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Attention to details can make a good newsletter great

Linc. Fisch

I see a lot of newsletters. Most of them are good. A few of them are great. The difference between good and great often is the attention to details of layout, headlines, type, graphics, and proofreading.

As I riff through my collection of newsletters, I find a variety of things that could be adjusted to improve the overall effect of the publications. These are not necessarily flaws -- many are just items for which there are both good options and better options. Most of the adjustments require relatively little effort to make.

Here's an accumulation of my suggestions for your consideration.

Give the front page your best shot.

An open, inviting front page draws readers into a publication. It should feature your best, most appealing article. Don't upstage that with trivial notes ahead of it. Don't detract from it with another major article. Avoid clutter. Resist flourishes unless they really enhance the material.

An asymmetrical layout adds interest, but be sure the page is reasonably balanced. Postpone general credits to the masthead. But be sure to include the date and the name of the institution; amazingly, quite a few front pages omit that. A contents box is appropriate if your newsletter runs more than four pages.

Write headlines that entice readers.

Headlines do for the article what the front page does for the newsletter: they grab readers. Write action headlines, using active verbs, rather than passive captions. If you must use standing heads such as "From the director" or "The editor speaks" for regular features, use them as kickers over a true headline.

Headlines in all capital letters are hard to read and gobble space. A growing trend is to write "downstyle" headlines, capitalizing only the first word and proper nouns.

Select type, paper, and ink as carefully as you select words.

Choose type that can be read easily and that doesn't call attention to itself. That's why most editors prefer type with serifs. For most text, use only one font in appropriate size -- usually 10, 11, or 12 point. When you have more copy than space for it, edit to reduce length rather than try to jam it all in by cutting type to less readable size.

Headlines can be set 8 to 15 points larger than text. A different font can be used for headlines; often sans-serif type is used for contrast to text. Pay particular attention to type size when you set special graphic/type elements: subheads, pull-out quotes, and blurbs should be sized somewhere between text and heads. Endnotes and explanatory elements might well be set a point or two smaller than text.
Attention to details (from page 1)

Don't set long passages in italics, since it doesn't read as easily as roman. Be careful to not use boldface where italics is called for.

Select paper that takes ink crisply. If you use a color ink, remember that it will bring a definite hue even to pure white paper. If you print photos, a dark ink is best.

Employ graphic elements for both relief and accent.

Graphic elements include not only photos and sketches, but also pull-out quotes, subheads, screens, sidebars, and white space. Without graphics, text becomes tedious. Too much graphic treatment clutters and distracts. Just the right amount enhances content and readability.

Use correct leading between lines of copy. Many DTP programs crank out more than is appropriate for newsletters.

Echoing, such as consistent page headers, can bring unity to your newsletter. But also watch for echoing that crosses the line into overdone repetition, such as excessive use of reverses and screens. Keep screens light to improve both readability and artistic effect.

Use fillers, whether text or image, only if they're relevant to adjacent articles or the overall purpose of the newsletter.

When you review layout, be sure to examine how two facing pages appear to the reader.

White space is the queen of graphic elements. Use it to frame and set off articles. Be willing to be accused of wasting space on "nothing." Be willing to leave bottoms of columns ragged if the effect is useful. But avoid trapping white space within copy; always leave room for it to "flow out" to the edge of the page.

Proofread until you drop. Then proofread some more.

Totally errorless newsletters are rare. Since typographical errors reflect glaringly on quality far out of proportion to their incidence, it takes only a few to embarrass you. Proofread for total quality control.

Read final copy word by word and line by line against original copy (not a processed version) to ensure no omitted passages or repeated material. Proofread punctuation as well as words. Watch especially for missing end punctuation in quotations and parentheses. Often errors occur in numbers, dates, and proper names because we seem to attend to them less in proofreading.

Don't rely totally on your computer's checking of your spelling. A word may be the wrong word even though spelled correctly. To save yourself time in looking up words in a dictionary, post over your desk a list of words whose spelling often troubles you.

I'm not suggesting that if you aspire from goodness to greatness that you need to follow a rigid formula for make-over of your publication. For almost every "hard-and-fast rule" there is a notable exception. Every suggestion should be tempered with discretion and good judgment.

Some of the ideas I've listed may be appropriate for your situation. Use them if they seem to fit. Remember that your newsletter should always reflect your own purposes and serve your own institution. Let it do that in the best way possible.

Editors' musings

What do readers want?

It's a simple question and an obvious question. But all too often editors fail to ask it.

Being an editor, you think you know what's good for a newsletter. You assume that if people had significant suggestions, they'd surely tell you. But you've probably received few comments -- good or bad -- about your publication.

The only way to learn how a newsletter is coming across is to actively seek reactions. A questionnaire may be useful, but often returns are low. You might better telephone a sample of readers and ask them what they like about the newsletter, what could be improved, and what special content they'd like to see. A few calls each issue would not be a burden and likely would be of great help.

Having given this advice to our subscribers, the editors of The Muse could hardly disregard it themselves. We plan to talk with some of you in the near future about our newsletter. But you don't have to wait for a call -- drop us a note whenever you want to pass ideas along to us. Thanks.

-- L.B., L.F., K.Z.

Linc. Fisch is a faculty development consultant and a co-editor of The Muse.

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Filings: Muse news to use

Reap the benefits of newsletter networking

Years ago, at a POD Conference, about a dozen of us were enjoying a lively luncheon conversation when Linda Hilsen suggested that we ought to share newsletters. By the time coffee was served, we had formed a wonderfully spontaneous newsletter network.

It couldn't have come at a better time, since I had recently decided to enter the perilous realm of newsletter editing. I was thirsting for information and ideas about every aspect of design and production. The newsletters that soon began arriving served as my trusty cicerones, guiding me by their good example through new and exciting territory. They became my close friends, each displaying a distinctive personality.

Even though I am no longer a neophyte editor, I continue to learn from my colleagues. If you have not already taken advantage of newsletter networking, I heartily encourage you to do so.

The following addresses will serve as a convenient "starter list." It is neither definitive nor judgmental. Indeed, there are scores of excellent faculty development newsletters which deserve regular reading. Now all you have to do is write the persons listed and reap the benefits of newsletter networking.

Focus on Instruction
Chuck Spuches, Editor
Room 8-Moon
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Syracuse, NY 13210

The LES Newsletter
Tom Creed, Coordinator
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Spotlight on Teaching
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Norman, OK 73019-0385

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The Beacon
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Faculty Focus
Barbara Millis, Editor
Office of Faculty Development
Univ. of Maryland Univ. College
College Park, MD 20742

Core
Susan H. Cohen, Editor
Centre for the Support of Teaching
York University
North York, ON M3J 1P3

Ken Zahorski

Review

The Editorial Eye

Winner of several prestigious awards, including the 1990 EDPRESS of America Honor Award for Best Newsletter, The Editorial Eye is both entertaining and informative—the kind of publication I look forward to getting in the mail each month.

Part of this newsletter's appeal is its lively and attractive format, but perhaps even more noteworthy is the alluring variety of its contents. Some of the regular features include a "Book Reviews" column providing information on texts dealing with such topics as writing, publishing, editing, design, and marketing; a "Software Review" of state-of-the-art word processing, indexing, and desktop publishing software (in the past few months there have been reviews of WORD FOR WINDOWS 2.0, ON TARGET, ISYS 2.07, XTREEGOLD 2.0, PC-INDEX 3.0, THOUGHTLINE 2.1.09, and LEGACY); and a lead article treating a broad spectrum of topics ranging from "desktop's magic charms" to the "editorial bully."

There are still other regular, or at least periodic, columns delivering grist for the editing mill. Bruce O. Boston, in "The Logo*Phile," deals out a witty and helpful series of observations on everything from "politically correct language" to "navigating the rough seas of usage," and Ellie Gavin delights in quizzing the reader on matters of usage and grammar through her "Test Yourself!" column (happily, she also provides the answers). Particularly useful is the "Resources" section, which identifies books, materials, organizations, reference works, and new technologies pertinent to the editorial enterprise. Besides the features already listed, readers of The Editorial Eye will also discover "Editor's Bulletin Board," "Ms. Grammar," "On the Job," "Readers Write," "Black Eyes," "The Right Word," and "Oddments."

Eye allows subscribers to reprint up to 300 words without permission, a nice bonus for busy newsletter editors always looking for good material to help fill white space.

In short, The Editorial Eye is an editor-friendly newsletter that packs a great deal of entertaining and useful material in a handsome and lively format. Further, this is a newsletter which should appeal to both novice and veteran editors.

Ken Zahorski

Selecting quotations

Different voices, different viewpoints

Laura L. B. Border

When I began editing The Tutor at the University of Colorado in 1985, I thought quotations would add interest, humor, poignancy, and even urgency to our message. We all like quotations. They entertain, amuse, instruct and inspire.

At the time I sought out the volumes available in our library. To my dismay the editions that I found featured only white males. Being an enthusiast of Agatha Christy, I began an investigation. Where could I find other representative voices? I discovered a book of quotations by black authors; again those featured were male.

Then, I discovered Elaine Partnow's two volumes The Quotable Woman: From Eve to 1799 and The Quotable Woman: 1800-1981. I was thrilled. I looked up "higher education" in the topical index of the second volume and discovered an entry "Democratic ideals may suggest that higher education is nondiscriminatory but it is actually continuous with social definitions of masculinity." (1457:2, 515)Oops! This quotation seemed to be too political to be perceived of as entertaining.

In fact, it called for a revolution. I checked the earlier volume and under "universal education" discovered: "It is necessary that all our people should be instructed, as universal education is the main pillar that must eventually support the temple of our liberty." (743:24, 403) Again this quotation called for reform.

I was getting curious. Had I stumbled upon a significant difference in the way men and women view education? This article is too short to answer such a question, but it opens up an intriguing avenue of research.

As a result of my investigations, I decided to revolutionize the "historically correct" quotation section traditionally found in newsletters. Now I make a deliberate choice to seek out quotations for The Tutor that represent a multifaceted view of education -- representing men and women equally by gender, color, and ethnicity.

Since other editors have encountered the same problem and called me to see where I get my quotations, I'm suggesting the sources which follow. And, of course, if you can't find what you need, regard it as an opportunity to create your own publication!


Laura Border heads the Graduate Teacher Program at University of Colorado-Boulder and is a co-editor of The Muse.

The schools of the country are its future in miniature.

Tehyi Hsieh

... the task of the educator lies in seeing that the child does not confound good with immobility and evil with activity, as often happens in the case of oldtime discipline.

Maria Montessori
WIGS, MORTARBOARDS AND OTHER TRADITIONS

Don Forrester, Ed
Director of CETL

A British professor invited his lawyer friend to lunch primarily to have some fun at his expense over an article he had just read in the newspaper.

"I say, Neville," said the waiter had taken their orders, "I just read that you barristers are considering leaving off those silly white wigs you wear in court. It's about time, I'd say! How many centuries have you persisted in that ridiculous custom?"

Nearly choking on a sip of water, the barrister replaced his glass, and carefully composed himself as he wiped his mouth on the white linen napkin.

"I must say, Percy, that I am somewhat taken aback that one of your profession would be of such an opinion, steeped as you are in tradition. Those caps and gowns you academics wear don't exactly serve any useful purpose now, do they?"

"Quite true," replied the professor, "but most of us don't lecture in them anymore, we only use them for ceremonial occasions. Besides, academic regalia once had a useful purpose—to keep the wearer warm in unheated lecture halls—which is more than can be said of your artificial looking wigs."

"But," Neville countered, "court is a ceremonial and solemn occasion. The wigs set us apart from the other participants in the courtroom and give us a sense of dignity."

Percy, regretfully, could not restrain his laughter.

"My dear friend, forgive me, but if you fancy that you look dignified in that ludicrous hairpiece, I must tell you..." His sentence was interrupted by more laughter which he pretended to try to stifle with his napkin.

(continued on page 11)
Kenneth P. Gilliam, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of Economics

Following the tradition established in 1982, we have again chosen to honor a faculty member for outstanding performance as a classroom teacher. Criteria for the recipient continue to emphasize the importance of creativity, the nurturing of individuality, and the presence of a model in both teaching and scholarship for students to emulate. This year's honoree, Dr. Jo Allen Bradham, follows a proud line of recipients by receiving the eleventh annual award for distinguished teaching.

Dr. Bradham has a rich history of classroom experience in her specialties which include English literature, poetry, and the execution of the written and spoken word. She is described by colleagues as being enthusiastic, well-prepared, and highly organized. However, there are also elements of her teaching that transcend these characteristics of all good teachers. These are the qualities which leave lasting legacies of inspiration for both students and colleagues. Many would covet her ability to energize a classroom through the advocacy of her beloved subject. She has the ability to maintain a linkage between herself, the subject, and her students. This is a personal and spiritual bonding between student and teacher that results in nothing less than synergetic responsiveness. She has the ability to empower words both visually and musically in a way that communicates the dynamics of the written word and the expressive quality of the poetic verse, while preserving the interpretive freedom of each new group of scholars who engage in dialogue over the classics.

To try to hear the inner voice of teachers and their teaching, the committee charged with selecting the finalists for the Distinguished Teaching Award asks each of the semi-finalists to submit a narrative on teaching effectiveness. I have chosen to reproduce much of the statement Dr. Bradham presented to the committee because I believe it conveys a potpourri of communication skills, narrative art, and experience in teaching. Dr. Bradham wrote:

"A narrative on teaching effectiveness is like an ad in the personals: a quick proclamation of one's unmatchable and highly desirable virtues. The test for truth in the personals is time; similarly, the test for truth in narratives on teaching is time.

"The only measure of teaching effectiveness is the retrospective, not the Scantronic. How do you measure accomplishments in teaching? You look at people's eyes and know something is happening. On campus or on the streets beyond it, you meet a person who says, because of your course X number of years ago, I can do so and so. Or because of your course, I realized I had a mind. Or you helped me when I needed it. Only things like this measure effectiveness in teaching, and no form accommodates such material.

"But for the occasion I will write a personal (in the jargon of the personals): 'ADPTT seeks class. Objective: growing, enjoying, learning.' Since the code of this personal is less well known than that of the amorous personal, here is the key: Articulate, Dedicated Professional Tends Talent (ADPTT).

"I work at discovering and cultivating talent. It surfaces in papers, in questions, in the body language of the person who stays after class to chat, in eyes. The
talent takes many forms. In a few cases, genuine brilliance declares itself. But many have a talent for hard work, the application of which reaffirms the triumph of the race-winning tortoise. Talents are as various as their possessors, and I try in all interactions—in class and out—to keep my antennae poised to pick up the signals. Since a long-range investment strategy, not sweating the short, pays in the talent market, I keep investing in talent—year after year, class after class, person after person. Eventually the phone rings, the letter comes, the off-print arrives, the comment surfaces; in all is the common thesis: thanks for finding and nudging me. Many times, from the least expected source, has come the dividend: 'I want to be to someone what you have been to me.' I think of the letters and the comments as the visible harvest, for to mix my metaphors in a most unprofessional way, I see teaching effectiveness not just as the long-term investment of the economist but as the timeless task of the gardener. I plant and, if necessary, stake and tie up. The harvest takes care of itself.

"Tending talent translates into effective teaching, and I have seen a good harvest which is now doubling. Students whom I taught when I was starting out are now college professors. They send me their students and endorse me by their experience and performance. When three generations of us are together, I have the long view of effectiveness in action—that's better than a dozen impetuous marks on a machine-graded form.

"To cultivate talent, I witness in class that what I am doing matters greatly, and I attempt in all classes to model a striking use of language and ideas so that students will see in action the material they read on paper. In abbreviated form, my philosophy of teaching comes from the following: Keep the faith, the fury, the flair, the flame, the facts, the friendship. The first of these, keeping the faith, sounds my belief in what I am doing, in the content itself, and in the connection with the great community of time and minds with which letters and learning connect us. The second, fury, reminds me that a passionate intensity—as long as it stops short of zeal—creates interest and invites participation. Flair matters because with undergraduates, the medium is the message, a statement that does not devalue the message. Since it is my privilege to teach the great works, I am obligated to work on a high level. 'Keep the flame' may sound like a truism, but there is nothing wrong with the truth that learning is a light. I have to say so in manner, example, and tone, not just in words and not just in class. Keeping facts demands solid preparation for every class. The product is too valuable to break down in delivery; therefore, I have to have my facts in place and ready. Keeping friendship means simply that teaching goes on in the office and in extracurricular affairs; it goes on after a class is over.

"I depend on this pattern of faith, fury, flair, flame, facts, and friendship to shape me up as ADPTT (a portfolio personal) and to inspire others."
FACULTY DEVELOPMENT GRANTS

Congratulations and best wishes for successful projects go to the recipients of Kent State's Faculty Development Grants and Summer Stipends. This program always yields interesting and valuable project applications, and this year was no exception. The awards, announced on May 8, included seven Summer Stipends for projects which were carried out during summer quarter, 1992, and five Faculty Development Grants for projects to be completed by next June. Summer Stipends have the value of 10% of the recipient's base salary (5% each for joint recipients), and Faculty Development Grants have a maximum value of $2,000.00.

Awards are made each year by the Faculty Development Committee, which consists of one member from each of the four schools, the four most recent recipients of the Distinguished Teaching Award, the coordinator of the Office of External Funding and the director of the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning. The 1991-92 committee members were: Ben Golden (Chair), Lynn Fedeli, Don Sabarese, Natalie Matthews, Patti Reggio, Bowman Davis, Alan Schlact, Howard Shealy, Jackie Givens and Don Forrester (ex officio). Watch for a call for applications for the 1993-94 program early in the winter quarter.

Focuses of the selected projects included pure research, applied research, community and institutional service and curriculum development. Below is a list which includes the author(s), title and an abstract of each funded project:

FACULTY DEVELOPMENT GRANTS

William R. Forrester, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of Marketing

Susan S. Carley, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of Marketing

An Empirical Investigation of Behavioral Responses to Dissatisfaction in Buyer-Seller Relationships. The study focuses upon consumer behavioral responses to dissatisfaction in the little-understood context of buyer-seller relationships. Specifically, the research investigates the ways in which consumers' responses to dissatisfaction are influenced by their perceptions of salespersons' trustworthiness and expertise, as well as how these responses are mediated by situational influences and consumers' attributions of responsibility. Data are to be collected by a mail questionnaire in which respondents are asked to relate their behavioral intentions following a service failure. The scenarios will involve relationships between homeowners and real estate agents with whom they have listed their houses for sale. Respondents will be actual homeowners who have had their homes listed with real estate agents sometime in the preceding six-month period. Results of the study will have significance for academics and practitioners alike.

Hugh C. Hunt, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of Philosophy

The Concept of Person in the Philosophy of Edith Stein. Edith Stein, a student of Edmund Husserl, the founder of the movement known as phenomenology, lived 1891-1942. A convert from Judaism to Catholicism in 1922, Stein entered the Carmelite monastery in 1933, was taken from the monastery by the Nazis in early August, 1942, and gassed at Auschwitz on 9 August, 1942. In her dissertation she addressed the concept of empathy. She turned to the relationship of Husserl's phenomenology to the thought of Thomas Aquinas. Emerging from her dissertation, even more prominently, from her study of the Husserl/Aquinas relationship was the concept of the person. Furthermore, she recognized the person as the concept central to all philosophical endeavors. This study traces her concept of person from her early work up to and including the last of her philosophical and theological works. The study attempts to establish the uniqueness of her philosophical/phenomenological approach to the concept and the significance and influence she has had on all subsequent reflections on the concept of person, both in philosophy and theology.

Alan Lebaron, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of History

Are the Maya Evolving Toward a New Nation? The project is a study of Mayan ethnonationalism in Guatemala and Mexico: its roots, its current characteristics, its probable future course and its significance in world affairs.

Ayokunle Odeleye, M.F.A.
Assistant Professor of Art

Inclusion of African American Artists into Course Content. Mr. Odeleye applied for and was awarded a Faculty Development Grant to financially support his Summer Stipend. See the project description on page 5.

Daniel J. Williams, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of Chemistry

Travel Funds to Investigate Methods for Assaying Free Radical Activity in Blood Samples. In order to investigate links between active molecular substances known as free radicals and a variety of diseases such as cancer and cardiovascular maladies, methods for assaying free radicals in blood are being investigated. With the availability of a large blood sample base with associated health records through "Operation Clone" in Washington County, Maryland, the free radical theory of disease etiology may be either further supported or refuted. The grant request focuses principally on the need for travel funds to aid in information gathering for the purpose of developing and refining the assay methodology. A small amount of expendable supplies are also needed. The long term goal is to develop the procedure to the point of attracting outside funding such as from the National Institutes of Health.
so as to obtain the equipment allowing undergraduate participation, once the large scale analysis process is ready to be done.

SUMMER STIPENDS

Army Lester, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of Biology.

Summer Science Camp. The underrepresentation of African Americans and other minority groups in science careers appears to be growing at an alarming rate, yet these groups will make up a substantially greater portion of the workforce in the next generation. This project addresses the problem by offering a Science Camp for underrepresented groups of the local community. The program includes six weeks of activities including lectures and seminars, laboratory studies, and field trips, with approximately twenty, 7th-10th grade students taking part. The objectives are to help break the pattern of fear students have of science, to help them develop the skills to do well in these courses, and to provide them with information on career opportunities in science. The effectiveness of the program will be determined by the success of the participants in science classes and science fairs, and by major/career selection in college.

Gary Lewis, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of Physics.

Connecting With Science: Development of a New Core Course. The purpose of this project is to develop instructional materials for a new core course entitled “Matter, Energy and Life.” This is the first of an interdisciplinary, two-course sequence being designed by a committee with members from Biology, Chemistry and Physics. If successful, these courses will become the primary core science sequence. The intent is to generate a new approach to teaching science to the general student at Kennesaw State College.

Linda M. Malgeri, M.B.A.
Assistant Professor of Accounting

Rodney Alsup, D.B.A.
Professor of Accounting.

The Design and Evaluation of a New First Year Accounting Curriculum. Accounting education is in a state of flux. The education and accounting establishments are questioning the objectives of education for accountants, the courses and course content, the instructional methods, the faculty reward structure, and the accreditation standards and process. One significant question concerns the elementary accounting course sequence and its objectives. These courses have been taught the same way and have covered the same material for decades. The objectives of the courses are not meeting the needs of today's business students, and the course is “turning off” the type of student the accounting profession is seeking. This project will evaluate and then define the content and delivery systems that should be used in the first year accounting curriculum. We will then develop and test prototype principles of accounting courses.

Ayokunle Odeleye, M.F.A.
Assistant Professor of Art.

Inclusion of African American Artists into Course Content. This project is to identify and document the works of prominent African American visual artists from the east coast region of the United States. Biographical data on fifty artists will be collected, along with color slides of their traditional and contemporary examples. These materials will become part of the Visual Art Department's permanent collection, and will be available to faculty as a multicultural teaching resource.

Pam Rhyne, Ph.D.
Professor of Biology.

Science 301: Model for Instruction.

This proposal describes the planning and development of instructional materials to enhance the Science 301 course for K-8 preservice teachers. Based on the Georgia Needs Assessment and using instructional strategies suggested by the current science education reform projects, Project 2061 and Scope, Sequence and Coordination Project, the lecture component of Science 301 will be developed to serve as a model for instruction.

Gail Schiffer, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of Biology.

Developing Student Activities for an Integrated Science Course. With changes in Areas I and III of the Core Curriculum in place, attention has turned to Area II, the Natural Sciences. The Science Core Curriculum Committee is developing a new model of integrating the sciences into one interdisciplinary sequence as opposed to the present system. Goals for the course sequence, such as the teaching of science process and critical thinking skills, require a considerable number of student activities, both laboratory- and classroom-based, that encompass the separate disciplines. This project’s purpose is to develop activities for the second course of the two-course sequence.

Diane Willey, Ph.D.
Professor of Education.

Development of a Model for Constructing Classroom Assessment Tasks.

The project seeks to develop a model for classroom assessment for use by college and high school faculty. Preliminary work with alternative models has already been done by a group of biology faculty. From this base, a more detailed draft of the model will be developed, which will include a) a description of the types of learning; b) examples of objectives, test items and other assessment tasks; and c) an initial description of the steps to follow in writing items and other tasks. This model will be used fall quarter to continue work by a group of KSC biology faculty to revise test items. Data from the fall quarter project then can be used to further refine the assessment model and, hopefully, will serve as a pilot project leading to external funding of further applications.
BOOK REVIEW

Dede Yow, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of English


The history of anthologies of literature in this country tells a story. It is a story of platitudes and politics, servitude and emancipation, a story much like that of our nation's history. As the name The New Cavalcade suggests, this extraordinary book places the works of Black American artists solidly in the procession of American literature, the goal of the three editors, Arthur P. Davis, J. Saunders Redding, and Joyce Ann Joyce. Beyond accommodation and protest, this anthology attests to the achievement of Black artists: reaffirming the values of freedom and equality in a literature of their own experience and culture.

This achievement has been hard-won one Joyce Ann Joyce tells us in an essay on her co-editor: "Arthur P. Davis: An African-American Anthologist in a Euro-American Colony" (forthcoming in African American Literary Judgments Reconsidered, Howard UP). The third editor of The New Cavalcade, Professor Joyce, was chosen by Arthur P. Davis and the late J. Saunders Redding because she is a "scholar who had a deep knowledge about contemporary criticism and the recent great upsurge in publications by African American women" (New Cavalcade xix). She writes that a "brief look at the goals or aims of a sampling of White American anthologies published between 1927 and 1991 reveals that African-American literary art was dismissed as inferior by the same criteria that fostered segregation in the political, social, and economic realms that affected Black lives." Drawing on Paul Lauter's book, Canons and Contexts (Oxford UP, 1991), Joyce supports her premise with the fact that out of twenty-one major classroom anthologies, including many revised editions, "nine contained no works by black artists; three include only a few spirituals; four contained one black writer each (Dunbar; Phillis Wheatley; twice; Richard Wright); two printed some spirituals and one black writer" (Literary Judgments).

Academic disenfranchisement—excluding Black American artists from the American literary canon—is codified in the texts that editors select to represent the literary tradition. In the Preface to The Oxford Anthology of Literature (1938), which includes writers from John Smith to Herman Melville, but excludes Black writers, editors William Mose Benet and Norman Holmes Pearson declare their anthology "an historical selection from the literary expression of the American people." Obviously, Joyce concludes, the phrase "American people" does not include African Americans and Native Americans.

Of the more widely used and more recent anthologies, The Literature of the United States (1953; 1961; 1966), edited by Blair, Hornberger, Stewart, and Miller, includes no works of Afro-American writers; the 1961 and 1966 editions let Uncle Remus tell the tale of eighteenth century life for Black Americans, continuing as Joyce says, the "White academy's tradition of using Joel Chandler Harris as spokesperson for Black plantation life and folk creativity" (Literary Judgments). The tradition of exclusion continues in the 1956 and 1967 Bradley, Beatty, and Long editions of The American Tradition in Literature; Amiri Baraka is the only Black writer in the two volume collection.

The Civil Rights movements of the sixties initiated Black Americans' march into the social and political citadels, a procession that in the next decade crossed the threshold of the academy. Both George McMichael's Anthology of American Literature (1974) and the revised Norton Anthology of American Literature (1979) include black writers: McMichael eleven, Norton fourteen. But Phillis Wheatley and Gwendolyn Brooks are the only two black women writers included.

The voices of all America's people are not heard until 1990 when Paul Lauter proclaims "To the Reader" of The Heath Anthology of American Literature that the "major principle of selection has been to represent as fully as possible the varied cultures of the United States." This diversity is reflected in "what is by far the widest sampling of the work of minority and white women writers available in any anthology of American literature. This selection includes material by 109 women of all races, 25 individual Native American authors... 53 African Americans, 13 Hispanics... and 9 Asian Americans." This multicultural text redefines "American Literature" (xxxvi).

These changes mirror the changes in the professoriate of the academy—all those sixties radicals are scholars and administrators now—and in the tradition that institution creates. But what of one of the oldest and strongest literary traditions in this country—the tradition of the African American artist? In 1941 Arthur P. Davis co-edited his first anthology of Afro-American literature, The Negro Caravan. It was not the first anthology of Black literature, but it was the first anthology including all time periods and genres up to its publication. It was, Joyce concludes, an implicit response to the editors of The Heritage of American Literature, who see "literary merit in only that African American literature that is non-confrontational and amusing" (Literary Judgments). By including antislavery pamphleteering, fugitive slave narratives, and novels, this book announced to the academic world that Black artists would take their rightful place in the procession of the literary figures of the American people.

It was thirty years later that Davis, together with J. Saunders Redding, presented Cavalcade: Negro American Writing From 1760 to the Present, a one volume work published in 1971 by Houghton Mifflin. Though containing only 80 writers to Caravan's 104, Cavalcade incorporated more primary works and criticism by women and added more comprehensive bibliographical information (Literary Judgments).

In 1991, twenty years later, in the tradition of Lauter's Heath Anthology of American Literature, Arthur P. Davis, J. Saunders Redding, and Joyce A. Joyce present the first of two volumes of The New Cavalcade: African American Writing From 1760 to the Present published by Howard University Press. Though organized basically the same as the original Cavalcade, this edition adds twenty-one writers not in the earlier Cavalcade, and includes the works of more than fifty women.

The purpose of this anthology, the editors write in the "General Introduction" is twofold: to "show the evolution of African American writing as literary art and to provide the historical context that gives meaning to this writing as the expression of the black American's special experience in this nation." What is implicit, though, is the creation of a canon of writing by Black Americans; hence the explanation of the term "Af
American American writing” used in the title of the book. Some Negro writers—Frank Yerby and Robert Hayden—for example, “write like whites,” their referents “Anglo-Saxon American derived.” Most black American writers, though, are “twin-rooted, and while one root is nourished by the myths, customs, culture, and values traditional in the western world, the other feeds hungrily on the experiential reality of blackness. These writers have a special vision. They are persuaded by a special mission. In their work they combine the sermon and the liturgy, the reality and the dream, the IS and the OUGHT TO BE.”

Building a literary tradition necessarily means assessing the literary merit of the writers. The editors do not back off from making judgment calls, proclaiming that the “basis on which works were chosen for inclusion is primarily literary merit.” However, they add, “no author has been left out because we disagree with his critical attitudes, his politics, or his stand on certain issues.” Our selections, for example, represent practically every major African American critic from Alain Locke to Henry Louis Gates, Jr., and their varying and often strongly conflicting critical stands. Our criticism is found in the headnotes and chapter introductions (“General Introduction” xxii).

Chronological in arrangement, the four parts serve as guideposts for the historical and literary procession of African Americans writing in this country. The Introduction to “Part 1 Pioneer Writers: 1760-1830” provides the metaphorical structure for the entire volume: accommodation, protest, and escape, the response of Black Americans to the denial of their humanity. “Part 2 Freedom Fighters: 1830-1865” contains eleven writers, among them Sojourner Truth, Charlotte L. Forten, and of course, Frederick Douglass. The introduction provides the literary backdrop of white writers like William Lloyd Garrison and Harriet Beecher Stowe.

“Part 3 Accommodation and Protest: 1865-1910” contains eleven writers, some of whom, like Booker T. Washington, Francis Ellen Watkins Harper, Charles Chesnutt, and Paul Laurence Dunbar, have become more familiar names because of their inclusion in recent anthologies. The procession in “Part 4 The New Negro Renaissance and Beyond: 1910 to 1954” is one that most students of American literature will recognize since names like W. E. B. Du Bois, James Weldon Johnson, Jean Toomer, Countee Cullen, Arna Bontemps, Zora Neale Hurston, Langston Hughes, Richard Wright, Gwendolyn Brooks, and Margaret Walker now appear even in freshman readers.

As in most anthologies, a survey of the literary and cultural milieu introduces each of the four sections. What The New Cavalcade adds is a critical context provided by writers like Alain Locke, Walter White (“dynamic chief executive of the NAACP, literary counselor of young black writers, and authority on lynching”), Sterling A. Brown, J. Saunders Redding, Arthur P. Davis, and Therman B. O’Daniel. More women join the cavalcade with Nella Larsen, her contemporary Jessie Fauset, Pauli Murray (“first black woman to become an ordained priest in the Episcopal church”), May Miller, Elma Stuckey, and Ann Petry.

The fact that the critical apparatus undergirding the texts is informed and intelligent contributes to the solidity of the work, but equally impressive is the distinctiveness and lightness of the editorial voices. Unlike the generic, homogenous style we read in most anthologies (Lauter’s Heath Anthology avoids that tedium with individual essays by scholars for each section), The New Cavalcade actually sings at times. Take for example this sentence: “Wright’s second work, Black Boy: A Record of Childhood and Youth (1945), is a great American autobiography, written in the militant spirit of Frederick Douglass’s 1845 Narrative, one that broke completely with the race-raising, name-dropping, best-foot-forward tradition of most of the black autobiographies written before Black Boy” (706).

Adding further to the readability is the format for each writer’s selected bibliography. Rather than being dropped down and printed in smaller type, the bibliographical and critical information is incorporated into the text of the essay. As a result, students get a sense of the importance of scholarship and critical study, the life blood of the preservation of this literature.

Most of the writers in Volume I of The New Cavalcade are currently taught in African-American and in American literature classes. They march, in the tradition of American literature, with all American writers. And they speak, in their own special voices, for all Americans. In Shadow and Act Ralph Ellison, “speaking from [his] own special area of American culture,” reminds us that “to embrace uncritically values which are extended to us by others is to reject the validity, even the sacredness, of our own experience. It is also to forget that the small share of reality which each of our diverse groups is able to snatch from the whirling chaos of history belongs not to the group alone, but to all of us. It is a property and a witness which can be ignored only to the danger of the entire nation.”
TEAM RESEARCH IN COASTAL MICROBIOLOGY: TEACHING THROUGH APPLICATION

Jerald D. Hendrix, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of Biology

My special interest always has been to convey the excitement of my discipline to students. Original research can be a very effective way to teach students the method and application of biological science. For several years, I have sought new ways to foster teaching through research, and have found that team research, the organization of a class into a research team working together to investigate a topic, represents a different and powerful approach.

Traditionally, colleges use three approaches to introduce students to independent research: directed study, in which the student works independently under the direction of a faculty member; internship, in which a student works at a government or private agency for one quarter; and cooperative study, which usually is a supervised work experience for three or more quarters at a government or private agency. In each of these activities, the experience often focuses on the accomplishments of the individual student working independently. Team research adds an additional dimension, the interaction of students with each other as a group as they work to accomplish a common set of objectives. The research team is able to complete a more complex investigation than a single individual, and the group interaction can reinforce the learning of new concepts and technical skills.

In the summer of 1991, I had the pleasure of teaching a course at Kennesaw State College entitled Team Research in Coastal Microbiology. Six students and I conducted a research project that included a field trip to Sapelo Island, Georgia. In this article, I shall attempt to describe the objectives, organization, and administration of the course, and give my perceptions on how the course benefitted both the students and the instructor.

Course Background and Objectives: Several groups of microorganisms contribute to nutrient cycling and other processes in coastal environments. For several years, I have had an interest in the microbes found in estuaries and salt marshes. Many species of microorganisms inhabit the soil of salt marshes, contributing to activities such as nitrogen and sulfur cycles.

In particular, I was interested in determining if the distribution of certain salt marsh bacteria could be used as an indicator of human impact on estuarine ecosystems. As part of this study, the team research class focused on three major scientific objectives: 1) to develop methods of collecting salt marsh soil samples for bacterial analysis, 2) to develop methods for the enrichment and growth of selected groups of bacteria, and 3) to evaluate methods for the extraction and measurement of certain mineral components from the salt marsh samples.

To complete the scientific objectives of the course, the students would have to employ several skills. These included using scientific literature, adapting published procedures to a specific task, formulating hypotheses, collecting and analyzing data, and disseminating information in oral and written presentations.

Course Organization and Administration: The course was divided into three main parts: preparation, the field trip to Sapelo Island and the follow-up after returning to campus. During the first three weeks, we concentrated on getting ready for the field trip. Each week, I gave a background lecture covering the topics of barrier island formation, estuaries and salt marshes, microbial groups found in salt marshes, and the processes performed by microorganisms. In the laboratory, pairs of students performed standardization procedures for the chemical tests we would use on Sapelo. We planned to examine the marsh soil for ammonia, nitrate, phosphorus, potassium, sulfate, sulfide, iron, and manganese content. The students standardized the procedure for each chemical test, and we discussed the results during weekly class meetings.

During the early stages of planning, each student chose a different type of bacteria to work with as an individual project. These included sulfate-reducing bacteria, photosynthetic bacteria, halophilic (salt-loving) bacteria, nitrogen-fixing bacteria, stalked bacteria, and marine spirilla. The students began collecting information about...
their organisms, learning how to isolate and grow the bacteria. They assembled the materials and supplies they would need to isolate the organisms from soil samples during and after the Sapelo trip.

On July 10, we loaded up a school van with our equipment and gear and headed toward the coast for our one-week visit to Sapelo, one of the barrier islands off the coast of Georgia. The state purchased most of the island in the 1960s and began to administer it through the Department of Natural Resources. Near the south end of the island was the former estate of R. J. Reynolds. The University of Georgia converted the dairy barn and surrounding buildings of the estate into the Marine Institute. Several university faculty reside on the island and conduct full-time research at the Institute. The Institute also supports the work of postdoctoral scientists, graduate students, undergraduate interns, and visiting scientists from other institutions. In addition to the Marine Institute, Sapelo is the location of a National Estuarine Reserve, a salt marsh system protected from development and used as a site for research by the Institute and others.

The Institute provided laboratory and dormitory space for us during our week-long visit.

During the first three days we selected samples from sites in the marsh along Dean Creek, a stream on the southern end of the island within the National Estuarine Reserve. Beginning at the mouth of the creek where it empties into Doby Sound, we collected soil samples at 200 meter intervals along the creek during low tide. We also chose a site where we collected samples across the width of the marsh. These samples gave us a representation of the length and width of a typical salt marsh community in the absence of human developments. We also collected samples from a marsh located near several industrial sites in Brunswick, Georgia. All of us went out in the field each morning to collect samples. After lunch, the students performed the chemical analysis and began their bacterial cultures. To complete this task usually required the students to work until late in the evening. The next morning, we would meet in the conference room in the dormitory to go over the data and make any necessary adjustments in procedure before starting the sample collecting for the day.

The students had free time during the week to explore Sapelo Island. They also took advantage of the Marine Institute library to finish some of the work on their reports. By the end of the week, we had met many of the scientists and interns at the Marine Institute, and had shared our ideas and learned about the research being conducted there. Certainly, we were sad to leave at the end of our trip.

After returning to Kennesaw, the students finished the analysis of the bacterial cultures they had started on the island. We continued our weekly meetings, with discussions focusing on the progress on individual projects. During the last two weeks of the course, each student gave a final report to the group and turned in a written report.

The students were successful in isolating the different types of bacteria that they studied. For the most part, the distribution of bacteria in the Sapelo marshes was consistent with other studies reported in the literature. We found that the samples from Brunswick contained significantly higher amounts of sulfide and sulfate-reducing bacteria when compared to the Sapelo samples.

Benefits of the Class: In the course evaluation, the students listed several ways the course had enhanced their science process and personal interaction skills. The technical skills that they used included critical evaluation of scientific literature, development of experimental approaches to test ideas, standardization of experimental methods with appropriate controls, and interpretation of results.

At least as important as science skills, perhaps, were the interactions of the students with each other and with personnel of the Marine Institute. By working together, the students usually were able to master technical skills much more quickly and thoroughly than when working alone. Our discussions, both in and out of the classroom, served to enhance our ideas and experiments. It seemed as if the group developed a sense of shared responsibility for the project. It was especially (continued on page 12)
HIGH TECH SUPPORT FOR TEACHERS: A REVIEW OF GRADEBOOK SOFTWARE

Martha E. Myers, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of Computer Science and Information Systems

Think back to the moment you decided to teach. Did you visualize inspired lectures in the college class room, followed by discussions after class with small groups of students? Did you see yourself as someone similar to Jaime Escalante (Stand and Deliver) or perhaps John Keating in Dead Poets Society?

Chances are, what you didn’t visualize were activities like verifying class rosters, identifying an equitable grading system, adding and dropping students from the class roll, or calculating, assigning and reporting student grades in the rush at the end of the quarter. Clearly none of us entered the field with these tedious administrative tasks in mind. However, they form a crucially important component of the job.

During the spring quarter, 1992, a group of students in CS 360 began a research project concerning current and future technological support for these administrative tasks. The project satisfied one of the requirements in CS 360, a course in systems analysis and design for information systems (IS) and computer science (CS) majors. The results reported here are largely due to their extensive efforts (Table 1).

The project was divided into two parts. The first part, in which many KSC faculty participated, involved a campus survey of current use of technology for grading and other tasks. The second part, completed just recently, involved a review of available software to support these tasks (Table 2).

Faculty response to the mailed surveys was quite positive. Out of 306 faculty members, 105 or about 34% responded. Of those responding, over 90% were interested in participating in the review of software. Clearly, there is a great deal of interest in this area. Table 1 summarizes the results from this initial survey of technology used by faculty.

Today, most faculty members at KSC have a PC or Macintosh available for personal professional use. These machines are primarily IBM or IBM-compatible. Less than half of the faculty members use some type of software support for gradebook activities. Most of those using manual gradebook methods are interested in future automation of these tasks. Virtually all faculty members are interested in learning more about relevant technology support.

The second part of the study focused on the review of available software. To date, nine gradebook-type software packages have been examined. Because many faculty members are familiar with Lotus 1-2-3, the student team designed and developed a Lotus prototype (GRAiding SPreadsheet - GRASP) for use by any interested faculty member. Spreadsheet files and user documentation are available.

Each package was examined for performance in areas related to ease of use, flexibility, and growth potential. Table 2 summarizes preliminary results.

Table 1. KSC Faculty Survey of Gradebook Software Use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CURRENT HARDWARE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IBM/Compatible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macintosh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CURRENT GRADEBOOK SOFTWARE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lotus/QuatroPro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diploma (I,II,III)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dBase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MicroSWAT III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. A Comparison of Gradebook Software Packages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PACKAGE FEATURES</th>
<th>VARgrades</th>
<th>GRASP</th>
<th>SWAT</th>
<th>Prowares</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ease of use</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sort by name</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sort by SSN or I.D.</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance feature</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comment feature</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edit grades, names entered</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
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<tr>
<td>Enter fractional grade</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High, low, median grade</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drop lowest grade</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lists cumulative grade</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lists distribution of grades</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average a catalog of grades</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curve grades in one column</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weight grades</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
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<td>Point-based system (alt.)</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
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<tr>
<td>Back-up features</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
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<tr>
<td>On-line help</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Context-sensitive help</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
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<tr>
<td>Password protection</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Printing flexibility</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>View more than one student</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
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<td>Multiple classes</td>
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<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of grades / students</td>
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<td>10000</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>40</td>
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<td>Test generator</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calculator</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approximate cost</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Costs are based on single purchase price.
Site licenses and other alternatives may be used to reduce the overall cost to KSC.
** Author's personal preference.

Table 2. A Comparison of Gradebook Software Packages
(Wigs continued from page 1)

Now Neville was clearly miffed.

"You have attacked a practice which some of us hold almost
sacred," he spoke icily. "I value tradition very highly until it
becomes destructive. It is my belief that wigs in court bestow
honor upon the wearer and upon the occasion; but at worst,
donning white wigs—or, for that matter, academic regalia—is a
harmless practice. Let's talk about one of academe's prized
traditions which I do not consider to be so benign."

"And what tradition is that?"

"You've mentioned the word twice since we sat down," replied
Neville. "It's the lecture. It is your profession's sacred cow, the
tradition you preserve at any cost, even when better ways of
teaching are available to you. And all the while, Percy, your
students are bored comatose."

"What?" answered Percy, loudly enough to attract the attention
of nearby diners. "The lecture is a venerated and, I might add,
proven means of disseminating knowledge. Our whole system
is built around it. We have lecture halls; some of our faculty even
have the title, Lecturer. Neville, old boy, you're meddling
with something you know nothing about!"

"Oh don't I, indeed? Let me remind you that I have two
university degrees, which means that I've heard enough
lectures to qualify me as an expert on the subject. In all my years
of study, I can only recall two or three professors who inspired
and stimulated me through the lecture. It certainly has its place
in the classroom, but the fact is that very few of you chaps are
any good at it."

"Well, I never!" sputtered Percy. "I invite you to lunch to
congratulate you on abandoning your anachronistic legal wigs,
and you transform it into an occasion to criticize the way I
practice my profession!"

By now Neville regretted having attacked his professor friend
quite so strongly, and began trying to make amends.

"Percy, old friend, don't take what I said personally. You're
probably an exceptional lecturer. I just meant that most of the
others...well, they fall short somehow. They could inspire their
students to learn so much more effectively using other
approaches."

Though this helped to salve his ego somewhat, Percy was still
defensive.

"What would you suggest, Neville?" he asked with more than
a tinge of sarcasm.

"Oh, I'll not presume to be prescriptive where academe is
concerned," Neville answered. "I just think it is sad when one
walks down the halls of one's alma mater, as I did a few weeks ago
at my twentieth reunion, and sees nothing in the classrooms but
the tops of students' heads as they bend over their desks writing
furiously as the professor drones on and on from yellowed notes."

"Well, Neville, at least they were absorbing information. Can
you think of a more efficient way of covering vast amounts of
material than lecturing?"
Preparing Course Syllabi for Improved Communication, by Malcolm A. Lowther, Joan S. Stark and Gretchen G. Martens. NCRITICAL, Suite 2400, SEB, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1259.

Students are seldom if ever aware of the time faculty spend preparing a course. Still, one of the most often-expressed student expectations of a good teacher is that s/he be "well-prepared." The course syllabus provides the first impression of preparedness; but too often it is a poor indicator of just how much planning and organization has taken place before the students even register for the course. Also, according to the authors, most syllabi fail to communicate much information students need in their initial encounter with the course. Research has shown that students learn more effectively when they understand the instructor's intentions. In short, the syllabus should communicate far more than when assignments are due, a testing schedule and grading procedures.

The authors list ten items which, without being prescriptive, might be included in a typical syllabus: 1) Basic Information on the Instructor and the Course, 2) Course Purpose, Goals and Objectives, 3) Educational Beliefs, 4) Content Outline, 5) Assignments and Course Calendar, 6) Textbooks, 7) Supplementary Readings, 8) Methods of Instruction, 9) Student Feedback and Grading Procedures and 10) Learning Facilities and Resources for Students. Let the reader be frightened away, all of this is covered in 24 pages, and many of the suggestions are presented in a "checklist" format.

Preparation of the first impression of preparedness is a significant part of the teaching process. Preparedness is especially crucial in the first week of the course, when students form their initial impressions of the instructor. A well-prepared instructor can create a positive and engaging learning environment, while an instructor who does not prepare adequately may leave students feeling confused and disinterested.

The authors suggest that instructors should include specific information about the course, such as the course goals, objectives, and expectations for student performance. They also recommend that instructors provide a clear outline of the course content, assignment expectations, and grading criteria. This helps students understand what is expected of them and how their work will be evaluated.

In addition, the authors emphasize the importance of providing students with clear instructions and feedback throughout the course. This helps students stay on track and ensures that they understand how to succeed in the course.

The authors also highlight the importance of maintaining a positive and respectful classroom environment. This can be achieved by creating a welcoming and inclusive atmosphere, and by fostering a sense of community among students and instructors.

Overall, the authors provide a comprehensive guide for instructors looking to create a well-prepared and engaging course. By following the suggestions outlined in this article, instructors can help ensure that their students are set up for success from the very beginning of the course.
An editor reflects . . .

The challenges of producing a newsletter

Don Forrester

Being asked to share Kennesaw State’s faculty newsletter with this audience is, at the same time, flattering and intimidating, making this all the more difficult to write. I have decided, then, to abandon what little journalistic savvy I have and simply talk about Reaching Through Teaching as I would with a colleague. Maybe this will assure you that I view our publication not as an ideal in the classical Greek sense, but as something which we are always challenged to improve by making it a more readable, more accurate, more attractive, and more useful agent of change in the next issue than in the last.

Hurdles

There are, I’m sure you’ll agree, some hurdles to jump in order to make an effective faculty newsletter. Here are a couple which keep me challenged, and a couple of solutions which (sometimes) work:

Hurdle #1: Many faculty hold methodology in disdain. Oh, we accept the lecture method and the Socratic method, but tend to resent anything that even hints at a bag of tricks -- unless, of course, it is our own bag of tricks, which we prefer to call "inspired teaching." Most faculty would probably like to improve their presentational skills, but the best way to address this issue in a faculty newsletter remains my most challenging obstacle.

Solution: One way of presenting "nuts and bolts" ideas has been through an occasional column (not in the current issue) entitled "The Creative Teacher," modelled unabashedly after POD’s Bright Idea Network. Here, faculty share teaching tips in 200 words or less. (Supposedly. Do you know how hard it is for a professor to say anything in 200 words?) My experience has been that these short articles are at least as difficult to obtain as those with 1,200 to 2,000 words, but some very creative ideas have been published in this little column.

Hurdle #2: Graduate school programs us to publish research articles, not articles about teaching. So even on this campus—a place where teaching is highly valued—probably no more than one article out of ten is unsolicited. The rest are gotten through a process not unlike that of fly fishing, where it takes many casts to hook a trout.

Solution: Though Reaching Through Teaching does not pretend to be a scholarly publication, we have tried to emphasize the scholarship of teaching. Many articles grow out of some applied research effort, often involving students.

Credo

I believe that an issue does not need a central theme other than teaching. The current issue, for instance, includes the editor’s cover article, a book review, a comparison of gradebook computer software, a distinguished teacher article, an article announcing recipients of faculty development grants, a description of how one faculty member teaches his students by involving them in his own research, and a regular editorial column called "Briefly Noted." The only theme issue that I can recall was Fall 1991 on the subject of "Assessment," and, frankly, I do not consider it one of our best efforts.

If an article is about teaching, in any sense of the word, we probably can find a place for it in Reaching Through Teaching. We consider material on teaching both inside and

In earlier Muses, we've referred a couple of times to Reaching Through Teaching, an exemplary newsletter that highlights the philosophy and practice of teaching at Kennesaw State College. We now showcase an entire issue, together with the above commentary by Don Forrester, its editor. Don is Professor of Music and Director of KSC's Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (Kennesaw State College, P.O. Box 444, Marietta, GA 30061, tel. 404-423-6410).
outside the classroom. It may involve content, preparation, presentation, philosophy, evaluation, motivation — you name it.

Though we call the publication a newsletter, we are not much interested in newsy items per se. The current issue’s reporting of grant recipients is about as newsy as it ever gets.

Though at first glance it may appear arrogant, our philosophy and practice is to accept articles only from our own faculty. It is sometimes tempting to do otherwise, especially when contributions seem to be down and I’ve just run across one of those perfect articles in someone else’s publication. But this decision is based upon the premise that faculty value what they own. So until convinced otherwise, I’ll continue this practice.

Appearance

On the publication’s masthead it may appear as though I have a rather full staff. The truth is that the very talented people who do the design, production, typesetting, additional proofreading, etc. are in the College Relations Office. An editor should know his own limitations, and I surely know mine. I could never illustrate my ideas and those of my contributors in the attractive, attention-getting manner they do.

Though we academic types profess not to like glitz, I’m not embarrassed to say that I think the appearance of a newsletter is critical. Appealing design is no substitute for good articles, of course, but even if content is first-rate, a ragged, paste-up, homemade appearance is not inviting to busy readers. The day of the typed, mimeographed, and corner-stapled faculty newsletter is gone. With the proliferation of desktop publishing, the job of creating a visually inviting publica-

tion is much easier than it used to be.

Our copy is set on a Macintosh. I am told that the type quality would be somewhat better if done on professional equipment, but for the difference in cost, this seems to be a good compromise. We do send our camera-ready version to a professional printer. Experience has taught me never to skimp on graphics, color or paper.

Finding Something to Print

Returning to the fly-fishing analogy, I am happy to say that experience teaches one the most likely places to cast. After learning this lesson, I can honestly say that soliciting articles has become one of my most pleasant challenges. For example, when the recipients of our faculty development grants for instructional enhancement complete projects, they are usually willing and often eager to share the results with colleagues. Collaborating with colleagues addresses one of the reasons I became a professor to begin with. Besides, this one source probably nets us more articles each year than any other.

A second source of articles is our brown bag lunch series, which we refer to as Teacher Talks. When a particularly valuable session takes place, the presenter can expect a call from me. My approach is to compliment the idea, then suggest that there are surely many other colleagues who would be interested in reading about his or her ideas. Given this scenario, I am seldom turned down.

The only other source I will mention is a bit more vague, but, I think, no less important. To locate potential authors, I always keep an ear to the ground for rumors about exceptional teaching. It goes without saying that it is necessary to rub elbows with faculty from every school and department on campus.

This is not always easy, but two of our teaching center’s programs help to make it possible. The first is the New Faculty Orientation each September, where, you may be sure, new colleagues are made aware of Reaching Through Teaching. The second is a program called Leadership Kennesaw State, where each year 25 to 30 faculty members from many disciplines meet monthly for an entire year to develop their leadership skills in various aspects of campus life, including teaching.

Both programs allow me to make many contacts which are very productive of good usable articles, and, I must add, are extremely rewarding personally.

Finally . . .

In closing, I want to summarize what we always try to do with Reaching Through Teaching:

1. Include topics that interest this faculty.
2. Seek variety of content.
3. Connect articles to the scholarship of teaching.
4. Print articles which are a culmination of dialogue about teaching between this office and the authors.
5. Make the issue attractive and readable.
6. Be generous with graphics, ink and paper.
7. Edit kindly and diplomatically, in collaboration with the authors.
8. Use multiple proofreaders and multiple proofreadings.
9. Be self-critical of the final result.
10. Write a thank-you letter to each author and send along three extra copies. (Faculty members have promotion and tenure committees to impress. They also have mothers.)