

A White Paper on Teaching Excellence in Criminal Justice

(A collaborative work by Dowling, Henderson, Frasier, Souryal, and Schulenberg)

One cannot be ignorant and free.

(Plato)

The Ideal of Excellence (Souryal)

This paper reiterates two classic academic propositions: First, intellect without a disciplined mind is worthless and a disciplined mind without intellect is dangerous. This proposition suggests that regardless of faculty efforts, students will not receive quality learning unless they fully understand the theory of "*what is being taught, where did it come from, and what is it good for,*" and Second, teaching that does not produce quality learning is futile since it can only reinforce ignorance. Therefore, to achieve teaching excellence, it is imperative to consider these two propositions and to rethink the profession of teaching in a new and judicious manner recognizing that it is not what the instructors say in the classroom that fosters quality learning, but rather what the students hear and interpret that can make the difference between mediocrity and excellence (Luntz, 2007, xiii).

The College of Criminal Justice enjoys a special place at Sam Houston State University among other universities. Therefore, there is more reason for it to endorse the highest standards of teaching excellence. The prestige of any university, college, or academy (as Plato called such institutions), as well as their intellectual and social efficacy of learning, is invaluable. While it is more likely true that knowledge is not developed only inside the classroom, an excellent academic learning experience results in a much more lasting impact. While the mission of our college encompasses neither moral impressions nor mechanical production, its central function is establishing an intellectual environment that intrinsically embraces the theories of reducing crime and promoting justice.

Criminal justice students have every right to expect—and criminal justice instructors have every obligation to offer—an informative, yet challenging mixture of theories and methods that can enrich the students' minds, broaden their vision, and further expand their imagination. Consequently, it is envisioned that both the instructors and the students engage in the development of knowledge, in careful and reflective analyses, and, when feasible, collaborate in research projects. These endeavors are invaluable and not routinely encountered outside the framework of the college. Yet, for these endeavors to be truly enriching, both the instructors and the students should work together in an enthusiastic, yet inquisitive, partnership that is fueled by intellectual sophistication, the pursuit of discovery, and, when the discovery is realized, a collective sense of joyous accomplishment. But, excellence is an even more serious endeavor. Both the instructors and the students must recognize that enlightenment is more enduring than popularity, and that merit is more virtuous than mere competition. Only when such a vision is realized can a truly intellectual environment conducive to excellence exist.

Whatever be the results of this vision, it is neither simple nor entirely predictable. While each of these groups (the instructors and the students) have their own assessment of the dynamics of the learning process based on their years of interaction with different methods, personal experiences, expectations, and frustrations, it is inconceivable that any more than a small minority would consider the results anything less than exhilarating. The primary challenge will be sustaining this unique relationship while making it grow.

This White Paper consists of five topics followed by a set of recommendations proposed by several faculty members. Without being too dogmatic, yet in keeping with the methodical flow of ideas, these topics will be framed in the following sections: (1) liberal arts as the core of criminal justice; (2) the erudition of instructors, their academic affiliation, research interests, and their professional experiences; (3) the methods of pedagogy that can bridge the subject matters being taught and the students' intellectual ability to learn; (4) the students themselves, their aptitudes, successes, and challenges; and, (5) the supplementary reading materials, including the assignments, books, papers, and exams, among other requirements.

Also, the reader should note that while the authors of these sections may suggest similar or different views, such similarities and differences reflect their academic orientation, perceptions, insights, and professional expertise. The recommendations will consist of a set of postulates that—if examined and accepted—can make the desired difference.

(1) Liberal Arts as the Core of Criminal Justice (Souryal)

Liberal arts are arguably the oldest field of inquiry devised by mankind. It precedes all other methods of communication by scriptures, kings, generals, or avant-gardes (Julius Caesar, Mahatma Gandhi, Karl Marx and Nelson Mandela are typical examples). Since the beginning of time, liberal arts have been essential for the survival of the human species. Even before the invention of mathematics, liberal arts were the vehicles for inventing the Power of One, the Power of Ten, the Power of Hundred, the Power of Thousand, and, eventually, the concept of infinity.

On college campuses, liberal arts have traditionally been the language of the essay, the lecture, or the story, until the maturation and independence of sociology, psychology, economics, and political science during the last hundred years. Essays are "concerned with the relations between 'things' and their values, subsequently their significance. What an essay expresses is a yearning for conceptuality and intellectuality, as well as the resolution of the ultimate questions of life" (Said in alif, 2005, p. 29). This definition might explain the reference to Socrates as "the typical essayistic figure, always talking of immediate mundane matters while at the same time through his life there sounds the purest, the most profound, and the most concealed yearning" (*Ibid*, p.155).

What the essay accomplishes in the context of liberal arts is creating a logical basis by which human beings can be judged, and subsequently treated, either by endearment or by shunning. Also, it should be clear that while the technologies of science, including advanced mathematics and statistics, are vital tools of measurement and verification, these tools did not create themselves *by themselves*; they were products of the farther reaches of liberal arts.

What is particularly enlightening about the development of avant-gardes is the institutional ability these individuals have for self-criticism. They routinely examine their own lives, their own laws, their own ways of thinking, and their own behavior lest they be duped into believing that they are infallible (Bloom, 1987, p.17 18). Focusing on the natural connection between the university and the avant-garde theory, Bloom argues that the university must act as "the island of intellectual freedom where all views are investigated without restrictions" (*Ibid*, p. 18). The knowledge of liberal arts cannot, in and of itself, make avant-gardes; it is their intellectual ability to penetrate, and—as some say—*impregnate*, the minds of others. It is imperative, therefore, to rely on the methods of reasoning, logic, conviction, and, eventually, transformation. Hence, teaching criminal justice as philosophy should be the first step on the ladder of teaching excellence.

In contrast to other liberal arts, criminal justice seems to be one of the youngest fields of inquiry, one that began at Sam Houston State University in the late 1960s and elsewhere later. That may be one reason why some critics argue that criminal justice education, because of its strong interdisciplinary nature and its lack of a unified justice theory, does not quite qualify as a liberal art. If any of these concerns are true, then the current methods of teaching criminal justice need to be re-examined and re-cast based on pedagogical consistency, originality, objectivity, and modernity. Accomplishing this change might be even more important since our college has traditionally taught criminal justice without offering specific courses in philosophy or justice. Therefore, revisiting how criminal justice is taught, should be the second step on the ladder of teaching excellence.

Institutions of higher education should be held to higher rational and moral standards than business corporations or military institutions because of their mission to educate the public. If this assumption is accurate, then criminal justice colleges and departments should be held to even higher rational and moral standards, if, for no other reason than their claim to teaching justice, the core of American liberty itself. It should then follow that, in addition to providing the students with a theoretical account of how the criminal justice system works or does not work, the instructors should also provide the students with a perceptual account of the intrinsic nobility of their discipline and the reasons why they should cherish it as their chosen career. Theoretical accounts justify the rational desire when issues of the discipline are debated, and perceptual accounts provide sensory experiences that, by their justificatory power, can reinforce one's rational belief in the integrity of the discipline. Only when both of these accounts (the theoretical and the perceptual) are jointly experienced can teaching criminal justice be more coherent—a mental quality without which rationality is unattainable. Subsequently, emphasizing both

of these critical accounts in the classroom should be the third step on the ladder of teaching excellence in criminal justice.

Because the field of criminal justice—at least in a practical sense—can be contentious in some aspects (e.g., use of deadly force by police, capital punishment, gun control issues, post-release treatment of sex offenders, minimum educational standards for police), it is necessary that criminal justice instructors develop new and more convincing pedagogical methods of teaching. As alluded to earlier, "excellent teaching" cannot be achieved by presenting longer lectures, showing more video tapes, using more PowerPoint presentations, or by turning the classroom over to students to engage in *laissez-faire* debates. Fundamentally, the challenge of excellent teaching is to be able to convince students of the primacy and truism of the legal and moral provisions of criminal justice, while maximizing their ability to use reason and to avoid prejudice. As "planes cannot fly until pilots fly them," in the conduct of criminal justice, this unique discretionary power is essential to making the difference between rule of law and principled mediocrity. It enables future criminal justice practitioners to objectively examine each case they might be confronted with, determine whether law violations have occurred, and, if so, to what extent they are justifiable, if at all. Nurturing this highly discretionary talent—one that must be exercised in good faith—is the fourth, and perhaps the most important step on the ladder of teaching excellence.

By way of illustration, it might be interesting to note (with one committee member objecting) that perhaps one of the most effective methods of teaching excellence was that by St. Thomas Aquinas. The Aquinas divided each course he taught into three-week segments. In the first segment, he uninterruptedly delivered his *lectio* (lecture) including his assumptions, premises, expectations, personal views and biases. In the second segment, the students were uninterruptedly allowed to express their skepticism and doubts about the professor's lecture and to articulate what they considered its weaknesses and possible contradictions. This session was called *disputatio* (disputations). In the third segment, both the teacher and the students engaged in a energetic, logical, yet agreeable debate over the state of the lecture before they reached a *determinatio* (resolution); a reframed exposition of the lecture that took into account the justifiable objections and concerns of the students (Kretzmann & Stump, 1993. pp 15-17). While this method may work better in graduate criminal justice courses, we think it can work equally well in undergraduate courses *if* both the instructors and the students are well versed in the philosophy of reason and the tradition of justice.

(2) The Erudition of Instructors (Henderson)

As a result of the proposed challenges to, and the nature of, criminal justice education, it is pertinent that professors be well informed of the characteristics of effectiveness in the classroom. In an attempt to honor their solemn obligation it is of the utmost importance that criminal justice professors strive to motivate students toward the actualization of justice. With the goal of fostering a sense of respect for the field, professors must be cognizant of those characteristics that demonstrate a strong correlation

with educational effectiveness. Inherent in these characteristics is an understanding that teacher effectiveness is a complex and multidimensional construct that may be captured by a host of terms and applications. The information in this section will identify some of the characteristics of effective teachers as deemed by students, peers, and administrators in the hope of providing a springboard for dialogue on excellent in professorship.

The attributes of an effective professor has been the basis of much scholarly inquiry and will be the parameters by which the following discussion will abide. Despite the prevailing assumption that effective teaching is a construct yet to be defined, research demonstrates the contrary (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001). Educational theorists have sought to answer this question of what it is that makes a professor effective. Research has demonstrated that teacher effectiveness is characterized and improved by a host of characteristics relating to (Young & Shaw, 1999):

- academic credentials
- professional backgrounds
- research interest(s)
- teaching and/or practical experience
- level of planning and preparation
- a willingness to self-reflect and modify teaching techniques
- flexibility
- knowledge of pedagogical theory(s)
and,
- communication skills.

Academic credentials, as well as research interests and professional backgrounds, provide an opportunity to ensure that students are being taught by individuals who have a higher level of understanding regarding the intricacies of the discipline. Contrary to popular belief, years of teaching experience does not guarantee that one will be an effective instructor. Research has demonstrated that experience is only as useful as the professor's willingness to self-reflect and modify instructional techniques in order to meet the needs of the students in their respective classrooms (d'Apollonia & Abrami, 1997). It should be noted that teaching is not as much about credentials and experience as it is about passion, charisma, and expressive attitudes which have demonstrated effectiveness in regards to students' perceptions of influential and motivational instruction.

In light of the nature of academism, instructors must be prepared to teach a rapidly changing population of students (i.e. in terms of interest and motivation), several of whom will require different methods of instruction(s) and guidance. The most effective teachers methodically assess the needs, abilities, and preparedness of the students on a class-by-class basis and respond to their needs accordingly. Effective

instructors should: (1) determine the style and material of their classes dependent upon the needs and abilities of their students; (2) constantly seek the most current developments in criminal justice/criminology and be sure to incorporate these into their classrooms; (3) organize the material in a manner that is conducive to intellectual growth and decision making; (4) consistently utilize and improve upon effective forms of communication; (5) establish relevant goals and objectives subsequently deciphering and incorporating the best methods of meeting the objectives; (6) inform the students of the objectives and expectations; and (7) continually seek a mentor-student relationship in the midst of an intellectual atmosphere.

Given the aforementioned characteristics, it is important to understand that professors are naturally well versed in a wide variety of areas, put forth personal attributes worthy of emulation by the students, and have an unrestrained desire for openness with the students in order to produce the synergistic relationship conducive to learning.

From a sociological perspective, as instructors, professors should lead by example, establish student-teacher relationships, and provide students with an opportunity to accept transference of knowledge. Leading by example provides the student with a level of mastery and a living role model of such character worthy and sought after for emulation. The instructor's level of integrity is an essential which provides for the second most important aspect of teacher effectiveness: namely, the relationship with the students. Once the professor is viewed as a role model and a level of trust is established, students will begin to allow themselves to be influenced or taught by the instructor. If these three essential elements are not achieved, the best one can hope for is the transference of knowledge from teacher to student without the implementation of a sense of passion for the subject.

It is also important, given the previous characteristics, that a sense of professionalism be the ultimate rule by which professors govern themselves. Whether or not an effective instructor is one who is the encourager of independent thought or a provider of structure, organization, and concepts, there must always be a sense of noble motivation behind every action. For a professor to motivate student action is to spark a sense of intellectual liberation. This section is written in hopes of beginning a dialogue regarding the characteristics of effective criminal justice instructors.

Finally, there are other factors that have been found to increase classroom effectiveness of which a few have been previously mentioned and to cover them all would drastically extend beyond the purpose of this paper. However, since the underlying goal of criminal justice educators is to provide a practical understanding of deeply entrenched philosophical concepts (i.e. justice and retribution), it is to this end that this section focuses on the main ideas behind instructor effectiveness characteristics.

(3) Methods of Pedagogy (Dowling)

The concept of pedagogy is originally Greek (i.e., *paidagogia*) and seeks to explain the characteristics of teaching and teachers as well as the arts and sciences of teaching, especially in the area of methods. This section will address how these arts and sciences can enhance teaching excellence in criminal justice.

Consistent with the Greek tradition, criminal justice instructors should be able to use a variety of instructional techniques and educational resources. They should recognize that students have different learning styles and that one style may serve some students well while serving others poorly. Additionally, they should realize that the learning experience is not limited to the classroom. While the lecture method is likely to remain the backbone of university teaching for the near future, the use of small group discussions, student presentations, student journals, field observations, and other sound instructional techniques have an important place in the learning experience. In addition, a variety of supplemental materials should be used, as appropriate for the course. Such supplemental materials may include textbooks, journal articles, legal briefs, work books, multi-media instructional presentations, outside library and internet assignments, and similar materials.

The instructor should select the right pedagogy to achieve the desired learning outcome goals. A university education is about more than mere acquisition of factual information. Development of the student's ability to make analytical judgments, evaluate research, apply information learned to new circumstances, and combine knowledge across disciplines separates a university education from a basic K-12 education. Accordingly, the instructor should set his or her instructional goals consistent with the higher phases of Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives. Appropriate pedagogical techniques should be used to ensure the success of student attainment at the designated level of learning.

The instructor should be academically qualified, knowledgeable in the topic being taught, and should possess either field experience or a research interest in the topic. In a university, instructors should possess either appropriate academic credentials for the course being taught or be in the final stages of acquiring those credentials. In the case of specialized courses, appropriate academic credentials should be held by the instructor. In addition, the instructor should possess sufficient knowledge of the topic that s/he can not only share that expertise with the students but also be capable of responding accurately to classroom queries related to the topic. While the instructor need not be an expert in the field, his or her knowledge of the topic should be of sufficient depth that the instructor is authoritative on the topic. Given the nature of criminal justice and criminology, the instructor should have either experience in application of the topic to the work-a-day world or be actively conducting research in the field. Field research can be either empirical study of the topic or provision of consulting services to relevant agencies. This requirement is necessary for the instructor to provide the current information on the topic

and be able to relate the student's classroom experience to the world outside of the classroom.

The instructor should also use a variety of assessment techniques. Assessment techniques should be as varied as, and as complimentary to, instructional techniques. No one form of testing is appropriate for every course and every course objective is a means of measuring one's level of educational attainment. The instructor should select the assessment technique that is most efficient and effective in fairly measuring the student's performance in the course.

The instructor should also advise the students of course expectations, grading standards, and classroom conduct requirements. Students have the right to expect that the instructor will provide them, at a minimum, with information that accurately describes the scope of the course, key time points in the semester, the level of performance to attain a particular grade, and the student's own responsibilities in the learning process. Such information shall not be modified during the course of the semester without fair and timely notice to all students. Additionally, all classes should normally meet at the scheduled period and for the assigned time length and such time periods should not be altered solely for the personal convenience of the instructor.

The instructor should recognize that s/he serves as a role model for students and should conduct herself/himself according to appropriate professional standards. The instructor is on view of the students both in and out of the classroom. Her/his public behavior and appearance should at all times reflect appropriately upon the discipline and the university.

(4) The Actualization of Students (Schulenberg)

The mission statement for Sam Houston State University provides an overarching framework for an approach that can be adopted in the classroom. Specifically, it aptly summarizes our institutional and instructional goals by stating:

Sam Houston State University is a multicultural institution whose mission is to provide excellence by continually improving quality education, scholarship, and service to its students and to appropriate regional, state, national, and international constituencies.

As a College, in order to achieve excellence in education, scholarship, and service we require an understanding of our student body and the concomitant approach necessary to engage, challenge, and elevate them to their highest potential. The consequences for neglecting these obligations are "that too many students leave our classrooms unable to transfer principles and understanding to new domains of knowledge [and] we will create a workforce for tomorrow that is superbly prepared only for yesterday's problems" (Halpern, 1999, p. 94).

To explicate these ideas, current student demographics are introduced in addition to the body of literature that discusses the relationship between student educational expectations and resultant behavior. This literature will help address the question of “What is a good student?” Finally, the teaching techniques are related to student characteristics with suggestions for maximizing learning in the classroom.

Student Profile

The student body has experienced several shifts over the last thirty years. Recent research finds that approximately two-thirds of high school graduates are now proceeding directly to higher education, but “some of them aren’t prepared – whether academically, financially, or socially – to succeed” (Martin & Manrahan, 2004, p. 288). Within the discipline of criminal justice, student-faculty ratios are not commensurate with other disciplines, yet almost all of the incoming freshman are under the age of 19 and just over half are first-generation college students (Martin & Manrahan, 2004). Complicating this situation is the fact that these students demonstrate a deficiency in their ability to process abstract thoughts and analogical reasoning thereby arguably requiring lower student-faculty ratios in order to effectively impart knowledge (Gimenez, 1989b).

Within our institution, student demographics are relatively similar to those found in other criminal justice programs. According to the Office of Institutional Research (OIR) at Sam Houston State University (2003), in the Fall of 2002 the most popular major for males and the second most popular for females was criminal justice. Within the College, 53.3% of our students were male and 46.7% were female. In comparison to the university as a whole, 41.4% of our students were male and 58.6% were female. The gender breakdown for Fall 2006 is identical (OIR, 2007). Thus, we are attracting slightly fewer females than the general university population ratio. Additionally, as of Fall 2006, the majority of the undergraduate student body at SHSU is White (71%), followed by African-American (14%), and Hispanic (12%) (OIR, 2007). In Fall 2006, 44.2% of all incoming students at SHSU were transfer students. Thus, our student body is slightly more likely to be male, white, with a significant proportion transferring from other institutions.

Student Expectations and Behavior

Students have their own personal motivations for pursuing higher education and in their decisions to take any particular class. There are two ways student expectations and behavior can be approached. First, there is the perspective of a generational divide between faculty and students. Second, building on educational research, we can examine the link between expectations and motivation within the classroom. Both approaches provide valuable insight into the students within our classrooms and into which teaching perspectives would be most effective.

According to Johnson (2007), there are generational differences in personality, perspective, and work ethic between the current faculty and students. For instance, individuals born in Generation X (1965-1977) are typically self-focused, goal oriented,

independent, self-sufficient, unimpressed with authority unless it is earned, and work to live. In contrast, our student body are predominantly from Generation Y (1978-2000) who are high-tech, optimistic, sociable, thrive on collaborative learning, achievement and goal oriented, have high expectations, are short-sighted, and need to be lead by example. As such, they are not strong problem-solvers, demand immediate and instant feedback, are very multi-task oriented, and have expectations that mirror a customer service model. Delucchi and Korgen (2002) elaborate on the consumerism model with their research into the perceptions of sociology majors. Their overall finding was that today's students "expect to be amused; to feel comfortable and to put forth little effort; to be rewarded liberally for self-disclosure; and to be given high grades in return for paying tuition and showing up" (Delucchi & Korgen, 2002, p. 101). This conclusion is based on their findings that most students prefer high grades to learning, just over half expect faculty to be responsible for their degree of attentiveness and their preference for entertainment over challenge in the classroom. Not surprisingly, research that looks at student performance and retention comes to similar conclusions. Unsuccessful students have lower levels of self-efficacy, an inability to manage time, and poor work group and reading skills (Chenault, 2007; Devonport & Lane, 2006; Howard, 2004).

Students bring their social experiences into the classroom and vary in their intellectual and social skills. In fact, "students' personal notions of how the world works influence what they learn in every academic discipline" (Halpern, 1999, p. 91). Several authors suggest that students, on the whole, are willing to explore with occasional bursts of energy and commitment when they are engaged by something that is of interest to them (Halpern, 1999; Heirich, 1980; McKinney, 1988). Thus, an academic task is taken seriously once the relevance of the question is linked to something they care about. This is directly linked to the second approach of viewing students in terms of their expectations and motivations.

Achievement goal theory suggests that there are two types of goal orientations that affect a student's ability to synthesize and understand information presented to them. For those with a learning or mastery goal orientation, they have "a desire to develop one's competencies, to master a task, or to improve intellectually" (Meece, Glienke, & Burg, 2006, p. 360). In contrast, performance goal orientation involves students who are striving to demonstrate "high ability relative to others, competing for grades, or gaining recognition for ability" (Meece, et al., 2006, p. 360).

In essence, all students have elements of these two types of goal orientations based on the situation. This can produce four possible variations. For the mastery approach, grades are not the most important factor, as learning the concepts is the goal of participation. In the performance approach, reliance is placed on comparison to one's peers (i.e. a type of relative deprivation) to assess one's ability and progress. Ideally, those students who present a mixture of the mastery and the performance approach maximize learning and would constitute a definition of a "good" student (Chenault, 2007). However, we also have mastery avoidance which encapsulates students striving for mediocrity and, performance avoidance where these students do not want to appear as the worst in the class and focus on avoiding unfavorable judgments of their ability. All

of these variations exist in our classrooms, thereby also necessitating teaching techniques to engage these types of students. Meece and colleagues (2006) find that there are no clear distinctions in achievement goal orientations by gender. However, Chenault (2007) surveyed criminal justice majors and found that prior achievement is significantly associated with the performance approach while sophomores were more motivated than seniors in terms of the mastery approach. In short, research suggests that the level and type of criminal justice student motivation is critical in maximizing performance and for considerations of teaching techniques.

Teaching Methods That Meet the Needs and Expectations of Our Students

Our classrooms contain a heterogeneous group of students. Traditional teaching techniques, such as the lecture and the exam, may be sufficient for students possessing a combination of the mastery and performance approaches to learning. However, research suggests unique challenges with Generation Y and mastery/performance avoidance students. “There is no royal road to science, and only those who do not dread the fatiguing climb of its steep paths have a chance to gain its luminous summits” (Marx, 1867/1972, p. 21). As academics and educators in our quest to achieve excellence, our teaching method should embrace this path and our actions reflect this diversity in student expectations and motivations.

The teaching techniques criminal justice instructors adopt should therefore be reflective of two conditions. On the one hand, they should represent all scholarly efforts to enhance learning. On the other hand, teaching techniques “reflect teachers’ adaptations to students’ structurally produced needs, level of skills and knowledge, and behavior” (Gimenez, 1989a, p. 199). Thus, instructors should structure their pedagogical approach to the requirements of learning as well as to the constraints that have created students with various deficiencies in the classroom.

This duality we face raises the question of how we can maximize learning. Several themes emerge from the multi-disciplinary literature that addresses student learning, motivation, and retention:

First, exercising fairness in grading and workload ultimately increases credibility and student motivation.

Second, it is no longer sufficient to present theories and concepts in their own right. Today’s students need to see how theories, knowledge, skills, and other analytical thinking apply to other settings, particularly their future work environment (Heirich, 1980; Martin & Manrahan, 2004; McKinney, 1988). If material is applied to other settings, it induces student excitement and interest. “To be a teacher is to be an enabler” (McKinney, 1988, p. 299) through the use of techniques such as class discussion and group projects.

Third, it is a disservice to students to underestimate their potential. This involves bringing substance to the courses and actively caring about our students’ future (McKinney, 1988).

Fourth, arguably the most difficult to embrace, is that of entertainment. Effective teaching requires enthusiasm as a mandatory ingredient (Delucchi & Korgen, 2002; McGee, 1985; McKinney, 1988) for students to respond to what occurs in the classroom. Teaching is a type of performing art form that, if done effectively, will increase learning, lower absenteeism, and increase attentiveness (McKinney, 1988). Varying the use of teaching techniques to incorporate films, debates, and guest speakers may be useful. However, engaging lectures can also be achieved through the use of humor, nonverbal body language, and extensive examples that relate the material presented to other settings. To be an outstanding teacher includes a “concern for student mastery of course materials, enthusiasm about the subject matter, and a genuine interest in the students as persons” (McGee, 1985, pp. 485-486). In short, to address today’s students in such a way as to maximize learning involves engaging lectures, enthusiasm and excitement, concern, fairness, and application of the material to the everyday world.

(5) The Supplementary Aspects of Teaching (Frasier)

One of the many challenges that teachers (no matter at what level) face is how to motivate students to master the material that is presented to them. While other portions of this paper will address various issues, this portion will focus on the supportive aspects of teaching criminal justice, i.e., assignment of books and supplementary materials, papers, and exams.

Books and Supplementary Reading Materials

Many new professors (and a few seasoned ones) are tempted to choose the book that they will use as a foundation for teaching a course and then design the course around the outline of the book. This is particularly true if, along with the book, the professor receives lecture outlines, PowerPoint presentations, and a test bank. It should come as no surprise that many of the publishers of textbooks for introductory courses (which just so happen are the ones often taught by newer faculty and doctoral teaching assistants) highlight the teacher’s aids that will accompany the textbook.

Others would suggest that such an approach is backwards. They would suggest that a professor should determine the design of the course and then attempt to find a textbook that contains the material. In order to find a textbook (or textbooks) which is adaptable, the professor will often have to be open to the fact that the material will not necessarily be in the same order in the textbook as the professor has chosen to teach the course.

While it is tempting to utilize several textbooks on which to base a course, requiring students to purchase several textbooks for one course is often seen as cost prohibitive by the students. While there is more flexibility in graduate courses to require several textbooks, in undergraduate courses it is recommended that supplemental reading assignments be used. By doing so, books can be placed on reserve at the library so that students can access them without cost.

If the course is one in which having students locate the material on their own is part of the learning experience, professors should be sensitive to the fact that students may require guidance at the beginning of the semester to find the resources.

The more difficult task is motivating students to do the reading. Some of the suggestions from Barbara Gross Davis in her *Tools for Teaching* are to:

1. Assign the reading at least two sessions before it will be discussed.
2. Assign study questions on the reading assignment. Extra incentive can be provided by informing students that exam questions will be pulled from the study questions.
3. Ask non-threatening questions about the reading.
4. If students have not done the reading, instead of covering it in class, tell them that they will have to do it on their own and that they should expect a question on the next exam covering the reading.
5. If students have not done the reading, give them a written assignment and dismiss them from class. Those who have done the reading stay for discussion. The written assignment should be onerous enough that doing the reading is the preferable alternative.

Papers

Students tend to think that only “writing enhanced” courses and graduate courses require papers. In reality, some faculty members tend to share this view. The decision to require a paper is one left to the professor. If a paper is required, obviously the writing of the paper should contribute to the students’ knowledge on the topic at hand.

Papers can be a valuable tool for covering material which would not otherwise be covered in class or covering it more in-depth. Some suggestions (some of these are from Barbara Gross Davis’ article) on making the paper writing experience more meaningful are:

1. Pass out a list of research topics that previous students have done so that students can get a better idea of potential areas of research. Encourage students to follow up on the previous research as opposed to duplicating it.
2. Make available copies of the best papers received in past semesters. It is suggested that permission be obtained from the students who wrote those papers and that the research area be “off limits” so as to minimize the temptation to duplicate previous work.
3. Provide class time for students to read papers submitted by other students and critique them. It is suggested that the critiques be done on “drafts” of the papers. However, students should be required to have made substantial effort on the papers before this step.
4. Incorporate the student’s papers into your lecture or have the students discuss their paper at the proper time.

Exams

Exams perform at least four functions:

1. Assess whether they are learning what they are expected to learn.
2. Motivate and help students structure their academic efforts.
3. Evaluate how successfully the material has been presented.
4. Reinforce learning by providing students with indicators of what topics they have not yet mastered. (Davis, 1999)

In order to construct effective exams, the following propositions are necessary:

1. Prepare new exams each time a course is taught. Past exams will not necessarily reflect the items that you have emphasized in the course.
2. Make up test items throughout the term or examination period.
3. Ask students to submit test questions. Buchanan and Rogers (1990) suggest that you limit students to two questions per exam and that they be required to indicate the correct answer and the source (page of the text, date of the lecture, etc.) for each question. Students usually receive extra credit for questions deemed appropriate.
4. When possible, make exams cumulative as they reinforce student learning (Crooks, 1998).
5. Prepare clear instructions.
6. Set students up for success by putting some easy items first so that they can overcome nervousness. (Savitz, 1985)
7. Challenge the best students by having at least a few very difficult questions at or near the end of the exam.
8. Try out the timing of the exam. One suggestion is to allow approximately four times as long as it takes you to complete the test. (McKeachie, 1986)

Once exams are given, students should be afforded the opportunity to review how they have done. One approach is to give the exams back in the classroom and go over them as a whole. While this is probably the most time efficient approach, it does little to provide students with an understanding of their individual shortcomings. Another approach, which is considerably more time consuming, is to meet with students individually or in groups of two or three (preferably their study groups). Students should be required to bring with them their study materials so as to help ascertain whether the type or material or approach needs to be adjusted.

Recommendations

In order to pursue excellence in teaching criminal justice, and to produce highly educated students, the committee recommends the following:

- To thoroughly understand criminal justice, the discipline should—as much as technically possible—be taught as a liberal art; one that fosters critical thinking, reasoning, and the pursuit of enlightenment. To achieve these attributes, however,

the students must experience a highly intellectual culture in their classrooms; one that emphasizes enlightenment, vision, openness, and the joy of discovery.

- To ensure intellectual consistency, teaching criminal justice should focus equally on both of its natural roots: the study of crime and the study of justice. Without studying both of these topics equally, the teaching of the discipline will be incomplete.
- To maximize teacher effectiveness, courses should be consistently assigned to faculty members based on their academic strengths, teaching experiences, and research interests.
- To improve the quality of learning, the more practical courses (e.g., criminal investigation, forensic science, police interrogation) should—as often as possible—be taught by practice-oriented instructors, mainly from the clinical and adjunct pool.
- To deliver quality learning, the college might reconsider the conventional practice of routinely assigning senior instructors to teach senior graduate courses. It has been argued, rather persuasively, that senior instructors (preferably at the full professor rank) should be assigned—in as much as it is feasible—to teach more of the lower-level courses (especially the large classes of sophomores and juniors). The rationale behind this is that, unlike the graduate students, sophomores and juniors are far less academically experienced, and, therefore, require, and deserve, the highest quality teaching available. Senior professors are assumed to be able to offer students a "laser focus" view of the discipline more clearly, and can best articulate the global lessons to be learned.
- To promote teaching excellence, the college should encourage the more experienced instructors to provide mentorship to the newer ones. Such mentorship may include advising them of the college's culture, structure, history, and its global goals, as well as assisting them in identifying the most appropriate avenues for getting their scholarly works published.
- To bolster an environment of academic fairness, instructors should be highly aware of students' perception of course grading, the need to accurately evaluate their contribution, and to expediently post the students' grades while protecting their right to privacy.
- To reinforce academic discipline and professionalism and to be in compliance with college policy, all classes should begin and adjourn on time. This includes classes meeting on weekends as well as those at the University Center. No classes

should be cancelled without prior notice to students and in compliance with official policies.

- To enhance the learning environment, instructors should encourage the students to be engaged (with the instructors) in discussions about relevant topics both, inside and outside the classroom. This can best reinforce the students' ability to extemporaneously, yet intelligently, respond to discourse and scholarly inquiry.
- To further promote faculty-student relationships, it has been proposed (with one committee member objecting) that the college designate a faculty-student lounge to provide a relaxed, yet dignified, setting for the free flow and exchange of views, dissertation ideas, and related commentaries. Such a lounge—rather elaborately and handsomely furnished—should serve as a focal point for academic dialogue and collegial camaraderie.
- To sustain an outlook conducive to quality learning, the criminal justice facility (especially the classrooms) should be physically maintained and technologically upgraded to provide a safe, modern, and appealing learning environment.
- To implement these recommendations, the college should more publicly embrace the role of teaching. This can be best accomplished by encouraging the instructors to strive for varied teaching techniques and to display intellectual enthusiasm for the subject matters they teach. Likewise, the instructors should demonstrate their willingness to serve their students with commitment and devotion.

Finally, it is hoped that this White Paper will serve only as the beginning of a series of dialogues conducive to making excellence in teaching criminal justice a reality.

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