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REACHING THROUGH TEACHING

A NEWSLETTER HIGHLIGHTING CLASSROOM PHILOSOPHY AND PRACTICE AMONG KENNESAW FACULTY

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The Agony & The Ecstasy of Case Teaching

Peter Chiaramonte, Ph. D., Associate Professor of Communication

Educational consultant George Leonard has referred to the exclusivity of the lecture system as “the best way to get information from the teacher’s notebook to the student’s notebook without touching the student’s mind.” He reminds us that what passes for routine “classroom control” isn’t just dull or boring, it’s downright tragic.

The most successful classroom teachers spend a good deal of their time planning their course objectives according to what students can do as a result of each session. Beyond planning the objectives and content, the best deliberately weave in a variety of learning methods—some lectures, case discussions, special guests, student role plays and presentations. There’s no mystery about it. A healthy mix of teaching methods facilitates the relationships between teachers and students, students and students, and teachers and teachers.

What Is A Case?

A case study is a record of an issue actually faced by a decision-maker, along with the surrounding facts, prejudices and opinions upon which the decision must be made. Although most cases serve as vehicles to teach critical thinking skills, others also serve to describe situations, to report research results or to engage in the use of conceptual schemes.

Although cases are most commonly used in professional

schools such as business, law, medicine and education, they play a role in the practical application aspects of all academic disciplines. In a

ute to the analysis and solutions of relevant issues they will face beyond the gates of the academy. Furthermore, they allow students

and professors alike to “put it all together”—by integrating disciplines and approaches in a variety of ways that clarify their understanding of the subject, and to teach them how to operationalize theory with practice.

Learning from one’s peers is another important development skill for students. The student analyst learns that others have perceptions and insights he or she may have initially overlooked in his or her

own personal examination. Because so much of our contemporary workplace revolves around teamwork, it is well to develop positive attitudes about the contributions others can make to our understanding.

Managing The Process

If conflict is the essence of drama, then case discussion will be interesting only if it has some drama. Therefore, professors should encourage different points of view from the participants and withdraw from the debate unless it is not building or is somehow wandering off course.

Reaching Gets New Look

For years Reaching Through Teaching has been a primary source of communication about teaching among faculty.

But as we grow, the need for more information grows as well. To accommodate more information, we have redesigned Reaching Through Teaching. You will notice shorter articles, more lists and numerous abstracts of teaching research being conducted by our faculty.

I hope this format helps expand the sharing that takes place among faculty about teaching and learning. Your suggestions and advice for future issues—as well as articles—will be greatly appreciated.

music history class, for instance, the case of a symphony conductor who has to introduce a Wagner encore to an audience in Tel Aviv shortly after the Second World War presents a unique decision-making situation that expands classical music beyond the keyboard into its social relevance. In each subject area, case studies can be used to simulate or describe real situations, and to allow students to practice some of the skills required of professionals in that field.

Why Use Cases?

Cases bring real problems and actual experience into the classroom and allow students to contrib-

Knowing when and how long to step back from a discussion is more of an art than a science.

Backward chaining is another technique used by case teachers. Inexperienced students may be prone to over-analyze and under-recommend. Asking for a thumbnail sketch of the proposed action first, and then backing into the analysis that led you there emphasizes dealing with the most important information first.

Excellent case teachers have a clear idea of what they hope to accomplish in each session, but they avoid interjecting their own viewpoints until the end of the case. Premature interjection tends to sour

a good discussion because of the professor's added authority.

The last 10 minutes of any class might well be taken up with students' reflections on what they have learned from the case. The professor should list those points, and then tell them anything that remains to be learned as a part of the session objectives. Professors remind the students how these learning points are important in practice, and explain the reasons. They also indicate what areas in the discussion might have been developed further.

A Case For Cases

Teaching with cases is not a perfect teaching method. Never-

theless, if it is used wisely, its disadvantages (it only simulates reality) are far outweighed by its advantages (it challenges and develops active student participation and appropriate creative and critical thought processes). Cases expose students to a variety of "real world" situations and help to develop expertise and wisdom in an environment of risk. They help students see problems, issues and principles central to their professional role. For the professor, cases can be used to synthesize knowledge and events occurring in more than one real situation. Above all, cases demonstrate the responsibility of students as sources as well as receivers of knowledge.

Ten Criteria for Selecting Cases

1. Is it a true case? A true case is a record of an actual decision that has been faced. Hypothetical cases are rarely as effective.

2. Is there a decision-making dilemma? Easy or obvious decisions make for lousy cases. The best are those that require rigorous evaluation to determine their effectiveness.

3. Does the case tell a good story? Like all good stories, good cases must have an interesting plot. There must be drama, suspense and an issue worth investigating.

4. Are there sufficient details? The case should provide enough relevant

information for students to identify with the situation and to empathize with the central characters.

5. Is it written clearly and coherently? It helps if specific names, dates, times and amounts are used. And it should be written in plain English. Optimum length is 12 pages.

6. Are there descriptive sub-titles? Outlining by sub-titles gives students an idea of the flow of the case, and it sets a framework within which data can be assessed. Analysis and interpretation will be more orderly.

7. Does it teach the skills you want? The best cases teach students deci-

sion-making processes that can be applied to other cases and other subjects.

8. Are assignment questions suggested by the case? The instructor should be able to identify key questions generated by the facts of the case.

9. How well does the case "age?" The relevance of a case may change with time. Even the best case may need polishing if it contains worn and outdated language.

10. Does the case suggest additional courses or uses? Potential uses of the case might identify other courses or topic areas for discussion.

A New Perspective on an Old Course: Government in a Global Perspective

Helen S. Ridley, Ph. D., Professor of Political Science

Change does not come easily to academe, and especially not to a "bread-and-butter" course like American Government. At KSC, more than 3,300 students enroll in American Government (PS 201) each year because the state requires all University System stu-

dents to complete a course in American government.

To meet the staffing requirements of this course, each of our political science professors as a rule teaches one or more sections each quarter. The importance of this teaching responsibility is evi-

denced by the fact that candidates for positions in political science must demonstrate the ability to teach PS 201.

Not all political scientists, however, have the same academic training. As with most disciplines, political scientists specialize in graduate school. Some focus on traditional areas of government such as the legislative, judicial or executive branches. Others go into public policy or administration. Still others concentrate on comparative politics or international affairs.

As a result, American government courses at some colleges

and universities are not truly core courses, but reflect the particular interests of the faculty who teach them.

Seeking Uniformity

At KSC, our effort to impose uniformity had been to require all PS 201 faculty to use the same text. This requirement met the need of a coherence in this course while allowing faculty the freedom to emphasize particular subject areas. Each year, the faculty would select the text for PS 201 for the following year—with some more pleased than others about the selection.

In 1991, another “horn” was added to the PS 201 dilemma. KSC’s “new core” called for a global context for all core courses. That meant that a new theoretical, conceptual and contextual framework for the “old” course had to be developed.

The traditional framework for the American government course has been either an institutional or policy approach, or some combination of the two. Most current texts give only passing reference to the global context, and no texts place American government in a broader, comparative context.

Although some political scientists have suggested students take a second course in comparative politics for a broader, more global understanding of governments, the reality at KSC is that only one (PS 201) is mandated.

Creating a New Approach

To remedy this situation at KSC, I began a process that eventually took the form of an *Annotated Outline* for PS 201. (Although I am not a specialist in comparative politics, my master’s degree is in comparative politics and international relations. As a result, my feet and head are in both camps—comparative and American government.)

Initially, the outline was put together for use by the faculty in preparing lectures, but classroom use of the material demonstrated the need for students to have the outline as well. Now, all students are required to purchase it.

One way to expand students’ understanding of American

American Government in a Global Perspective (Annotated Outline)

Part I: Forms and Functions of Government

Chapter I	The Modern State
Chapter II	Constitutional Government
Chapter III	Federalism

Part II: The Political Process

Chapter IV	Political Culture
Chapter V	Public Opinion
Chapter VI	Political Communication
Chapter VII	Elections, Participation and Voting
Chapter VIII	Political Parties
Chapter IX	Interest Groups

Part III: The Institutional Process

Chapter X	The Legislative Process
Chapter XI	The Executive Process
Chapter XII	The Judicial Process

Part IV: Human Rights

Chapter XII	Human Rights and Government
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government is to create a new theoretical framework that examines government from both a micro and macro perspective. Such a framework is found in the *Annotated Outline*. It combines information from three traditional courses in political science: Introduction to Political Science, American Government, and Comparative Government. From the intro course are taken “the properties universal to governing processes in all human societies and an understanding of the nature and consequences of the major variations in these processes among different nations.” (Ranney) That provides the macro perspective. From the other two courses comes the micro perspective—offering specific examples of government in process.

Such an approach strengthens PS 201 because a student is presented with basic concepts of the American governance experience, which then serves as a vehicle for comparative analysis.

Today, the *Annotated Outline*, published through Harcourt-Brace Custom Publishing, serves as a unifying text for American government courses at KSC, for both large lecture courses (100+) as well as smaller seminar classes. Professors supplement the *Outline* with any additional texts they desire.

Looking to the Future

Perhaps because I taught American government in the traditional way for such a long time, I find the new approach very exciting. Presenting our government in a broadened global perspective seems to result in students gaining more clarity and a deeper understanding. But the *Outline* is still evolving. As we gain experience with the course, changes will likely occur. Having the *Outline*, however, allows us to take a very positive step toward changing a “bread-and-butter” course to reflect the new imperatives of the discipline, the college and the community.

To Be or Not To Be...That is The Dichotomy

Ed Bostick, Ph. D., Professor of Biology

What do Goofy and Mickey Mouse have in common? This may seem like an odd question for biology class, but Ed Bostick says answering that question may give students insight into how people and objects fall into categories.

In biology and other fields, unknown specimens are often identified by the use of “dichotomous keys.” These are outlines in which pairs (hence *dichotomous*) of contrasting statements are used to categorize the objects being examined until a final pair of statements leads to the identification or categorization of the specimens.

Being able to use dichotomous keys is a useful skill in natural history. More useful perhaps, is the ability to develop a dichotomous key to a group of known specimens. This requires that the specimens be categorized by similarities and differences. Observational and organizational skills are honed and such an activity serves as a good jump-off point for a discussion of classification systems and their highly subjective nature.

For Biology 104 and 200 (our majors’ course), I have developed an exercise in which students write a dichotomous key to 10 well-known characters. Students are given a list of 60 “persons.” I highlight a different set of 10 for each student, and their homework or extra credit assignment is to develop a dichotomous key or outline.

After comparing classifications, students quickly learn there is no particular “correct” way to do this—that it depends upon individual concepts as to what characteristics are important and which should precede others.

For example, it might have been more efficient to use the “Mammal/Non-mammal” dichotomy at the first step. Some students will use other, sometimes

Sample: Mickey Mouse, Donald Duck, Pluto, Goofy, Madonna, Puff the Magic Dragon, PeeWee Herman, Scooby-Doo, Sylvester Cat and Big Bird. An acceptable key might be:

- I Living persons
 - A. Female...Madonna B. Male...PeeWee Herman
- II Non-living, fictional characters
 - A. Mammals
 - 1. Dogs
 - a. Biped dogs...Goofy
 - b. Quadruped dogs
 - 1) Speaking dogs
 - 2) Non-speaking dog...Pluto
 - 2. Non -dogs
 - a. Bipeds...Mickety Mouse
 - b. Quadrupeds...Sylvester Cat
 - B. Non-mammals
 - 1. Birds
 - a. White-Feathered...Donald Duck b. Yellow-feathered ...Big Bird
 - 2. Reptiles...Puff the Magic Dragon

unexpected classification criteria such as “Speech impediment/No speech impediment” (Elmer Fudd, Sylvester Cat). I continually update my list of characters as some fade from students’ memories (Chief Noc-a-Homa, “The Fonz”) or become politically incorrect (Hooter the KSC Owl).

As an alternative to this list, I have randomly selected KSC faculty and staff as subjects of the exercise. Students have been seen hustling about the campus attempting to discover Steve McCullagh’s hair color or the size of Linda

Papageorge’s hat-of-the-day. (The reader might like to try dichotomizing: Betty Siegel, Roger Hopkins, Deborah Wallace, Tom Keene, Army Lester, Ed Rugg, Anne Linkous, Judy Mitchell, Craig Aronoff and Connie Bostick). Use of initial letter of the last name is forbidden. (“Last name begins with A-M” vs. “Last name begins with N-Z”).

Another alternative is to have the students construct a key to all of the members of the class and then to compare outlines and classification criteria.

- Just as acceptable but more unwieldy:
- I Warm-blooded
 - A. Hairy
 - 1. Biped
 - a) Ears long and droopy...Goofy
 - b) Ears round and erect
 - 1) Ears large, about half the diameter of head...Mickey Mouse
 - 2) Ears smaller, less than half the diameter of the head
 - i) Male...PeeWee Herman ii) Female...Madonna
 - 2. Quadruped
 - a) Disney character...Pluto
 - b) Non-Disney character
 - 1) Hanna-Barbera character...Scooby Doo
 - 2) Lance character...Sylvester
 - B. Not hairy; feather
 - 1. Disney character...Donald Duck 2. Children’s Television Workshop character...Big Bird
 - II Cold-blooded...Puff the Magic Dragon

From Fun to Facts

After this playful exercise, the students are assigned a more “serious” group of organisms: cab-

bage, duck, hawk, butterfly, trout, snake, mouse, horse, frog, for example. We begin to discuss the differences between plants and animals,

mammals and birds, reptiles and amphibians, and ducks and hawks. Vocabulary is built: biped/quadruped, autotrophic/heterotrophic, lanceolate/hastate. Students are soon able to write keys, classify, and discern similarities and differences between specimens which are more similar to each other than the previous examples. Differences and similarities are

more subtle, but students are quickly able to sort out various species of oaks, pines, beetles and fish.

Lessons Learned

Dichotomous thinking is restrictive. Mental boundaries are erected if one is forced to think in an "if not this, then that" style. Obviously, there are times when dichotomizing is useful and other times

when it limits creativity. It does give practice in outline construction. How many times have you received student outlines with an "A" category but no matching "B?" Some students find it quite simple to organize information dichotomously; others have difficulty in producing an efficient, well-organized outline. Learning specialists and psychologists...Help!

Classroom Research Abstracts

"The Effect of Self-Generated Elaboration on Students' Recall of Tax and Accounting Material: Further Evidence," to appear in *Issues in Accounting Education* (Fall 1994)

Dana Hermanson, Ph. D., Assistant Professor of Accounting

Research has shown that active learning strategies often lead to better recall of material than do passive strategies. This study compared the effectiveness of self-generated elaboration (an active learning method) and instructor-generated elaboration (a more passive method).

Students in introductory accounting were given a series of tax laws and accounting concepts. After reading each law, groups of stu-

dents were asked to indicate why they thought lawmakers enacted this law, and how this law achieves its goal (self-elaboration). After each accounting concept was presented, student groups were asked to suggest the logic behind this concept and how this logic supports the concept. As a control, other students, not placed in groups, were given the goal and logic underlying the laws and accounting concepts by the instructor.

The results indicate that the active method better promotes recall of both simple and complex accounting material. In addition, both high and low-ability accounting students benefitted from the use of the active method. For low-ability students, a factor associated with the effectiveness of the active method was the students' ability to generate reasonable explanations of the material presented. (For complete copy of this research, contact CETL).

Crossing the Cognitive Divide: Using Portfolio Assessment with Preservice and Inservice Teachers, Presented at Eastern Educational Research Association Conference, February 1994.

Jonelle Pool, Ph. D., Assistant Professor of Secondary and Middle School Education

Jean Ketter, Ph. D., Assistant Professor of Education

As is true in most educational settings, quantitative assessment dominates the post-secondary experience. But changes are taking place to find more authentic assessment tools that measure through direct demonstration. One such tool is the student portfolio.

We conducted a qualitative evaluation of portfolio assessment among 123 KSC education students who had to prepare portfolios in upper division and graduate courses to determine if such a process positively affected their educational objectives as well as served as a model for future use in their own classrooms.

Students were asked to reflect on their portfolios at mid-term and end of term through evaluation instruments.

Results Indicated

- 1) Students were confused at first by the unfamiliarity of the portfolio assignment and by the freedom to choose evaluation parameters;
- 2) Students' school experiences had limited their vision of class assessment to traditional objective measures;
- 3) Faculty adapted to the portfolio process by modifying practices to emphasize application during instruction;
- 4) Students reported they "worked harder and dug deeper" using portfolios, and that subject matter was much more meaningful;
- 5) Initially the use of portfolios seemed to create grade anxiety for some;
- 6) Students felt the time necessary to create a portfolio was lengthy, but many said they intended to use their products as professional advancement tools.

While there are numerous obstacles to overcome in implementing authentic assessment in college classrooms, we are optimistic about the use of portfolios in making assessment more meaningful for the student.

Periodicals Related to College Teaching

William E. Cashin, Victoria L. Clegg, Kansas State University (from Exchange, Newsletter of Center for Faculty Evaluation & Development at the University of Kansas, January, 1994. Educational institutions have been given permission to reprint for instructional purposes.)

Although there is a lot more talk about improving college teaching these days, only a minority of graduate programs offer courses or supervised training in college teaching. For those of us who have already earned our terminal degree, it is even less likely that we had the opportunity for such educational or training experiences. The only recourse has been, and still is, learning on the job.

Our graduate studies acquainted us with the important periodicals/journals in our subject matter area. But there is also a wealth of print resources to help college professors learn more about teaching, if not in one's own academic field, at least about college teaching in general. We offer this list to help acquaint you with what is available. Although some of these publications may be familiar to you, we suspect that even veteran teachers will find new publications. The hope is that these periodicals/journals will help in your efforts to become more effective college teachers.

(Editor's Note: If you or your department subscribe to any of the journals not available in our library, please let CETL know so others may share.)

Periodicals for Specific Academic Fields (Abridged List)

* = In KSC Periodical Collection

** = Available through Pro-Quest Databases

Accounting

Issues in Accounting Education

* *Journal of Accounting Education*

Anthropology

Anthropology and Education

Art

* *Art Education*

* *Journal of Aesthetic Education*

Journal of Aesthetics and

Art Criticism

Studies in Art Education

Behavioral Science

Behavioral Science Teacher

** *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*

Small Group Behavior

Biology

** *American Biology Teacher Journal of Biological Education*

Business

Journal of Education for Business

Organizational Behavior Teaching Review

Business Education

* *Business Education Forum DPE Journal (Delta Pi Epsilon) NABTE Review (National Association of Business Teacher Education)*

Business, International

Journal of Teaching in Internatl. Business

Chemistry

* *Journal of Chemical Education*

Communications/Speech

* *Communication Education*

Computer Science

Computer Science Education

Economics

* *The Journal of Economic Education Social Education/The Journal of National Council for the Social Studies*

Education

Action in Teacher Education

** *Journal of Teacher Education Teaching College*

- Educational Psychology**
Educational Psychologist
Journal of Educational Psychology
Teaching of Psychology
- English**
* *College Composition and Communication*
***College English*
* *Research in the Teaching of English*
- Finance**
Financial Practice & Education
* *Journal of Financial Education*
- Geography**
* *Journal of Geography*
Journal of Geography in Higher Education
- Geology**
Journal of Geological Education
- History**
* *The History Teacher*
Teaching History: A Journal of Methods
- Journalism/Mass Communication**
Journalism Educator
Media and Methods
- Management**
Journal of Management Education
- Marketing**
Journal of Marketing Education
- Marketing Education Review*
- Mathematics**
* *Arithmetic Teacher*
* *Journal for Research in Mathematics Education*
* *Mathematics Teacher*
School Science & Mathematics
- Modern Languages**
ADFL Bulletin (Association of Departments of Foreign Languages)
Canadian Modern Language Review
Foreign Language Annals
International Review of Applied Linguistics
***Modern Language Journal*
- Music**
Council for Research in Music Education
Instrumentalist
* *Journal of Research in Music Education*
Music Educators Journal
UPDATE: Applications of Research in Music Education
- Nursing**
* *Journal of Nursing Education*
* *Nurse Educator*
- Philosophy**
Metaphilosophy
Teaching Philosophy
- Physical Education/Kinesiology**
***Journal of Physical Education, Recreation, & Dance*
Journal of Teaching Physical Education Strategies
- Physics**
* *American Journal of Physics*
Physics Teacher
- Political Science**
Political Science Teacher
* *Teaching Political Science*
- Psychology**
Educational Psychologist
***Journal of Educational Psychology*
* *Teaching of Psychology*
- Science**
Instructional Science
* *Journal of College Science Teaching*
* *Journal of Research in Science Teaching*
- Social Studies**
* *Social Education/The Journal of National Council for the Social Studies*
- Social Work**
Journal of Education for Social Work
Journal of Teaching in Social Work
- Sociology**
* *Sociology of Education*
* *Teaching Sociology*
- Statistics**
***The American Statistician*
STATS
- Theatre**
Theatre Topics
- Women's Education**
Feminist Teacher

C-SPAN in The Classroom

Richard F. Welch, Ph. D., Associate Professor of Communication/Interim Director of CETL

Surfing through the cable stations at home, I've paused momentarily (and sometimes longer) on C-SPAN1 or C-SPAN2, the public affairs channels carried by most cable systems in the Atlanta area.

Maybe it was a House roll-call vote that caught my eye. . . or a live call-in program with a journalist. . . or a rebroadcast of a talk by a National Press Club speaker. Whatever it was, I've often thought, in mid-watch, how some of that stuff would be ideal material for one of my classes.

I'm not alone. A recent conference in Washington, D.C., brought together faculty from around the country who use or want to use C-SPAN as instructional support. Their consensus was that these channels were an often untapped gold mine of quality material.

C-SPAN1 and 2 are unique among the myriad program offerings on cable because they are copy-right free. Thus, educators may use all the material broadcast on C-SPAN without fear of infringing on anyone's copyright protection or having to seek advance approval. (However, rebroadcasts of programs aired by other channels—NBC, CBS, TBS—may have some protections that must be reviewed. In this case, a call to Bruce Collins, C-SPAN's general counsel, can determine that.)

Public Affairs Programming

C-SPAN began in 1979 with live, gavel-to-gavel coverage of the U.S. House of Representatives. C-SPAN2 was added in 1986 to cablecast sessions of the Senate. Today, however, such coverage accounts for only 13 percent of total air time; the rest is devoted to a wide assortment of regular and special programs.

In addition, there is "Event of the Day," (weeknights at 8 p.m.)

Regular Programs

Among the regular features are:

Booknotes (Sunday, 8 & 11 p.m.) has guest authors of recently published historical, policy or political books.

C-SPAN Sunday Journal (Sunday, 10 a.m.) surveys top policy issues and events of the week.

National Press Club (Saturday, 6 p.m.) is a rebroadcast of all Press Club speakers—everyone from Bob Dole to Boris Yeltsin to Coretta Scott King.

Communication Today (Saturday, 11 a.m.) focuses on issues affecting the cable and broadcast industries.

British House of Commons (Sunday, 9 p.m. and 12 a.m.) is a taped broadcast of the Commons sessions of the week.

which highlights the key public policy story of the day, as well as numerous national and regional conferences, such as the recent UCLA conference on the Information Superhighway.

Locating the Treasures

The biggest complaint about C-SPAN has been the difficulty in predicting (and recording) what events are to be aired. Since the channels function much like a daily newspaper, often selecting what to cover the day it's aired, there is little lead time for what events will be covered.

However, C-SPAN has attempted to assist faculty in snaring those hidden treasures. There is a programming hotline, (202)628-2205, that has the schedule for that day, the next day and future events. This same information is available on America On-Line, a commercial computer network, and on Internet (Gopher c-span.org).

Although finding what's happening on C-SPAN now may be a problem, finding gems from the past is not. Since October 1987, Purdue University has been archiving every minute of C-SPAN broadcasts. Through an Internet subscribers network (minimum membership is \$100 to get a pass-

word), faculty members can search the archive's database (extremely user-friendly) to locate specific speakers or events. Tapes of these broadcasts can be ordered at a relatively low cost (approximately \$50 per hour of broadcast, although custom tapes of many short clips will cost more).

Based on past requests, Purdue has also compiled a number of tapes that pull together clusters of like material. For instance, it offers a tape of 1992 television commercials from the Bush, Clinton and Perot campaigns. These are also for sale through a catalogue distributed by Purdue.

C-SPAN is so eager for faculty to use its material that it has formed C-SPAN in the Classroom, a free membership service for educators. It publishes a semi-annual professor's guide with helpful hints for using the channels. (For complete information, call (800)523-7586.)

If you are interested in reviewing C-SPAN in the Classroom material, please contact CETL. If you have C-SPAN tapes—either personally recorded or purchased from Purdue—and are willing to share, let us know so we can spread the word. And happy channel surfing!

Editorial

Richard F. Welch, Ph. D.
Associate Professor of
Communication/Interim Director
of CETL

A Hard Act to Follow

When I learned that I would be assuming the directorship of CETL (albeit temporarily), my first thought was of Don Forrester. Anyone who has been at KSC any length of time knows Don's omnipresence at campus functions large and small, as well as his willingness to take on ever-expanding duties. I figured I was definitely in trouble.

But then I realized I could never "fill Don's shoes" at the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning. Don has set a standard of dedication few can match and none surpass. My charge, then, is to hold the line while he helps out in the VPAA's office. (For those who don't know, Don is interim Assistant VPAA while Deborah Wallace assumed temporarily the deanship of the School of Education.) My only hope is that I can continue to support and expand the great development programs he has created.

Back to Basics

In reflecting on the tasks ahead of me, I begin with the basics. The goal of CETL has been, and will continue to be, to support faculty in creating and enhancing quality education throughout our school. KSC is only one of three University System of Georgia schools that has such a center (along with UGA and Georgia Tech, although DeKalb is in the process of developing one). The fact we have a "CETL" proves to me that KSC views the idea of quality education seriously and systematically.

Teaching, for me, has always seemed a craft and an art. As a craft, teachers apply "tools of the trade" in specific situations for specific outcomes. As an art, teachers use those tools in innovative and creative ways to design uniquely effective learning experiences.

Because of the demands on the KSC faculty, those on the

front lines (in the classroom) may not always have the time to explore all the tools available. And even if we have the time, we usually explore only the terrain in our own backyards (our disciplines).

CETL's role is to be a "scouting party," i.e., going out to find new tools and helping faculty adapt them for their specific classroom needs if the tools seem appropriate.

A Group Effort

This is not a singular effort. CETL is, and should be, faculty powered. It will take everyone on campus keeping eyes and ears open to discover those new tools. I ask each of you to help the CETL effort by passing along information

whenever and wherever you may find it. If you read an article in one of your disciplinary journals that may have more universal application, please pass it along. If you attend a program or hear a speaker you believe has something to offer us, let me know. Most of all, let me know what you want and expect in CETL support. Any and all suggestions are welcome.

Over the next several months, I hope to talk personally with many of you about CETL. I hope I can count on your honest appraisal of the programs we have offered and your suggestions for the future. Together, we can continue the "Excellence in Teaching and Learning" that is at the heart of Kennesaw State College.

Guest Editorial

Making Connections/Crossing Borders

Laura Dabundo

Associate Professor of English/Core Curriculum Coordinator

I am not a mathematician. In fact, I have not darkened the threshold of a math classroom in nearly a quarter of a century. I do not offer this fact to you out of pride but rather to confess an apparent weakness that will certainly bring me to grief in this or the next century, if it has not already, because of the state to which the technological revolution has brought our society and our world. That is to declare, in short, that I have only a bare, rude understanding of the outlines of fractal geometry.

What I know is simply that it is a science or art of fractional dimensions, which describes similar repeating forms and has come to be applied practically not only in mathematics, but in art and film and computer science and medicine, among many other field, with breath-taking, spectacular and otherwise unimaginable results. *Jurassic Park*, for instance, demonstrates the wonders of fractal geometry, uniting the prehistoric with the contemporary, science with art, reason with emotion. What fractal geometry can do, as I understand it, is to translate a mathematical con-

cept to innumerable fields, connecting them, bridging their gaps, expanding their limits, extending their own reach, their own art, their own meanings and truths.

This, in sum, is the kind of collaborative, synergistic approach that I think we at Kennesaw State College need to attempt in our program of general education. We must strive to break down the artificial barriers that separate courses in a curriculum--while still respecting their disciplinary integrity. As subjects these courses might otherwise become locked in independent recesses of students' minds. We hope in so doing that those ultimately artificial divisions and limitations between disciplines would dissolve and that students would practice the learning that draws intellectual connections in integrated, collaborative thinking as part of the growth of knowledge and the development of skills to deal with it. We model learning, in other words, as we conduct it, and our students begin the task of integrating information even as they

(See Guest Editorial, page 10)

Integrating Communications and Analysis Skills into the Study of DSS and AI Technology

Martha Myers, Ph. D.,

Assistant Professor of Computer Science, Acting Chair of Computer Science and Information Systems

To emphasize higher levels of learning in upper division Information Systems courses, I introduced the "board meeting concept" in my Decision Support Systems course in Spring 1990.

Board meetings, developed by L.S. Franz, place students on "boards" whose responsibilities include presentation, review and observation. The presentation board is responsible for presenting a manage-

ment memo generated from a problem statement provided by the instructor. This memo includes an orientation to the problem, analysis leading to several viable solutions and a recommendation.

The reviewing board evaluates the recommendation and points out any computational errors in the presentation. The observer board critiques the entire process.

Although students were in favor of the board meeting concept, some found it taxing and too ambiguous. They did note that the concept "stretched" their capabilities—one goal of instruction. In addition, students demonstrated improved analytical and communication skills through the use of board meetings.

"A Trio of Instructional Computer Programs in Statistics"

(Presented at Computers on Campus Conference, November 1993)

Penny Verhoeven, Ph. D., Assistant Professor of Decision Science

For many students, statistics represents an uneasy excursion into unknown territory. As most instructors of introductory statistics are required to cover considerable amounts of material, students' difficulties are compounded by a fast pace. For many topic areas, repetitive practice can raise students' knowledge level (and, at the same time, "comfort" level). In this regard, I offer three instructional computer programs, unencumbered by any copyright restrictions, and operable in an MS-DOS environment.

The program VARIABLE provides an exposition of the differences between qualitative, discrete and continuous variables, and incorporates 20 practice problems. Each practice problem presents the student with a variable, asks the student to identify it as qualitative or discrete or continuous, and—in the event of a misdiagnosis by the student—explains why the variable is of a particular type.

The program SAMPDIST defines what is meant by a sampling distribution, and "walks the student through" the construction of three different sampling distributions—of a mean, a proportion, and a variance, respectively.

The program ESTMEAN

describes what is meant by interval estimation of a population mean, provides a table associating particular situations (involving features of the population and sample) with particular interval estimation formulas, and incorporates 20 practice problems. Each practice problem presents the student with a scenario, asks the student to identify which of 10 situations is reflected in what scenario, and—in the event of an incorrect choice—explains why a particular situation is reflected in that scenario.

Each of the programs can serve as a substitute lecture for students who missed the lecture on that topic, or as a homework assignment ("interact" with the program for 20 minutes). Collectively, the programs suggest an approach for incorporating instruction and/or homework exercises into a statistics-textbook-on-disk.

If you would like a copy of these programs, send a high-density 3 1/2 inch disk to me through campus mail. Reactions to and suggestions regarding the programs are welcomed.

Guest Editorial

(continued from page 9)

are analyzing and processing it. What we would create, therefore, is some idea of the history of literature, the science of the arts, the humanity of the sciences, the philosophy of society, the economics of living, the religion of the nation, the discipline of thinking, the music of the spheres, the material for life.

Thus, our goal for the education of our students, it seems to me, must always move toward synthesis and away from the limitations and narrowness of analysis, and I believe that is when our pedagogy is at its best because that is when I think we are most able to furnish students with what I think they need, not now particularly, but later on in confronting and dealing with open-ended, contradictory, unfinished life itself.

Consequently, my own sense of education is that we have not succeeded if our students leave

us with tidy little packages labeled history, biology, psychology, French, and music, say, little packages, never to be unwrapped, never to be investigated. I would much rather my students leave class with loose ends, with spillage and overlap, with questions and uncertainties but also with the tools and the confidence to deal with them, the confidence, in short, to provoke and inquire. In a world made radiant, transcendent, but often vexing and recalcitrant by the promise of cross-disciplinary discoveries such as fractal geometry, those citizens of our nascent world community who will prosper and best serve as faithful stewards of its bounty, its resources as well as its responsibilities, are those who are aware of and equal to the challenges of complexity, synthesis, confusion and possibility. We must all become fractal geometers open to innovation, knowledgeable about tradition and the past, seeking to understand, striving to make sense by applying to what we already know and by making whole, making connections, crossing borders into, finally, what Hamlet, in another context, called "that undiscovered country from whose bourne/No traveler returns."

We cannot retreat, but we can only advance by building on what we know, connecting, synthesizing and expanding. Our general education is both the start and the end, then, of our baccalaureate enterprise, the best and the promise of what we seek to do and what we seek to leave after our portion of formal instruction is past. In the minds of our students stands our academic legacy, then.

At Kennesaw, we seek to instill the foundation for our students to lead responsible, committed lives in communities of tolerance, understanding and cooperation-virtues that must prevail against the perils of isolation, separation and conflict born of competitive specialization and mistrust. If we can accomplish this, then the general education our students receive will reflect our humility before the world's riches and problems and the grace to live together in harmony, civility and charity.

Faculty Development Grant Updates

A.G. Adebayo, Ph. D.
Associate Professor of History

Last year, I produced four 30-minute documentaries about aspects of African culture in which most of my students have expressed interest, notably the traditional religions; music, dance and drama; art; and women, marriage and family.

My faculty development grant was used to convert videotapes acquired in Nigeria to a format compatible with American tape players. I have written the story line to accompany the tape shot in Nigeria, and will begin editing in the spring quarter. I have also used the tapes "as is" in my history classes.

Melanie Angle, M.S.
Instructor of English

In the not-too-distant past, it was advantageous for professionals to use personal computers to expedite the flow of information. Today, using and understanding one's own computer is step one. Step two is grasping the potentials of interconnected computers.

Networked computers facilitate research and collegial exchange in many ways, but with the wealth comes the responsibility of learning the constraints and conventions. For my development grant I have been studying Novell networking and researching the benefits of networks for the humanities, specifically English.

My increased understanding of the constraints of networking is assisting in the decisions the English Department is making in the Writing Center. Additionally, I am assisting other department members in using the KSC network to access information worldwide. I have taken three courses and will take two more by the end of the summer. The training materials I have ordered are also being used by other departments on campus.

Teresa Joyce Covin, Ph. D.
Associate Professor of Management
Acting Chair, Management
and Entrepreneurship

My faculty development grant has supported a study of Atlanta-area company-based management training programs. The specific focus of the research is to determine how companies evaluate the effectiveness of these programs. A 12-page survey was developed and sent to 300 randomly selected members of the Society for Human Resources Management (SRM) and the American Society for Training and Development (ASTD).

In addition to a number of questions on specific training program evaluation practices, the survey contained several questions focusing on management training program content and process.

Of the 300 surveys mailed, 36 were non-deliverable and 60 were returned, for a response rate of 22.7 percent. Results from the survey are currently being analyzed and study participants will receive a summary of the findings in March.

Deborah Roebuck, Ph. D.
Assistant Professor of Management

We have just finished the preliminary analysis of the data received from a national sample of 1,500 management faculty (509 completed surveys were retained for analysis) on perceptions of academic life.

We are currently completing the first of three papers to submit for publication. In addition, we are in the process of completing mailing of the survey to faculty in marketing, finance and accounting. Data will be compared across the different disciplines to determine: 1) relative importance placed on teaching and research; 2) attitudes of faculty toward teaching and research; and 3) pedagogical approaches and teaching techniques utilized in the classroom.

KSC to Host Teaching Conference

Kennesaw State College will be the site of the first—of what is hoped will be an annual—Georgia Conference on College and University Teaching. Designed by Don Forrester and a system-wide faculty development committee, the conference will be held April 15-16, and will consist of four sessions with three concurrent panels in each session.

The conference was designed to “promote dialogue and discussion about teaching in a scholarly, inquisitive and colle-

gial manner.” Both presenters and attendees will be invited to participate, with selections based on teaching leadership on their respective campuses.

Presenters come from five system schools and were nominated by their chief academic officers. These presenters have been asked to make their panels as interactive as possible—no “paper reading” is expected.

Each System school will nominate five faculty members to attend to keep the numbers below 150 for logistical and interactive reasons. Members of KSC’s Leadership Kennesaw, however, have been invited as part of their year-long development program.

The foci of conference panels will be teaching effectiveness, diversity in higher educa-

tion and instructional technologies. Three KSC faculty members will present during the conference. Alan Schlact, associate professor of business law, and Janet Adams, associate professor of management, will revisit the topic of ethics in teaching, which they presented during our Fall school opening program. Jerry Sparks, temporary professor of instructional technology, will give a tour of our instructional demonstration classroom in the Education Building. He also gave this demonstration during the fall opening of school.

Other presenters will cover topics as diverse as student motivation, collaborative learning, interdisciplinary team teaching, the changing student and critical thinking.

Reaching Through Teaching will disseminate information presented in the panels in our Spring or Fall issues.

In the KSC Library

What Matters in Colleges? Four Critical Years Revisited by Alexander W. Astin, Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1993

This is an update on Astin's 1977 commentary on the state of higher education. In it, he reports on 135 college environmental measures and 57 student involvement criteria he used to assess the college experience.

Assessment For Excellence: The Philosophy and Practice of Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education, by Alexander W. Astin, Oryx Press, 1993.

Astin reports on the increasing emphasis on assessment triggered by local and federal mandates for accountability. Contains both personal observations by the author as well as “how it do it” recommendations.

Toward an Ethic of Higher Education, by Mortimer R Kadish, Stanford University Press, 1991.

This concise work explores the two dimensions of ethical behavior—faculty's role as instructor of ethics and our own ethical constraints fostered by the inherent teacher-student relationship.

REACHING

THROUGH TEACHING

Contributions from KSC faculty are solicited. Please submit articles to CETL on a 5.25” or 3.5” disk in WordPerfect. Preferred length of articles is 900 words. Deadline for the Spring, 1994 issue is April 11

Giving guidance and vision to CETL is a Faculty Development Committee including the following:

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| Jackie Givens, B.A. | • Coordinator of Sponsored Programs |
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