



# Teaching Notes

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## Reflections on Teaching

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In "Teaching: Have Your Cake and Eat it Too?", Claude Buxton (1951) implored psychologists to value teaching as much as research. Educators mostly ignored his exhortation, but we recently addressed certain issues that he raised (i.e., the Society for the Teaching of Psychology's involvement with the project on Redefining Scholarship; see Halpern et al., 1998).

Research need not be detrimental to teaching. Research can improve teaching and teaching can improve research, if they appropriately complement each other. Also, people who are primarily teachers should not be less knowledgeable about the history, methodology, and substantive content of psychology. Jerome Bruner was right when he said that "it takes no elaborate research to know that communicating knowledge depends in enormous measure upon one's mastery of the knowledge to be communicated." Some outstanding researchers are masterful teachers, but most of us cannot "have our cake and eat it too." Despite recent lip service being paid to teaching in research universities, teaching has not attained equal status with research in psychology.

Aside from research, I now want to talk about teaching. My perspective on this topic comes from having taught in liberal arts colleges for almost 40 years. Be forewarned that my comments are not constrained by one scintilla of empirical evidence. I will mention 10 things that beginning teachers should hear. Readers who are not neophytes can stop here or read on.

### Number 1

Be clear about your educational goals and ensure that your students are clear about them. Beginning teachers' notions about their academic objectives may be murky, but how can teachers know what to do until they know what they want to do? If you do not know where you are going, the likelihood that you will get there borders on randomness.

### Number 2

Know the relevant facts, but go beyond them. Stress concepts and principles that have wider applicability than isolated facts. Facts fade fast, and most students will not remember them for the final examination; if they do, they will not remember them 2 weeks later. Emphasize that "everything is related to everything else."

### Number 3

Be willing to say "I don't know," but strive to decrease the frequency with which you must do so. Samuel Butler observed that "a little knowledge is a dangerous thing, but a little lack of knowledge is also a dangerous thing." With more experience, you will understand Hal Borland's point that "facts are not answers, but only tools with which to fashion more questions" and James Thurber's wise observation that "it's better to ask some questions than to know all the answers." For every complex question, there is a simple answer—and it is wrong.

### Number 4

In speaking and writing, strive for clarity, conciseness, and felicity of expression. Coleridge insisted that "preciseness in the use of terms is required, and the test is whether you can translate the phrase adequately into simpler terms, regard being had for the feeling of the whole passage." Strunk and White echoed the same sentiment even more succinctly when they advised writers not to be tempted "by a twenty-dollar word when there is a ten-center handy, ready, and able." (Their wonderful little book, *Elements of Style*, is now in its 4<sup>th</sup> edition—Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2000.) In speaking and writing, as in almost every other endeavor, it is a simple task to make things complex, but a complex task to make things simple. Heed Thoreau's advice and "simplify, simplify, simplify." Also, learn to recognize what Oscar Wilde called "the precise psychological moment when to say nothing."

### Number 5

Develop a passion for teaching that approaches religious fervor. If you are not passionate about what you are doing, your students will not be excited about what you want them to do. I am convinced that passion is the chief ingredient that distinguishes adequate from exceptional teachers. Ralph Waldo Emerson insisted that "nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm," and he was right.

### Number 6

Be friendly and fair with all students but familiar with none. Benjamin Franklin made a similar point when he said: "Be civil to all; sociable to many; familiar with few." Recognize that you will not like some students as much as you like others. I prefer capable students who work hard to learn the facts, concepts, and principles that they should know. Do you favor certain kinds of students?

### Number 7

Maintain rigorous academic standards, despite grade inflation that is a national travesty. Emerson knew whereof he spoke when he remarked that "our chief want in life is someone to make us do what we can." Do not expect instant perfection from your students but strive for steady improvement. A common problem with beginning teachers is their intense need to be liked or loved by students. Being respected is more important. I do not know any esteemed teachers whose classes are flooded with mediocre students who get high grades without doing any serious academic work.

### Number 8

Cherish colleagues of all ages. From older ones, you will learn about historical perspective. From younger ones, you will learn to avoid intellectual flabbiness and to have a healthy skepticism for traditional ways of doing things. When you agree with all your colleagues, you should probably change your mind.

### Number 9

Stan Ericksen said that "the most important influence the teacher can have on students is to help them learn how to learn independently." This point can be threatening to young teachers, who may believe that students cannot learn anything that they are not taught. The best teachers are those who have no students, because the students have learned how to learn without their teachers.

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### Number 10

Samuel Johnson remarked that "praise, like gold and diamonds, owes its value to its scarcity." Teachers must be willing to work for intangible rewards that may not come until many years after students graduate, which gives new meaning to the "delay of reinforcement gradient." Henry Brooks Adams was right when he said that teachers affect eternity; they never know where their influence stops. But you must learn to be patient with your students and especially with yourself. One of the most frustrating things about teaching is that you never know what you are doing. I sometimes hope to be a house painter or a bricklayer in my next incarnation, because they can more easily quantify the results of their work.

### Conclusion

One of the most important and rewarding aspects of teaching is that it is more fun than bipeds should have. After almost 40 years of having more fun than I deserve in teaching, I simply cannot imagine doing anything else! (Please don't tell my Dean, but I would probably pay Furman to let me do what Furman pays me to do.)

But the real reason for teaching is to make a difference—to be honorable, to be competent, to be responsible, to be productive, and to be unselfish but proud. Teaching is not a profession; teaching is a calling—delightful, invigorating, mysterious, frustrating, passionate, precious, and sacred. Good teachers stretch the mind and they stretch the heart. I hope that the world will be a better place because we teachers make a difference to our students.

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## Stepping Up to the Plate In Diversity Education: Building an Intercultural Campus

*A Best Practices Conference for Educators and  
Administrators*

Kennesaw State University  
March 18-19, 2005

**Proposal Deadline: December 17, 2004**

In the past decade, more and more colleges and universities have "Stepped up to the Plate" and diversified their curricula to better prepare students to live and work in a complex world. The purpose of the conference is to take stock of where we are and how institutions have grappled with the intellectual, social and pedagogical challenges of curricula change and campus transformation.

The Office of Academic Affairs, the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning, and the Office of Institutional Diversity invite you to a two-day conference devoted to best practices in diversity and learning in higher education. "Stepping Up to the Plate in Diversity Education" will provide a showcase for the best practices in diversity and learning currently in use at universities, four-year colleges, and community colleges.

For additional information, visit the conference Web site at <http://www.kennesaw.edu/diversityeducation/index.html>

## WebCT Tip of the Month

### Changing Icons

Gary B. Roberts, CETL Faculty Fellow for e-Learning

Tired of the same old icons in every class? Changing icons is easy in WebCT. In fact there are over 500 different icons to choose from. And they come in a wide variety of colors and textures.

You need to make all changes from the Designer Options window. The first thing you do to change an icon is select the radio button that is next to your current icon. Then choose the Edit button under the Actions menu on the far right of your screen. You should then see a page that is titled something like \*Update Link,\* which also shows the current icon, the title, and a section on \*Link Appearance.\* In this last section there is a line that contains the words: \*Icon Filename\* and a URL that links to an icon file. To the right of this is a button that is titled \*Browse.\*

Click on the \*Browse\* button and you will be taken to a new window that contains all of the files for your course. At the very bottom of the list of files (use the scroll bar to move to the bottom) is a folder entitled WebCT-Files. Click on this folder and you will see a list of sub-folders. One of the subfolders is named \*Icons.\* Click on the \*Icons\* subfolder and you will see even more subfolders, each of which contains a set of color coordinated icons that you can use on your home page. The magnifying glass allows you to preview the icon.

When you find an appropriate icon, click the radio button in front of it and go to the very bottom of the window and click on the \*Add Selected\* button. This returns you to the \*Update Link\* page. You will notice that the new icon file is now the URL for your Icon. The final step is to click the \*Update\* button at the very bottom of the window. You are now done, and the new icon should show up on your WebCT page. Congratulations!

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## Web Site of the Month

### Teaching Goals Inventory

<http://www.uiowa.edu/~centeach/tgi>

The Teaching Goals Inventory (TGI) is a self-assessment of instructional goals. Its purpose is threefold: (1) to help college teachers become more aware of what they want to accomplish in individual courses; (2) to help faculty locate Classroom Assessment Techniques they can adapt and use to assess how well they are achieving their teaching and learning goals; and (3) to provide a starting point for discussion of teaching and learning goals among colleagues. College and University teachers might find it helpful to complete the TGI when they are: developing a new course, revising a course, writing or re-writing their philosophy of teaching, or participating in a curriculum review.

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# Creating a Norm of Honesty: Student Academic Integrity at KSU

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To turn a blind eye to cheating is to undercut the central mission of the university to educate. According to McCabe (2002-2003), over 75% of college students admit to some form of cheating. The rate of students who self-report collaboration without permission, cheating on tests, and plagiarism (especially the Internet "cut and paste" type) has increased significantly. While 10% of students admitted to "cut and paste" plagiarism in a 1999 survey, 41% admitted doing so in a 2001 survey, and 68% indicated that they did not believe Internet plagiarism was a serious issue.

Based upon records maintained by the KSU Office of Judiciary Programs, KSU faculty reported 41 students for cheating in 2001-2002, 71 in 2002-2003, and 83 in 2003-2004. Applying the 75% rate of cheating to our enrollment of nearly 18,000 students, we should expect considerably more reported cases of academic misconduct. While it is possible that KSU is an anomalous bastion of honesty, statistics suggest that significant academic misconduct goes undetected and/or unreported. As a final anecdotal note, a student wrote an article for the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* describing rampant cheating taking place in and out of the classroom at his college (Romm, 2004, April 20). Although he did not provide the institution name, he was a KSU student. If his account can be trusted, the cultural norm of this institution tolerates cheating, but this doesn't have to be the case!

The faculty, students, and administration can all play a part to create a new norm of academic honesty at KSU. At an Association for Judicial Affairs workshop in 2001, presenters Daisy Waryold and Jim Lancaster argued that all of us have a responsibility to promote academic honesty, prevent dishonesty, and address incidents of dishonesty by confronting and reporting them.

## Promoting Academic Honesty

Students need to hear that academic honesty is expected from the time they enter KSU until they leave, with faculty emphasizing it early and often in the classroom. Faculty should cover their expectations of academic honesty, explicitly defining potential instances of academic dishonesty and clarifying contentious points such as collaboration (what it is, when and where it is allowed, and when it is not allowed). If academic dishonesty is not overtly discussed and prohibited, many students may conclude that no one truly cares and the academic honesty statement in every syllabus is merely "lip service." Other campus constituencies must also play their part. Student leaders should continue the recently begun practice of speaking to new students at orientation about the non-tolerance of academic dishonesty on campus. Teachers in First Year Experience classes should also discuss this issue in depth in the ethics portion of that class. Finally, administrators should also take every opportunity to promote both academic excellence and integrity.

## Preventing Academic Dishonesty

### Tests

Although you should repeat your prohibition of, and consequences for, cheating before every test, this simple statement is insufficient. Faculty also need to implement specific strategies to reduce, discourage, and prevent the opportunity or temptation to cheat, both in the short and long run. Although not an exhaustive list, some possibilities include putting explicit grade consequences for cheating in your syllabus and reminding students of them before each test; forbidding students from

keeping books, paper, cell phones, and laptops on desktops or in plain view; verifying student identities in large classes where there might be the temptation to use an imposter to take the test; preparing different test versions, both for use in the same class and between different sections, and not using the same tests across semesters to prevent the development of test banks by students; and assigning seats to prevent collaboration without unfairly targeting individual students.

### Papers

Plagiarism, whether through copying from print publications, the Internet, or unauthorized collaboration and sharing of past papers among students, is an increasing problem. Once again "an ounce of prevention" applies to this situation and not only discourages plagiarism, but also helps encourage skill development in writing. Some suggested strategies to discourage plagiarism include: providing clear and explicit expectations about student writing and collaboration and the consequences of plagiarism; providing examples of good and poor citation and paraphrasing, especially from the disciplinary perspective of your course; requiring a rough draft before the due date, which encourages students to complete the work over a reasonable time span and discourages the purchasing of papers; and requiring submission of copies of all or at least some subset of the references cited in the paper.

You should inform students that you will investigate suspicious papers or phrases from a paper. One new resource available for KSU students and faculty is our institutional subscription to Turnitin, which allows students and faculty to quickly check a paper for text taken from other sources. The program generates a report, color-coding materials taken from other sources and listing each source it catches. A quick visual scan can then determine whether each reference received proper citation. Although Turnitin can be used by faculty as a "gotcha" tool, it can also allow students to check their own papers for improper citation ahead of the due date. For more information on Turnitin, visit their Web page at <http://www.turnitin.com> or contact the KSU Online Learning Services at 770-423-6670.

## Addressing Academic Dishonesty When It Occurs

Some faculty have expressed a concern that involving the Judiciary is a punitive process, and they do not wish to be responsible for ruining a student's academic career because of one mistake. Other faculty prefer handling matters themselves or only within the department either because they fear the Judiciary won't be hard enough on cheaters or that the process is too long and cumbersome. Unfortunately, these perspectives encourage repeat offenders because each instance is seen as a "first" time offense.

Strategies and policies designed to catch and punish cheating serve as a powerful deterrent and highlight the seriousness and unacceptable nature of the behavior, but only if faculty follow through on suspected incidents. For those who are caught, the process of filing charges, undergoing a hearing, and receiving a sanction commensurate with the offense forces them to think about and discuss the ethical ramifications of their actions. Judicial sanctions also protect the dignity and degrees of the university. No faculty member wants to send a graduate out into the world as an ambassador of the institution, only to have that individual continue a learned pattern of dishonesty that casts suspicion on the qualifications of all other alumni. Ultimately, judiciary charges represent an opportunity to do good, either immediately as a corrective measure to educate and rehabilitate an offender, or at very least by setting a zero-tolerance atmosphere benefiting other students and the institution as a whole.

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*Creating a Norm of Honesty, cont.*

Finally, it is important to note that KSU does not place any notation in a student's permanent record indicating that a student has committed academic misconduct. Instead, the Judiciary Office maintains a confidential record of students who have violated university rules on academic honesty. This confidential file enables us to identify repeat offenders, especially in cases where the offense occurs across departments.

### **KSU Policies & Procedures for Handling Suspected Academic Dishonesty**

If you believe you have detected academic misconduct, the first step is to meet with the student outside of class. Prior to the meeting, it is advisable to inform your chair and request that he or she identify someone who is experienced in such meetings to sit in with you and the student. You should check with the Judiciary Office to see if the student has a previous cheating record. If there is a previous record, you should tell the student that you are referring the matter to the Judiciary. If there is no previous record, you must explain the reason for the allegations and present any evidence. Due process requires that the student receive an opportunity to explain. If you find that the student did not cheat, no further action is necessary. If the student admits misconduct during the meeting, you may settle the matter by imposing a sanction. The process is finished when you forward a completed academic misconduct report form to the Judiciary Office (see <http://www.kennesaw.edu/judiciary/academic.shtml>). We use this record to monitor for repeat offenders.

Although most cases are settled informally, if the student denies the misconduct and fails to provide a credible explanation, refuses to sign the form, or has a prior record, the faculty member should fill out the form and refer the case to the Judiciary. The Judiciary Office will then set a hearing either before the Vice President for Student Success and Enrollment Services or the university court (a judiciary panel of five trained staff, faculty members, and students), whichever is selected by the student. At the hearing both parties present their sides of the story. If it is determined that the student committed misconduct, the student faces both a *minimum* sanction of one semester suspension from KSU and the academic sanction the faculty member chooses to impose.

### **Conclusion**

The "promote, prevent, and address" policy emphasizes the critical role faculty play in creating a campus-wide norm of academic honesty. Ultimately, faculty should not look at these strategies as punitive or demeaning, but rather as a means of encouraging and teaching integrity as well as protecting honest students from cheaters.

The Judiciary Office exists to support and encourage all constituencies (faculty, students, and administrative staff) at KSU to achieve these goals. If you need assistance, please do not hesitate to contact us. We are located in rooms 284, 285, and 286 of the Carmichael Student Center. Our office telephone number is 770-499-3403.

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## **Seasons of an Academic Life**

Thomas Kolenko

CETL Fellow for the Reflective Practice of Teaching

For the past four years I have been amazed at the physical transformation of this campus with its new academic buildings, residence halls, and traffic flows. In the same breath, I have wondered if this transformation has extended to the life blood of a campus' teaching core – its faculty. As a 14 year veteran of the KSU classroom, I have been trying to understand the important transitional role and potential contributions that senior faculty can make. Past participation in several CETL teaching circles and exposure to educator Parker Palmer's (1998) perspectives have fueled my new awareness of the complexity, challenges, and developmental needs of college faculty.

Under the logic of an old dog and new tricks, this 53 year old is attempting to better understand his own transitioning through the stages of an academic's life. This quest to understand the integration of professional, mental, and physical changes in one's complete life can be quite challenging. Parker Palmer proposes that "good teaching can not be reduced to technique, good teaching comes from the identity and integrity of the teacher." Integration of the intellectual, emotional, physical, and spiritual "paths" we follow is built around expanding our self knowledge levels. While these goals often get eclipsed during the "quest for tenure" years, the 262 tenured faculty on our campus are freer to explore this intersection.

At the personal level, John Gardner (1963) notes that faculty vitality is about continual self-renewal. Yet, university teaching is a profession where career paths tend to plateau relatively early at the full professor ceiling level. With over 50 percent of full-time tenured faculty in the U.S. colleges now over the age of 55, the need for renewal can provide dividends for all stakeholders: faculty, students, administration, and communities.

The renewal and revitalization of faculty members can generate significant personal and professional returns. It is toward that end that I am developing programming to explore how the stages of adult development frameworks may be used to increase self-awareness and faculty renewal. The work of Levinson (1978, 1996), Kelly (1991), and others have cleared an early path for discussion and analysis. While written works can provide discussion points, the real wealth on our campus is within the KSU faculty ranks. Harvesting that knowledge core is my goal as a CETL Fellow. Through a series of programs exploring the use of personal journal writing, CETL Book Club selections/sessions, senior faculty symposiums, brown bag presentations, and invited speakers we can elevate faculty vitality and renewal in the months ahead.

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