

faculty focus

A Quarterly Newsletter from the Center for Teaching Excellence

Spring Quarter 2004

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Technology in Teaching Event Highlights Pedagogy

Faculty and staff who attended this year's Convocation on Teaching, "Expanding the Classroom Walls: Teaching with Technology," had a rare opportunity to see in one place some of the most creative approaches to teaching with technology developed at UCSC. In a series of faculty presentations, at resource exhibits, and through the thought-provoking keynote address by Dr. Bernard Gifford, a compelling theme emerged. Learning technology is about much more than the technology: it's about the pedagogy.

"I thought the short practical sessions were very useful. Interesting to see what is going on in other departments and stimulates thought about how to adapt to our own classes."

"It was a good mix of "formal presentations" with a lot of time for one-on-one interaction with vendors and speakers."

In concurrent sessions, instructors from across campus demonstrated how they are using

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Instructional Improvement Grants Announced

The Academic Senate Committee on Teaching and the Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Education have announced funding of twelve Instructional Improvement Grants for 2003-04.

Grant applicants submitted proposals in January, detailing improvements they planned to make in one or more undergraduate courses. This year two types of grants were awarded: Course Development Fellowships provide one course relief so a faculty member can design a new course or undertake significant redesign of an existing course; Major Grants supply funding for other expenses in instructional

improvement, including expenses for developing new instructional materials or software.

Key to either type of proposal is a strong focus on learning. In evaluating proposals, committee members place a high value on those that show evidence the applicant has an understanding of the learning process, on projects that represent an innovative approach to an instructional problem, and those that stand to have a long-term impact. Projects are expected to include a strong assessment plan that addresses student learning.

Among the innovations funded this year are projects that incorporate service learning,

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project-based learning, case-study-based courses, new approaches to disciplinary epistemology, a web-based distance learning course, and plans to improve student learning in basic areas such as writing and mathematics. Five of the twelve projects explicitly include a technological component.

For 2003-04, the following grants were funded:

Course Development Fellowships

Heather Bullock, Assoc. Professor, Psychology

Contextualizing Women's Lives

David Draper, Professor and Chair, Applied Math and Statistics

A Case-Study-Based Contemporary Calculus Course

Gabriel Elkaim, Asst. Professor, Computer Engineering

Development of a Hands-On Project-Based Mechatronic Design Course

Virginia Jansen, Professor, History of Art and Visual Culture

New course on 'other' Gothic architecture

Major Grants

Andrew Fisher, Professor, Earth Sciences

Hydrologic Modeling and Web-based Instructor-TA-Student Interaction: Bringing the Earth Sciences Department 'Water Curriculum' into the 21st Century

Jonathan Fox, Professor, LALS

Holly Cordova, Coordinator, Learning Support Services

Rosa-Linda Fregoso, Professor and Chair, LALS

Increasing Writing Support for Cognitively Engaged But Under-prepared Writers in Upper Division LALS and Sociology Classes

Maria Morris, Lecturer, Language Program

Technological and Student Assistance for a Distance Intermediate Spanish Reading Course

Roz Spafford, SOE Lecturer and Chair, Writing

Anrew Szasz, Assoc. Professor, Sociology and Provost, College Eight

Articulating Core Courses with Writing

Nancy Stoller, Professor, Community Studies

Queer Studies Pedagogy, Curriculum and Minor

John Vesecky, Professor, Electrical Engineering

Dynamic web-based formative assessment and interactive instructional materials for engineering, mathematics and physics

Alice Yang Murray, Assoc. Professor, History

Alan Christy, Assoc. Professor, History

Creating Resources for Classroom Virtual Tours of War Memory Sites in Saipan and Guam

Erika Zavaleta, Asst. Professor, Environmental Studies

Dennis Kelso, Asst. Professor, Environmental Studies

Sarah Rabkin, Lecturer, Environmental Studies

Enhancing Learning through Content, Process, and Skills Integration in the Environmental Studies Core Course



Mini-Grant Funds Still Available

Funds still remain for 2003-04 IIP Mini-grants. Mini-grant proposals may be submitted up through **May 7, 2004**. However, applicants are encouraged to get proposals in as early as possible to avoid last-minute disappointment if funds run out.

For more information and applications, visit
<http://www.ic.ucsc.edu/CTE/grants/>.

Faculty Focus

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Center for Teaching Excellence

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Faculty Focus features the voices of the UCSC community speaking out on teaching and learning. The Center for Teaching Excellence encourages the submission of material representing divergent ideas and opinions. These opinions are not necessarily shared by CTE. Letters to the editor and comments may be e-mailed to cte@ucsc.edu.

CTE is located at 168C McHenry Library.

Editor's Corner

Incubating Innovations in Teaching

As this year's Convocation on Teaching demonstrated, this campus is alive with new developments in teaching and learning. The difficulty has always been in finding ways to propagate those innovations. One of the major aims of the Instructional Improvement Program, for instance, is to identify projects that will have both broad and long-term impact on undergraduate instruction. It is clear that increased visibility for grant-funded projects would promote this aim.

In order to help foster dissemination of teaching ideas across campus, CTE has initiated a new colloquium series, the Instructional Improvement Colloquia. As the name suggests, colloquium topics are drawn largely from Instructional Improvement Grants, although other projects are featured as well.

The idea for the colloquium series grew not only out of a wish to publicize grant successes more, but also a recognition that valuable discussion happens when faculty get together to present new approaches to teaching. These discussions tend to be both reflective and practical. A 90-minute session may provide a spark of an idea or a crucial first-hand review of a newer teaching practice. And, because the expert is right on campus, you know where to go if you want further information, materials to adapt, or to initiate a collaboration.

The Instructional Improvement Colloquium series was inaugurated this fall with the topic of "Ethics Across the Curriculum," inspired by the development of three new ethics courses in different disciplines across campus. Three faculty members agreed to share their course development process and course content: Ellen Suckiel of Philosophy, Joel Ferguson, Provost of Crown College, and Guy Cox of Computer Engineering. Following their presentations, the session evolved into a kind of roundtable on teaching ethics, involving audience members as well as presenters.

This spring, we continue the Colloquium series with "New Curricula, New Approaches," Wednesday, April 28, 3:30-5:00 pm, in Cowell Conference Room. Presenters will be faculty who have received Course Development Fellowships over the past two years. They will share what they have learned in developing these courses, re-examining pedagogy in their disciplines in light of new curricular developments. Some of the issues addressed relate to large courses, "W" courses, and a variety of interactive teaching approaches.

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Update on Evaluations Support: Coordinator moves to Faculty Instructional Technology Center

Campus Evaluations Support Coordinator, Chris Lee, has recently joined the Faculty Instructional Technology Center (FITC), consolidating this valuable support service within the Instructional Computing group.

This position was created to address critical support needs for the writing of student evaluations identified by a task force composed of faculty, administration, and staff and headed by Associate Registrar Pam Hunt-Carter. The NES Reform Committee considered several software tools and selected the simplest and most flexible approach to assist faculty in writing their evaluations, taking advantage of software – Microsoft Word and Excel – that is already available and familiar. Using the software reduces the need to type or copy-and-paste information that is similar across students (while allowing for personalization), and helps organize course record-keeping.

In addition to a 4-page step-by-step tutorial (also available online at evals.ucsc.edu), Chris provides individual support to faculty and TAs in learning to use the system. Chris's in-person demo and the tutorial show how to use the software to automatically combine student comments and information from an Excel spreadsheet into a Word document to create all of the evaluations for the course. The resulting text is easily edited prior to submission.

Keeping student records in Excel can be helpful for organization throughout the quarter, especially in large courses with multiple TAs. Excel can also automatically complete commonly used phrases and be set up to translate scores or abbreviations to phrases. (No prior experience with Excel is necessary; for the most part, its use is similar to Word.)

To date, nearly 200 instructors have been assisted in setting

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Mid-Quarter Feedback

The Center for Teaching Excellence offers several options for obtaining mid-quarter feedback on teaching. The best time for mid-quarter feedback is weeks 3-5 of the quarter.

Review the available options at <http://www.ic.ucsc.edu/CTE/mqf.html>, or call the CTE director (x9-5091) to discuss which approach would be best for you.

Grading Students Without Degrading Learning

James Sheldon, Student Representative to the Committee on Teaching

From its beginning until 1996, UCSC was essentially a grade-free campus. Although students could opt for letter grades in a few upper division science courses, students did not have GPAs, and written evaluation was the primary form of evaluation. From 1996-2000, undergraduate students had the option of choosing whether or not to take letter grades. In Fall 2001, UC Santa Cruz went to a system in which all new undergraduate students were required to take the majority of their classes for a letter grade.

Regardless of one's beliefs on the wisdom of the grading policy decision, letter grading is now a reality at UC Santa Cruz. The question that now arises is simple. How do we assess students while creating an ideal pedagogical environment and maximize student learning?

Barbara Rogoff points out in "Relevant Research on the Effects of Grades on Learning" what I would consider to be the crux of this issue. She argues, "Making grades the CENTER of our assessment system could both attract and create less academically qualified students." Although it is too soon to determine whether or not this is the case, an important consideration remains. There is a high cost to the overemphasis of grades in the learning process. Research in this area indicates that emphasizing grading tends to lower student performance, decrease intellectual engagement, and discourage higher order thinking skills.

Is there a way to have a mandatory grading system and its resulting emphasis on grading and yet to simultaneously de-emphasize them? As paradoxical as it may sound, there is. How we choose to utilize grades and evaluation processes in the classroom determines whether we are creating students that are less academically qualified. Even more important than what is on our transcripts is how we utilize grading in the classroom.

Ohmer Milton in his 1986 study on grades and learning developed a psychometric assessment instrument to classify students into two groups: learning oriented and grade oriented. For example, a student who answered yes to "I get irritated by students who ask questions that go beyond what we need to know for exams" would be classified as grade-oriented. A student who answered yes to "I discuss interesting material that I've learned in my class with my friends or family" would be classified as learning-oriented. An individual student could be learning oriented, grade oriented, both, or neither.

The results of the study were mostly what we would have expected. Students who were learning oriented attended more to the class material, paid more attention to the class instructor, thought more about the material during class and scored the highest on both essay and multiple-choice examinations. What is quite surprising, however, is that students who were both learning and grade oriented simultaneously scored the lowest on the examinations, had the lowest scores on abstract reasoning, and reported the highest levels of text anxiety. The group of students that we would expect to do the best in the courses ironically did the worst. And of course, how we use grades and grading in the classroom affects how students will respond and learn.

Milton concluded the study by passionately arguing for de-emphasis of grades in the learning process. He wrote, "Faculty members have it within their power to reduce this pernicious and distorting aspect of educational practice that often serves to work against learning. If faculty would relax their emphasis on grades, this might serve not to lower standards but to encourage an orientation toward learning." The question, however, is how one might actually de-emphasize grades and emphasize learning within a letter-graded context such as the one we have now at UCSC.

In my Literature 101 course in fall 2003 (taught by Carla Freccero), the grading system did not involve a point system. Instead, we were given a list of criteria that would determine whether or not we received a B grade in the course: satisfactory completion of papers, attendance and participation in lecture and section, attendance in MSI sections, and completion of reading response notecards handed in to our TAs. Satisfactory performance in all of these areas is required; doing well in one area does not replace doing poorly in another area, unlike a point averaging system. In fact, there were no points or grades for any of the assignments and activities throughout the course.

When we received our first assignment back from our teaching assistants, some of us were surprised to discover that there were no letter grades on our papers. Instead, a narrative analysis and commentary of our papers was attached. Although students were initially uncomfortable with this, it was effective in achieving its purposes. Few students ever tried to get their grade changed or argued for points (not that there were any points). No student stopped work on a paper prematurely because they "already had an A in the class" or "just needed a

C to pass.” And student inquiries to TAs focused primarily on how to improve their papers or their understanding of course material instead of their grade.

A course that grades like this takes students’ attention away from grades and puts it more on the subject, allowing their genuine interests to take over. In such a milieu, students are more likely to voluntarily do work. For example, our final paper in the course was made optional and yet I still completed it because I felt like I had more to say and was capable of doing a better job on it. Research in this area also shows that emphasizing extrinsic motivation such as grades in general reduces intrinsic motivation, especially in the long term. (See for example <http://www.oncourseworkshop.com/Motivation004.htm> for more on this.)

Does a reduced emphasis on grades mean a lack of rigor and challenge for students? Not necessarily. In fact, Literature 101 is an especially rigorous course in the Literature curriculum. It has a low pass rate, which means that supplemental sections and tutoring are offered through the EOP Learning Center. It deals with complex theoretical material and analysis. By de-emphasizing grades, it successfully emphasizes learning. Alfie Kohn, in *Punished by Reward*, remarks that what we often think of as academic rigor is instead academic rigor mortis. We have the power as educators to raise standards and to encourage independent intellectual and critical thinking in our classes. By de-emphasizing grading, we can meet our obligations to grade students without degrading learning.

James Sheldon is a 4th year Crown College student, majoring in “Interdisciplinary Computer Science Teaching.” This is his second year serving as an undergraduate student representative to the Committee on Teaching. He welcomes comments on this article, and can be reached at jsheldon@ucsc.edu.

For a copy of Barbara Rogoff’s article visit <http://www.jamessheldon.com/graderes.html>
Other tips for encouraging intrinsic motivation can be found online at:

<http://www.cat.ilstu.edu/conf/handouts/intrinsicmot.shtml>

The Ohmer Milton book *Making Sense of College Grades* can be found at McHenry Library, call # LB2368 .M57 1986 ❖



Synergy: Explorations in Science and Society

Catherine Soehner, Science and Engineering Library

The Science & Engineering Library is pleased to announce a new lecture series, *Synergy: Explorations in Science and Society*. This series will focus on UCSC research, teaching and grants in science and engineering with a view towards their impact on society.

The Synergy lecture series is designed to provide a platform for exchanging ideas and showcasing the exciting research being done on this campus.

The first lecture will be on April 27th at 4:00 pm, and we are very happy to have Brent Haddad, Associate Professor of Environmental Studies, as our inaugural speaker. His talk, titled “Not an accident?: Understanding why 1 billion people lack reliable drinking water world-wide,” will discuss global drinking water and wastewater treatment crises, and how these problems historically have been viewed as failures of economic development and international aid programs. As an alternative approach, he will explain how insights from Coalition Theory, a branch of economic game theory, applied to international relations can help explain who gets reliable drinking water in the world and who doesn’t. Professor Haddad will conclude his talk with implications and recommendations for improving access to drinking water worldwide.

Professor Haddad is an authority on water issues and in 1999 published the book *Rivers of Gold: Designing Markets to Allocate Water in California*. He is currently working on a new book that will discuss the issue of worldwide potable water. His lecture will be a chance to hear what insights he brings to this very important topic.

There are plans for a Synergy web site that will describe upcoming lectures and provide photographs and streaming audio of past events.

If you would like to participate as one of our upcoming speakers, please contact Catherine Soehner (459-1554, soehner@ucsc.edu). ❖

Please join us to hear Brent Haddad on April 27th at 4 pm in the S&E Library Current Periodical Room.

Visit the UCSC Teaching Toolbox: <http://teaching.ucsc.edu>

Federal Grants Program Funds Innovations in Higher Education

Ruth Harris-Barnett

<http://www.ed.gov/programs/fipsecomp/index.html>

Problem: *Students at many college campuses do not have access to courses in less commonly-taught languages, such as Arabic.*

Solution: *A distance-learning program called “Arabic Without Walls,” developed by a multi-institutional team of language instructors headed by Robert Blake of UC Davis, with the help of a more than \$450,000 grant from the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education. The team, awarded the grant in the 2003 round of funding, will build on the success of “Spanish Without Walls” to pilot a solution potentially applicable to a variety of less commonly-taught languages.*

For the past 30 years, the federal Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education, or FIPSE, has been funding innovations and improvements such as this one affecting all areas of higher education. Over the years, FIPSE-funded projects have tackled some of the most prominent issues in higher education: increasing access for under-represented populations, reforming medical education, and improving K-12 teacher education. A host of new learning approaches have been pioneered through FIPSE grants. Unlike grant programs supported by many foundations, FIPSE has no specific agenda, nor does it have grant categories. Instead, it is left up to applicants to identify areas of need and make a case for their improvement. The program’s stated goals are quite broad: “The competition is designed to support innovative reform projects that hold promise as models for the resolution of important issues and problems in postsecondary education.”

The projects’ roles as “models” is important. Like “Arabic Without Walls,” FIPSE projects are expected to have broad potential applicability. Each proposal must include a plan for “dissemination and for expanding the scope of your pilot, and/or for achieving widespread impact on postsecondary reform.” The program also seeks to achieve broad impact through encouraging collaborations between and within institutions, and often funds partnerships between institutions of higher education and K-12 schools. While there is no stated limit to grant amounts, successful projects typically receive between \$300,00 and \$600,000 spread over two to three years.

Several UC campuses have received FIPSE awards. In 2003, in

addition to the UC Davis award, UC Irvine received funding for a new bachelor of science degree in Informatics, and UCLA for a project to increase geographical literacy and English proficiency in local schools.

In all, 45 projects were funded in 2003, from a total appropriation of over \$25 million. Other notable awards in 2003 included:

- a project to improve alignment of learning outcomes and assessment between 2-year and 4-year institutions, headed up by Portland State University;
- continued funding of the technological transformations of large-enrollment courses initiated through the Pew Program in Course Redesign;
- a project at University of Minnesota Twin Cities to improve the teaching of science to non-science majors through a special earth sciences curriculum;
- a University of Wyoming effort to restructure the general-education curriculum through identifying a set of “working literacies;”
- an initiative to improve access and retention of Latino students at University of Arizona through creation of a degree program in translation and interpretation.
- a project at Bennett College of North Carolina to improve the first-year college experience through learning communities
- an effort to embed a college campus within a subsidized housing community, led by Bunker Hill Community College in Massachusetts.

Faculty or others who have an idea for expanding a local innovation through a federal grant are encouraged to contact Ruth Harris-Barnett at CTE to discuss the project’s potential. ❖

Looking for a good book on teaching?

CTE maintains an annotated bibliography of books on teaching and learning. We may be able to suggest a title on a specific topic you are interested in, such as teaching in large classes, using small groups in teaching, or student motivation.

New Version of Library's NetTrail Guides Students through Forest of Information

Christy Caldwell, Science & Engineering Library

<http://nettrail.ucsc.edu>

The University Library is happy to announce the re-designed NetTrail (<http://nettrail.ucsc.edu>). This new version of NetTrail addresses how best to find, evaluate, use and communicate the information a student needs. It is designed for students new to the research process, specifically lower division undergraduates. It is not subject specific and can be used in a variety of introductory courses.

The original "NetTrail: the UCSC Computer Literacy Course" was released in 1997. Along with Library research skills, it also introduced the email program Pine and how to use a Web browser. Clearly, an update was needed.

NetTrail is a supplement to University Library instruction assistance such as class lectures and hands-on instruction. As the name suggests, the Web site uses the natural environment of our wooded campus and its network of trails as a navigational motif. The content is organized into six sections, each with a trail "marker" to indicate the logical sequence:

1. Types of Info: An overview that introduces students to various types of sources.
2. Choosing a Topic: Provides tips on broadening and narrowing a topic and discusses search concepts.
3. Library & Web: Looks at the comparative evaluation of Web sources.
4. CruzCat: How to use the Library catalog effectively.
5. Finding Articles: What is an article database and how to use it to find scholarly articles.
6. Info Ethics: Explains why and how to use citations, and covers the topic of plagiarism.

These sections can be viewed in this order, or used individually to review certain skills. There is a quiz covering the topics in these sections, so that instructors can assign NetTrail as extra credit. The student completes the quiz, answers all questions correctly, and prints out a certificate to return to the instructor. Students will benefit most by completing NetTrail before they begin their research or attend a library research session.

While some abstract concepts need textual explanation, many graphics, animation and interactive elements have been added

with the hands-on learner in mind. To illustrate more complex, multi-step procedures such as using CruzCat or UC-eLinks, Flash animation was employed. For other concepts such as keyword searching or plagiarism, the student is asked to complete an activity.

Future versions of NetTrail will have new interactive pieces and additional concepts. Questions, comments and suggestions are appreciated and can be sent to net3@library.ucsc.edu. ❖



Update on Evaluations Support: ...

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up the software approach to fit their evaluation styles. Here are some of their comments:

"Using a template he prepared in cooperation with the entire course staff, Chris made the drafting, gathering, and delivery of 430 detailed narrative evaluations a surprisingly manageable undertaking. As long as we're obliged to teach courses of this size, it's the only way to go." (Forrest Robinson, American Studies)

"All I had to do was follow the directions and it was easy. So much quicker than cut and paste." (Jill Thompson, Ecology and Evolutionary Biology)

"Chris not only has made the process of writing evaluations less onerous but has provided friendly, competent, and reliable assistance at various points in the process. I can't imagine doing evaluations any other way." (Deborah Woo, Community Studies)

Currently, Chris is developing evals.ucsc.edu, a web-site for evaluations support containing a library of sample templates, background articles, and answers to frequently asked questions. New materials for expanding the use of the tutorial are also being created to use OpenOffice with UNIX systems and for using WebCT's record-keeping feature.

If you would like assistance from Chris in getting started with the software approach, for questions, or help designing your evaluations, please contact him at 459-1573 or chrislee@ucsc.edu.



Technology In Teaching Event Highlights **Pedagogy**

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technology to engage students, provide new resources, or create new kinds of learning environments. Developers had thought deeply about student learning, and described how they had tested and refined their approaches over time. The presentations sparked discussion of the pedagogical implications of introducing technological innovations into courses, including such issues as visual literacy, attention span, and student engagement. For instance, one listener raised concerns about maintaining the reliability of database information; another asked about the quality of online discussions. Another responded in writing:

“I hope that faculty do not get so involved in increasing technological applications that they lose sight of the fundamental processes involved in higher education, i.e., close, intensive work with individual students.”

Among the ideas that emerged from the Convocation:

- Technology really does provide completely new ways of learning, and thus can enhance the learning of students who were less well-served by traditional methods: for instance, through graphic presentation of concepts, or through on-line interaction.
- Incorporating technology into teaching leads instructors to re-examine their assumptions about how students learn.
- Today’s students respond to, and indeed expect, visual stimuli far more than previous generations.
- Developing a complex and effective piece of learning software is both time- and resource-intensive.
- Successful technology projects increasingly reflect collaborations between individuals such as faculty, grad students, library professionals, IT staff; these collaborations often transcend departmental or institutional boundaries.

Keynote speaker Bernard R. Gifford, Professor in the Graduate School of Education at UC Berkeley and president of the Distributed Learning Workshop, presented his vision of how technology can transform teaching in higher education. He advocated for collaboration in technology development (rather than the “lone ranger” approach), for using technology to address needs of underrepresented groups in higher education, and for understanding how disciplinary differences may affect course management system design.

Throughout the afternoon, the exhibit room showcased both on-campus resources and new products from commercial vendors. Guests were able to see such resources as “UCWrite” (for supporting writing instruction) and the library’s “NetTrail” (an online literacy tutorial), as well as WebCT, and instructional development resources provided by the Faculty Instructional Technology Center and Media Services. Products included audience response systems and online textbooks.

Overall, response to the new Convocation format has been overwhelmingly positive, with many suggestions received for making it even better next time.

“Please keep the format, and the exhibitors were good too.”

“I thought the convocation was terrific. . . getting to talk with these folks [exhibitors] about PowerPoint, automated evaluations, etc. was extremely helpful.”

“I am looking forward to this event next year, hoping to see even more advances in using technology to teach.”

The Convocation on Teaching was a collaborative venture presented by the Academic Senate Committee on Teaching, the Center for Teaching Excellence, Media Services, and the Information Technology Services Division. It was supported by generous donations from Microsoft, Apple, McGraw-Hill, and Addison Wesley. ❖



Editor’s Corner

Incubating Innovations in Teaching

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In addition to the colloquia, CTE periodically offers topical workshops & seminars on teaching. These sessions have the goal of enhancing a particular skill in teaching through facilitated discussion, enabling participants to benefit from sharing their experiences and challenges. (See the back cover for a full schedule.) I sincerely hope you will find the time to attend one or more of our teaching events.

Ideas for future colloquium or seminar topics are welcomed, as are offers to present. Contact Ruth Harris-Barnett, rlharris@ucsc.edu.

Award Winning Teachers on Teaching

Following are teaching statements from recipients of the 2002-03 Excellence in Teaching Awards.

Thinking (and Feeling) Deeply about Teaching and Learning

Wendy Martyna, Lecturer, Sociology

Asked in this brief essay to demonstrate that I “think deeply about teaching and learning, and apply that thinking in the classroom,” I hardly know where to end. Beginning is easy – I have always loved teaching and learning. I bribed other neighborhood kids to “play school” with me, in the summers, on weekends, even right after school let out. It took the promise of chocolate chip cookies to get them to come sit in my garage and do my homemade worksheets, so I would have something to “grade.” As it turns out, grading is not my favorite part of teaching, but I still feel that learning can be play — good, hard play — filled with experimentation, discovery, and exuberance.

I began teaching at UCSC twenty-five years ago, just after earning my Ph.D. in Psychology at Stanford, a young Assistant Professor eager to do it all: teaching, research, writing, activism. I got here just in time for the final year of Teacher on the Hill, a weekly lunchtime group that gathered across disciplines, and published a journal in which we explored our thinking—and our feeling—about the art of teaching. I organized lunches for women faculty where we could talk of teaching, and probe the particular issues facing us as female professors. And I was free to teach classes that meant the most to me: Social Psychology of Death and Dying, Psychology of Writing, Language and the Sexes, Social Psychology of Childhood.

But five years later, even after a successful mid-career review, I chose to leave the tenure track. I couldn’t do it all, after all. It seemed there was never enough time to devote to teaching, my primary purpose in becoming a professor. But what felt at the time like my swan song (when I was chosen by Stevenson students to give their commencement address) turned out to be only one note in an ongoing score, for I decided to stay on as a Lecturer. Teaching could now be my main focus. Later, that focus expanded to include many other contexts, such as private workshops, community college classes for re-entry women, courses for home schooled children, public lectures, radio work, community organizing. And for several years I studied, and then began to teach, poetry and storytelling, to schoolchildren as well as professionals, here

and in the U.K.

Eight years ago, I returned to UCSC as a Lecturer, bringing back into my classrooms all I had come to learn outside of them. New courses came my way: Sociology of Love, Sociology of Emotions, Family and Society, along with my former courses on gender, and on Death and Dying. I resurrected the Teaching Practicum model I’d first developed in 1980, training a core group of undergraduates to lead discussion sections for my very large classes. And I returned to teaching College Core Courses. At Cowell and Merrill for the past eight years, I’ve savored the interdisciplinary emphasis, as well as the attention to first principles, that characterize these small seminars.

My courses pose questions, both big ones and small. Here’s a big one, for example: What can social psychology tell us about the things we worry most about — love and death and sex and time and the meaning of our lives (and also important: What does it fail to tell us?). Such questions takes us on journeys, with beginnings (What do you already know, or assume you know, about this topic?) as well as endings (What will you do with what you know now? What do you still need to know?). On the last day of class, I often write on the board these lines from e.e. cummings: “Always the beautiful answer which asks a more beautiful question.”

“Which do you think came first, “I asked a recent class, “Sociology or Death and Dying?” I want it clear that we are going to have to cross boundary lines to get where we are going on this questioning journey. William Miller, a Professor of Law writing on social psychological themes, hoped his work could “make some small breaches in the monstrously thick wall that divides the academic and non-academic worlds.” Often, I like to take down the walls altogether – showing film excerpts, reciting poetry, telling stories, bringing in speakers who are doing the very work the students are reading about. It’s risky to leave the lecture outline for a moment, let alone the discipline, but it’s exhilarating, too. Sometimes I lose my way. Then I think on what Miles Davis said, “Do not fear mistakes. There are none.” It’s how you find your way back that makes the music, not the fact that you got lost for a moment, hearing the sound of something new. And I try to go by this truth – you have to practice your scales, so your improvisations can shimmer and shine.

Explication and extension – these are what my lectures
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What can social psychology tell us about the things we worry most about — love and death and sex and time and the meaning of our lives . . .

Statement on Teaching

Sandy Chung, Professor of Linguistics / Chair of Philosophy

For me, the purpose of teaching is to help students discover for themselves how to think actively and rigorously, and to make the process of discovery exciting (intense) enough that its impact persists beyond the classroom. This view is shaped by the hands-on, interactive, Socratic approach used by me and others in the Linguistics Department to teach syntactic theory.

The introductory syntax course that I teach (Linguistics 52) is designed to take students from ground zero in their knowledge of English sentence structure to a sophisticated grasp of

syntactic analysis and syntactic theory. Through class discussion and problem sets, on which they are encouraged to work collaboratively, students discover first how basic sentences are built up from words, then how to form hypotheses about how more complex sentence types are constructed. Through debate with one another, they discover how to use evidence to decide which of their competing hypotheses is superior. Finally, they participate in building a formal rule system that incorporates the generalizations they have uncovered.

The instructor's tasks in this process of discovery are two: first, to put certain key theoretical assumptions in place, and second, to nurture the discussion so that the rest of the course content—specific analyses, the understanding of what counts as evidence, the formal rule system—emerges organically but efficiently. This second task is immensely exciting for me. Every class period has an analytic goal which is achievable in numerous ways but must be achieved, one way or another. Directing the flow of the conversation toward that goal requires energy, concentrated attention, and a high level of responsiveness to the students and respect for their ideas. When this instructional improvisation works and the class reaches the desired goal by some new and surprising route, I feel enormous satisfaction.

The Socratic approach works well in syntax courses for a couple of reasons. Syntactic analysis is rigorous and highly structured, so that even though there might be many routes to the overall analytic goal, at every key point along the route, there are only a very few alternatives among which to choose. The enrollment in syntax courses is small enough for all students to participate actively in discussion and to interact with the instructor. (Socrates did not teach large lecture courses.)

As my teaching has diversified, it has been challenging for

me to try to import the hands on, interactive approach into courses which fit less obviously into a Socratic framework. For instance, Poetry and Language (Linguistics 108), is an interdisciplinary course in which I introduce students to rhyme, meter, and how these linguistic devices are employed in poetic form. Rhyme and meter have a formal linguistic analysis that is quite rigorous. So orchestrating the discussion to get students to discover the details of, say, Shakespeare's use of iambic pentameter is relatively straightforward. But it is

much harder to make precise how rhyme and meter contribute to the larger aesthetic impact of poetry, even in poems in which linguistic form and literary effect are, intuitively, quite closely connected. There are only

a handful of poems for which I feel I have managed to elicit this connection successfully in the classroom.

Introduction to Logic (Philosophy 9), a large lower-division course which I have just started teaching, introduces students to sentential logic and predicate logic via the traditional lecture format. Here, the major barrier to a Socratic approach is the number of students enrolled: between 135 and 150. In a class of this size it is impossible to get most students to participate actively in discussion. Nonetheless, some of the benefits of the interactive approach can be achieved by posing frequent questions—some pointed, some open-ended—and interacting with the small number of students who do respond as if they were both representative of the entire group and members of a much smaller class. To an extent that surprised me, it is possible to connect personally with these students, nurture their sense of discovery, and track their progress. Doing so seems to encourage all students, even those who are completely silent, to feel that they, in some sense, have a stake in the interaction.

There is an excitement to Socratic teaching like no other kind of teaching I know. The thrill of discovery has a real impact on the student, and the thrill of novelty—surprise—is ever-present for the instructor, no matter how often s/he has taught the material before. For many years I have thoroughly enjoyed this excitement in syntax courses. I am now deeply committed to bringing it to a wider audience. ❖

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attempt. Not just repeating what they have read, but trying to clarify it, to help students discern the central, the guiding ideas. But often, I use lectures to range beyond the assigned material, to extend and to amplify, to draw connections. For instance, what does this research finding have to do with what you read in today's paper? (So many students don't read a newspaper at all, this helps them learn to link what is learned "on the hill" with what boils and bubbles in the rest of the world.) And I draw in interdisciplinary readings, to show how an idea is approached from different starting points, or articulated with differing intents.

About 30 years older now than most of my students, I work to make sure my offhand references don't seem, to them, entirely off the wall. I find ways to find out what concerns them. Last week, for example, I asked them to list ten news events from their lifetime, which had most affected their attitudes towards death and dying. After categorizing their responses, I integrated them into my next lecture on contemporary cultural influences. I also asked them to generate the headlines they'd most like to see in the coming ten years (world peace was mentioned most often, but their hopes were varied and inspiring). I continue to read everything they write, even though all my classes are large. Their papers let them reflect on what they are learning, and I need to hear that. I comment on their writing; and am always nudging them to attend to grammar, to form, to clarity. To criticize for that purpose is essential, but most important is to praise, to find the perfect phrase and tell them just how good it is. I want them not only to know that it matters — the way they say what they say — but also that someone is listening. With permission, I read a student paper in class from time to time. Hearing another student's words can have surprising impact ("I had no idea," one told me, "that other students were writing so beautifully of such things.") And a freeing effect, as well ("Perhaps I should also write of things that matter.")

I welcome creativity into the classroom, and have found some structural ways to encourage it. Along with the usual identification and essay questions, there is sometimes a model-building portion of my Midterm exams — take these three items, and use them (along with anything else you choose), to construct a model of some idea or theory we have studied. The night I thought of this, my kids and I sat on the floor at home, stocking each of 100 baggies with a penny, a piece of string, and a 3x5 index card. Walking into class on the day the models were due, my initial relief at seeing that they'd actually done them turned to rapture. I'd worried they'd scoff at the 'silliness' of the assignment, but instead, the long front table was covered with creation: a delicate clay sculpture, several

drawings, a three dimensional collage, a complex mobile, and much else. Ideas beautifully brought to life. I recall the young science major who had spent six straight hours crafting an elaborate collage representing the life cycle, and nearly wept as he presented it. He said he'd put away his art when he first came to college, but now, once more, had felt the exhilaration of creating something new.

Final presentations are another invitation to create. They are optional, but the last day of class is always filled with folks who step up front to present something of themselves and what they've learned. One of many vivid memories comes to me now; a re-entry woman, holding her final project in her trembling hands. It had been twenty years since she'd dared to create anything, and she told us why. A nun had once displayed her drawing to the whole 4th grade class, saying, "Now here is an example of some work that demonstrates no creativity whatsoever."

Art can be healing, and learning can be healing, and teaching can be, too. It is the whole person I try to keep in mind when I teach, as well as the person they are hoping to become. It is my own "becoming" I nurture, too, for it's always changing — the books I assign, the syllabi I design, what I think to say and do in the classroom. It seems I'm always beginning again. Each quarter, a new chance to get it right, or to fail in interesting ways, as I remember someone saying (just can't remember who). And the first day of school still intoxicates, especially in fall. I remember filling my notebook with all that promising blue lined paper, sharpening my pencils for the homework to come — the mysterious math problems each with their own true answer, the spelling words that would help me say still more. I ended up dropping out of college in deep disappointment over what I found there, but a year later, I returned, having decided to become a college teacher myself.

Emile Zola said that, as an artist, he came here "to live out loud." Of course, I wanted to avoid the deadliness of so many classrooms I'd been entombed in as a student. But even more, I wanted the teaching and learning atmosphere alive with energy. Praise to those teachers who taught me that was possible — who loved students as well as books, and were not afraid to show that love out loud, every single day. I always want my teaching to honor what I learned from those who have gone before. Let me share one praise song here, of all the many I wish to sing. To my high school debate coach, Miss Bridges, driving us all down Lombard Street on a rainy San Francisco night, belting out an aria in her VW van, exuberant at our first place victory in one more far-away tournament she gladly drove us to, nearly every weekend. I can hear her large laugh now. Maybe you can, too; she's there in some golden place our memory safeguards, along with all the other teachers who give us so much more than they can ever know. ❖

Faculty Seminars ❖ Spring Quarter 2004

Topics in Teaching

Thursday, April 15, 3:30-5:00 pm, Bay Tree Conference Center, Room A

Guiding Students through a Research Paper

Dan Scripture, Writing Program
Deborah Murphy, McHenry Library

Research is the cornerstone of academic writing, and students in upper-division classes in the disciplines are frequently asked to write research-based papers. This seminar focuses on practical methods for helping students write successful research papers, including formulating a research question, developing an argument in response to that question, and conducting appropriate research. We will discuss encouraging students to see question, research, and writing as inter-related, rather than as a series of discrete steps. Also addressed will be issues of information literacy, and guiding students in evaluating sources.

Recommended for: Faculty who teach courses incorporating a research paper assignment.

Wednesday, April 28, 3:30-5:00 pm, Cowell Conference Room 132

Spring Instructional Improvement Colloquium:

New Curricula, New Approaches

2001-02 and 2002-03 Course Development Fellows
Hosted by the Academic Senate Committee on Teaching

Faculty who have received Course Development Fellowships through the Instructional Improvement Program will speak about the new courses they developed. These fellowships not only explore new curricular areas but, more importantly, have sought out new approaches to teaching. Presentations will address issues relating to large courses, “W” courses, and interactive approaches. Includes time for questions and discussions.

Recommended for: All faculty.

Wednesday, May 5, 3:30-5:00 pm, Bay Tree Conference Center, Room C

Course Design

Ruth Harris-Barnett, Director, CTE

This workshop will explore how well-designed courses can foster the kinds of learning we value. We will address how to align course objectives, assessments, and learning activities, and participants will have an opportunity to discuss their own course development challenges with colleagues. Participants should bring ideas for a course they are currently planning or revising, or for a “dream course” they would like to create.

Recommended for: Course Development Fellows, faculty interested in applying for Course Development Fellowships, faculty developing new courses, assistant professors.

