

TLCExchange

The Newsletter of the Teaching and Learning Center of Wake Forest University ▲ Volume 8, Number 2 ▲ Spring 2005

Letter from the Director

March 2005

Dear Colleagues,

It's hard to believe, but my term as Director of the TLC is rapidly coming to an end. Beginning next fall, Judy Kem from Romance Languages will take over as director of the center. Judy has been teaching French at Wake Forest for many years, so she is a familiar face on campus. I know you'll continue to send Judy your ideas as she begins to plan programs for the TLC next year.

Being the Director of the TLC has been a truly wonderful experience. I've had the opportunity to work with faculty, administrators, and staff from all over campus. Their commitment to educating our students in full and meaningful ways is genuinely inspiring. I've learned so much from all of you, who have been willing to share your experiences so generously.

Thank you for giving me this extraordinary opportunity.

With best wishes,
Bernadine Barnes

Winners of the Teaching Innovation Award Announced

Sharon Andrews and Brook Davis of the Department of Theatre and Dance have been selected as the joint recipients of the first Teaching Innovation award. Sharon and Brook developed Theater 295, Development and Performance, with a special session aimed at exploring the culture of student athletes.

In making our decision the Committee for the Teaching and Learning Center was impressed with the way the course addressed a specific need in the Wake Forest community: helping student athletes express their unique experiences which were often very different from those of "typical" students at Wake Forest. The students wrote and performed their own production, "Our Reality," which was presented to the Wake Forest community last summer and fall. Their course embodies the ideals of active learning, reflection, and creativity.

We received many other applications for the award, and we were delighted that so much innovative teaching is happening here. Each course was unique, and yet they all had one quality in common: giving students active responsibility for their own learning, without losing sight of the pedagogical goals of the course. We truly wished it were possible to reward more of the applicants, and we hope that they and others will continue seeking new ways to engage students in the learning process.

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.

▲ Peer 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 semester. 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).

Shifting Paradigms? Don't Forget to Tell Your Students

By Barbara Mezeske, Hope College, MI, mezeske@hope.edu. Previously published in *The Teaching Professor*, August/September 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.

The following essay was prompted by my recent experience at the 2004 Teaching Professor Conference. A panel of four students, in response to the moderator's questions about how they learned, persisted in talking about what teachers had done in their classrooms. Despite the efforts of the moderator, not one of the four panelists spoke about her own learning, or claimed responsibility for his own intellectual growth. Education had happened to them all.

The move from teacher- or content-centered teaching to learner-centered teaching is a radical paradigm shift for our students. Unless we understand and acknowledge how different this makes the classroom experience for them, our forays into new kinds of practices will be misunderstood and met with resistance. In learner-centered teaching, the balance of power in the classroom is shared by the teacher and the students; content becomes not the end, but a means to promote learning; teachers become guides rather than experts; the responsibility for learning is shifted to the students; and evaluation is used to promote learning, not merely to generate grades.

This is a new territory for most students. After all, experience has taught them that passivity is expected, even desirable: their teachers generate assignments, lectures, and evaluations. They have mastered a set of rules that privileges teacher action: get the right answer (the teacher's answer); expect every action to merit some tangible reward from the teacher (points or extra credit); work just enough to earn the grade you

desire, as defined by the teacher's standards. Our best students have used this approach and achieved great success. They graduate at the top of their class and leave college with job offers in hand. Why should we expect them to abandon what has worked so well?

Their struggle is strikingly similar to the one most teachers face when they themselves embrace change. Which of us would not feel anxious, reluctant, even hostile, if told we had to retool all of our courses? Which of us does not experience dissonance when we see evidence that our teaching produces inferior learning? Like our students, we are products of a teacher-centered paradigm where the expectation is that teachers lecture and then test.

However, research tells us that deep learning requires students to be engaged and that the role of the learner must be central. How then, are we to bring our students along with us, as we shift from old practices to new? We must begin by making the process of change a continuous open dialogue. We must talk about learner-centered practice again and again as a course progresses. It must become a philosophy that stands at the center of our course design and practice, not at the periphery. Here are some ways I think we can accomplish this:

Use reflective learning logs at several points in the semester. An early log might ask students to respond to the course syllabus, taking note of any element that seems unusual to them. Or, one might ask students to strategize their approach to the course, to lay out their plans for study and homework, and to make predictions about their performance on course goals and objectives. In some cases, merely asking students to think about their own learning is surprising to them.

Solicit and share feedback often. After the first test, ask students to reflect in writing about what they learned from taking it. Ask them how they prepared for the test, and how their preparation will change next time. Gather the responses, share them in class, and talk about the kind of learning that testing promotes.

Reinforce, again and again, that the course is about their learning. Maintain a dialogue about their learning goals, and their perceived successes. Always ask, "Did this activity help you to learn? How might it have helped you to learn better?"

Be flexible. If we operate in a learner-centered classroom, then we can expect any group of learners to have somewhat unique needs. Accept this, and make changes as dictated by the feedback received from students.

The need to help students shift the paradigm of their thinking about what should happen in class is critical if we are to transform them from passive to active learners who think about ideas rather than about grades. If we consistently reinforce the value of their own learning, we can radically alter their thinking about what "going to school" means.

TLC EVENTS

Spring 2005

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.

MODERATING DIFFICULT DISCUSSIONS: USING THE DELIBERATIVE MODEL IN THE CLASSROOM

Thursday, January 27, 4:00-5:30 P.M.

Location: The Teaching and Learning Center, Room 330, ZSR Library

Hosts: Katy Harriger (*Political Science*) and Jill McMillan (*Communication*)

KATY HARRIGER, Political Science, and Jill McMillan, Communication, will present a workshop on how to promote more deliberative classroom discussions around difficult issues. For the last four years they have been working with a group of students on teaching deliberative skills and implementing them in the classroom and in campus and community discussions. The workshop will involve discussion of the concept of deliberative talk and work on practicing these skills.

TEACHING WAKE FOREST STUDENTS ABROAD

Monday, February 7, 3:00-4:30 P.M.

Location: The Teaching and Learning Center, Room 330, ZSR Library

Hosts: Pia Wood (*International Studies*), Larry West (*German and Russian*), and Sylvain Boko (*Economics*)

HAVE YOU CONSIDERED teaching in one of Wake Forest's programs in Europe or Asia? Are you thinking about developing your own program? Come to this session to find out how directors are selected and how to

develop a new study abroad program. We'll also discuss some of the rewards and challenges of teaching in foreign countries—so if you've taken a group, come share your experiences!

WHAT'S CHANGING IN CAMPUS TECHNOLOGY?

Tuesday, February 15, 12:00-1:00 P.M.

Location: Room 204, ZSR Library (the electronic classroom)

Host: Anne Bishop (*Information Systems*)

DO WIRELESSLY-ENABLED MOBILE devices have a place in the classroom and campus life? What's a DeaconAlert? Interested in trying out a Tablet PC instead of a traditional ThinkPad? What's going to happen now that IBM may be selling its ThinkPad business? For answers to these and your other questions about our technology future, come to this session.

COMBINING TEACHING AND RESEARCH

Thursday, February 17, 12:00-1:00 P.M.

Location: The Teaching and Learning Center, Room 330, ZSR Library

Hosts: Michele Gillespie (*History*) and David Lubin (*Art*)

JUGGLING TEACHING and research is never easy. Are there ways to advance students' learning and your own scholarship in the classroom? Join us for a discussion on ideas for incorporating actual research into your courses, and at the same time enhancing your teaching effectiveness.

INTERDISCIPLINARY TEACHING: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Wednesday, February 23, 12:00-1:00 P.M.

Location: The Teaching and Learning Center, Room 330, ZSR Library

Hosts: Candelas Gala (*Romance Languages*) and Barry Maine (*Interdisciplinary Honors Program, and English Department*)

TEACHING YOUR DISCIPLINE in connection to others can be invigorating and challenging. Come to this open discussion about team-teaching, crossing disciplinary borders, and interdisciplinary teaching opportunities.

USING JOURNALS EFFECTIVELY
Thursday, March 17, 3:00-4:30 P.M.

Location: The Teaching and Learning Center, Room 330, ZSR Library

Hosts: Christy Buchanan (*Psychology*), Teresa Ciabattari (*Sociology*), and Angela King (*Chemistry*)

STUDENT JOURNALS CAN be used to generate ideas, to consolidate learning, to reflect on experience, and to help students write better. If you use journals in your classes, please join this inter-disciplinary conversation about how to make journals a truly meaningful learning experience. Light refreshments will be offered. **Please RSVP by Monday, March 14, to snyderdw@wfu.edu or extension 4587.** Drop-ins are welcome.

TEACHING WITH TABLETS
Thursday, April 14, 12:00-1:00 P.M.

Location: Room 204, ZSR Library
 (the electronic classroom)

Host: Christa Colyer (*Chemistry*)

TABLET COMPUTERS, with their robust, write-on screens, allow instructors most of the freedom of a chalkboard lecture with the added bonus of being able to archive lecture notes. The tablet can be used as a high-tech tool for presenting low-tech (good old-fashioned) hand-written lecture notes to students, or can be used to annotate other "high-tech" presentation media (such as PowerPoint shows). In addition, the tablet is a terrific tool for editing or commenting on student writing. This lunchtime talk will explore how the tablet can be used in addition to (or instead of) the ThinkPad for a variety of academic applications. **Lunch will be provided for faculty who RSVP (extension 4587 or snyderdw@wfu.edu) by Monday, April 11—be sure to indicate your sandwich choice of vegetarian, turkey, or roast beef when you RSVP.** Drop-ins are welcome.

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, Tuesday, and Thursday from 8 A.M. until 4:00 P.M.; Wednesday from 8:00 A.M. until 3:30 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. Active committee members for the spring semester are: Teresa Sanhueza (Romance Languages), Harry Titus (Art), Jonathan Duchac (Calloway), Patricia Cunningham (Education), Angela Hattery (Sociology), 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."

EVENTS AT A GLANCE

Please see the *TLC Events* portion of this newsletter, or the TLC web site, for event descriptions. All events will take place at the Teaching and Learning Center, 330 Z. Smith Reynolds Library, unless otherwise noted. Faculty are invited to be our guests for lunch, breakfast, or light refreshments at all discussions.

January

Moderating Difficult Discussions: Using the Deliberative Model in the Classroom

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