

The Teacher

The Excellence in
Teaching at NGCSU
Newsletter

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Welcome to The Teacher

by Judy O'Neal, 1998-1999 RDPTL

Welcome to the premier issue of *The Teacher*, the North Georgia College & State University faculty newsletter that focuses on teaching. Regular features of *The Teacher* will include an article written by an outstanding NGCSU teacher, an update on the Regents' Distinguished Professor for Teaching and Learning (RDPTL) initiatives, a schedule of professional development opportunities, and a column for *Letters to the Editor*. It is anticipated that this year's edition of *The Teacher* will be published in October, December, February, and April.

This issue of *The Teacher* features an article on the use of instructional technology written by Dr. Mark Davis, Associate Professor of Biology and NGCSU's first Regents' Distinguished Professor for Teaching and Learning. Other articles focus on the 1998-99 RDPTL initiatives, teaching resources currently available in NGCSU's Stewart Library, an introduction to the Excellence in Teaching at NGCSU website, an overview and schedule of faculty discussion forums and seminars, and upcoming teaching-related conferences.

It is my hope that *The Teacher* will serve as a catalyst for focusing attention on teaching as a scholarly activity and as a venue for publication of teaching-related research. You are invited to submit your reactions to newsletter articles, for inclusion to the *Letters to the Editor* column, suggestions for newsletter inclusions, articles for publication, or general impressions. Contact Judy O'Neal, Department of Mathematics & Computer Science by phone (706-864-1813) or by e-mail (rdptl@nugget.ngc.peachnet.edu) for further information.

RDPTL Initiatives Update

by Judy O'Neal, 1998-99 RDPTL

My responsibility as NGCSU's 1998-99 Regents' Distinguished Professor for Teaching and Learning is to focus attention upon excellence in teaching, to promote the improvement of student learning through the enhancement of teaching effectiveness, and to work toward the formation of a faculty-oriented center for teaching and learning. The process of fulfilling such a responsibility began with a faculty survey that sought specific areas of personal interest, need, and experience or expertise related to professional development activities. Results of the survey validate the commitment of the NGCSU faculty to improving their teaching effectiveness. Progress toward discharging my responsibility via attainment of five academic year goals is presented below.

Goal 1: To create a faculty-mentoring program for new and adjunct faculty
Progress: Two faculty mentor-training sessions have or are in the process of being completed. Official faculty mentors are listed on the *Mentoring Program* web page and several mentor/mentee teams have already been formed.

Goal 2: To produce a faculty newsletter focusing on teaching
Progress: You are reading the first issue of *The Teacher*, the Excellence in Teaching at NGCSU newsletter.

Goal 3: To establish and facilitate faculty discussion/focus groups
Progress: The Recognizing and Rewarding Teaching Excellence discussion group met for the first time on September 22, 1998 and will meet again on October 6, 1998. Look for the announcement of other focus group meetings on the *Excellence in Teaching at NGCSU* web site.

Goal 4: To organize seminars addressing identified faculty needs and interests
Progress: At present thirteen seminars, workshops, or discussions are scheduled for the months of October and November. Others will be forthcoming throughout the year.

Goal 5: To create a web page focusing on excellence in teaching and faculty development
Progress: Thanks to the talent and expertise of Jess Bloomingdale, a junior computer science major, the *Excellence in Teaching at NGCSU* web page has become a reality.

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A Biologist's View Of Instructional Technology: The Dissection and Evolution of Teaching Methods

by *Mark Davis, Associate Professor of Biology*

I was honored to be invited to submit an article for the first issue of *The Teacher*. Because of my interest and experience in instructional technologies, I have chosen to discuss their use in my introductory biology class (BIOL 112). I also provide recommendations for faculty who wish to implement technology in their courses. Although BIOL 112 has been replaced by a different course (BIOL 1010) on the semester system, I use the same approach in the new class.

My introduction to instructional technology and computer-assisted instruction began in the summer of 1995. I was a participant in the first Connecting Teachers and Technology (CTT) initiative, a workshop that is sponsored by the Office of Information and Instructional Technology (OIIT). The CTT experience proved to be a significant turning point in my teaching career. It prompted me to think more seriously about how I teach, to dissect my previous teaching methods, and to revise my approach to teaching introductory biology.

On The Web

The *Excellence in Teaching at North Georgia College & State University* web site is now ready for browsing. You may view the web site from the NGCSU homepage by clicking on the *Campus Resources* button and then selecting *Excellence in Teaching Program*. You will find links to the following pages:

- Mission Statement
- Goals
- Discussion Lists and Forums
- Workshops and Seminars
- Mentoring Program
- Teaching Resources
- *The Teacher* Newsletter
- Contact Information
- Current RDPTL

This site is designed for faculty use and is intended to provide resources specifically targeting teaching and learning. It will be regularly updated to reflect the most current information available. Enjoy!

Several new technologies seemed to fit the needs of my BIOL 112 class, the second course in an introductory biology sequence for non-science majors. These students often present a challenge not seen in introductory courses for biology majors. Considerably less motivated than traditional biology majors, students enroll in BIOL 112 to satisfy the core curriculum lab science requirement. Their enthusiasm for biology is usually low, their anxiety about science is high, and their computer skills are poorly developed. Many students confess that they are content to "C" their way out of the class.

My primary goal in bringing IT to BIOL 112 was to create a stimulating learning environment. Using multimedia, I wanted to invigorate classroom presentations and foster visual learning. I also wanted to increase student participation in class, promote independent learning and enhance computer literacy of students. My plan was to create a class with less emphasis on note-taking and more emphasis on class discussion. I wanted students to have an experience that extended beyond the four walls of a typical classroom. I transformed BIOL 112 from a traditional setting of chalk dust and erasers to an IT environment, one that has been termed by Robert Henshaw (UNC-Chapel Hill) and colleagues as a "new chalk" approach. My revision of BIOL 112 included the following changes:

1. PowerPoint Slide Shows

Lectures became PowerPoint slide shows that I create and present with a computer. Each slide show is enriched with numerous images from CD-ROMs and the World Wide Web. I use a Macintosh 540c laptop or a Compac DeskPro PC, along with an In-Focus 580 or Eiki 7000LC projector to project on-screen images and text.

2. Videodiscs

I interface videodisc images (still images, stepped images, animations, films) with each PowerPoint presentation. Separate s-video and computer input connections on high-intensity projectors permit one to switch rapidly from videodisc images to presentation software text and images.

3. CD-ROM

During class sessions, I often use the CD-ROM that accompanies the biology text.

The CD-ROM has tutorials, test banks, images and interactive animations that parallel concepts in each chapter of the text. I use the CD-ROM to introduce topics, illustrate concepts, and review for tests.

4. Computer-Based Tutorials

Staff members in NGCSU's Department of Information Technology installed BC Tutor on desktop computers in two computer labs. BC Tutor is a software tutorial available free to faculty who adopt the most recent edition of particular biology texts. All questions in BC Tutor are multiple choice, and the tutorial explains why answers are incorrect or correct. All questions are cross-referenced with specific modules in the textbook.

5. E-Mail

Students enrolled in BIOL 112 must possess an E-Mail account. I create mail lists that permit me to send mail simultaneously to all class members. E-Mail provides a convenient means to post data from team-conducted lab experiments, remind students about revisions in upcoming laboratory procedures, post assignments that pertain to the World Wide Web, and pose thought questions prior to examinations. I also encourage students to use E-Mail as an electronic forum and submit questions about lecture or lab concepts. Often, students submit questions that are unrelated to syllabus topics but are relevant to biology. I post all questions and their answers to the mail list and keep the identity of the questioners confidential.

Wanting students to be more discussant in class and less concerned with note-taking, I initially posted expanded outlines of each lecture topic to the mail list before introducing the topic in class. Text from each electronic PowerPoint slide show can be copied from "outline view," then pasted directly into an E-Mail message. I held training sessions outside class and showed students how to extract files from E-Mail, then edit these outlines with a word processor. I later abandoned the procedure of providing "notes" via E-Mail in favor of placing notes on the Web (see next section).

6. World Wide Web

I make numerous assignments on the Web to foster independent learning. Students use the Web to read about issues related to top-

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Special Pull-Out Section

Teaching Resources Available in Stewart Library

Video Selections:

Assessing Data Networks
Business Writing
Courage and Commitments We Need Now
Differentiating Instruction
Implementing Performance-Based Education
Little History Worth Knowing: Disability Down Through the Ages
Multi-Media Technology Video Series
Online Course Delivery
Opening Doors: Two Cases of Formative Assessment of Teaching
Protecting Intellectual Property
Psychological Residuals of Slavery
Reinventing Leadership
Renewal of Community in Higher Education
Writing for the Humanities: The Explication
Writing for the Sciences
Writing for the Social Sciences

Teacher Education Collection:

A New I.D.E.A. for Special Education
Augmentative and Alternative Communication
Building a Quality School
Emotional Intelligence: A New Vision for Educators

Books:

Arcaro, Jerome S. Teams in Education: Creating an Integrated Approach. 1995.
Armajani, Babak J. Model for the Re-invented Higher Education System. 1994.
Banta, Trudy. Assessment in Practice: Putting Principles to Work on College Campuses. 1996.
Bates, Tony. Technology, Open Learning and Distance Education. 1995.
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Bean, John C. Engaging Ideas: The Professor's Guide to Integrating Writing. 1996.
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- Early Intervention Programs: Opening the Door to Higher Education. 1997
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Weaver, Frederick S. Liberal Education: Critical Essays on Professions, Pedagogy and Structure. 1991.

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Wilshire, Bruce W. Moral Collapse of the University. 1990.

Winebrenner, Susan. Teaching Kids with Learning Difficulties in the Regular Classroom. 1996.

Wodkowski, Raymond J. Diversity and Motivation: Culturally Responsive Teaching. 1995.

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- #14 Griffin, C. Williams. Teaching Writing in All Disciplines
- #15 Jaques, David. Learning in Groups
- #21 Lacey, Paul. Revitalizing Teaching through Faculty
- #22 Kate, Joseph. Teaching as though Students Mattered
- #27 Civikly, Jean. Communicating in College Classrooms
- #28 Beidler. Distinguished Teachers on Effective Teaching
- #29 Seldin, Peter. Coping with Faculty Stress
- #30 Stice, James. Developing Critical Thinking and Problem Solving Abilities
- #31 Aleamoni, Lawrence. Techniques for Evaluating and Improving Instruction
- #32 Weimer, Maryellen. Teaching Large Classes Well
- #33 Young, Robert. College Teaching and Learning: Preparing for New Commitments
- #34 McMillan, James. Assessing Students' Learning
- #35 Hutchinas, Pat. Knowing and Doing: Learning Through Experience
- #36 McLeod, Susan. Strengthening Programs for Writing Across the Curriculum
- #41 Gabelnick, Faith. Learning Communities: Creating Connections Among Students, Faculty, and Disciplines
- #49 Border, Laura. Teaching for Diversity
- #51 Albright, Michael. Teaching in the Information Age: The Role of Educational Technology
- #59 Bosworth, Kris. Collaborative Learning: Underlying Processes and Effective Techniques
- #60 Martin, Deanna. Supplemental Instruction: Increasing Achievement and Retention
- #61 Gainen, Joanne. Fostering Student Success in Quantitative Gateway Courses
- #65 Hativa, Nira. Disciplinary Differences in Teaching and Learning: Implications for Practice
- #66 Svinick, Marilla. Honoring Exemplary Teaching
- #67 Sutherland, Tracey. Using Active Learning in College Classes
- #68 Wilkerson, Luann. Bringing Problem-Based Learning to Higher Education: Theory and Practice
- #69 Soreinelli, Mary Deanne. Writing to Learn: Strategies for Assigning and Responding to Writing Across the Disciplines
- #70 Sigsbee, David. Approaches to Teaching Non-Native English Speakers Across the Curriculum
- #71 Cyrs, Thomas. Teaching and Learning at a Distance: What it Takes to Effectively Design, Deliver, and Evaluate Programs
- #72 Cranton, Patricia. Universal Challenges in Faculty Work: Fresh Perspectives from around the World

ics in class, including diverse subjects such as Olestra, RU 486, and smoking. Students also use the Web to view images (such as images of tissues archived in medical school image banks) and animations (such as heart movies and virtual cells) related to syllabus topics. I post relevant URLs to the mail list and require students to visit these sites before scheduled tests. To ensure that students read Web materials, information on the Web sites is "fair game" on examinations. Students also accessed textbook Web pages, maintained by the textbook publisher, to view on-line tutorials associated with chapters in the text.

During summer 1997, I placed most course materials for BIOL 112 on the Web. Students learned how to access the BIOL 112 homepage on the first day of class. The course syllabus, general course policies, lab schedule, and textbook information are all linked to this page. There are links with on-line quizzes and "process of science activities" maintained by the textbook publisher. Instead of receiving expanded outlines of lecture topics by E-Mail, students now access outlines for each syllabus topic via links in the homepage. The homepage also provides access to instructions for BC Tutor and establishes links with GALILEO, web search engines and other relevant sites.

Student Opinion

Students were enthusiastic about the different approach in BIOL 112. After using the technology approach for two quarters, my course evaluations were very favorable. Student comments usually focused on the "improvement" in BIOL 112 pedagogy compared to BIOL 111, regardless of the previous instructor. Because I wanted something other than anecdotal comments, I developed a survey instrument that permitted me to quantify student attitudes about the course. The Likert-type survey instrument queried students about the following:

- the multimedia approach to teaching
- the impact of IT on learning
- their preference for IT-enhanced classes
- their present computer skills
- the importance of computer skills in future classes and in the work force, as well as their perception of the opportunity to develop computer skills as an undergraduate.

Students completed the survey anonymously during the last week of class and received two bonus points on the final exam as an incentive for returning the completed form. The complete survey and a summary of student responses to each survey item can be accessed via the electronic journal

On-line Instruction: Trends and Issues at the following URL: <<http://leahi.kcc.hawaii.edu/org/tcon98/paper/davis.html>> or at <<http://www.ngc.peachnet.edu/academic/sciences/biology/davis/tcc.htm>>.

Does IT Make a Difference?

Two obvious questions remain. Do students do better on exams since the change? Do they learn more with this approach? I can offer only qualitative answers to these questions. I have not compared test scores of previous BIOL 112 classes taught in a "traditional" manner with test scores of classes taught with IT. Once I began using the technology, I modified the course syllabus, omitting sections on some topics and expanding coverage on others. I also changed my testing methods. Tests in classes taught with IT focused more on application of course concepts and less on "memorization" of discipline-specific content. My grade distributions for BIOL 112 classes taught with the technology are about the same as previous BIOL 112 classes, but students in the multimedia classes probably worked harder for those grades. Subjectively, they seemed to learn more than in the past. Based on my survey results, students reported that the visually-enriched classroom helped them gain a better understanding of course materials. Students recommend this approach to teaching and prefer IT classes more than traditional classes.

Lessons Learned and Recommendations

The most important lesson that I learned

with multimedia pertains to the time and labor commitment it requires. After attending the OIIT workshop, I received one-third release time for one quarter to develop instructional materials. It would have been difficult to develop BIOL 112 as a complete multimedia course without this release time. In my experience, obtaining images that illustrate examples or class concepts requires more time than learning to use new software or equipment. It is less demanding to walk into a classroom with lecture notes and chalk than to create slide shows with a computer. Moreover, it is usually necessary to set up electronic equipment and preview presentations before each class. The time necessary to implement full scale IT for the first time was considerably more than I anticipated.

-Recommendations:

- Decide how IT can assist you in meeting instructional goals before you begin using the technology.
- Begin by implementing changes slowly. Start with CD-ROM and/or videodisc images and animations - they bring a dynamic visual experience to the class. These technologies are simple to use and do not require considerable effort.
- Begin by changing one class, not all classes.
- If you wish to use presentation software such as PowerPoint, begin by developing one or two lectures each week instead of daily presentations. Don't worry about initial presentations that are primarily text. You can insert suit-

continued on page 4

Upcoming Activities

October:

- 7th, NGCSU Faculty Mentoring Program Training Session, 3:30 pm, DX 208
- 8th, Web-Based Course Development Seminar, 12:30-1:15 pm, DX 208
- 12th, Web-Based Course Development Seminar, 3:30-4:15 pm, DX 208
- 13th, Using the Web as an Instructional Tool Seminar, 12:30-1:15 pm, DX 208
- 15th, Using the Web as an Instructional Tool Seminar, 12:30-1:15 pm, DX 208
- 19th, Technology-Based Applications Workshop, 3:30-4:30 pm, DX 210
- 20th, Teaching Strategies Seminar, 3:30-4:15 pm, DX 010
- 26th, Introduction to Teaching Portfolios Seminar, 3:30-4:15 pm, DX 208

November:

- 2nd, Using the Web as an Instructional Tool Seminar, 3:30-4:15 pm, DX 208
- 3rd, Preparing for Post-Tenure Review Seminar, 3:00-4:00 pm, DX 017
- 3rd, Preparing for Pre-tenure Review Seminar, 4:00-5:00 pm, DX 017
- 4th, Peer Review Seminar, 3:30-4:15 pm, DX 010
- 10th, Addressing Varied Learning Styles, 12:30-1:15 pm, DX 010

able images in your presentation later. Will your presentation software allow you to insert images as PICT files only (versus GIFs or JPGs)? If so, you may have to convert other images to PICT files using a graphics converter package. Ask the Information Technology staff for recommendations, but you can download graphics converter applications from shareware.

- Get acquainted with the Information Technology staff at NGCSU. They are an invaluable source of help and advice.
- Talk with others at NGCSU who use IT in their classrooms. They can be important sources of new ideas. Modify their approaches to suit your class needs.
- If another faculty member in your department is interested in using IT and teaches the same class that you do, think about a joint project. Materials can be shared to reduce workload. For example, in our biology department, Dr. Irene Kokkala and I plan to develop multimedia materials that address separate topics in our BIOL 1010 syllabus, then share these materials.
- If you desire to place course materials on the Web, use one of the html editors that are available. I have used different versions of the Netscape browser (Navigator Gold and Netscape Communicator). Both possess html editors and are simple to use. Unless you are proficient in writing html code, consult the campus Information Technology staff and use the html editor that they recommend and/or support. It isn't necessary to become proficient in html, but knowing some code will be useful. I purchased [HTML For Dummies Quick Reference](#) (by Deborah and Eric Ray) and it has been very useful on occasion.
- Use the NGCSU faculty listserv (ngcfaculty@nugget) to solicit answers to questions or share ideas. If you do not obtain an answer from the campus community, try contacting a member of the OIIT staff in the Distance Learning and Academic Innovation section. You can access their names through the OIIT homepage at <<http://www.peachnet.edu/oit/itdl>>. I have been rescued by the OIIT staff on numerous occasions.

The collective time investment for course development can be a concern for many faculty because tenure and promotion commit-

Teaching-Related Conferences

The Lilly Conferences on College & University Teaching

•November 19-22, 1998, Oxford, Ohio

•March 12-14, 1999, Athens, Georgia

•April 16-18, 1999, Towson, Maryland

Additional information is available at www.iats.com/Lilly.html.

Georgia Conference on College and Uni-

versity Teaching will be held at Kennesaw State University, March 18-19, 1999.

The Tenth International Conference on College Teaching and Learning will be held April 14-17, 1999 at the Radisson Riverwalk and Jacksonville Hilton Hotels, Jacksonville, Florida. Additional information is available at www.fccj.cc.fl.us/~conf/.

tees may favor scholarship in the research arena over scholarship associated with teaching. Tenure and promotion committees may not consider developing instructional materials to be on the same level as pursuing research. I believe this issue is less important than in the past because development of instructional materials utilizing new pedagogies and technologies is now listed on the current annual faculty evaluation form.

–Recommendation:

- Share the results of innovative classroom efforts with colleagues at professional meetings such as the Lilly Conference on College & University Teaching or the Georgia Conference on College & University Teaching (see above).

Because multimedia equipment is expensive, and thus limited in quantity, it is presently dedicated to a particular classroom or mounted on a cart that can be moved from one classroom to another. Access to the “technology classroom” or the “technology cart” can pose problems for faculty who wish to use the same equipment at the same time. It is counterproductive to develop course materials using IT, then find that equipment isn't available when it's time for class.

–Recommendation:

- Discuss equipment needs (access to the classroom or the cart) in advance with your department head or the appropriate equipment coordinator. If possible, arrange a schedule that avoids or minimizes equipment use conflicts.

Despite recent improvements in projector quality, most computer-assisted presentations require a dimmed room to produce acceptable on-screen images. Few classrooms possess a dimmed lighting feature; most have “switched on/off” lighting. Even so, rooms that permit adjustment of light to appropriate levels (instead of complete darkness) still

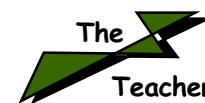
pose a problem. Lower light levels that increase on-screen image quality also decrease student attentiveness. Despite the “eye candy” of multimedia, students are more apt to get sleepy in a dimmed room.

–Recommendation:

- Engage students in classroom activities and/or group discussions relevant to the current syllabus topic.

Epilogue

The evolution of my teaching to include the use of multimedia has been personally rewarding and professionally rejuvenating. I have found an excitement in class preparation that was not present previously. Faculty members at NGCSU and other institutions have reported to me their personal satisfaction and renewed excitement for teaching after shifting to multimedia. Moreover, students are enthusiastic about the use of technology in the classroom. They enjoy this different approach to teaching. Faculty who adopt the technology can also provide students with opportunities to augment computer literacy. An increase in computer experience would foster the ongoing computerization of campus culture and better prepare students to use computers when students enter the work force. The potential of IT to enhance teaching and learning parallels student and faculty enthusiasm for its use. Clearly, the new technologies have much to offer both students and professors in the classroom.



The Excellence in Teaching at NGCSU Newsletter

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