

October 2008 Feature: *Teaching at its Best* by Linda Nilson

This best-selling handbook is in its second edition and includes a compilation of hundreds of practical teaching techniques, formats and classroom activities. The book is a user-friendly guide with quick tips on a wide range of current issues and relevant topics. The book is divided into five sections that cover *Sound Preparations* (course design, syllabus, copyright guidelines), *Good Beginnings* (responding to incivility, motivating students), *Varieties of Learning and Teaching Strategies* (learning styles, lectures, leading discussions, getting students to do the readings, experiential learning activities, use of instructional aids and technology), *Teaching Problem Solving for Today's World* (case, problem-based learning, quantitative reasoning, science in the laboratory), and *Assessment* (test construction, grading, evaluating).

Linda Nilson is Director, Office of Teaching Effectiveness and Innovation at Clemson University in South Carolina. She is a nationally recognized speaker on teaching effectiveness and faculty development.

The book is available in the Doherty Library. The CFE has three workshop materials developed by Dr. Nilson:

- Designing Test Questions and Assignments that Assess Thinking Skills
- My Top 10: The Best and the Worst Teaching Practices I've Ever Seen
- Reaching the 75% of Students Who Don't Do the Readings

November 2008 Feature

Creating Significant Learning Experiences: An Integrated Approach to Designing College Courses by L. Dee Fink

“How can I create courses that will provide significant learning experiences for my students?” From this question, the author outlines the role of significant learning as key to a quality education. In this book, Fink provides procedural and conceptual tools that teachers can use as part of their course instructional design including: a taxonomy of significant learning with a process for setting learning goals; steps to design significant learning experiences with ideas to integrate new exercises, activities and strategies; how to make changes in the way we think about teaching promoting the need for teachers to continually grow; and the need for and type of institutional support required for developing significant learning environments. There are two appendices: “Planning Your Course: A Decision Guide” provides exceptional assistance to enhance course design and “Suggested Readings” includes an extensive list of useful references.

Reviewers of this book who have successfully integrated Fink’s concepts span the disciplines: math, education, theology and business. “Our faculty members have successfully increased student achievement, especially in challenging and rigorous courses, as a direct result of the ideas from Dee Fink’s workshops, now collected in his book.” Cynthia Desrochers, founding director, The Center for Effective Learning and Teaching, California State University at Northridge

Dr. L. Dee Fink has worked as an instructional consultant with college teachers for 25 years. He founded the Instructional Development Program at the University of Oklahoma in 1979. In 2002, he was President of the Professional and Organizational Development (POD) Network in Higher Education, the largest faculty development organization in North America. He offers workshops for faculty on how to design courses for significant learning through Dee Fink & Associates.

The book is available at the Center for Faculty Excellence.

December 2008 Feature

Learner-Centered Teaching: Five Key Changes to Practice by Maryellen Weimer

This month's feature is selected based on the response to the Center's *Thank-a-Prof!* initiative. A number of our faculty have been recognized by their students for their positive impact in the classroom suggesting a learner-centered, not a teacher-centered, environment has been created.

In *Learner-Centered Teaching*, Dr. Weimer provides a comprehensive hand-book on how to create transformative classroom environments by focusing on: what and how the students are learning, the conditions under which students learn, assessing retention and application of what is learned and how current learning directs the future learning of students. She provides a theoretical foundation for the learner-centered approach, outlines positive ways to improve teaching and includes practical strategies to create a learner-centered course.

Dr. Weimer is associate professor of teaching and learning at the Berks-Lehigh Valley College of the Pennsylvania State University. She is editor-in-chief of *The Teaching Professor* newsletter and is recognized as one of the nation's most highly regarded authorities on effective college teaching.

The book is available in the Center for Faculty Excellence office.

January 2009 Feature

The Disciplined Mind: What All Students Should Understand by Howard Gardner

“Education in our time should provide the basis for enhanced understanding of our several worlds—the physical world, the biological world, the world of human beings, the world of human artifacts, and the world of the self” (158). In this seminal work, Gardner examines the role of education through the lens of the cognitive and biological sciences. Well known for his work in multiple intelligences, he links traditional values and educational strategies with multi-disciplinary avenues for learning. Gardner’s educational philosophy continues to provide keen insights into the goal and objective of higher education. Three chapters provide the conceptual grounding and practical applications of his ideas: Chapter 6: Designing Education for Understanding; Chapter 9: ‘Multiple Intelligences’ Approaches to Understanding; and Chapter 10: Getting There. In keeping with the liberal arts tradition, he defines a humane education as one that enhances truth, beauty and goodness.

Dr. Howard Gardner is the John H. and Elizabeth A. Hobbs Professor of Cognition and Education at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. The book is available in the library.

Please check your CFE site on Black Board for a related article: Can Howard Gardner’s Theory of Multiple Intelligences Transform Educational Practice? Yes by Howard Gardner and No by Perry Klein.

February 2009 Feature
Collaborative Learning Techniques: A Handbook for College Faculty
by Barkely, Cross and Major

“The twenty first-century poses a paradox for higher education. At a time when students and parents consider a college education a necessity and getting into a “good” college is more competitive than ever, legislators, accrediting agencies, the American public, and educators are raising questions about what students are learning in college—and they are asking for evidence.” (p. xi)

This handbook is divided into three parts that address the *why*, *how* and *what* questions of collaborative learning, the intentional design of structured activities in the classroom to foster meaningful learning. Part One provides a brief yet comprehensive review of the literature on collaborative learning. Part Two gleans the experience of teachers across a variety of colleges and disciplines on how to implement collaborative learning. Part Three provides detailed descriptions of 30 techniques organized into five broad categories: discussion, reciprocal teaching, problem-solving, graphic information organizers and writing. Each technique includes characteristics, description and purpose, preparation, procedure, examples, online implementation, variations and extensions, observations and advice, and key resources.

Barkley is a professor of music at Foothill College, Los Altos Hills, CA and named California’s Higher Education Professor of the Year by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. Cross is professor of higher education, emerita, at the University of California, Berkeley with former appointments at the Harvard Graduate School of Education and Cornell as dean of students. Major is associate professor of higher education administration in the College of Education at the University of Alabama and former director of Problem-Based Learning at Samford University.

The book is available in the CFE library.

March 2009 Feature

The Life of the Mind: On the Joys and Travails of Thinking

James V. Schall

“The question of a proper education follows the question of what to read. I want to recall the familiar notion of the liberal arts, those studies, those disciplines which, on going through them, enable us better to see what is there. The ‘liberal arts’ are not one person’s invention, but rather represent the collected wisdom of many generations and nations. We should recognize from the beginning that these ‘freeing’ or ‘liberal’ arts are not simply a body of books to read but a way of life enabling us to be free enough to know the truth of things.” (Schall, p. 24).

The “Life of the Mind” is neither an academic or self-help book. Rather Schall engages his reader to ponder on ‘the joys and travails of thinking’, books and the intellectual life, the liberal arts, taking care of one’s own wisdom, and the risk of being human. He offers twenty books that awaken the mind, and insights on what it means to be a teacher.

James V. Schall, S.J., Professor of Political Philosophy at Georgetown University. He is the author of numerous books on social issues, spirituality, culture and literature including *Another Sort of Learning*, *The Student’s Guide to Liberal Learning* and *The Sum Total of Human Happiness*.

April 2009 Book Feature

Developing Learner-Centered Teaching: A Practical Guide for Faculty
By Dr. Phyllis Blumberg

“Learner-centered approaches are not about watering down course content and otherwise compromising academic standards. However, faculty with questions about the viability of these approaches are not likely to be persuaded by assertions. This book answers these objections by demonstrating how and why learner-centered approaches maintain content integrity while at the same time they help students achieve a deeper mastery of the material” (From the forward, Maryellen Weimer, Professor Emeritus, Penn State University)

The essence of learner-centered teaching shifts the role of the faculty from information givers to facilitators of student learning. In keeping with the May 7 online seminar on creating learner-centered syllabi, this book offers an accessible hands-on guide to the approach. The book is divided into three parts. Part One is on transforming teaching to be learner-centered describing tools and rubrics for change and assessment; Part Two is on the five dimensions of learner-centered teaching; and Part Three identifies strategies of overcoming obstacles and resistance.

The book is a rich compilation of tools, strategies and research on learner-centered teaching. The author has been teaching using learner-centered approaches to first-year college students through graduate and medical students for over 25 years. She has a 30 year history in faculty development with faculty in the sciences and health sciences.

The book is available in the Center for Faculty Excellence Library.

June - July 2009 Book Feature

McKeachie's Teaching Tips: Strategies, Research and Theory for College and University Teachers

“Do you want your students to get more out of your courses? Would you like to brush up on the current research on teaching? Have you ever asked yourself any of the following questions: Is increasing motivation within my power? Why does peer learning work? How can I make lectures more effective? How will technology enhance teaching and learning?” (From the cover/introduction of *Teaching Tips*).

This practical user-friendly handbook is now in its Eleventh Edition. The book is organized in seven sections: Parts 1 and 2 focus on getting started in class and basic skills for facilitating student learning; Part 3 provides awareness of and respect for student differences in the classroom; Parts 4 and 5 focus on active learning, laboratory instruction, facilitating experiential learning and distance education; Part 6 is dedicated to teaching for higher level goals; and Part 7 provides insights for the lifelong learning for the teacher.

McKeachie describes the teacher's role as “expanded to include that of mediator between your content specialization and yours students' understanding of it on multiple and increasingly higher levels.” (xviii). A number of faculty known for their work in higher education, teaching and learning are contributing authors.

Bill McKeachie is Professor Emeritus and former chairman of the Department of Psychology at the University of Michigan and is also Research Scientist and past Director of the University of Michigan Center for Research on Learning and Teaching. *Teaching Tips* is a #1 best seller in the field and is considered synonymous with higher education teaching methodology.

Several copies of the book are available in the CFE Library.

September 2009 Feature
What the Best College Teachers Do
by Ken Bain

From the cover: “What makes a great teacher great? Who are the professors students remember long after graduation. This book, the conclusion of a fifteen-year study of nearly one hundred college teachers in a wide variety of fields and universities, offers valuable answers for all educators.

The short answer it’s not what teachers do, it’s what they understand. Lesson plans and lecture notes matter less than the special way teachers comprehend the subject and value human learning. Whether historians or physicists, in El Paso or St. Paul, the best teachers know their subjects inside and out—but they also know how to engage and challenge students and to provoke impassioned responses.”

The seven chapters address how the best teachers learn, prepare to teach, what they expect from their students and themselves, how they conduct class, treat and evaluate their students with an epilogue on “What Can We Learn From Them?”. The Appendix outlines how the study was conducted. The book provides insight and inspiration for all faculty both new and seasoned.

The book was the winner of the Virginia and Warren Stone Prize awarded annually by Harvard University Press for an outstanding book on education and society. Ken Bain is Director of the Center for Teaching Excellence at New York University.

October 2009 Book Feature

Faculty Focus e-newsletter published by Magna Publications.

Faculty Focus e-newsletter, first launched in 2003, contains valuable information for faculty, academic deans, and department chairs. Now celebrating its fifth year, the e-newsletter is published three times per week and has its own dedicated website featuring additional news and best practices on the academic issues at the forefront of higher education today. With a subscriber base of more than 16,000 and growing, *Faculty Focus* continues to be a premier free resource focused on today's higher education professional. 20 free reports are available on a number of topics. A few examples include: online course design, tips for encouraging student participation, philosophy of teaching statements, twitter in higher education, strategies for improving teaching and learning, and making sense of educational assessment.

The e-newsletter also features online seminars and conferences faculty may find of interest that qualify for the TEG or mini-grant option.

To log on the site:

Enter: www.facultyfocus.com. Once on the homepage, follow the directions to enter your email address and sign up for free reports. You will receive weekly updates.

**November 2009 Selection: Discussion As A Way of Teaching, 2nd Edition
Stephen Brookfield and Stephen Preskill**

In an effort to compliment this month's *Let's Talk Teaching* video feature on "The Art of Discussion Leading", Brookfield and Preskill offer specific steps to planning, conducting and assessing classroom discussions. Specific topic areas include discussion through questioning, listening and responding; as applied to culturally diverse classrooms; discussing across gender differences; use of group discussion; creating conditions for online discussion and the role of theory in executing effective discussion practice.

Brookfield is Distinguished University Professor at the University of St. Thomas in Minneapolis-St. Paul, MN. Preskill is Regents Professor of Education in the Department of Educational Leadership and Organizational Learning in the College of Education at the University of New Mexico.

January / February 2010 Book Selection

The Norton Field Guide to Writing with Handbook (2nd Edition) by Richard Bullock and Francine Weinberg

Quoted from the preface: “The Norton Field Guide covers 15 kinds of writing often assigned to college students. Much of the book is in the form of guidelines, designed to help students consider the choices they have as writers. Most chapters are brief (but color coded links send them to places in the book where they can find more information.”*

The Field Guide is easy to use with color-coding, menus, directories and a glossary. The Guide’s unique design allows for flexibility with explicit assignment sequences if wanted and/or directions to create your own assignments. Each chapter is concise with affiliated links.

The book has seven parts: Rhetorical Situations, Genres, Processes, and Strategies, Research/Documentation, Media/Design and Handbook. The second edition includes 11 new readings, 2009 MLA documentation guidelines, and chapters on synthesizing ideas, mixing genres, writing as inquiry, on arguing and on taking exams.

A copy is available in the CFE Library.

* Page VI.

March 2010 Book Feature

The Art of Possibility: Transforming Professional and Personal Life *by* Rosamund Stone Zander and Benjamin Zander

“The Art of Possibility: Transforming Professional and Personal Life” by the Zanders is one of the books provided as recommended reading for the annual “Boot Camp for Profs” program. Each of the book’s twelve chapters develops a specific practice for achieving their vision—that of bringing possibility to life.

The uniqueness of this how-to book is in the perspective the authors bring to this work. Benjamin Zander is founder and conductor of the Boston Philharmonic Orchestra and professor at the New England Conservatory of Music. Rosamund Stone Zander is a family therapist and landscape painter. Their backgrounds provide a rich encounter for the reader as to how the arts can form and inform our personal development and our professional practice as teachers.

This book was recommended by Professor Claire McDonald in the UST Drama department who attended last year’s “Boot Camp for Profs”. The book compliments this month’s “Let’s Talk Teaching” with its focus on “The Act of Teaching” as facilitated by Nancy Houfek, Head of Voice and Speech for the American Repertory Theater at Harvard University.

The book is available in the CFE Library.

April 2010 Featured Reading Selection

Reading List on Blended Learning

This month, Dr. Charlene Dykman and Dr. Beena George, professors in the Cameron School of Business, will provide a half-day workshop on: *Transforming Your Classes with Blended Learning.*” Please check the CFE website under Workshops and Events for details.

A reading list has been compiled by Dr. Beena George, as posted on Blackboard. The list is divided into four sections: creating a virtual community and online discussions, online assessments, course redesign and the scholarship of blended learning. The CFE Library also has books on blended learning available to faculty.

September 2010 Book Selection

***Publish & Flourish: Become a Prolific Scholar* by Tara Gray**

Gray, an associate professor of criminal justice and director of The Teaching Academy at New Mexico State University, offers her version of The 12 Steps to getting published. The book is a succinct, user-friendly guide promising that “every scholar can become more prolific” (p. 3) by working the steps: managing time (3 steps), writing (2 steps), revising (2 steps), getting help (3 steps) and polishing and letting go (2 steps). *Publish & Flourish* serves as a how-to manual with tips as direct as: write daily for 15-30 minutes; organize around key sentences; solicit the right feedback from the right colleagues; and how to make effective use of feedback. Gray talent is taking what is often viewed as a daunting task and making it very doable.

The book includes appendices that offer support at the individual level (i.e., keeping a writing log) to support at the group level (i.e., instructions for writing groups.) Gray has also provided a rich index of recommended readings and a section on *Funding Your Best Ideas: A 12-Step Program*.

Copies of the book are available in the CFE Library.

October / November 2010 Book Selection

***Digital Nation: Toward an Inclusive Information Society* by Anthony Wilhelm**

This semester the *Let's Talk Teaching* sessions are dedicated to viewing the Frontline documentary Digital Nation. The discussion has centered on questions around life on the virtual frontier and how it impacts teaching and learning.

Wilhelm's book continues the conversation by outlining how the information society impacts the way we educate students, deliver healthcare, and engage in productive work. The book is accessible and covers both the social and technological impacts on, what Wilhelm describes as, the digital divide.

His book is rich in bibliographic references and in presenting ideas on how to avoid the pitfalls of social exclusion as we move toward life in cyberspace. Chapter 7 provides an especially cogent argument on working with the millennial generation, those students born in the 1980s.

Wilhelm is a recognized expert and author on addressing issues in the emerging digital society. The book was published in 2004 by The MIT Press.

A copy of the book is available in the CFE Library.

December 2010/January 2011 Selection

Faculty Focus, a weekly newsletter focused on today's higher education professional, posted the Top 10 Articles for 2010. The articles cover topics on social media, blogging, facilitating on-line courses, student writing, plagiarism, good teaching, and dealing with difficult students.

February 2011 Book Selection
Cooperative Learning in Higher Education: Across the Disciplines, Across the Academy
By Dr. Barbara Millis

If you've been interested in cooperative learning, but wondered how it would work in your discipline, this book provides the necessary theory, and a wide range of concrete examples. Defined, cooperative learning is a highly structured form of group work that focuses on problem solving, deep learning, critical thinking and a paradigm shift in students' thinking. CL offers a systematic and learning-centered approach to teaching without putting "anyone in a pedagogical straight-jacket" (Chapter 1).

The book offers insights from faculty ranging from accounting, chemistry, educational psychology to the sciences, research and engineering. Concrete examples guide the reader to understanding CL as well as providing ways to apply this methodology in any classroom, independent of discipline.

Dr. Barbara Millis is currently director at the UTSA Teaching and Learning Center in San Antonio, Texas. She has been active in faculty development since 1982, directing programs at the University of Maryland, The U.S. Air Force Academy and the University of Nevada. She is the author of several books and articles on teaching from a learner-centered perspective and a sought-after speaker and trainer.

Dr. Millis joins us on Tuesday February 8 as part of the monthly *Let's Talk Teaching* discussions.

The Elements of Style (4th Edition) by William Strunk and E.B. White
(Bartleby Publishing, NY: 1999)

The Elements of Style is considered a classic reference book and a must-have for anyone who writes. The revisions to the newest edition are minimal and maintain the author's tone and wit. There is a new Glossary of grammatical terms and discussion of pronoun use to reflect contemporary concerns with language. Eighteen chapters are dedicated to elementary rules of usage, one section dedicated to matters of form and concluding chapters on words and expressions commonly misused and words commonly misspelled.

The book is recommended by the director of Tutorial Services, Dr. Connie Michalos who will be presenting *Grammar in the Real World* as part of the March Let's Talk Teaching Series.

April 2011 Book Selection

Getting Culture: Incorporating Diversity Across the Curriculum

Edited by Regan Gurung and Loreto Prieto

Stylus Publishing 2009

The editors, Dr. Gurung, Professor of Human Development and Psychology at the University of Wisconsin and Dr. Prieto, Professor of Psychology at Iowa State University, provide a rich resource on the topic of diversity. From the cover: “Within the framework of current scholarship, and discussion of essential concepts, it offers practical advice, and empirically proven best practices for teaching about diversity.”

The book is divided into six sections: general issues on teaching about diversity; feminism and diversity education; the inclusive classroom; diversity and on-line environments; methods and techniques for faculty and diversity trainers; and diversity across educational settings.

The book is available in the Center for Faculty Excellence Library.