



CTL *notes*

the Center for Teaching and Learning

The CTL logo is a mature tree symbolizing the developed roots and continued growth of Miami University Middletown's excellence in teaching and learning under the canopy of its Center for Teaching and Learning.

Some CTL Thoughts from Dean Hey

November

Volume 6, Issue 2

Compiled, designed, and edited by Jackie Couch and Moira Casey.

Thoughts on the Mission of the CTL

It has always struck me that the training required to qualify for the post of a "university teacher" includes little or no emphasis on teaching. The PhD, the most common ticket to a university teaching post, is a research degree. If PhD candidates get any teaching experience along the way, it's usually because their department is taking advantage of cheap labor. If they get any formal pedagogical training, it means they are in a particularly thoughtful department whose faculty realize that research training alone will not prepare PhD stu-

dents for the likely career facing them.

In what other industry are the qualifying degree work and the tasks later performed so mismatched? High school teachers study student development, pedagogy *and* their content area. Like doctors, they spend significant time working side by side with professionals as part of their training. MBA graduates study business theory, technique and extensive business case studies in preparation for a career as business executives. Yet, even though the bulk of PhD students, especially in arts and sciences, go on to

teaching careers, their training is focused almost solely on theory and research in their discipline. Certainly, this intensive research grounding is necessary for anyone qualified to conduct research in his or her field. But what does it do to prepare us for the other part of the job that requires interacting with students for dozens of hours a week? If indeed a graduate degree is required to prepare one for university teaching, shouldn't that same degree relate more directly to the teaching enterprise?

Thanks to the people staffing and participating in them, Centers for Teaching

Upcoming Conversations

WEDNESDAY, NOV. 4, 2009

"Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) Learning Community"

12-1 pm in JHN 136/137.

Lunch served to the first twenty attendees.



WEDNESDAY, DEC. 2, 2009

"Using Clickers"

12-1 pm in JHN 136/137.

Lunch served to the first twenty attendees.

Some Thoughts from Dean Hey, continued

“...the desire to inform and inspire young minds...”

they wanted to teach. In my case, I was inspired by a set of exceptional professors at my undergraduate institution. Their skill, instinct, energy and intelligence in and out of the classroom turned on a number of lightbulbs over my head, and also led me to think, “I want to do this!” Only after a year of slogging through theory classes at (THE) Ohio State University did I fully come to realize how divorced a PhD program can be from what had led me there in the first place: the desire to inform and inspire young minds.

It has been a joy and a privilege, therefore, to work at an institution that takes excellence in teaching and learning so seriously. I have been an avid consumer of CELT workshops, faculty learning communities, and conferences. They have improved me as a teacher, thinker and even scholar. So it is a delight to learn about the tremendous success of the Center for Teaching and Learning at MUM. From the opening session with Thiagi in August, I perceived passion and commitment to teaching excellence among the faculty here. That impression has only grown as

I’ve learned about the CTL’s leadership in preparing faculty for the BIS, attended a workshop, and followed the CTL’s many activities. The Center’s leadership is clearly a truly fun group of people as well.

Congratulations to the CTL for all its successes, past and future. I look forward to a great year.

Jeanne Hey
Interim Dean

November Happenings at the CTL

“Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) Learning Community”
Wednesday, November 4, 2009
12:00-1:00, 136/137 JHN

In this session we will showcase a SoTL faculty learning community. The session will have both a practical and philosophical orientation. We will discuss the challenges and benefits of such a community, the reflective nature of SoTL work, and the benefits of a SoTL learning community to the faculty. The session will be facilitated by Cathy Bishop-Clark and Beth Uhler.

This conversation is co-sponsored by CTL and CELTUA in Oxford.

“Pixton: Make Your Own Web Comics!”
Tuesday, November 17, 2009
11:00-12:00, 118 JHN

In this session, Eric Luczaj will demonstrate a free, web-based tool called Pixton. Participants will be able to try their hands at creating their own online comic strips (even if an individual cannot draw). Pixton is a great way to communicate ideas graphically in a multimedia rich environment and then share them in email and social networks like Facebook. Experiment with using images and storytelling to share class material with your students.


A Vision of Teaching and Learning by Psychology Professor Ginger Wickline

While I was on my pre-doctoral internship, my Time Limited Therapy supervisor asked us to ponder how time fit into our conceptions of counseling. My metaphor for time as it applies to teaching (and therapy) is that of a raindrop. Each class is but a blip in the sea of time for the student. A good class or lesson, however, is the drop that falls and hovers as a separate, round ball on the water's surface for just a minute before the tension breaks and the drop is absorbed into the larger body. Most of our teaching is washed away in a person's ocean of memories and sometimes flood of life events, but if we as teachers are lucky, we get that one class, that one moment or maybe two, where we can see the impact of time well spent and know the student has heard, understood, or been helped.

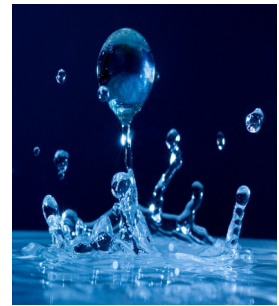
Learning, like water, can be a powerful force: freezing, expanding, breaking apart rock-hard surfaces, and smoothing out edges. As a teacher, I have heard from students and seen for myself that interactive activities, service-learning, and things that surprise and energize them tend to be drops that get under the surface and have an impact on them. I love learning ideas from others that help make that recollection more possible for my students.

With our students, sometimes we only get a few drops, a few moments. My goal as a teacher is to create just a few more "drops" (which inevitably are not always the ones I intend for them). My goal for my students is that they leave a little less thirsty than when they arrived. I am glad to be here and looking forward to riding the waves with you!

"Drink deep and never thirst, our brother." - Jubal Harshaw, from Heinlein's *Stranger in a Strange Land*



*Learning, like
water, can be
a powerful
force...*



*...drops that get
under the
surface and
have an impact
on others...*

Faculty Technology Survey

We're asking for about 10 minutes of your time to complete a short survey for all faculty and staff teaching on the Middletown campus. You will be asked about your technology expectations for students in your courses and your thoughts regarding technology on our campus. Your feedback will be used to help us better address the technology learning needs of our students.

Your feedback is completely confidential. If you have questions

about this survey or the procedures to guarantee confidentiality of responses, please contact Andrea Han at hanan@muohio.edu.

The Faculty Technology Survey will be available until **midnight on Friday, October 30**. Entering responses in the survey indicates your consent to participate in the survey. You may access the survey at <https://survey.muohio.edu/Checkboxes/fts.survey>.

If you prefer to fill out a paper ver-

sion of the survey, you will find copies available in the faculty lounges in Johnston Hall and Thesken Hall. Paper surveys should be returned in campus mail to John Burke in the Library.

Please copy and paste the URL into your web browser to access the survey. If you need assistance, stop by the Help Desk in the Computer Center or call Andrea Han at 7x4001.

Service Learning Seminars

Monday, November 2	12-1:00	JH 136
Monday, November 16	12-1:00	JH 136

Co-sponsored by MUM's CTL and Office of Community Engagement and Service, these two seminars will provide curious faculty with the information they need to understand service learning better. The first seminar will feature faculty who will share their experiences teaching service learning courses, information on service learning (including the S course designation and course release time), and discussion of the challenges and opportunities of service learning. The second seminar will feature representatives from local community agencies who will share their experiences as partners in service learning projects, and give attendees the opportunity to see how individual courses they plan to teach might look with a service learning component. Faculty will also have the opportunity to brainstorm potential service learning projects with community agency reps. Pizza will be served!



Lilly Conference Keynote Speaker: Dr. Michael Wesch

The Center for Teaching and Learning has joined CELTUA in co-sponsoring the Lilly Conference keynote speaker, Dr. Michael Wesch. He will deliver his Bicentennial Event presentation, **The Art of Loving and Learning in New Media Environments, on November 20, from 10:50-noon in Room 1000 of the Farmer School of Business.**

Dubbed "the explainer" by Wired magazine, MICHAEL WESCH is a cultural anthropologist exploring the effects of new media on society and culture. After two years studying the implications of writing on a remote indigenous culture in the rain forest of Papua New Guinea, he has turned his attention to the effects of social media and digital technology on global society. His videos on culture, technology, education, and information have been viewed by millions, translated into over 15 languages, and are frequently featured at international film festivals and major academic conferences worldwide. Wesch has won several major awards for his work, including a Wired Magazine Rave Award, the John Culkin Award for Outstanding Praxis in Media Ecology, and he was recently named an Emerging Explorer by National Geographic. He has also won several teaching awards, including the 2008 CASE/Carnegie U.S. Professor of the Year for Doctoral and Research Universities.

The video designed and produced by Wesch and his class on YouTube, "A Vision of Students Today," has received acclaim and millions of hits. You can view it on the Lilly Conference homepage at <http://www.units.muohio.edu/lillycon/> and find links to his other videos such as "The Machine is (Changing) Us"; "A Portal to Media Literacy"; "Twitter and the World Simulation" and "Information Revolution."

The co-sponsorship will be announced on the CELTUA and Lilly Conference websites and in program material.



Jackie's Corner by Jackie Couch

As a future teacher, I dream of the day when I first walk into my classroom and all of my students are eager and willing to learn. In my dream every student raises their hand to answer a question and the students all love school. However, after being in a school setting for 15 or so years, I have learned that this is not the case—especially not in higher education.



Last week I was sitting my English class when my Professor walked in and asked who in the class had read the assignment. Only a handful of students' hands were raised. This was not the first time that the majority of students did NOT read for the class. And this time, my Professor had had enough, she sent everyone who had not read the assignment out of the classroom—they were welcome back when they had finished the article. More than seventy five percent of the students packed up their bags and left. After the initial shock wore off, I found myself feeling more relaxed and comfortable in my classroom. With only six or so other students (who had read the article) I felt free to voice my opinions and have an actual discussion with my peers. Honestly, I was glad that my Professor made those students leave. I am paying money to come here and obtain an education—I want to make sure I get my money's worth. It was a great class that day; I felt like we had a meaningful discussion of the text. Even though there were so few of us in the class, only three of the students spoke up, even in that small setting!

This got me to thinking, why aren't students completing the assignments? Why does no one speak up or participate in a classroom dialogue? Perhaps it's the demographics of the class; most of the students in there are in their first year of college, straight out of high school. I believe that a lot of first year freshmen do not realize how different college is from high school. Most people can breeze through high school (maybe that's the problem), and expect to do the same in college. But the two are on completely different levels—our Professors expect more out of us, and so they should. Most students think that once they graduate from high school that they are “adults”, well adults don't slack off and shirk their duties. I think it is important for Professors to have high standards for their students, but to also be flexible.



[Jackie's Corner Con't]

One of the most important things I think a teacher should do at the start of the semester is to get to know their students. Make your classroom into a community. The atmosphere of the classroom is so important to learning, a welcoming, friendly, comfortable atmosphere is more conducive to learning. I can sometimes go a whole semester without knowing the name of the person who sits next to me, and have no personal connection at all with the professor. From personal experience, I know that students are more willing to speak up in an environment in which they feel comfortable and there is not fear of ridicule or rejection by peers. I have held my tongue many times in class because I am honest to goodness scared of what my peers may think of me. So get to know your students and don't forget that learning can (and should) be fun! One technique you may try is using some of Thiagi's activities for interactive learning, you can go to www.thiagi.com for more information.

CTL Office Schedule for Fall Semester 2009

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8-9	Jackie	Jackie			Jackie
9-10			Sue		
10-11	Jackie/Brad			Ellenmarie	
11-12	Brad				
12-1	LC Meeting		Jackie		
1-2		Jackie/John			
2-3					
3-4		John/Angela		Lizz	
4-5	Moira	Angela	Eric		Jackie
5-6					
6-7					

For more information call: 513-727-3464 or visit us online at
www.mum.mid.muohio.edu/ctl