

Essays on Teaching Excellence

Toward the Best in the Academy

Volume 13, Number 1, 2001-02

A publication of The Professional & Organizational Development Network in Higher Education (www.podnetwork.org).

From Cognitive Dissonance to Self-Motivated Learning

Edmund J. Hansen, *Northeastern Illinois University*

No matter at what level of sophistication students enter our classroom, the one goal we have for all of them is to leave it as changed people. The transformation we desire, even in the most basic introductory course, goes beyond the simple acquisition of knowledge. All teachers want their students to “like” what they learn. This means we eventually want to reach them where we can influence their attitudes and motivational dispositions toward the subject. Even though we may not be optimistic enough to reach this with all or most of our students, the ultimate goal of higher education must be to create self-motivated learners who are both willing to change and able to affect the direction of their change. Unfortunately, this is also the most difficult goal to accomplish at a time when learning is often seen as an instrument rather than a purpose for its own sake. How then can we influence students to a point where they appreciate the process of change itself?

This essay conceptualizes the task as an enterprise that unfolds on four different levels. It is a growth process that requires the instructor to carefully orchestrate experiences of conflict, development of competencies, reflection of progress, and ultimately definition of purpose.

Level 1: The Learning Experience Intentional learning--as opposed to tacit, automated learning--is made up of experiences that capture the learner’s attention and imagination. Getting someone’s attention typically involves an element of surprise. What is

more surprising than having one's long-held opinions and beliefs drawn into question? Psychologists have a name for this experience: When beliefs about who the self is and what the self does are inconsistent . . ., people experience a psychologically uncomfortable state referred to as cognitive dissonance (Reeve, 2001). Our belief systems and behaviors are ripe with the potential for cognitive dissonance. We often believe one thing, but actually behave the opposite way (e.g., we may consider ourselves environmentally friendly but rarely recycle or conserve energy; or we demand scientists to provide the answers to all of life's questions, but exclude ourselves as much too complex to fit into any scientific categories). Elsewhere (Hansen, 1998) I have given more examples of common misconceptions that, when confronted, easily lead to cognitive dissonance.

As students face their own misconceptions, the experience can be somewhat unsettling, but it may provide the instructor with opportunities for "teachable moments." These are instances in which learners' natural defenses against destabilizing insights are low so that they are willing to consider the need for change. Instructors must be careful not to overuse the approach because every person's tolerance for conflict is limited. Nobody wants to be shown wrong all the time, but when used with care, the creation of cognitive dissonance is a powerful tool to initiate meaningful learning experiences.

Level 2: Learning Process Tools As important as the initial stimulus may be, learning needs more than an unsettling or exciting experience to promote personal growth. Intentional learning requires a plan, which needs to be made transparent to students--maybe even negotiated with them.

One of the most difficult tasks of teaching is defining a good plan with appropriate learning outcomes: What should students know, what should they be able to do, and what attitudes should they hold about the course material (Ewell, 1987)? Determining the answers to these questions requires careful judgment about the focus of a course and what is manageable in the available time frame. It also requires considerable experience with the given student population and what it might take for them to achieve these outcomes.

To begin with, students need a comprehensive syllabus (Grunert, 1997) outlining the key concepts, ideas, theories, skills, and procedures of the course. In addition, many students lack some of the basic learning tools necessary to accomplish the course goals. Therefore, helping students learn how to learn has become a key component of good course design. Aside from a few elite institutions across the country, our undergraduate students need help with the basics: reading textbooks, taking class notes, writing papers, managing time. I have always found that the most successful faculty members provide some form of scaffolding (Hogan & Pressley, 1997). They give specific cues for how to do things: question guides for reading assignments, rubrics and work samples for papers and oral presentations (Andrade, 2000), formats and guided practice for note-taking, tips and class discussion on how to manage time. Depending on the class level, good teachers tend to phase out those learning aids as the course progresses.

Level 3: Learning Awareness Tools Without the development of learning process tools students are unable to reach the third level of intentional learning, learning awareness. Instructors truly interested in the growth of their students want them to become aware of the progress they are making and how they are making it. Practice, supposedly, makes perfect, but reflective practice characterizes the educated practitioner. The same process tools don't work equally well for all people. That's why accomplished learners need to get to know themselves, their own strengths and weaknesses and their own developmental history as learners. Education is the process of discovering the self, and that process requires ongoing self-assessment.

It is possible to distinguish at least four different functions self-assessment serves in college: (1) self-assessment of one's growing competence in one particular area, such as the writing of a certain genre of essays; (2) self-assessment to set goals for the improvement of particular skills or learning behaviors; (3) self-assessment of how applicable one's experiences in one field of practice can be to another, for example, how one's parenting experiences might translate into teaching skills; and (4) self-Assessment of long-term growth, involving reflection and integration of benefits derived from multiple courses over multiple semesters, and clarification of career

goals and one's general place in life (Hansen, 1998).

A host of tools and processes is available to foster these types of learning awareness. At the micro level, instructors need to build in opportunities for repeated practice of the same or similar tasks. Multiple drafts of writing are an example of this approach; so is the use of grading rubrics for self and peer-assessment. At a higher level, students may be asked to reflect on their learning progress through learning logs, journals, diaries, profiles, portfolios, or capstone activities, which require more sustained effort and add a developmental dimension to the reflective process. A good description of many of these approaches is provided in Freeman and Lewis (1998).

Level 4: Learning Purpose The fourth function of self-assessment--assessing one's long-term growth--is the ultimate condition for creating the self-motivated learner. At some point, students need to learn to determine for themselves the purpose of their learning efforts. Much of education consists of teachers deciding what's "good" for their students. But in a democratic society where lifelong learning is a requirement for civil and economic welfare, it is crucial that students be enabled to define the purposes of their learning for themselves.

This has important implications for how we design courses and curricula. They include:

- Instructors need to find better ways of explaining the rationales for their course activities to students, ways that make their students care about the reasons for doing things in class.
- Course programs--in General Education and the major--need to have curricular coherence (see Ratcliff, 1997). Programs that are nothing but shopping lists of courses are unlikely to help students discover meaning and purpose.
- College courses need to consider different developmental levels that represent systematic increments in the demands made of students' abilities. Schools like Alverno College have demonstrated that key abilities like communication, analytical thinking, problem solving, effective citizenship, or aesthetic responsiveness can be conceptualized at growing levels of

complexity across the college years (Mentkowski, 2000, p. 419ff).

- Students ought to be involved in defining the purposes of their courses and programs in accordance with their own needs and goals. In other words, students should participate in the planning of at least some of their courses to help them move out of their educational consumer role.

Conclusion

The road from cognitive dissonance to self-motivated learning is a long one. I have tried to outline crucial steps along the way. It seems inevitable that meaningful learning begins with carefully orchestrated experiences of conflict and dissonance. Productive ways of dealing with conflict involve the development of competencies and assessment tools that allow students to reflect on their progress. Self-assessment is not complete until students become sufficiently autonomous to define the purpose of their learning. Good teaching means helping students move through these levels of intellectual development. It is not merely confined to individual courses, but requires long-range planning across whole programs of study.

Edmund J. Hansen (Ph.D., Indiana University) is the Director of the Center for Teaching and Learning at Northeastern Illinois University

References

Andrade, H. G. (2000). Using rubrics to promote thinking and learning. *Educational Leadership*, 57(5), 13-19.

Ewell, P. T. (1987). Ewell, P. T. (1987). Establishing a campus-based assessment program. In D.F. Halpen (Ed.), *Student outcomes assessment: What institutions stand to gain* (pp.9-24). *New Directions for Teaching and Learning*, 59.

Freeman, R., & Lewis, R. (1998). *Planning and implementing assessment*. London, UK: Kogan Page.

Grunert, J. (1997). *The course syllabus: A learning-centered approach*. Bolton, Ma: Anker.

Hansen, E. (1998). Creating teachable moments . . . and making them last. *Innovative Higher Education*, 23, 7-26.

Hogan, K., & Pressley, M. (Eds.). (1997). *Scaffolding student learning: Instructional approaches and issues*. Cambridge, MA: Brookline Books.

Mentkowski, M., a.o. (2000). *Learning that lasts: Integrating learning, development, and performance in college and beyond*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Ratcliff, J. L. (1997). Quality and coherence in General Education. In J. G. Gaff, J. L. Ratcliff, a.o., *Handbook of the undergraduate curriculum*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Reeve, J. (2001). *Understanding motivation and emotion*, 3rd ed. Fort Worth: Harcourt College Publishers

Essays on Teaching Excellence

Toward the Best in the Academy

Volume 13, Number 2, 2001-02

A publication of The Professional & Organizational Development Network in Higher Education (www.podnetwork.org).

Reflections on the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning

Pat Hutchings, *The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching*

In more than 40 years of studying change in higher education, Pat Cross (2001) wrote in a recent *Change* magazine article, "I cannot recall a time when attention and action have been more focused and potentially productive" (p.37). One aspect of this "attention and action" is what some of us are calling the scholarship of teaching and learning.

I say "what some of us are calling the scholarship of teaching and learning" because the phrase has accrued various meanings since it first appeared in *Scholarship Reconsidered* (Boyer, 1990) over a decade ago. In this essay I reflect on key elements of the scholarship of teaching and learning as they have emerged through a national program I've been directing for the past five years, the Carnegie Academy for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (CASTL). My emphasis is on three elements that best explain this work's contribution to the change that Cross noted.

Viewing Teaching as Intellectual Work Often our conversations about teaching are about methods and technique, which matter a lot, as do enthusiasm and good organization. But the scholarship of teaching and learning is founded on a view of teaching as *intellectual* work. Most faculty, I believe, resonate to this view. They know that designing a powerful course or constructing an appropriate assessment is--like other forms of scholarly work--an act of intellectual invention, with its genesis in one's sense of what it means

to know the field deeply. Teaching is intellectual work, as well, in that it calls on faculty to examine “the transactional relation” between teaching and learning and to be problem solvers and active investigators of what works and how and why it does so (Bernstein, 1998, p. 77).

One of my favorite statements of this view comes from Randy Bass (1999), a faculty member in English and American Studies at Georgetown University--and a Carnegie Scholar with the CASTL program. “One telling measure of how differently teaching is regarded from traditional scholarship or research,” Bass wrote, “is what a difference it makes to have a ‘problem’ in one versus the other.” In traditional research you *want* to have a problem; problems fuel the investigative process. But in teaching, a problem is an embarrassment, something to be fixed or concealed. “Changing the status of the problem in teaching from terminal remediation to ongoing investigation is precisely what the movement for a scholarship of teaching is all about” (p. 1).

The power of this focus on questions and inquiry is also suggested by Bill Cerbin, a Carnegie Scholar in psychology from the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse. In a case study describing his scholarship of teaching and learning, Cerbin (2000) notes, “The wrong reason to do the scholarship of teaching is because it’s now listed in the criteria for promotion and tenure; that’s a formula for turning important work into just a job.” Rather, “the scholarship of teaching has to be motivated, finally, by personal commitments. . . aspects of teaching and learning that pique your curiosity” (p. 19). The scholarship of teaching and learning is a movement to bring to the faculty’s work as teachers the habits of inquiry and intellectual engagement that characterize other scholarly work. As such, it’s an approach that helps both to raise the esteem in which teaching is held and to improve its quality.

Building the Profession and Practice of Teaching The guidelines for Carnegie’s program invite faculty to identify and investigate a question about their teaching and their students’ learning in ways that can contribute to thought and practice beyond their own classrooms. This ambition--to contribute to something larger--is one that we take for granted in other forms of scholarly work; our

research projects and professional outreach are not undertaken simply for our own professional development. But looking beyond individual improvement is not a goal that comes easily in teaching.

It's a challenge, first, because work on teaching is almost by definition highly contextual. What the Carnegie Scholars uncover about the learning of their students requires careful distillation and translation to be meaningful in other settings. And this process is complicated by the fact that different fields have quite different expectations about the conditions and rules of evidence needed for such translation.

Looking beyond individual improvement is a challenge, too, because teaching has traditionally been an individual, even private enterprise. Carnegie Foundation President Lee Shulman talks about discovering, as a young faculty member, what he calls "pedagogical solitude," the fact that teaching, which one might expect to be the most social of work, done in community with others, is in fact much less so than research. Indeed, teaching is lonely work for many faculty, work with a very underdeveloped set of habits and infrastructure for sharing what we learn with colleagues. This is especially distressing today, when so many faculty are doing innovative things in their teaching. The profession can't afford not to learn from the innovations and experiments by teachers who are trying new things.

Building the profession and practice of teaching--which means building the mechanisms for doing so--is a long-term agenda. But one important sign of progress is the sense of intellectual community growing up around the scholarship of teaching and learning. Many of the 200 campuses participating in CASTL (the Campus Program coordinated by the American Association for Higher Education) have begun by framing a conception of the scholarship of teaching and learning that emphasizes collaboration *across* fields. SUNY Buffalo State College, for instance, is using the scholarship of teaching and learning to counteract strategies that "promote a personal, individualistic view of teaching" (2001).

It may well be that at least in this first phase of activity the most important outcome of the scholarship of teaching and learning will

not be any single “finding” but the sense of scholarly community growing up around the intellectual work of teaching and learning. To put it differently, the scholarship of teaching and learning may best be thought of not as discrete projects and investigations, but as a set of principles and practices that bring people together and energize their collective work: a commitment to making teaching and learning public, to rigorous and constructive peer review, and to building the field.

Integrating Diverse Efforts Not only does the scholarship of teaching and learning promote collaboration across disciplines. It also brings together and draws upon a variety of traditions and lines of work, past and present.

One important tributary is assessment, with its emphasis on evidence of student learning. Another is action research by teachers in K-12 settings, a reminder of the value of collaboration and learning across that great divide. The scholarship of teaching and learning also overlaps with the work of the educational research community and with many initiatives undertaken by centers for teaching and learning, which are, on many campuses, taking a central role in advancing the scholarship of teaching and learning. Several recent efforts to promote the peer review of teaching are directly relevant as well. In short, the scholarship of teaching and learning has its own history, but it is not new. One of its strengths lies in drawing on diverse lines of work and communities of practice.

This is an insight many campuses are seizing upon, seeing the scholarship of teaching and learning not as a self-standing new initiative but as a way to shape and integrate diverse efforts. Indeed, one of the reasons to be hopeful about the scholarship of teaching and learning is that there are now many efforts moving in similar directions, not only on individual campuses but in consortia of campuses, through accrediting agencies, and at the national level. For instance, CASTL is a “cousin” to many of the projects in the Pew Forum on Undergraduate Learning.

Teaching has traditionally been a practice faculty learn by the seat of their pants. The promise of the scholarship of teaching and learning and related efforts is that teaching might be more like other scholarly

work, where we learn from colleagues and from those who go before, standing (as Sir Isaac Newton famously said) on the shoulders of giants.

Pat Hutchings (Ph.D, University of Iowa), is Senior Scholar at The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

References

Bass, R. (1999). The scholarship of teaching: What's the problem? *Inventio* 1.1 18 August 2000
<http://www.doijit.gmu.edu/Archives/feb98/randybass.htm>.

Bernstein, D. (1998). Putting the focus on student learning. In P. Hutchings (Ed.), *The course portfolio: How faculty can examine their teaching to advance practice and improve student learning* (pp. 77-83). Washington, DC: American Association for Higher Education.

Boyer, E. L. (1990). *Scholarship reconsidered: Priorities for the professoriate*. Special report of The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Cerbin, W. (2000). Investigating student learning in a problem-based psychology course. In P. Hutchings (Ed.), *Opening lines: Approaches to the scholarship of teaching and learning* (pp.11-21). Menlo Park, CA: The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

Cross, K. P. (2001). Leading efforts to improve teaching and learning: The Hesburgh awards. *Change*, 33(4), 30-37.

Shulman. L. S. (1993). Teaching as community property: Putting an end to pedagogical solitude. *Change*, 25(6), 6-7.

SUNY Buffalo State College (2001), Teaching Academy Campus Program part 2 participation report, January 24, 2001. AAHE WebCenter: <http://aahe.ital.utexas.edu/reports>

Useful Web Addresses:

<http://www.carnegiefoundation.org/CASTL/highered/index.htm>

www.pewundergradforum.org

Essays on Teaching Excellence

Toward the Best in the Academy

Volume 13, Number 3, 2001-02

A publication of The Professional & Organizational Development Network in Higher Education (www.podnetwork.org).

The Multicultural Teaching Portfolio

Matt Kaplan, *University of Michigan-Ann Arbor*

Derived from the artist's portfolio, the teaching portfolio is "a factual description of a professor's teaching strengths and accomplishments. It includes documents and materials which collectively suggest the scope and quality of a professor's teaching and performance" (Seldin, 1997, p. 2). It is, in addition, a venue for faculty to reflect on teaching.. The teaching portfolio is now a familiar part of higher education. In 1997, Seldin estimated that approximately 1,000 institutions were experimenting with teaching portfolios or a variant, up from about 10 in 1990 (p. 2).

Despite this proliferation, little has been written about the specific use of teaching portfolios to document faculty work with multiculturalism. Although variably defined, multiculturalism for this essay includes topics such as diversifying the curriculum, social justice education, civic engagement, and creating a positive learning environment for a diverse student body. In this essay I first outline the rationale for multicultural portfolios and then discuss strategies faculty can use to develop such portfolios.

Rationale Creating the multicultural portfolio enables faculty to represent their work towards several goals:

- promoting reflection on multicultural teaching and student learning,
- documenting the scholarship of multicultural teaching,
- documenting multicultural teaching for administrative decision making, and
- sharing work with colleagues.

Perhaps the most compelling purpose for such portfolios is for faculty to document how they are enacting institutional priorities. An increasing number of colleges and universities are making multiculturalism/diversity a part of their core curriculum. The American Association of Colleges and Universities reports that almost two thirds of the 543 colleges and universities polled now have a diversity requirement or are in the process of developing one (Humphreys, 2000, 1). More than 90% of campuses surveyed agree that students need to be prepared for life in a diverse democracy. These data indicate that all faculty will want to address multicultural issues to some extent in a generic teaching portfolio. However, faculty who devote significant amounts of time to multiculturalism need focused documentation so that they can be recognized and rewarded and so that colleagues can build on their work.

By creating multicultural portfolios, faculty can ensure that their teaching is evaluated in context. Such context is necessary because it can be a challenging undertaking to engage students with multicultural issues and get them to work with peers who have very different backgrounds and experiences. Students are often resistant to ideas and practices that challenge their assumptions, and this resistance could lead to lukewarm or even hostile reactions to multiculturalism, especially for faculty from underrepresented groups who can be seen as "pushing an agenda" (see Griffin, 1998; Bell, Washington, Weinstein, and Love, 1997). By having access to a portfolio, administrators can examine evidence beyond student ratings when evaluating faculty efforts to foster multicultural teaching and learning.

Creating a Multicultural Portfolio A portfolio should never be exhaustive, nor simply a collection of documents. Instead, it needs to be representative, including selected samples of faculty work along with reflective materials that set that material in context. In addition, a multicultural portfolio focuses on documenting efforts and accomplishments specifically related to multicultural teaching. Creating the portfolio involves five activities: collection, reflection, selection, completion, and revision.

Collection In this early stage of development, you collect documents related to multicultural teaching and learning. To ensure that you are

gathering a complete picture of this work, consider whether you have materials that relate to the four dimensions of multicultural teaching described by Marchesani and Adams (1992): knowing the students, course content, teaching methods, and knowing oneself as instructor. "Knowing the students" might include assignments and classroom assessment techniques that help you get to know the individuals in your classes (e.g., journaling, background learning styles questionnaires); efforts to increase enrollment of underrepresented groups; and mentoring/working with multicultural student groups on campus.

"Course content" might include development of new courses on multicultural topics; syllabi for the same course before and after multicultural development; readings lists, bibliographies, websites, and other resources representing diverse perspectives; student papers or assignments that show a multicultural approach to the material; letters from colleagues who have examined your syllabi and course materials; and lists of honors projects, masters theses, or dissertations focused on multicultural topics.

Under "teaching methods" you could include sample activities and assignments designed to promote learning among students with diverse learning styles, course policies that emphasize multiple perspectives and inclusiveness (such as ground rules for discussion); and letters from colleagues who have observed your class.

Documents that address the category "knowing oneself as an instructor" include a reflective statement on multicultural teaching, a list of activities undertaken to increase knowledge/skills in multicultural teaching, reflections on student comments or peer evaluations about your work, and plans for development as a multicultural teacher.

Reflection For a portfolio to be more than a compendium of documents, you will need to reflect on items collected and make explicit the underlying assumptions, beliefs, and principles that guide your approach to multicultural teaching. Some questions to consider include: How do you define multiculturalism? How have you developed your multicultural perspective? In what ways does your work with students, course content, and teaching methods reflect

your definition? What aspects of multicultural teaching and learning do you and your students struggle with? How do you create an atmosphere to help students examine these difficulties? What is your role in the classroom around multicultural topics: enlightener, advocate, agitator, organizer, change agent, skill developer, empowerer? How do you hope to develop as a multicultural teacher?

Answers to these questions should lead to the creation of a statement of teaching philosophy focused on multiculturalism. This statement will provide an organizing principle for selecting documents to include in the portfolio. It will also help clarify the rationale for your teaching goals and methods for colleagues and administrators, which is particularly important because there is no single definition of multiculturalism. Explaining your approach allows others to evaluate your work in a more accurate context, and it can open up a productive conversation among colleagues. Such conversations can help departments think deliberately about curricular reform, the recruitment and retention of underrepresented students and faculty, and multicultural faculty development.

Selection Once you express your multicultural teaching philosophy, you can return to your collection of documents and start selecting items to include. You might decide to organize the portfolio by course, with all related items (syllabus, assignments, handouts, student work, student evaluations) in one section; or you could create topical sections on students, curriculum, teaching methods, and your own growth as a multicultural practitioner, with each section comprising representative materials from a variety of courses. The body of the portfolio could consist of descriptive narratives for each section, with original materials included as appendices. Or you could introduce each section of original materials with a short, context-setting explanation.

Completion A portfolio should be easy to construct and to read. This means setting realistic time and page limits. Although it is an evolving document, you will need a deadline for completion. The experience of graduate students creating portfolios at the University of Michigan has shown that most of them can complete a portfolio in 15-25 hours. You will also need to think carefully about how to make

the document as accessible as possible for readers. Suggestions include a very clear table of contents and section dividers, continuous pagination, clear copies or retyped versions of any original materials, and a clear rationale for the selection of items you have included.

Revision Most of the faculty and graduate students with whom I have consulted insist that the portfolio we are discussing is "a work in progress"; and so it is. Just as it is important to complete a given version of your portfolio, you should return to the document to consider needed revisions (see Zubizarreta, 1997). Writing a multicultural philosophy, examining teaching materials on multiculturalism, and setting goals for the future do increase your reflection about your teaching. In addition, as you develop your courses and meet new students, you continue to learn more about yourself and your ideas about multiculturalism. As your approaches and experience change, you can update the portfolio to better reflect your current practices and thinking.

Matt Kaplan (Ph.D., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill), is Assistant Director of the Center for Research on Learning and Teaching, at the University of Michigan.

References

Bell, L., Washington, S., Weinstein, G., & Love, B. (1997). Knowing ourselves as instructors. In M. Adams, L. A. Bell, & P. Griffin (Eds.), *Teaching for diversity and social justice* (pp. 299-310). New York: Routledge.

Griffin, G. (1998). Speaking of whiteness: Disrupting white innocence. *Journal of the Midwest Modern Language Association*, 31 (3), 3-14.

Humphreys, D. (2000). National survey finds diversity requirements common around the country. *Diversity Digest*, 5 (1), 1-2.

Marchesani, L. S., & Adams, M. (1992). Dynamics of diversity in the teaching-learning process: A faculty development model for action and analysis. In M. Adams (Ed.), *Promoting diversity in college classrooms: Innovative responses for the curriculum, faculty, and*

institutions (pp. 9-20). *New Directions for Teaching and Learning*, 52. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Seldin, P. (1997). *The teaching portfolio* (2nd ed.). Bolton, MA: Anker Press.

Zubizaretta, J. (1997). Improving teaching through portfolio revision. In P. Seldin (Ed.), *The teaching portfolio* (2nd ed.) (pp. 37-45). Bolton, MA: Anker Press.

Essays on Teaching Excellence

Toward the Best in the Academy

Volume 13, Number 4, 2001-02

A publication of The Professional & Organizational Development Network in Higher Education (www.podnetwork.org).

Diversity Begins at Home: Multiculturalism in State and Regional Studies

Barbara Lounsberry, *University of Northern Iowa*

“O brave new world, that has such people in it,” Miranda exclaims at the close of Shakespeare’s *Tempest*. As we begin our brave new millennium, few question the need for multicultural education. Instead, college faculty and administrators are seeking diversity experiences most appropriate for their institutions and missions. One answer lies right in our own backyards. State and regional studies can offer faculty, staff, and students experiences with all kinds of diversity (racial, ethnic, religious, cultural, sexual)--even in locales that think of themselves as “homogenous.”

Our Project Recently, two of my faculty colleagues (Kamyar Enshayan from Physics and Kenneth Lyftogt from History) joined me, an English professor, in an interdisciplinary project that took as its premise the hypothesis that state and regional studies *currently going on* at our midwestern public university of 14,000 were an untapped natural resource for multicultural education. We followed the steps below and offer the results of our work as possible useful information for others.

Our first step was to inventory the 2,413 courses listed in our university’s catalogue that make up our institution’s formal curriculum.

Inventory Findings

--Nearly 8% (184 courses) are devoted *directly* to state or regional studies. Examples: "Studies in Midwestern Literature," "History of Iowa," and "Iowa Natural History."

--Another 18% (436 courses) may offer units or assignments on state or regional *ramifications of the course topic*. Examples: "Urban and Regional Economics," "Prairie Ecology," and "Rural Education: Field Study."

--Together, more than 25% of our current courses (620 of 2,413) offer opportunities for state and regional exploration.

Conversations with Colleagues

Our next step was to send a mailing to all department heads, program heads, and external services directors, asking them to identify faculty and staff members teaching or engaged in research on Iowa or midwestern topics, as well as to highlight specific courses and other learning experiences available in their units.

We then followed up with personal interviews with these colleagues to learn more about their work--and to obtain materials from them for our Iowa and Midwestern Studies Resource Collection, begun at our university library. (Most were delighted to find there were colleagues in other departments and colleges who were interested in their work!) To facilitate information sharing, we are currently creating an electronic list-serv connecting faculty, staff, students, and community members engaged (or just interested) in state and regional studies.

Curriculum Development Drawing on this wealth of information, we drafted curriculum proposals for: (1) a 20-22 hour Certificate Program titled "Iowa and Midwestern Culture and Community"; (2) a 23-25 hour minor (or "emphasis" for teaching majors) in state and regional studies; and (3) a 36-37 hour major in state and regional studies. Our motives in all these endeavors are double: state and regional studies have merit in their own right; however, they simultaneously involve "real world" diversity experiences.

An essential concept we have learned from POD Conference sessions on diversity is that colleagues and students (young and old) who feel *uncomfortable* talking about racial, ethnic, religious, or

sexual matters are more comfortable talking about their own (or their family's) ethnic or religious or sexual histories (and intricacies and challenges!). That often is the place to begin. The same holds true of community, state, and regional studies. They are natural and familiar--not to mention, easily accessible--starting points.

Yet a paradox tends to prevail: we are like fish in water. We take our environment for granted, viewing the world through it, but failing to recognize its own composition. Those on our campus who have bought into the myth that Iowa is white, homogeneous, and bland are surprised to make Cornell University historian Carol Kammen's discovery (1988) that nationalities settling in Iowa retained much ethnic coherence across the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Thus, Iowa has its Dutch communities, its Scandinavian communities; its Czech communities; its German communities; its Meskwaki Indian settlement in Central Iowa; its African-American communities and enclaves throughout the state; its new Bosnian, Vietnamese, and Hispanic settlements; its (now famous) arrival of Hassidic Jews in Postville; and its gay communities.

The same surprising experience greets those exploring "Iowa Geology" (not as flat as they had thought), "Prairie Ecology," or "Midwestern Literature" (Louise Erdrich, Ray Young Bear, Gwendolyn Brooks, Willa Cather, Saul Bellow--as well as Twain, Fitzgerald, Hemingway, and T. S. Eliot).

Natural Starting Place for Global Studies We claim, therefore, that state and regional studies can be an important complement to international studies. In truth, those striving for global awareness often seek to "ground" their understanding of *other* cultures through a strong sense of their own "place." One might argue, in fact, that a rich sense of one's own landscape and culture is necessary for proper appreciation of another. For some students and colleagues, state and regional studies can be a stepping-stone to international studies, while for others, such studies can provide a rich experience of racial, ethnic, religious, cultural, and sexual diversity *in itself*--should they be unable to pursue international studies.

State and regional studies are only one gateway to multiculturalism. However, we believe that drawing on (and even providing faculty,

instructional, and organizational support for) the diverse state and regional studies already going on (usually in isolation) on college campuses can:

- Enhance faculty development (as colleagues in diverse disciplines share their work with each other).
- Improve the curriculum (as state and regional learning experiences are linked in synergistic ways).
- Create productive new organizational structures (such as our listserv of faculty, staff, students, and community members across the state and region engaged--or just interested--in state and regional studies).
- Create unique relationships among faculty, staff members, students, and area citizens engaged in fascinating on-site work.
- Contribute to the institution's mission.
- Help our students--and ourselves--move beyond old or stereotypical images of our states, regions, and world.
- Better prepare students, faculty, and staff members to live in and contribute to the state and region.
- And, at the same time provide a first (or alternative) experience in multicultural education.

Some colleagues believe multiculturalism must be taught *directly*, that is, as multiculturalism, or else colleagues and students will miss the point. We strongly support such practice. We are not suggesting that state and regional studies replace multicultural courses and workshops but that they can serve as an important complement, even reinforcement, for multicultural initiatives. Education in diversity is an almost inescapable by-product of immersion in state and regional studies--whether one is studying the state's or region's history, geology, art, vegetation, music, economy, or religion.

We believe state and regional studies do not have to be "provincial" in the negative sense of the world. Properly pursued, state and regional studies can help colleagues and students appreciate the rich (and diverse) texture of their environment--and recognize that this is, in fact, the way of the world. As Fred S. Matter (2000) has written of the growing architectural movement called Critical Regionalism, such studies can help us address essential human longings: the yearning to reconcile the specific and the universal, tradition and

innovation, the transitory and the enduring.

Barbara Lounsberry (Ph.D., University of Iowa), is a Professor of English at the University of Northern Iowa. She was named the University's Outstanding Teacher in 1998.

References and Resources

Gibbins, R. (1982). *Regionalism, territorial politics in Canada and the United States*. Toronto: Butterworths.

Kallab, V. (Ed.) (1997). *Reflections on regionalism: Report of the Study Group on International Trade*. Washington D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

Kamen, C. (1988). *On doing local history: Reflections on what local historians do, why, and what it means*. Nashville: The American Association of State and Local History.

Matter, F. S. (2000). *Critical Regionalism from a Desert Dweller's Perspective*. <http://128.196.42.70/OALS/ALN/aln28/matter.html>

Naisbitt, John. (1994). *Global paradox: The bigger the world economy, the more powerful its smallest players*. New York: Morrow.

Essays on Teaching Excellence

Toward the Best in the Academy

Volume 13, Number 5, 2001-02

A publication of The Professional & Organizational Development Network in Higher Education (www.podnetwork.org).

Imperatives for Reforming Pedagogy and Curriculum

Hitendra Pillay & Bob Elliott,
Queensland University of Technology

The imperatives for reform in pedagogy and curriculum are grounded in our changing society. These changes imply pedagogy built around critical thinking and a curriculum that encourages individuals to position themselves in a society that must recognize both global and local imperatives.

Our changing global society is fundamentally characterized by uncertainty, flexibility, incongruities, and increased access to information. This contrasts with past ideas of certainty and information located with experts. Previously there was an expectation of "closure" in every activity, a sense of objectivity and absoluteness. For example, curriculum models posited a ten-year cycle during which everything was invariant-including the subject content. This may have been appropriate for relatively stable societies, but it is totally inappropriate for today's "run-away" world. Societies in the past had clear demarcations between political ideologies, geographical boundaries, roles of teachers and students, and subject domains. To deal with this high differentiation there was the luxury of extended debate and trialing before new policies and models were adopted.

Changing world order However, in the emerging, contingent, and dynamic world, certainty is becoming non-existent. One paradox is particularly significant: that we must be fully committed, but also be aware at the same time that we may be wrong or have to change

even before we complete a task—it's about the dialectic relationship between conviction and doubt (May, 1975).

Policies have been fundamental to providing directions and assurance for individuals. In a rapidly changing society policies are driven by the immediate and the pragmatic and often become vacuous because there is no appropriate framework for uncertainty and asynchronous demands. Because policy can no longer protect individuals against risks, there is a need for individuals to develop the capacity to think critically and construct personal meaning. The withdrawal of control and regulatory systems, through increasing economic rationalizing and market forces, requires individuals to have the capacity to discriminate, evaluate, and question assumptions behind rhetoric and promotion. Simply stated, individuals need to have the capacity to think critically. While the need for this capacity has been recognized for some time, the complexities of this capacity have been not realized and consequently there has still been too little change in our pedagogy and our curriculum.

One of the significant themes emerging from societal restructuring is the fact of contradictory, yet legitimate, roles and associated values. The search for absolute finite outcomes is no longer possible in a world of uncertainty and flexibility. This contrasts with our previous model of understanding the world. Such contrasts present us with tensions and dilemmas (Delors, 1996; Giddens, 1998) associated with a move from a single, government driven, traditional model of policy development, to new multiple pathways that emphasize individuals and their engagement with community and industry. There is a move from singular, linear, and rigid pathways to multidimensional and asynchronous patterns of operating.

Such changes require human attributes that are different from those previously considered valuable. While there has been a shift from production of the same products and services at a cheaper price to more innovative products and services (value adding), education has been driven by proclamations such as "education for all"-implying a stereotypical, top-down, and highly prescriptive education model. This is counterproductive to becoming innovative and self-sustaining. The above stereotypical approach is particularly evident in many developing countries.

Implications for pedagogy Learner-centered models have come to dominate discourse on learning to the point where they are seen as the only model of pedagogy. However, Saljo (1987, p. 106) notes "learning does not exist as general phenomenon. To learn is to act within man-made institutions and to adapt to particular definitions of learning that are valid in the educational environment in which one finds oneself. ...[Learners] define learning according to different socially and culturally established conventions with respect to what counts as learning." Despite Saljo's caution, we appear to have adopted an absolute model of learning rather than choice in pedagogical approaches. Similar unilateral and absolute positions are evidenced in the early claims of self-directed learning as the defining attribute of adult learners.

We (see Pillay & Elliott, 2001) argue for pedagogy that encourages learners to develop the capacity within themselves to deal with conflicting situations, to consider opposing ends at the same time. Drawing on the literature of "possible selves" (Cross & Markus, 1991) we are advocating a pedagogy to develop learners as multiple voiced selves. This requires individuals to defend contrasting positions of an issue at the same time and, in so doing, recognize dilemmas, to resolve those dilemmas to the best of their abilities, and to live with that resolution until further thought provides other insights. Through such pedagogy, dilemmas are not "solved" in a finite sense or in a finite time frame, but lived with. The development of such fragmented selves as learners requires a totally new approach and investment for development.

We propose that today's pedagogy should be centered on critical thinking that extends beyond a set of skills and encourages learners to evaluate assumptions, appreciate reasons underpinning actions, be aware of standards of reasoning, and recognize emotional influences on learning. We have argued elsewhere (Pillay & Elliott, 2001) for a reconceptualization of critical thinking that involves interaction of disposition, substantive knowledge, strategies and tools. While the previous focus has been on these elements as individual entities we argue for a reinvigoration of critical thinking built on the interactions among them. As noted earlier, in a deregulated world, the ultimate location of responsibility is with the individual; thus any appropriate pedagogy has to explore ways of developing knowledge, skills and

dispositions that may assist individuals to become self-responsible.

Implications for Curriculum We understand curriculum to include all structured expectations of learners and the ways in which these expectations are to be realized. In a global context where uncertainty and tensions have replaced stability and surety and where we need to address both local and global issues, there is a temptation to conceive curriculum in terms of fixed knowledge and skills. However, such a direction is unproductive and counter to the very issues we face.

Curriculum needs to be considered not just in terms of subject requirements but also in terms of generic attributes that have to be developed in each citizen if the society is to survive mounting pressures to deal with these tensions. For example, our changing world is associated with a new form of individualism that is linked to issues such as global mobility, generic skill development, equity, powers of discrimination, and human rights. Each such imperative needs to be developed in learners, as they understand domain specific knowledge. This is particularly important as we move towards an information age in which market regulates quality and citizens need to discriminate between advocacy-based and research-based information.

In many societies, social changes have given rise to sophisticated systems of welfare to accommodate those who find living with contemporary dilemmas difficult or impossible. While curriculum should encourage individuals to take responsibility for the consequences of what they do and the lifestyle they pursue, support will probably be necessary for those unable to accept such responsibility. Generally, there will always be the need to develop attributes that address collective concerns in the community and to promote social values such as tolerance and equity. Despite recognizing these emerging issues, curriculum planners are confronted with the difficulties of how to promote such values in the face of time constraints and rigid curriculum frameworks.

There is a need to develop curricula that have the capacity to grow and quickly adapt to changes, and herein lies the challenge of dealing with change within set structures. Curriculum can no longer be developed on the basis of current relevance or past patterns. While

it needs to be able to project into the future, very little of this is known. Consequently, there is a need for a pedagogy through which citizens are encouraged to engage in a critical way to adopt a "multi-voice" orientation to learning and a curriculum which enables individuals to think critically about these voices. Again, the central tenant of our argument is the need for individuals to develop attributes that enable them to become critical discriminators in an ever-changing, complex world.

Conclusion We hope this essay stimulates thinking on what education means in today's world. We also hope that faculty members, researchers, planners, and policy makers are able to adopt a critical approach when reviewing various aspects of the education sector in order to better understand these practices and beliefs.

Hitendra Pillay (Ph.D., University of New South Wales) is the Director of the Centre for Cognitive Process in Learning, and Bob Elliott (Ph.D., University of Queensland) is Head of School of Professional Studies at The Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, Australia.

References Cross, S., & Markus, H. (1991). Possible selves across the life span. *Human Development*, 34, 230-255.

Delors, J. (1996). *Learning: The treasure within*. Paris: UNESCO.

Giddens, A. (1998). *The third way*. Cambridge, England: Polity Press.

May, R. (1975). *The courage to create*. New York: Norton.

Saljo, R. (1987). The educational construction of learning. In J. T. E. Richardson, M. W. Eysenk, & D. W. Piper (Eds.), *Student learning* (pp. 101-108). Milton Keynes: Open University Press.

Pillay, H., & Elliott, B. (2001). Emerging attributes of pedagogy and curriculum for the "new world order". *Innovative Higher Education Journal*, 26(1), 7-22.

Essays on Teaching Excellence

Toward the Best in the Academy

Volume 13, Number 6, 2001-02

A publication of The Professional & Organizational Development Network in Higher Education (www.podnetwork.org).

College Teaching as an Educational Relationship

Douglas Reimondo Robertson, *Eastern Kentucky University*

Most of us enter college teaching with no formal conceptualization of what we are trying to do. In this essay I provide a conceptualization of learner-centered college teaching that I believe enables us to understand it and do it better.

The Educational Helping Relationship We start as teachers by being preoccupied by our own concerns (teacher-centeredness, or Egocentrism; Robertson, 1999b). We begin in Egocentrism because generally we do not know what we are doing as teachers, we have little or no experience, we have done little or no formal study of teaching and learning, we are teaching new courses, we receive little or no meaningful support in our teaching infancy, and the stakes are high. Our promotion and tenure is on the line. This set of circumstances would make anyone defensive and egocentric.

However, as our careers progress and we acquire reasons for comfort (e.g., experience and tenure), we may discover the opportunity to integrate into our Egocentrism a meaningful exploration of students' experiences in trying to learn our topics (learner-centeredness, or Aliocentrism; Robertson, 1999b). As we come to see teaching as facilitating learning (helping students to construct their personal knowledge), it becomes a helping profession. It is now akin to, but different from, other helping professions such as counseling, psychotherapy, ministry, or social work.

Images that influence the literatures arising from the learner-centered teaching perspective such as Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule's midwife, Brookfield's skillful teacher, Daloz's mentor, Freire's partner, Knowles' andragogue, and Mezirow's emancipatory educator often encourage us to develop a relationship with learners that is based on trust and care and dedicated to nurturing learning and development in each individual (Robertson, 1996). In other words, the images encourage a helping relationship (Brammer, 1996) which is educational. It is oriented toward learning rather than problem solving as is the case for counseling or psychological healing (Robertson, 2000).

Benefits of This Understanding Understanding teaching as an educational helping relationship has three specific benefits (Robertson, 1996, 2000). First, doing so encourages us to explore the pertinent theory and research of the related helping professions so that we do not have to reinvent the wheel (Robertson, 1996, 1997, 1999a, 1999b, 2000). Second, perceiving teaching as, potentially, a highly charged helping relationship helps us focus on the need to learn more about constructively managing the boundaries in teacher/student relationships in order to make them nurturing yet professional, caring yet appropriate (Robertson 1993, 1996, 1997, 1999a, 1999b, 2000). Third, this understanding helps us move toward normalizing the critical professional supports already required or expected as exemplary practice in other helping professions for example, professional or peer consultation that offers confidential settings in which to discuss specific problems and cases related to teachers' work as facilitators of learning (1996).

Conflict and Paradox With this understanding, we need to realize that college or university teaching is a fundamentally conflicted educational helping relationship. That is, the role of teacher as learning facilitator has within it inherent, antithetical demands: for example, development vs. evaluation, to develop students but still judge their progress; teacher learning vs. student learning, to maintain and increase teachers' content expertise but still devote time to promoting students' mastery; teachers' inner experience vs. students' inner experience, to attend to both the student's and the teacher's subjective reality; and individuals vs. systems, to focus on both individual experiences and needs and the needs of the entire

teaching and learning system of the class (Robertson, 1999b, 2001, in press).

In Latin conflict means to strike together; and it typically denotes contention, antagonism, incompatibility, or contradiction. Paradox derives from Greek and means beyond thought. The word usually refers to something that seems contradictory but is nonetheless true. When we come to see college teaching as an educational helping relationship, we face conflicting demands. Our challenge is to integrate them. We are called to make paradox out of conflict—a single complex truth out of two seemingly opposing truths.

Achieving Paradox To illustrate this integration, let us consider the fundamental conflict that an educational helper faces in a graded course at an accredited institution: development vs. evaluation. The learner-centered college teacher focuses on the learners' frames of reference and helping them construct their personal knowledge of the content, either by integrating new personal knowledge into their existing frame of reference or by transforming the frame of reference itself (i.e., facilitating either simple or transformative learning; Robertson, 1988, 1997). Thus the focus is on trying to help students learn or develop within the only world they can experience: their own reality.

However, college teachers have other constituents besides the students. If they teach graded (including pass/no pass) courses at an accredited institution, then they must be responsible to external standards which may be drastically different from students' standards. College teachers in this case serve as evaluators representing their discipline, their institution, and society as a whole as expressed by regional accreditation associations. So the learner-centered teacher must somehow convince students to enter into a trusting, caring relationship with someone who is devoted to their individual learning and development but who will eventually judge them on behalf of authorities whom the students know are in the room but cannot see. "Tell me what YOU think (forget that I'm grading you)," teachers encourage students. Hearing only, "I am grading you," students play it safe and clam up.

Hence, we must devise ways to integrate these two roles “helper and

judge” in order to function effectively in the conflicted educational helping relationship that is college teaching. Facing role conflict, we have at least three choices.

First, we can negotiate with the self. For example, we can lower our standards of acceptable performance in one or both of the conflicting role domains. I can throw in the towel with regard to being a facilitator and retreat to teacher-centeredness; I can abdicate my responsibilities as an evaluator and give everybody "A's"; or I can hold myself accountable in both domains but decide to define as acceptable a much lower quality of performance in each.

Second, we can negotiate with others. We can discuss openly with others involved with our role conflict and agree upon acceptable ways of handling it. For example, we can discuss with the class the inherent conflict in our work as teachers and ask their help in creating effective ways to manage it, one of which is to encourage students to be aware of our conflicting roles and to be aware when each role comes to the fore and when it fades into the background.

Third, we can negotiate with neither the self nor others and just try harder. For example, when we have just given a student who was expecting a higher mark a "C" on a midterm, we can ignore the conflict and just work all the harder to regain the trust needed in order to function effectively as a facilitator of learning.

My own humble attempts to integrate these conflicting role demands have focused on the second alternative above: enlisting the help of others involved, specifically students. At some point during the first class, I routinely explain my teaching philosophy, acknowledging explicitly the conflict between being a facilitator and an evaluator. Normally, I sense an almost tangible sense of relief, appreciation, and bonding from students as we witness together the elephant in our parlor and talk about it openly. I explain that these apparently conflicting demands can co-exist in relative harmony (my understanding of paradox) and that the first step toward achieving harmonious integration is admitting that conflicting role demands are present. Then I try to be as precise and frank as I can about my evaluation system: where I act as an evaluator and where I do not, specifying my evaluative frame of reference as clearly as I can where

I do act as a judge. In my experience this approach works, and I recommend it for addressing other conflicts inherent in the educational helping relationship.

Conclusion F. Scott Fitzgerald once observed, "The test of a first-rate intelligence is the ability to hold two opposed ideas in the mind at the same time, and still retain the ability to function." Serving as a learner-centered college teacher challenges us to pass this test. The extent to which we struggle in this conflicted educational helping relationship called college teaching, is traceable, I believe, at least partly to the degree to which we have succeeded with integrating the relationship's inherently conflicting demands, i.e., made paradox out of conflict.

Douglas Reimondo Robertson (Ph.D., Syracuse University) is Professor and Director of the Teaching and Learning Center at Eastern Kentucky University.

References Brammer, L. M. (1996). *The helping relationship: Process and skills* (6th ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Robertson, D. L. (1988). *Self-directed growth*. Muncie, IN: Accelerated Development.

Robertson, D. L. (1993). Bringing reentry home: The phenomenology of a woman's return to college. *Research Fellows' Symposium, Project for the Study of Adult Learning* (pp. 68-77). Normal, IL: Illinois State University.

Robertson, D. L. (1996) Facilitating learning and transition theory: Toward developing the ability to facilitate insight. *Journal on Excellence in College Teaching*, 8, 105-125.

Robertson, D. L. (1999a). Unconscious displacements in college teacher and student relationships: Conceptualizing, identifying, and managing transference. *Innovative Higher Education*, 23, 151-169.

Robertson, D. L. (1999b). Professors' perspectives on their teaching: A new construct and developmental model. *Innovative Higher Education*, 23, 271-294.

Robertson, D. L. (2000). Enriching the scholarship of teaching: Determining appropriate cross-professional applications among teaching, counseling, and psychotherapy. *Innovative Higher Education*, 25, 111-125.

Robertson, D. R. (2001). *Beyond learner-centeredness: Close encounters of the systemocentric kind*. Manuscript submitted for publication.

Robertson, D. R. (in press). Professors in space and time: Four utilities of a new metaphor and developmental model for professors-as-teachers. *Journal on Excellence in College Teaching*, 11 (1).

Essays on Teaching Excellence

Toward the Best in the Academy

Volume 13, Number 7, 2001-02

A publication of The Professional & Organizational Development Network in Higher Education (www.podnetwork.org).

Teachers and Scholars as Designers: The Art and Practice of Instructional Design

Charles M. Spuches, *SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry*

Helping people learn is central to our faculty work. Instructional design theory and practice can help us create optimal learning environments. Perhaps no other area of our faculty work, however, is at once so inextricably linked to what we are all about as educators and so confused as instructional design (ID). Too often ID is misunderstood and mischaracterized.

Based upon sound cognitive research, instructional design is a purposeful process that helps us focus on learners, learning, and human development. It is worth another look and a more current understanding.

Most of us have not had experience and training in the purposeful design of instruction, but ID benefits us by helping us ask important questions. ID helps to address issues such as our operating assumptions; decisions about our students and our subject; learning results; and the organization, structure, strategies, management, and evaluation of our courses and curricula.

ID becomes a necessity when we embrace current and emerging learning technologies or form collaborative design and development teams. The associated costs, time, and complexity make a systematic and systemic approach imperative.

What is instructional design? Learning is a natural process that involves analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating information and building skills and knowledge. Fundamentally, ID is a set of systematic perspectives and procedures for creating optimal learning environments. With it we can systematically apply what we know about the learning process to the process of developing human potential. It is an "iterative process of analysis and design whereby the appropriate content is selected and sequenced, appropriate instructional strategies are selected and sequenced, and appropriate media are selected and utilized" (Leshin, Pollock, & Reigeluth, 1992 p 8).

We can compare instructional design to other professional and design fields such as architecture. In planning a building the architect considers the conditions under which the building will function and methods to optimize its use. Similarly, faculty and others who design instructional materials and programs consider the instructional conditions and select methods to best support the intended learning outcomes.

ID helps us to make explicit what may otherwise be implicit. By so doing, we increase the potential that our decisions will be informed by research and best practice, that expectations will be focused and efforts can be measured against these expectations, and that efforts to improve will follow.

How can instructional design help us? The new view of instructional design focuses on needs assessment, outcomes, learner control, and experiential learning (Rossett and Barnett, p. 36, 1996).

Needs assessment. An underlying tenet of ID is a commitment to determining learners' current and desired knowledge, ability, and motivations. This includes the ability to learn independently, the use of technology to support learning, and the level of intrapersonal and interpersonal skills. This information then serves to meet learner needs and avoid overloading our courses and our students. It also helps us decide what to include in our courses and curricula. Emerging technology-based approaches such as CD ROM and Web-based courses, however, require far greater "front end" analysis and planning.

Outcomes. Another principle tenet is the simple question “why”. ID processes encourage us to articulate and communicate intended behavioral, cognitive, affective, and interpersonal outcomes. Thus it relates well to our current focus on assessment. Knowing and seeing what graduates can do that they could not previously do serves accountability, focuses faculty and student attention, informs instructional planning and strategy selection, and facilitates evaluation. ID is simply part and parcel of sound educational practice.

Learner control. By and large we still assume that we have control over our courses and curricula. However, new approaches combined with new technologies allow students to have far greater control over and responsibility for their learning experiences. It is not essential for us as faculty (or the instructional system) to entirely pre-prescribe learning outcomes or means and methods. Learner centered and controlled outcomes and methods are not only desirable in many situations but necessary and highly appropriate. Learner control can extend from the intended outcomes (results) to the approaches used to achieve them (means). This can include, for example, student choices about learning goals, the kind and amount of examples and practice, pace, sequence, length of time on task, and assessment. Purposeful instructional design helps faculty to rationally identify and select, consistent with research, from a burgeoning repertoire of traditional and technology-enhanced strategies and approaches. In addition, web-based course management systems allow us to track, monitor, and support learner progress.

Experiential Learning. Simulated environments provide immersion in realistic learning experiences, and they should be at the core of our instructional design tool box. They provide a bridge between theory, practice, and application that entails the perception of and response to often subtle relationships and consequences. The key is to help students bring together their individual skills and understand how all elements of the task fit together.

Instructional Design and Technology? The potential of today’s instructional technologies is a compelling reason to embrace a more formal approach to instructional design. The possibility of transforming our teaching has never been greater, and potential

results include an unprecedented emphasis on planning and facilitating learning rather than merely presenting information (Gillespie, pp. 39-40, 1998).

Harnessing this potential, however, requires significant time and energy. Moreover, our efforts should no longer focus on the "transfer, acquisition, and retention of knowledge." Rather, to be most effective, "the focus in using the new technologies should instead be on helping learners become skilled at finding and accessing appropriate information, evaluating it critically, using it to solve problems, and presenting the result of the learning experience" (Gillespie, p. 47, 1998).

Start Where You Are! Assuming that our common goal is to design the best learning environments possible, where do we go from here?

- First, consider the value of instruction that enables learners to build meaning for themselves as compared to instruction in which knowledge and skills are allegedly transferred from one person to another like packages being delivered. This change in approach can help us to transform a system that places high value on memorization and information consumption to one that puts these abilities in their appropriate place and emphasizes higher-order cognition and creative problem solving skills.
- Embrace your multiple roles. We often become faculty because of our passion about our disciplines, and teaching may be a secondary consideration. Nevertheless, we have multiple responsibilities for our scholarship, our service, and our teaching. Embracing these roles encourages the equal attainment of perspective and expertise equal for all areas of professional practice and inquiry.
- Use the instructional design process as a basis for dialogue to elevate the quality of your expertise and practice. Working individually and together, we can improve the teaching and learning environments.
- Identify a unit or part of a course and begin. Conduct an assessment based on your instructional goals, student performance and satisfaction with their learning. Compare this

information with your intended outcomes. Decide whether or not to rebuild, but don't try to redo everything at once.

Renovate your course, curriculum, or program one room at a time.

- Engage the teaching support center on your campus. Attend functions that will allow you to interact with other faculty members and with instructional consultants.
- Enlist the help and support of one or more colleagues and engage in collaborative peer review of course materials, instructional design, and implementation. Include student assessments and surveys.
- Seek and develop a teaching mentor, someone secure in their own career and motivated enough to put their personal agendas and opinions aside so that they may focus on developing your strengths and interests as a teacher and designer.
- Read, reflect on, and discuss with colleagues professional publications Use search engines to seek out organizations and publications on, for example, engineering education, economic education, and assessment in higher education.
- Become familiar with instructional design models. A good model serves as a guidance system and facilitates a collaborative, learner-focused approach. ID invites you to challenge assumptions, brainstorm alternatives, and generate a rich mix of ideas before selecting an appropriate starting place. Other considerations as you select and adapt an instructional design model include flexibility and continuous improvement. Think of your course as a work in progress rather than a completed product.
- Remember that ID, at its best, is a collaborative process. Seek out and consider the perspective of students (past, present, and future), faculty colleagues, instructional consultants, multimedia development experts, and relevant literature.

ID offers a way of coping with the tremendously increased demands on faculty. We are experiencing increasing sophistication and diversity in our students, heightened expectations to demonstrate outcomes, advances in knowledge about learning; and we have available to us new and emerging learning technologies. Whether we take an artistic-intuitive or more formal/explicit approach, our assumptions, values, and approach to design are readily apparent in

the way our courses and related learning experiences are planned, conducted, and managed. It will help to consider instructional design as a subset not only of teaching, but of the practice of design itself; to examine our assumptions and the meaning we assign to instruction; and to consider our roles not only as teachers and scholars, but as instructional designers.

Charles M. Spuches (Ed.D., Syracuse University) is Associate Dean for Educational Outreach, Instructional Quality Improvement and Instructional Technology at the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry and adjunct associate professor in the Syracuse University graduate program in Instructional Design, Development, and Evaluation.

References

Gillespie, F. (1998). Instructional Design for the New Technologies. In Gillespie, K.H. (Ed.). *The impact of technology on faculty development, life, and work. New Directions for Teaching and Learning*, no. 76. San Francisco: Jossey-bass.

Leshin, Pollock, & Reigeluth (1992). *Instructional design strategies and tactics*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Educational Technology Publications.

Rossett, A., & J. Barnett (1996). Designing under the influence. *Training*. December, 35-42.

Essays on Teaching Excellence

Toward the Best in the Academy

Volume 13, Number 8, 2001-02

A publication of The Professional & Organizational Development Network in Higher Education (www.podnetwork.org).

Teachers are Diverse, Too -- Respecting Each Other's Beliefs

Richard G. Tiberius, *University of Toronto*

The title of Charles Dickens' book *Hard times for these times* captured the cruel imbalance between England's huge industrial wealth and the sad condition of her poor. Dickens' words came to mind when I thought about the imbalance between these enlightened educational times in which we celebrate student diversity and our often-inflexible attitude toward teachers.

Teacher diversity deserves to be respected both on humane grounds and for the sake of effective teaching. The diversity that is the concern of this essay is not that of ethnicity, gender, or age. It is the diversity of teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning, beliefs that guide the way we think about our teaching and the way we teach.

Our Belief Systems What are these beliefs? I have identified four belief systems (See the list below) about teaching roles, responsibilities, and relationships, each of which has long historical roots (Pratt, 1998; Tiberius, 2001). Teachers who assume the *Content Expert Role* serve as resources to their learners, as might a book or illustration. They see themselves as responsible for maintaining subject matter expertise rather than for skillful teaching, and the relationship with students is characterized by "division of labor". The teacher's job is to maintain expertise in the field while the students' job is learning.

Teachers who assume the *Skilled Performer Role* deliver information to mold their students. Their primary responsibility is using skilled

performances to make learning happen. Indeed, they often view themselves as the sole agents of learning and students as the "products" of their teaching.

Teachers who assume the *Interactive Role* interact with students for the purpose of facilitating learning. They believe that the skills of listening, understanding the student, and receiving feedback are just as important as are the skills of lecturing, explaining, and giving feedback. Finding out about the learner enables them to target interventions to students' specific learning needs.

Finally, teachers who assume the *Relational Role* help students by engaging them personally and using the relationship as a vehicle for learning.

Beliefs about Teacher Roles, from 1945 to 2000

- *The Content Expert Role*: experts who serve as a resource, like a book or a picture, by maintaining expertise in the subject matter.
- *The Skilled Performance Role*: teachers who make learning happen by transmitting information or shaping students.
- *The Interactive Role*: teachers who facilitate learning by interacting with the learner.
- *The Relational Role*: teachers who use the relationship and personal engagement for the purpose of helping the learner.

Respecting Beliefs

I will illustrate my argument about respecting teachers' beliefs using the role of *Skilled Performer*, the most commonly held role in higher education today. This role is epitomized by a successful lecturer whom I shall call Dr. Stage. Students raved about his excellent organization, clear communication, humor, and anecdotes. However, his success depended as much on the context in which he lectured as it did on his performance. His lectures were valuable not only because they supplied information, one of the essential ingredients of student learning, but also because that information was not supplied by another component of the teaching system. Moreover, other essential ingredients for learning—such as motivation and feedback—which were not supplied by Dr. Stage, were supplied by other aspects of the system. The exams were based on his lectures,

not on the textbook material; and a tutorial system provided corrective feedback.

After a decade of successful teaching Dr. Stage's course became a casualty of curriculum reform. He was offered a teaching assignment as facilitator of a small group session. He endured the training sessions and tried in vain to become a small group discussion leader. Students were highly critical of him on their written evaluations. His contribution was not valued in the tutorial situation because the arrangement did not require either his lecturing skills or his information. In fact it strictly forbade it. Students were supposed to look up the information themselves. The curriculum reformers and administrators interpreted the problem as teacher inflexibility. He was a dinosaur. Years ago we made the same interpretations of students who either fit into the system or had no business being here. Today student "inflexibilities" are called learning styles, and we spend a great deal of energy accommodating them.

Those who consigned Dr. Stage to the dustbin failed to appreciate that beliefs about teaching are often part of an enduring and profound perspective. Changing such perspectives requires a transformation of the very framework that organizes the teacher's understanding, a change that is difficult, emotionally draining, and therefore one that requires a great deal of support (Mezirow, 1991; Pratt, 1998; Robertson 1996, 1999). In the long run a perspective transformation would provide Dr. Stage with a broader repertoire of teaching roles and thus more flexibility to teach under various conditions, but in the short run we should respect Dr. Stage's beliefs and limitations just as we respect diversity in our students.

We could do this by arranging the teaching-learning system to complement Stage's contribution, not necessarily by reinstating his previous lecture course, which was discontinued because it fostered passive learning, but by designing a new arrangement under which Dr. Stage could maintain his role of information transmitter within an active learning curriculum. For example, as a member of a panel discussion he could function as a resource, answering questions and debating with other specialists. The coordinator of the panel discussion could provide all of the teacher functions that require interaction, leaving Dr. Stage to fill in the missing pieces supplying

expert information. The coordinator could interact with the students to create a motivating climate, for example by discussing with students the importance of the material to them, the qualifications of the panel discussants, and mentioning the fact that the exam will contain questions about the panel discussion. The coordinator could also encourage an appropriate relationship between the students and the panel discussants by the appropriate introductions.

Another format that might allow Dr. Stage to deliver information is a brief lecture followed by a break and then a Q & A session. At the break students could write questions on cards and hand them in. After the break, or at the next session, Dr. Stage could answer them, again in his enthusiastic lecturing style. Still another format that would complement Dr. Stage's beliefs about teaching and his talent might be an "information" tutorial in which he answers questions in his specialty, questions that were developed previously by leaderless student "study groups." In all of these suggestions the intention is to arrange the elements of the teaching-learning system so that Dr. Stage's contribution is a necessary ingredient to learning. (For a discussion about matching teacher competencies with teaching tasks see Bess, 2000.)

When education was teacher-centered, teachers just lectured and learners were left to arrange for the rest of their learning needs. By shifting focus to the learner we discovered individual differences, identified the specific needs of the learner, and developed systems exquisitely sensitive to learners. However, the systems we developed often forced teachers to become educational gumball machines who were expected to deliver whatever the system required. We can do better. Heavily influenced by constructivism, and by recent research on the social and emotional components of learning (Love & Love, 1995), modern educators tend to view learning as a process of enculturation into a community of practice by means of social interaction among learners and between learners and teachers.

Conclusion We are now in a position to design systems that are centered on the relationship between teachers and students, on teaching and learning as a social system. To do this we must begin to respect the diversity of teachers who are legitimate members of the system "their beliefs, competencies and limitations" just as we have

learned to respect student diversity.

Richard G. Tiberius (Ph.D., University of Toronto) is Professor, Center for Research in Education and Department of Psychiatry at the University of Toronto.

References Bess, J., & Assoc. (2000). *Teaching alone, teaching together: Transforming the structure of teams for teaching*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Love, P.G., & Love, A.G. (1995). *Enhancing student learning: Intellectual, social, and emotional integration*. ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report, no. 4. Washington, DC: The George Washington University.

Mezirow, J. (1998). *Transformative dimensions of adult learning*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Pratt, D. D., & Assoc. (1998). *Five perspectives on teaching in adult and higher education*. Malabar, FL: Krieger.

Robertson, D. L. (1996). Facilitating transformative learning: Attending to the dynamics of the educational helping relationship. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 47 (1), 43-53.

Tiberius, R. G. (2001, in press) A brief history of educational development: Implications for teachers and developers. In D. Liebermann (Ed.), *To Improve the Academy*. Stillwater, OK: New Forums Press.

Tiberius, R. G., Sinai, J., & Flak, E. (2001, in press). The role of the teacher-learner relationships in medical education. In G. Norman and C. van der Vleuten (Eds.) *The International Handbook of Research in Medical Education*. Maastricht, The Netherlands: Kluwer.