



Innovative Teaching at UWF

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Spring 2012

DVDs on teaching and assessment in the CUTLA library

CUTLA acquired several DVD recordings of webinars on teaching, professional issues, and assessment this fall. Faculty may visit CUTLA and check out DVDs and books from the CUTLA library.

New titles for DVDs of webinars

Extra Credit: An Undeserved Gift or a Second Chance to Learn?

Maryellen Weimer, Ph.D.

Maryellen Weimer discusses the pros and cons of offering extra credit. Topics include a discussion of legitimate reasons for offering extra credit and legitimate reasons for not offering extra credit, how to design extra credit assignments to enhance learning, how the use of language (*extra credit* versus *optional assignments*) affects attitudes toward this work, and strategies that instructors can use to avoid rewarding procrastination or other irresponsible student behavior.

Originally broadcast: October 25, 2011 (running time: 30 minutes)

DVD includes a PDF file of the transcript, discussion guide, power point handouts, and supplemental materials.

New Faculty Orientation 4-Pack

Collection of 4 20 Minute Mentor programs:

How should I respond to wrong (or not very good) answers?

Maryellen Weimer, Ph.D.

How do I discuss academic integrity during the first class?

Gary Pavela, J.D.

How can I clarify fuzzy learning goals?

Linda Suskie, Ph.D.

What if a student asks a question I can't answer?

Therese Huston, Ph.D.

Each program CD includes power point slides, supplemental materials, and a transcript of the original webcast.

All DVDs and professional books in the CUTLA library are indexed on a searchable database that can be accessed through the CUTLA web site

(<http://www.librarything.com/catalog/cutla>).

Contact Mary Hallford (473-7435) or visit the CUTLA office in BLDG 53 to check out a DVD or book.

Web Page Updates

The **Syllabus Construction** web page has been rewritten and updated to include new recommendations from Faculty Senate and updated links and contact information for the student handbook, academic misconduct information, and the Student Disability Resource Center. The new web page now clearly identifies syllabus components that faculty should include on every syllabus and describes additional components that are recommended as best practices for designing a learning-centered syllabus. The page includes a downloadable quick guide to syllabus construction and a rubric for self-evaluation of a syllabus.

In response to requests at the rubric workshops held during the fall, the **Rubric Development** page now includes a downloadable template (in a Word document) for creating your own rubric. The template includes instructions for using and modifying the template for individuals who are unaccustomed to editing tables in Word.

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Monday Morning Mentor weekly online webcasts begin in January 2012

Beginning on January 30, 2012, members of the UWF community can view a series of webcasts created by Magna Publications to learn about effective strategies for teaching and learning, assessment of student learning, classroom management, legal issues, and other professional development issues of concern to faculty.

Monday Morning Mentor programs are 20-minute online programs. Each program will air live at 9:00 AM Central time. Contact Claudia Stanny if you

would like to view the live airings with a group of individuals or view the program at a more convenient time later in the week. Programs can be accessed any time during the week following the initial broadcast date. Faculty can also join a forum for the Monday Morning Mentor on LinkedIn, where they can connect with other participants, engage in discussions, share strategies, and develop collaborations with faculty on other campuses.

Schedule of Topics for Spring 2012

| Date | Program Title | Presenter |
|-------------------|--|-------------------------------|
| January 30, 2012 | What are the three worst mistakes to make in the classroom? | Maryellen Weimer, Ph.D. |
| February 6, 2012 | How can I clarify fuzzy learning goals? | Linda Suskie |
| February 13, 2012 | How can I transform my tests into learning tools? | Debi Moon, J.D. & Rob Jenkins |
| February 20, 2012 | My student has a mental health or substance issue. Now what? | W. Scott Lewis, J.D. |
| February 27, 2012 | How should I handle pushy parents? | Brian Van Brunt, Ed.D. |
| March 5, 2012 | Is team teaching right for me? | Ike Shibley, Ph.D. |
| March 12, 2012 | How do I use Voice Thread for online student discussions? | John Orlando, Ph.D. |
| March 19, 2012 | What are my rubric results telling me? | Linda Suskie |
| March 26, 2012 | How do I get more students to participate in class? | Maryellen Weimer, Ph.D. |
| April 2, 2012 | What should I do when students say they have a disability? | Debi Moon, J.D. & Rob Jenkins |
| April 9, 2012 | How can I help students develop critical thinking skills? | W. Scott Lewis, J.D. |
| April 16, 2012 | What should I do if I suspect a student has Asperger's Disorder? | Brian Van Brunt, Ed.D. |
| April 23, 2012 | How can document sharing tools help students collaborate? | John Orlando, Ph.D. |
| April 30, 2012 | How do I give feedback that improves student writing? | Maryellen Weimer, Ph.D. |
| May 7, 2012 | Can service-learning work in my discipline? | Barbara Jacoby, Ph.D. |
| May 14, 2012 | What can I learn from student ratings? | Ike Shibley, Ph.D. |

Teaching Tip: Develop Critical Thinking Skills through Journal Writing

David Hogsette, Associate Professor, English and Francine Glazer, Assistant Provost & Director, Center for Teaching & Learning, New York Institute of Technology

Sound critical thinking involves understanding points of view, evaluating positions, and then establishing a critical position. Students need multiple opportunities to practice critical thinking skills and receive feedback to guide improvement. Create a set of written journal assignments that develop the following three goals for student learning related to critical thinking.

Goal 1: Paraphrase what was said

Encourage students to listen to ideas, examine views carefully, gather information, and understand the various points of view on their own terms without immediately judging the merits of the positions. This step involves a willingness to be open-minded and to understand what is being said, how it is being said, and why it is asserted. Teach students how to identify key elements of a logical statement, the principles and assumptions informing the positions, and the evidence used to support the points of view stated in a written work.

Goal 2: Evaluate what was said

The next step requires that students critically evaluate the legitimacy of the arguments advanced in a written work. Students should examine the following elements of the argument:

Logical consistency. Does the author's position make logical sense? Did the author commit logical or emotional fallacies? Is the author's position self-defeating? Are principles and assumptions adequate to sustain the point of view?

Empirical adequacy. Does the author provide sufficient evidence to support the claims? Does the author present evidence accurately and use evidence appropriately? Did the author avoid or ignore known evidence that contradicts the claims?

Existential relevance. Does the author's position make sense to real-world experience? Can the author's proposals be reasonably implemented in a real world setting?

Students who complete all three parts of this analysis should have developed enough material to present a sound evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the author's position.

Goal 3: Establish a position on the topic

After completing the first two steps, students should be sufficiently prepared to establish, explain, and defend their own position. Students frequently offer statements such as "Well, it is just my opinion," "These are my beliefs," or "How can anyone question how I feel?" If students assume that all opinions and positions have equal value (Perry, 1970/1999), they might also believe they should not be required to defend or explain their position or, worse, argue that no one has the right to challenge their positions and views. However, sound critical thinking requires that students move beyond personal opinions and support their arguments with clear logic, accurate descriptions of reliable evidence and relevant experience.

Create opportunities for students to practice critical thinking skills with journal writing assignments

It can be challenging for students to learn these essential steps to effective critical thinking. Students need to practice these skills in multiple contexts so that they can understand how to think critically in academic, professional, and personal contexts.

A critical thinking journal assignment can be adapted to a first-year writing class, applied in core courses/seminars, and assigned in major program courses.

Example of a critical thinking journal assignment

The following example of a critical thinking journal assignment is based on a core literature seminar.

Reading assignment. The instructor assigns a scholarly article that relates to the literature read in the course (in this example, a novel).

Journal assignment. Students write a 500-600 word journal entry in which they

- State the main focus or purpose of the article
- Summarize one key point or argument the student finds interesting
- Explain why the student finds it interesting
- Discuss one example from the literature read (in this example, the novel assigned) that illustrates this idea

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Learning-Centered Course Design (*continued*)

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- Explain the extent to which the student agrees or disagrees with the author's main point.

This journal assignment encourages students to practice three key phases of critical thinking:

- Understanding (summarize a key point)
- Evaluating arguments (discuss to what extent the student agrees and disagrees and why)
- Establishing a position (in this example, explain how the assigned article helped the student understand the novel more clearly).

Ideally, a course will include 4-5 such assignments that allow students to engage in critical thinking and practice their writing skills. The example above illustrates the general pattern for a critical thinking journal assignment. Each journal assignment should be slightly different.

Faculty should provide feedback on each journal entry before the next assignment is due to engage the students and enable them to improve their work.

References

- Hogsette, David S. (2009). *Writing that makes sense: Critical thinking in college composition*. Eugene, OR: Resource Publications.
- Perry, W. G. (1970/1999). *Forms of intellectual and ethical development in the college years: A scheme*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. [Original work published 1970, Holt, Rinehart, and Winston.]
- Ruggiero, Vincent Ryan. (2008). *Beyond feelings: A guide to critical thinking*. 8th ed. New York: McGraw Hill.
- The Critical Thinking Community, Sample Assignment Formats. Accessed 2/28/2011 from <http://www.criticalthinking.org/resources/HE/a-sample-assignment-format.cfm>
- This tip is based on a contribution to the Western Kentucky University Writing Consortium written by David Hogsette, Associate Professor, English, New York Institute of Technology (iris.nyit.edu/~dhogsett/) and Francine Glazer, Assistant Provost & Director, Center for Teaching & Learning, New York Institute of Technology (www.nyit.edu/ctl).*

Workshop certificates go green!

Thanks to a suggestion from Erica Jordan and the efforts of Marketing and Communications, CUTLA will now send paperless workshop certificates to workshop attendees. Erica has been promoting green initiatives in the School of Psychological and Behavioral Sciences and suggested that CUTLA adopt a paperless certificate. Attendees will now receive an email with an attached electronic certificate that can be included in faculty portfolios in the week following a CUTLA event. Lost your certificates from past workshops? Request a letter from CUTLA that summarized and documents attendance at CUTLA workshops and participation in activities such as Teaching Partners. The CUTLA data base includes attendance records for all workshops offered since 2006.

Requests should be sent to Mary Hallford (473-7435 or mhallfor@uwf.edu).

Eric Mazur launches a Peer Instruction Network

Eric Mazur and his colleague, Julie Schell, are initiating a network of faculty who want to share experiences and expertise with peer instruction. Mazur has published extensively on the use of Concept Test questions in Physics classes at Harvard to improve student learning. At present, the network consists of a mailing list of interested users. Soon, the Peer Instruction Network will launch a web site that will allow Peer Instruction users to identify potential Peer Instruction collaborators at other institutions, share and disseminate instructional materials, and build expertise with effective peer instruction strategies. If you are interested in Peer Instruction, you can join the Peer Instruction Network by completing a registration form at www.peerinstruction.net.

You can learn more about Eric Mazur's work with Concept Tests by consulting the **Student Response System Users Group** in UWF Google Sites, which is open to all members of the UWF community.

Calendar of Events for Spring Term 2012

Faculty Fridays

Meet for collegiality and lunch followed by a program on topics related to teaching and faculty career issues.

Faculty Friday workshops begin with lunch and conversation. The program generally begins about 20 minutes later.

January 27, 2012

Anybody Out There? Engaging Students in Large Introductory Courses

Nautilus Chamber University Commons

11:30 AM – 1:30 PM

Kevin Kern (Theatre) and Richard Glaze (Music) will share strategies for creating a presence, building community, and maintaining focus in larger-enrollment courses. Topics will include creating opportunities for maintaining student focus through activities such as clicker questions, small group discussions, and minute papers. In addition, Kevin and Richard will discuss strategies for dealing with texting, side conversations, and similar disruptions that can interfere with student learning.

This event should be valuable for faculty who teach larger classes and faculty who are interested in using these strategies in smaller classes.

Innovative Teaching at UWF is published twice a year by the Center for University Teaching, Learning, and Assessment.

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February 17, 2012

Preparing for Tenure, Promotion, and Annual Evaluations

Conference Center Room A University Commons

11:30 AM – 1:30 PM

Meet with Deans, chairs, and successful candidates for tenure and promotion in 2011 for a conversation about the tenure and promotion process and advice about preparing a successful tenure and promotion portfolio.

March 2, 2012

Mentoring Students in Service Learning, Internships, and Field Studies

Nautilus Chamber University Commons

11:30 AM – 1:30 PM

Lauren Loeffler, Career Services, will discuss best practices for identifying and structuring experiential learning opportunities, working with external supervisors, and mentoring students in experiential learning courses.

May 16, 2011

CCR Submission Workshop

Conference Center Room A University Commons

1:30 PM–3:00 PM

This workshop provides information on how to prepare and submit curriculum change requests (new and revised courses and programs) through the online CCR system. In addition, attendees will learn to write behavioral, measurable student learning outcomes for use in course syllabi, course and program Curriculum Change Review (CCR) submissions, and the preparation of Academic Learning

Compacts and Academic Learning Plans.

Monday Morning Mentor Webcasts

Monday Morning Mentor programs are 20-minute online workshops. Programs can be accessed any time during the week following the initial broadcast date. See page 2 for the topic schedule for Spring Term.

Teaching Partners

January 18, 2012

Mid-Year Luncheon

Nautilus Chamber University Commons

11:00 AM – 1:00 PM

Reconnect with your Teaching Partner, celebrate insights gained from Teaching Partners collaborations during the fall term, and plan classroom observations for Spring Term.

April 5, 2012

End of Year Luncheon and Celebration

Nautilus Chamber University Commons

11:00 AM – 1:00 PM

Teaching Partners participants gather for lunch and conversations about teaching.

Consider participating in Teaching Partners in 2012-2013.

Submit an Application for Teaching Partners:

uwf.edu/cutla/teaching_partners.cfm

