange as possible. How is this accomplished?

Build Comfort and Trust

People in groups will give to one another when they feel comfortable and trusting. This seems obvious, yet all too often teachers attempt to initiate discussion without consciously trying to create an atmosphere in which meaningful discussion is possible, i.e., an environment of comfort and trust.

George Prince (1970) finds it useful to assume that each participant in a group unconsciously perceives the gathering as a competition; if someone else wins, he will lose. To the extent that Prince is correct, your job is to demonstrate a win/win model. You must show that no one's ego will be damaged, that energy will be directed only toward solving the problem under discussion, and that not only does no one lose, but everyone wins. A number of specific practices can contribute to the establishment of a win/win atmosphere.

1. Have the students meet one another. Make sure that they learn each other's first and last names. If the group is larger than 10-12, have them meet 4-5 people in their immediate environment. Start to build a community of trusting friends in the classroom. In addition to names, ask them to learn home town, hobbies, and special interests of one another.
2. Go around the room and check to make sure that they have learned some of these things. Let them tell you about each other. If handled correctly, this will initiate a number of friendships or at least more trusting, casual relationships. Additionally, this information can be very helpful to you as discussion leader. It can allow you to personalize questions in ways that make them more meaningful and easier to handle for individual students.
3. Make a seating chart so that you can immediately address students by their first names. Find out if they have nicknames that they prefer.
4. Arrange the group in a **circle**. The circular format changes the dynamics of the group immediately, because it gives everyone access to everyone else.

Above all, it de-emphasizes your role as the teacher; the students can start to assume responsibility by sharing the leadership of the group with the instructor. You are having a discussion precisely because you want them to practice assuming such responsibility and because you believe that all have something important to contribute. As circular arrangement tends to reinforce this idea. It prevents any single individual from automatically and continuously being the focal point. It is inherently democratic and participatory.

I have to remind myself constantly that I am trying to engage the students with one another, not with myself. I must remember to de-emphasize myself because the students need to practice thinking, too. During most of their academic lives they have been watching the teacher think. This is *their* chance to think in a friendly, yet analytical environment of equals. As much as possible, stay out of their way.

Get People to Listen

Often we think we are listening to others, when actually we are just waiting for them to finish so that we can get in our ideas. In his exceptionally lucid discussion of the conditions necessary for effective discussion, Bridges (1979, pp. 21-26) stresses openness as a vital element. We need to be sure that we are truly open and attentive to the other participants in the group. Real openness is especially characterized by the capacity to listen effectively. Good listening is essential to effective discussion; it makes genuine exchange and comparison possible and creates a sense of closeness and excitement about shared learning.

You can encourage good listening by frequently asking students who are poised to respond, first to paraphrase the remarks of the preceding speaker. They must not only paraphrase, but they must paraphrase to the satisfaction of that preceding speaker. Only when the first speaker is willing to say, "Yes, that is what I meant," does the second speaker get to make this point. This simple tactic can be very effective in terms of really engaging people with one another; it is particularly effective in developing precise and meaningful exchanges of ideas and feelings. You will come to appreciate this strategy when you see students continuing to discuss with one another even after class.

Because this is often a rather time-consuming technique, it is easiest to use in small groups. If the group meets frequently, students will quickly grow accustomed to habits of openness and close listening, and you will not need to request that they paraphrase one another very often.

Your emphasis on close listening can be somewhat intrusive, at least initially. But it is an essential part of your role, as discussion leader, to provide the framework that makes discussion possible. Your concern with facilitating

the process of exchange rather than determining right and wrong answers will serve to reduce your position as a feared authority figure. In addition to your function listed above, you support the discussion process by:

1. Clearly and consistently articulating the values of decorum, openness, equality, and mutual respect.
2. When appropriate, orally clarifying and summarizing developing conflicts and ideas.
3. Using the blackboard or other audio-visual devices to help identify developing positions and ideas.

Give Them Some Tools

What are the differences between a bull session and a discussion? One of the main differences is that people in a discussion proceed in a way that allows them to explore a question effectively. This is where a good teacher can really be invaluable. In order for students to respond in perceptive and effective ways, they need some analytical tools and shared vocabulary. Either during previous class sessions or at the beginning of the discussion you should provide the necessary ideas and critical terms from your discipline that make precise and systematic analysis possible. Give them a set of tools and then make way for discovery.

In my own field of American literature, there are a number of critical concepts that can be given to students and that can be employed with reasonable effectiveness almost immediately. I may ask them to keep in mind certain formal categories such as symbols, irony, foreshadowing, plot conflicts, point of view, recurrent ideas, and details of characterization. Or I may offer definitions of specific literary models such as tragedies, comedies, or epics. With some literary works it is helpful to give students rudimentary explanations of archetypal or historical patterns. They often respond well to psychological models such as those offered by Carl Jung or Sigmund Freud. Freudian interpretations of *Hamlet* invariably elicit lively exchanges, which can be disciplined by the shared vocabulary and conceptual framework most of us recognize when we hear such terms as id, ego, libido, unconscious, Oedipus complex, etc.

The use of such discipline-specific concepts and vocabulary offers a boundary for the discussion but need not constrain it, so long as the leader makes it clear that the objective is honest exchange and discovery. Students remain free to respond to the subject, whatever it may be, in ways that seem relevant to them, while simultaneously using analytical tools to draw precise conclusions they can share with others.

Help Students Explore the Question

As indicated initially, the heart of the educational process is a question. Yet determining the question can be

very difficult. Even though the desire to have a particular question answered usually provides the energy that drives learning and discussion, the way the question is explored is of critical importance. Questioning can actually be counter-productive. Dillon (1978) points out the potential danger of direct questioning in discussion. Such questioning can quickly turn the discussion into a session in which students feel constrained to come up with specific, "right" answers. He explains: "The rule of thumb during discussion is not to ask questions but to use various alternative techniques. The notion is that alternatives will foster discussion processes, whereas questions will foil discussion by turning it into a recitation" (1984, p. 55). So the challenge becomes not only one of posing or, even better, eliciting a significant question, but also of keeping that question and related ones alive.

I find especially significant Dillon's report that discussions are kept alive at least as much with statements as with questions. He offers a list of seven alternatives to questioning that seem to stimulate discussion:

1. Make a declarative statement (for example, give an opinion).
2. Make a reflective restatement (give the sense of what the student has said).
3. Describe his or her state of mind ("I'm sorry, I'm not quite getting your point").
4. Invite the student to elaborate ("I'd like to hear more of your views on that").
5. Encourage the student to ask questions.
6. Encourage other students to ask questions.
7. Maintain deliberate, appreciative silence (until the student resumes or another enters into the discussion). (Dillon 1984, p. 55)

In my experience the seven strategies listed above, when utilized in an environment of comfort and trust, are very effective. Point seven warrants particular attention because I think it is the most difficult for many teachers to follow. Once a provocative question is on the floor you have to be willing to wait a moment for a response. Often, inexperienced and nervous discussion leaders never really give students a chance to reflect. They will rush from one question to the next without pausing for as long as ten seconds between questions. The work of Swift and Gooding (1983) illustrates that when teachers wait for periods as short as 2-3 seconds after asking a question, the quality and quantity of student response improve markedly. Watch yourself to see if you are actually giving students time to think about the question. Ask yourself the following questions:

1. How comfortable is the group? Have I really worked at making them comfortable with me and with one another?
2. How secure is the person I am addressing? Is it necessary to ask a direct question or might I try some alternative approach?
3. What do I know about the person I am addressing? Is there anything in their background or interest to which I could relate the query?
4. Am I constantly scanning the faces of silent students to see if they are engaged and thus might comfortably enter the discussion if called upon?
5. After waiting an appropriate period of time without getting a response do I rephrase my statements or questions? Do I check with students to make sure my remarks or those of others who are speaking are clear? Frequently, lack of response simply reflects lack of comprehension. Teacher questions are sometimes posed from a perspective of extensive knowledge that assumes equal knowledge on the part of students. Make sure that the question is clear to them.

Be Willing to Trust the Process

Remember this is a discussion, i.e., it is a *group* activity. You have to be sensitive to where the group wants to go. Often your students will be 20 or more years younger than you are, so you will have to listen carefully to find a common ground on which you can meet. But you have a discussion only because you are sure there is some common ground and that group interaction is the source of significant insights. By respecting that, you can relax with the knowledge that the students' questions are important and that, with appropriate guidance, most of their conclusions will be valuable. Be willing to trust the process.

In specific terms, trusting the discussion process means that you are able to:

1. Allow "wrong" or unexpected ideas on the floor. In my opinion the teacher should rarely say to a student "That's wrong."
2. Step back and don't lecture, except very judiciously. This is their opportunity to practice thinking—you have already had your turn.
3. Point them to the text (or appropriate course materials) and to their own experience for answers.

To elaborate on point one: in the exposed environment of small group discussion, not allowing a "wrong" response can be very harmful to student security and self-esteem. Rather, one should say, "Well yes, that is certainly one perspective, but is it true in a real situation such as . . ." or "Could you explain that idea in further detail and give me a concrete example where it works that way?" or "Does that seem to be consistent with what we learned earlier? Could

you show us how?" Erroneous or negative ideas should certainly be confronted but always with sensitivity for the student's sense of self-esteem and always with the awareness that you may not really be understanding what the student is saying. Ask for clarification. You may be dealing with a very perceptive but poorly expressed idea. Ideally you encourage other students to challenge and clarify all ideas which are submitted to the group whether they seem erroneous or extremely profound. One of the key advantages of a discussion is that most often the most memorable critique usually comes from one's peers, perhaps not the most precise or articulate, but the most memorable, the one that students will carry with them out of the classroom.

In allowing the group to go its own way you may find that it has departed dramatically from your course, your subject matter, your agenda. In my opinion you have to be willing, in the short run, to live with that. It is one of the risks entailed in a discussion. One valuable result that you can always achieve, no matter how far afield the discussion seems to go, is this: *The trust and comfort essential to subsequent effective discussions can be firmly established.* Of course, even though you strive to make your role a subtle one, it remains nevertheless a critical one. As discussion leader, you can steer the class back toward the most appropriate topics of discussion when you can do so without violating the healthy group dynamics discussed above.

It is important to remember the additional skills you are developing in students through the use of discussion, for these sessions are part of a total learning program. You will see not only a growing sense of trust and cooperation but also that students are learning how to help one another, which means that you will see them learning how to teach. Thus they experience the joy of sharing while also reaping the benefit that all teachers experience: the sense of mastery over a subject that comes through successfully teaching it to someone else.

Discussion Is Greater Than the Sum of Its Parts

As you practice facilitating discussion with regularity and a sense of confidence, you will discover that it provides a powerful opportunity to foster student enthusiasm and student growth. Discussion is active and participatory, and group members stimulating one another can produce a dynamic and rich environment. You will see students whom you previously thought of as dull and mediocre really blossom when given the opportunity to participate in a safe, supportive, and stimulating discussion.

As suggested above, part of the value of discussion rests in the advantage of utilizing the energy and intelligence of many minds rather than one. But conversely, successful discussion is enormously valuable because it fully engages the individual student, giving him or her the chance to select issues of personal interest and providing an arena in

which contending ideas can be observed and engaged. And most importantly the discussion format fully respects the student by encouraging him to develop and articulate an independent judgment, certainly one of the highest goals of any educational system.

References

- Bandura, A. *Social Learning Theory*. Englewood Cliffs: NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1976.
- Bridges, D. *Education, Democracy and Discussion*. Windsor, UK: NFER, 1979.
- Dillon, J.T. "Using Questions to Depress Student Thought." *School Review*, 87 (1978): 50-63.
- Dillon, J.T. "Research on Questioning and Discussion." *Educational Leadership*, 42 (1984): 50-56.
- Eelen, P., and G. D'Ydewalle. "Producing or Observing Response—Outcome Contingencies in a Two-Response Alternative Task." *Psychologica Belgica* 16 (1976): 61-71.
- Gall, M.D., and Gall, J.P. "The Discussion Method." *Psychology of Teaching Methods*. NSSE 75th Yearbook, Part 1, edited by N.L. Gage, 166-216. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976.
- Gooding, C.T., Swift, P.R., and Swift, J.N. "Improving and Encouraging Discussions in the Classroom." Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Eastern Educational Research Association, Baltimore, February 1983. (ERIC ED 229 338).
- Price, G.M. *The Practice of Creativity*. New York: Harper & Row, 1970.
- Sieber, J.E., Neil, H.F., Jr., and Tobias, S. *Anxiety, Learning, and Instruction*. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum, 1977.
- Wittrock, M.C. "The Cognitive Movement in Instruction." *Educational Psychologist* 13 (1978): 15-30.

Ron Billingsley is an Associate Professor of English at the University of Colorado at Boulder.

Professors, Students, and the Syllabus

We forget that what we know about our disciplines and our teaching methods is not known by everyone

Sharon Rubin

For the past two years I've been sitting in on the meetings of a committee charged with approving courses for the University of Maryland's general-education program. Very often the committee members leave those meetings mystified and exasperated. It's not that the courses proposed are inadequate; it's just that the syllabi submitted with the proposals are so often virtually impossible to decode.

I've listened while a faculty member from a related discipline has tried to guess what a syllabus might possibly mean. I've seen carefully worded letters from the dean requesting clarification—and then looked on as the committee has tried to relate a three-page response to the original syllabus. The committee has even developed a new cover sheet for all proposals, which requests detailed information about objectives and asks for samples of test questions and paper assignments. Yet sufficiently informative syllabi are still so rare that when one appears it elicits audible sighs of relief around the conference table.

The syllabi our committee gets are not much different from the ones I've picked up at conferences or seen attached to grant proposals. In other words, I don't believe the problem is local or idiosyncratic; rather, it seems to be basic to the teaching endeavor. We keep forgetting that what we know—about our disciplines, about our goals, about our teaching methods—is not known (or agreed upon) by everyone. We seem to assume that our colleagues and our students will intuitively be able to reconstruct the creature we see in our mind's eye from the few bones we give them in the syllabus.

The worst syllabi seem to fall into one of two categories.

The "listers" merely specify which books or chapters will be read during which weeks, without a hint about the principles behind the selection. The most puzzling of this type assign chapters in the textbooks in an order considerably different from the order intended by the authors. At best, such modification gives students the impression that the teacher is improving on the original organization for some as yet unrevealed purpose, at worst, it gives students the idea that one order is no less logical or coherent than another, and that all parts are interchangeable and equally valid.

The "scolders" give brief descriptions of content and lengthy sets of instruction detailing what will happen if a student comes in late or leaves early, hands in a paper after the deadline, misses an exam, fails to follow the rules for margins and double-spacing, does not participate in class

discussion. The scolders often sound more like lawyers than professors. Undoubtedly the syllabus as legal document has evolved because so often students demand that their teachers provide a set of rules, probably to give the students something concrete to cling to as they struggle with the content of the course. If even sophisticated scholars fall into the trap of equating quantitative data with significance, it's not surprising that students mistake the rules for the meaning.

Here are some questions our committee often finds unanswered even in wonderful syllabi for wonderful courses:

- Why should a student want to take this course? How does it make a difference as part of the discipline? How does it fit into the general-education program?
- What are the objectives of the course? Where does it lead, intellectually and practically? Students should be able to find out what they will know by the end of the course, and also what they will be able to do better afterward than before. Is the purpose of the course to increase their problem-solving abilities, improve their communication skills, sharpen their understanding of moral ambiguities, allow them to translate knowledge from one context to another? Why are the objectives important, and how will different parts of the course help students accomplish those objectives?
- What are the prerequisites? Students should be given some idea about what they should already know and what skills they should already have before taking the course, so they can realistically assess their readiness. Will they be expected to know how to compare and contrast, to analyze and synthesize, or will they be taught those skills during the course?
- Why do the parts of the course come in the order they do? Most syllabi note the order in which topics will be discussed, but make no attempt to explain the way the professor has chosen to organize the course. Sections of the syllabus are usually titled, but only infrequently are questions provided for students to help them put the reading assignments and homework into context.
- Will the course be primarily lectures, discussions, or group work? When a percentage of the grade is for "class participation," what does the professor expect from the students—regular attendance? questions? answers to questions? Will the students be given alternative ways to achieve success in the class, based on different learning styles?

- What is the purpose of the assignments? Students are frequently told how much an assignment will “count” and how many pages long it must be, but they are rarely given any idea about what it will demand of them or what the goal is. Will students be required to describe, discuss, analyze, provide evidence, criticize, defend, compare, apply? To what end? If students are expected to present a project before the class, are the criteria for an excellent presentation made clear?
- What will the tests test?—memory? understanding? ability to synthesize? To present evidence logically? To apply knowledge in a new context?
- Why have the books been chosen? What is their relative importance in the course and in the discipline? Is the emphasis in the course on primary or secondary materials and why?

“Well,” you may say, “the syllabus isn’t the course—everything will be made clear as the semester progresses.” Or, “I can’t ask my overworked secretary to type a 12-page syllabus.” Or, “Students are interested only in the numbers—of books, of pages to read, of written assignments, of questions on the exam.” Or, “A syllabus with all that information is too static—it doesn’t allow me the flexibility to be creative on the spur of the moment.” Maybe those are relevant objections—and maybe they are excuses for badly thought-out, hurriedly patched-together efforts. Whatever the rationale, I believe that the inadequate syllabus is a symptom of a larger problem—the lack of communication between teachers and students.

Most of the latest reports on undergraduate education have in common the criticism that faculty members and the students no longer seem to be connecting. Our students do not seem to be involved in learning, they say. We seem to have lost the ability to create a shared community of values; we have substituted diversity for coherence and cannot find our way back to integrating principles. However, these reports all seem to ignore a very real wish among students and faculty members to find a place of meeting.

In 1982-83, Lee Knepfkamp of the University of Maryland asked 217 faculty members at eight colleges what they worried about most the first day of class. Their three most common concerns were, “Will the students get involved?” “Will they like me?” “Will the class work well as a class?”

When 157 students at those institutions responded to the same question, their three most common concerns were, “Will I be able to do the work?” “Will I like the professor?” “Will I get along with my classmates?”

The notion of relationship between teachers and students and material to be learned is clear in the answers from both groups. However, when the faculty members were asked what they thought students worried about the first day of class, they responded, “Will I get a good grade?”

“Will the work be hard?” “Will the class be interesting?” When the students were asked what they thought teachers worried about, they generally couldn’t answer the question at all.

The survey showed that there was a real desire on the part of both students and teacher for connectedness, but neither group realized that the other shared that desire. If the participants on both sides don’t understand how to develop their relationship, learning will be diminished.

The syllabus is a small place to start bringing students and faculty members back together, of course, and its improvement is not the revolutionary gesture that curriculum reform seems to be. But if students could be persuaded that we are really interested in their understanding the material we offer, that we support their efforts to master it, and they we take their intellectual struggles seriously, they might respond by becoming more involved in our courses, by trying to live up to our expectations, and by appreciating our concern.

Then the real work of learning can begin.

Sharon Rubin is assistant dean for undergraduate studies at the University of Maryland. Copyright 1987, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. Reprinted with permission.

Quick Starters: New Faculty Who Succeed

Robert Boice

Most of what we know about how professors teach comes from studies of already experienced teachers. As a result, we understand little about how teaching is learned or about why some of us master it more readily than do others.

This chapter demonstrates a simple strategy for identifying new faculty who make quick starts and it suggests that we can profit in comparing them to other new hires. The result is a new way of looking at instructional improvement, based on communication of the basics of teaching that work so impressively for "quick starters."

Normative Behaviors of New Faculty as Teachers

In a decade of studying new faculty as teachers, I have made a point of interviewing a whole range of colleagues, even those who would ordinarily avoid faculty development programs. The advantage in this patient style, beyond the eventual rapport it builds, is its potential for uncovering aspects of teaching that faculty ordinarily do not verbalize. For example, when new faculty were interviewed and observed over several successive semesters (see Boice, 1991, for details), they revealed some striking commonalities about how most professors start as teachers. As the following list shows, many of the initial habits of new faculty seem less than ideal:

1. Most new faculty, even those who had at other campuses, tended to teach in a facts-and-principles style of lecturing (Fink, 1984). As a rule, new faculty equated good teaching with good content. Almost without exception in my sample, new faculty volunteered plans to teach in more interactive styles, but not until they felt comfortable as teachers. Curiously, new faculty with considerable prior teaching experience admitted that they had rarely strayed from familiar patterns of lecturing.
2. Most new faculty taught defensively, with the specific aim of avoiding complaints made by students to senior colleagues, especially chairpeople. New faculty at all three study campuses showed an awareness that such complaints, once registered in retention/tenure/promotion reports, could persist and become reasons for termination. Almost invariably, new faculty tried to defend themselves against this potential danger by focusing on content (what they called "getting their facts straight"); the most indefensible criticism imaginable to them was not knowing their lecture material. Incidentally, new faculty almost never worried about the kinds of factors that faculty developers typically assume are

critical to excellence in teaching, such as displaying enthusiasm for teaching and assessing student learning.

3. The majority of these few hundred new faculty under study received student evaluations that fell well below their expectations. As a rule, they blamed these mediocre-to-poor ratings on external factors such as the quality of students, teaching loads, invalid rating systems, and class times and sizes.
4. Few new faculty planned improvements as teachers beyond making their lecture notes better organized and error-free.
5. New faculty's most important goal as teachers, a priority revealed only after several semesters of contacts, was to get to the point where teaching no longer took as much time to prepare or as much emotion to conduct. That is, they looked forward to lecture preparation that would not dominate work weeks and to classes where they could feel comfortable. New faculty in their first three years at large campuses expended surprising amounts of time in lecture preparation: Norms for new faculty with two-course-per-semester assignments were thirteen to twenty-two hours per week; with three-course loads, eighteen to twenty-seven hours. One result of this pattern was busyness and stressfulness (Boice, 1989). Another result was a growing aversion to teaching as an activity that took too much time and paid too few rewards.
6. By their own admission, new faculty typically went to class overprepared; that is, they prepared so much to say that they had to rush to say it all. In so doing, they inadvertently discouraged students from active participation in classes.
7. Most new faculty established comfort, efficiency, and student acceptance slowly, if at all, during my two to four years of regular contact with them. Even by the fourth year the majority of inexperienced new faculty reported feeling tense, worrying about not being in control of classes and doubting that students liked them.

Overall, this is a disheartening pattern, one that probably holds true on a variety of campuses. Its generality is easily enough tested. But even where practitioners are not inclined to carry out systematic research, they can profit in interviewing enough new faculty to identify some of the quick starters on campus. These exemplary newcomers provide important relief from the discouraging beginnings of most professors. Moreover, quick starters may suggest simple strategies for enhancing the performance of other teachers.

Characteristics of Quick Starters

So far, my colleagues and I have identified inexperienced new faculty as quick starters, usually during their second and third semesters on campus, when they scored in the top quartile on these dimensions: (1) classroom observers' ratings of new faculty's teaching in terms of classroom comfort, rapport with students, and student involvement, (2) students' ratings of teaching in formal, end-of-semester evaluations and in early, informal evaluations (Boice, 1990a), and (3) new faculty's self-ratings of their enjoyment and comfort as teachers. At the three campuses where quick starters are under study, the incidence of new faculty who meet these criteria is 5 to 9 percent. Incidentally, the rate at which experienced new hires (that is, those with considerable prior teaching) meet these criteria is somewhat lower.

Thus far, eight concomitants of quick starts have proven reliable. Overall, the twenty-two quick starters observed for at least a year (usually during their second and third semesters on campus) showed the following, relatively unique tendencies:

1. They lectured in a facts-and-principles style but in a comfortable fashion that allowed time for student involvement. This more relaxed pacing included verbal and nonverbal cues that encouraged students to participate.
2. They verbalized (to me) uncritical, accepting, and optimistic attitudes about the undergraduate students on their campuses.
3. They displayed low levels of complaining and cynicism about their campuses and their colleagues in terms of supportiveness and competence.
4. They showed a marked disposition to seek advice about teaching, from colleagues, via reading and observing, and from faculty development programs. Specifically, they spent an average of four hours per week in social contacts with colleagues that included discussions about teaching.
5. They evidenced quick transitions away from spending the bulk of work weeks on teaching preparation, usually by the end of the first semester on campus. Specifically, they settled into patterns of work allocation that typically included no more than one and one-half hours of preparation per classroom hour by the third semester.
6. They produced a documented balance of time expenditures among academic activities so that at least three hours per week (of at least half of the weeks during semesters) were spent on scholarly writing by the second semester. Accordingly, quick starters were nearly unique in producing scholarly outputs at levels consistent with tenure standards on their campuses (mean = 1.5 published manuscripts per year). (Recall that, by

definition, quick starters also excel as teachers during their first year on campus.)

7. They integrated their research and scholarly interests into undergraduate classes, resulting in enthusiasm for teaching and recruitment of students as research assistants.
8. They displayed high energy, broad interests (for example, singing in choirs), concern with self-presentation, and a sense of humor (see Cole, 1986, for a similar finding).

What can we learn from the pattern just outlined? The obvious answers relate to the greater skill of quick starters in establishing moderation in lecture preparation, in meeting other academic needs including collegiality and scholarly productivity, and in finding comfort with their classes, their students, their colleagues, and their campuses. All in all, quick starters seemed to be more positive, more sociable, and more efficient individuals. A problem in stating the differences from other new faculty in this way is that it can discourage emulation; quick starters may seem like gifted people who are necessarily exceptions.

My own thinking about what makes quick starters different keeps drifting back to my interests in understanding success at writing. There are also quick starters among professorial writers and they display illuminating similarities to quick starters as teachers. Briefly, quick starters as writers, unlike their relatively silent colleagues, postpone attention to the *process* and *product* of writing, concentrating first on regular *practice* and *comfort* as writers.

This postponement of addressing product (final outcomes in terms of writing quality) and process (finding ways to write for an audience, with flow and voice) actually increases the likelihood that writers will eventually deal with process and product (Tremmel, 1989). That is, quick starters begin by establishing the mind set and habits of already productive writers, by working at writing regularly, regardless of readiness (Boice, 1990b). Then, once underway, they seek out related solutions to process and product in a timely and enthusiastic fashion.

Quick starters as teachers, similarly, put off the usual concerns of new faculty about product (for example, the completeness of their lecture notes) and process (for example, attempts to abandon lecturing for discussion-based classes). Instead, they begin by attending to issues of practice in comfortable and efficient fashion. Specifically, they talk about wanting to begin with comfort in the classroom, with acceptance and feedback from students, and with enough time left over to take care of other essential needs such as establishing collegial networks and scholarly productivity. Then, much like quick starters as writers, they build a practical and timely interest in the process and product of teaching once productive practice is underway.

The point in drawing this parallel between quick starters as writers and quick starters as teachers is that, in both cases, the habits, intellectual skills, and attitudes that distinguish these exemplary new hires are basic and teachable. Sternberg and his colleagues call this sort of practical intelligence *tacit knowledge* and conclude that it is rarely taught but nonetheless very teachable (Sternberg, Okagaki, and Jackson, 1990). In fact, much evidence already exists to show that academic writers can profit from emulating the simple basics of quick starters (see, for example, Boice 1989). In this chapter, the emphasis is on emulating the practices of quick starters as teachers.

Testing the First-Factor Rule with Slower Starters

There is, of course, nothing new about suggesting that new faculty should include the most basic skills in their initial efforts at mastering teaching; the most successful guide for teachers emphasizes basics such as monitoring student note taking as an index of their comprehension (McKeachie, 1986). What may be novel, however, is the notion that new teachers fare best when they address certain basics first.

As a preliminary test of this idea, I have begun studies where slower starters are coached to imitate quick starters. Results of ongoing studies with fifteen new faculty at two campuses indicate that at least some of the practices of quick starters are promising as interventions for other new faculty. In fact, we opted to initiate our program with what quick starters themselves suggested would assist most: helping colleagues find balance in time expenditures. (This is not, I suspect, where I would have embarked on my own, at least in regard to facilitation of teaching.)

Thus, we recruited new faculty who had established clearly distressing beginnings as teachers to participate in a "balance program." These participants represented a wide cross section of faculty who agreed to remain involved for at least an academic year and to (1) keep daily, verifiable records of how they spent their work time (Boice, 1987), (2) decrease classroom preparation to a maximum of two hours per classroom hour, (3) increase social networking aimed at supporting teaching and scholarship, (4) increase time spent on scholarly writing to thirty to sixty minutes per workday, regardless of readiness to write, and (5) integrate their own research and scholarly interests into lectures.

While participants invariably expected these assignments to be difficult and time-consuming, the eventual result was quite different. This uncomplicated paradigm of helping new hires with the "first factor" in teaching—starting with the basics of comfortable and efficient practice before moving to process and product—brought uniform comments

about increases in the ease of working and in free time for nonwork.

Tentative Results

The key ingredient in the quick starters program is time, or, more specifically, management of one's time to provide balance among three major areas: preparation for teaching, collegial interactions, and writing. For new faculty, this time management means avoiding overpreparation, seeking dialogue about teaching and scholarship, and committing time to writing.

Preparation Time. The task of cutting back on preparation time was evidently the most difficult of all the changes requested from participants. As a rule, it elicited anxiety about going to class and feeling out of control. The following comment typifies those made by new faculty whom I accompanied to their classroom doors: "This feels risky. What if I draw a blank or what if I can't think of exactly what to say? I felt a whole lot better when I took the time to write out *everything* in advance. Now, I'm not sure exactly how I'll say everything. I don't want to look foolish."

Eight participants mastered this step on the basis of what they termed a "leap of faith." They simply went in without having points completely written out in advance; their main goal was to be spontaneous but careful in presenting materials clearly. Five others did not make the transition until they observed one or two quick starters who demonstrated the technique of improvising around a clear structure (for example, an outline on the board or a handout) and of relying on students for some of the explanations and solutions in their own classes. The other two participants proved especially resistant to the change but took the risk of going to class "imperfectly prepared" after I coached them through role plays with small groups of supportive colleagues acting as students.

Two more components complete this tentative picture. First, once in the mode of going to class with moderate preparation, the new faculty invariably reported feeling more at ease. Their students enjoyed the greater spontaneity of presentation and of participation. And the new faculty noted that they left class less exhausted and more satisfied than before. Second, the new faculty's concerns about becoming "lazy preparers" once they learned to teach more spontaneously proved unfounded. Instead, they continued to pre-prepare enough to bring clear structure, definite learning goals (something new for them), and plans for flexibility to class.

So far, proof of the effectiveness of this intervention has been essentially limited to improvements in the early, informal student evaluations of participants (Boice, 1990a), in the end-of-semester student ratings, and in the new faculty's self-ratings. In terms of these indices, at least,

students and faculty see their classes as more comfortable, interactive, and instructive.

Socialization Time. The requested increase in time allotted for the establishment of support networks was initially resisted, usually for reasons of busyness. Socialization seemed to be an activity that could wait until the new faculty had more time. Resistance also came in the form of concerns about sources of contact; the participants were ready to suppose that they knew too few potential contacts and that colleagues worth soliciting would feel imposed upon. Practice proved otherwise.

Here again, the strategies of inducing leaps of faith, of modeling, and of role playing successfully induced involvement. Once involved, participants reported that this socialization time was the most enjoyable aspect of their work weeks; documented benefits included advice about practice and opportunities for collaboration in writing and teaching.

Writing Time. Here too, the new faculty reported feeling unprepared to begin, despite agreeing that writing was critical to their survival and development. The essential problem was to move them past preconceptions about the need to find large blocks of undisrupted time for writing. But once they agreed to try approximations to manuscript writing in brief daily sessions (Boice, 1990b), the value of beginning before feeling ready and of getting something done amidst busy workdays was apparent.

Much like their colleagues designated as quick starters, these new faculty evidenced an average of about three hours of writing per week (compared to an average of twenty-four minutes per week for other new faculty). Equally important, in the view of the participants, the increase in the amount of writing done was a boon to their general sense of well-being and coincided with an end to resentment of teaching as an interfering activity.

Implications and Applications

At first glance, the first-factor rule has promise for facilitating teaching. The first factor appears to be an important component in the success of quick starters, and it evidently works when transferred to the habit patterns of slower starters. We may find it easier to consider adoption of this seemingly unusual idea upon seeing its roots in already familiar notions of instructional development.

Kinship Patterns. A striking quality of quick starters and of compensated slow starters is the interest they show in learning more about teaching (Cole, 1986). In many ways, they reflect what Cross and Angelo (1988) call *classroom research*. That is, quick starters, whether spontaneous or converted, actively collect data from their own and their students' experiences as part of making teaching easier. And then they take another step. Quick starters show a special interest in learning what their most success-

ful colleagues do. This typical comment from a quick starter makes the point: "The more I get into this, the more I realize how much I have to learn. I'm fascinated to imagine all the clever ways that master teachers have devised to make teaching easier. They may not be used to verbalizing their savvy, but I'll bet they can if stimulated by somebody who shares their fundamental excitement for teaching."

A second instance where first-factor thinking finds roots in common practice is in its emphasis on starting with the simplest, most basic elements of teaching. Quick starters make the explicit assumption that the most important keys to finding success as teachers are comfort and enjoyment. They even recognize that many of their colleagues, by virtue of their neglect of these basics, may be doomed to miserable beginnings and chronic disappointments with teaching. The pioneer in charting the experience of new faculty as teachers, Fink (in press, p.7), observed a similarly unpromising start for those who "developed a teaching style in a time-shortened condition that had no time for creative reflection on how to teach effectively, no time to seek help in this regard, and no prospects for improvement of their time situation."

There is a literature on the importance of starting with basics. Appropriately, most of these beginnings occur within the boundaries of teaching assistant (TA) training. Consider this sampling: One correlate of improved student evaluations is an increase in the teacher's awareness of the effective components of classroom behavior (Abbott, Wulff, and Szego, 1989). Once TAs are comfortable enough to perceive and act on subtle student feedback, they fare better as teachers. Similarly, TAs, no matter what their styles as beginners, prefer personal guidance (mentoring) over instruction on the skills of teaching (Boehrer and Sarkisian, 1985). Stated another way, they want comfort before skills. The best TAs, in the view of their students, are those comfortable enough with students to avoid seeming too busy to help (Wulff, Nyquist, and Abbott, 1989). Finally, TAs who learn to interact in ready, friendly ways with students can overcome other obstacles to comfort and acceptance, including a lack of proficiency in speaking English (Bailey, 1983).

If, then, the first-factor rule generates a modicum of familiarity with the literature on instructional development and pedagogy, the next step is to outline its implications in more detail. A list of eight such implications is presented below.

1. Instructional development properly begins with concerns about comfortable and efficient practice, in contrast to traditional, premature emphases on process and product.
2. Most teachers, no matter how experienced, must resolve first-factor issues before they can make lasting progress

in arenas of process (for example, supplanting lecturing with something else) or product (for example, student evaluations).

3. New faculty who begin amid their own and others' concerns for product (that is, avoidance of complaints and bad ratings) may teach in a defensive, noninnovative fashion, perhaps permanently.
4. Effective, lasting instructional development cannot occur in isolation from collegial development and scholarly development.
5. As faculty confront issues of process and product, they will need to reestablish first-factor practices of comfortable and efficient practice. Without this link, process and product will have no basis for self-efficacious risk taking (Lucas, 1990) or for learning to get past disappointments with students (Tobias, 1990).
6. The first factor is rarely taught. Like many other kinds of practical intelligence, it is not explicitly tutored but is essential to success (Sternberg, Okagaki, and Jackson, 1990).
7. First-factor habits are apparently as amenable to learning as are related factors tested by Sternberg, Okagaki, and Jackson (1990). In their view, the three essential components that teachers must master are self-management, task management (for example, balancing time), and social management.
8. Because first-factor practice encourages spontaneity, simultaneous activity in scholarly domains, and social inputs, one result should be more innovative and creative teaching.

Reflections About Applications. In a way, the kind of information presented here can fall between the cracks in faculty development. This presentation of ideas about the first-factor rule may be too data-centered for practitioners who do not see themselves as prone to collect the repeated observations needed to draw the kinds of conclusions reached here.

But, like our new colleagues, we may fare better if we seek more balance among our activities and attitudes. Why can't we take time for some illuminating but imperfect data collection? Why shouldn't we assume that we have much to learn from the best teachers on campus, including those quick out of the gate? And, why must we exclude ourselves from the discovery process that goes into more formal research?

In conclusion, I suggest the following as starting points in the task of transporting ideas about the first-factor rule to other campuses: (1) Venture into the field and get to know a small group of new faculty as they adapt to campus. New faculty welcome this attention during what is usually a lonely couple of years. (2) Solicit repeated and reflective observations (from new faculty and from one's own occasional and brief visits to their classrooms) about what

distinguishes happy and successful teachers. (3) Compare other observations with mine. It may be that we can learn something about the effects of different campus cultures on what it takes to succeed at teaching. (4) Consider using information about quick starters in revising the instructional development pro-grams at one's own campus (and recruiting quick starters as collaborators in coaching the basics of better teaching). (5) At the least, reconsider Lucas's (1990, p. 113) conclusion about what will most help faculty as teachers: Instead of worrying about *what* to say, they would do better to ask *how* they can present material in ways that create excitement about teaching.

References

- Abbot, R. D., Wulff, D. H., and Szego, C. K. "Review of Research on TA Training." In J. D. Nyquist, R. D. Abbott, and D. H. Wulff (eds.), *Teaching Assistant Training in the 1990's*. New Directions for Teaching and Learning, no. 39. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1989.
- Boehrer, J., and Sarkisian, E. "The Teaching Assistant's Point of View." In J. D. W. Andrews (ed.), *Strengthening the Teaching Assistant Faculty*. New Directions for Teaching and Learning, no. 22. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1985.
- Boice, R. "Is Released Time an Effective Component of Faculty Development Programs?" *Research in Higher Education*, 1987, 26, 311-326.
- Boice, R. "Procrastination, Busyness, and Bingeing." *Behaviour Research and Therapy*, 1989, 27, 605-611.
- Boice, R. "Countering Common Misbeliefs About Student Evaluations of Teaching." *Teaching Excellence*, 1990a, 2 (2), 1-2.
- Boice, R. *Professors as Writers*. Stillwater, Okla.: New Forums Press, 1990b.
- Boice, R. "New Faculty as Teachers." *Journal of Higher Education*, 1991, 62 (2), 150-173.
- Cole, D. L. "Attracting the Best and Brightest to Teach Psychology." *Teaching of Psychology*, 1986, 13 (3), 107-110.
- Cross, K. P. and Angelo, T. A. *Classroom Assessment Techniques: A Handbook for Faculty*. Ann Arbor: National Center for Research to Improve Postsecondary Teaching and Learning, University of Michigan, 1988.
- Fink, L. D. (ed.) *The First Year of College Teaching*. New Directions for Teaching and Learning, no. 17. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1984.
- Fink, L. D. "New Faculty Members: The Professoriate of Tomorrow." *Journal of Staff, Program, and Organization Development*, in press.
- Lucas, A. F. "Using Psychological Models to Understand Student Motivation." In M. D. Sviniki (ed.), *The Changing Face of College Teaching*. New Directions for Teaching and Learning, no. 42. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1990.
- McKeachie, W. J. *Teaching Tips: A Guidebook for the Beginning College Teacher*. (8th ed.) Lexington, Mass.: Heath, 1986.
- Sternberg, R. J., Okagaki, L., and Jackson, A. S. "Practical Intelligence for Success in School." *Educational Leadership*, Sept. 1990, pp. 35-39.

Tobias, S. *They're not Dumb, They're Different: Stalking the Second Tier*. Tucson, Ariz.: Research Corporation—A Foundation for the Advancement of Science, 1990.

Tremmel, R. "Investigating Productivity and Other Factors in the Writer's Practice." *Freshmen English News*, 1989, 17 (2), 19-25.

Wulff, D. H., Nyquist, J. D., and Abbott, R. D. "Students' Perceptions of Large Classes." In M. G. Weimer (ed.), *Teaching Large Classes Well*. New Directions for Teaching and Learning, no. 32. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1987.

Reprinted by permission, from Michael Theall, Jennifer Franklin (eds.), Effective Practices for Improving Teaching. New Directions for Teaching and Learning, no. 48. Copyright 1991 by Jossey-Bass Inc., Publishers.

Robert Boice directs the Faculty Instructional Support Office at the State University of New York, Stony Brook, where he is also professor of psychology. His interests as a researcher and practitioner focus on faculty as colleagues, writers, and teachers.

Fostering Diversity in the Classroom: Teaching by Discussion

R.G. Billingsley

Cultural diversity is a fact, often unacknowledged, of our national history. And while it is true that fostering diversity is an idea which is consistent with some of our most enduring national ideals, such as respect for the right of each individual to pursue life in their own fashion, promoting these ideals in the classroom can often prove very difficult. The difficulties which must be overcome stem from several sources:

1. A basic lack of knowledge about the diverse peoples and lifestyles that have always been a part of the American experience.
2. Inherited prejudices and stereotypes, many of which are unacknowledged and/or unknown.
3. Deep seated feelings of guilt, anger, frustration and anxiety which are stirred by discussion of diversity issues.

A successful pedagogy must start with an awareness of these difficulties and some fundamental strategies for overcoming them.

While a variety of pedagogies can be fruitful, it seems especially helpful to provide an environment where students can comfortably engage in discussion (as opposed to recitation in which a "right" answer is sought). True discussion sends a message of empowerment between equal agents who all have something significant to contribute to a common enterprise. Although sharing the principles and facts of one's discipline with students is very important, preparing an environment of comfort, trust and mutual respect must also be seen as a primary task. Such an environment makes it possible for meaningful human exchange to take place on complex and often frightening issues. It can enable students to experience a common ground of mutual experiences and respect which can bind students together and simultaneously make it easier to understand and celebrate many differences.

The pedagogy of teaching by discussion places a heavy burden on the Professor. She must establish not just a *content* of diversity but a *process* that actualizes and demonstrates appreciation of diversity. It is important to bear in mind that students are observing and learning the faculty member's *behavior* as well as her *rhetoric*. This type of classroom environment not only embodies the fundamental value of appreciation of diversity but it can also yield great rewards in terms of critical thinking skills especially the ability to appreciate sophisticated multiple perspectives on complex intellectual and moral issues.

The following tips are practical suggestions that undergird the pedagogy of teaching by discussion. In

addition, the tips on teaching and learning suggested below assist in creating an atmosphere which embraces diversity in the classroom.

1. Create an environment of trust and mutual respect so that discussion is not inhibited by fear. Introduce one or more ice-breaking activities that allow students to get to know one another fairly well. They should know each others first and last names, hobbies, majors, place of birth etc. Think up questions that are of interest to you and related to your subject area on which students can exchange information. Use some class time to mention things that students have in common. Let students know of others in the class that have similar interest.
2. You must make it absolutely clear that no one in the classroom is under attack, or is seen as the official representative of a particular group. Explain that no one in the class is viewed as responsible for the ethnocentric behavior of anyone else or of any other group (majority or minority) past or present. Students must be assured that one important point of the class is to explore and understand diversity. The strategy must be to celebrate everyone and to denigrate no one. Surely, many aspects of the historical and cultural past will be discussed. Many of them will be negative. But it will not be the job of the professor or other students to point the finger of blame at anyone in the classroom. The right of each person to choose, what group and what issues to identify with or to disregard must always be protected and respected. Above all the instructor models appropriate behavior by treating all students with great respect, even though he may not, for a variety of very legitimate reasons, agree with some of their opinions.
3. Minority students must be viewed and treated as *individuals* rather than racial, ethnic or gender *categories*. No one should be forced to assume the position of a particular group. If they choose to speak as a member of a minority group, their remarks become one more resource that can be utilized in the same way that a contribution from any non minority person would be incorporated into the classroom dialogue.
4. Universalize the ethnic/gender experience whenever possible so that students can identify with those that they might have previously seen as "other." Find examples from your subject area that illustrate how people of diverse identities share many common problems, issues and solutions. Activities such as eating, dancing, making art, courting, child-rearing, playing etc. can be explored in the search for commonalities. Students need to experience the marvelous paradox of human diversity, that We are all the same in different ways.

5. When there is a sharp difference of opinion between two students ask both of them to explain their positions. The listener must explain in his own words what was said by the first person. When the first speaker is satisfied that she has been understood accurately, then the two can reverse roles. In this way you can build accuracy of communication and encourage mutual respect. Often differences that seemed great initially, are minimized and even eliminated.
6. If arguments between students start to become abusive, interpose yourself between them. Take the place of the student that is being attacked and answer for him until tempers cool and the two initial adversaries can safely face one another again. This is your opportunity to clarify language, but above all it is your opportunity to demonstrate that the essence of diversity in the classroom is mutual respect.
7. Use your discipline to make clear what the rewards have been historically for various forms of prejudicial behavior that have opposed the expression of diversity. Students need to understand the psychological, economic, and political reasons why diversity has often been undermined in various societies in the past. Use examples from the immediate society/ environment, as long as they are not embarrassing or accusative of participants in the class.
8. Establish respect for the values of diverse peoples by using specific examples, from your field of study, to show how culturally varied people have contributed to western history and civilization. In particular, use examples that illustrate the value and beauty of the ethnic/ racial/gender group under discussion.
9. Try to attract students to your classroom that represent diversity. For example, you might notify people from counseling and advising staffs that you are interested in issues of diversity. Although such students would not be "used" as representatives of their group (see #3 above), their participation will inevitably provide a wider range of input than is available from a homogeneous group.
10. Be sure to give students many opportunities to work together in small groups (3-5) on a variety of problem-solving activities which stress the importance of using personal experience. Problems that are of universal significance (see #4 above) are particularly useful for small group work.
11. Use language that is gender neutral or that uses female pronouns as often as male pronouns. This can be done with great effect when describing unknown or hypothetical individuals in positive, creative, or authoritative positions.
12. Enhance the self-respect of individual students by referring to valuable ideas and comments they have made in previous classes.
13. Use specific examples and ideas from your discipline which serve to exhibit the functions of stereotypes and their destructiveness. Try to introduce exercises which show the extent to which most of us are susceptible to belief in some kinds of stereotypes. In the field of American literature examples are abundant. The black child, Pecola Breedlove, in Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*, accepts Euro-American stereotypes of beauty so completely that she fully believes her dark eyes and brown skin are emblems of absolute ugliness. She prays for the blue eyes of white girls who she sees, stereotypically, as beautiful and eternally happy.
14. Be sure to indicate to students the arbitrary nature of cultural and intellectual agendas. Students need to understand that while particular cultural forms may be useful (such as quantitative forms of analysis), they are not absolutes. We may judge specific forms of behavior by these standards, but never individual worth. In a diverse classroom it is essential to be able to separate worth from behavior. The worth of each student should never be questioned, and it must be clear that the value of individual levels of behavior or achievement is a convenient convention that is established in many different ways in various cultural groups.

References

Morrison, Toni. *The Bluest Eye*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1972.

Developing and Teaching an Inclusive Curriculum

Deborah Flick

Developing an inclusive curriculum is a transformative process for the instructor and the students. It entails a paradigm shift in which basic assumptions are examined and changed. Thus, undertaking the project requires desire, curiosity, willingness to travel into unknown pedagogical terrain, and patience with oneself and with one's students.

Women and men of color, white women, and the working class and underclass have been absent from the "center" of analysis, research, theory, and the curriculum. To locate the members of these groups at the "center" from the standpoint of their experience and perspective is an important step toward creating an inclusive curriculum. What does it mean to make this move and what are its implications?

Considering that this undertaking is a process, it is helpful to look at it in terms of phases (McIntosh 1990):

Phase I: White, middle/upper class, male experience, authors, and theorists are the focus of the syllabus. Their experience is considered to be synonymous with "the human experience." Their theories are thought to be "objective" and "uncontaminated" by political considerations.

Phase II: An exceptional white woman or person of color, author or theorist, is added to the Phase I syllabus. They are treated as an anomaly, the exception.

Phase III: Issues concerning people of color, white women and/or the working class are addressed as "problems" and "special topics." Members of groups that were invisible or distorted in Phase I and given token status in Phase II are coming into focus at the margins, but they are not yet at the center.

Phase IV: The lives of people of color, the working class, and white women are located at the center of the syllabus. To paraphrase McIntosh (1990), if you start with the lives of people of color, for example, you will get to the lives of white men and women, but if you start with white men and women you will not necessarily get to the experience of any person of color. Thus, race, class, gender and sexual orientation are treated as interactive systems that shape *everyone's* experience and all social institutions.

Of course, as in the case of all stage theories, one may move back and forth from one phase to the other or experience aspects of more than one phase at the same time. Nonetheless, the phases illustrate, in broad strokes, what it means to embark on the journey toward the development of an inclusive curriculum.

Checklist

This checklist, an adaptation from Collins and Andersen (1987), is offered to help assess whether or not a syllabus is in concert with a Phase IV curriculum.

1. Does thinking about gender, race and class pervade the entire syllabus or are these issues treated as "special topics" or "social problems?"
2. Are all groups recognized as being affected by the interactive structures of race, class and gender or only white women, people of color and the working class?
3. Is one group's experience held as the norm against which others' are measured and evaluated?
4. Does one group dominate in defining the other groups, or do groups define themselves? Is diversity within that self-definition represented and articulated?
5. Does material in the syllabus reinforce prejudice and stereotypes or does it expose and refute them?
6. When teaching about people of color, are the assigned readings by authors of the same race and ethnicity as those you are studying? This is especially important when studying the status of women in non-Western cultures and so-called minority cultures in the U.S.A. Are readings assigned by women within the culture who critically analyze their culture as well as by those who endorse the status quo?

Teaching Tips

The following teaching tips are divided into two sections. Section A provides two pedagogical techniques to help students embrace and benefit from an inclusive curriculum. Section B offers practical suggestions for the instructor so that her/his behavior in the classroom is congruent with the spirit of a diverse curriculum.

A. Pedagogical Techniques

Fostering Empathy

Many students, particularly those who belong to one or more categories of race, class, and gender that have been privileged and dominant, have trouble understanding and relating to people who are different from themselves. "Why do we have to hear all this stuff about Jim Crow, World War II internment camps, and broken treaties? I came to school to learn sociology. What does this have to do with sociology or me?" One can help to bridge this chasm by providing students with an opportunity to explore a time in their lives when they felt "different" from the dominant group or the majority.

1. Ask students to recall a time when they felt “different.” Tell them to write it down. Give students a lot of latitude in defining the experience of being different. Some of them will need it.
2. Ask them to write about how others reacted to them. How they felt. How they behaved. For example, did they try to hide their difference? Accentuate or exaggerate it? Ask them to explore why they did what they did and whether it worked.
3. Finally, ask the students to write what others, from whom they were different, could have done to support them. Ask them to be very specific.
4. Ask students to share what they have written with two or three others in a small group.
5. Facilitate a discussion with the whole class with an eye toward building bridges and common ground. This is an opportunity to explore how the “same” treatment is not necessarily “equitable” or “fair” treatment. It can also be helpful to clarify differences among differences. For example, the experience of being the only ballerina among a group of friends who are tap-dancers is different from being a Chicana in a predominantly white school. The former is situational and limited in its impact. The latter, in contrast, carries with it the effects of historical and institutionalized prejudice and discrimination.

This exercise can be referred to during future lectures and discussions to help address denial of the issues at hand, blaming the victims and to examine what it means to take responsibility if one is a member of the dominant group or if one is “different.”

Disabusing Stereotypes

Race, gender and class stereotypes are socially created lenses through which complex people are reduced to distorted but “manageable” characteristics. Such stereotypes are very resistant to change. Consequently, regardless of how scrupulous one is about trying not to reinforce stereotypes, there is always the risk that students will inadvertently draw unintended conclusions. The following exercise is useful in heading off the likelihood of this occurring.

1. Ask students to “brainstorm” stereotypes for a particular group whose experience is at the center of focus, e.g. African-American women. Write them on the chalkboard.
2. Examine the “sources” of the stereotypes. Where did students learn them? From family? Friends? Religious institutions? Textbooks? Media? Be specific.
3. Test the verity of the stereotypes. For example, “most women on welfare are African-American.” This stereotype can be disabused by offering the following information: Most women on welfare are white; most

African-American women are in the labor force; there is a significant population of highly educated middle-class African-American women.

4. Explore with the class why such stereotypes persist when they are factually wrong. Whose interests do such images serve? African-Americans? Middle and upper-middle-class whites? How do they serve those interests, i.e., what social contradictions and tensions do the stereotypes resolve and for whom?
5. Create new positive images from the point of view of those whose experience is being discussed. Be prepared with ideas of your own. Your students might find it difficult to generate nonstereotypic images. DO NOT single out students who represent the group under consideration to answer this question.
6. Compare and contrast the new images with the original stereotypes. Explore their implications in the context of the interrelatedness of race, gender, class, and sexual orientation in the society under discussion.

B. Concrete Teaching Tips

1. Do not ask students of color or a white female to give “the African-American point of view” or the “woman’s point of view” on any given topic. An individual cannot speak for a group. To ask a student to do so is not only potentially embarrassing for the student, but it implies that there is not a diversity of perspectives within the group.
2. Do not expect, and do not ask, students of color to be knowledgeable about their history or culture. The same applies to language. For example: do not ask a Chinese-American student, “How would you say this in Chinese?” Many students of color have not had an opportunity to learn the history, culture, and/or language of their ethnic heritage. Even those who have had such cultural and educational opportunities may not wish to be involuntarily singled out.
3. Become conscious of your assumptions regarding students of color. For example, do you assume that all Asian students are good at math? Asians are highly intelligent? African-American males are not very smart and are attending college on athletic scholarships? Students of color are less qualified or intelligent than your white students? Be careful not to act on these assumptions, or other assumptions if you hold them, when relating to your students.
4. Anticipate students’ tendency to negatively stereotype women, people of color, and lesbians and gays. By so doing, the stereotypes can be made conscious and dispelled. For example, before beginning the study of an American Indian nation, invite students in a nonthreatening way (e.g., brainstorming) to identify stereotypes of American Indians. Examine and dispel the stereotypes one by one. (See *Disabusing Stereotypes*)

5. You are a role model to your students. Share your own process of developing awareness of gender, class, sexual orientation, and race/ethnic stereotypes and issues. Help students understand the value of a diversity perspective in their personal, academic and future professional lives. Use examples from your own life.
6. Learn to use gender inclusive (non-sexist) language. Encourage your students to do the same when they speak in class as well as in their writing.
7. Use (learn) group facilitation skills to productively manage discussions regarding the difficult subjects of race, gender, class and sexual orientation.
8. Create a comfortable climate for students who are in the minority in your class by not making them inappropriately visible. For example: in a class in which women are a clear minority, don't say something like, "We shouldn't make sexual references like that, we'll embarrass Sally and Jane."
9. Be aware that silence on the parts of students of color and women does not necessarily mean they are comfortable with the class. It might mean the contrary and that they are reluctant to speak up about it. If you are concerned about this, do not single out, publicly or privately, students of color or women and ask them how they feel about the class. They likely would feel uncomfortably visible and you probably would not get a candid response. Rather, approach the whole class with something like, "I am concerned that some points of view are not being expressed. I think we are missing out on important, diverse opinions. What would make it safer and easier for more of you to speak up?" The faculty member might suggest some diverse opinions that are missing as well as ask for examples. Invite everyone in the class to contribute.
10. Be clear about your motivation for creating an inclusive curriculum. If you are doing it for other than personal and/or scholarly reasons, e.g., approval of your students of color and women students, you might be disappointed. For any number of reasons your efforts might not be appreciated. Also, be prepared to address the concerns of students who feel confused or resentful of an inclusive curriculum. (See #5)

References

- McIntosh, Peggy. *Interactive Phases of Curricular and Personal Revision with Regard to Race*. In press, SUNY, 1990.
- Collins, Patricia Hill and Andersen, Margaret L. *An Inclusive Curriculum: Race, Class and Gender in Sociology Instruction*. Washington, D.C.: ASA Teaching Resources Center, 1987.

Deborah Flick teaches in the Women Studies Program.

Fostering Diversity in a Medium-Sized Classroom

Brenda J. Allen

In her inaugural speech (October 4, 1991), President Judith Albino encouraged all members of the University community to become involved in the daily commitment to "the imperative of diversity." One essential area where faculty members can fulfill their obligation to this imperative is the classroom. Billingsley (1991) delineates difficulties that they must overcome in order to foster diversity while teaching, and he offers excellent guidelines for "creating an atmosphere which embraces diversity."

His suggestions, however, are geared toward discussion courses. Consequently, some of his ideas may not be easy for faculty members to employ when working with more than 15 to 20 students. Here, I submit a few tips for those of us who work with "medium" sized groups of 80 to 100 learners, as contrasted to what Middleton (1987) calls "thundering herds" of 200 or more.

Pedagogical style is a key factor in the formula for being a successful teacher. I tend to use an interactive approach, which encourages students to engage themselves actively in the learning process. Although this strategy is harder to exercise in large lectures than in seminars, using it is both possible and crucial to promoting diversity in the classroom.

In some ways, an interactive approach is similar to the discussion method Billingsley describes. For instance, he advocates creating an atmosphere of comfort, trust, and mutual respect, and he emphasizes the importance of "the faculty member's *behavior* as well as her *rhetoric*."

Middleton (1987) cites an element of teaching large classes that also applies to an interactive approach for medium-sized classes: "an awareness of a personalized relationship between the professor and the students, first as a group but then, at first gradually but with quickening pace, between the professor and individual students" (p.24).

To establish such an environment in a medium-sized classroom, however, a professor cannot literally involve each student in every discussion. But she *can* set a tone that allows all students to feel like part of the process, whether they express themselves through speech or not.

Delineated below are some practical tips for creating an interactive scenario that fosters diversity in the classroom. I also strongly recommend Billingsley's brochure as a complement to these ideas.

1. Establish and maintain a climate of openness and interaction by disclosing personal information about yourself. As an African American professor, I often divulge facts about myself that illuminate my similarities to and differences from my students.

For example, I usually share my abbreviated autobiography with students during one of the first class sessions. Then, I ask them to tell me about themselves as a homework assignment. Invariably, their autobiographies include the same kind of information as mine does. Furthermore, I periodically reread their autobiographies throughout the semester and personalize discussions by referring to them. For example, if a student is from Ohio (as I am), I might make a comment about midwesterners, and say, "Isn't that right, Susie?" These kinds of tactics help to maintain an interactive atmosphere and to reinforce Billingsley's point that **WE ARE ALL THE SAME IN DIFFERENT WAYS**.

2. Those of you who are members of ethnic plurality groups should help students to understand that you *do not represent* your group. Rather, you are an individual, as are any students in your class who happen to be nonmajority persons.
3. Since "actions speak louder than words," try always to be mindful of your nonverbal behavior. To help students feel like part of the process, establish eye contact with each one throughout the session. Move around the classroom as you talk (especially when you expect students to contribute to the discussion, but also while you are lecturing). Also, try to appear enthusiastic, relaxed, and comfortable.
4. Consider assigning seats according to alphabetical order, for at least two reasons: (1) you can learn students' names more easily; and (2) students who otherwise might not sit next to each other may have an opportunity to meet someone who is "different" from them.
5. If your subject matter permits, incorporate a few exercises that require groups of students to interact with each other. Billingsley recommends:

Be sure to give students many opportunities to work together in small groups on a variety of problem-solving activities which stress the importance of using personal experience. Problems that are of universal significance are particularly useful for small group work.

6. Wherever possible, integrate (no pun intended) information about diversity into your classroom materials. Again, Billingsley recommends:

Establish respect for the values of diverse peoples by using specific examples, from your field of study, to show how culturally varied people have contributed to western history and civilization. In particular, use examples that illustrate the value and beauty of the ethnic/racial/gender group under discussion.

Use specific examples and ideas from your discipline which serve to exhibit the functions of stereotypes and their destructiveness. Try to introduce exercises which show the extent to which most of us are

susceptible to belief in some kinds of stereotypes. In the field of American literature examples are abundant. The black child, Pecola Breedlove, in Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*, accepts Euro-American stereotypes of beauty so completely that she fully believes her dark eyes and brown skin are emblems of absolute ugliness. She prays for the blue eyes of white girls who she sees, stereotypically, as beautiful and eternally happy.

7. Before the middle of the semester, devise an assignment that requires students to meet with you individually. If possible, review the student's autobiography before the meeting. The purpose of this activity is to give the students a chance to talk with you privately and to let them know that you are approachable. This may be particularly meaningful for ethnic plurality students, who (in my experience) sometimes seem apprehensive about talking one-on-one with their professors.

References

Billingsley, Ron. "Fostering Diversity In the Classroom: Teaching by Discussion." On *Diversity in Teaching and Learning*, no. 1. Faculty Teaching Excellence Program, University of Colorado at Boulder, 1991.

Middleton, Charles. "Teaching the Thundering Herd: Surviving In a Large Classroom." In *On Teaching*, edited by Mary Ann Shea. Boulder, CO: Faculty Teaching Excellence Program, 1987.

Brenda J. Allen is an Assistant Professor of the Department of Communication.

The Influence of Attitudes, Feelings and Behavior Toward Diversity on Teaching and Learning

Lerita Coleman

Developing an inclusive curriculum and creating classroom environments to foster diversity offer excellent opportunities for faculty members as conveyors of knowledge to examine their own ideas and feelings about gender and diversity. Most professors are socialized to believe that once they have begun their first teaching position, much of their personal (self) development is complete. Frequently we think of our initial years in the professorial ranks as the time to focus on professional development. Self-development (e.g., seminars, faculty development, self-help groups, therapy), however, are important components of professional development. Self-development, self-acceptance, in particular, is inextricably tied to our performance in the classroom, especially with respect to how we handle differing perspectives and perceptions and how we relate to others who are different. As we become more comfortable with who we are, we also become more comfortable with “differentness”: different worldviews, as well as cultural, ethnic, racial or gender “differentness.”

Teaching about ethnic and gender diversity therefore allows us to examine our own feelings about gender, race and diversity and to determine how our feelings affect what kind of material we present in class and how we present the material. Questions that we might ask of ourselves in this regard are: Do I have biases? Do I really believe in the equality of members of all ethnic and gender groups, and if not, how do I convey this attitude to my students? What aspects of racial or gender diversity make me feel uncomfortable? Why? For example, am I comfortable being around successful women? What kind of general attitudes do I hold about specific types of people (e.g., Black males, White females)? Where did these attitudes and feelings originate? Hence the process of creating an open classroom environment where students feel comfortable discussing often volatile issues begins with an examination of our own attitudes, feelings and behavior regarding diversity.

Examining our own personal reading habits provides another way to determine our underlying attitudes about ethnicity and gender: Do I read widely? More specifically, when have I read any fiction or non-fiction written about or by an Asian-, African-, Native- or Latino-American or female writers? Do I value these literatures and the lives and experiences of people who are racially, ethnically and culturally different? How much do I really know about the origin and history of Asian or African, Latin or Native American culture? What do I know about women’s studies or women’s history?

An exploration of attitudes, feelings and behavior about diversity can be extended to how we relate to colleagues

and graduate students who are different. In this domain we might address such questions as: Do I feel uncomfortable when a woman or a professor of color publishes a paper in a prestigious journal in my discipline or acquires a major grant or fellowship? Do I attribute most or all of their successes to “affirmative action” and not to their hard work, intelligence, perseverance and competence? Do I seek out the expertise of my female colleagues or colleagues of color or do I see my role as primarily a mentor to them? In summary, how symmetrical or egalitarian are our relationships with colleagues, graduate students and staff members who are “different”?

We may also need to explore whether we have developed competencies outside our own area or domain of specialization. Do we see other disciplines or the cultural experiences of others as an opportunity to enhance our own research or teaching? Do we make use of what is known in literature or history in our research in the social sciences? In turn, can scholars in the humanities and sciences learn from anthropology, sociology or psychology? In studying identity, for example, can I utilize information from African-American or Latino-American studies? In understanding environmental design, how can the literature and history of Native American people elucidate my thinking?

Exploring the personal and professional issues outlined above are excellent guides to understanding how we may present issues of ethnicity and gender in the classroom. Student-teacher relationships, in particular, help us to realize that students are teachers also, and our interactions with them offer a wealth of opportunities to learn about ourselves and the differing perceptions of the world that people have constructed.

Behavior Toward Students Who Are Different

Given that we can learn from teacher-student relationships, we might ask ourselves about how we respond to different kinds of students inside and outside of the classroom.

1. Can you see beyond a student’s ethnic or racial background and see an intelligent, evolving person? Do you treat your students differently? Do you have different expectations for them? Are you surprised when a Black or Latino student earns the best grade on an exam or writes the best paper in the class? Claude Steele in his work on student achievement asks the question of all educators—Do you see ability and intelligence as a limited capacity or an expandable commodity?
2. Have I encouraged any bright students of color to assist me with my research or join my research lab? Have I

encouraged him or her to pursue graduate school? Have I encouraged students struggling with diversity issues to work with professors who are conducting research on such topics?

3. How do I feel about students of color and women at the graduate level? Am I eager to engage in research with them?

Specific Teaching Tips

1. Advise *every* student to take an ethnic studies or women's studies class no matter what their ethnic or gender background is. Being immersed in the literature and history of another group is an enlightening experience and will help to loosen rigid conceptions of "other people."
2. Attempt to provide a variety of perspectives about all of the topics you teach. Rather than always to begin with the Western societal version of a topic and then talk about "the other people" as an aside, try to introduce alternative ways of looking at issues from the beginning. Also try to help students understand the origin of different epistemologies or worldviews associated with ethnic, racial or gender groups. It is quite evident that most epistemological traditions are linked to different ecologies (i.e., ways of surviving). Rather than showing that a particular worldview is wrong, discuss with students why groups of people developed a particular epistemology, cognitive style or behavioral tradition.
3. Attempt to help students understand how we (as a society or as individuals) construct the meanings attached to certain racial, ethnic, gender or social class, and other groups and how each person also has the ability and the responsibility to examine these meanings. For example, why does being female mean being "less valuable than a male" in many cultures? What is the verity of this meaning associated with gender and why is it perpetuated?
4. Ask students to write a paper about the meaning of race (and its relevance for your academic discipline). Ask them to talk with another person who is not of the same race or ethnic background about what race and ethnicity means to them and then have students compare the two.
5. Do not allow students to make unsubstantiated statements (e.g., most African-American college students are athletes, Asian students study more than the average student, women are not good at math and science) about members of ethnic, racial or gender groups. Ask any student who makes such a claim to conduct research in the library or obtain statistical information from the appropriate sources to support such claims.
6. Try to answer personal questions about gender and racial issues as honestly as you can (e.g., what would you do if your son or daughter chose to date someone of another race?).
7. Do not avoid controversy. In fact, have students openly discuss stereotypes that they have about different racial, ethnic and gender groups. Talk about where these stereotypes originate and why they are perpetuated.
8. Encourage students to engage in individuation. This is the process by which we attempt to move beyond stereotyping a person to seeing him or her as an individual. Help students to understand that stereotyping people and acting on these stereotypes are bad habits that can be dissipated with each interaction. Assist them in trying to see beyond social categories to the individual (e.g., Do you say hello to the janitor? Why not? Can you have a conversation with a server in the dining hall? If not, what is inhibiting you?).
9. Stop the class when students are having trouble talking about a topic. For example, students often have difficulty talking about racial issues. Ask them to talk about their discomfort, especially their feelings (which often range from guilt and anger to fear). Once the class is able to transcend the inhibitory affect, you can return to discussing the relevant issues at a more conceptual and abstract level.
10. Do not allow students to attack each other in class. Instead, try to get them to explain why they feel the way they do. It is helpful for them to rephrase an attack such as "You are so racist and sexist" to "When you stereotype all members of a racial or gender group, I feel offended and angry."
11. Encourage students, especially those who seem to be angry about racial or gender diversity to come by your office to discuss the matter in greater detail. Usually such anger stems from personal feelings of insecurity or fears about one's future occupational success. In extreme cases, such students might benefit from a referral to the counseling services.
12. Try to assist students in understanding how their specific racial or gender makeup may help them to get more in touch with their humanity. Being a member of a particular ethnic or racial minority group may teach one strength or compassion that one might not have being a member of a majority racial group. Or certain characteristics associated with gender groups (e.g., gentleness, autonomy) are attributes that exist in everyone and can be nurtured and developed for the good of all. Basically, try to help students understand that there might be some greater purpose for their ethnic, racial or gender background (besides being angry at the "outgroup") that can help them be more comfortable with who they are and make the world a better place for all of us.

References

Steele, Claude. In press. "Minds Wasted, Minds Saved: Crisis and Hope in the Schooling of Black Americans." *The Atlantic*.

Lerita Coleman is a Professor of Psychology.

The Nature and Problem of Stereotypes

William Wei

Stereotypes are an ingrained feature of American society and an integral part of our socialization process, transmitting a patchwork of traditionally inaccurate images and clichés from one generation to another. They are based on preconceptions that are derived from existing sources of information about certain people and selective perceptions developed to explain their behavior. Stereotypes are a function of social relations between groups or political relations between nations, not extensive personal experience or knowledge. We use them to justify certain prejudices that we have and to strengthen our self-image at the expense of someone else. Indeed, their primary purpose is to degrade others as a means of accentuating our own humanity.

Perhaps the most insidious aspect of stereotypes is that they weaken our ability to think critically and serve as a major source of disinformation about others, especially women and minorities. Instead of challenging the stereotypes that we encounter in our daily lives, we accept them as representing reality and erroneously equate them with valid generalizations based on accurate data about a group of people. In actuality, they are nothing more than standardized mental pictures reflecting an oversimplified opinion and have little or no ascertainable basis in fact. They project unidimensional caricatures, masking the diversity that is an inherent feature of every group of people. Only Euro-Americans are depicted as representing the entire spectrum of humanity. Stereotypes, however, do accurately reflect one social reality: unequal relations in society and in the world.

Using Asians and Asian Americans as illustrations, I would like to suggest a way for you and your students to deal with the problem of stereotypes. But first, a cautionary note is in order: The issue is not whether specific stereotypes are politically correct or incorrect, negative or positive, but rather that they are, by definition, basically false and misleading. A case in point is Asian Americans as a "model minority," a positive stereotype that emerged during the 1960s and is used to make invidious comparisons with other people of color. It embodies a "cultural determinist" argument, that Asian Americans have overcome extraordinary adversities through the strength of their cultural heritage.

For educators, what makes Asian Americans a model worth emulating, is their exceptional school performance. This perceived performance, however, is excellence in a limited number of areas. It is an article of faith that Asian Americans are "born" mathematicians or scientists, but are unable to master English even if they try. While many have certainly done well in school, many others have not, a fact

that is conveniently ignored or overlooked. Moreover, the "Model Minority" stereotype fails to take into consideration the high psychological costs of academic achievement.

1. Before you can successfully address the problem of stereotypes, you have to recognize not only that it is a universal problem but also that it may be a personal one as well. So it will probably be necessary first to ask, "Am I burdened with race, gender, and class stereotypes?" It is a difficult question to ask and answer, since none of us want to believe that we harbor and promote stereotypes. The beneficial result of this self-examination is self-empowerment, for when it is over you will have greater control over what you think and who you are, and a better understanding of what Carlos Cortés (1979) refers to as the "societal curriculum," that "massive, ongoing, informal curriculum of family, peer groups, neighborhoods, mass media, and other socializing forces that 'educate' us throughout our lives."
2. The best way to tackle the question of whether you have unintentionally stereotyped a group of people is to do so head on and on paper. Writing out your thoughts and feelings enables you to see more clearly what is in your mind's eye and, equally important, take ownership of it. One way is to write it out in the form of a tree, with the more fundamental ascribed characteristics where the roots are, and derivative ones where the leaves are. Another way is simply to write down five adjectives that you think best describe a people. For example, given the Japan bashing that has been going on in the United States, it might prove instructive to compare what you have written down about the Japanese, who are increasingly perceived as our newest "enemy," at least in the economic arena, and what scholars know about them.
3. After identifying potential stereotypes, it is essential to subject them to critical scrutiny and factual verification. Asking Asian Americans to tell you what is true and false about the portrait that you have created may seem convenient but is foolish. Unless they have studied their group's history and culture, they will probably know as little as you do. Even though Asian Studies has been in existence since shortly after World War II and has produced a wealth of information about Asia and the people who live there, and even though Asian American Studies was established in the late 1960s, there is no certainty that Asian Americans (or other people, for that matter) have studied either field. Besides, you risk embarrassing them if they cannot answer the question.
4. If what emerges is a stereotypical portrait of a people, then the question becomes: What are the origins of these stereotypes? A Gallup Organization public opinion

poll about the Chinese is instructive (China Council). In 1966, Americans described Chinese as hardworking, but also as ignorant, warlike, sly, and treacherous. But by 1972, the highest ranking adjectives for Chinese in the same poll were hardworking, intelligent, progressive, artistic, practical, and honest. Within the space of six years, negative opinions were replaced with positive ones. It is no coincidence that these changes occurred during a period of improved Sino-American relations.

5. Since stereotypes permeate popular culture, an effective way to engage students is to have them collect examples from a medium of their choice. For instance, a survey of advertisements in national magazines or on television could yield a wealth of images for analysis and discussion, activities that will impart critical thinking skills. Among the questions that could be asked are the following:
 - Are these images accurate? What purpose do they serve?
 - Do these images affect Asian American self-identity? How do they affect the rest of society, especially Euro-Americans?
 - Are counterportrayals useful? Or do they simply promote a different stereotype?
 - Are there any perceptual, moral, or marketing reasons for advertising agencies to alter these images in any substantive way?
 - What do these images imply about American culture?
6. Ultimately, someone will ask, "If these images are inaccurate or unidimensional, what are Asians and Asian Americans really like?" Since students know that there are characteristics that distinguish one group of people from another, they will want to learn what these traits are. This is the most demanding part of the process, since it requires real knowledge that can be acquired only through study.

References

China Council of the Asia Society. "Looking for China: American Images (Part I)." Color Slides and Cassette Tape Unit, n.d.

Cortés, Carlos E. "The Societal Curriculum and the School Curriculum: Allies or Antagonists?" *Educational Leadership*, 36, no. 7 (April 1979): 475-479.

Section Three:

The Faculty Teaching Excellence Program

Goal and Methods of the Faculty Teaching Excellence Program

The overarching goal of the Faculty Teaching Excellence Program is the improvement of teaching and learning at the University of Colorado at Boulder.

In terms of contact, the Program works toward this broad goal by assisting faculty members with improving their teaching.

Some of the specific methods by which the Program brings faculty members into contact with teaching concepts and techniques include:

- disseminating pedagogical information to faculty in printed form (*Memo to the Faculty*, the series of brochures “On Diversity in Teaching and Learning”)
- offering group sessions in which teaching and learning methods are presented and discussed (Professional Lecture Series, Instructional Workshops and Symposia)
- providing individual guidance to faculty members (Faculty Consultation Services)
- conducting programs designed primarily to aid junior faculty (New Faculty Program, Teaching Portfolio Consultation)

The Five Dimensions of Good Teaching

Underlying all of the programs that the Faculty Teaching Excellence Program has established are a set of five aspects that we feel are basic constituents of good teaching. We call these components the Five Dimensions of Good Teaching:

1. Knowledge of Content
2. Clarity and Organization
3. Rapport with Students
4. Dynamism and Enthusiasm
5. Fair Exams and Grading

This breakdown of teaching into specific areas can be extremely helpful to the college-level instructor because each of these dimensions is essential to successful teaching and learning. By concentrating on one aspect at a time, while not forgetting the importance of the five as a group, you can make genuine progress toward teaching excellence.

Here is the specific importance of each of the Five Dimensions of Good Teaching:

- 1. Knowledge of Content.** This is a component of teaching that nearly every student will justly demand of all of their college teachers. This is one responsibility for which you are well-prepared. However, this is not a static requirement; new developments in your discipline must be followed and new epistemologies for teaching these developments will have to be learned as well.
- 2. Clarity and Organization.** Organization is a multi-step process that begins in our own minds. Do we have a good grasp of the subject in all of its parts? Organizing these subject components so that our students can absorb them requires a knowledge of what information, concepts, and vocabulary the students may lack as well as the ability to reconstitute the knowledge into easily learnable modules. Clarity is the punctuation connecting these modules, providing clear delineations that mark them as distinct learning units.
- 3. Rapport with Students.** The concept of rapport implies a certain harmony existing between students and faculty that allows students to relate comfortably with their teachers in the joint search for knowledge. It does not suggest that teachers need to portray themselves as close friends or political allies of their students. Indeed, faculty and students have a right—perhaps a duty—to disagree with each other from time to time, as long as such a difference of opinion does not hinder the learning process. The benefit of rapport for students is the feeling of support and cooperation that they should derive from their relationship with each of their instructors during their years at the university.
- 4. Dynamism and Enthusiasm.** Generally, men and women choose to be university teachers because they feel enthusiastic toward their discipline and wish to spend their working careers involved in learning more about it. An integral part of this relationship between person and knowledge is the need to share that learning with others, and this is where teaching interacts with enthusiasm. Faculty who develop ways to release this internal enthusiasm, to share it with their students, not only further its spread throughout the university community, but find their own interest in their discipline constantly renewed and fresh.
- 5. Fair Exams and Grading.** Two facts of college teaching are that many students regard a teacher’s job as consisting mainly of testing and grading, while many faculty find testing and grading the most onerous tasks connected with teaching. For both students and their instructors, testing can be a relatively smooth operation if a number of conditions are met:

- Effective tests are related closely to the goals of the course.
- Tests should reflect the type of work that students are doing in the course.
- Students should have some idea in advance of the contents of the test and the type of questions that will be asked.

Grading should recognize good work for what it is, should not be used as a punitive measure, and should be a deliberate act, considering the potential effect of grades on the student's future choices.

Services to Faculty

As it is currently constituted, the Faculty Teaching Excellence Program offers a wide range of services to faculty members. In the area of group events, the Program sponsors the Professional Lecture Series and the Instructional Workshop and Symposia Series. Generally, these group sessions involve faculty members sharing their insights and innovations with colleagues.

The Program caters to the needs of individual faculty members with a voluntary and confidential consultation system with a flexible range of services.

Because the consultations are viewed as both non-threatening and beneficial, a wide variety of faculty from such diverse fields as Dance, Biology, and Psychology take advantage of these services each semester.

Professional Lecture Series on Teaching and Learning

The Professional Lecture Series presents several lectures on teaching and learning each year. Some of the talks are delivered by CU Boulder faculty members while outside speakers are brought to the campus to deliver others. Typical subjects of these lectures include relating to students in large lecture environments, the relationship between teaching and research, and how to engage students when teaching controversial issues.

Here are examples of recent events in the Professional Lecture Series:

- “Women as Teachers—Teaching About Women” an annual event in the form of a panel discussion on the concerns of women in academe
- “Canst thou pull out Leviathan with a hook: A multimedia approach to teaching a large lower division course” Brian Fagan (University of California Santa Barbara)
- “Teaching as Listening” Elise Boulding (international peace activist)
- “Knowing and Gender” Blythe Clinchy (Wellesley College)

Instructional Workshops and Symposia

We believe that college teachers are as much in need of periodic refreshment of their skills as are doctors and dentists. The purpose, therefore, of the Workshops and Symposia organized and presented by the Program is to bring groups of faculty members into contact with stimulating pedagogical ideas and techniques. In this way, they can renew and expand their approaches to classroom teaching.

Topics of Instructional Workshops presented in recent years have included:

- “Performance in a Nutshell”— Lee Potts (Theatre & Dance)
- “Lexicon of Discrimination”— Manning Marable (Political Science and History)
- “Provoking Critical Thought in the Classroom: Teaching with the Socratic Method”— Ed Gac (Business), Norton Steuben (Law), Mary Wilder (University of Denver)
- “Teaching in the Sciences”— Michael Grant (EPO Biology), Kim Malville (Astrophysical, Planetary, and Atmospheric Sciences/APAS), John Taylor, (Physics)
- “How to Evaluate Student Learning”— Lee Chambers-Schiller (History), Polly McLean (Journalism), Jim Palmer (Humanities), Larry Singell (Economics)

Instructional Symposia are an innovation that is a variation on the workshop theme combining the advantages of workshops and lectures. Instead of an individual demonstrating a teaching technique or lecturing on a pedagogical topic, a short presentation is followed by an open exchange of views on the subject among the faculty members in attendance. Examples of the Symposia that the Program has presented are:

- “Bringing the Creative Spirit to Teaching,”— Jim Downton (Sociology)
- “Teaching Large Lecture Courses”— David Clough (Engineering and Applied Science), Evelyn Hu-DeHart (Center for Studies of Ethnicity and Race in America/CSERA), Charles Middleton (Dean, College of Arts and Sciences)
- “Difficult Teaching Situations” —Herbert Covert (Anthropology), Steve Everett (Journalism), William Krantz (Chemical Engineering), Robert Pois (History)

New Faculty Program: “Becoming a Teacher”

From our experience in assisting faculty members with their teaching, we can draw some significant conclusions. First, the best instructors only rarely can be said to have a natural talent for teaching; more often, excellent teachers are those who conscientiously reflect on their teaching and constantly try to develop and perfect new skills. Second,

we have faith in the abilities of all of our faculty. We believe that they all can become excellent teachers.

Recognizing that the first year of college teaching can be a time of challenge for new faculty, the Faculty Teaching Excellence Program conducts a series of symposia on teaching and learning under the title "Becoming a Teacher." These sessions assist new faculty in taking their first steps toward feeling confident with their teaching. Each symposium addresses a topic that is relevant to the challenges faced by beginning teachers and provides them with strategies for ensuring excellence in each area.

Here are descriptions of the "Becoming a Teacher" symposia on teaching and learning that have been offered:

- **Course Visioning** covers all facets of course planning. Beginning with the initial concept of the course, participants consider the finer points of setting goals for the course, text selection and syllabus construction. Discussion then proceeds to classroom activities, homework assignments and evaluation and grading. Finally, ways of evaluating the course and improving it for the future are considered.
- **Difficult Teaching Situations** provides a forum where new faculty members can suggest strategies and discover new methods for dealing with situations such as these: an obstreperous student threatens the stability of the class; an embarrassed silence follows an invitation for class discussion; the seemingly unending variations of grading hassles.
- **Microteaching** is a collegial group method for getting feedback on teaching techniques that has proved to be a productive way of improving teaching. Each participant in the symposium will give a short presentation in his or her own discipline. This presentation is videotaped and then critiqued by peers from other departments.
- **Creating and Establishing a Teaching Portfolio** offers suggestions for developing a personalized portfolio that suits the faculty member's individual style and needs. Participants learn about the concepts underlying use of the portfolio as a means of reflecting on and improving one's teaching, and discuss the components of a portfolio. They then develop a plan of the contents and creation process for their own portfolio.
- **Performance in a Nutshell** concentrates on three principles of enhancing presentational skills and provides each participant with a seven-item checklist of techniques for utilizing the principles of good presentation. It is based on two assumptions: first, most of us can use support and suggestions from time to time about how to put our best self forward; and second, we know much more about choosing words that help students understand what we are trying to teach than we do about nonverbal communication.

Faculty Consultation Services

Just as important as the mass contact with faculty in lectures, workshops and symposia are the one-to-one—consultations offered by the Faculty Teaching Excellence Program. Faculty can apply on a voluntary basis to seek validation of their teaching methods as well as to learn of ways to improve their effectiveness in the classroom. Of course, confidentiality is assured. The Program offers assistance to individuals in the following forms:

The 37-Item Student Survey

The 37-Item Survey asks students to help an instructor in evaluating his or her teaching. We have found the survey to be an excellent way to identify students' perceptions about specific teaching areas and see how the students' perceptions match the instructor's own expectations. The 37 items of the survey are representative of the 5 dimensions of good teaching: Clarity and Organization, Knowledge of Content, Fair Exams and Grading, Dynamism and Enthusiasm, and Rapport With Students (see above) and have been demonstrated to be the key points of the nexus of teaching and learning. Requiring only 10 minutes of class time, the 37-Item Survey can be administered as part of a mid-semester evaluation or at any time that feedback from your students is desired. This survey may be administered on its own or in conjunction with the classroom observation or videotape consultation. After the results of the survey are tabulated, an Associate of the Program will meet with the instructor to discuss a detailed analysis of student perceptions of the instruction they are receiving.

The Student Group Interview

Suitable for either mid-semester or end-of-semester administration, the Group Interview is a more thorough survey of student reactions to teaching than the 37-Item Survey and requires approximately 40 minutes of class time. In this process an Associate of the Program asks students to divide into small groups to discuss the strengths of a faculty member's teaching methods, as well as those areas they see as needing improvement. The suggestions of the groups are then written on the board and votes are taken on each item to measure the degree of class consensus. Both the suggestions and the voting results are then compiled in the form of a detailed written report that is sent to the instructor within a few days.

Classroom Observation

At the request of faculty, Associates of the Faculty Teaching Excellence Program regularly visit classes and assess those areas in which the instructor's teaching is strong and those that might be improved. The faculty

member meets with the Associate at a later date to discuss the observation. This service is usually accompanied by a videotaping of the class.

Videotaping a class

At the request of a faculty member, an Academic Media Services representative will videotape that instructor teaching a class session. Afterwards in a personal (and fully confidential) consultation with an Associate of the Faculty Teaching Excellence Program, the tape will be viewed by the faculty member who will have the opportunity to set his or her own goals for improving classroom performance. The faculty member will be able to recognize and validate the strengths in his or her teaching and the learning environment created in a specific course and discuss techniques to try in areas that can be improved. Research studies have indicated that faculty who participate in a videotape consultation do improve their performance in specific skills and that the improvements in teaching are durable. The only copy of the videotape is presented to the faculty member to keep.

Teaching Portfolio Consultation

The Faculty Teaching Excellence Program offers a consultation service for faculty who could benefit from assistance with the creation of a Teaching Portfolio—a collection of documents recording their teaching performance. The service assists those faculty who wish to join a growing trend toward documentation and recognition of the act of teaching. An Associate of the Program will guide faculty through the process of creating a Teaching Portfolio from the time that they decide to establish one through the acts of revision and updating.

We base this consultation on the belief that teaching portfolios represent an opportunity for faculty to be “reflective practitioners,” that is, teachers who are highly conscious of the relationship between pedagogy and their experiences as directors of student learning.

The ultimate responsibility for the contents of the portfolio rests in hands of the individual faculty member. However, we do stress that the centerpiece of the portfolio should be a personal statement containing the instructor’s philosophy and approach to teaching, past and present teaching methods, and future goals as a teacher.

Our Teaching Portfolio Consultation Service is purely voluntary and is totally independent of the promotion and tenure evaluation process. The Faculty Teaching Excellence Program plays no role in such decisions, but will continue to promote the use of teaching portfolios as a way of improving teaching practice on our campus.

The faculty members that we have advised so far in our pilot program have been pleased to have the opportunity

to discuss with us their teaching approaches and the progress they have made as teachers since joining the University. They also appreciate the portfolio as a way of expressing what it means to them to be college instructors. Some seem relieved to be offered a procedure for unlocking experiences and achievements that no one has ever asked them about before.

The Portfolio provides an excellent chance for faculty to promote themselves as good teachers. Developing a portfolio is a relatively independent and creative process, which can showcase work such as curriculum and materials development. We hope that faculty will view their portfolio as a mirror of their teaching careers, reflecting their success as teachers through their constant striving towards excellence.

Publications of the Faculty Teaching Excellence Program

Memo to the Faculty

To assist faculty in keeping up with developments in the field of teaching, the Faculty Teaching Excellence Program sifts through the mass of articles written on instructional methods and distributes copies of the best materials to all tenured faculty. Appearing 3 times each semester, this series is entitled *Memo to the Faculty*. A copy of each *Memo* is sent without charge to tenured faculty members on the Boulder campus. Here are examples of past *Memos* illustrating the range of subjects that they cover:

- Number 19: “Discussion Method Teaching: How to Make It Work,” by William Welty (Pace University)
- Number 22: “Teaching Strategies for the Culturally Diverse Classroom,” by Jonathan Collett (State University of New York, College at Old Westbury)
- Number 25: “Teaching by the Case Method: One Teacher’s Beginnings,” by Nona Lyons (Harvard University)
- Number 27: “Inquiry and Exploration in Introductory Science,” by John L. Southin (McGill University)

On Teaching

The Faculty Teaching Excellence Program has also published two volumes in a series entitled *On Teaching*. These are books of essays written by Boulder faculty members on pedagogy, usually from a practical and personal point of view.

On Teaching, Volume I (1987) contains seven articles with these titles and Boulder campus authors:

- “Aloof Professors and Shy Students”—Patricia Nelson Limerick (History)
- “Teaching the Thundering Herd: Surviving in a Large Classroom”—Charles R. Middleton (Dean, College of Arts and Sciences)

- “The Scientist as a Story Teller”—R. Igor Gamow (Chemical Engineering)
- “Active Learning in the University: An Inquiry into Inquiry”—Martin Bickman (English)
- “The Continuity of Research and Classroom Teaching, or How to Have Your Cake and Eat It Too”—Sam Gill (Religious Studies)
- “The Professional Schools: The Influence of a Professional Ethic on Teaching Styles”—Emily M. Calhoun (Law)
- “From a Student’s Point of View”—R L Widmann (English)

The essays by Professors Limerick, Middleton, and Bickman are reprinted in Section II of this Guide.

On Teaching, Volume II (1990) has ten essays with the following titles and authors:

- “Teaching as Architecture: Humanities the Foundation”—Nancy Klenk Hill (Humanities)
- “So You Want to Be an Actor. . . Stages of Learning in the University Setting”—Joel G. Fink (Theatre and Dance)
- “Facilitating Discussion”—R.G. Billingsley (English)
- “Ways of Knowing”—David Hawkins (Emeritus, Philosophy)
- “You *Can* Get Good Help These Days: Working with Teaching Assistants in Large Lecture Courses”—Walt Stone (Political Science)
- “Memory for Classroom Algebra”—Lori Meiskey, Alice F. Healy, and Lyle E. Bourne, Jr. (Psychology)
- “Teaching Anthropology: Writing Captions for the Blind”—A.J. Kelso (Anthropology and Honors)
- “Do Professors Need Professional Ethics as Much as Doctors and Lawyers?”—James W. Nickel (Philosophy)
- “Use of the Socratic Method”—Marianne Wesson (Law)
- “Gendered Subjects”—Joyce McCarl Nielsen (Sociology)

Compendium of Good Teaching Ideas

The *Compendium of Good Teaching Ideas* has been developed from interviews with teachers on the Boulder campus who have been cited for excellence in the classroom and contains 180 practical teaching tips. This advice to instructors is divided into five sections. Here are examples of the teaching tips contained in each of the sections of the *Compendium*:

- **Organization and Clarity:** “Have the first assignment include material that should have been learned in prerequisite course. This will enable you to establish whether or not the students are working from the same base of knowledge that you are assuming that they are.” (Tip #13)

- **Rapport with Students:** “One professor explains that ‘Every week I hold some office hours in the UMC—on students’ territory, a place where they feel comfortable. I tell them that I’ll be there and they can come to talk about biology or anything.’” (Tip #78)
- **Communication Skills:** “One professor noted that guessing the meaning of a student’s question and attempting a hurried answer is never a satisfactory strategy. He finds that after a brief dialogue with the student, he can get to the heart of the question.” (Tip #95)
- **Promoting Discussions:** “One professor said, ‘When I ask a question in class, I don’t usually have a particular answer that I want the students to convey to me. I’m not looking for my view to be corroborated.’ She notes that nothing ‘kills’ a discussion faster than conveying to the students that you’re looking for the right answer.” (Tip #118)
- **Fair Exams and Grading:** “If your students give class presentations, put some questions on the exam that cover the material they presented. One professor who does this noted two benefits of this practice: (1) it tells students that their input is vital and (2) it encourages high attendance when student presentations are given.” (Tip #170).

The *Compendium* and the two volumes of *On Teaching* are available at the University Book Center.

Research on Teaching

The work of the Faculty Teaching Excellence Program is heavily dependent on research on teaching. In order to improve teaching, we both monitor work being done at other universities and conduct our own research on classroom teaching. Our consultation services to faculty, the 37-Item Survey and the *Compendium of Good Teaching Ideas* all rest on a foundation of research on teaching and learning.

An excellent example of the innovative research on teaching conducted on our campus is the Peer Perspectives Project. This project placed several faculty members from non-scientific disciplines in a physics course where they spent a semester as “students.” Their insights helped us understand more about student learning styles and how to organize and teach a large lecture section, while also providing the course instructor with valuable feedback of a highly detailed nature.

Currently, we are seeking both to learn more about how teachers embrace diversity in the classroom in a positive and beneficial way as well as to pass this information along to CU-Boulder faculty. The first step in this process was to administer a Diversity Survey to students in selected classes on the campus. The survey asked students to identify the

degree to which instructors addressed diversity issues in their teaching. The results of the survey are being printed in a series of brochures on the subject entitled *On Diversity in Teaching and Learning*. Brochures published so far in the Diversity Series include:

- I: "Fostering Diversity in the Classroom: Teaching by Discussion" —Ron Billingsley (*English*)
- II: "Developing and Teaching an Inclusive Curriculum" —Deborah Flick (*Women Studies*)
- III: "Fostering Diversity in a Medium-Sized Classroom" —Brenda Allen (*Communication*)
- IV: "The Influence of Attitudes, Feelings and Behavior Toward Diversity on Teaching and Learning" —Lerita Coleman (*Psychology*)

In addition to its formal publishing projects, the Faculty Teaching Excellence Program disseminates pedagogical information packets to teachers. These packets contain a selection of informative research articles on specific aspects of teaching and are available from our office upon request. Topics of packets already prepared include Teaching by Discussion, Large Lecture Courses, and Teaching through Case Studies. However, we will be happy to search for information on nearly any subject related to college teaching. There is no charge for this service.

Toward Future Excellence

Recognizing that the road to teaching excellence has no end, the Faculty Teaching Excellence Program at the University of Colorado is constantly planning improvements to its services. Three new projects have been implemented recently to address specific concerns in undergraduate teaching.

First, the Teaching Portfolio Consultation Service was started in the Spring 1992 semester. As described above, this service provides individual attention to faculty members who are creating a dossier promoting their work as teachers.

Second, in order to ease the orientation of new faculty members on our campus, especially those who are new to teaching, the New Faculty Program has been initiated, also in Spring 1992.

Third, the Teaching Excellence Program is planning a study of how best to teach large groups. The Large Lecture Study will ask faculty who are teaching such groups to experiment with innovative methods that facilitate learning in the increasingly prevalent large lecture halls.

Getting in Touch

We pride ourselves on offering swift and congenial responses to all faculty inquiries. Whether you seek advice

on teaching techniques, the latest pedagogical research, a classroom observation, a survey of your students, or an analysis of your FCQs, simply contact us and we will see to your needs.

Here is how to get yourself in touch with our services:

Office Location

M400M Norlin Library (use the south staircase)

Office telephones

Mary Ann Shea 492-4985

Campus Address

Campus Box 360

Mailing Address

Faculty Teaching Excellence Program

Campus Box 360

Boulder, CO 80309-0360

Appendix

Pre-course Questionnaire

Note: Your answers to the questions below will give me an idea of you as a group and how I can best address your collective strengths and weaknesses in teaching this course.

Name

Current major

Minor (if any)

Anticipated graduation date

Career goals

Previous courses in this subject area

Reasons for taking this course

What you hope to learn in this course

Your phone number

(so that I can contact you if necessary)

Names of two classmates with whom you have exchanged names and phone numbers (so that they can contact you if they are absent or vice versa)

1.

2.

Appendix

End-of-course Questionnaire

Note: Your answers to the questions below will give me an idea of how well this class worked for you and how well you worked in the class. From your answers I will have some ideas of how to improve this course for the next time I teach it.

Do not write your names on this form.

Year in the University (Circle)

Freshman Sophomore Junior Senior 5th year Senior Other

Major

Minor (if any)

Previous GPA

Credit hours of course load this semester

Reasons for taking the course

Your chief accomplishments in this course

Self-estimated grade for this course

Weekly study hours for this course

Percentage of assigned work/reading done

Number of times absent from class

Number of times met with instructor outside class

Your chief difficulties in this course

References

- Belenky, Mary Field, Blythe McVicker Clinchy, Nancy Rule Goldberger, and Jill Mattuck Tarule. *Women's Ways of Knowing*. New York: Basic Books, 1986.
- Boice, Robert. "New Faculty as Colleagues." *Journal of Higher Education*, 62 (1991): 150-173.
- Boyer, Ernest L. *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate*. Princeton: The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1990.
- Clinchy, Blythe McVicker. "Issues of Gender in Teaching and Learning." *Journal of Excellence in College Teaching*, 1 (1990): 52-67.
- Edgerton, Russell, Patricia Hutchings, and Kathleen Quinlan. *The Teaching Portfolio: Capturing the Scholarship in Teaching*. Washington, DC: The American Association for Higher Education, 1991.
- Faculty Teaching Excellence Program. *Compendium of Good Teaching Ideas*. Revised Ed. Boulder, CO: Faculty Teaching Excellence Program, Univ. of Colorado at Boulder, 1988.
- Gilligan, Carol. *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982.
- Krupnick, Catherine G. "Women and Men in the Classroom: Inequality and Its Remedies." In *On Teaching and Learning*, Vol. 1, edited by Margaret Morganroth Gullette, 18-25. Cambridge, MA: Harvard-Danforth Center, 1985. Reprinted as *Memo to the Faculty*, Number 9. Boulder, CO: Faculty Teaching Excellence Program. University of Colorado at Boulder, 1988.
- Limerick, Patricia Nelson. "Clarity and Organization in Teaching." In *On Teaching*, Vol. I, ed. by Mary Ann Shea. Boulder, CO: Faculty Teaching Excellence Program, University of Colorado at Boulder, 1987. Reprinted as *Memo to the Faculty*, Number 20. Boulder, CO: Faculty Teaching Excellence Program. University of Colorado at Boulder, 1990.
- Mohrman, Kathryn. "The Synergy of Teaching and Research." AAHE Bulletin. Reprinted as *Memo to the Faculty*, Number 14. Boulder, CO: Faculty Teaching Excellence Program. University of Colorado at Boulder, 1990.
- Perry, William G. "Different Worlds in the Same Classroom: Students' Evolution in Their Vision of Knowledge and Their Expectations of Teachers." In *On Teaching and Learning* edited by Margaret Morganroth Gullette, 1-17. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1985.
- Perry, William G. *Forms of Intellectual and Ethical Development in the College Years: A Scheme*. New York: Holt Rinehart and Winston, 1970.
- Seldin, Peter. *How Administrators Can Improve Teaching*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1990.
- Seldin, Peter. *The Teaching Portfolio*. Bolton, MA: Anker Publishing Co., 1991.
- Shea, Mary Ann, ed. *On Teaching*, Vol. I. Boulder, CO: Faculty Teaching Excellence Program, University of Colorado at Boulder, 1987.
- Shea, Mary Ann, ed. *On Teaching*, Vol. II. Boulder, CO: Faculty Teaching Excellence Program, University of Colorado at Boulder, 1990.





Faculty Teaching Excellence Program
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO **BOULDER**