

TLCExchange

The Newsletter of the Teaching and Learning Center of Wake Forest University ▲ Volume 8, Number 1 ▲ Fall 2004

Letter from the Director

October 2004

Dear Colleagues,

As you read this, the new semester is well under way. Your syllabus is a model of clarity and organization. You've learned all your students' names. You're leading lively discussions and helping students learn to give outstanding reports. Some of you are already grading exams and papers with exemplary fairness and efficiency.

Or, maybe not. More likely, you've reached a point in the semester where even the best-laid plans are in need of modification, and you're beginning to realize that every student really isn't above average. Teaching is a challenge, and it helps to hear how your colleagues have handled similar problems. That's where the Teaching and Learning Center comes in. If you've never attended one of our programs, be assured that these are always lively discussions with people just like you: people who have had terrific teaching experiences and who can't wait to share their ideas, as well as people who have had very difficult moments and who would like to give and receive advice, or at least commiseration. We sometimes bring in experts from outside, but most of our programs are led by Wake faculty, from all the divisions.

In the coming weeks, we'll be planning sessions on grading, plagiarism, writing, oral presentations, discussions, and diversity in the classroom, as well as offering information sessions on some of the grants and special teaching programs at Wake Forest, including the Kauffman grant, service learning, and interdisciplinary programs. This year, we're planning more open discussions, designed to give faculty the chance to freely exchange ideas about teaching within and across disciplines. We're always open to suggestions, so please feel free to send us your thoughts.

With best regards,
Bernadine Barnes

Opportunities for Classroom Visits and Mentoring

If you would like to get feedback on your teaching from one of your peers there are now several ways to do that.

▲ Classroom Visits

Inspired by a suggestion by Alyssa Lonner in the Department of German and Russian, the Teaching and Learning Center will be coordinating voluntary faculty classroom visits in the upcoming year. These are friendly visits, meant to help newer faculty members without pressure; generally the observer will be a colleague of similar rank, but from a different department. Unlike the classroom visits that your department may require as part of your yearly review, feedback will be very informal, as agreed upon by the participants.

If you would like to have a faculty member from another department visit your class, or if you would like to visit someone else's class, please send an e-mail to Deborah Snyder. (snyderdw@wfu.edu). Let her know which departments you're most interested in, and what your own teaching schedule is.

▲ Mid-Term Evaluations and Videotaping

If you prefer a more structured evaluation of a particular class, the TLC can arrange a mid-term evaluation. A faculty member visits your class during the semester and interviews students about their expectations and experiences, without the instructor present. Afterward the course instructor and colleague meet to discuss the students' responses.

The TLC can also help you videotape your classes. You may either borrow our camera to do it yourself, or have Deborah Snyder assist you in the process.

If you would like more information about either of these options, please see our webpage <http://www.wfu.edu/organizations/tlc>, and click on Evaluation Services. Contact Deborah Snyder for appointments (allow two weeks for mid-term evaluations).

▲ Mentoring Open House

The Women's and Gender Studies Program is proud to support a campus-wide mentoring program to serve the needs of all newly appointed faculty, both men and women. The

goal of our program is to provide a mentor from outside the individual's department to help advise junior faculty through the tenure process. Junior faculty interested in finding a mentor, and senior faculty interested in serving as a mentor, should attend our open house on Friday, September 24, from 4:00 to 6:00 in the Johnson Room of the Library. For more information, please contact Simone Caron (5556, caron@wfu.edu).

Innovative Teaching Award

The first Teaching Innovation Award, sponsored by the Teaching and Learning Center, will be given this spring. The purpose of this award is to reward the significant faculty effort that goes into reworking traditional courses using new methods or of finding ways to apply recent theories of learning to the practice of teaching. The award will carry a stipend of \$500.

All faculty teaching undergraduate courses in the College are invited to apply for this award by submitting a two page description of the approach used in a particular class, along with a short vita, supporting materials such as syllabi or student evaluations, and "live documentation" of your approach. This can best be done by videotaping your class, but classroom visits or other types of presentations can be arranged. Courses taught in the 2003-4 or 2004-5 academic years are eligible for consideration. The deadline is February 1, 2005. Since you will need to document how your innovative method is used in the classroom, you may want to begin this process now. Please contact Deborah Snyder to arrange for videotaping or use of the TLC's video camera, or to set up a class visit with a member of the committee.

Materials should be submitted to the Teaching and Learning Center. The award recipient will be decided by members of the TLC Advisory Committee. Since the Teaching and Learning Center depends upon the shared experience of faculty at Wake Forest, we expect that the winner of this award will be willing to share his/her innovative approach with other faculty through a program at the TLC.

'The Professor Made Us Do It Ourselves'

By Larry Spence, School of Information Sciences and Technology, Penn State, lspence@ist.psu.edu; previously published in *The Teaching Professor*, April 2004. This article reprinted by permission from *Magna Publications* and *The Teaching Professor*, www.magnapubs.com or 1-800-433-0499 for submissions and subscriptions.

Anxious to demonstrate their work, students crowded around a laptop to show me how their virtual classroom worked.

"See, you can click on each student to see if they are alert and on task. Now watch. If we raise the temperature the students start to doze off. If the instructor lectures too long, they start daydreaming."

They interrupted and talked at the same time in their enthusiasm to show and tell what they had accomplished. Their projects, demonstrating software engineering and Java programming skills, were the final for an introduction to computer languages, taught in a problem-based mode. I caught their enthusiasm and asked a question I thought would make them shine.

"So tell me what you learned this semester."

"Nothing." The first time I heard this answer I thought it was a fluke. But it was repeated by more students in other groups.

"You learned nothing? How did you create this prototype? Haven't you learned to use Java?"

"We taught ourselves. The professor made us do it ourselves. We didn't learn anything."

"Didn't he help you?"

"Yes, but you still had to learn it yourselves."

You are saying that it was a bad course?"

And then I heard the answer that left me speechless.

"No, not really. I accomplished a lot, but I had to work too hard. That professor could just as well have been a janitor for all the teaching he did."

Here was an almost ideal example of a course designed for active learning. When I had visited the class I was always struck by the buzz from clustered students and the difficulty in finding in the professor in the seeming chaos. According to the experts in learning science, this was the classroom of the future.

What were these students thinking? Evidently that learning results from being taught-that is, told; from studying-that is, memorizing; and from being tested-that is, answering questions that teachers know you can. They expect a steady progression along a learning curve, which coincides with the amount of time they spend in classes. That is what teachers tell them in school. That is what they do in school. Everything else-their personal struggles to master knowledge and skills in sports, software, games, or music-they take to be "teaching yourself" and an inferior way of learning.

How can we enlighten students? Sometimes the solution may rest in giving them what they want. An instructor I know offered this anecdote. He introduced problem-based learning in his course and students struggled. In frustration, they begged him to lecture. They couldn't tell him how that would help, but he agreed. No more than two sentences escaped before he was pelted with questions and objections. There was no lecture, he reported. There never were any more lectures in that course. There were discussions hot enough to shed light on the barriers to students' learning and criticism pointed enough to make him improve.

That is a beginning--for students and teachers.

TLC EVENTS

Fall 2004

If you do not already receive e-mail reminders about TLC programs and would like to, please e-mail your request to snyderdw@wfu.edu. If you are interested in one of the topics but find the time unsuitable, please contact the TLC. All programs take place in the TLC (Room 330, ZSR Library) unless otherwise indicated.

Open House

TEACHING AND LEARNING CENTER OPEN HOUSE

Thursday, September 9, 3:30-5:00 P.M.

PLEASE JOIN US for an informal gathering over wine and cheese. It's an opportunity to meet new colleagues and visit old friends, and to learn about programs the Teaching and Learning Center offers for faculty. Please RSVP by Tuesday, September 7, to x4587 or snyderdw@wfu.edu.

Brown Bag/Breakfast/Discussions

GENDER ISSUES IN THE CLASSROOM

Brownbag discussion

Thursday, September 23, 11:00 A.M.

Location: TLC

Host: Simone Caron (*History*)

DO MALE and female faculty have similar or different experiences in the classroom? Do students treat male and female professors differently? Come share your experiences in an informal setting at the Teaching and Learning Center. Please RSVP no later than Monday, September 20, to x4587 or snyderdw@wfu.edu if you would like a box lunch provided, and be sure to indicate your choice of a beef, turkey, or vegetarian sandwich. Drop-ins are welcome.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW, WHEN YOU NEED TO KNOW IT: INFORMATION LITERACY AT WFU

Brownbag discussion

Tuesday, September 28, 11:00AM

Location: TLC

Host: Rosalind Tedford (*ITC*)

ALTHOUGH THE LIBRARY is now teaching for-credit Information Literacy classes, the concept of Information Literacy extends far beyond the classroom. The skill of being able to find good answers to your questions in a timely manner is an important one for students and faculty alike. Come to a discussion about what the Information Literacy course is teaching students and how faculty can incorporate principles of Information Literacy into their own lives both in and out of the classroom. Please RSVP no later than Thursday, September 23, to x4587 or snyderdw@wfu.edu if you would like a box lunch provided, and be sure to indicate your choice of a ham, chicken, or vegetarian sandwich. Drop-ins are welcome.

PUTTING TOGETHER AN END-OF-SEMESTER STUDENT SHOWCASE CONFERENCE: EVERYTHING YOU ALWAYS WANTED TO KNOW BUT WERE AFRAID TO ASK

Brownbag discussion

Wednesday, September 29, 12:00 P.M.

Location: TLC

Host: Stephanie Hawkins (*English*)

TIRED OF BLUE books? Learn how to put together an end-of-semester student conference, where students can showcase their research for the broader Wake Forest community. Sample organizational materials,

including a conference program and student-designed fliers will be available. Please RSVP no later than Friday, September 24, to x4587 or snyderdw@wfu.edu if you would like a box lunch provided, and be sure to indicate your choice of a beef, chicken, or vegetarian sandwich. Drop-ins are welcome.

**THINKING OUTSIDE YOUR SKIN:
HOW TO TEACH DIVERSITY**

Brownbag discussion

Thursday, October 7, 11:00 A.M.

Location: TLC

Host: James Wilson (History)

THE CHALLENGE to encourage university students to think "outside the box" often involves introducing a variety of thinking exercises. Join us to discuss how issues related to race, religion, gender, sexual identity, and power hierarchies create excellent teaching opportunities to address the value and critical thinking skills necessary to appreciate the concept of "diversity." Please RSVP no later than Friday, Monday, October 4, to x4587 or snyderdw@wfu.edu if you would like a box lunch provided, and be sure to indicate your choice of a ham, chicken, or vegetarian sandwich. Drop-ins are welcome.

**TALKING ABOUT RELIGION IN CLASS:
CREATING A CLIMATE FOR OPEN
DISCUSSION**

Brownbag discussion

Monday, October 18, 12:00 P.M.

Location: TLC

Host: Mary Foskett (Religion)

DR. FOSKETT WILL focus on strategies for helping students and faculty address matters of religion in the context of class discussion. There will be time for attendees to share their own insights, concerns, and experiences in this area. Please RSVP no later than Wednesday, October 13, to x4587 or snyderdw@wfu.edu if you would like a box lunch provided, and be sure to indicate your choice of a beef, turkey, or vegetarian sandwich. Drop-ins are welcome.

**FIRST-YEAR SEMINARS FOCUSED ON
ENTREPRENEURSHIP: OPPORTUNITIES
FOR WAKE FOREST FACULTY OFFERED
THROUGH THE KAUFFMAN CENTER FOR
ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN THE LIBERAL ARTS**

Brownbag discussion

Wednesday, October 20, 12:00 P.M.

Location: TLC

Host: William Conner (Biology)

IN DECEMBER, 2003, the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation agreed to fund a five-year program to instill a culture of entrepreneurship at Wake Forest. The proposal for the program was developed by a committee largely composed of faculty from the arts, sciences and humanities. Though ordinarily associated with business pursuits, a broader definition of entrepreneurship resonates closely with the goals of liberal arts education. The approved program provides significant funding for curriculum development efforts across departments in the college, encouraging faculty and students to think innovatively about their fields of study. This session will provide general information about how to incorporate entrepreneurship in the first-year seminar format. Please RSVP no later than Friday, October 15, to x4587 or snyderdw@wfu.edu if you would like a box lunch provided, and be sure to indicate your choice of a club, chicken, or vegetarian sandwich. Drop-ins are welcome.

**ASSESSING WRITING AT WFU:
EXPECTATIONS AND GOALS?**

Brownbag discussion

Wednesday, October 27, 12:00 P.M.

Location: TLC

Hosts: Anne Boyle, Tom McGohey,
Eric Wilson (English)

HOW WELL DO our students write? Do we all agree on what it means to write effectively and how to get students to do it? What do we expect from our students when they write papers in our courses? How do our courses help them meet those expectations? Please join us for an open discussion of these questions and others you may have about writing at WFU. Please RSVP no later than Friday, October 22, to x4587 or snyderdw@wfu.edu if you would like a box lunch provided, and be sure to indicate your choice of a beef, chicken, or vegetarian sandwich. Drop-ins are welcome.

OPEN FORUM ON FIRST-YEAR SEMINARS

Brownbag discussion

Wednesday, November 3, 12:00 P.M.

Location: TLC

Host: Angela King (Chemistry)

THE FYS DISCUSSIONS have become one of the most popular programs offered by the TLC. Join us for an opportunity to obtain advice from experienced FYS faculty, to offer suggestions, and to express concerns about your current and future FYS classes. Open to all faculty. Please RSVP no later than Friday, October 29, to x4587 or snyderdw@wfu.edu if you would like a box lunch provided, and be sure to indicate your choice of a chicken, beef, or vegetarian sandwich. Drop-ins are welcome.

GRADING AS A TOOL FOR LEARNING

Breakfast discussion

Tuesday, November 9, 9:00 A.M.

Location: TLC

Host: Bernadine Barnes (Teaching and Learning Center, Art)

WHAT SHOULD a grade mean? How can grading be used to increase learning? How do students and faculty feel about fairness? Come to this morning discussion to learn about some effective grading strategies and to share your thoughts about grading at Wake Forest. Please RSVP by Friday, November 5, to x4587 or snyderdw@wfu.edu. A continental breakfast will be offered. Drop-ins are welcome.

Past Program Notes

Spring 2004

BY POPULAR DEMAND, the TLC Exchange will reprint or make available notes and handouts from several of the previous semester's brown bag discussions and programs. Handouts from the following discussions are available to interested faculty by contacting the TLC Coordinator at x4587.

Activating the Classroom:

Delivery Skills for Oral Presentation

Brown Bag, February 4

Host: Dee Oseroff-Varnell (*Communication*)

Students with Learning Disabilities: How They Cope and How We Cope

Discussion February 11

Host: Van Westervelt (*Director, Learning Assistance Center*)

Beyond Blackboard

Brown Bag, March 24

Host: Jolie Tingen (*Theatre*)

Kauffman Grant Campus Initiative

Brown Bag, March 29

Hosts: William Conner (*Biology*),
Page West (*Calloway*)

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, Bernadine Barnes, at Ext. 4559 (barnes@wfu.edu) or TLC Coordinator, Deborah Snyder, at Ext. 4587 (snyderdw@wfu.edu). The Teaching and Learning Center is open Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday from 8 A.M. until 4:00 P.M.; Tuesday from 8:00 A.M. until 3:00 P.M.; Friday from 8:00 A.M. until 11:00 A.M., and is located in 330 Z. Smith Reynolds Library.

The TLC faculty advisory committee is elected annually. Committee members for the 2004/05-year are: Teresa Sanhueza (Romance Languages), Stewart Carter (Music), Harry Titus (Art), Jonathan Duchac (Calloway), Batja Mesquita (Psychology), Patricia Cunningham (Education), and Angela King (Chemistry).

Resources

THE TLC HAS many resources available to the campus community, including books and journals promoting teaching excellence. 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. If you need to consult or check out TLC resources when the center is closed, you may obtain a key at the circulation desk by showing your faculty ID card.

The Teaching and Learning Center also maintains a vertical file and notebooks of teaching-related articles. Subjects include, but are not limited to:

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

We are pleased to offer several excellent articles within the "Course Documents" section of the TLC Blackboard site (<http://blackboard.wfu.edu/>) that may enhance your classroom teaching experience. Contact the Coordinator at snyderdw@wfu.edu to receive access. Information on WFU grants for faculty is also included on this site.

The Teaching and Learning Center is available for departmental and committee meetings. Please call extension 4587 or e-mail snyderdw@wfu.edu to reserve the space.

For information about other TLC services and upcoming events, see the TLC web site. In addition, information about First-Year Seminars, and FYS proposals from several faculty members, is now available. FYS materials as well as other web-based information are accessible by going to the TLC homepage and clicking on "Teaching Resources."