

William Paterson University

Th'Ink Well

Center for Teaching Excellence

November 2007

Greetings from the Director

Welcome to our first electronic newsletter! In the spirit of the 21st century (availing of technology to promote an economy of resources) we are moving from print to electronic newsletters. We hope to take this monthly opportunity to provide you with a range of teaching-related information. I know we're all swamped with the demands of teaching, research and service, but I hope you'll find this newsletter a handy resource for updates on opportunities for professional growth and development and for information on campus events of relevance to you and your students. To succeed in this aim, we encourage your contributions. Please share with us events of interest to the teaching community, and any and all teaching-related contributions. CTE is here to serve and support faculty - and we'd like this e-newsletter to be *your* voice!

Pixy Ferris

[insert new picture here]

CTE Seminars- Fall 2007

Join your colleagues in dialogue on a range of 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.

September 11 - New Faculty Networking Lunch

September 27 - Interactive Teaching and Learning

October 25 – Preventing Plagiarism

November 29 - Integrating Critical Thinking into Course Content

December 6 - Ending Your Class Effectively: The Recency Effect (to be held in Atrium 258)

Seminars are held in the Paterson Room of the Library during Common Hours on the dates noted above (unless otherwise noted). A light lunch is served at every meeting.

Workshop: Cluster Courses

Learning communities, generally defined as a group of students co-enrolled in two or more classes, provide unique academic and social opportunities for faculty and students. William Paterson University has a long and fruitful history of learning communities in our Cluster Course program.

Are you interested in learning more about Clusters? If so, let us know so we can include you in workshops in October, offered by the Center for Teaching Excellence and the Learning Communities Advisory Group.

Please contact Pixy Ferris (FerrisS@wpunj.edu),

John Peterman (PetermanJ@wpunj.edu) or

Glen Sherman (ShermanS@wpunj.edu) for details.

Use Technology To Help Your Teaching

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Professor Connie Bareford, from the Nursing Department, has been hard at work in addressing a challenge related to the assessment of Nursing students. As part of overall efforts to make the department's detailed assessments of students more accessible, Connie has been working with Dr. Kim, in IRT, to create a web-based clinical evaluation, using Cold Fusion, that will allow the Nursing Department to gather, store, and access the information they collect in more efficient ways. While development of this site remains an ongoing work in progress, it is up and running this semester, much to the benefit of the department as a whole.

"Help Students Experience WPU!"

WPU is hosting a wide range of cultural events this semester, from the ever-popular Distinguished Lecturer Series featuring such topical speakers as Harold Ford, Jr., & Susan Molinaro discussing "Presidential Campaign 2008—A Conversation about Issues, Candidates and Concerns" (details at <http://ww2.wpunj.edu/culture/dls/index.cfm>) to a filled Performing Arts series, featuring many of our faculty colleagues. As you plan for your classes, consider having your students attend many of the art exhibitions, music performance and theatre on campus (see details at <http://www.wpunj.edu/coac/UPA/artbeat/artbeat.htm>.)

IRT Faculty Technology Curriculum

Interested in learning more about using MsWord for grading, updating your Blackboard skills, learning Photoshop, or creating your own Webpage? IRT offers faculty the opportunity to learn all this and more through their Faculty Technology Curriculum workshops. To see the September and October workshop schedules, or to register, go to <http://www.wpunj.edu/irt/ftc/>

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 or mailto:crupit@wpunj.edu

Teaching Tips Corner

Interactive Teaching Through the Socratic Method

This month's CTE Seminar focuses on Interactive teaching and learning. While allied with technology today, interactive teaching has a long and venerable history going back to Socrates.

Here are the six types of questions that Socrates asked his pupils, representing Socrates dialogic method of teaching by asking questions and thus drawing out (as 'ex duco', meaning to 'lead out', which is the root of 'education') answers. (Summarized from Changing Minds, http://changingminds.org/techniques/questioning/socratic_questions.htm)

Conceptual clarification questions

Get them to think more about what exactly they are asking or thinking about. Prove the concepts behind their argument. Basic 'tell me more' questions that get them to go deeper.

- *Why are you saying that?*

- *What exactly does this mean?*
- *How does this relate to what we have been talking about?*
- *What is the nature of ...?*
- *What do we already know about this?*
- *Can you give me an example?*
- *Are you saying ... or ... ?*
- *Can you rephrase that, please?*

Probing assumptions

Probing of assumptions makes them think about the presuppositions and unquestioned beliefs on which they are founding their argument. This is shaking the bedrock and should get them really going!

- *What else could we assume?*
- *You seem to be assuming ... ?*
- *How did you choose those assumptions?*
- *Please explain why/how ... ?*
- *How can you verify or disprove that assumption?*
- *What would happen if ... ?*
- *Do you agree or disagree with ... ?*

Probing rationale, reasons and evidence

When they give a rationale for their arguments, dig into that reasoning rather than assuming it is a given. People often use un-thought-through or weakly understood supports for their arguments.

- *Why is that happening?*
- *How do you know this?*
- *Show me ... ?*
- *Can you give me an example of that?*
- *What do you think causes ... ?*
- *What is the nature of this?*
- *Are these reasons good enough?*
- *Would it stand up in court?*
- *How might it be refuted?*
- *How can I be sure of what you are saying?*
- *Why is ... happening?*
- *Why? (keep asking it -- you'll never get past a few times)*
- *What evidence is there to support what you are saying?*
- *On what authority are you basing your argument?*

Questioning viewpoints and perspectives

Most arguments are given from a particular position. So attack the position. Show that there are other, equally valid, viewpoints.

- *Another way of looking at this is ..., does this seem reasonable?*
- *What alternative ways of looking at this are there?*
- *Why it is ... necessary?*
- *Who benefits from this?*
- *What is the difference between... and...?*
- *Why is it better than ...?*
- *What are the strengths and weaknesses of...?*
- *How are ... and ... similar?*
- *What would ... say about it?*
- *What if you compared ... and ... ?*
- *How could you look another way at this?*

Probe implications and consequences

The argument that they give may have logical implications that can be forecast. Do these make sense?

Are they desirable?

- *Then what would happen?*
- *What are the consequences of that assumption?*
- *How could ... be used to ... ?*
- *What are the implications of ... ?*
- *How does ... affect ... ?*
- *How does ... fit with what we learned before?*
- *Why is ... important?*
- *What is the best ... ? Why?*

Questions about the question

And you can also get reflexive about the whole thing, turning the question in on itself. Use their attack against themselves. Bounce the ball back into their court. Etc.

- *What was the point of asking that question?*
- *Why do you think I asked this question?*
- *What does that mean?*