



Excellence in Teaching Matters

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Fall 2011

Message from the Director

Bob Dylan sang that “the times they are a changing” and that is true for the CTE as well. With the addition of Dr. Katie Linder as our new Associate Director we have been able to expand our offerings for teaching and learning. Katie comes to us from The Ohio State University where she was a doctoral intern in their University Center for the Advancement of Teaching. Katie has brought her talent, energy, enthusiasm and new program ideas to our Center for Teaching Excellence.

This issue of Excellence in Teaching Matters provides tips by Dana Rosengard from Communication and Journalism on setting the tone the First Day of Class for a productive and engaging semester. We also profile George Moker, Director of the Entrepreneurship Programs in the Business School.

Check out last year’s highlight events including our first Technology Symposium attended by over 80 faculty and staff; our Spring Speaker Event with Dr. Howard Gardner with

over 100 faculty and staff in attendance; and our new Course Design Institute piloted this summer and which we will run again during the Fall Semester.

We have a very robust calendar this fall and an updated website to help you choose the events and activities that will assist you during the academic year. There are a wide variety of workshops, afternoon teas, book groups, course design work, writing workshops, all designed to help you meet your goals this academic year. Make sure to check out our new Library offerings as well as our pre-loaded Kindle with new books on teaching.

We wish you an energizing and productive Fall Semester; let us know how we can help! Don’t forget to follow us on Facebook or Twitter as well.



Donna Qualters,
Director of the
Center for
Teaching Excellence

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Tips for the First Day of Class

by Dana Rosengard

I love the first day of the semester: no one is behind! Every student is as close to an ‘A’ as he or she may ever be!

As with any endeavor, getting off to a good start is critical. There are a lot of variables to doing just that: class size; academic (class) standing of your students; your experience in the classroom; your experience with a particular course; and, your personal teaching philosophy. With all that in mind, I have been asked to suggest a few things for you to consider for day one.

I like to make day one as much about

the students as it is about me and the course to come. I typically build a biographical grid using the computer and overhead projector in the room. Handwriting on a whiteboard works well too. This both helps me to start getting to know my students and affords them an opportunity to start getting to know one another. Name, hometown, major, grand plan (What do you want to be when you grow up?), and a 1-word descriptor are among the things I include in this exercise. I include myself in this exercise. I like the students to know why I am teaching the course and what I

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CTE by the Numbers

- Spring 2011 Events at CTE attracted over **214** unique participants
- CTE has formed book group communities with **97** different faculty and staff members
- **65** faculty or staff members have facilitated an event for CTE
- The Spring 2011 Technology Symposium attracted **86** participants



The first annual Technology Symposium was held on May 17th, 2011 and featured over twenty faculty presenters, speakers, and discussion facilitators. The symposium was co-sponsored by the Office of the Provost and the Center for Teaching Excellence.

Spring 2011 Events

First Annual Technology Symposium

Faculty and staff from across the university came together this past Spring for the first annual Technology Symposium, an event co-sponsored by the Office of the Provost and the Center for Teaching Excellence. The Symposium—which was jointly organized by academic technologists from the law school, the Sawyer Business School, and the College of Arts and Sciences—was a great success with over 80 participants attending. Over 20 faculty members presented on their innovative uses of technology in the classroom in 10 different sessions.

Christopher Dede, Professor in Learning Technologies, Technology, Innovation, and Education at Harvard University, entertained participants over breakfast with a thought-provoking talk entitled,

“21st Century Learning: Implications for College Teaching.”

Sessions during the day offered information on podcasting, using blogs in the classroom, creating paperless courses, and the use of social media, among many other fascinating topics.

According to Katie Linder, associate director at the Center for Teaching Excellence, feedback from participants was overwhelmingly positive. “Not only were participants able to see what others are doing,” she said, “but they were also able to ask questions and share their own experiences in cross-disciplinary discussions.”

The CTE is looking forward to planning another great technology symposium for 2012!



The Fourth Annual CTE Spring Speaker event was held on April 12th, 2011 at the Omni Parker House. Over 100 Faculty and Staff came together to hear a presentation by Howard Gardner and celebrate the community of teaching excellence at Suffolk University.

Spring 2011 Speaker Event

The CTE Spring Luncheon featuring Howard Gardner was CTE’s premier event this year, drawing over 100 guests to hear Gardner’s talk on “The Theory of Multiple Intelligences: Implications for Teaching” at the Omni Parker House.

Participants enjoyed box lunches and conversation with colleagues from across the university during the hour-long event. Magid Mazen, CTE board member and Professor in the Management Department, introduced Dr. Gardner with a personalized and memorable speech.

As one participant noted in CTE’s annual

feedback, of all CTE’s events, “the Howard Gardner lecture was probably the most significant, thought-provoking event for me.” This annual event drew guests from all three colleges and included representatives from most departments.

Gardner’s talk (which included a powerpoint now available on the CTE website) offered suggestions for how to work with different learning preferences in the classroom and offered examples of his theories of multiple intelligences. Several of Gardner’s books are also available in the CTE lending library for faculty and staff to borrow.

The CTE lending library contains numerous resources to assist faculty in creating student-centered courses. We recommend the following texts if you are designing a new course or re-designing an existing one:

Creating Significant Learning Experiences: An Integrated Approach to Designing College Courses

L. Dee Fink *(see review below!)*

Assessing Student Learning: A Common Sense Guide

Linda Suskie

Learning- Centered Teaching: Five Key Changes to Practice

Maryellen Weimer

Classroom Assessment Techniques: A Handbook for College Teachers

Thomas Angelo and Patricia Cross

Discussion as a Way of Teaching: Tools and Techniques for Democratic Classrooms

Stephen Brookfield and Stephen Preskill

Active Learning: Creating Excitement in the Classroom Charles Bonwell

Developing Learner-Centered Teaching: A Practical Guide for Faculty

Phyllis Blumberg

Collaborative Learning Techniques

Elizabeth Barkley

Designing and Assessing Courses and Curricula Robert Diamond

Developing Critical Thinkers

Stephen Brookfield

Effective Grading: A Tool for Learning & Assessment

Barbara Walvoord, et al.

The Graphic Syllabus and the Outcomes Map Linda Nilson

Preparing Instructional Objectives

Robert Mager

Student Engagement Techniques

Elizabeth Barkley

Tips for Improving Testing and Grading John Ory

Upcoming Events:
(All events held at CTE on the 12th floor of 73 Tremont unless otherwise noted)

9/9 – Writing Fridays

9am-2pm

9/13 – Faculty Workshop

Safe Zone Training for Faculty

1-2:30pm

9/15 – Faculty Lunch 12-2pm

9/16 – Writing Fridays

9am-2pm

9/20 – Teaching & Technology

Blackboard Tools Tour

1-2:30pm

9/21 – Afternoon Tea

The Rowdy Classroom and How to Handle It

2:30-4:00pm

9/22 – Universal Course Design

Responsibly Educating Students with Disabilities in Your Classroom

1-2:30pm

9/23 – Writing Fridays

9am-2pm

9/26 – Afternoon Tea

Dealing with Students in Distress

2:30-4:00pm

9/27 – Faculty Workshop

Battling Bias in the Classroom

1-2:30pm

9/28 – Faculty Workshop

Conflict in the Classroom

10-11:30am

Book Review: L. Dee Fink’s *Creating Significant Learning Experiences*

L. Dee Fink, *Creating Significant Learning Experiences: An Integrated Approach to Designing College Courses*, Copyright © 2003 John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Fink argues that a new paradigm is emerging in college teaching, one that encourages a focus on activities that produce significant learning experiences, valuing the quality of learning over the quantity of content coverage. In order to frame the discussion, he defines a *Taxonomy of Significant Learning* consisting of three categories that essentially mimic Bloom’s taxonomy of educational objectives: Foundational Knowledge, Application, and Integration as well as three categories that go be-

yond Bloom: Human Dimension (“students learn something important about themselves or about others” (p. 31)), Caring (about the subject, phenomena, ideas, their own self, others, the process of learning, etc. (p. 49)), and Learning How to Learn.

Fairly little attention is given by faculty to the latter three in the course design process, although I suspect that when pressed, most professors would espouse these as goals of their courses. In the sciences, I see some of these categories as long-term goals, built up through the entire curriculum and difficult to foster in a single course.

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Work with a CTE Staff Consultant

Upcoming Events:

(All events held at CTE on the 12th floor of 73 Tremont unless otherwise noted)

9/30 – Writing Fridays

9am-2:00pm

10/4 – Universal Course Design

Intro to Universal Course Design

1-2:30pm

10/5 – Faculty Workshop

A Class Act: Teaching as Acting

1-2:30pm

10/7 – Writing Fridays

9am-2pm

10/11 – Afternoon Tea

Maintaining Teaching Excellence while Balancing Research &

Service

1-2:30pm

10/13 – Teaching & Technology

Using Wikis as Part of the Classroom

1-2:30pm

10/14 – Writing Fridays

9am-2pm

10/18 – Teaching & Technology

Facilitating Online Discussions

1-2:30pm

10/20 – Faculty Lunch 12-2pm

10/21 – Writing Fridays

9am-2pm

10/24 – Faculty Workshop

Writing Across Borders

1-2:30pm

Individual faculty consultations are designed to support faculty and lecturers who would like to improve their teaching or learn more about teaching strategies. Instructors work one-on-one with a CTE staff member based on their own goals and needs.

During an initial meeting, the instructor outlines the issues that they want to explore and the CTE staff member consultant will provide resources, support, and a plan for action that may include a classroom observation, gathering additional feedback from students, reviewing previous evaluations, or meeting regularly for conversations about teaching.

Individual consultations can address a number of teaching issues and concerns including, but not limited to, assessment, active learning, the course design process, and the scholarship of teaching and learning.

To set up an individual consultation, email cdirico@suffolk.edu.

Improve Your Courses with Student Feedback

A Midterm Feedback Session is a confidential method that uses small group discussion among students to provide feedback to the instructor. The process takes about 20-30 minutes with the faculty member out of the classroom on a scheduled day.

Once a Midterm Feedback Session is requested, you will receive a form that allows you to provide us with additional details about your class. A CTE colleague will then visit your class and ask your students to respond to three questions:

1. What aspects of this course ENHANCE your learning?
2. What aspects of this course HINDER your learning?
3. What could YOU (as a student) do to make the course better for your classmates and the teacher?

The information gathered will then be correlated into a confidential report for the instructor. Once the report is ready, a debriefing session is scheduled with a CTE staff member to discuss the results and brainstorm ideas for the class.

Research has shown that faculty who conduct mid-course feedback and have a consultation raise their teaching evaluations and improve learning. To sign up for a mid-term feedback session for this semester, call the CTE office at 617-573-8222 or email Christina DiRico at cdirico@suffolk.edu by **September 30th**.

Check out CTE Online!

In the summer of 2011, the CTE staff were working hard to update and re-structure our website to make sure all of our many events, activities, and resources were easy for faculty to navigate. Check out the new look and make sure to visit our new pages on Research and Writing, Work/Life Balance, and our expanded Teaching and Learning section where Part-Time Lecturers have their own resources listed. We welcome feedback on the website and continue to work hard to make sure we are providing the latest and greatest teaching resources to Suffolk Faculty, Staff, and Part-Time Lectures. Also, don't forget to "friend" us on **Facebook** or follow CTE on **Twitter!**

Fall Semester Book Groups

Each semester, the Center for Teaching Excellence hosts faculty-facilitated book groups on a variety of teaching topics.

Check out this semesters upcoming selections and join us for some thought-provoking conversations.

To register for a book group, contact Christina DiRico (cdirico@suffolk.edu)

Academically Adrift

“Almost everyone wants to get into college, but how much do undergraduates really learn once they’re there? According to *Academically Adrift*, the answer for many students is not much. Richard Arum and Josipa Roksa’s extensive research draws on survey responses, transcript data, and the Collegiate Learning Assessment, a standardized test administered to students in their first semester and again at the end of their second year.” (from the book jacket)

Teaching What You Don’t Know

“Your graduate work was on bacterial evolution, but now you’re lecturing to 200 freshman on primate social life... Everyone in academic knows it, but no one likes to admit it: faculty often have to teach courses in areas they don’t know very well... In this practical and funny book, an experienced teaching consultant offers many creative strategies for dealing with typical problems. How can you prepare most efficiently for a new course in a new area? How do you look credible?” (from the book jacket)

Leadership Can Be Taught

“Today’s increasingly complex, dangerous, and challenging world demands more and better leaders than ever before. Yet conventional methods of leadership training and teaching—seminars, corporate retreats, executive coaching—often fail to transfer critical leadership skills into practice effectively. How can leaders prepare for the challenges they’ll face? Are leaders born, or made? And if leaders are made, is there a better way for them to learn?” (from the book jacket)

Teacher

“In 1969, Mark Edmundson was a typical high school senior in working-class Medford, Massachusetts. He loved football, disdained school work, and seemed headed for a factory job in his hometown—until a maverick philosophy teacher turned his life around... When Frank Lears, a small, nervous man wearing a moth-eaten suit, arrived at Medford fresh from Harvard University, his students pegged him as an easy target. Written with verve and candor, *Teacher* is Edmundson’s heartfelt tribute to the man who changed the course of his life.” (from the book jacket)

What Participants are Saying about CTE Book Groups:

“Talking about teaching is crucial and critical for all of us to improve. The reading groups allowed for that to happen.”

“It was great to be with a group of people from different departments and to hear different points of view.”

“The diverse views of the group have impacted me in a positive manner... I am now more open to views/perspectives I was not aware of.”

Tips for the First Day of Class (Continued)

(continued from page 1)

bring to the experience. I am clear about my academic and professional background in an attempt to assure them I bring a lot to their table.

Associated with this introductory exercise is being very clear about what I expect the students to call me. It's totally your choice of course (Doctor Smith, Professor Jones, Mister Johnson, Sue) but I see this obvious yet often overlooked issue as hurdle number one for students to clear. If they are not confident in how to address you, they simply will avoid doing it.

The syllabus is the obvious roadmap for the day and for the semester. I channel my inner-Vygotsky, a pioneering Russian educational psychologist, as I toil over each of my syllabi. Dr. Barbara Ash, SU Professor of Education and Human Service and my faculty mentor, would urge you to put a lot of thought and care in to learning objectives that need to be part of every syllabus. I concur. On day one I typically read the finished product word-for-word answering any questions students might have along the way. It should inspire questions to which you should have clear answers. As you read it too, you have the chance to give the students a good look at your teaching philosophy. What do you find important? What do you see as the keys to success in your classroom? What are the challenges the students will take on? What are your expectations? Is there a final exam?

Moving beyond what might seem obvious, I usually do an exercise with index cards that I have found useful. I pass one out to each student and tell them NOT to put their names on it. On one side of the card, I ask them to indicate something, if anything, they

have heard about the course. On the other side, I ask them to indicate something, if anything, they have heard about me. I collect and shuffle the cards then read them out loud one at a time.

Students typically say they have heard the class is hard or tough or demanding or maybe even, impossible. I respond honestly: the class is demanding; the class is not impossible. The side with what the students have heard about me is typically more exciting! I typically hear that I am hard or tough or demanding or maybe even, impossible. Sound familiar? Of course there is almost always a very positive comment or two out there about my teaching style. I accept or deny those as well. And I can almost guarantee that more than one student has heard that I don't give A's. I am prepared, putting the final grade grid from the prior semester right up on the board, without names of course. I show the students how many A's students earned in this class last semester (there is almost always at least an A-minus!). I also show the students how many of their peers earned B's and C's and D's and if anyone earned an F. And so I am able to rebut that never-gives-A's rumor.

In the end, I want my students to know by day one's end that I care about the material and that I care about them and that I plan to have fun over the course of the semester.

These are some of the things that work for me and seem to work for my students. Try them as you feel comfortable, tweaking as you see fit. Let the learning begin!

Dana Rosengard is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Communication & Journalism.

Upcoming Events:

(All events held at CTE on the 12th floor of 73 Tremont unless otherwise noted)

10/25 – Universal Course Design Series

The Universally Designed Syllabus
1-2:30pm

10/28 – Writing Fridays

9am-2pm

11/1 – Afternoon Tea
SOTL 101
2:30-4:00pm

11/4 – Writing Fridays
9am-2pm

11/14 – Afternoon Tea
Creating the Optimal Student-Professor Dynamic
1-2:30pm

11/15 – Teaching & Technology
What is Twitter and How to Use it in the Classroom
1-2:30pm

11/17 – Faculty Lunch Series
12-2pm

11/18 – Writing Fridays
9am-2pm

11/22 – Universal Course Design Series
Universal Course Designed Instructional & Assessment Strategies
1-2:30pm

**Mark your calendars—
we hope you'll join us!**

Book Review (continued)

(continued from page 3)

This suggests that we need a concerted effort to consider these values collectively, not merely in isolation.

The heart of this book is the two chapters on course design. My teaching mimics that of my own teachers and so, like them, I am a member of content-aholics anonymous: the group of professors ashamed that their courses are creatively designed to include as much content as possible. Conveniently, Fink offers up a 12-step plan for designing a course. Although few of his suggestions are innovative, many of them will make you say, "That makes so much sense! Why haven't I been doing that?"

My only complaint is the relative lack of attention given to the the grading system and its role in fostering significant learning. While the author accepts the need for "the development of a feedback and assessment system that goes beyond just grading and contributes to the learning process" (p. 142), he gives an example of a grading system that is "fair and educationally valid", but which reduces the course, for many students, to the calculus of point grubbing.

The title sets the bar: the book is a failure if reading it is not itself a significant learning experience. Fortunately, the author succeeds in the ultimate accomplishment in pedagogical writing: he made me put the book down at times, frantic to work on designing one of my courses.

Review by Adam Glesser



Adam Glesser is an assistant professor in the department of mathematics and computer science and a member of the CTE advisory board.

New CTE Course Design Institute a Success!

The Center for Teaching Excellence is thrilled to offer a new series of workshops on course design!

Launched over the summer, this set of four days of workshops and interdisciplinary conversations with peers from across the university has been a huge success.

"The Course Design Institute gave me the time and intellectual space to take my course and truly design it. I arrived with a syllabus that looked like an unsolved Rubic's cube and by the fourth day all of the pieces had fallen into place," participant Keri Iyall Smith of Sociology stated, "I can't wait to see the results in action this fall."

Capped at 10 participants for each institute, the workshops include topics such as designing course goals and learning objectives, how students learn, assignment and rubric design, and teaching students with a variety of ability levels.

Additionally, the Course Design Institute includes opportunities for individual reflection and peer collaboration, the opportunity to interact with colleagues from across the university to share ideas about teaching and gather new ideas from peers, and a full set of course design materials that can be used to redesign your courses during and after the institute.

Participant Micky Lee of the Communication and Journalism department, stated, "The Course Design Institute has encouraged me to think about what I want the outcome of the course to be rather than what I need to 'cover' in a semester. It is a new way to think about teaching. The folks at CTE really made my brain work!"

Upcoming Course Design Institutes will be offered on consecutive Fridays fall semester on Sept. 30, Oct. 7, 14, and 21 as well as January 9-12 from 10am-3pm each day. For more information or to register, contact Christina DiRico (cdirico@suffolk.edu).

Do you work with Sophomores?

National research on the transition from freshman to sophomore year identifies some key topics critical to the continued development of these students such as support in areas of major and minor program selection, career development and exploration, and developing opportunities to be involved in formal institutional activities.

This Fall Semester, the Office of Orientation and New Student Programs is excited to host a new Sophomore Dinner Series program to aid in supporting these critical areas of student development. Please consider encouraging your students to attend at least one of the following:

Tuesday, 9/27 @ 5pm – Student Leadership & Involvement – 73 Tremont 9th Floor

Tuesday, 10/18 at 5pm – Study Abroad – Law School Faculty Dining Room

Tuesday, 11/8 at 5pm – Career Services & Cooperative Education – Law School Faculty Dining Room

Tuesday, 12/6 at 5pm – Off Campus Housing Office – 73 Tremont Amenities



Micky Lee (Communication & Journalism), Gail Sergenian (Sawyer Business School), and Keri Iyall Smith (Sociology) hard at work on their course redesigns.

Please let us know if you would like to write an article, book review, or be featured in our "Professor Profile" for *Excellence in Teaching Matters*. We also welcome any suggestions that you may have to make this newsletter more valuable to your teaching.



The 1st Annual 2011 Technology Symposium was a great success!

Get your proposals ready for the 2nd Annual 2012 Technology Symposium!

94% of participants surveyed plan to come back in 2012 and would recommend the symposium to a friend

More information about proposals will be available soon along with a save the date notice. We hope you'll join us this year to make the 2012 symposium the best yet!

Professor Profile: George Moker

Tell us a little about the courses you currently teach:

The two main courses I teach are Legal and Financial Risks for Start-Ups, which is a course for majors and minors in the Entrepreneurship Program and E-Project Opportunity, which is a capstone course. They are very different courses; the first is highly technical and in the second I have more of a coaching role. The students are at very different stages in their lives academically and socially, so the courses require different teaching techniques. When I teach these courses I get to see how students develop from when they are first semester juniors to last semester seniors. I get to see their confidence first-hand.

How do you show students how to apply what they learn in the classroom to their lives and work outside of it? My favorite courses to teach are our small business management courses at the undergraduate and graduate levels. The courses are case-based and students are continually challenged to not only develop solutions, but to come up with implementation plans. Students must think about who they are creating the implementation plans for, so they must have a sense of all the players involved. We compare the different cases and by the time they are through they have all helped each other solve the problem. They then take these skills and use them with friends and at work.



George G. Moker earned an MBA in business administration (MBA) from Suffolk University where he currently serves as Director of Entrepreneurship Programs as well as being a member of the entrepreneurship faculty. He is President and CEO of MOKER CPA PC, a certified public accounting firm specializing in government-funded startup companies. George is a certified public accountant (CPA) and a certified fraud examiner (CFE) with more than 25 years in public accounting and commercial business. Professionally, George served in senior management positions in the private sector, including roles as Chief Financial Officer and Vice President of Operations in an aerospace support company that provided metrology products and services to the Department of Defense and NASA. In addition, George has developed training manuals, workshops and seminars in the recordkeeping and reporting compliance areas of government contracting.

Where do you find new ideas for teaching? How do you keep things fresh for you and your students?

I always feel the need to constantly mix things up to keep my classes interesting for myself and my students. This often means creating practical exercises or inviting client speakers so that students can see as many real situations as possible. I want students to be able to understand that they spent four years developing the tools for success that they'll be using when they leave Suffolk. Every student that comes to my classroom should be much better when they leave.