Letter from the Director
September 2001

Dear Colleagues,

As the fall semester begins, I would like first of all to welcome to campus the new TLC coordinator, Deborah Snyder. Deborah began her duties in the middle of the summer, and as you will see from the list of articles she added to the TLC article file, she has not wasted any time familiarizing herself with topics that are of interest to WFU faculty. As TLC coordinator, Deborah will also be maintaining the TLC web page. If you have suggestions for additions or corrections to any material found there, please do not hesitate to contact her.

Among the activities planned for the fall, the TLC will be hosting discussions or workshops on writing and on facilitating classroom discussion, especially in the teaching of first-year seminars. As many of you may know, a useful resource for written and oral assignments is Dee Oseroff-Varnell’s handout. If you have not already received a copy, please contact the TLC (tlc@wfu.edu). The WFU faculty has been designing and teaching first-year seminars since 1996. This fall would be a good time, perhaps in an open forum, to step back to assess and share the successes and challenges of teaching these courses.

At the TLC this academic year, we will be assisting the Planning Board for the Pro Humanitate Grant in the organization of activities and the design and administration of applications for the various opportunities offered by the grant. Announcements are forthcoming as planning progresses, and please do not hesitate to contact me if you would like to know more about service-learning. We will also be working closely with the Hewlett Committee on Pluralism and Unity as they plan events open to faculty and students and related to issues of diversity. With the help of faculty who attended the National Conference on Race and Ethnicity (NCORE) in Seattle last May, plans are under way to organize discussions on diversity in the classroom, in our courses and disciplines, and on campus.

The four-week certificate program on teaching translation and interpretation that I had the opportunity to attend at the Monterey Institute this summer (thanks to an Archie grant), gave me the chance to take a more formal look at many of the strategies that I have been using in the classroom, more or less as necessity dictated, over the last twenty years. Some of these include: assessment and grading, syllabus construction, lesson planning, peer evaluation of teaching, rethinking my philosophy of teaching and trying to identify my teaching style. I hope to draw on that experience in planning for TLC activities for the 2001/02 academic year.

Please do not hesitate to contact Deborah or me if you have suggestions for programming or services. Or take a few minutes to stop by, have a cup of coffee, read the Chronicle of Higher Education, browse through recent acquisitions, or just to talk. This semester has had shaky and troubling beginning, and we can not be certain about what will follow. I feel a need and desire to pull the plans for my classes by onto the track to continue our course. At the same time, tragedy offers an opportunity for reflection. I hope that as a community, students and colleagues alike, we continue to look to one another as we sort through the actions and reactions of September 11th. We have much to think about, and I think we think best together.

Sincerely,

Sally Barbour
Romance Languages
Director, Teaching and Learning Center
Real Reflections on the Virtual Office

By Michael Dulay, Glendale Community College, California; previously published in the Teaching Professor, November 2000. Reproduced with permission of the author.

I began the first meeting of the summer session doing the usual things: reviewing the syllabus, introducing and stirring excitement about the subject, and explaining how difficult the course might be. I offered myself for support in the traditional ways: my office hours are this; my phone number is that; and so on. Knowing that these times and means would not suit many of my students’ needs (and to satisfy my own curiosity), I boldly asked, “Would anyone be interested in a virtual office hour?” To my surprise, many students greeted the offer with enthusiasm. We agreed that I would meet them in a secured chatroom on the night before the exam. Our first meeting was on a Sunday night at 7 p.m. I met with 12 of the 90 students enrolled in my course while I was in the virtual office. My experience has taught me several things that should prove useful to anyone considering holding virtual office hours.

Become Chat Savvy

With the exception of one, my students were seasoned veterans of chatrooms. They used a style of communication and language that could easily confuse and alienate those unfamiliar with it. I was met with an onslaught of what I call “chatinglish” (“Chat English”), a style of communication made up of acronyms (BTW = by the way), expressions of action (LOL = laughs out loud; or *flips through book* = the person is flipping through a book—words with *s are actions), and symbols (> : (=facial expressions). Had I not been familiar with the nomenclature, I would have had a difficult time communicating with them. My advice: visit a chatroom, such as www.collegeclub.com/chat/> and simply observe. Carefully Select and Question the Questions

Chatroom communication travels at a phenomenal pace. In five seconds, 10 students can pose questions to you and each other. Initially, this is overwhelming. You need to remember that a chatroom is not a classroom, and so you are limited in the number of techniques that are available to you to control the discussion. My advice: quickly respond to the students’ most meaningful question, and then immediately add a question of your own that is capable of provoking thought on the subject at hand.

The first action establishes the norm that you only answer those questions that you deem meaningful, and it provides all those in the virtual office with good information. Remember, unlike regular conversation, the dialogues in a chatroom take the form of text that can be read and reviewed by everyone involved. The second recommended action stems from my firm belief that we must be catalysts of thought for our students.

Finally, answering questions with questions of your own can lead to collaborative learning. Here’s how: Follow the questions with silence. There is something about a chatroom environment that makes its occupants feel compelled to say something. All the occupants will read your question, and many of them will try to respond to it, either with another question or an answer. The students’ dialogue that follows the initial flurry of responses is fascinating; and it is, at least by my definition, a wonderful glimpse into the dynamics of collaborative learning. Students communicate among themselves to
solve the question/problem you have posed and will continue to do so until they reach and agree on a solution/answer.

Be Open-minded and Sociable

The chatroom environment can be very casual. As the instructor, you need to maintain a certain distance in your virtual office, but you should also seize the opportunity to really get to know your students. They will certainly make attempts to get to know you. Do not be surprised by questions that are completely removed from the course and its content. I use these exchanges to find out what their interests are, and then I plan how I can harness these interests to better by classroom teaching.

Pop the Question(s)

If the virtual office hour seems to spin out of control, simply type “pop quiz time” and then key in a series of questions that can be answered in one or two words. Brevity is essential because it allows you to quickly reinforce attentiveness and it will allow you to elicit responses from several students. Moreover, virtual pop quizzes and questions encourage students to respond more freely than they do in class for two reasons. First, their responses are not graded and second, they are protected by a certain amount of anonymity that a “user name” and computer screen provide.

Once concern I had about my time in the virtual office was that I was only assisting a select group of students. However, after reviewing the grades that my students earned on the first exam, I discovered that those who met with me virtually had scores ranging from 60 to 100, with an average score of 84.5. This was higher than the class average but it indicated that I was not meeting with just my “A” students.

The virtual office can be a great way to assist students, and a fantastic learning tool. But the most beneficial feature of the virtual office is that it accommodates the changing lifestyles of college students by allowing them to meet with you after they get off work or after they have fulfilled family obligations. As teachers we must consider these changing lifestyles and embrace teaching tools like virtual office hours so that we can effectively challenge and support our students’ learning and development.

New Faculty Web Site

By Anne Bishop, Information Systems, Wake Forest University

A new web site has been developed for faculty members who are interested in using technology to enhance teaching and learning. The address is http://forte.wfu.edu. Faculty Online Resources for Technology in Education (FORTE) is a site offering how-to information, links to campus resources that may be hard to find, and directions for tasks associated with creating class materials. The site will be continually updated as new documents are created and new resources discovered. Documents now posted are primarily geared toward faculty members who have little experience in using the resources available on the standard software load. A “Think Pad Tour” link lists the items from the Start Menu (including all those things under Programs>Accessories>Multimedia) with short explanations of what they are for.

Continuing to develop this site will be a collaborative effort between the ITC staff and the IS Research and Development staff. We hope to include contributions from the IT Specialists in the academic departments, as well as faculty members and others who have
materials that will be useful to others. The site is intended as a supplement to—not a replacement for—other resources faculty members currently have available to them. This site may also be accessed directly from the Teaching and Learning Center Web site home page by clicking on Online Resources for Technology Help.

TLC Events
Fall 2001

If you do not already receive e-mail reminders about TLC programs and would like to, please e-mail your request to tlc@wfu.edu. If you are interested in one of the topics but find the time unsuitable, please contact the TLC.

Magnolia Room Lunches

These lunches are organized to give faculty the opportunity to have lunch together and discuss a topic informally. Please RSVP by calling x4587 or e-mailing tlc@wfu.edu no later than two days before the discussion.

HOW’S YOUR FIRST-YEAR SEMINAR GOING?
(Date and time to be announced)
Host: Brad Jones (Chemistry)

Brown Bag/Breakfast Bag Discussions

USING A POCKETPC TO CREATE A MORE INTERACTIVE CLASSROOM
Monday, September 17, 1:00
Host: Anne Bishop (Information Systems)
The TLC is providing a box lunch for all participants who want one. Please indicate your sandwich choice, roast beef, turkey, or vegetarian by calling x4587 or e-mailing tlc@wfu.edu before Wednesday, September 12.

THE SILENT SOCRATIC DIALOGUE: MOVING STUDENTS FROM TOPICS TO IDEAS
Monday, September 24, 12:30
Host: Tom McGohey
The TLC is providing a box lunch for all participants who want one. Please indicate your sandwich choice, roast beef, turkey, or vegetarian by calling x4587 or e-mailing tlc@wfu.edu before Wednesday, September 19.

COME LEARN ABOUT BLACKBOARD (CourseInfo)
Tuesday, October 9, 12:00
Hosts: Rosalind Tedford, Giz Womack
The TLC is providing a box lunch for all participants who want one. Please indicate your sandwich choice, roast beef, turkey, or vegetarian by calling x4587 or e-mailing tlc@wfu.edu before Thursday, October 4.
Workshops

(Please RSVP for workshops a minimum of two days in advance.)

WRITING TO SPEAK, SPEAKING TO WRITE: CREATING ASSIGNMENTS WITH A WRITTEN AND AN ORAL COMPONENT
Monday, October 1, 3:30-5:00
Green 321
Host: Dee Oseroff-Varnell
Bring an assignment you would like to work on.

Past Program Notes

Starting in fall 2000, the TLC began inviting faculty to have lunch together in the Magnolia Room to discuss particular topics. Many thanks to Sue Rupp (History) and Anne Boyle (English) for hosting Magnolia Room lunches on FYS last year.

How’s Your First-Year Seminar Going?
Magnolia Room Lunch
Host: Sue Rupp (History)

On Thursday, February 15th, half a dozen faculty members met for a lunchtime discussion of first year seminars. Several issues were addressed during the hour, beginning with an evaluation of library orientations coordinated by Elen Knott. The discussants, from both the sciences and the humanities, felt that such orientations at the start of the semester were helpful to first-year students, introducing them to a variety of useful resources and familiarizing them with doing searches. Several faculty members also remarked that their experience with the first-year seminars has improved over time, as they have had an opportunity to correct some of the mistakes they made when first teaching these courses.

Much of the meeting was devoted to the structuring of class discussions and ways to develop students’ oral skills. Suggestions for encouraging class discussion included having students write up questions about the reading before coming to class, as well as giving students a greater sense of proprietorship by having them act as discussion leaders and correspondingly restricting the teacher’s role. It was remarked that students often feel a greater obligation to participate when their peers are responsible for leading discussions. Some have found it useful to ask those students who tend to dominate discussions to remain quiet for one class, in this way encouraging more reticent students to speak up. Another participant has instituted quizzes on oral reports as a way of convincing students to listen to their peers, while another faculty member had students evaluate their fellow students’ contributions to class discussions. Several agreed that one of the obstacles to increasing student involvement was anxiety about surrendering their own control of the course. While generally positive about their experiences teaching first year seminars, those attending the meeting identified some problems, including students’ persistent complaints that they did not get the course they wanted, or that they chose a particular course simply because it fit best into their schedule. The disinterest or even hostility that students may feel can then affect the classroom dynamic in very negative ways. The participants were also concerned about problems with student writing, ranging from rather
fundamental issues such as spelling, grammar and syntax to shortcomings in organization and analysis. These problems are exacerbated by students’ emphasis on grades, and the frequently observed frustration and anger of students who receive anything less than a B. Several participants suggested closer contact and cooperation with the English Department as means of more effectively improving student writing.

How Can I Share My Research with Colleagues: A Brainstorming Session
Magnolia Room Lunch, March 26
Host: Simeon Ilesanmi (Religion)

Sharing research with colleagues in other disciplines is a challenge. Several ideas for creating and facilitating a process for doing this were generated in this brainstorming session. It was suggested that either Research and Sponsored Programs or the Dean of the College’s office should spearhead this initiative. Department research colloquia schedules could be solicited from the department chairs and posted in WIN. Additionally, an e-mail digest, sorted by department, could be sent to faculty on a weekly basis.

Talking about Religion in Class; Creating a Climate for Open Discussion
Magnolia Room Lunch, April 3
Host: Mary Foskett (Religion)

Discussing religion or religious issues in the classroom may be uncomfortable for faculty and students. The following suggestions can be implemented to reduce tension in these discussions. First, set ground rules for discussion. Second, demystify religion. Third, model inclusive language. Fourth, ask, “What perspective are you speaking from?” or “Which Christianity are you speaking from?” Finally, ask students to identify and take the perspective of someone they disagree with.

Oral Presentations in the Classroom (Assignments and Assessment)
Breakfast and Brown Bag Discussions, Feb 23 & March 21
Host: Dee Oseroff-Varnell (Communication)

What kinds of oral assignments do you use in class and what questions to you have?
• In FYS, a problem is time. What is the best way to incorporate oral work, get all the other information out to the students, yet have time to evaluate their oral work in a meaningful way?

• Suggestions:
  1) One way to deal with the time factor is to let students present small segments of information on the material that you would present anyway.
  2) Have students present research for papers before they are due (say two weeks) so they can go over their arguments for the paper with the class before actually writing the paper.
  3) Students post questions before coming to class.
• Give students tips on how to lead discussion: tell them to count to 15 before jumping in to fill a silence, tell them how to rephrase a question when the first question does not get a response, put them into groups.
One of the most important questions to ask ourselves is why do we want students to speak at all? We need to clarify our own objectives before making oral assignments. Are they to present new information, their research, personal information from journals? Are they supposed to animate the discussion? Students also need tips on organization and delivery (see TLC web site and videos).

In upper-level courses, one colleague asks students to summarize an article and to raise issues for class discussion. The objective is to have students present material that the entire class has read and to get them involved in discussion. The first time this was attempted, students were given 40 minutes for presentation and discussion, but the time has been reduced to ten minutes. What is the downside of this kind of activity? The student may not be thinking as deeply as you would like. Possible solution: have a couple of students be responsible for a couple of similar readings that take a different perspective so that they can discuss among themselves different points of view.

Evaluation: What about classmate/peer input in evaluation? Students do appreciate feedback from their classmates. If classmates are asked to give a grade, however, it must be anonymous, and the professor must give clear criteria, including a quantitative breakdown of how the grade is assigned (even then, inflation on the part of the classmates can result).

Academic Double Dipping
Brown Bag, March 6
Hosts: Simone Caron (History) and John Llewellyn (Communication)

On September 11, 2000 the faculty voted to amend the Honor Code to include the following statements: If students wish to do one project for two courses, or to draw on work previously done in order to complete an assignment for a current course, they must get the expressed permission of all affected faculty in advance of turning in the assignment. Approved combined projects should represent significantly more effort than the individual projects they supplanted. This discussion examined the impetus for these guidelines and discussed ways faculty can work together to enforce them. It was suggested that faculty make students aware of this provision and provide specific examples of what is and is not acceptable under the provision.

Facilitating Classroom Discussion
Brown Bag, April 17
Host: Linda Nielsen (Education and Women’s Studies)

1) Setting the mood
   • Open blinds to provide natural lighting
   • Put the seats in a circle away from the walls
   • When a guest speaker visits class, put him/her in the circle. The professor should sit outside and behind the circle so the students will not address all comments to the professor.

2) In the first class meeting, distribute a student information sheet that includes a 1 – 10 point Likert scale asking the student to assess how comfortable he/she is about speaking in class. Ask if there is anything you need to know to make the student more comfortable about
voicing disagreement with classmates and/or professor. Also ask the student to list the other people in the class he or she knows.

3) Make name tags for students to keep and bring to class with them each meeting
   • Nametags facilitate learning the students’ names
   • Nametags facilitate the students learning each others’ names

4) Make a seating chart with student pictures from WIN
   • Use student information sheet to assign seating – put students by individuals they don’t know
   • Pair “quiet” and “verbal” students (use information sheet to assess students in this characteristic)
   • Use symbols to code for interests, this will help develop individualized discussion questions

5) Put discussion expectations in the syllabus. For every class meeting, identify the discussion topic by asking students to come prepared to answer specific questions. Keep the discussion questions tied to the reading and start the discussion by going around the circle.

6) Distribute a participation assessment sheet to the students at the beginning of each class period. At the end of class they are to assess their participation on a three-point scale and turn the form back in. 0 = no contribution, 1 = spoke voluntarily, 2 = spoke more than others.

7) If a guest speaker is scheduled, pair students and have them come up with questions a minimum of one week prior to the visit. Send the questions to the guest speaker in advance. After the guest speaker’s visit, have the students complete a response form and send those to the speaker

WAKE FOREST UNIVERSITY TEACHING AND LEARNING CENTER

The Teaching and Learning Center was established in 1997 with a dual purpose: meeting faculty-identified needs for teaching support and promoting dialogue about teaching. Faculty are encouraged to fill out a Faculty Information Form available from the Center designed to help us target specific needs and concerns which are then the topics for brown bag lunch discussion and workshops throughout the academic year.

The Teaching and Learning Center also offers a number of voluntary and confidential evaluation services outside the traditional departmental evaluation process. These have included mid-term evaluations, videotaping, and peer class visitations, and a faculty mentoring program.

To learn more about the Teaching and Learning Center, and/or to discuss the programs and services the TLC offers, please contact TLC Director, Sally Barbour at Ext. 4559 (barbour@wfu.edu) or TLC Coordinator, Deborah Snyder at Ext. 4587 (snyderdw@wfu.edu). The Teaching and Learning Center is open Monday through Friday from 8 A.M. until 4 P.M. and is located in 330 Z. Smith Reynolds Library.
The TLC faculty advisory committee is elected annually. Committee members for the 2001/02 year are: Doug Beets (Calloway School) Natalie Holzwarth (Physics), Joe Milner (Education), Mary Pendergraft (Classics), Kathy Smith (Political Science), and Harry Titus (Art).

Evaluation Services

The center offers services to faculty who would like voluntary and confidential peer review of their classes outside the traditional departmental evaluation process. All of these services require some lead-time to arrange since faculty volunteers provide them. If you would like to schedule any of these services, please give us at least two weeks notice. You can call X4587 or e-mail tlc@wfu.edu for scheduling or more information.

1. Mid-term evaluations

A colleague administers this evaluation to your class(es) at mid-term during the last twenty minutes of class. Students discuss in small groups the following topics: What is working in the class? What is not working? Suggestions? A secretary in each group takes notes of the discussion. After approximately five to seven minutes, the class comes together and each group reports. The colleague begins a list on the board of group answers in the three categories, coming to consensus with the entire class about which answers will be passed on to the professor. Three student secretaries are responsible for making a clean copy of each list. After class, the colleague meets with you to discuss the results. The information that is passed on to the professor is anonymous and reflects only those matters on which there is a consensus or majority opinion. For more information about the process and its benefits, read the article by Genevieve Brock (Romance Languages) in the first issue of The TLC Exchange. It is available on-line at our web site www.wfu.edu.TLC.

2. Videotaping

The Center owns a video camera and related multimedia/audio-visual equipment. You may use this service in two ways:

a) Borrow the equipment and set up the camera in your classroom yourself. You keep the tape and view it yourself. This procedure requires less lead-time as long as the equipment is available and you know how to use it.

b) Arrange for someone representing the Center who has been trained in using the equipment to tape the class and meet with you afterward to discuss the tape.
3. Peer Class Visitations

A colleague whom you select from a list available at the TLC visits your class on one or more occasions and discusses their observations with you. To read more about the process and benefits of this service, see the article by Bob Evans (Education) in the second issue of *The TLC Exchange*. It is available on-line at our web site [www.wfu.edu.TLC](http://www.wfu.edu.TLC).

Resources

The TLC has many resources available to the campus community, including books and journals promoting teaching excellence. Several new titles, listed below, have been ordered and will arrive during the fall semester. These items are available for use in the Center and/or can be checked out at the circulation desk of the Z. Smith Reynolds Library. TLC hours are 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM Monday through Friday; if you need to consult or check out TLC resources when the center is closed, a key is available at the circulation desk.

- **Hawke, Constance.** *Computer and Internet Use on Campus: A Legal Guide, 2000.*
  “From intellectual property rights to free speech and privacy issues, this guide distills the most current legal knowledge and case precedents on technology use for educators, administrators, and students.”

  “Zachary explores the process of mentoring and shares practical tools for facilitating the experience from beginning to end. She shows how mentoring can become a learning process in which the mentor and mentee serve as companions.”

- **Nelson, Michael and Associates.** *Alive at the Core, 2000.*
  “*Alive at the Core* explores what higher education must do to encourage greater breadth of knowledge, improved critical thinking skills, and lifelong competence in its undergraduate students. The authors lay the groundwork for meaningful learning in college and share approaches to changing the core curriculum into a tool for lifelong learning.”

- **Classrooms Without Fear: One Teacher's Journey Toward a Safe Classroom, 2001.**
  “Here is one teacher’s story about his personal journey toward a safe classroom for his students. Through technology and awareness, the author hopes to replace his students’ fear of the classroom with a renewed passion for learning.”

- **The Teaching Assistant Training Handbook: How to Prepare TA's for their Responsibilities, 2001.**
  “This edited book presents readers with a wealth of information that is essential for designing, implementing, or improving a TA training program in a department or university-wide office.”

  “An increasing number of institutions are recognizing teaching innovation and course and curriculum design as forms of scholarly and professional work. This booklet provides specific guidelines for documentation.”
  “Contains forty-nine succinct and practical chapters on everything from lectures, discussions, and small-group activities to dealing with a diverse student body, using technology, making out-of-class assignments, grading, and improving student learning and motivation.”

• **Gardiner, Lion F. *Redesigning Higher Education: Producing Dramatic Gains in Student Learning, Report 7*, 1996.**

The Teaching and Learning Center also maintains a vertical file of teaching-related articles. Subjects include:

• Active learning
• Assessment
• Collaborative learning
• Critical thinking
• Generating discussion
• Syllabus construction
• Teaching portfolios
• Testing and grading
• Writing across disciplines

Over seventy-five new articles were added during the summer, including

• “We Never Said it Would be Easy: Do Students Want to be Active”
• “Understanding Student Evaluations: What All Faculty Should Know”
• “Please See Me: Students’ Reactions to a Professor’s Request as a Function of Attachment and Perceived Support”

For a complete list of new articles available in the TLC, send an email to tlc@wfu.edu or stop by room 330, Z.S.R. Library.

For information about other TLC services and upcoming events, check the TLC web page.

**EVENTS AT A GLANCE**

Please see the Upcoming Events article in this newsletter for event descriptions. All events will take place at the Teaching and Learning Center, 330 Z. Smith Reynolds Library, unless otherwise noted.

The Teaching and Learning Center is available for departmental and committee meetings. Please call x4587 or e-mail tlc@wfu.edu to reserve the space.
September

Using a PocketPC to Create a More Interactive Classroom
(Brown Bag)
17, Monday, 1:00 P.M.
The TLC is providing a box lunch for all participants who want one. Please indicate your sandwich choice, roast beef, turkey, or vegetarian by calling the Coordinator at extension 4587 or e-mailing tlc@wfu.edu before Wednesday, September 12.

The Silent Socratic Dialogue: Moving Students from Topics to Ideas
(Brown Bag)
24, Monday, 12:30 P.M.
The TLC is providing a box lunch for all participants who want one. Please indicate your sandwich choice, roast beef, turkey, or vegetarian by calling the Coordinator at extension 4587 or e-mailing tlc@wfu.edu before Wednesday, September 19.

October

Writing to Speak, Speaking to Write: Creating Assignments with a Written and an Oral Component
(Workshop)
1, Monday, 3:30-5:00
Green 323
Please RSVP by calling x4587 or e-mailing tlc@wfu.edu before Wednesday, September 26.

Come Learn About Blackboard (CourseInfo)
(Brown Bag)
9, Tuesday, 12:00-1:00
The TLC is providing a box lunch for all participants who want one. Please indicate your sandwich choice, roast beef, turkey, or vegetarian by calling x4587 or e-mailing tlc@wfu.edu before Thursday, October 4.

ACE Workshop
17th, Wednesday, 3:30-5:00 (Followed by dinner at Vineyards Restaurant, 5:15)

New Faculty Orientation
23rd, Tuesday, 5 – 6

ACE Workshop
24th, Wednesday, 2 - 3:30
November

ACE Workshop
7th, Wednesday, 2 - 3:30

ACE Workshop
14th, Wednesday, 2 - 3:30