



THE BEACON

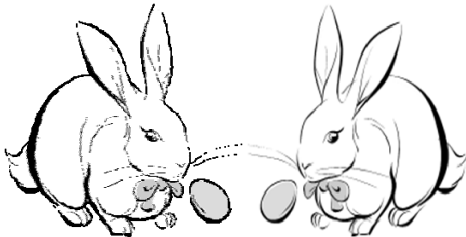


THE QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE CENTER FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING

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Upcoming Events

April 20 from 12:00 to 1:00 p.m. in the Chancellor's Dining Room, the Research and Technology Transfer team will answer the question "What is Research and Technology Transfer at NSU?" Lunch will be provided.

April 24 Dr. Franklin Medio will offer a half day workshop on improving communication with clinical students. The session is being offered twice: 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon in Resnick Auditorium and 1:30 to 4:30 p.m. in Terry Auditorium.

RSVP to Kathleen Hagen at (954) 262-1235 or khagen@nova.edu.

Mark Your Calendars!

The next Health Professions Educational Research Symposium (HPERS) will be January 16, 2010.

The next HPD Research Day will be February 12, 2010.

"This column first appeared on The Chronicle of Higher Education's Careers site, as part of James M. Lang's monthly On Course series."

TRY AND FAIL

By James M. Lang

At the bottom of a pool, struggling with his scuba gear, a professor learns a lesson about teaching.

"The best college and university teachers," writes Ken Bain, "create a safe environment in which students can try, come up short, receive feedback, and try again."

The truth of that pedagogical principle — from Bain's book *What the Best College Teachers Do* (Harvard University Press, 2004) — was never more apparent to me than when I was at the bottom of the pool in a local health club, trying desperately to roll my body in the correct direction and retrieve a mouthpiece that my scuba-diving instructor had just ripped from me.

We were near the end of the scuba course, and this session was devoted to recovering equipment that you might lose in a sudden current or other accident underwater. My fellow students and I were swimming in laps around the bottom of the pool, like a school of oversized fish, and our instructor was darting in between us, pulling off people's fins and masks and doing anything else he could think of to disrupt a normal dive situation.

Our job was to follow the instructions we had been given during the hour-long "dry" portion of the course, which had preceded our weekly work in the water. When you lose your mouthpiece (or "regulator"), you are supposed to extend an arm straight ahead and roll in one direction, to allow the hose to snake up your body toward your hand. Like everything else that I learned in scuba diving, though, I quickly discovered that what the instructor said in the classroom gave me only the barest assistance when I was underwater.

When he snuck up behind me in the pool and yanked out my mouthpiece, I panicked. First I rolled in the wrong direction; then I rolled in the right direction but forgot to extend my arm to catch the hose. All the while the instructor floated patiently nearby, watching and giving me nonverbal reminders. Finally I reached out my arm, rolled in the correct direction, and found the regulator sliding down my arm and into my hand, from where I could pop it back into my mouth.

Later, I couldn't help relating that experience to my own teaching practices. When I stood in front of the classroom, told students how to write, and sent them off to their dorms to draft their essays, did they feel exactly as I had felt underwater: panicked and uncertain how to take what I had heard and actually make use of it? Worse still, were they feeling that way knowing that I was unavailable to help? Was I doing the pedagogical equivalent of ripping out their regulators and then simply swimming away?

In the semesters following the scuba course, I began to experiment with moving my teaching away from telling and toward doing. I devised as many methods as I could to provide students with opportunities to try out their writing skills in the classroom — with me watching and guiding — so that when they had to write for a grade, they were trying something for the second, third, or fourth time.

But my transition from conventional teaching methods to this other model — which is more common in the fine arts than in English courses — has been slow, since it has required me to entirely rethink what I do in the classroom. And while sometimes this

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COPYRIGHT ISSUES SOLUTIONS THAT WORK

With all the concerns about copyright compliance and questions about proper use of resources that we've heard from our faculty in the past few weeks, it's good to know that HPD Library can be your best friend in this matter! One of our primary missions is to provide the online resources that you and your students can use freely with no fear of copyright violation.

Our contracts with our electronic vendors provide for use of databases and online journals and books by authorized users (*i.e.*, those with NSU ID) both in the classroom and in WebCT courses. Linking directly to individual articles, book chapters, illustrations, database information, etc., is the most efficient way to provide a wealth of electronic resources to your students.

The library has several electronic resources that will provide you with images, animations, clinical guides, all for your use in Power Point presentations, WebCT pages, posters, webpages, handouts, etc. Here are a few of the best:

SmartImage Database: 15,500+ images and animations

Anatomy.tv: interactive human anatomy; 3D head & neck anatomy for dentistry; surgery; sports injuries; clinical spine, radiological cross-sectional anatomy, plus more

MDConsult: 50,000+ medical images from textbooks; photos; tables; graphs, etc.

ProceduresConsult: procedures in internal medicine, anesthesia; interactive tests

Mosby's Nursing Skills: online skills and procedures reference resource with interactive testing

These are just a few of the resources available to you to help with your class presentations, whether they are face to face in the classroom or via WebCT. Please see a librarian for more help with the specific needs of your coursework. We will try to provide any resources that you need to enhance your teaching. Let us know of your recommendations for subject-specific databases or e-resources, licensing for online textbooks, new journal titles, or even print materials. We are here to help make your job easier!

Please contact me directly at kayerob@nova.edu or Ext. 23123 with questions and comments.

*Kaye Robertson,
Executive Director, HPD Library*

HELPFUL WEBSITES

Kathleen Hagen

Listed below are some websites which have helpful or interesting information to advance the cause of health care education. If you have found a website which you feel would be helpful to your fellow faculty members, please let *The Beacon* staff know so they can share it with your colleagues.

Handbook of Emerging Technologies for Learning
http://lrc.umanitoba.ca/wikis/etl/index.php/Handbook_of_Emerging_Technologies_for_Learning

*Submitted by Kathleen Hagen
Director of Faculty Development
HPD*

If you are feeling pressure to incorporate new technology into your classroom but don't know where to start, you may first want to visit this site. As you read the various sections, you can clarify what various technologies might be able to do for your teaching. I especially like the section Technology, Teaching, and Learning found at http://lrc.umanitoba.ca/wikis/etl/index.php/Technology%2C_Teaching%2C_and_Learning

MedEd Portal
www.aamc.org/mededportal

*Submitted by Abby Brodie, D.M.D
College of Dental Medicine*

In 2005 the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) developed and launched MedEdPORTAL as a free publishing venue and dissemination portal to support educators and learners as they create and use on-line teaching materials, assessment tools and faculty development resources. As an internationally available service, MedEdPORTAL facilitates sharing of high quality peer-reviewed educational material and promotes collaboration and educational scholarship across institutions. Examples of MedEdPORTAL publications include tutorials, virtual patients, cases, lab manuals, assessment instruments, faculty development materials, etc. MedEdPORTAL publications cover the continuum of medical and dental education (*i.e.* undergraduate, graduate, and continuing medical and dental education). *Quoted from the MedEdPortal website, About MedEdPortal section.*

Health Education Assets Library
<http://www.healcentral.org/>

*Submitted by Abby Brodie, D.M.D
College of Dental Medicine*

The Health Education Assets Library (HEAL) is a digital library that provides freely accessible digital teaching resources of the highest quality that meet the needs of today's health sciences educators and learners. *Quoted from the HEAL website section What is HEAL?*

Biblioteca Virtual em Saúde
<http://www.bireme.br>

*Submitted by Todd Puccio, MLS
HPD Librarian*

BIREME VHL Virtual Health Library provides searching and portals to Health information from and about Latin America.

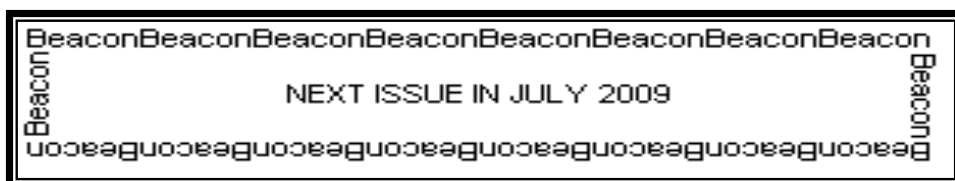
Part of an international network that also includes SciELO (Scientific Electronic Library Online) <http://www.scielo.org/> the BIREME website attempts to provide links to various web portals as well as search mechanisms that looks in selected databases.

This is a good place to search for Health related information in for and about Latin America and other Spanish language materials.

Academic Commons
<http://www.academiccommons.org/>

*Submitted by Kathleen Hagen
Director of Faculty Development, HPD*

Although not specifically targeted for health professions education, this site provides interesting articles on higher education today. I have especially enjoyed reading the article "Capturing the Visible Evidence of Invisible Learning" by Randy Bass and Bret Eynon. It is available at <http://www.academiccommons.org/commons/essay/capturing-visible-evidence-invisible-learning>



A NEW BOOK FOR OUR LENDING LIBRARY

Kathleen Hagen

The Center for Teaching and Learning has just acquired a new book to add to our lending library, Derek Bruff's *Teaching with Classroom Response Systems: Creating Active Learning Environments* (2009, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, California). Two copies of the book are available for faculty to check out. Here is a paraphrased excerpt from the chapter titled "Why use Clickers?"

Using clickers can result in increased student engagement. Depending on how clicker questions are structured, students can have an opportunity to consider their response before seeing their classmates' answers. Even the small act of pushing a button to select a response gives students a sense of commitment toward an answer. Having to commit to an answer before seeing others' responses can force students to grapple with a question when they might otherwise not have given serious thought on how to answer it. Another advantage of not knowing how others are responding is that the various options all have equal weight. This can broaden a student's perspective. If a show of hands is used to indicate their answer, students can see which is the most popular response and may be tempted to discount the other choices.

Beyond the engagement advantage, allowing students to see how their comprehension of the learning material compares to that of their classmates' helps in two ways. If a student answers a question incorrectly yet notices that several members of his class also answered incorrectly, he will not feel so bad. If a student finds that he is the only person in his class who missed a question, he will feel pressure to meet the standard set by his class.

The instructor can use the information on whether the entire class or just a few students are struggling with a concept to structure how best to deal with the situation. A class-wide review session might be in order if many students are unsure of the material. However, an office visit might be sufficient if just a few students need help in understanding a concept.



Stan Cohen, Ed.D.
Vice Provost, HPD

Stan's Soap Box

THE DIFFERENCE A TEACHER MAKES

I am using this soap box to explain a major conclusion I have come to believe after sixty years of teaching. As a teacher in the classroom I have the power to control the learning environmental climate. It is my daily drive that controls the temperature. I can choose to make students miserable or really enjoy learning. I can be like a string on a cello to inspire student achievement or I can be a broken string resulting in fear, sadness, and loss of desire to learn. I can use humor when I laugh with students, or I can humiliate them by laughing at them. I can accept their feelings so they hurt less and learn how to deal with anxieties or I can treat their expressions of uncertainty and doubt as excuses, annoyances, or proof that they are lesser beings. Students are human beings. When I treat them as such, I humanize myself.

Some instructors fear that by softening their attitude towards students, they have lowered their standards or lessened the quality of what they teach. I propose that it is only by treating our students with kindness that we create an atmosphere which allows them to reach their highest potential. I have the joy of watching students grow and be successful. I go home every night with a wonderful sense of accomplishment, and it makes me really happy. The joy is in the role as a teacher, and there is no higher calling for me. I hope it is yours too.

Ideas on Teaching: Enhanced Lecture Formats

1. Lecture with Periodic Pauses

Format: Lecture 12-15 minutes

Pause for 2 minutes: students work in pairs to review, discuss and revise their notes (repeat this pattern three times)

Last 3 minutes of class: "Write everything you can recall from the lecture."

Results: ("treatment" and "control" groups in two different courses over two semesters) on a 65-item multiple-choice quiz given 12 days after the last lecture, comprehension and retention of the lecture material was consistently much better, in some cases up to 2 letter grades better.

2. Lecture with Immediate Test: based on the empirically based observation that people comprehend and retain material better when tested quickly and frequently.

Format: give a test on that day's lecture at the end of the lecture, every time

Results: doubled the retention of the lecture material on a test given 8 weeks after the last lecture.

3. "Feedback" Lecture

Format: Before class: students do "study questions"

20 min.: lecture

10 min.: small groups discuss teacher-provided question related to the lecture

20 min.: lecture

After class: students do "study questions"

Results: 99% of students liked the method and 93% said they in fact did do the study questions before and after class.

4. "Guided" Lecture

Format: 30 min.: lecture (students take NO notes)

5 min.: students take notes on what they remember

15 min.: small groups discuss teacher-provided question related to lecture

Source: Active Learning: Creative Excitement in the Classroom by Charles C. Bonwell and James A. Eison. ASHE-ERIC Higher Educ. Rept. #1. Washington, D.C.: George Washington University, 1991. Summary graciously provided by Stephen S. Davis, PhD; Director, Faculty Development; Ohio U College of Osteopathic Medicine.

TRY AND FAIL

hands-on style requires less energy from me in the classroom, it often requires far more planning than I would do for a conventional lecture or discussion.

Last spring I was able to convert another aspect of my course to the "studio" pedagogical style. It turned out to be my best success yet, so I thought I would share the story here. I was teaching a course called "Contemporary British Novel." In order to supplement the texts we were reading with some historical and cultural context, I asked each student to give a 10-to-15-minute presentation to the class on a British work of art in a genre other than fiction. That meant that they could offer presentations on film, television shows, or even rock music.

I thought the assignment would elicit some interesting presentations, since it gave students the opportunity to present on topics they were excited about — one student did Pink Floyd's *The Wall*, another did the BBC television series *The Office*, and so on.

However, after the day came and went, I just about gave up hope of ever seeing great presentations from my students. They may have been interested in their topics, but they clearly had not practiced or timed themselves, despite my multiple injunctions. One student's presentation lasted for almost 30 minutes, even in the face of repeated hints to wrap it up. Fast forward to the fall of 2008. I am teaching a course in which students are required to write a thesis proposal and defend it at the end of the semester (they write the actual thesis in their senior year). So while I have mostly sworn off presentations at this point, the structure of the course requires me to use them one last time.

As presentation time approaches, I decide that I simply cannot bear to sit through another set of unrehearsed, under-timed rambles. I have no degree in public speaking, so I don't feel qualified to give detailed instructions on it. But as someone who speaks frequently in public, I know that most of the problems we encounter in public speaking can be improved by practice.

"On the class before the presentations," I announce to my students, "you must be prepared to give the first two minutes of your presentation to the class. That's it — just the first two minutes. Rehearse it and be ready."

With 15 students in a 75-minute class, and figuring time for transition and critique, that meant I had to give up an entire class period — no content that day at all, just helping them improve their presentations. I was not at all sure that the effort would be worth the lost time.

When rehearsal day arrived, I asked the first student to begin. I let her speak for about three sentences, which were stiff and clearly memorized, before I stopped her.

"Hang on a second," I said. "Start over."

"Did I do something wrong?"

"Nope. I just want you to start over."

She began again, speaking a little more confidently. I let her go another few sentences.

"Wait," I said, interrupting again. She gave me a pained look. Students were looking at me, and at one another, with bewilderment.

"You're not doing anything wrong," I said. "But just start over again for me."

A chill descended on the room at that moment, as students began to wonder why on earth I was torturing this poor student. Her third time around was much better, as she found her way into her own words, so I let her continue for a while.

At the end of some technical explanation she gave about her material, I asked her to stop and describe it for me in her own words without looking at her notes. She put down her notes and broke out of the rigid posture in which she had been standing in order to explain what she meant.

"That's better," I said. "Say it like that in the presentation."

"OK," she said, and then resumed her presentation where she had left off.

"No, no," I interrupted. "Say it like that right now in the presentation."

"Go back and do it again?" she said.

"Yes, go back and do it again. And don't look at your notes."

And so it went for the next 70 minutes, as I asked student after student to repeat false starts, clear up technical material or jargon, and put away written notes. The room went from a climate of fear and anxiety to one of laughter and relaxation as the students picked up on what was happening and saw that all I was trying to teach them were the virtues of practice and rehearsal.

There were a few bad moments. One student was so nervous and stammering it was painful to watch, and I thought interrupting her would do more harm than good. So I just let her talk. Eventually, I think, she realized that nobody was going to rescue her, and she locked in and worked her way through her nerves. That was no great pedagogical moment of mine — I just didn't know what else to do.

The following week the students gave their presentations, and they were, by far, the best student talks I have ever seen. It could not have been clearer that every one of them had gone back to their rooms and rehearsed and timed themselves until they had it right. Some were better than others, but even the worst would have beaten out almost any presentation I had seen before. Afterward, when I had a chance to reflect on it, I came back to the quote from Ken Bain's book and realized that my selfish unwillingness to sit through any more terrible presentations had led to the kind of environment that he describes. I had given students the chance to try, fail, get some guidance, and try again. When I spoke about this experience to a group of faculty members recently, one of them lamented that we shouldn't have to spend our class time on such rehearsals — that's what public-speaking courses are for, he said, and we should require students to take such courses.

Agreed. In a perfect world, someone else would teach them how to give presentations, and I would reap the benefits of that instruction and focus on the content of my course. Until that perfect world arrives, however, I will never again ask students to give successful presentations without first giving them the chance, a week or two in advance, to fail.

James M. Lang is an associate professor of English at Assumption College and author of On Course: A Week-by-Week Guide to Your First Semester of College Teaching (Harvard University Press, 2008). He writes about teaching in higher education. His Web site is <http://www.jamesmlang.com>. He welcomes reader mail directed to his attention at careers@chronicle.com. For an archive of his previous columns, see http://chronicle.com/jobs/news/archives/columns/on_course.

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