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Teaching for Social Justice:

Getting Down to Cases

James Rhem, Executive Editor

As previously announced, *The National Teaching & Learning Forum* has committed to including a significant article on teaching for social justice and social equity in each of its issues in this volume. The first two issues have included provocative essays on the power of language and the need to awaken and shape students' understanding and use of language. In this edition, I want to bring attention to samples from a growing archive of vetted and refined assignments aimed at addressing the last of the five learning categories outlined by the Degree Qualifications Profile—civic and global learning.

Some readers may not be familiar with this very impressive initiative, so let me briefly summarize it before highlighting a few of the assignments from its assignment archive. The DQP initiative moves away from counting degrees per se. Instead, it seeks to define the proficiencies students should come away from their educations demonstrating, and it defines the level of proficiency each degree level should attain—associate, bachelor's, and master's. To put it more crudely: DQP focuses on what students can do rather than how much information they've managed to retain. It lays out five learning categories, the first three of which are long-standing and familiar in liberal arts education—specialized knowledge,

broad and integrative knowledge (i.e., historically, the general education requirements), and intellectual skills (critical thinking and basic writing ability). In recent decades, the fourth—applied and collaborative skills—has become more familiar, as colleges have recognized the need for students to be able to work with and learn from others. The fifth—civic and global learning—may seem new, but it has deep roots in the idea of the common good. Perhaps merely the notion that good transcends national is new.

I encourage *NTLF* readers to learn more about DQP if they aren't already familiar with it (<http://degreeprofile.org/>). The DQP initiative includes a searchable archive of assignments, together with assessment rubrics (<https://www.assignmentlibrary.org/>). And, helpfully, it also includes a "featured assignment" area that contains videos and feedback and commentary from peers.

Assignment Archive: Social Justice

Happily, the featured assignments include a number that address issues of social justice and equity. One of the most impressive comes from Mount St. Joseph University, a Catholic school in Cincinnati. A few years ago, an assessment review indicated that students were coming out of their interdisciplinary core curriculum not fully achieving the overall goals of a liberal arts education. Mount

St. Joseph undertook a revision of the curriculum, shifting from a focus on interdisciplinarity per se toward integrative learning, defined as integrating life and learning to create meaning and value. Capstone courses that call for strong demonstration of integrated learning became a feature of the school, and in many ways a natural theater for dramatizing the connections between a liberal arts education, the common good, and life (and challenges) beyond graduation. Different courses offer a range of focuses. Recent ones include immigration, global human rights, and environmental stewardship. Perhaps psychology professor Mary Kay Jordan-Fleming's "CORE 405: The Human Costs of Inequality" speaks most directly to *NTLF's* focus in this series of pieces on teaching for social justice.

The vital energy in an integrative approach lies in *doing* on behalf of the common good beyond merely *learning* about its history and challenges to it. Professor Jordan-Fleming's assignment description lays this out clearly: "This course was designed to further your understanding of several types of inequality and the toll they take on our bodies, minds, spirits, communities, and common humanity. Throughout the course, we have drawn on knowledge and skills gained from our life experiences, academic majors, and the Core Curriculum. I hope the course has fed our passion for *learning* about and *acting* for the common good." In revising its curriculum, Mount St. Joseph didn't abandon its emphasis on interdisciplinarity. These capstone assignments require integrating knowledge and insight from a variety of disciplines. The shift merely insisted on students embracing these matters as alive and unsettled.

CORE 405 calls for two essays, equally important: one a scholarly essay on a social justice problem not studied in the course and the other a reflective essay on the student's processes in arriving at his or her insights and positions. The social justice essay (the scholarly

piece) must be well-researched, well-documented, and, quoting Professor Jordan-Fleming's description, "First and foremost ... must make a compelling case for action." Yes, this is academic study, but it is academic study focused on committed involvement with the real world's need for the healing help education can offer.

The vital energy in an integrative approach lies in doing on behalf of the common good beyond merely learning about its history.

The course assignment is concrete, robust, and transparent in what's required of the student and the learning outcomes it expects students to show evidence of having satisfied in communications, critical thinking, and integrative learning. And it comes with a comprehensive grading rubric in matrix form outlining exactly what constitutes inadequate, adequate, and exemplary performance. Study it here: http://degreeprofile.org/featured-assignment-description_archived/.

To some extent, the reflective essay added last year in a revision of the assignment remains a work in progress. All assignments added to the DQP archive receive critical review, and as one reviewer of the assignment noted, while the objective of the reflective essay is clear—it seeks to have students become metacognitively aware of their own modes of thinking, of when and how they frame and approach problems—unspoken implications of the assignment may lead to a self-congratulatory rather than fully honest reflection. How to add rigor and demand probing honesty in a reflection the whole capstone context expects to be positive remains a continuing concern.

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Editor's Note:

Previous editions of *NTLF* this year have featured provocative essays on aspects of social justice and social equity. These meditations on some of the obstacles to achieving those goals in the education offered to today's undergraduates and graduates will have surely stimulated your thinking about improving the educational ethos with those goals in mind. This edition seeks to advance investment in working toward social justice by profiling a pair of assignments from the extensive archive compiled by the National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NIOLA). These come from NIOLA's Degree Qualifications Profile (DQP) Assignment Library, and they are aimed squarely at the last of the DQP's general goals—"civic and global learning." These assignments each come with an assessment rubric as well as commentary from reviewing faculty. They should inspire other committed faculty to create assignments designed to move forward in making concepts of social justice an integral part of all students' education. I wrote the story with help from *NTLF* Editorial Advisory Board member Pat Hutchings.

I wrote another story for this issue, this one on one of the most attractive innovations in supporting improved teaching and learning on campus I have seen in a long time. The innovation is a wiki called Principedia. I call it a crowdsourced gazetteer to the learning on the Princeton University campus. Wikipedia offers an easy comparison, but a limited one. Principedia compiles and organizes the metacognitive knowledge students and faculty accrue from the dynamic of teaching and learning. Students write analyses of the learning in particular courses, guides to how the material is organized and presented and the most productive ways students have found to grasp it. It's not a "Rate My Professor" sort of thing; it's a large meditation on learning, at once sprawling and targeted.

In this issue's **PRAXIS**, **Kevin Bennett** of Penn State, offers advice to graduate students on aspects of preparation and also career balance.

In the final installment of their **CRITICAL THINKING** series, **Patty Payette** and **Brian Barnes** of the University of Louisville discuss not only habits of mind needed for critical thinking, but also dispositions and values needed. They focus on intellectual humility and intellectual perseverance. We've taken up these vital matters in an earlier issue (Susan Alvarado's "Character in Thinking and Learning: One Professor's Practice," V25N4) and we're happy to welcome this further exploration of these important ideas, too seldom explored (at least overtly).

Our **CREATIVITY CAFÉ** column by **Charlie Sweet**, **Hal Blythe**, and **Rusty Carpenter** of Eastern Kentucky University applies their "nifty nine" creative thinking strategies to understanding what innovating academic leadership for the twenty-first century will need to look like. Readers of *NTLF* are already familiar with this trio's understanding of collaboration, brainstorming, shifting perception, and using metaphor, but perhaps a review of piggybacking and "glimmer catching" may be in order.

What are the "generation effect," the "production effect," the "repetition effect," the "testing effect," and the "imagery effect"? **Marilla Svinicki's AD REM ...** concludes this issue of *NTLF* with a short course on memory, how it works and, thus, how we can better understand how to appeal to and use it in teaching and learning.

Finally, let me renew my invitation to followers of *NTLF* to join in our effort to expand understanding of teaching for social justice. Has there ever been a time in living memory when social justice seemed more aggressively under attack? Surely, education offers the most lasting and civilized means of moving our society toward a deeper understanding of social justice and a firmer commitment to enacting it in our society. What do we need to rethink in our teaching, our curriculum? These pages welcome your thoughts.

—James Rhem

The DQP assignment archive contains at least a half-dozen examples of assignments that address social justice/equity. Find them by searching using DQP's fifth proficiency or desired learning outcome—civic and global learning. Awash as public discourse currently finds itself in talk of "America first," all of these embrace the undeniable fact of global citizenship and reaffirm the hope of a liberal arts education and civic engagement as means to a better, fairer, more compassionate, and thoughtful world.

Liberal Arts in Action

Another featured assignment, this one from Elon University, plants the hope of an applied liberal arts education right in its title. Nina Namaste's "COR 440: Liberal Arts Skills In Action" calls on students to design and implement a project focusing on a social issue of importance to them that demonstrates their understanding of key concepts of the liberal arts and their possible application to this issue in real life. The assignment calls on them to demonstrate not only an understanding of the course readings from this capstone semester, but of their entire experience of the general education core at Elon. Their "product" may be almost anything—an academic paper, a video, an ad campaign, a thematic unit with lesson plans, a speech, a workshop. But as with Jordan-Fleming's assignment at Mount St. Joseph, not only must what the student develops be well-researched and well-documented, but it may not be passive and merely "academic" in the more pejorative sense of that word. It must show an engaged, action-oriented posture toward the issue.

Professor Namaste, an associate professor of Spanish in the Department of World Languages and Cultures, also teaches in Elon's Women's, Gender, & Sexualities Studies program and has used the same assignment teaching there.

Given the latitude allowed in students' final products, the assign-

ment obviously calls upon students not only to be critical and scholarly, but to be creative as well. But while *NTLF* has been affirming for some time that critical and creative thinking go hand-in-hand, in some quarters, assignments that can be fulfilled with a video or website are still looked at as suspect, lacking critical rigor. A glance at some of Namaste's question prompts quickly dispels any such suspicion.

- For what social issue are you trying to investigate, contextualize, analyze, synthesize, evaluate, and hypothesize solutions?
- What is your “big”/foundational question (and therefore your research question)?
- What is the core issue? What are related ones?
- What is the socio-cultural/historical context of the issue? Why is it a relevant and pressing issue to investigate and “solve”?
- What are your “baseline” ideas on the topic as of right now?
- What sources have you found so far that will ground your project? Where else might you need to look?
- What theories or expert ideas are grounding, guiding, or framing your own? How are you using or applying those ideas?
- Who is your target audience?
- If you were a person in your target audience, how would your project impact you?

Reflection Questions

And as with Jordan-Fleming's assignment, Namaste's also requires students to submit a reflective essay detailing their inner journey in the creation of their final product. Everyone begins with assumptions and, thus, biases. An essential part of learning involves becoming conscious of them as guides to the unanswered questions that must be addressed in order to shape an ethical personal response to a social problem. And students must show how they found a way to become personally involved in ameliorating the injustice or inequity they've researched. Namaste's assignment also contains prompts to help students make these instructive reflections.

- What IS the issue (in a larger socio-historic context and for you personally)?
- Why is this such a complicated issue it hasn't been “resolved” already?
- How did you “drill down” to figure out what the core problem actually is?
- What research did you find and where did you find it?
- How did the research shape, change, and/or solidify your understanding of differing positions on the topic?
- What aspects did you struggle to make sense of and what aspects did you process easily?
- What questions were answered for you in doing the project? What lingering questions do you still have?

We do not have to look far to find injustice and inequity. Our hope of creating more justice and more equity has always lain in education. Assignments such as these offer steps along that long road that I invite the readers of *NTLF* to follow. |||

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CRITICAL THINKING

Coaching for Intellectual Humility and Intellectual Perseverance

*Patty Payette and Brian Barnes
University of Louisville*

Recent calls from all corners of higher education and industry to sharpen the focus on students' critical thinking skills have resulted in a plethora of critical thinking

webinars, standards tests, and campuswide initiatives. There doesn't seem to be disagreement that the core cognitive skills of critical thinking—such as evaluating claims, analyzing problems, posing questions, and checking assumptions—are skills students can learn with focused instruction, ongoing effort, and explicit feedback.

But what often gets left out of these discussions is a consideration of the critical thinking dispositions, or mindsets, that can create the conditions for students to adopt the best cognitive moves in meaningful and lasting ways, no matter the discipline at hand. By “dispositions,” we are talking about the kind of thinkers each of us are. These intellectual dispositions are sometimes referred to as intellectual virtues or habits of mind and the number and names vary somewhat depending on the scholar or source. However, what they all have in common is investment in the shaping of students' “fundamental beliefs, attitudes and feelings about thinking and learning” that aims for “deep personal growth” (Core Practices, n.d.). This ensures that critical thinking becomes part of who we are as individuals and is not reduced to a set of shallow academic moves we reserve for the classroom.

A focus on intellectual virtues challenges us, as instructors, to consider the following questions: To what extent do I and the thinkers I am training display **intellectual humility** (as opposed to intellectual arrogance), **intellectual courage** (as opposed to intellectual cowardice), or **intellectual empathy** (instead of intellectual narrow-mindedness)? To what extent do I **persevere intellectually** even when the thinking gets tiresome or difficult? To what extent am I comfortable with **intellectual open-mindedness** and can consider alternative perspectives or points of view? These intellectual virtues, or attitudes, shape how each of us as thinkers goes about the ongoing work and personal effort that improves or impedes rigorous thinking behaviors and enables us

to stretch outside of intellectual comfort zones or remain in ignorant bliss.

Here we focus on two critical thinking intellectual traits instructors can actively coach students to practice and adopt in service of becoming critical thinkers at any level: **intellectual humility** and **intellectual perseverance**.

Learning and Mentoring

We invite you, as the instructor, to think of yourself as a mentor. Thinking of yourself as a mentor helps keep *your* focus on prompting the students to do the thinking instead of putting yourself front and center as the active agent while your students passively watch you do the intellectual work in the classroom.

When instructors coach students in thinking, they become “facilitators of learning” rather than “givers of information” (Paul & Elder, 2007, p. 29). All of us want students to be able eventually to think through the material we are teaching without us present to correct them. This stance requires having students use and actively work with course content in meaningful ways while you remain on the sidelines providing steady feedback.

With the help of an encouraging mentor, they will adopt a resilient mentality, learning from their mistakes. This is where critical thinking dispositions come into play.

Intellectual Humility

A critical thinker, like an orchestral musician, knows there is always room for improvement, in the thinker’s case, intellectual improvement. When learners are demonstrating intellectual humility, they are aware that their own biases can get in the way of unbiased judgment or color their decisions; they are attuned to what they know and don’t know about a topic and aren’t afraid to admit it.

Jason Baehr (2015) defines intellectual humility as “an awareness of and a willingness to ‘own’ one’s intellectual limitations, weaknesses, and mistakes.” He offers sugges-

tions for instructors on how to integrate a focus on intellectual humility into classroom teaching, beginning with identifying the concept of intellectual humility for students, providing several salient examples, and encouraging students to demonstrate it.

Intellectual perseverance is the disposition needed as one struggles with confusion, difficulties, and frustrations in order to gain understanding and insight.

You can begin by modeling intellectual humility for students by admitting when you don’t know something or that you’ve made a mistake. Intellectually humble instructors also hold up their own beliefs and conclusions to examination without demonstrating defensiveness; they are willing to listen to learners and to be proven wrong (Baehr, 2015).

Baehr offers a number of ways to encourage students to practice intellectual humility, including:

- Ask students to indicate (in discussions, assignments, or homework) what they still don’t understand about an issue or topic.
- Require students to identify potential counterarguments to their own conclusions or beliefs and to articulate the merits of opposing points of view.
- Encourage students to maintain room for intellectual growth and new knowledge at all times, in



and outside the classroom. Ask them to pinpoint a skill, talent, or avocation in their personal lives and then trace the trajectory of their own performance or mastery curve as a way to normalize the learning curve in all domains of life.

Emphasizing intellectual humility helps combat students’ attitudes that an “A” means they have it all figured out; it helps them appreciate that revisiting a topic or intellectual challenge again and again from new and different perspectives is a chance to become an agile, deep thinker. Like a basketball player who comes back to practice and to each game with a desire to be challenged and to grow, win or lose, students can, with our help, learn to strive continually to identify their blind spots and hone their natural tendencies as thinkers.

Intellectual Perseverance

Intellectual perseverance is the disposition needed as one struggles with confusion, difficulties, and frustrations in order to gain understanding and insight (Paul & Elder, 2014). It is also known as intellectual tenacity, thinking that involves “persistence, struggle and rigorous engagement” (Baehr, 2013, p. 1).

Intellectually perseverant students will think about and talk about their thinking about the subjects under discussion, allowing the teacher/mentor to provide feedback, give corrections, and bolster confidence even when the subjects are vex-

ingly complicated. Mature mentors will encourage students to find the courage to abandon approaches that aren’t working and to try a completely different approach. Only so much can be learned inside any box.

In the classroom, instructors can foster intellectual perseverance in a number of ways:

- **Be explicit** with students at the start of a learning experience or assignment about the intellectual challenges, likely bottlenecks, or difficulties they may encounter in the material you are introducing. The difficulties of the thinking skills you're asking them to practice should become the topic of conversation, just like intricacies or complexities on the court would become the topic of conversation in a basketball game.
- **Model for students** the iterative, messy process of thinking through a tricky text, problem set, or case study. Regularly puzzle through these aloud to display your own thinking process so that students can see the "cognitive sweat" or confusion and hesitation that is part of the path to understanding.
- **Provide students with opportunities to practice intellectual perseverance** in teams or as individuals by asking them to think through unfamiliar or challenging material. Afterward, they should reflect on their experiences and name the unsuccessful and successful thinking strategies they used to process the unfamiliar material. Give them feedback—and practice in bolstering their own self-awareness—by "noticing and naming" the virtue or trait you see on display in the classroom, in assignments, or on exams (Core Practices, n.d.).

As their mentor, you are helping to develop and deliver on strategies that will advance students' thinking and get past the anticipated sticking points. And once learners become familiar with techniques, they must practice them and be diligent about seeking feedback and adjusting intellectual moves and attitudes accordingly.

No matter which intellectual virtue or thinking skill you are fostering, remember that as instructor/mentor, it's the students' journey. You prepare them and then put them into situations in which their

thinking is put on display. You remain to the side, "listening to peer interactions, providing feedback on the sorts of problems in thinking they are engaged in" (Paul & Elder, 2007, p. 29).

Does your current pedagogy foreground the role of mentor? How many different thinking skills are you teaching? How do your students demonstrate those skills in action? Check our sources for a selection of resources to help you become familiar with many of the intellectual traits and how to make use of them in the classroom. |||

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Principedia:

A Princeton University Learning Gazetteer

James Rhem, Executive Editor

There's an apocryphal Mark Twain quote about how much his father seemed to have learned between the time he was 14 and 21. On the one hand, the quote underscores how time may bring maturity and insight; looked at another way, it highlights how much knowl-

edge and wisdom lie all around, somehow invisible to us. What if our peers could open to us the knowledge they carry tacitly about the world in ways we could hear and understand? How much more effective would we be in this world and how much closer to them for the sharing? It's the aim of Principedia to make tacit knowledge about learning at Princeton available to the Princeton University community. Undergraduates form the primary audience, but faculty and advising staff have also begun to use and contribute to the resource.

Principedia does derive its name from Wikipedia ... but the comparison should stop there.

Principedia does derive its name from Wikipedia and is a wiki and is, like Wikipedia, crowdsourced, but the comparison should stop there. Principedia organizes and makes available metacognitive understanding: it notes the curricular geography of Princeton, but it's more a descriptive gazetteer of what its creator Nic Voge calls "the learning from instruction" at Princeton than a simple map. Put another way, the Principedia effort assumes that the more students learn about how things are taught, the more they will be able to learn from the instruction.

The idea for Principedia began several years ago while Voge was working at the University of California, Berkeley. As he sat in his cubicle, he overheard a graduate assistant helping an undergraduate student nearby. The things she was telling the student hadn't been part of her training; they were part of the knowledge about Berkeley she'd acquired (some might say "constructed") while studying there. Voge thought how valuable this knowledge was and would be

to the student being counseled, and how it was knowledge that was seldom if ever recorded. It's taken about 10 years to get Principedia up and running, but now that it is, it appears to be growing not just in content, but in influence and utility. More students are coming to its pages for guidance, and some faculty have begun to offer input, even using it in training for their teaching assistants. Advisors have begun to use it regularly.

"We're not trying to uncover universal knowledges or strategies," says Voge. "One of the core precepts is the ethnological principle of 'local knowledge.' At the same time, as anthropologists have found, there are common patterns across cultures that can be organized." The upshot of the Principedia effort then shifts the focus of commentary and advice away from tips and "Rate My Professor" commentary toward an evolving, community inquiry into and discourse about learning.

Princeton has invested a lot in the support of teaching and learning and the academic success of its students. Its McGraw Center for Teaching and Learning has a staff of 20. Principedia may be seen as a faculty development tool, but only as a side effect of its central purpose. "Absolutely, we do think it is a faculty development tool, but I might perhaps call it a by-product, and suggest that the real focus is 'teaching and learning development,'" says Voge.

The Principedia site includes a page of excellent material for students on studying and learning at Princeton, much of it "local knowledge," including videos of advice featuring current students rather than generic study tips. But the heart and soul of Principedia lies in the reflective course analyses written by students. The McGraw Center offers detailed guidance to students on composing entries for Principedia. Obvious don'ts

include minimizing evaluative language like "boring," "interesting," "easy," and "hard," and remembering that these analyses aren't intended as critiques of individual professors. The intellectual energy and intention of the entries becomes obvious later in the guidelines—for example, in this text from a section on "Learning For and From Assignments & Assessments":

"Assignments and tests are not only parts of the course where knowledge and skills are learned and practiced, but they ... also reveal the skills and knowledge most valued in the course. In advice on writing about required papers, the guidelines ask not only what resources students found helpful, but also ask 'how' the students came to identify their topics. The focus on 'how' underscores the central aim of the project—stimulating reflective thinking about learning."

Voge reports that Principedia solicits entries in all kinds of ways, but most effectively through widely advertised "Write-A-Thons." These

include the usual enticements of T-shirts and food, and sometimes 60 students show up; sometimes only 10. But reflecting deeply on their learning in one course often leads students to understand their learning (and learning difficulty) in another. "We think it's worthwhile talking at the course level for learners and for teachers," says Voge. "That's what's most salient to both parties, so it can be quite practical in a way that a course evaluation at the end may not be." Not surprisingly, Voge is more enthusiastic about the Classroom Survey of Student Engagement (NTLFV16N4) than the National Survey of Student Engagement.

Voge sees focus on the course level as especially important given the variety of instructional approaches students encounter:



"When you are a student in the liberal arts curriculum, you are moving day to day, hour to hour, among these different cultural practices of teaching, which of course make new demands on us as learners. This variety does require students to change modes of engagement. We undervalue the variety of the learning demanded and especially how that is experienced by beginning or novice learners in college. We, as experts, can see through that variety to the universal principles behind it, but students do not see that nearly as well." ■■■

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PRAXIS

Delivering Excellent Course Content from the Outset:

Guiding Graduate Students and Young College Faculty Through the Process of First-Time Teaching

Kevin Bennett

Penn State University, Beaver Campus

Fantasy

So far, you have done a job. After several years of graduate school, your department has given you an opportunity to teach your very own college-level course! Dig, if you will, this picture: your imagination in overdrive, you see yourself performing captivating oratories on every subject within your academic discipline. No one doubts the almost magical synergy between you and your eager students. They hang on your every word, applaud your insightful and witty comments, and commend you

on exam day for a superbly crafted test that challenged their mastery of the material. Perhaps you even remind yourself of the scene from *Dead Poets Society* where students climb on desks to address “O Captain! My Captain!” Soon this will be you.

Reality

Now come back to reality. Teaching a college-level class is no easy task. It requires a great deal of work and preparation just to organize a decent course, let alone make one that will have a lasting impression on students. Are you up to the challenge? Based on my years of experience in the classroom, here is a very brief guide to teaching your first college course. The advice is organized around the themes of first-day issues, preparation, and balancing teaching and research.

The First Day

Maybe you are the type of individual who receives an offer to teach and begins preparing months ahead of time. If you are not this person, try to be. You will experience a noticeable increase in anxiety as the course changes from being weeks away to being days away. Assuming you have dealt with all the administrative issues, such as picking out a textbook and organizing a syllabus, your first challenge will be getting through the first day. There is no substitute for being organized and confident for that occasion. Being prepared means having a well-detailed, understandable syllabus and a plan of action. Your first moments are important for setting the tone for the rest of the course.

You might not get through much material other than some introductions and a review of the syllabus. That is OK. There are two things I try to accomplish more than anything else on the first day: (1) impress upon the class how much I want to be there because I enjoy teaching and (2) demonstrate how dazzling the class will be for them. One thing I like to do is provide a

glimpse into the future by selecting a few examples of the most intriguing topics and briefly exploring them. If you are successful, both you and your students will walk away from the first day feeling very positive about the course and excited for the rest of the semester.

Preparation

We have all experienced good and bad teaching. Set your sights on being a good teacher while you are still early in your career. The best piece of advice I can give is do not leave class preparation until the night before. As a graduate student, this might seem impossible, but make it a goal. The confidence and energy that comes with being prepared will lead to positive outcomes in the future.



The best piece of advice I can give is do not leave class preparation until the night before.

Depending on class size, course content, and available technology, you will have to make choices about which strategies best fit your personality. Will you rely heavily on PowerPoint presentations? Or will you express a general bias toward minimalism? I suggest starting out simply, concentrating more on what you will be saying instead of spending time developing elaborate media presentations. In addition to impinging on your preparation time, you might find yourself depending too much on visual displays in class. An environment in which material is simply being read to the class often creates depressed, unfocused students.

Do not be afraid to borrow instructional styles from effective teachers from your past. A profes-

sor once told me your teaching style does not have to be completely invented by you. It is the combination of all the positive relationships with teachers you have had in the past. Think about these people and draw from them. Be sure to consult with others in your department who have taught the course in the past. They will prove an invaluable source for syllabus help, exam construction, and classroom activities.

Balancing Teaching and Research

Do not quit your day job! You are in graduate school to learn and do many things. Teaching might be one. At the same time, you are expected to be a productive researcher. All humans, including graduate students, face decisions about how to focus valuable time and energy. If you are fortunate enough to get the opportunity to teach a course in graduate school, you will wrestle with the trade-off between teaching and research.

Do not focus all your time on teaching. It is easy to get caught up in the enthusiasm of developing courses and finding new ways to engage students. If your teaching and research interests overlap, think about possibly combining the two. Students like to hear about the latest research, especially work that is coming from their own school. This way, your time spent doing good research can be parlayed into effective learning and discussion in the classroom.

Conclusion

If you have never taught before, how do you know you will love it and the class will too? Well, you do not know. But you are about to find out. If you are like me, you will want your initial attempt at teaching to be great and will not be happy if your students think the class is anything less than stellar.

This is the only time in your life when you will be a “first-time teacher.” Remember, nobody expects you to have a problem-free semester, so do not expect this yourself. If things fail to go well the first time around, rest assured that they will only improve. The best way to have an effective and enjoyable semester is to plan ahead as much as possible. Students will get more out of the course and you will have less stress. Before you know it, your class will be thanking you for a great semester. ■■

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CREATIVITY CAFÉ

Innovating Academic Leadership

*Charlie Sweet, Hal Blythe, and Rusty Carpenter
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In a previous column, we asserted that higher education has entered the Age of Innovation and that creative thinking will be a major force in solving the problems that academia confronts in the twenty-first century. As an example of how that process might look, we used the field in which we currently operate: faculty development.

This time, to further prove our contention about the importance of creative thinking, we will examine the process of innovation in an even wider area of higher education: academic leadership. For a definition of leadership, we like that of Northouse and Lee (2016): “Leadership is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal” (p. 2). Interestingly, however, in their 16-chapter book,

Northouse and Lee offer many approaches to leadership (e.g., psychodynamic, transformational, and behavioral) but never discuss the innovative approach. Importantly, in *The Innovative University: Changing the DNA of Higher Education from the Inside Out* (2011), Christensen and Eyring argued that “the typical university must change more quickly and more fundamentally than it has been doing....

Now innovation is disrupting the status quo” (p. xxiii). *First, Break All the Rules: What the World’s Greatest Managers Do Differently* (Buckingham & Coffman, 1999), a product of two large studies performed by the Gallup Organization over the previous 25 years on management, asked the question of what great managers do to survive in a hostile world restricted by company policies. The answer was “Revolt, quietly and creatively” (p. 190).

How can we accomplish this goal of creative revolt? Let’s start with what we mean by creativity. Guilford (1967) defined creativity as the ability to generate many different solutions to new problems. Guilford described divergent thinking as “the generation of information from given information, where the emphasis is upon variety and quantity of output” (p. 213). In short, in a twenty-first-century world where change occurs more rapidly than in previous eras, innovative academic leaders are able to challenge the status quo and suggest new solutions to current problems.

Traits of Innovative Leaders

Why is innovative academic leadership being regarded as such a key position? According to Puccio and Cabra (2010), “Many writers now argue that one of the most prominent variables within the organizational context that either promotes or undermines creativity

is leadership behavior” (p. 164). In the conclusion to their Boston Consulting Group report, Andrew, Sirkin, Haanaes, and Michael (2007) found that creativity in an organization rested on the shoulders of a leader: “most critically, it will mean demonstrating to the rest of the organization—through the leader’s words and actions—that innovation is a personal priority. This is truly a case of walking the walk and talking the talk, because employees are unlikely to believe a leader who says one thing and does another” (p. 27). While being a creative thinker is one trait that dominates the leader’s personality, it is not the only characteristic.

What does it take to be an innovative academic leader? Several studies have analyzed the key character traits of such leaders. Andrew and Sirkin (2006) identified several characteristics:

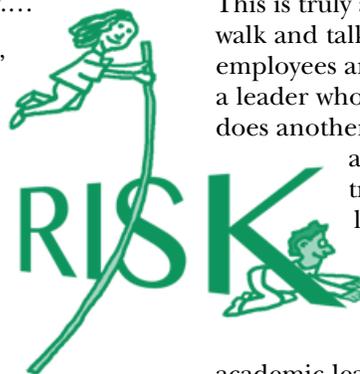
- tolerance for ambiguity,
- the ability to quickly and effectively assess an individual,
- the ability to balance passion and objectivity, and
- the ability to change.

Providing an Area for Risk

Foremost in innovative academic leadership is providing a safe space for risk. Steve Ross, the late CEO of Time Warner, once said, “In this company, you’ll be fired for not making mistakes” (Vrana, 1995, p. D3). An academic leader must create such an environment where risk is promoted as a positive value. When the Boston Consulting Group asked senior managers (Andrew et al., 2007), 38% of the 2,468 senior managers surveyed named a risk-averse corporate culture as the primary obstacle to innovation.

Returning to the Nifty Nine

Five years ago, as we pointed out in a previous column, we published our *Introduction to Applied Creative Thinking* (2012), in which we tried to demystify creativity. Our chief



instrument for accomplishing that goal consisted of the so-called “Nifty Nine,” a nonet of the most effective creative thinking strategies. We contend that innovative academic leaders should utilize these creative thinking strategies.

Strategy 1: Collaborating

As their titles indicate (e.g., president, provost, dean, chair), academic leaders tend to function in positions built for one person only. Many major initiatives, such as our DEEP (Developing Excellence in Eastern’s Professors) initiative and Faculty Innovators, were developed by high-functioning committees. As we have pointed out before, collaboration provides a social component and increases ideation levels.

Strategy 2: Brainstorming

How many institutions have units that teach brainstorming as a leadership strategy? Innovative leaders know how to break large groups (e.g., all the chairs in a particular college) into brainstorming units to come up with processes, policies, and approaches to problems. With the advent of new technology, however, more decisions can be crowdsourced. Want to create a policy on classroom civility? Open a Google Doc and give everyone in the group access. Our point is that innovative leaders can utilize brainstorming in conjunction with technology to allow broad, easy-access participation.

Strategy 3: Piggybacking

Innovative leaders can follow up brainstormed docs (Google or otherwise) with piggybacking by asking the crowd to use the brainstormed ideas as building blocks for other ideas. Innovative deans invite deans from other colleges who have tried something new with success to talk to their chairs and faculty. Innovative chairs ask chairs from other departments to discuss how they came up with a strategic plan that works or developed that new assessment instrument. Then these leaders figure out not so much how they can copy those effective con-

cepts, but how to adapt and refine them to the home disciplines.

Strategy 4: Shifting Perception

Back in the 1960s, a perception shift brought about by student revolution was the inclusion of students on faculty committees. The student added a different point of view for faculty who sometimes forgot what it was like when they were students, as well as provided a current viewpoint on the situation. Today, we often talk about innovative leaders possessing empathy, which is both a shifted perception and an emotional involvement in something outside the leader. Design thinking suggests to leaders that they start by viewing any situation from a person-centered perspective.

Foremost in
innovative academic
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for risk.

In *First, Break All the Rules*, the Gallup Organization’s Buckingham and Coffman (1999) tell the story of how hotels can make housekeeping more effective. After employing a questionnaire that was to select the eight greatest housekeepers, they asked those eight for their best tips. To a person, the eight announced their secret: they thought like guests, so when they entered a hotel room, they lay on the bed the way a guest would do. If the fan and ceiling looked clean, the guests perceived the room as clean. In short, the most effective housekeepers employed perception shift, thinking like guests.

Strategy 5: Glimmer Catching

During a recent workshop and resulting discussion of institutional assessment, we became aware that we were overlooking opportunities

to design faculty development as a way to help “close the loop.” While most of the suggestions discussed focused on curricular reform, not on providing either students or faculty in the gen ed process with skills and strategies, an indistinct idea started to form in our heads.

Sometimes that key idea you need is on the tip of your tongue, in the corner of your eye, or just out of your hearing range. Collaborative creative thinkers learn to listen, observe their colleagues, and, most importantly, take notes. Sometimes you don’t recognize immediately what you have seen or heard, but reviewing your notes can stimulate a good idea. Glimmers, as Osborn suggests, are often “wild”—i.e., they don’t immediately make sense or seem feasible. The first step is noticing the glimmer; the second is analyzing, often through critical thinking, whether the idea is useful.

Innovative leaders recognize that glimmers need to be caught, developed, and sometimes implemented.

Strategy 6: Using Metaphor

In *Introduction to Applied Creative Thinking* (Carpenter, Sweet, & Blythe, 2012), we define metaphor as “an effective creative strategy for learning about the unknown and gaining a perspective on it” (p. 67). A few years ago, we created an experimental classroom that through mentoring, observing, critiquing, and the newest technology allowed faculty to become the best version of themselves as teacher-scholars. To make that faculty growth into a more substantial reality, we named the program and the faculty experience LEAF, the Learning Environment for Academia’s Future, and our logo became a green leaf that was formed from the intersecting Venn diagrams of technology, communication, pedagogy, and instructional design.

If the university is based on building new knowledge on the foundation of old knowledge, an innovative leader can sometimes make this process seem more real through the effective use of metaphor.

Strategy 7: Recognizing Pattern

Innovative leaders recognize patterns in what they do that are sometimes positive, sometimes negative. A pattern is a series of separate items/events that, taken as a whole, reveal something important. A few years ago, we detected a need to employ new technologies to provide access to workshops, professional learning communities, and our dialogues series. Solving that need meant noticing two other patterns: the rise of student enrollment in online classes and our success in embedding consultants in our writing classes. Our unit, which faces both students and faculty, asked a far-reaching innovative question: What if we applied those student-oriented solutions to faculty development? As a result, we created both an online system of faculty development and faculty consultants we could embed in departments and colleges.

Strategy 8: Playing

At Pedagogicon 2017, the plenary speaker, Melody Bowdon of the University of Central Florida, described a new center for creative thinking that the university had instituted, naming it “The Sandbox” to stress that one of its goals was that its users have a playful environment. We have a similar space, The Treehouse, that will encourage play situated on the third floor of the campus library that will feature comfortable, wheeled furniture and the most recent technology to maximize faculty experimentation and understanding of active-learning techniques. In short, innovative leaders can construct literal as well as virtual environments that are not only conducive to creative thinking, but emphasize that leader’s commitment to that ideal as well.

Strategy 9: Going with the Flow

Going with the flow is a state much like that of athletes who describe their peak performances as occurring when they were “in the zone” or just “feeling it.” Innova-

tive academic leaders can demonstrate this quality, even prod others toward it, at meetings. The flow is something that happens when creative strategies are used within a creative environment, two factors an innovative leader can control to some degree.

Conclusion

Innovative leadership demands a leader who champions creative thinking, constantly constructs risk-taking environments, and employs creative knowledge and strategies in an attempt to develop a creative organization. Leaders exhibit many traits, but innovative academic leaders must possess some of the characteristics discussed.

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AD REM...

What Can We Do About Remembering?

Marilla Svinicki
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Over the past couple of years, I’ve been writing about how you can help students who are having trouble in their study of your topic. Although learning has many nuances across different areas of study, psychology has been able to make suggestions for enhancing one’s ability to commit information to memory in such a way as to make it retrievable in the future. Some we already use in our normal practice, and others could be slipped in quite easily with a little imagination. I’ve selected six of the ones that have been suggested and seem to be pretty robust. I’ll illustrate through my own classes how I’ve used the base concepts in taking on that most difficult of teachers’ challenges, calling everyone by the right name. (Caveat: they don’t always work.)

The Generation Effect

This finding refers to the fact that if you as the person trying to remember something can make up your own version of an example of it, or process the new material deeply by relating it to things unique to you, you have a higher probability of remembering it. This is the research that underlies the active learning movement, which has become so widespread in education across all levels. The “active” part of the learning is the most important component because it is the self-generated connections and depth of processing that create a unique memory trace or network that can trigger the cue you need to remember.

In learning my students’ names in a large undergraduate class (only 75 students, but they all look alike), I need to be the one that

notices that Sally differs from Susie, her twin sister, because she wears glasses. They could just tell me that, but coming up with it myself expends more energy and makes the idea uniquely mine. I'm generating meaning.

The Production Effect

This phenomenon is related to the generation effect, in that they both require the learner to actively engage what they are trying to put into long-term storage. However, this effect comes not from the creation of a new connection, but rather the articulation of it. It involves "[p]roducing items by means as simple as saying, writing, or typing them (which) can yield substantial memory improvements relative to silent reading" (MacLeod & Bodner, 2017). Generation involves thinking up something you want to remember, while production encourages you to say it out loud or write it down. The act of describing your idea to someone else (as in group work) or putting it in writing resulted in a stronger memory than just reading it or hearing someone else talk about it. But you have to "produce it," not just acknowledge having heard seen or heard it.

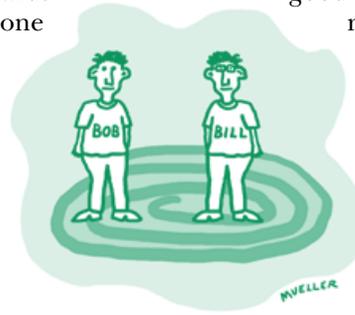
When I practice my students' names, I need to say them aloud or at least mouth them as I practice with their pictures.

The Repetition Effect

This is related to the production effect in that the more times you are required to produce the students' names, the more likely you are to remember them. This is a fairly common phenomenon that we would all be familiar with and use on a regular basis by asking students to repeat something they

allegedly have learned and stored in their memory.

In learning my students' names, I create a set of flash cards with their pictures on one side and their names on the other that I can practice with. In addition, I try as often as possible to call them by name or ask them to correct me if I get their name wrong (a seriously aversive situation for me as a psychologist).



The Testing Effect

Also related to production and repetition is the testing effect, which is experiencing a renaissance in the literature as a result of recent reviews (Roediger & Karpicke, 2006). The effect refers to the facilitation of remembering information because you have been required to actively retrieve it from long-term memory frequently. Unfortunately for us, the results of this effect, while very beguiling, are tempered by a whole bunch of situational variables that affect it, like how long has it been since I learned their names that I see them again, or under what conditions do we encounter one another. Similar conditions enhance my ability to recall, but very different conditions might make me forget my best friend's husband's name, something that recently happened to me!

In terms of my students' names, I'm tested every time we meet for class and every time they come to my office to consult with me.

The Imagery Effect

This effect doesn't really have a single agreed-on name, but it

refers to the superior power of images in memory. For example, many individuals who have really good memory use a familiar room that they can easily picture in their minds and make connections between the names of a group they're trying to remember and the features of the room. It's a very old memory technique, especially if the images you create are bizarre or unusual.

With my students' pictures, I try to create a unique mental picture of them as I practice their names, different but similar enough that I could recognize them outside of class.

In the End

There are many more psychological effects that we as teachers can use in our own learning and that of our students. They don't always work perfectly, but they do help most of the time, if only because we've made an effort to use them. |||

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