October 2001

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

From the Office of the Associate Dean Vol. 5 No. 8

Center for Advanced Study Fellows

The UIUC Center for Advanced Studies (CAS) provides opportunities for faculty to obtain released time for one semester to pursue individual scholarly or creative projects. CAS appoints Associates (tenured faculty) and Fellows (non-tenured faculty). Faculty in ACES are encouraged to consider nominations to the Center. The application deadline is December 3, 2001. Consult http://www.cas.uiuc.edu for the most current information.

Addressing Individual Differences

Dr. Bryan L. Garton of the University of Missouri-Columbia was the keynote presenter for the annual ACES Fall Teaching Symposium. The fifty participants learned about their our preferences for how they learn and how student preferences for learning are varied perhaps different from the instructor. The following serves as a general summary of the workshop.

Learning style describes the manner in which a person sorts and processes information. The field-dependence/independence learning style dimension has been the most widely studied learning style and has produced the broadest applications to educational problems. Learning styles are concerned more with the how of learning than the how much. The field-dependent and field-independent learning styles are bipolar dimensions, value neutral, and independent of intelligence.

Field-dependent learners mode of perception is strongly dominated by the surrounding field. In contrast, field-independent learners are relatively uninfluenced by the surrounding field. The characteristics describing the two learning styles tend to denote direct opposites.

Field-dependent persons possess more global perceptions, pay greater attention to social clues and have an interpersonal orientation. In contrast, field-independent persons possess more articulate perceptions, pay less attention to social clues and have an impersonal orientation.

There is evidence to support a relationship between teachers learning style and teaching style. The field-dependent and field-independent teaching styles are consistent with the characteristics and behaviors of the field-dependent and field-independent learning styles. As with describing the two learning styles, the two teaching styles tend to denote direct opposites.

Field-dependent teachers are student-centered, avoid the use of negative feedback, use positive reinforcement, and prefer the discussion method of teaching over either the lecture or discovery method of teaching. In contrast, field-independent teachers are subject-centered, view negative evaluations as effective, prefer impersonal teaching situations, and prefer an inquiry or problem-solving approach to teaching.

As a re-cap, there is diversity in how individuals prefer to learn. To help address variation in

learning preferences, instructors should use variety in teaching techniques, providing a greater chance of reaching the diverse student population.

Graduate Fellows Recognition
November 1, 2001
3:30-5:00 p.m.
103 Mumford Hall

Toward More Active Learning

From Active Learning: Creating Excitement in the Classroom by Charles C. Bonwell, UIUC Teaching Retreat, February, 2001.

Because lecture classes have been the prevailing instructional approach seen most often by faculty when they were undergraduate and graduate students, many faculty have had limited personal experience with, and few role models for, active learning alternatives. To help identify your personal levels of risk and the active learning strategies you might be willing to try in future classes, complete the self-assessment that follows.

A SURVEY OF CLASSROOM TEACHING METHODS

DIRECTIONS: There are many different ways faculty make use of class time. We would like you to describe the teaching strategies you have used *in the class you teach most often*.

Step 1: Carefully read the list of teaching strategies (i.e., the left-hand column) and indicate with a check mark (") if you used this teaching method the last time you taught this class.

Step 2 Then indicate with a check mark (") whether you would be willing to try this teaching method the next time you teach this class.

Teaching Strategy	Last Time	Next Time
I lectured during the entire class period	) *) *	
I showed a film or video for the entire class period	) *) *	
During lecture, I gave a short, ungraded quiz to check student comprehension of material	) *) *	
I assigned a short writing activity without having class discussion afterward (e.g., writing end-of-class summaries, providing questions over material)	) *) *	
I had students complete a survey instrument	) *) *	
I had students complete a self-assessment	) *) *	

activity (e.g., complete a questionnaire
about their beliefs, values, behaviors)
I took the class on a field trip) *) *
I assigned a laboratory exercise) *) *
that was done by students
I lectured with at least 15 minutes of time) *) *
devoted to recitation or asking questions
designed to check student understanding
of material (interaction between teacher-
student/student-teacher)
I led a class discussion focused on a) *) *
visual/audio stimulus (e.g., a picture,
cartoon, graph, song)
I had students engage in a brainstorming) *) *
activity (i.e., a group activity designed
to generate as many ideas as possible)
I lectured with at least 15 minutes of time) *) *
devoted to class discussion (interaction
between student-student, with
occasional questions/remarks by teacher)
I assigned a short writing activity that was) *) *
followed by at least 15 minutes of class
discussion
I assigned an in-class reading activity that) *) *
was followed by a significant class
discussion lasting 15 minutes or more
I assigned a small group discussion or) *) *
project (e.g., case study work)
I had students complete a problem solving) *) *
game or simulation in groups
I assigned individual student presentations) *) *
(e.g., speeches and reports)
I assigned small group presentations) *) *
(e.g., debates, panel discussions, plays)
I assigned a student-centered class) *) *
discussion (e.g., students developed
the questions and lead the discussion

that followed)

I led a role playing activity) *) *

New Academy Room

The Academy of Teaching Excellence has a new home! Thanks to the generosity of William and Marilyn George, the Academy room is now in 115 ACES Library, Information and Alumni Center. Professor George was a long-time faculty member in Horticulture and served as Associate Dean for several years. The Academy room serves as a place for faculty to meet to discuss teaching and learning issues. In addition to a conference table and chairs, the room will equipped for instructors to view tapes of their own teaching, and view instructional videos on teaching. A reference library is also part of the room. Academy members have generously contributed funds to begin the collection, which can be used in the room or checked out on the honor system. A listing of the materials in the Academy room is included in this newsletter. The room is always available for faculty use.

Assessing Faculty Performance: Measures of Teaching Performance

During the 2000-01 academic year, faculty in the College participated in a comprehensive survey addressing faculty performance assessment. This is the second article intended to provide discussion and thought on how the faculty in each of the seven ACES departments might consider improvements in the annual performance systems currently utilized. This article is based on only aggregate data of the College, not individual department means.

Faculty responded to 24 statements related to how teaching performance should be measured. On the seven-point scale from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree, respondents rated these performance measures highest: peer observation reports (5.3); peer assessment of course materials (5.1); self assessment of teaching (5.0); graduate advising activities (5.0); and contributions to developing new courses (5.0).

The next six statements included: student assessment of advising (4.9); contributions to teaching improvement (4.9); ICES scores (4.9); awards received for teaching (4.9); a teaching portfolio (4.8); and undergraduate student advising activities (4.8).

The four performance measures rated the *lowest* were: student performance in courses taught (3.6); number of Instructional Units generated (3.5); recognition/rewards received by students (3.5); and availability of course materials on-line (3.4). The remaining 9 items fell within a range of ratings that would indicate they should be considered in measuring performance.

What suggestions can be derived from these results? First, it appears that faculty believe that teaching can be assessed in ways in addition to student ratings (ICES scores). In fact, eight statements were rated as high or higher than using ICES scores. Departments should consider how these other measures of performance can be incorporated into the annual performance review process.

Departments should also consider that teaching performance goes beyond what happens in the

classroom. Advising graduate and undergraduate students, contributing to teaching improvements, and feedback in addition to ICES ratings are all a part of a comprehensive teaching performance assessment.

Mixing Face-to-Face and Web-based Teaching

Adapted from Hybrid Courses Are Best, David G. Brown, *Syllabus,* August 2001

For several years, researchers associated with the Center for Distributed Learning have been comparing results in M-sections (media-enhanced and reduced seat time) with traditional, face-to-face and Web-based-only sections. The outcomes are dramatic and consistent. Students enrolled in M, or hybrid, courses have the highest success rate! These rates are higher than those for face-to-face courses and Web-based-only courses. Almost everything I do is best done face-to-face, either in my office with individual students or during class, when one students comment might stimulate anothers learning. Both my students and I are willing to give more time to the course unfortunately, not the same time and not at the same place. My challenge is to structure assignments to take advantage of our mutual time, and to free up face-to-face time for class discussion, visiting lecturers, and in-depth exploration into basic economic concepts.

I asked myself, What activities that I normally pursue in class can be shifted out of class with the least loss in effectiveness? Lecture delivered over the Internet is almost as effective as an in-class lecture. By contrast, 12-person discussions over the Internet are much less effective than in-class discussions. Even though it would be best if students both heard and discussed my lecture during class, by making the lecture available over the Internet, I have more time to encourage a full, in-depth discussion.

Professors with different teaching styles, students, and subject matters should and will make different decisions. Properly designed hybrid courses are a wonderful way to get students to spend more time on task and, hopefully, develop a better mastery of the material. Hybrid courses can capture the best of both worlds.

ACES CAREER EXPO
Thursday, October 11
9:30-3:30 p.m.
Illini Union -
Rooms A, B, and C

Assess Learning Styles for More Effective Teaching

From an article by Julia L. Dunn, Whitman College, in *The Teaching Professor*, June/ July 2001.

Developed in the last 1980's by Dr. Neil Fleming, the VARK inventory, which is a mnemonic for Visual, Auditory, Reading/Writing, and Kinesthetic, was the first learning style inventory to also provide students and educators with practical guidelines for teaching and

learning in each of the four areas.

After completing the VARK Inventory, which can be taken and graded online, <www.active-learning-site.com/inventory1.html>, the students are scored in each of the four categories. The higher the score in any one category, the greater the students ability to acquire knowledge in that mode of delivery. For instance a student with high kinesthetic scores might acquire knowledge better through the use of three-dimensional models that they can touch, feel and interact with kinesthetically. A student with a high auditory score might process text better if read aloud.

I have also taken and scored the inventory, and I share my results with the students. Teaching styles generally reflect learning preferences. It is important for students to understand how I most comfortably orient to the content. Students also share their results, and this enables me to see the individual learners in the sea of faces.

Students benefit when they know a variety of learning techniques. You might come up with four different groups working on the same material in different ways. I teaching anatomy. We recently finished up a large section on the knee. The material included knee anatomy, knee injuries, and common injury mechanisms. Based on the students pre-assessed VARK scores, they were divided into four groups (students with multiple strengths could self-select into one of two groups) and given 15 minutes to review the material. The visual learners took large pieces of butcher paper, drew diagrams of the knee, labeled important anatomical landmarks, marked frequently injured structures, and drew schematics of how those injuries might occur. The auditory and reading/writing learners worked together. One group wrote as much as they could about anatomy, injuries, and mechanisms. The auditory group then read aloud to a partner the paragraphs written by the reading/writing group. Finally, students in the kinesthetic group were given a lump of clay and Popsicle sticks. They built elaborate working knee models and demonstrated with their models how a certain mechanism might damage a specific structure.

To those of you who are thinking that this approach might not work for your subject area or a larger classroom, consider how you might relate your material to each of the four types of learners. I have discovered in my own preparations for classes that, when challenged to think in these four styles, I have streamlined my presentations, I tend to be more dynamic, and my classroom more interactive. The student that previously may have been neglected frequently participates more, often adding insights that might otherwise have been missed.

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