

# Th'Ink Well

## Center for Teaching Excellence

*An occasional Newsletter from the Center for Teaching Excellence*

### CTE Seminars Offer Opportunities for Pedagogical Conversation

Teaching is often a solitary activity. Although a teacher works with groups of students, his/her role is to initiate and facilitate learning among students, and outside the classroom pedagogical decisions are largely made on an individual level. Unless one is team teaching the classroom rarely offers opportunities for dialogue with colleagues, let alone opportunities for collaboration – particularly after tenure. But, like our students, teachers learn from each other – through conversations and observation. With the many demands on faculty time in today's university, many of us feel we don't have time to engage in the luxury of pedagogical conversations and collaborations. But an investment of a few hours every month can pay off richly in energized teaching and inspired student learning. The Center for Teaching Excellence offers a regular opportunity for such conversations, monthly, with a range of seminars on significant pedagogical topics. Seminar topics range from a focus on instructional skills and techniques to theoretical issues. Every seminar is faculty-run, with an interactive, discussion-oriented focus. Perhaps the most important function of these seminars is the opportunity to join your colleagues in dialogue. The seminar theme for 2007-8 is developing engaging teaching and promoting learning.



Missed a seminar? While we can't offer a substitute for the richness of dialogue, we can help you if you're interested in viewing ancillary readings and support materials. Email us at CTE ([FerrisS@wpunj.edu](mailto:FerrisS@wpunj.edu) or [CrupiT@student.wpunj.edu](mailto:CrupiT@student.wpunj.edu)) and let us know. Materials for previous 2008-9 seminars include the following topics:

- Interactive Teaching and Learning
- Preventing Plagiarism
- Integrating Critical Thinking into Course Content
- Ending Your Class Effectively
- Getting the Semester off To a Good Start

#### **Save the dates:**

Upcoming Seminars will be held on February 26, March 27, and April 24, 2008, from 12:30-1:45pm, with a light lunch provided.

Topics include: Balancing Teaching and Research (*Feb 26, Paterson Room*), Integrating Media into Courses (*March 27, Room TBA*), and Promoting Synthesis, Analysis and Evaluation In Learning (*April 24, Paterson Room*).

## Teaching Resources

### Reflecting on the Semester

<http://www.ukcle.ac.uk/reseources/reflection/you.html>

Congratulations! Finishing a semester is always a milestone. Before the thoughts and memories of this semester become too distant, take a few moments to reflect on your teaching experience. Doing so while the experience is still fresh may provide greater insight into your growth as an instructor.

#### Here are some general reflection questions.

1. What did you like about teaching this semester?
2. What lesson (s) went particularly well?
3. Why do you think they worked so well?
4. Choose from the following areas:
  - Designing lessons for studio classes
  - Giving demonstrations & conducting critiques
  - Facilitating discussions: whole class, partner and small group
  - Instructional modules, topics, themes
  - Student assignments, midterm and final projects
  - Giving feedback
  - Assessing students' progress, i.e. quizzes, tests, or more informal assessment, if applicable
  - Using multimedia and web tools
  - Incorporating readings, field trips, and guest speakers, if applicable

#### If you will be teaching the same class again:

- Identify lessons, topics, discussions and themes that worked well and you'd use again
- Save examples of students' work to use as examples for the next class (get their permission)

- Identify aspects of the course that didn't go as you had planned.

#### More in-depth reflection on a lesson that didn't go as planned:

1. Write down what you intended to do during the lesson.
2. Note how the lesson actually progressed.
3. What factors caused the lesson to change?
4. How might you facilitate this lesson differently next time?

Want to get more feedback? Want to brainstorm new approaches to old lessons? Contact us!

[Facultydevelopment@academyart.edu](mailto:Facultydevelopment@academyart.edu)



### Share Your Campus Event

Planning an event of interest to your faculty colleagues? Let us know, and we'll include it in our next e-newsletter. We can even help you create promotional information. Call 720-3684, or email [FerrisS@wpunj.edu](mailto:FerrisS@wpunj.edu) or [mailto:crupit@student.wpunj.edu](mailto:mailto:crupit@student.wpunj.edu)

## The Unbearable Importance of Grading by Jay Parini

Condensed from: The Unbearable Importance of Grading- Chronicle.com

This article gives insight on the benefits to students that grading papers has, and some tips on how to go about the task to make it less of a burden.

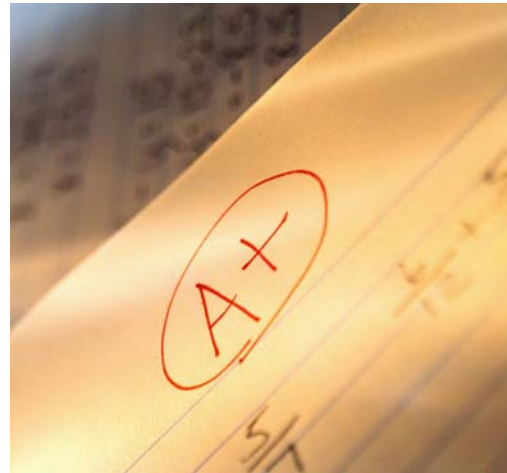
Finding ways to get through the stacks of papers that need to be graded can make the task seem less of a drag. It does no good to wait until the last minute and pull an all night session. Instead work a little each day, but start right away. Good grading needs attention, and after several papers it becomes harder to pay attention.

Another suggestion is to look the paper over once to get a first impression of the student's ideas. Often papers with too many grammatical errors can detract from the content. Then re-read the paper more carefully to see if it is well written and if the student made their point clearly is their arguments well supported, etc. This is the opportunity to correct the paper.

Most professors understand that their final summary is important, but overlook the value of margin notes. Margin notes are instant feedback right at the point that it is specifically intended.

Grading papers is one task that seems to be the least enjoyable part of teaching: however, it provides another opportunity to teach.

If a student comes to discuss your comments and question why they received the grade, it is a chance to teach that student skills that can serve them well throughout their academic years and possibly throughout their life.



## Free Technology Workshops

Atrium Room 121

Monday – Thursday 8:00 am – 10:00 pm

Friday 8:00 am – 8:00 pm

- Word, PowerPoint, Excel, Access, Publisher 2007
- Blackboard (and E- Portfolio)
- Photoshop
- Dreamweaver and more....

Just walk in or make an appointment by going to

<http://euphrates.wpunj.edu/cfevaluation/twswsdes/request.htm>

# Teaching Tips Corner

## The Last Day of Class: Providing Closure

From:

[http://faculty.academyart.edu/resources/viw\\_tips.asp?UCID=1155](http://faculty.academyart.edu/resources/viw_tips.asp?UCID=1155)

The end of the term is always a very busy time for both students and teachers. Students are frantically preparing their final projects and studying for final exams, and teachers are rushing to make sure the last topics of the course are covered. Students and teachers need closure, but sometimes bringing the class to an effective close gets lost in the shuffle. The last week is a perfect time to provide a sense of closure by reflecting on the knowledge and skills both students and teachers have learned.

**Here are some simple ways to end class on a positive note:**

**Pull together the themes that span the course in a brief lecture**

- Review connections between topics covered. Write down main topics on the board or in the discussion area of your online class and have students work collaboratively to explain the connections.
- Reflect on key concepts or ideas from the course

**Ask students to identify the most important topics, themes, or points from the course in a class discussion - onsite or online.**

- Review their list, pointing out connections or clarifying points of confusion.

Ask students to discuss concepts/skills that were most

- Important and/or useful to them and how they connect to their future goals.

**Prepare students for the final exam**

- Have students work collaboratively a "simulated" exam.
- Review the answers with students to reassure they can do well on the final.

**Get feedback from the students. Use a questionnaire to:**

- Get feedback from students about what they liked most about the course.
- Find out about what topics they'd like to explore in greater detail



