When Motivating Generation Y in the Classroom

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I have noticed a frequent lament among my university professor colleagues that the quality of students is dropping rapidly. This newest generation of students has been described as impatient, incurious, unmotivated, and in possession of a belief that they are entitled to large rewards for small amounts of effort. Many faculty seem to believe that students increasingly view the classroom as an assembly-line. To better understand our students' changing values, attitudes, and beliefs, we need to understand their upbringing and environment. This essay examines how our students may be changing, and provides suggestions for how faculty can adapt to be successful in this new educational environment

Who is Generation Y? Some Demographics
Born between 1980 and 1992, Generation Y is three times the size of Generation X in number, and is approximately the same size as the Baby Boomer Generation numbering approximately 65 million. Aliases of Generation Y include Gen Why, Gen NeXt, NeXters, Echo-boomers, and the Net Generation. They are currently 14 – 26 years of age, one in three is not Caucasian, and they will comprise approximately 45% of the full-time labor force by the year 2010 (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2004).

Students are Products of Their Environment
Our Generation Y students have grown up in an environment that is significantly different from what prior generations have experienced, and as a result, their view of the world is fundamentally different from

the faculty perspective. These students have developed in an environment that possesses unprecedented levels of media saturation and technology. Two-thirds of Gen Y students used computers by the age of 5, and they are exposed to an average of 8 hours of media every day (in contrast to spending 2 hours with parents and 50 minutes doing homework). In their television worlds, they have adapted to an environment of quick-cut stimuli from being bombarded by commercials tailored to short attention-spans. The advertising that is pervasive throughout their environment is tailored to providing them messages that they want to hear, and are usually geared towards getting Gen Y to define themselves and establish their individual identity through some form of product consumption. They have never known a world without a television remote control, cell phones, an ATM, or the internet. Generation Y has developed expectations for instant gratification - the internet for information and entertainment, cell phones and instant messaging for communication, and websites such as facebook.com for dating. They have been described as the "Nintendo Generation", whereby reinforcement is received at rates 50-100 times what faculty are used to delivering.

The Challenges
As a result of their development within this environment, Gen Y has arguably developed a number of distinctive traits. The overwhelming amount of media messages that they have received in their lifetimes has led to them to develop a significant level of skepticism towards any information that they receive. They have well-honed "BS" detectors, and, increasingly, they question the validity of the messages received from faculty. The media-generated messages catering to adolescent desires for individualism and self-expression manifest themselves in students' preference for self-expression over self-control, and in what I have heard faculty refer to as an "arrogant, brazen, entitled attitude" amongst students of this generation. Their media heroes are a reflection of this attitude, represented by Eminem, Allen Iverson, Mike Vick, to "extreme" sports and snowboarders/skateboarders. They consider themselves to be free-wheeling individualists, with a disdain for authority and convention—more so than previous generations. A 2007 study by UCLA found a 30% increase in narcissism among university students in 2006 as compared to university students in 1982 (Twenge, Konrath, Forster, Campbell, & Bushman, 2007).

Their media-saturated environment has also led to an increased student expectation for instant and positive results for any efforts that they undertake. They spend ½ as much time on homework as do students in France, Italy, Russia, and South America, and they spend ½ as much time as did prior generations in the U.S. Self-reported cheating behavior is also at an all-time high. Many faculty have witnessed a "gold star" mentality amongst Gen Y students, whereby rewards are available to all, if only loosely linked to effort or accomplishment. Rather than expecting to adapt to their work and academic environments, they seem to expect their environments to adapt to them. Some evidence of this effect is that Gen Y has thus far achieved the highest workplace turnover rate of any generation in U.S. history (for 20-24 year olds the annual turnover rate was 54%, for 16-19 it was 78%) (SHRM, 2004). If they become dissatisfied with the involvement and/or rewards of a particular experience, they are likely to quit.

The Benefits
Although this seems to present a depressing educational environment for faculty, in my experience, there is some good news. As a result of the overwhelming amount of positive feedback that they have received in their lives, in my opinion, these students are bursting with self-esteem and optimism. They want to "believe" in order to commit their efforts, but if not "sold", they respond with indifference. They are goal and achievement-oriented, energized by ideas, entrepreneurial-minded and willing to take risks. The stimulus-oriented artificial environments in which they were raised have made Gen Y adept at multi-tasking, fast thinking, and creativity. They have also become techno-savvy, and are very communicative. Although highly independent, I have noticed in my classroom that this generation possesses an intense desire to connect with other people, and collaborate (they have one of the highest rates of volunteerism among the generations).

How to Teach to Gen Y
What is needed is a model to help faculty understand how to best meet the needs of our techno-savvy Gen Y student workers. I use the term worker, as I believe that they increasingly view their experience in a classroom in a way which is similar to having a "job", or a

specific duty, role, or function that they are expected to accomplish. In the organizational psychology literature, Hackman and Oldham (1980) created a model oriented towards creating more engaging jobs, with the outcomes including increased motivation, satisfaction, and performance of employees. A large body of research has developed in support of their model, and its particular strength is that it examines the core features of work as seen from the perspective of the worker (or student) (Piccolo & Colquitt, 2006). Thus, it provides a theoretical framework to analyze how to improve student outcomes from their perspective, and the students are (arguably) most attuned to what motivates them to perform. The core job characteristics model asserts five independent constructs important to one's work satisfaction, motivation, and performance: skill variety, task identity, significance, autonomy, and feedback. If we apply this model to our Gen Y students, I believe we see the following suggestions for faculty:

> Skill Variety – GenY likes to multitask. They see themselves as "internal customers" and they need engagement and involvement (if not entertainment). They are active-experimentation oriented, they want to experience more than passively observe. I suggest using Socratic method and case studies when possible, building teams, holding debates, building active-engagement websites, and challenging them to use their technological skills to solve problems.

> Task Identity and Significance – Gen Y desperately wants to feel that what they are doing is meaningful and important. Provide connections with the world that they are living in as frequently as possible to maximize the salience of your subject. Serve as a role model, and emphasize the functional benefits of learning the material every day. Explain the "why" of what you're asking them to do, and explain what's in it for them. Try to back up what you say with real-world verifiable proof. Many of them are searching for identity, and faculty could view this as an opportunity to help them to affiliate/find meaning in your classroom and subject.

> Autonomy - Within limits, let them express individuality in their work. Be wary of one-size-fits-all teaching approaches. They

often refuse to blindly conform to traditional standards and time-honored institutions. Try to provide a flexible, fun classroom, and don't be too rigid. They chafe at many stepped processes and bureaucracy, and they are not so comfortable with rigid routines. Reconsider squishing them into pre-existing classroom molds, they don't want to feel like they are a cog in a boilerplate classroom. Interact with them, update your class, and customize where possible. Try to enable self-expression and autonomy in the classroom.

Feedback - Get them involved quickly - they want to get up to speed fast and contribute. Think of the Nintendo game: expectations are clear, behavior is continually measured and feedback is consistently provided on performance, and they receive high rates of reinforcement to motivate them to keep playing. Provide frequent performance feedback (like weekly quizzes, activities and presentations in the classroom, and other high-involvement activities).

Final Thoughts

Each generation faces its own set of expectations and challenges, and higher education has adapted to provide the necessary skills. As faculty, we should try to see the world through the eyes of Generation Y, and be willing to learn from our students. They are growing up in a fast-paced, technological, outcome-oriented environment, and they expect their higher education experience to provide them with the skills that they need to prosper in such an environment. Consider this generation an opportunity to question and enhance your approach to teaching, and reduce the bureaucracy of your classroom. Let's turn to our students and ask for involvement to provide creative, hands-on solutions to problems. We should strive to cultivate their positive attitude, willingness to work, and challenge them to solve the unanswered problems in our disciplines.

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Student Plagiarism: How to Maintain Academic Integrity

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Detection or Deterrence?

Plagiarism cases can be hard to judge; teachers' decisions may not receive institutional support, and detected instances of cheating may turn out to be the result of the misuse or inherent limitations of plagiarism-detecting software. In spite of these difficulties, the race for detection has gone into high gear. This year witnessed the 2nd International Plagiarism Conference on managing institutional policies. We have also seen abundant proliferation of publications and web sites with anti-plagiarism tips as well as the growing use of Plagiarism Detection Technology (PDT) in thousands of institutions.

Nevertheless, many institutions are questioning the use of PDTs. The University of California at Berkeley refused to use a PDT because of concerns about student privacy and violation of copyright; Mount Saint Vincent University in Canada turned off Turnitin.com (a popular PDT) because of similar concerns; and a student at McGill University refused to submit his paper to Turnitin.com and won his case.

Whatever the institutional policy, teachers need to be prepared to make critical choices: whether to use PDT or not, which one to use, how to use it, whether to report plagiarism, how to report it, and

whether to recommend or pursue disciplinary action. Most importantly, teachers need to decide whether to give a higher priority to catching cheaters or to deterring cheating by educating students about proper citation and research methodology. We cannot reach high standards of academic integrity without guiding students in their pursuit to distinguish their own ideas and words from those of others.

Reappraising Choices

Making informed choices depends on knowing how a PDT works and the logical consequences of its use. Relegating this workload to technology may end up colliding with our academic goals.

Text-matching procedures are invalid ways to measure plagiarism. A PDT service may offer plagiarism detection when its operations really provide only text matching. Text matching only detects sentences or phrases in a student's work that appear verbatim in other works archived in a digital database. As a result, text matching tools flag properly cited text as readily as uncited text. Yet the technology cannot check the validity and relevance of citations, data, or content. Furthermore, these tools fail to detect well-paraphrased theft of another's ideas (Barrett & Malcolm, 2006; Braumoeller & Gaines, 2001; Crisp, 2004).

If catching illegally copied digital text matters, then the database content against which a PDT compares content, also matters. Databases vary and PDTs are entirely dependent upon them. For example, Turnitin does not check databases other than those owned by ProQuest. Students who use any source not included in a particular PDT's database to find articles and papers can easily plagiarize without detection. In addition, if catching plagiarism is important, then non-digital content matters, too. Yet no digital text checker covers non-digital sources such as individuals who write papers for a fee, friends or peers who help, old books, deep files in a

sorority or fraternity, or encyclopedias. Incorrigible plagiarists can find a way to succeed.

PDT systems have limited teaching capacity. Some instructors allow stu-dents to submit a paper and review each subsequent text-matching report before formally submitting it to the teacher. This allows students to learn how to plagiarize without being caught. It works like this. Students see that quoted material triggers bad reports. Students also see those sections that the PDT failed to flag, such as paraphrased, uncited text. They learn that rewording text and dropping quotations generates better originality reports. To some students, this is old news. They learn how PDT's work and figure out how to make minor adjustments in plagiarized text in order to foil detection. A teacher can guide students in identifying a source by walking them carefully through the process of integrating outside sources into "original" research. Without this context, technology may lead both students and learning objectives astray.

Ethical and legal problems may arise with the content of a PDT database. Turnitin has never hidden the practice of using student papers to build its database—with or without student consent—and then using the database containing these student papers for its own commercial gain. Students get no returns from this business. Teachers may feel more secure if all previous student papers are submitted to the database, even without student consent, so that another student's paper is less likely to be plagiarized. However, the teacher is then allowing a student's intellectual property to be used for someone else's profit. How can students place a high value on academic integrity when teachers and institutions make this kind of choice? Although the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) requires students' written consent for submitting their papers, is this true consent when faculty require such submissions in their course?

Defining Plagiarism

Pinpointing ethical, professional, and legal dilemmas has scant meaning in the absence of a common understanding about what constitutes plagiarism. Does the presence of one uncited section on one page of a ten page manuscript demonstrate plagiarism? How do students know where teachers draw the line? Statistics on cheating add to the fog because questions on surveys about cheating ask about anything from accidental omissions of citations to copying of papers; few students admit to major infractions. We do not know the true percentage of students who cheat. By some reports it could be as low as 5 or 10 per cent, significantly less than the higher percentages often cited. How one defines plagiarism determines the percentage of those who cheat.

Many people think that "cutting and pasting" snippets from disparate online resources produces acceptable student work, saves time, and does not constitute serious cheating. Many disagree. The courts are wrestling over its legal implications. Subsequently, teachers should make explicitly clear their expectations and requirements including the appropriate ways of using the Internet and other digital media in a particular course.

Teaching with Technology

Tech-savvy teachers are less likely to be fooled by plagiarism. For these individuals, the careful deployment of technology can be helpful in confirming or eliminating suspicions. Yet technology is no substitute for good teaching. Abundant evidence suggests that problems of academic integrity have much more to do with the efficacy of teaching assignments and students' capabilities than with dispositions to plagiarize. Students who don't plagiarize tend to be high achievers with better ethical reasoning skills, self-confidence, and grades.

All of the following reported motivations for plagiarism can be

changed by what students learn from a teacher's guidance, support, modeling, and explicit instructional communication: lack of confidence in tackling a topic; lack of prerequisite skills or preparation for an assignment; reluctance or fear of questioning course content; poor critical thinking habits; poor citation and reference skills; low vocabulary and language skills; low motivation to do an assignment; poor time management; confusion about goals; confusion about when collaboration ends; confusion about what constitutes plagiarism in general; lack of skills in properly using content from the Internet.

Assignments discourage plagiarism when they require analysis move progressively from simple to complex concepts. Such assignments must be challenging, but not beyond students' skills. Instructions and assessment criteria must explicitly delineate behaviors and artifacts for performance and be actively discussed during class time before studying begins, including examples and consequences for noncompliance (Auer & Krupar, 2001).

Many scholars and practitioners, already deep into this journey, provide effective tips and strategies that produce a low probability for plagiarism. Turnitin.com is one of the PDT businesses that provide such resources, usually a set of study and research tips. Ironically, if the resources work, then PDT's like Turnitin.com could be out of business.

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For more student and teacher resources on plagiarism, visit: "Student Guidelines & Tutorials" and "Assignments & Teaching"
(http://academics.georgiasouthern.edu/cet/ludy/integrity_links.htm)

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Incorporating Course-Level Evidence of Student Learning into Program Assessment

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As a faculty member in a post-secondary educational setting, you have likely encountered the term *student-learning assessment*. With the need for a college-educated work force increasing, and the cost of education escalating, higher education's stakeholders are asking for evidence that dollars are well-spent and that graduates are prepared to be productive, ethical, problem-solving citizens. Such evidence may be produced through program assessment of student learning and can inform decisions regarding program development or modification. We argue here for the benefits of integrating course-level assessment conducted by faculty members into overall program assessment. We begin by describing assessment principles, and then present a rationale and practical steps for conducting course-embedded program assessment.

Assessment Principles
Assessment of student learning is a process of defining expected learning outcomes, identifying or creating relevant learning experiences, collecting and interpreting evidence of learning, and using this evidence to make decisions intended to improve student

learning (Bresciani, 2006; Suskie, 2004; Walvoord, 2004). The following principles characterize sound assessment:

Learning-focused: Clearly articulated learning outcomes describe what we want students to know and be able to do when they complete their academic program.

Meaningful: Assessment is connected to institutional mission and goals, and to values of the discipline. It is integrated into daily teaching and learning.

Transparent: Assessment purposes, processes, and findings are communicated to all involved. There is no hidden agenda.

Faculty-owned: Faculty design and conduct assessment processes, and place confidence in results.

Systematic: Faculty focus on a few specific outcomes at a time in a cyclical approach so that, over time, a holistic picture of the amount and/or quality of learning emerges.

Useful: Evidence of learning that is gathered and interpreted is directly applicable to highlighting strengths, and improving courses and curricula.

Program assessment differs from course-level assessment primarily by virtue of the time at which the picture of student learning is taken and by the proportion of influence an individual faculty member has on that learning. When we assess learning in our courses, we want to know what students know and can do with that knowledge by the time they complete the course. By contrast, when we assess student learning at the program level, we typically want to know the cumulative effect of all the courses and activities students have experienced when they complete their degree. No single faculty

member teaching in such a program has a stake in the cumulative view, if program assessment is an add-on, after-the-fact process that makes no use of course-embedded evidence. This apparent disconnect between course-level learning and program assessment can give faculty the sense that program assessment is a burden, an exercise to be completed and then quickly forgotten until the "next time."

Using course-embedded evidence in program assessment helps to reconnect program assessment with course-level teaching and learning of faculty and students. There are several advantages to this approach:

- Results from program review that use this kind of evidence are more clearly connected to daily student learning and provide feedback that can directly impact that learning.

- Often, needed evidence of student learning already exists. Why do more work by creating assignments and tests outside of class when it is possible to use assessments already incorporated into courses?

- Students are more motivated to do their best work within courses where they have a rapport with the professor and a context for their learning. Course-embedded assessment thus provides a more accurate representation of what students know and can do.

- Communication among faculty that is required to accomplish program assessment often sheds light on the learning goals and teaching methods of each course, allowing colleagues to examine and learn from each others' practices. This communication also serves the creation of a curriculum that is an integrated whole, rather than a disjointed series of individual

courses.

Program Level Assessment Steps

1. Reach consensus on learning outcomes. Program-level assessment begins with faculty agreeing on a few overall learning outcomes for their graduates; they identify the major concepts and skills students will need to remember and apply in new contexts. This process is strengthened by seeking input from former students, their employers, post graduate educational institutions and other outside audiences. Several excellent resources provide guidance for articulating learning outcomes. See, for example, Fink (2003); Richlin (2006); Suskie (2004); Walvoord (2004).

2. Identify necessary learning experiences. With the learning outcomes in mind, examine courses and other experiences that make up the curriculum. To be systematic, it is useful to map desired outcomes onto courses so that each outcome is introduced and reinforced at appropriate times and in an appropriate sequence. This process gives departmental faculty an opportunity to verify that their assumptions about prerequisite knowledge are reasonable and that learning goals that are not course-specific—such as problem-solving ability or communication skills—are, in fact, being addressed throughout the program's curriculum. Sample matrices and charts to provide a framework for this part of the program assessment process may be found in Diamond (1998); Maki (2004); Walvoord (2004.).

3. Determine what will count as evidence of learning; collect and interpret the data. For each major learning outcome, choose multiple sources of evidence that faculty in your field find convincing. Direct methods examine actual student performance to determine the extent to which students have met the learning goals (e.g., written assignments, performances, presentations, quality of field work, tests). Indirect methods examine perspectives on the learning process (e.g., student self-appraisals, satisfaction surveys, focus groups). Both

methods can employ qualitative and/or quantitative approaches, and together they provide a complete picture (Suskie, 2004, pp. 95-97).

If you are assessing an existing program, begin by determining the kinds of evidence already available through course work. Walvoord (2004) provides a chart for identifying course-level assessment usable for program assessment (p. 125). Often, sample student work already being produced for a particular course can be reexamined from a program perspective. In other cases, faculty can add a question to an exam or create an assignment that will work well to assess learning in a course and be used later for program-level assessment. Examples of course-embedded evidence of learning:

a. Capstone Courses – Many programs have a culminating course in which students create a learning portfolio or do a complex project. These synthesis projects require students to demonstrate what they have learned throughout the major. In the absence of a capstone course, synthesizing assignments can be incorporated into upper level courses.

b. Selected Writing Samples – Faculty select writing samples from across courses to look for evidence of program-wide goals (e.g., critical thinking, professional communication, proper citation, disciplinary writing and research skills). Using an agreed-upon scoring guide, a group of faculty evaluates the sample papers (Huba & Freed, 2000, p. 151; Suskie, 2004, p. 123). Clean, unmarked copies of the papers, with student and faculty names removed, are used.

c. Common Exam Items – Faculty agree on common test items or design tests that provide course and program evidence of learning simultaneously (e.g. mastery of specific content and general evidence of critical thinking). Instructors grade the items for the course, and two to three faculty members evaluate selected items for the program.

d. Reflective Writing or Discussion – Reflection questions require students to examine their knowledge, academic skill development, personal learning goals and success, or their learning styles. For example, a learning community at Duquesne University asks students to reflect on six topics by drawing connections across three courses. Each instructor incorporates the reflective writing into the course grade, and at the same time the faculty as a whole examine the success of their learning community through these reflections.

e. Questionnaires/Guided Discussion – Students may be asked to complete a questionnaire relevant to program outcomes and articulate, for example, what experiences most promote their learning. Administering this in class both promotes reflection on learning and provides feedback on the program.

Once the evidence has been gathered and the resulting data analyzed, faculty meet to discuss specific action to take in response to the results. During this step, the value of a carefully created curriculum "map" (see step 2) becomes clear. Where assessment findings indicate a high degree of achievement, it is possible to trace back to the learning experiences that facilitated this achievement and to celebrate and learn from this success. Where findings indicate gaps or low achievement, faculty identify assignments to modify or supplement. The most important principle to remember is that assessment only works when faculty use the findings to continually enhance learning.

Done well, assessment increases our confidence that we are putting resources into activities that result in valuable learning and allows us to communicate meaningfully and credibly to stakeholders. Course-embedded assessment, in particular, can be used to many advantages: feedback to individual students and teachers, as well as an efficient source of evidence for academic programs to use in

improving and celebrating the overall quality of their students' learning.

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Microteaching to Maximize Feedback, Peer Engagement, and Teaching Enhancement

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Microteaching has been defined as "a scaled down realistic classroom training context in which teachers, both experienced and inexperienced, may acquire new teaching skills and refine old ones" (McKnight, 1980, p. 214). Developed at Stanford in the early and mid 1960's for elementary school teachers, the original model emphasized a "teach, review and reflect, re-teach" approach, using elementary school students as authentic audiences. Videotaping a mini-lesson, with an emphasis on narrowly described skill sets, was a key component.

Subsequent modifications in higher education settings typically rely on faculty or teaching assistant (TA) peers rather than actual students to provide feedback. But the model's positive attributes as a method for introducing neophyte instructors to the experience of classroom teaching are multiple:

(a) Microteaching is real teaching;

(b) It lessens the complexities of normal classroom teaching in that class size, scope, and content are reduced;

(c) It focuses on accomplishing specific tasks;

(d) It organizes controlled, structured practice sessions;

(e) It allows for immediate, focused feedback; and,

(f) It promotes reflection on teaching approaches and on constructive feedback. (Hertel, Milis, & Noyd, 2002, pp. 275-276)

In most microteaching models, the workshop leader along with the peer audience (comprising 5-7 instructors) will review the tape of the five-minute segments together. This can be a laborious process since these models require their audiences to sit through the microteaching sessions twice: once 'actually' (when the sessions are videotaped) and once 'virtually' (when the entire videotape is reviewed by the group). In a more efficient model, Keesing and Daston (1979) eliminated the repetition by having the mini-lesson presenter and the workshop facilitator review the tape *at the same time* the peer audience prepares feedback. This essay will describe and evaluate an adaptation of this latest version of the model used for TA and faculty training at the University of Nevada, Reno and elsewhere.

A Highly Structured Model

The Excellence in Teaching Program (ETP) staff at University of Nevada, Reno divides the teaching assistants enrolled in a required course, GRAD 701: College Teaching, into heterogeneous groups of 5-7 students, making certain there is a mix of disciplines, genders, and nationalities. The course begins with three days of interactive face-to-face seminars. After this three-day period, the graduate students complete the course by working individually to earn a total of 16 points by producing assignments on a variety of pedagogical tasks, which are submitted electronically (via WebCT) for credit in the course.

Microteaching occurs on the third and final day of the face-to-face portion of the course with carefully trained Mentor TAs guiding each group through the 30-minute-per-presenter microteaching sequence. Each thirty minute segment is divided into the following three parts:

1.) The Individual Presentation: 10 Minutes

Each TA provides 10 copies of his/her completed Planning and Feedback Sheet for the group. The top portion contains information about the student and his/her topic and one area in which s/he wants feedback. (e.g., pacing, clarity of presentation, etc). The bottom half

of this sheet provides a space for feedback in response to the following questions and prompts: What did you like most about the presentation? What constructive suggestions can you make about the designated area of feedback? Did the speaker involve the listeners? Give examples of the speaker's interactions with the class. Describe the speaker's use of the blackboard and other visual aids. Do you have any suggestions about how to make the lesson more effective or understandable?

After distributing these forms, each TA presenter delivers his or her mini-lesson while the Mentor TA keeps time. A camera operator, selected from the TA participants, records the presentation.

2.) One-on-One Feedback (A) and Group Feedback Preparation (B): 10 Minutes
The Mentor TA (or Workshop Leader) and the TA mini-presenter run the tape while discussing the presentation. The Mentor TA references the videotape whenever appropriate, but we emphasize the value of the discussion between the TA and the Mentor, not the viewing, with opening questions such as, "How do you think it went?" "What was the best thing about your presentation?" "What would you change if you could?" This private discussion allows the TAs to reduce their anxiety, to "vent" their concerns, and to receive reassuring positive feedback as well as constructive ideas for improvement.

During this same ten minute period, the remaining TA participants, working in two separate groups, discuss the presentation and prepare constructive feedback for the TA presenter. Participants assume one of three roles, which rotate with each presentation: discussion leader, recorder, and spokesperson.
In all cases, the emphasis is on constructive feedback. For example, the instructions for the discussion leader are: When guiding the discussion, be certain that the group focuses initially on the two specific skills the instructor wants feedback on. Keep the tone positive and constructive, perhaps asking questions such as, 'How can we provide X with the most help?' 'Do we really want to tell X that if she cannot do anything to change this behavior?' 'How can we phrase these comments to get X to reflect on possible changes?'

3.) Group Feedback: 10 Minutes
The TA presenter then receives constructive feedback from the two subgroups. The Mentor TA facilitates this feedback session by calling on the spokespersons in the two groups to offer constructive criticism in at least three areas: the feedback requested by the presenter, the positive aspects of the presentation, and the areas that need improvement.

During the closing activity for the all-day microteaching session, all TAs within their heterogeneous groups reflect on their own performance, by summarizing in a plenary session, what they learned from the feedback and from watching fellow TAs present mini-lessons. Then, with a partner, they discuss what they would do differently—and why.

Selecting and Training the Mentor TAs
Each semester ETP selects new Mentor TAs from exemplary GRAD 701 students who exhibit strong interpersonal and teaching skills. During an hour-and-a-half training session, the Mentor TAs learn how to give constructive feedback to peer instructors and to assemble and run the equipment. Mentor TAs receive a packet with the materials needed for their all-day sessions.

Preparation for the Microteaching Participants

The TAs attending GRAD 701 receive written instructions on the microteaching process and a list of sample topics. Additionally, on the first day, everyone participates in a 45-minute interactive planning module, which emphasizes the importance of active learning and visual aids.

Assessment
We use two types of assessment instruments. All graduate students attending the three-day seminar portion of GRAD 701 complete an evaluation form. Microteaching consistently receives very high ratings. The Mentor TAs, who complete a Follow-up Report, are equally laudatory. Their useful reports offer suggestions for improvement and provide detailed descriptions of the microteaching sessions.

Benefits of this Structured Model

Participants report the following:

· They value the rehearsal time and minimal preparation time required by the sessions. In other words, TAs have an opportunity to present in front of a group under low-threat conditions.

· They value the feedback from both an expert (the Mentor TA) and from peers. This process allows TAs to see themselves as their students might see them.

· TAs benefit from seeing the presentations of other TAs. All participants learn from each other (and we find these observations of peer performance particularly useful for international students).

· Viewing the tape one-on-one with a facilitator has important benefits. The Mentor TA provides a wide range of feedback, including insights into presentation mechanics captured on the tape. The TAs take the videotape with them for further viewing and self assessment.

· The group feedback helps not only the presenters, but also the TA sub-group members. We deliberately mix TAs so they do not have similar content knowledge, making them more like actual students unable, like experts, to "fill in the blanks." Different perspectives emerge from the two groups, causing one group to react one way while another group reacts differently. These occasions highlight the fact that a technique may produce similarly mixed reactions in students. Most importantly, the members of the subgroups work conscientiously to offer constructive feedback, which doubles as a valuable classroom skill.

Conclusion
Virtually any institution can adopt this microteaching model because of its flexibility and efficiency. It is effective not only because it focuses on good teaching practices, but also because it promotes collegiality. For a set of microteaching materials, including the

planning sheets, please contact Barbara Millis at millis@unr.edu.

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Everything You Always Wanted to Know about Student Writing (but Were Afraid to Ask)

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Although faculty often think of writing as a way in which students can communicate what they have learned, we sometimes forget that writing in itself is a powerful mode of learning. Emig (1977) believes that "Writing serves learning uniquely because writing as process-and-product possesses a cluster of attributes that correspond uniquely to certain powerful learning strategies" (122). These correspondences shared by both writing and learning include self-provided feedback (both immediate and long-term), the ability to make connections ("conceptual groupings, synthetic, analytic"), and, perhaps most importantly, an "active, engaged, personal" and "self-rhythmed" style (128). Having students write as a way to learn can be an efficient way not only to engage students with the content of the material they are learning but also foster the development of the thinking abilities we want in our students: to read and analyze texts; to formulate and solve problems; to follow or make a coherent argument; to adopt different perspectives; and to form and test hypotheses.

Thus, writing itself is a powerful tool for teaching, because *writing is thinking (and learning) made visible*. The connection between writing and thinking means that students can and should write about

what they need to learn as they learn it. Writing can be employed in ways that allow a teacher to see not only what a student knows, but also how her thinking is developing and where she is going right or wrong (Elbow, 1997; Kalman & Kalman, 1997-98; Young, 1999). Because well-designed writing assignments can offer us insight into student learning, they also can help us adjust our teaching to meet the needs of our students better. Courses across the curriculum should employ writing to help faculty and students alike to assess student mastery of the material, ideas, concepts, or skills.

Most of us lack a familiarity with the now large body of research on writing that can help us inform our practice . Below I offer three of the most helpful strategies and practices for using writing effectively in our classrooms. Although within the purview of this article I can only offer the most basic introduction to these concepts, the resources that I reference provide clear and simple guidance for faculty who want to learn more.

1.) The Difference Between Low-stakes and High-stakes Assignments

Elbow (1997) uses the term "low stakes" and "high stakes" to describe "how much a piece of writing *matters* or *counts*" (5). Examples of low-stakes assignments include personal reading journals, class emails, discussion boards, "2-minute essays," notes, directed writings, and drafts (see Young, 1999). Elbow lists numerous advantages of low-stakes writing: it allows the students to "involve themselves more in the ideas or subject matter of the course"; low-stakes "prose is usually livelier, clearer, and more natural" than high-stakes writing where students worry about a grade and are trying to write exactly "what the teacher was looking for"; and low-stakes assignments improve the quality of students' more formal, high-stakes writing by "warming them up" and giving the opportunity to process and hone their ideas. Additionally, frequent use of low-stakes assignments ensures that students keep up with the course readings and materials (Elbow, 1997; 7-8). Although such assignments can still contribute to a student's overall grade, they may or may not receive feedback, and if the work does receive a grade, it might be a satisfactory or unsatisfactory, a check, check-minus, or check-plus, or a completed or not-completed. Bean (1996), Young (1999), and Elbow & Sorcinelli (2006) all offer

faculty excellent ideas for using low-stakes writing to improve student learning across the disciplines.

2.) How to Design and "Scaffold" Larger Writing Assignments

"High-stakes" assignments such as final papers, should be completed in stages, helping ensure not only that the final product will be better, but also that students learn—and can make corrections—during the writing process. Breaking the writing process down into more manageable parts and discrete steps, sometimes called "scaffolding," allows a student to receive formative feedback (from faculty, peers, or a Writing Center) as she progresses through a large assignment. It also requires a student to think about writing not only in terms of getting ideas down on paper, but as *revision* and *rewriting*. A simple example of scaffolding an assignment is a final research paper that is written in stages: first a thesis and a bibliography might be turned in for comments; then a rough draft that might be commented upon by the professor, taken to a writing center, or peer edited; and, only then, after those stages, would a final draft be turned in. Young (1999) does a nice job of discussing the different stages of writing (45-55), and Bean (1996) offers excellent suggestions for encouraging student revision (33-34; 197-214; 217-238).

3.) There are Specific Strategies for Giving Effective Comments on Student Writing

There are two main types of comments on writing: *macro* (also called global), which are comments related to the overall thesis, argument, and structure of a paper, and *micro* (also called local), which focus on grammar, mechanics, spelling, punctuation, and style—more sentence-level, editing issues. Before making comments, we need to have in mind what the *purposes* of our comments are: Are they geared towards justifying a grade given on a final version of a paper? Are the comments geared toward revision of a draft? Are the comments merely meant to respond to what a student has to say, rather than how he is saying it?

Sommers (1982) believes that many faculty offer comments merely to justify a grade, and offer students generic comments (such as "vague") that inform students what they have done wrong but offer

them little specific guidance about how to correct the problem. We need to give students a sense of what it is like to read their writing, and one of the best ways to do this is to ask questions (e.g., "What do you mean, exactly, by _____?"). Sommers also notes that faculty often make too many comments, and end up sending our students conflicting messages about what they need to do to improve a piece of writing: we may write both "needs more info" about a sentence and then, out in the margins, refer to the entire paragraph as "wordy"; or within one paragraph we might offer conflicting micro and macro feedback (e.g., "Wrong tense;" i.e., *Fix this small error*, and "The topic of this paragraph is irrelevant to your thesis;" i.e., *The entire paragraph needs to be removed or the contents changed*). She argues that students become confused during revision, and end up making the simpler editing (micro) changes rather than truly rewriting their paper and improving their thinking. Lunsford (1997) offers seven clear and simple principles for responding to student writing, such as offering "well-developed and text-specific comments"; focusing on global, not local concerns; adapting comments to "the student writer behind the text" and "the rhetorical situation for the writing"; and designing comments "to help students approach writing as a process" (91).

Furthering Your Own Education
I have introduced these important ideas and strategies, but to employ them effectively in your classrooms and laboratories you will need to learn more and adapt these large concepts to your own teaching style and discipline. The works that I refer to below are the ones I regularly provide for faculty during the workshops I run. Finally, I urge each of you to become familiar with the types of support that are available both for students who are writing *and* for faculty who are interested in using writing as part of their teaching: writing centers and faculty workshops are particularly helpful and often under-utilized.

I believe it is essential for all faculty to understand not only the ways in which writing can be used most effectively to foster student learning, but also that writing is the responsibility of all teaching faculty, no matter what our discipline or the level of students whom we teach. As faculty, we owe it to ourselves and to our students to become more effective teachers of writing.

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Information Literacy: Imperatives for Faculty

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As information resources, especially electronic ones, continue to proliferate and become more complex, faculty's frustration seems to be growing in parallel fashion. What used to be standard assignment formats now seem to require a level of planning and of complexity that we, as faculty, are not accustomed to. It used to be so simple: assignments requiring any level of resource research would indicate the quantity and type of bibliographic sources students should access, how those sources should be utilized, and how they should be cited. Students would walk into the library, and with the help of knowledgeable librarians find the pertinent tomes or journals. This is no longer what's involved in "library research." With the advent of the internet, electronic databases, and scholarly electronic publications, even faculty have a hard time keeping up with the amount of new information, with credibility issues, and with modes of citing such resources. Information literacy is now required in order to make sensible and informed choices and avoid major pitfalls.

What is Information Literacy?
As defined by the American Library Association (1998), information literacy (IL) is a set of abilities requiring individuals to recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate,

and use effectively the needed information. Six IL Standards were developed to help define what information literate individuals can do. They can:

- · Determine the extent of information needed;
- · Access the needed information effectively and efficiently;
- · Evaluate information and its sources critically;
- · Incorporate selected information into one's knowledge base;
- · Use information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose;
- · Understand the legal, social, and economic issues surrounding the use of information, and access and use information ethically and legally (including proper citation, paraphrasing, and related skills).

For a detailed description of specific skills and abilities associated with each standard, please see the ALA's expanded outline at http://ala.org/ala/acrl/acrlstandards/informationliteracycompetency.htm.

These standards are at the heart of the academic learning process. They are not new. What is new is the complex environment in which they are to be learned and eventually practiced. A complicated factor embedded in the definition of an information-literate person is the assumption that such a person is also library-literate, computer-literate, and Internet-literate. These embedded literacies are all necessary for the successful accessing and use of new information.

Student and Faculty Challenges
The new information landscape requires that faculty reconsider and re-configure ways of teaching that have been standard for a very long time. Rather than the traditional highly structured and well-defined approaches to interactions with information, students and faculty are now required to use multi-layered and nuanced methodologies. Consider, for example, the oft-assigned term paper. Traditional

pedagogies have the instructor take one of two basic approaches. The first approach involves an assigned topic or a selection of topic by the student from a limited list of topics, followed by the actual development and submission of the completed paper at some deadline, usually toward the end of the academic term. In this model, the instructor's expectations are that (1) students know how to structure and write a term paper, and (2) that the bulk of skills required are focused on developing ideas in writing. A second approach to term paper assignments is one in which the instructor participates in the process in a developmental role. In this model, students are required to follow prescribed steps such as topic selection, bibliography development, and thesis statement in drafting the paper, moving to each subsequent step after receiving constructive feedback from the instructor, and sometimes from classmates. In both models, the research component is seen as one of the basic and straight-forward tasks--"identify three bibliographic resources" or "use at least two scholarly journals and one reference book" are typical guidelines provided for gathering bibliographic information.

The greatest challenge that faculty face in assigning a term paper and students face in preparing one is that two commonly held underlying assumptions are no longer practical. The identification and accessing of information is not a simple, streamlined process; and neither instructor nor student can assume with any certainty what resources will be found and where they will be found.

Integrating Information Literacy into College Courses
Information literacy competencies are closely related to emerging practices in college teaching. As we have been moving from teacher-centered to learner and learning-centered instruction, articulating learning outcomes, focusing on understanding and capabilities rather than fact acquisition, and realizing the importance of preparing students for the application of knowledge in non-

academic settings, we have set an agenda that has information literacy at its core.

Academic courses provide ample opportunities for the integration of information literacy at all levels of learning: acquisition, usage/practice, mastery, and application. The curriculum as a whole and specific assignments in particular, are rife with possibilities. The following are some ways in which such integration can happen:

- Connect desired course learning outcomes with information literacy competencies, and include them in the course syllabus.

- Identify areas of the course's curriculum in which information plays a key role. Rather than provide students with the information, have them either locate the information themselves or assess the validity and veracity of information accessed by fellow students.

- Structure assignments to highlight the process of information searching, assessing, and using, and make this process the key element of the assignment.

- Enable students, through the use of such channels as journals and process maps, to reflect on the process of information acquisition.

- Partner with an instructional librarian to re-fashion assignments.

- Create or re-focus assignments to reflect real-world tasks. For example: instead of a topical term paper in a business course, have students structure it as an annual report, or in a history course have the assignment done as a first-person diary.

- Invite the instructional librarian to conduct a session on search strategies for a specific topic.

- Include diverse types of assignments. Examples include: "compare the bibliographies in a couple of published works, possibly with differing points of view, on the same subject", "create annotated bibliographies", or "use resources from multiple databases".

- Describe with some specificity resources to be used. Examples include an opinion piece, a report of scientific research, and an historical perspective of the issue(s). Have students compare and contrast them with attention to the source, its credibility, its point of view, etc. (These are all sentences or multiple sentences to each bullet, and they would be better with periods rather than semicolons.

Components of Information Literacy-Based Assignments

Many types of assignments can enhance information literacy competencies. Such assignments are beneficial when they:
- Include library research;
- Present opportunities to explore the literature of the discipline;
- Include opportunities to compare types of publications such as trade, scholarly, or popular journals and magazines;
- Emphasize the process of research as well as the product;
- Require students to present information as evidence;
- Expect students to evaluate information for reliability and relevance;
- Teach citation and paraphrasing skills.

Imperatives for Faculty

Information literacy provides a beneficial set of skills for both faculty and students. Faculty benefits include increased productivity in

scholarly activities, enhanced curricula, reduction in instances of plagiarism (as proper citation and paraphrasing are an important part of information literacy), and compliance with accreditation requirements. Students benefit by improving learning skills, becoming discriminating seekers of information (consumers/critics of knowledge production), preparing for life-long learning, and enhancing preparation for the professional careers.

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For more information, visit: http://ala.org/ala/acrl/acrlstandards/informationliteracycompetency.htm

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Opening the Door: Faculty Leadership in Institutional Change

Rick Holmgren, *Allegheny College*

As faculty, we often feel overwhelmed by a heavy workload, conflicting demands on our time, and an imperfect evaluation system. Heavy teaching loads are augmented by the continuing need to keep up with ongoing changes in our disciplines and the constant development of new teaching technologies. Misuse and abuse of student evaluations of teaching is common, and many faculty report frustration at the double bind caused by their belief that they should do something to improve their evaluations and uncertainty about what they could do to improve student response if they tried. This frustration is compounded by the fact that they may not see a connection between improving student evaluations and improving student learning, which is the core of faculty work.

In many cases, faculty discomfort is augmented by a mismatch between their personal goals and their perception of institutional priorities. In a 2004 – 2005 survey conducted by the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI), "being a good teacher" was cited as a very important personal goal for almost all faculty, independent of whether they work at a small college or a large university. The only other goal selected to be very important by more than ninety percent of faculty from all institutional types was "being a good colleague." By contrast, "becoming an authority in my field" was cited as a very important goal by about half of all faculty and by

about two thirds of that subset of faculty working at universities, well behind "serving as a role model for students" and "developing a meaningful philosophy of life." In the same survey, more than four fifths of faculty indicate that their institutions do not reward faculty for being good teachers, and only about half believe their institutions provide adequate support for faculty development (Lindholm, Szelenyi, Hurtado, & Korn, 2005). In such an environment, where faculty and institutional goals appear to be in conflict, one should not be surprised if faculty retreat behind the closed doors of their classrooms to teach in isolation.

While such a response is understandable, it leaves intact a cultural construct in which faculty who desire to be good teachers—almost all faculty—too often experience themselves as victims to student evaluations, uncaring colleagues, and an administration characterized by benign neglect. In this essay, I propose that we, as faculty, do indeed have the resources we need to improve our situation. I also suggest ways in which we might begin to gain more control over our teaching and our lives while building an academic culture that supports us as teachers.

To begin, we must first recognize that we are empowered to foster change, since the culture in which we feel trapped is created and sustained by us, the faculty. As a corollary, little institutional change is possible without our leadership since we are the cultural drivers. Secondly, any change initiative intended to create an environment more supportive of teaching and teachers can draw on the inherent desire of faculty to be good teachers and colleagues as documented in the HERI survey. Finally, since faculty as a collective are a rich resource of teaching wisdom, all that most campuses lack to foster real change are regular occasions to share this wisdom. Given this context, a small investment of time and our willingness to seek colleagues with whom to work are sufficient to develop a program of regular meetings and shared observations that can foster cultural change.

Most faculty value opportunities for collaboration and discussion that leads to more effective teaching (Wergin, 2003). Teaching Circles are a good way to capitalize on this natural inclination while building a more supportive community. Teaching Circles differ from most

faculty development workshops or retreats in several ways. They meet over a sustained period of time—typically a semester or more—and participants commit to attending every week so that they can build the trust necessary to sustain a substantive and challenging dialogue. To support the development of trust, Circles are limited to twelve or fewer participants, and participants are asked to hold in confidence the topics of conversation and the contributions of their colleagues. Teaching Circles do not have agendas; participants are asked to talk about whatever joys or challenges they are currently facing in their teaching, which provides immediacy and relevance that many participants find refreshing. Finally, participants are asked to focus on what they bring to the classroom as teachers and what they can do to create change as opposed to complaining about the students or other diversions. To keep the discussion on track, Circles typically agree at the outset on ground rules, and if there is not already a designated facilitator, a faculty participant is appointed to serve in that role.

Administrators can be asked to support teaching Circles in two significant ways. At some schools, the college administration has agreed to underwrite the lunch expenses for Teaching Circles that occur over the noon hour, or snacks and beverages for late afternoon offerings. In addition, key administrators can help publicize Teaching Circles, facilitating the extension of participation across disciplinary boundaries. Cross disciplinary teaching discussions are particularly fruitful since colleagues from other disciplines can introduce us to different pedagogies and help us unpack some of the disciplinary assumptions that might be holding us back as teachers. However, since Teaching Circles are discussions led by faculty for faculty, it is wise to limit administrator's role to providing publicity and financial support for sustenance and encouraging (but not monitoring or mandating) participation. Limiting the draw on administrative resources to support Teaching Circles has the added benefit of making it easier for administrators to say yes!

Exchanges of classroom observations are another great way to begin to build a community of teaching faculty. Teaching Circle participants can split into groups that visit one another's courses, which can enrich the Circle discussions or, alternatively, observations can be arranged as a separate program. Classroom observation

exchanges have the added virtue of requiring no resources other than colleagues with whom to work. In many ways, trios of faculty working together are optimal since two observers are present for each class visit, which provides two viewpoints and enriches the related discussions. If trios are not practical, pairs work too.

In approaching colleagues to arrange exchanges, remember that it is often intimidating for faculty, even (perhaps, especially) experienced, well-regarded, senior faculty, to invite colleagues into their classroom to observe and then discuss their teaching. Still, it is up to us to take the initiative to ask, trusting in the inherent desire of our peers to be good teachers and colleagues. In addition, we need to propose an observation process that will facilitate an open, honest dialogue about teaching, and there is a wide variety of readily available resources on class observation to help us with this step. A hyperlink to one free online resource is included in the article references.

I do not want to end this article without acknowledging the difficulty of bringing about cultural change. Although it does not need to take a lot of time on any single day, it takes real and sustained focus to overcome the inertia of our cultural patterns, and the pace of our lives can make it difficult to sustain this focus. Once a new term has started and we are enmeshed in its rhythm, arranging a series of weekly lunches or observation exchanges is particularly difficult. In recognition of that difficulty, I try to organize these types of activities several weeks or months before the start of the academic term in which they will happen so that participants can prioritize them in their schedules. Even then, not everyone who expresses an interest will be able to do so in a given term. Fortunately, you can rely on your campus teaching excellence center, faculty development coordinator, or a sympathetic administrator to aid in sustaining a Teaching Circle or classroom observation initiative.

Finally, we need to recognize that beyond planning and the relentless pace of academic life, our biggest hurdle is often our own hesitation to broach discussions about teaching in an environment where research is rewarded over commitment to students and to the improvement of teaching. For change to occur, someone has to start the conversation on your campus, and there is good reason to believe that our colleagues are anxious to join the conversation once started.

I encourage you to be a catalyst for change in your life and at your institution. And please share your experiences—I'd like to know.

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When Disability Enters a Teacher's Life, Must the Teacher Stop Teaching?

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In the past 20 years, progress had been made on most campuses to assist undergraduate students with disabilities. However, another population with similar concerns exists on our campuses and usually has no specific program or support available: faculty and TAs with disabilities. Disabled college instructors may consequently need the support of faculty development professionals.

Regrettably, faculty and TA developers may feel ill at ease dealing with mental health difficulties, learning difficulties or disabilities, sensory impairments, physical impairments or mobility difficulties, or progressive, medical or other conditions (Tynan, 2005). When an instructor with a disability requests help, teaching consultants may feel unsure of their ability to provide guidance. The following case study suggests that consultants can separate the issues surrounding the disability from the pedagogical issues involved and help disabled instructors perform well in the classroom.

The Case[1]
Tom, a teaching consultant, received a call from a departmental faculty member asking if he could work with a TA who had a

disability. During a recent meeting, the TA, Betty, had expressed her frustration and wanted to leave the program. The professor really didn't want to lose such a good graduate student. Tom agreed to meet with Betty.

During their first meeting, Betty complained that her students were rude and lazy. She said that when she had been a student, she had always been prepared because she really cared about school and studied very hard. She also explained that she had always treated her faculty with respect, but her students didn't afford her the same consideration because she was a TA. Betty ended by saying that she was ready to quit graduate school and abandon her plans to achieve the doctorate and teach.

During the second session, Tom asked Betty how the class was going. Betty exploded about how ill mannered the students had been during a recent field trip to the Convention Center. She said that she used to enjoy field trips but now found them impossible to do because students were so impolite. Tom asked if there could possibly be anything else bothering her, regarding the situation, and she burst out, "Yes, I am going deaf! I wear a hearing aid, but I can't hear my students if they are always hiding BEHIND me!" Tom asked her to describe in more detail her perception of the situation.

Betty's hearing had been worsening for some time and she had been told that eventually she would be deaf. She used several basic formats in her class: lectures, panels of invited speakers, and field trips. She had few problems when she lectured because the students listened. During panel presentations, she had an interpreter who signed the panelists' comments and the students' questions for her—which worked pretty well. However, sometimes she noticed students talking with each other and giggling and was afraid that they might be laughing at her. Such behavior was even worse on the field trips than in class. She was aware that she tended to walk in front of the

group and do most of the talking. Students who wanted to chat dropped behind. This bothered her a lot because she feared that the students would fail the exam. And, to top it all off, they didn't think she was an expert—even though she had actually worked in the field after she received her master's degree and prior to returning to complete the doctorate. She felt incompetent, out of control, and annoyed with students who didn't take her or the subject seriously.

The Consultation

Tom checked with Betty to determine if she had been in contact with appropriate disabilities experts on campus. She assured him that she had, but that she was concerned about her classroom experience. Tom decided to help Betty determine which concerns were directly related to the disability, which to her perceptions of students' reactions, and which to her lack of experience in teaching. Once they accomplished this, they could address some acceptable solutions together. Additionally, they had to determine how to communicate the results of the consultation to her faculty mentor. Betty, with Tom's help, wrote down the points that were bothering her. Then, together, they sorted the problems into the following categories:

Problems based on my disability

• I'm uncomfortable telling people about my disability.
• I can't hear students when they are behind me.
• I assume students are making fun of me.

Problems based on student behaviors

• Students are rude and impatient.
• Students don't pay attention to me.
• Students walk behind me when
• I'm lecturing on the field trip.
• Students make fun of me.

Problems based on a lack of pedagogical knowledge or skill

• I've never considered how my disability influences my teaching methods.
• I focus on what I am saying rather than what the students are learning.
• I haven't planned individual and group focused activities.
• I haven't set norms and expectations for classroom and field trip interaction.

Solutions

After analyzing the list, Betty could clearly see the difference in the impact her disability was having and the problems caused by a lack of skill in teaching. She decided that her failure to address the disability up front caused students to misunderstand what was happening in the classroom and on field trips. She realized that blaming the students interfered with her ability to plan student-focused activities that would work and engage them despite her disability. She also had to face up to the impact her disability really did have. For example, she had to tell students to stand in front of her so that she could read their lips when they had specific questions. Or they could give their questions to the interpreter and have him communicate with her. Betty also had to learn some new pedagogical skills and put them into practice.

Tom suggested that she discuss her disability with her students, explain how it affects her and them, and to explain the interpreter's role and how to interact with him. Tom pointed out that many people have disabilities and many others will have them as they meet life's challenges. Betty decided to give students the sign language spelling hand signals and encourage them to learn signs. She thought they might have fun making the extra effort if she gave them extra credit for spelling out their answers by hand. She also decided to use one-

minute papers for feedback during each lecture class and establish email communication with the whole class so students could express their questions and concerns and receive answers quickly outside of class. Betty's teaching style tended to be the same whether she was lecturing or leading a field trip. As Betty and Tom continued to work together, she decided to develop a new format for her field trips in which students explored the site and filled out individual worksheets. She would write a good worksheet, give clear directions, and plan some questions as small group activities and some as individual activities. She established grading guidelines for both. Each field trip would end with a whole group question/answer session with everyone sitting in front of her. Betty felt relieved that students would benefit from active engagement and realized that she did not have to lecture about everything.

Follow-up on the Consultation
By the end of the semester Betty reported that she felt much better about herself and her teaching. Subsequent field trips had gone much more smoothly after she instituted the worksheets. Students had responded well to her request to learn to spell out words and were very willing to communicate directly with her or write down questions and comments. Everyone relaxed, had a good time; and students reported that they felt they had learned a lot.

In their last consultation, Betty told Tom, "I'm so happy. My class gave me very good reviews at the end of the term. I'm so glad that I didn't quit. Now I know I can adapt. My students can adapt. Best of all, I can continue my doctorate. By the way, I talked to my faculty mentor and told him I'm going to stay in the program and become a teacher. And, thanks for referring me to the Disabilities Office—even though they usually don't work with instructors, they gave me some great ideas, too."

This case raises questions about the needs of instructors with

disabilities and the role of teaching consultants in providing service to them. Since this case was first written, some progress has been made. There is a new listserv for Faculty with Disabilities, and researchers at the University of Colorado have conducted two surveys with instructors with disabilities to better define the parameters of the problem.

References & Resources
Tynan, A. (Ed.), (2005). Time to take stock: Disability and professional competence. DIVERSE: The UK Veterinary Medicine Disability Project, Higher Education Funding Council for England. London, England: The Royal Veterinary College, London.

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