



# THE BEACON



THE QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE CENTER FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING

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## I AM A TREE, I CAN BEND

Part Three By Stan Cohen, Ed.D.

*This is part three of a five-part series on teaching and learning styles. In part three we present information about faculty's MBTI "style" and its influence on course content. The information that we present is taken from the book entitled I Am a Tree; I Can Bend: Adapting Your Communication Style to Better Suit Your Students' Needs, by Stanley R. Cohen.*

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**Thinking-style teachers** like to deal with ideas when planning content. They will examine many different books in their field and analyze them to make sure they are current, they are readable, they are to some degree self-instructional, and they are at least partially concept oriented. Because thinking-style teachers see time as a continuum from past to present to future, they can make historical content seem real to their thinking students but not so real to the sensing, intuitive or feeling learning-style students.

There is a dark side to the many positive behaviors of the thinking-style teacher. While it is true they are lifetime learners, they plan intelligently and have a great capacity for seeing things in their full context, they can also lack a sense of humor and they can be so abstract that many students find their content too difficult. As a result, students tend to label these teachers as dogmatic, too serious, and not willing to be flexible.

**Sensing-style teachers** tend to plan content with factual information. They believe students need a foundation by knowing basic facts and basic vocabulary before they can understand more complex ideas. So their instruction is focused on what students can learn by using their five senses. While thinking teachers are using books and verbally describing ideas, sensing teachers use hands-on objects and anything in the environment that will help students perceive the content. They believe that objects, not words, are the real reality. There is a dark side to the many positive behaviors of the sensing-style teacher. Sometimes they solve complex problems by immediate action, and may in fact get them wrong. Because they see only material things as real, they often miss the importance of non-material things and the emotional joy experienced by feeling types that so enrich their lives.

**Feeling-style teachers** develop content by stressing people and emotions as the important elements. They recognize students who are having emotional reactions to content and they take the time to process the feelings. There is a dark side to the many positive behaviors of feeling-type teachers. Sometimes they fail to set boundaries with their emotional commitment. Very often they share negative feelings of students and carry these feelings home. They can be classic co-dependents to the extent that they burn out quickly from emotional distress. Since they tend to live by memories of the past, change in the present or future can be a terrible threat. Since negative feelings lead to breaking off relationships, they try hard not to blame other people. Usually they blame themselves and take on the guilt that they really don't deserve.

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### Upcoming Events

All HPD faculty are invited to attend these luncheon seminars.

RSVP to Kathleen Hagen at ext. 1235 three days before these events.  
12:00-1:15pm Chancellor's Dining Room  
(5th floor of the Terry Building)

#### Faculty Research Development Seminars

hosted by the  
Faculty Research  
Development Committee

**Mon., June 12, 2006.** Dr. Samuel Cheng from the College of Allied Health and Nursing will speak on "Monitoring Functional Activities in Patients with Stroke."

**Fri. July 7, 2006.** Dr. Peter Murray from the College of Dental Medicine will speak on "Stem Cell and Tissue Engineering Research to Regenerate Oral Tissue."

The Beacon is a quarterly publication of The Center for Teaching and Learning. Contact information:

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## ASK THE EXPERTS:

# "MULTICULTURALISM IN THE HEALTH PROFESSIONS - PART 2"

## The Care and Feeding of Monolingual and Bilingual University Students: Implications for Teaching

by Sarah Ransdell, Ph. D.

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*Portions of this paper were presented to the Center for Teaching and Learning, Faculty Development Seminar, March 2006*

Metacognitions about what a student knows and how to acquire new knowledge is aided by learning through understanding, not rote rehearsal, faculty student interaction, cooperation among students, strategies to promote time on task, high expectations, and knowledge about diverse learning styles. It is especially important to use metacognitive strategies in the classroom when there are non-native speakers of English present (Ransdell, 2003; Ransdell & Lavelle, 2002; Ransdell, Arecco & Levy, 2001). American university students have become increasingly diverse in ability, background, aspirations, and language background making the use of metacognitive strategies increasingly important (i.e., Hardigan, 2006).

### Research on metalinguistic awareness

Ecological research is needed to understand specific cognitive, linguistic, sociocultural, and economic factors that promote or impede academic performance and employability among native and non-native speakers of English. Metalinguistic awareness may be especially important to non-native speakers and is the knowledge of properties of language, like sound and syntax that extend beyond language as communication. One subtype, phonological awareness, is the single best predictor of children's word-level reading and reading comprehension skill, is still a reliable predictor of reading in adulthood. Syntactical awareness underlies the ability to use word order and grammar knowledge successfully (Galambos & Goldin-Meadow, 1990). Semantic awareness includes vocabulary breadth and depth, as well as writing fluency and quality. Expressive vocabulary still forms the basis of most modern cognitive ability assessments. Writing fluency has been measured as the number of words generated per minute controlling for typing speed and has been shown to be a reliable predictor of writing quality and reading comprehension. Bilingual adults, in particular, may have increased flexibility in using phonemes, syntax, and vocabulary to communicate and to understand language (Ransdell, Arecco & Levy, 2001).

Clearly the issues are complex when including an increasing number of non-native speakers to the college ranks. Explicit knowledge from basic research is needed in order to predict and train academic success and employability in bilingual college students. For example, relative weakness in English vocabulary can be offset by relative strength in metalinguistic awareness. Protective outcomes associated with being bilingual, such as increased metalinguistic awareness, are thought to be likely when the heritage language is preserved in terms of social status, when it is not entirely replaced by the new language and when degree of bilingualism is high. Many Spanish-English bilingual college students in South Florida follow this pattern because immigrant groups such as Cuban-Americans have made Spanish an important and widely-used language of culture and commerce.

In Ransdell's research (2003), monolingual students who have higher grammar awareness, and a more extensive expressive and receptive language vocabulary, were found to do better on measures of reading comprehension skill. Bilingual students, while having comparable grammar, phonology, expressive vocabulary and writing quality skill to their monolingual peers, did not show reliable relations among any of these measures and their reading performance. A wide range of assessments chosen from grammar, phonological skill, writing, reading comprehension, and expressive and receptive vocabulary are necessary to account for reliable variance in academic success, especially among bilingual students.

### Implications for teaching

Several implications for teaching follow from the present research and apply to monolingual college students as well. Explicit training of vocabulary skill should be a basic part of university training. Students should be encouraged to learn classroom material in two steps. First, key terms and definitions should be learned through integration with existing vocabulary knowledge. Students should then be trained in using newly-acquired vocabulary items in practical applications. Classroom assessment practices should require university students to both learn new vocabulary and learn ways to apply new lexical items in context.

Writing fluency skill can be encouraged through extensive and meaningful writing practice. Word processing practice in career-oriented writing assignments can improve fluency and ultimately enhance writing quality and composition skill. For example, rather than simply asking a student to write about the differences among learning disabilities for an exam, ask them to create a dialogue between a parent and a teacher describing how theories of learning can explain some types of

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## WRONG ANSWERS IN THE CLASSROOM

# Stan's Soap Box

Question and answer sessions in the midst of a lecture are one of the best ways to improve student learning. However, no student will answer correctly all the time.

That leads to the issue of how to deal with incorrect answers. Professors need to be careful how they handle wrong answers to questions they raise in the lecture hall. I would never argue against giving feedback to students who give incorrect answers. This is essential to the learning process. However, crude responses like, "No, no, no. That's completely wrong thinking!" will result in students losing confidence. Then students become unwilling to raise questions or take part in discussions.

Feedback does not have to be negative to correct a wrong answer. I believe telling students they are not correct is not the same as telling them they are wrong. "Wrong" is loaded with negative emotional connotations. By showing a little sensitivity, a professor can give students the feedback they need to get them headed in the right direction without creating a negative, hostile environment. A little tact goes a long way in correcting students' answers without intimidating them as individuals. "I don't like your answer" is a world away from "I don't like you."

Beyond just creating a non-hostile atmosphere, skillful handling of incorrect answers can increase student learning. Do more than just inform a student his/her answer was incorrect. Use the correction of a mistake as an opportunity to help the student and the rest of the class learn. Ask the class: Was there any part of the answer that was correct? Point out: Did the student make a common error? Ask the class: Can you pinpoint where he/she went astray?

Finally, you can give your students a tremendous gift if you help them understand the difference between failure and mistakes. Failures are complete and permanent. Mistakes are partial and can be corrected. Help your students recognize their incorrect answers as mistakes and not failures.

### 4 Points to Remember when correcting your students' incorrect answers:

A.) Treat your students kindly. Insulting a student does nothing for the learning process. Make sure your response is to the answer, not the person. Remember, it was the answer that was incorrect, not the person.

B.) Base your feedback on what you have observed or heard, not on your interpretation of what that means. For example, one instructor may observe a student flipping through the pages of his/her textbook and think "How rude to not be paying attention!" Another instructor may observe a student flipping through the pages of his/her textbook and think, "There's a student searching for an answer, good for them!" Same event, different interpretation.

C.) Avoid generalizations. Phrases like "You always" or "You never" are rarely accurate.

D.) Be specific with what is wrong. Blanket statements like "That answer stinks!" do nothing to diagnose incorrect thinking.

**POP QUIZ:** here are some destructive responses to incorrect answers. See if you can identify which of the "4 Points to Remember" (above) they missed. Compare your answers with the Answer Key.

### UNHELPFUL RESPONSES TO INCORRECT ANSWERS

1. That's a really dumb answer.
2. What's wrong with you?
3. Your thinking is dead wrong.
4. Wrong!
5. Did you read the assignment?
6. I have been teaching this material for 30 years and I've never heard an answer like that.
7. I am tired of stupid questions.
8. Have you been paying attention?
9. John, only you would misinterpret my handout.
10. Did you say that just to get me off track?
11. My 10-year-old son could give me a better answer.
12. There's no excuse for this poor thinking.
13. Your answer tells me you should drop this class.
14. No! No! No!
15. Come on, you're not an idiot.
16. I really don't like your answer.

A & D	6#
A, B, & D	15#
A, C, & D	14#
A, B, & D	13#
A & D	12#
A & D	11#
A & B	10#
A, B, & D	9#
A, B, & D	8#
A, B, & D	7#
A, C, & D	6#
A, B, & D	5#
A, C, & D	4#
A, C, & D	3#
A & D	2#
A & D	1#
<b>Unhelpful Response</b>	<b>4 Points to Remember</b>

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## STAN'S SOAP BOX

(continued from Page 3)

### BETTER RESPONSES TO INCORRECT ANSWERS:

1. That answer is incorrect. Can anyone help us out?
2. I think I see where you went astray. Can anyone identify where John went off track?
3. There is some truth to what you just said. Let's fine tune it.
4. You missed that one. Would you like to try again?
5. That's an easy mistake to make. Class, what would be a better answer?
6. That's a novel viewpoint. Can you tell me a more standard answer?
7. Let's take our thinking up a level. Class, why was Mary's answer incorrect?
8. Nice try, but check your facts again. I'll ask you again in a minute.

**A CHALLENGE:** Try your hand at re-writing 9-16. Submit your answers to me Stan Cohen (scohen@nova.edu). I'll print the best re-writes in the next issue (let me know if you want to remain anonymous). The writer of the best response will receive a \$5.00 gift certificate to Starbucks.

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## ASK THE EXPERTS - MULTICULTURALISM IN THE HEALTH PROFESSIONS - PART 2

(continued from Page 2)

learning disabilities. The student might also be asked to discuss the ways in which current theories of learning do not aid our understanding of some types of learning disabilities.

Reading comprehension skill can be encouraged not just by assigning reading homework, but by explaining to students, especially non-native speakers, that the comprehension process requires active, meaningful processing of information. Students who see reading as a passive exercise whose main goal is getting to the final page of the assignment will not improve general reading comprehension skills to the same extent as those who actively formulate questions and comments about the material as they are reading it. Students should be encouraged to write while they read, write about what they read, and critique both what they have read, and what they have written.

Bilingual students should be especially encouraged to take advantage of their metalinguistic awareness skills. University professors can facilitate this process by acknowledging differences among monolingual and bilingual paths to academic and career success and by promoting metacognitive knowledge in the classroom.

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## Quotes to Brighten Your Day...

In everyone's life, at some time, our inner fire goes out. It is then burst into flame by an encounter with another human being. We should all be thankful for those people who rekindle the inner spirit. - *Albert Schweitzer*

I am always willing to learn, however I do not always like to be taught. - *Winston Churchill*

Knowing others is intelligence; knowing yourself is true wisdom. Mastering others is strength; mastering yourself is true power. - *Lao-Tzu*

It's what you learn after you know it all that counts. - *John Wooden*

# DIRECTOR'S CORNER

by Kaye Robertson, Director of the NSU Health Professions Division Library

The HPD Library serves as the primary biomedical information repository for the students, faculty and staff of the six colleges within the Health Professions Division at Nova Southeastern University and for health-care workers in the surrounding South Florida area. Our mission is to meet the informational and continuing education needs of our students, faculty, administrators, researchers, and health care practitioners by providing access to timely and accurate health-sciences information resources to enable them to fulfill their responsibilities in their respective academic or clinical settings, by maintaining a physical and online environment for the resources and other library services, and by offering opportunities for instruction in the use of information sources.

As part of the SACS review process this year, the HPD Librarians have been meeting with faculty members within the various colleges and programs of the Health Professions Division to determine how we can improve library service to the students and to the faculty. While we have found a high level of satisfaction with the library as a whole, we have also become aware that we sometimes assume that our users are more sophisticated and adept in the use of computers and library and research resources than they actually are. Frequently, the only exposure a student has to the library is during a brief presentation by a librarian during orientation week, or a visit to the library to use the copiers or check out a study room. When an assignment requires some sort of research, the student is lost. If Google does not supply the needed information, the student doesn't know where to turn.

Here are some suggestions for you as the instructor to help us serve your students (and perhaps yourself) better:

1.) Provide "point of need" instruction concerning library resources. The librarians are happy to provide

instruction in your class on choosing databases, forming clinical questions, finding full text, searching strategies, etc. This can be tailored to the needs of your particular assignment, or it can be a general introduction to resources. The timeliness of this presentation is crucial, and it should be followed up with practical application of the strategies.

2.) Make arrangements for the librarians to offer mini classes on particular topics. These classes can be held in the Library Teaching Lab in the evenings, on weekends, or over lunch hours. Small group instruction can be very effective in helping those students who need help finding full text, struggle with the basic research process, etc. Contact one of the librarians listed below to schedule the sessions.

3.) Encourage your students to make individual appointments with a librarian. A request form is available on the [www.nova.edu/hpdlibrary](http://www.nova.edu/hpdlibrary) website. Individual sessions usually last an hour or less, depending on the questions the student has, and they may be scheduled any day except Sunday, as well as Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday evening.

4.) Notify the library in advance of upcoming research assignments. This will help us better understand the assignment requirements, allowing us to direct the students to the best resources.

5.) Suggest online tutorials and pathfinders for our help page. These could be for specific databases or for more general research techniques. We can tailor them to your requirements.

6.) Put your required and recommended readings on reserve in the library, whether they are textbooks, articles, CD-ROMs, etc. If the library doesn't have the books you want, use the online form on our webpage to request items for purchase. Contact us for help with this.

7.) Make sure your students are

equipped with basic computer skills. Our non-traditional students especially may need extra help in mastering computer commands and are hindered in using the more advanced research tools as a result.

For help with any of these suggestions, please speak to a librarian. We are here to help you and to be a support to your curriculum. Each of the reference librarians is assigned as a liaison to specific programs, but we are all here to help.

x3123 Kaye Robertson, Director, HPD Library

x3107 Vince Mariano (liaison for Dental, Pharmacy, Anesthesiology)

x3121 Hilary O'Sullivan (liaison for Medicine, Public Health, Physician Assistant)

x3114 Todd Puccio (liaison for Optometry, Vascular Sonography)

x3117 Alex Wachslar (liaison for OT, PT, Nursing, Health Sciences, Audiology)

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## I AM A TREE, I CAN BEND - PART 3

*(continued from Page 1)*

**Intuitive-style teachers** like to base content on their own inspiration and creative imagination. Orderly lesson plans and syllabi are too restrictive. Actually, order is the enemy and chaos is quite acceptable. They like to entertain students and have a clear vision of what should be in the curriculum that is missing. The dark side of intuitive-style teachers are many, partly because in our culture they are in the minority and are not valued in Western civilization. Rather than follow the traditional content embedded for so many years, they march to their own drum created by their own visions. They love students who are different. They want them to challenge traditional wisdom. They want them to create their own textbooks. Sadly, other teaching types and administrative types view this behavior as unreliable and inconsistent, and so dreamy that much rejection comes their way.