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TEACHING MATTERS

The Newsletter of the Center for Effective University Teaching

Volume 9, Edition 2 **Spring 2004**

Engaged Learning Redeux

- Donna Qualters

During a lesson in my class about learning theory and learning styles one student remarked: "If this is the way people learn, why do we teach the way we do, it seems in conflict!". My answer – it is! We all know the construction of any centralized system, education included, is more political/pragmatic than research/theory based. Thinking about this though begs the question, "what is our role in a process (education) that contradicts theory (learning/learning styles) and frequently changes with more research?"

In the broadest sense, for the boomers (of which I reluctantly admit to being one) higher education provided the necessary knowledge we needed to change the world. We were raised in an educational system that stressed, nay demanded, critical analysis, thinking, and evidence based arguments. By the time most of us reached college, we knew how to process and analyze information but often didn't have access to sufficient information. We relied on our faculty to provide that for us – our own personal sage on the stage.

Recently, I attended the Enrollment Management presentation on the "millennial student". This presentation prompted me to dig a little deeper into this population who are now entering higher education. Millennial, GenZ or NetGeners, whatever you want to call them, are different. But then so is every generation. It is the area of difference in every generation that directly confronts the educational system.

What is different about today's students? Bet you think I'm going to say technology! And while students today are more technologically proficient then ever before, that's not the most important difference. Those studying the millennial generation are telling us that they are less creative and able to critically analyze (Howe & Strauss, 2003) and more experiential based learners (Higher Education Leaders Symposium, 2003) than any previous generation. This is neither good nor bad, it simply is. But it presents an interesting classroom dynamic: a generation of faculty educated as critical thinkers seeking information is confronted by a generation of instant information gatherers seeking critical/creative skills in a hands-on environment.

What does that mean in our classrooms today? It means LEARNING THEORY IS IMPORTANT. People learn by interacting and experiencing the material!! This is not new, John Dewey told us that over 50 years ago. We need to help our students

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develop divergent thinking skills, to be able to critically analyze the flood of information they process every day. This generation, more than any other, doesn't need factual information as much as a way to apply, analyze, and use that information. Fundamentally they are seeking a different classroom experience. However, I'm the first to admit, that this is easier said then done. But do it we must!

Active learning is not a fad. It is a reality of today's students and today's world. Only by actively engaging students in and out of the classroom can we fulfill our role as educators. Only by challenging today's students to stretch their minds to think more creatively and analytically and by having them experience what we are talking about will we be preparing them for their future role in society.

Because of the importance of this pedagogical approach to learning, we are devoting this issue once again to active learning. There are many forms of active learning and many ways to integrate it into classrooms. Something as simple as a 10/2 lecture (10 minutes of lecture/2 minutes of students processing) makes the material come alive as students grapple with what they have just heard. Asking critical, well-crafted, open ended questions that seek creative solutions (not just factual answers) challenge students to stretch their thinking outside the box. In this issue, we have offered other creative ways to engage students in their learning.

Remember, regardless of the generation we belong to, learning theory tell us we remember:

5% of what we hear
10% of what we read and hear
20% of what we see, read, and hear
50% of what we discuss
75% of what we practice
90% of what we immediately use
(Learning Journeys, 2000).

Donna Qualters is Director of the Center for Effective University Teaching and Associate Professor in the School of Education

The Dialogue of Civilizations: A Model of Active Learning

- Riham Bahi, Political Science Department

In December 2002 and January 2003, Northeastern University and Cairo University launched a pilot program called the Dialogue of Civilizations. This was the first time for Northeastern University to engage in such a project. Judging from the students' reactions and evaluations, indeed the project was a successful experience in active learning.

In active learning, as Dr. Miriam Diamond describes it, "the climate of the classroom is transformed, students are thinking, debating, clarifying, and talking out the task. They begin to take ownership of it. They connect with one another and stretch the boundaries of their individual levels of comprehension". "Students are better able to apply concepts and comprehend information when they have worked with the material interactively". Participatory learning shifts students from mostly physically passive to active, which increases long-term retention of data and concepts".

Our dialogue experience extended active learning beyond classrooms. Students were physically active; they traveled thousands of miles to a different country in order to gain a practical experience of academic research. The instructors took the time to learn who the students are and how to connect with them and acted as facilitator of critical thinking in a more causal climate. The instructors' role focused on identifying the subject matter and engaging students in active learning. Including this active learning component in the curriculum proved to support a variety of learning styles, including verbal, visual and spatial.

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The idea for this particular Dialogue, between Northeastern University and Cairo University students, developed over coffee in Davis Square in Somerville Massachusetts in summer 2002. The idea of a student exchange and Dialogue became the focus for collaboration between Professors Denis Sullivan and Nadia Mostafa and their universities.

In "Clash of Civilizations," Samuel Huntington argues that conflict emerges from the incompatibility of major culture blocs in the world. Huntington feels that a primary chasm exists between "East and West", especially between the Islamic world and the Christian West. The Dialogue of Civilizations became our joint response to the notion that there is a CLASH of Civilizations. Professors and students at both Cairo and Northeastern Universities feel that such a clash is not inevitable or even a realistic picture of the "new world order."

That was our belief prior to the Dialogue we held in December 2002 and January 2003. That belief was even more confirmed once the Dialogue occurred and succeeded in bringing our students together to share "world views" as well as their own personal stories of life, politics, art, culture, religion, gender, economics, global issues, and so on.

Prior to the Dialogue of Civilizations, students from Northeastern University and Cairo University read the competing theories of clash of civilizations, learned overviews of history, culture, religion, language, and political stances, both Egyptian and American. The two groups began discussions prior to the NU visit to Cairo via email - a "virtual dialogue" that helped pave the way for more open discussions once the two groups met at Cairo University. Professor Sullivan relied on two doctoral candidates and Teaching assistants, Paul Beran and Riham Bahi.

The Dialogue of Civilizations was designed to engage students in an even higher level of active discussion to promote a shared reality and perception of the world. This program, as Professor Sullivan puts it, "*quite literally brings the world into the NU classrooms and sends NU classes out into the world*".

The preparation required prior to attending the Dialogue of Civilizations is a demanding chore as students must do extensive reading and research on a variety of issues - economic, political, social, humanitarian, and so on, relative to both the United States and Egypt. Students work together as a team from Northeastern and help one another with research, training in public speaking, and negotiating on critical issues facing the global community.

Regarding the goals and objective of the program, this program is central to Professor Sullivan's efforts to promote a fully "internationalized" curriculum. The Dialogue promotes the goals of student leadership training, international awareness, and global cooperation.

Individually, Northeastern students experienced the following:

- Practical application of academic research
- On-line and international communications, between NU and Cairo University
- Public speaking, defending arguments, all-the-while maintaining a "community" of peers
- Learning about compromise as well as sticking to principles
- Negotiating interpersonal dynamics in a cross-cultural setting
- Experience in group dynamics, occasionally cooperating, occasionally arguing;
- "Culture Shock" as well as cultural awareness and sensitivity toward multi-cultural and international environments (and upon returning to the U.S., students also dealt with "re-entry" or "reverse culture" shock).

Beyond the obvious learning about international politics and governance, this program develops leaders and facilitates intellectual, personal, and interpersonal growth. In addition to these skills that are called upon and developed, students came away from this experience with a great deal more understanding of and appreciation for cultural,

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national, ethnic, religious, and ideological differences. They became more enlightened citizens of the world community and hold out hope for our collective future, as they prepare themselves (with our help) to take on the mantle of leadership in the years to come.

In order to measure that the students are *learning* what we are *teaching*, each student participant wrote a review of the Dialogue of Civilizations and a reflective essay at the conclusion of the program. Through this format, the students have the opportunity to provide feedback on program structure and organization as well as an interpretation of their own personal progress on skill enhancement such as negotiation and conflict resolution, group dynamics, diplomacy and leadership. To summarize just some of their own words:

In preparing for the dialogue, we discussed a variety of topics. We read the opposing sides of the dialogue versus clash of civilization debate. We examined the ideas put forth in "Jihad vs. McWorld." We also discussed issues of interest to us, such as the veil, the Palestinian and Israeli conflict, and the leadership of President Mubarak. All of this preparation helped me at the Dialogue. The topics we were briefed on aided us in getting started with discussion. However, I believe the real value came from the open discussion we shared with the Egyptian students."

. . . .Tracy D. Thigpen

While in Cairo, I came closer to realizing that differences are wonderful and special and they are what make up our world. The reason differences often lead to misunderstandings and misinterpretations is because we rarely take the time to look at issues from a different point of view as we get fixed in believing that the picture is only two-dimensional. This seems to sum up the reason for creating the "Dialogue of Civilizations," so that we as students can come and stand at different angles of the picture and marvel, or cringe, at the sights that have been there all along but that we are only now becoming aware of."

. . . .Lillie Paquette

There was so much preparation before we began our travels, and much to my surprise, I didn't feel as though I needed to read up on the opinions of Huntington and others. Once I actually began to talk with students from Cairo University, I realized that there was so much more to learn, rather than the theories behind the differences between our governments. It was the mere cultural differences, and the understanding of what each tradition meant that really had an impact. Just sitting down and talking to someone about something as simple as coffee, turned into a political debate about corporations and how each government deals with globalization."

. . . . Emerald Gravel

Some of the most important issues discussed included the recent conflict in Afghanistan and the Arab-Israeli conflict. Also discussed was the relationship between Egypt and the United States and the origins of policies in both countries. The exchange was particularly interesting because it had both a local issue specific nature and an abstract one as well. We looked at matters on a state level and on the broad level of Arab-Western relations, finding much agreement between Northeastern and Cairo University students. The veil often came up as a subject, much to the surprise of our Egyptian counterparts but they quickly realized that this symbolizes much of the Islamic world in the United States and is commonly misperceived."

. . . . Michael Kofman

Riham Bahi is a Ph.D. student in the Political Science Department

Photograph by Riham Bahi

Top: *(left to right) Paul Beran, Hilary Rantisi, Emerald Gravel, Michael Kofman, Daniel Quintel, Lillie Paquette, Denis Sullivan*
Bottom: *(left to right) Tracy Thigpen, Michael Sechrist, Michael Romano, Lauren Mountain, Phil D'Agati*

Strategies for Increasing Student Participation in Class: Warming up Cold Calls

- Elise J. Dallimore, Julie H. Hertenstein and Marjorie B. Platt

The widespread belief that active approaches to student learning are preferable to more traditional lecture-based instruction has fundamentally altered the ways in which colleges and universities think about teaching and learning. Educational philosophers have long argued that higher education ought to shift away from its focus on teaching and, instead, place greater emphasis on student learning. A natural extension of this discussion has been an appeal for instructors to use instructional strategies designed to actively engage students in the teaching-learning process.

Of the recommended approaches perhaps one of the frequently used and more often embraced "active learning" strategies is classroom discussion. The benefits of discussion include: helping students develop critical understanding, self-awareness, appreciation for diverse perspectives, and the ability to take action. However, one of the challenges in utilizing discussion teaching (or any other active learning strategy) is learning how to do so skillfully. For example, it is one thing to recognize the benefit of engaging students in a classroom discussion yet quite another to master the skills necessary to facilitate such a discussion.

In attempting to enhance both participation and discussion effectiveness, there is concern over what to do about students who are less inclined to participate voluntarily. Cold calling, that is, calling on a student whose hand was not raised, not only increases the number of students participating in the discussion, it is a strategy that has been found to enhance student comfort, preparation and participation frequency. Although cold calling is a strategy that can be used to increase the number of participants in a discussion, the thought of calling on a student whose hand is not raised is viewed by many instructors as punitive or seen as "picking on students." While it is certainly possible to cold call in an intimidating and humiliating way (and we do not encourage this), it does not necessarily follow that all cold calls are. Our work with experienced instructors, however, suggests they initially tend to respond negatively to any suggestion of calling on a student whose hand is not raised. Many have not considered or analyzed the range of techniques that are possible.

In response to such concerns, we undertook a recent study[1] about non-voluntary participation, and more specifically cold calling. In this study, we assembled panels of faculty experts designed to assess how to cold call in an effective, non-punitive manner. Specifically, we asked faculty for their views on what made a cold call so "icy" and for their choices of instructional strategies to "warm up" a cold call. We analyzed their suggestions to identify those qualities that might make a cold call more or less intimidating to students thereby identifying strategies for warming up cold calls and, therefore, enhancing classroom discussion. The strategies that faculty identified fell into the following general categories: (1) setting an expectation of participation, (2) providing opportunities for reflecting and responding, (3) the instructor's facilitation style, (4) appropriate use of questioning, (5) a supportive learning environment, and (6) responding respectfully to student contributions.

1 "Faculty-Generated Strategies for Cold Calling Use: A Comparison with Student Recommendations for Quality Participation and Discussion Effectiveness," by Elise J. Dallimore, Julie H. Hertenstein, and Majorie B. Platt, 2003 Working Paper.

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Not surprisingly, techniques to warm up cold calls directly address many of the icy characteristics. For example, if a cold call is especially icy when it happens unexpectedly, then it can be warmed up by explicitly warning students you will cold call. This finding is consistent with other research that acknowledges the importance of setting expectations in order to manage classroom activities and change. Instructors can use the syllabus and in-class remarks to set the expectation that participation is required and that cold calling will be used and to explain why. Grading participation was also seen as a way to warm up cold calls, as it signaled the importance of participation, and hence further helped to set expectations.

Within category #2 (opportunities to reflect) instructors identified the need for reflection by suggesting that students be given specific questions to prepare for the class and that they be provided opportunities for reflection during the class. Suggestions included, "warn in advance/off-line," "give time to think: take time to write question on board," "put students in groups first," "let them talk about the question," and "assign roles in groups."

Within category #3 (facilitation style) the use of "provocations"—by assigning students to articulate or argue for a particular position on an issue—may leave a student feeling less vulnerable when called upon. If someone were to oppose the student's ideas, the opposition is depersonalized because the student is not necessarily sharing his/her own views but rather articulating the beliefs of those who might hold the position which he/she has been assigned to support. This strategy also has positive implications for international students whose culture suggests that sharing one's own opinions in a classroom is inappropriate because it is individual in its focus and further might be in opposition to the views of the professor who is seen as an authority figure. Category #3 also included the need to establish rules and regulate participation: "ground rules; qualities of a good answer" and "control the monopolizer." Yet, the expert panelists recognized the need to remain flexible, and to "give students a second chance to recover from weak response to an earlier cold call" or "to look at notes," or even to "decline if the student does not want to respond."

Category #4 (appropriate use of questioning) included references to the types of questions: "open-ended; many possible angles or answers," and "allowing for alternative solutions." It also included who to question and why: "keep student's experiences in mind when choosing a student," "identify who might have an answer," and "use questioning to draw student out more, to modify response."

Finally, expert panelists identified the need for a supportive learning environment (category #5) and for responding constructively to student contributions (category #6). They made suggestions such as "create a safe place, "give support," "reinforce any reasonable attempt," and "eliminate 'correction' method; change to modify/paraphrase."

Of considerable interest to us was that as we examined the instructor strategies for warming up cold calls, we discovered a surprising overlap with the typology that emerged upon analysis of student responses regarding instructor behaviors that contribute to the quality of participation and the effectiveness of classroom discussion in a previous study we conducted.[2] The strategies that students identified fell into the following general categories: (1) required/graded participation, (2) incorporating ideas and experience into the discussion, (3) skilled facilitation, (4) asking good questions, (5) supportive classroom environment, and (6) affirm contributions and provide constructive feedback.

There were direct similarities between categories of responses for students and faculty for five of the six categories; the exception was category #2 for each group. Students in their category #2 reported that achieving the combination of quality participation and effective discussion involves the incorporation of student and faculty

2 "Classroom Participation and Discussion Effectiveness: Student Generated Strategies," by Elise J. Dallimore, Julie H. Hertenstein and Marjorie B. Platt, forthcoming in *Communication Education*, 52(3), 267-276.

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ideas and experience. Faculty did not focus on the content of the discussion (which makes sense given the fact that the questions posed to them were specifically related to cold calling as a discussion strategy) but rather on the importance of giving students time for reflecting and responding during discussion.

However, there was considerable consistency among the other categories. For example, in category #1, both students and faculty identified the need for required participation, cold calling and grading participation. Further, the student category #4 (asking of good questions) captured the essence of category #4 (appropriate use of questioning) which emerged from faculty strategies for warming up a cold call. Faculty suggestions that questions allow for alternative solutions are consistent with student discussion of "good" questioning, which they see in terms of faculty asking open-ended questions as a means of inviting discussion as opposed to looking for the "one right answer."

Although both faculty and students seem to agree about what types of questions should be asked (questions that students find to be good and useful in generating quality participation are similar to the questions that faculty identify as warm), the faculty discussion of appropriate questioning is much more extensive than is the students'. In addition to the above discussion regarding what makes questions more or less useful, faculty indicate that appropriate questioning involves not only what is asked, but also who is asked a particular question, as well as the reason for selecting a particular student to respond. Faculty suggest that it is very different to call on a student to highlight his/her lack of preparation than to do so because you want to help the student to expand his/her understanding of a topic/issue. This finding is not surprising considering that experienced faculty likely have a much more sophisticated understanding of the details impacting one's ability to effectively engage in questioning (having wrestled with strategies for leading their own discussions) than do their students. Nonetheless, this difference is worth noting.

In addition, faculty and students both recognized the value of a supportive learning environment (category #5) and responding to student contributions in a respectful, affirming, and constructive manner (category #6). Certainly, the categories generated by faculty and those generated by students are not completely analogous, especially considering that the focus of the questions and the respondent groups differed. Nonetheless, we find it highly relevant that the very strategies students identify as enhancing the quality of participation and the effectiveness of discussion are largely consistent with strategies identified by faculty for warming up a cold call and enhancing non-voluntary participation.

An instructor willing to embrace cold calling in its warmer (even tepid) forms will likely not only produce benefits from greater inclusion of students in class discussion but will also increase participation quality and discussion effectiveness as perceived by students. A number of faculty who participated on our panels (including some who had been skeptical of using cold calling at all) later reported using some of the warmer versions of the cold call and enthusiastically described positive outcomes.

Elise Dallimore is an Assistant Professor of Communication Studies in the College of Arts and Sciences.
Julie Hertenstein is an Associate Professor of Accounting in the College of Business Administration.
Marjorie Platt is a Professor of Accounting in the College of Business Administration.

Do YOU have a teaching technique or approach you would like to share with your colleagues? Did you read an article to which you'd like to respond? We are seeking pieces for future editions of Teaching Matters. Contact Miriam Diamond, the editor, at M.Diamond@neu.edu, with your thoughts.

Ethics, Values, Diversity, and Interactive Learning

- Timothy F. App

It was refreshing to read the feature article, "What is" Academic Teaching"?", in the last issue of Teaching Matters. While the article validated my own beliefs in teaching, it articulated the value of interactive instruction in preparing students for the "real world".

As a thirty year veteran in the criminal justice field, I have had the privilege of serving with many talented administrators. I served in positions that provided me with the opportunity to shape agency agenda, hire, lead and manage staff, and develop public policy. In short, I realized my dream of creating a vision and seeing it through reality. In many ways, I have found the concept of interactive instruction similar to that of leading an agency.

Northeastern prides itself, as it should, on creating a University that is student centered. As faculty, we are here for the benefit of our students; to develop, challenge, educate, and equally important, prepare them to competitively compete for jobs in their field upon graduation. To this end, there needs to be a concentration on such skills as critical thinking, problem solving, and public speaking. Interactive learning initiatives target these very skills.

Although I am fairly new to teaching in a pure academic environment, I have had extensive experience as a trainer/facilitator at various criminal justice training academics. It was here that I began experimenting with interactive learning strategies. While interactive learning may not be appropriate in every situation, my most rewarding experience as an instructor have come from interactive instruction.

I wanted to take this opportunity to share some interactive learning strategies that not only have served me well, but have proven to be popular with my students.

Currently, I am teaching several classes in Ethics, Values, and Diversity in Criminal Justice, an ideal course for interactive learning. Attendance and participation account for 50% of the student's grade; a mid term and final make up the remaining portion of the student's grade. During the semester, students break into smaller working groups to troubleshoot a variety of ethical scenarios in criminal justice. Each student will have an opportunity to act in each role during the course of the semester.

It is during these group activities when the learning process is most pronounced. Students begin to think, debate, build off one another's ideas, identify ethical principles at risk, problem solve, and explore the various options for resolving the issue at hand. The energy is contagious! Each group's spokesperson then presents the findings of the group which often leads to further debate. There is no rush to conclude a particular topic, as long as the discussion is active and proceeds in a purposeful way. The frequency of group activities has served to make students more comfortable in their public speaking roles.

We have created an environment where it is safe to speak, to express ones views. We have also created and environment that I like to call the "no stress zone". The emphasis is on free thinking, expression of one's opinions, *and the ability to apply what we are learning to today's problems*. Memorizing material for the purpose of taking a test is de-emphasized while participation, problem solving, and public speaking is emphasized.

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In the end, absenteeism is minimal; students are alert and report looking forward to coming to class. Most important, *we are learning, preparing for the future, and having fun*!

I look forward to coming to work every day, I truly enjoy working with my students, developing their skills, and watching them grow. My students energize me! I always try to keep in mind that as Faculty we play many roles, among them; educator, facilitator, coach, and cheerleader.

As in the end it's about life, we're here for a short time and therefore it is important that we are doing what we like to do. I like to tell my students, the day you wake up and dread going to work is the day it is time to change careers. I hope to be a part of the Northeastern Community for many years to come.

Timothy F. App is a Visiting Assistant Professor in Criminal Justice

Can This Course Be Saved?
Strategic Interaction – aka – Scenario

- Christina Braidotti

Since the early 1970s, global language teachers have experimented with a garden variety of methodologies, hoping to discover ways to unlock the unequivocal secrets to expediting their students' proficiency in reading, writing, listening and speaking in foreign tongues. Quite early in our search, however, we realized that not one of our choice approaches led to the desired perfection we sought, and that 100% accuracy in all aspects of language learning is an intangible even for native speakers. Moving beyond the unreachable goals we had set for our students then, many of us began to explore devices for luring our language learners into becoming more proactively engaged in the learning processes. How to motivate students to get their on- task mouths open and risk articulating their thoughts in a manner that would preclude bursts of laughing fits as they heard their classmates attempt to roll their French Rs or slide their tongues correctly into their Spanish double Ls was our first objective.

During the late 80s, I began teaching Italian and Spanish at a girls' high school in Wilmington, Delaware. Having implemented various techniques in trial and error mode, one of my colleagues shared a fairly new approach that had worked well for her as she grappled with enticing her students to actually want to speak French in class. We were fascinated as she recounted having heard them carry on in French even in the hallways and the lunchroom. As she continued her story, I had my first introduction to Strategic Interaction, more informally known as Scenario.

In the summer of 1990, I had the immense pleasure of meeting the inventor of SI, Dr. Robert DiPietro, whose 6-week course on Scenario influenced my lesson plans for years after. Dr. DiPietro, a warm and caring human being, now deceased, would surely be smiling at the success of his efforts and all the fun that I and other language teachers have had in our classrooms with some pretty raucous variations on his imaginative creation. I remember that in the first class, which I attended at the University of Delaware, where Dr. DiPietro was professor of Linguistics and occasional instructor of Italian, he said that language students in the hallways were the source of his inspiration to find a way for students to learn foreign languages less painfully. He had heard so many for too long complaining

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that they absolutely hated French, or Spanish or whatever language, because they were struggling so hard. They "just couldn't do languages" and after that year, they would be "so glad that they would never have to suffer their language books or teachers again." He felt it was such a shame that language learning had become a dreaded penance, since with our shrinking world and our lives becoming more peripatetic in nature, this attitude was bound to severely limit our willingness to become more accepting of different languages and cultures. Would we forever be such dyed-in-the-wool anglophiles?

Thus, Scenario. The process was the following. First of all, we worked on a premise of problem solving and resolution. (Scenarios are often catch-22-type situations that require collective strategizing while keeping in mind the sensitivities of others.) A small class of, say, sixteen students would divide into two groups of eight. Each group was handed a card that described a role their side represents. This agenda included some shared information and some unshared information of which the other group is not aware. Right away, each side decided who would actually perform the role, and then spend the next 15 minutes roughing out their ideas in the target language. They did not write scripts, but jotted down phrases. The main idea was for each side to accomplish the goal as described on the card, sharing ideas in a collaborative spirit. The teacher called time, and the two performers began the scenario in front of the class. It was essential that while this was happening, each performer relied upon the group's recommendations for the direction of the action, bearing in mind the inclusion of the group. Group members were encouraged to communicate with the performer, calling time out when the performance seemed to be headed in a "dangerous" direction. When the problem appeared to be adequately resolved, or when the teacher called time, the Scenario ended and the debriefing session began. Debriefing was conducted in a variety of ways, from simply asking students to describe what they thought was happening, to reflecting on how a better outcome could have been reached, to the teacher giving them a writing assignment based on the scenario.

There is a great deal more to be said about Scenario. Dr. DiPietro responded positively to a grading system I devised for my students, promising to include it in the next edition of his book, Strategic Interaction - Learning Languages through Scenarios. Concerning Scenarios for language learners, teachers may insist that their students plan and perform only in the target language as they move into the upper levels of language learning. (Even silliness is condoned, as long as it transpires in the target language.) I remember how my students would beg to have Scenarios and how often we would videotape them and critique them when we sat to watch their productions. Also, I began to create scenarios for my colleagues in History and English and then supervise their implementation and performance in their classes.

I have provided one example of a scenario below. Teachers of global languages in particular may find this a hilariously fun way to engage your students in practicing their oral and written skills. For my colleagues in Sociology, what do you think would Goffman say about this version of Symbolic Interaction?

IS DIPLOMACY THE BEST POLICY?

Role A: You are an international student, studying in a graduate program at Mainstream University. You've been promised a job back home that you must report to on June 15th. Graduation from MU is on June 14th. You have almost finished writing your dissertation and have brought it to an appointment for today, June 12th in the Office of Dissertation Supervision. There, you plan to ask detailed questions to the dean's assistant about the required format of your dissertation, so that you can type it up in pristine condition on special, expensive paper and hand it in on time for graduation. Other students have told you that the person scrutinizing your dissertation is the same person

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who signs off on it so that you can graduate. Prepare to enter the dean's assistant's office for your appointment.

Role B: You are the dean's assistant in a graduate program at Mainstream University. Among your many duties, you must examine prospective graduates' dissertations and sign off on them before each student takes the dissertation to the library archive, usually a few days before graduation. You have been told to be extra careful in examining the dissertations of the international students, who are now subjected to more stringent Homeland Security rules regarding their length of stay past their graduation in this country. You have an appointment now with an international student who is approaching graduation. Your time will be very limited, since you will need to finish a report to present at a meeting in the dean's office right after this appointment. Prepare to receive your appointment.

- Christina Braidotti is a Ph.D. student in Sociology who works in the department of Law, Policy and Society .

BEEN TO THE CEUT LIBRARY LATELY? HAVE WE GOT RESOURCES FOR YOU

- Cynthia Sanders

Visit the CEUT Higher Education Resource Library to solve the mysteries of the teaching and academia. There is something for everyone. The library's holdings address topics as: Faculty and Program Development, Assessment, Diversity & Multiculturalism, Committee Guidelines and TA Preparation. Recent editions added to our ever-growing collective wisdom include:

Building a Scholarship of Assessment
by Trudy W. Banta (Author), Associates (Author)
Jossey-Bass; 1st edition (April 2002)
Assessment

Disciplinary Styles in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning: Exploring Common Ground
Edited by Mary Taylor Huber and Sherwyn Morreale. Washington, D.C.:American Association for Higher Education and The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 2002.
Teaching Style/Methods

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Diversity and Motivation: Culturally Responsive Teaching
by Raymond J. Wlodkowski (Author), Margery B. Ginsberg (Author)
John Wiley & Sons; (February 2003)
Faculty Development

Education as Transformation
by Victor H., Jr Kazanjian (Editor), Peter L. Laurence (Editor)
Peter Lang Publishing; (August 1, 2000)
Education Reform

E-tivities: The key to active online learning
by Gilly Salmon (Author)
Kogan Page Ltd; (October 23, 2002)
Teaching Style/Methods

Learning Contracts: A Practical Guide
by Geoff Anderson (Author), David Boud (Author), Jane Sampson (Author)
RoutledgeFalmer; (March, 1996)
Teaching Style/Methods

Learning Journals: A handbook for academics, students and professional development
by Jennifer A. Moon (Author)
Kogan Page Ltd ; (February 1, 2000)
Teaching Style/Methods

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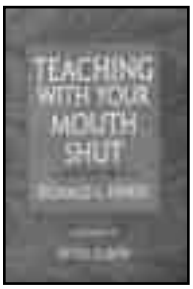
McKeachie's Teaching Tips - Strategies, Research & Theory for College & University Teachers (11th ed)
by Wilbert J. McKeachie (Author), Barbara K. Hofer (Author)
D. C. Heath & Co; 11th edition (November 2001)
Faculty Development

Teaching and Learning Ethics of Inquiry: Issues in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning
Edited by Pat Hutchings. Menlo Park, CA: The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 2002.
Faculty Development



Teaching with your mouth shut
by Donald L. Finkel (Author)
Boynton/Cook; 0 edition (March 15, 2000)
Faculty Development

The Art of Changing the Brain: Enriching the Practice of Teaching by Exploring the Biology of Learning
James E. Zull (Author)
Stylus Publishing, LLC.; (October 3, 2002)
Faculty Development

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No library card is needed, only an eager mind willing to learn.

Cynthia Sanders is Administrative Assistant and Media Coordinator of the CEUT.

Chalk Talk

by Jonas Chalk

The purpose of the Jonas Chalk "Chalk Talk" column is to initiate a dialogue on best practices, successes, and frustrations in teaching. (Although the concerns covered are often universal, we do put a particular emphasis on the challenges and rewards of teaching freshmen.) This column hopes to stimulate, engage and occasionally nudge professors to share their wisdom and ideas about the best ways to achieve outstanding learning outcomes in. Readers can submit letters, questions, or ideas that you have to jchalk@coe.neu.edu.

Old Jonas columns can be accessed at: http://gemasterteachers.neu.edu/documents/documents.html

If you would like to subscribe to the weekly Jonas e-column, contact Jonas at jchalk@coe.neu.edu with your e-mail address and put "subscribe" in the subject line.

Dear Jonas:

Everyone's talking about preparing students to work in teams in the workplace by doing more group activities in class. Last time I did this, it was a disaster! The division of labor in some groups became totally lopsided, because there were students who didn't do anything. Also, I couldn't tell which members of the group had done the work and which had been slackers. I agree that it's important to give students some experience with group work, but how can I make it a more uniform, less chaotic experience?

Grappling with Groups

Dear Grappling:

Group learning, cooperative learning, peer teaching, or any class activity involving more than two students, can lead to unpredictable mixtures of abilities and personalities. If group work is not properly planned, group dynamics can range across the spectrum from a harmonious cooperative learning experience to a dysfunctional group of quarreling students. Entire books have been written about teaching and collaborative learning, so a complete primer on this subject in a single column is not feasible. However, I can provide some basics for setting up student groups for success. Here are some pointers that I have collected from "Tools for Teaching" by Barbara Gross Davis.

* Before the semester starts, look over your syllabus and figure out which part of your course is well-suited for group work. Don't try to force fit group work on things that are better done individually. Problems that require discussion, different points of view, and division of labor to complete are good applications for groups. Like any assignment you give to students, group tasks should not be "busy work," but achieving some integral part of the course objectives.

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* You'll need to decide how groups will be formed.

- In small, upper-level classes where students probably know each other and have likely worked in groups previously, they can form their own groups after you establish a maximum group size.
- In larger classes or those where students may not have had much experience or simply don't know each other, group selection could be done randomly or by having students submit 1-2 names of students they'd like to work with and use that as a start. Also see "Jonas on Teamwork in Class Projects", 11/14/02.

* Have groups submit written guidelines after their first meeting. You should ask each group to submit a proposal that details the responsibilities of each group member, deadlines for achieving certain milestones, and even mechanisms they plan to use to deal with problems in group dynamics.

* Involve students in the group in assessing each other's efforts. Felder and Fuller present a rubric for gaining input from team members and modifying individual grades within the group. (See "Accounting for Individual Effort in Cooperative Learning Teams"

http://www2.ncsu.edu/unity/lockers/users/f/felder/public/Papers/Kaufmanpap.pdf)

To avoid problems with "slackers" or "shirkers", consider the following:

- Keep groups small; it's harder to be a slacker in a group of three or four;
- Make sure that roles are well-defined in the proposal, and follow up on these roles during the mid-project evaluation sessions;
- Ensure that the group assignment has enough elements for a reasonable division of labor;
- Base a portion of the grading on individual effort, e.g., each week, assign a different member to report on the group's activities for that week and evaluate each report.
- Suggest mechanisms for each group to deal with problem members, and have them detail this in their proposal. This is difficult since students usually don't like to be perceived as "selling out" their peers, but they need to understand the idea of responsibility to the team and the project. (A subsequent column will address methods to help students negotiate the group dynamics.).

Finally, a competition for the best group product (presentation, paper, scale model, etc.) can often fuel motivation.

Group learning has the potential to be a powerful learning and teaching tool. However, it does require investment by the instructor to organize and keep tabs on each group's progress.
Good luck,
Jonas

QuickTip: During group assignments, conduct one or two "check point" evaluations with each group, during which you should ask them to discuss the following questions:

- What has each member done to help the group?
- What could each member do from this point forward to make the group even better?

Also, at the end of the project, students should fill out an assessment form regarding the effectiveness of the group and its members.

Teaching in the Summer Semester Workshop

SAVE THE DATES!!!

The CEUT is sponsoring a workshop series for those faculty members who will be teaching in the Summer Semester. The Summer Semester will involve compressed time frames and longer instructional blocks of time.

Topics of the workshops will involve how to plan for a compressed semester, how to keep students engaged for long periods of time, how to creatively use class time efficiently and how to utilize outside resources to meet learning goals.

Workshops will be held on **March 11, 18 and 25 from 3:00 – 4:30 p.m.** Location to be announced.

For more information and an in depth description of the workshops, please log onto **www.ceut.neu.edu**

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