President’s Message

January affords us the opportunity to take stock of where we are as an organization and project where we’d like to be in the future. Here are my predictions for the upcoming year based upon past performance:

1. POD’s influence will grow through collaboration with national and international organizations in higher education. In one exciting initiative POD is partnering with the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) for two 2006 conferences. A second collaboration is underway at the national level, with POD members Todd Zakrajsek (Central Michigan University) and Leora Baron-Nixon (University of Nevada, Las Vegas) representing POD as members of the national advisory board of the Teaching, Learning and Technology Group (TLTG). On the international level POD will be represented by incoming President Jim Groccia (Auburn University) at the Staff and Educational Development Association of the United Kingdom (SEDA) conference and at the International Consortium for Educational Development (ICED) conference.

2. Excellent leadership will continue to guide the organization. The initiative and talent of the Core Committee helps drive POD toward continuous improvement. On behalf of POD I extend my thanks and appreciation to the members of the Core Committee who are rotating off, and look forward to welcoming incoming members at the Core Committee meeting in March. For more information on the Core Committee see, Core Committee Election News.

3. Attendance will increase at POD’s 31st conference to be held in Portland, Oregon, U.S.A. The 30th POD Conference saw a record attendance of 690, up 2% from a year ago and up 25% from 2000. The conference’s trademark feature, communal meals, has been retained throughout this period of growth.

In March, I become the immediate Past President of POD. I will be replaced by incoming President Jim Groccia, who in turn will be replaced as President-Elect by Mathew Ouellett (University of Massachusetts, Amherst). It has been an honor representing POD as President, and I look forward to working with Jim and Matt in our new roles.

Best wishes for the upcoming year.

— Virleen Carlson

Looking ahead to Portland

Dear Colleagues,

On behalf of the conference planning committee, it is my pleasure to announce that the 31st POD annual conference will be held October 25-29, 2006, in Portland, Oregon, U.S.A. Mark your calendars and look out for the call for proposals in early spring!

The conference theme is “Theory and Research for a Scholarship of Practice.” Many of us are hard at work documenting the effectiveness of traditional and innovative programs and approaches, and we chose this title to showcase the outstanding results produced when our practice is thoughtfully informed by existing data and wisdom. In the spirit of nurturing scholarship that has always characterized POD, this conference will create spaces that facilitate the exchange of ideas, encourage broad conversations about our field, and foster the networking that is the hallmark of POD!

The conference team is already planning to bring you another outstanding POD conference, with great sessions, expeditions, and other conference events. I am delighted to work with co-program chairs Peter Felten (Elon University) and Therese Huston (Seattle University) whose competence, dedication and creativity will greatly benefit the conference.

“Big city excitement and small town charm make Portland, known as ‘the City of Roses,’ a favorite destination in the West. Portland is situated approximately 70 miles from the Pacific and has a magnificent setting. Nestled beneath Mt. Hood, Portland’s unmatched natural beauty combines sparkling waterways with lush greenery rarely found in urban settings. Wherever you go in Portland, you’re never far from an art house cinema, performance space or gallery. You’re never more than five minutes from a brewpub or gourmet coffee shop, and always just a paddle’s jump away from a farmers market, park or garden. Portland’s historic old town, Saturday Market, and Waterfront Park are just a few of the many attractions the city offers” (Portland Oregon Visitors Association, 2005).

I hope to see all of you in beautiful Portland this fall. I am already counting the days (318 as I write this) to what is for me the most invigorating professional conference I attend!

~ Michele DiPietro, Conference Chair
News from the 30th annual POD Conference in Milwaukee

The 30th annual POD Conference in Milwaukee was a resounding success! Once again we had a record attendance (690 persons). Of this number 35 attendees were from outside North America. A marvellous energy could be felt in the hallways, in the workshops, at sessions and at meals, as new ideas and resources were shared, stories exchanged, new relationships formed, and old friends reconnected.

Kudos to Conference Chair, Latherine Wehburgh (Texas Christian University), and Co-Program Chairs Wayne Jacobson (University of Washington) and Angela Linse (Temple University), who did an outstanding job, offering members a smoothly organized conference packed with a variety of enriching opportunities and experiences. POD’s “pearl” anniversary did indeed reveal many “pearls of wisdom.” If you have not attended the annual POD conference make plans now to attend the 2006 Conference to be held in Portland, Oregon, U.S.A. The Call for Proposals will be posted on the POD webpage and distributed to POD members in early spring.

In recognition of his lifelong work and accomplishments, which have impacted so many persons throughout the world, the POD Network dedicated its 30th annual conference to Dr. Wilbert J. “Bill” McKeachie. A teacher of psychology since 1946, McKeachie has had a long and distinguished career at the University of Michigan, where he served as Chair of the Psychology Department, and founding Director of the Center for Research on Learning and Teaching. McKeachie has also served as editorial advisor to many journals in psychology, as President of the American Association of Higher Education, and as President of Division 2 of the American Psychological Association. Now an Emeritus Professor at the University of Michigan, McKeachie is also the author of the highly acclaimed McKeachie’s Teaching Tips: Strategies, research, and theory for college and university teachers.

Matt Kaplan (University of Michigan), introduced Dr. McKeachie. Former POD President Marilla Svinicki (University of Texas, Austin) gave a moving tribute to her former professor, and Conference attendees gave him a standing ovation.

McKeachie was thrilled with this tribute to his work. POD awarded Dr. McKeachie a lifetime achievement award several years ago.

Barbara Millis Receives POD 2005 Innovation Award

Long time POD member Barbara Millis (University of Nevada, Reno) was stunned at her selection as the 2005 POD Innovation Award winner. Her co-innovator, Mary Sedgwick (University of Nevada, Reno) was equally surprised. Their award winning innovation is a half-day retreat using cooperative learning approaches called “Send-a-Problem” and “Gallery Walk.” This project resulted in the redesign of an instrument used to observe student teachers and led to powerful discussions of the observation process and what constitutes good teaching and mentoring.

The POD Innovation Award recognizes new and innovative ideas in professional organizational development and is awarded each year at the national conference. To win the award, the idea must be more than innovative. It must have a demonstrated impact on teaching and learning, be relatively inexpensive to implement, and easy for others to replicate. This year the finalists for the award formed a strong contingent of ideas representative of the great ideas often shared by POD members.

Six Finalists Honored for Innovations

Six finalists, along with the winner, presented their ideas at the national conference. Devorah Lieberman (Wagner College), shared an innovative idea for impacting the culture of faculty development through partnerships with the community. Niki Young (Western Oregon University) and Brian Duggan (California State University Stanislaus) inaugurated a technology fair designed to show best practices in teaching and learning with technology. Karen Santos (James Madison University) developed a program and evaluation to assure that both facilitators and participants/representatives of professional development offerings realize benefits from their collaboration. Cathy Santanello (Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville) implemented internal course assessment using student assessment consultants. Kathleen King (Fordham University) used podcasting to facilitate, extend, and transform professional development for faculty members. Tina Parscal (Regis University) developed a two-week online workshop to help faculty design and integrate library activities into their courses.

Questions regarding the POD Innovation Award can be directed to Todd Zakrajsek (Central Michigan University) at <zakra11@cmich.edu> or by calling 989-774-2757. Keep track of any new programs or services you develop over the coming months and consider submitting them for consideration in Portland, Oregon at the POD Network meeting next fall.

Core Committee Election News

Matthew Ouellet (University of Massachusetts, Amherst) has been selected as the POD President-Elect. He will assume this position at the conclusion of the Core Committee meeting in March, 2006.

Five new members were elected to the Core Committee (2006-2009):
• Tuesday Cooper (Eastern Connecticut State University)
• Barbara Milis (University of Nevada, Reno)
• Leslie Ortquist-Ahrens (Oberlin College)
• Michael Reder (Connecticut College)
• Catherine Wehburgh (Texas Christian University)

Thanks to all the candidates for their willingness to assist POD and its members by volunteering their expertise and time for this important job!
Guest Column

Editor's Note: We are pleased to welcome Guest Columnist John Dearn, immediate past president of the Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia (HERDSA) and Vice-President and Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic) at the University of Canberra. This column is the first of a series of international exchanges. In the next issue our Guest Columnist will be Julie Christensen Hughes, president of the Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (STLHE) in Canada.

Measuring student learning outcomes in higher education – a view from Australia

It isn't often that higher education makes the front page of a national newspaper, but this is what happened recently in Australia. The occasion was the release of the first “official” ranking of Australia’s universities in terms of their learning and teaching performance. Official in this case means the Australian Commonwealth Government – Australia's universities are almost all public and under the control of the Commonwealth Government.

The ranking was derived using seven indicators related to student satisfaction, student success and student outcomes based on nationally available data.

Some highly regarded research intensive universities scored poorly which has initiated a fascinating debate about how excellence in learning and teaching should be measured and, indeed, whether it is possible to make such an assessment at all.

The ranking has added significance because it will be used as the basis for distributing a large amount of Commonwealth Government funding to those universities that best demonstrate excellence in learning and teaching. The project will raise the status of teaching in universities and is part of a major reform of higher education currently underway in Australia.

One effect of the current reform is greater attention is being paid to learning and teaching in our universities. This can only be welcomed by those of us committed to improving learning, teaching and scholarship in higher education but it does raise some interesting issues.

The effectiveness of faculty or academic staff development is one concern. Most universities allocate considerable resources to supporting learning and teaching. However, questions are increasingly being asked about the effectiveness of this investment, the models of staff development that are being used and how the outcomes of faculty or academic staff development can be measured.

In an environment of increasing accountability and funding pressure it is becoming clear that unless academic developers can provide evidence of their effectiveness in terms of improved student learning they risk being seen as ineffective.

A related concern is our capacity to provide evidence of what students are actually learning. The learning and teaching performance fund initiative in Australia has been criticised for using indirect indicators that do not actually measure student learning outcomes. Finding better ways of assessing student learning outcomes in higher education remains a critical and urgent challenge for us all.

These issues are not unique to Australia and represent a critical agenda for higher education worldwide. The Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia (HERDSA), the Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education of Canada (STLHE), POD and the Staff and Educational Development Association of the United Kingdom (SEDA), have an opportunity to play an important leadership role in shaping this debate.

~John Dearn

Books by POD members


New Collaboration to Offer Useful Resources

The Publications Committee is pleased to announce that a database of resources focused on a variety of teaching/learning topics is being assembled in a collaborative effort by POD and the National Teaching & Learning Forum (NTLF). The collaboration will include contributions and editorship by POD members, with the NTLF providing technical implementation and assistance. The goal of the project is to provide a centralized and highly useful resource for faculty developers and college faculty. The database will be accessible through the POD website. Arranged topically, each item will include a short overview, an annotated bibliography of the most influential, current, and useful resources, and a list of additional resources, both print and web-based. Topics will include course development, course management, assessment, diversity, instructional technology, teaching strategies, psychological foundations of teaching and learning, curriculum development, and graduate student teaching and learning development.

Changes at the POD Network

With regret, POD accepted the resignations of Kay and Frank Gillespie effective June 30, 2006. After inaugurating the position of Executive Directors and holding that office for five years, they plan to retire (again), which is the plan they were enjoying when they accepted this challenge five years ago.

The Gillespies will be feted at the Core meeting in Chicago on March 25, 2006. Correspondence, good wishes, and cards will reach them at the POD Network address or can be sent to President Virleen Carlson at <vcmc3@cornell.edu> for inclusion in the March meeting. All POD members are invited to participate in the send-off. President Virleen Carlson notes, “We will miss Kay and Frank for a long, long time, and remember with gratitude and thanks their excellent work and committed service as Executive Directors.”

The search for a new Executive Director falls under the leadership of POD’s immediate past President. The POD Network website at <http://www.podnetwork.org/> carries updated details of the search.
International News and Notes

Interest in faculty development internationally is growing rapidly, and POD continues to play a significant role in supporting and assisting this effort.

New Faculty Development Initiative in Thailand

The Ministry of Education in Thailand is sponsoring a national conference to promote faculty development. The conference will take place in March 2006. Former POD President Dee Fink, former POD President Nancy Chism (Indiana University Purdue University at Indianapolis) and POD member Tara Gray, (New Mexico State University) will lead plenary sessions at the Conference. Representatives from all colleges and universities are invited. Conference organizers expect 600 people will attend.

This effort began last year when seven Thai faculty members and administrators attended the 29th POD Conference in Montreal and then visited the faculty development programs at the University of Oklahoma and New Mexico State University. Following a fruitful exchange of ideas, the Thai team submitted a proposal to create a national program to foster faculty development in Thailand.

Becoming more International – Taiwan

• Former POD President Mary Deane Sorcinelli (University of Massachusetts, Amherst) gave the keynote address, “The Value of a Teaching and Learning Center for Faculty Development,” at the International Symposium on Excellence in Teaching and Learning hosted by Soochow University, in Taipei, Taiwan on December 10th, 2005.

• Mary Deane Sorcinelli, Mathew L. Ouellett and Mei-Yau Shih (University of Massachusetts, Amherst) presented talks on “Strategies for Effective Learning in the Digital Age,” at the National T'ai-Tung University, Tainan, and Shih Hsin University, Taipei.

• Mei-Yau Shih (University of Massachusetts, Amherst) presented talks on “Strategies for Effective Learning in the Digital Age,” at the National T'ai-Tung University, Tainan, and on “Teaching and Learning in the Digital Age: Challenges and Opportunities in Higher Education,” at the National Yi-Shou University, Kaohsiung, Taiwan on May 31st, 2005, and at the National Cheng-Kung University, Tainan, Taiwan on June 2nd, 2005.

Special Offer from National Teaching and Learning Forum

The National Teaching and Learning Forum marked its 15th anniversary with the publication of the October 2005 issue. To commemorate the anniversary, the publisher is offering all colleges and universities a 60-day complimentary site license that will provide full access to the current issue and past archives.

The Forum is a print and online resource that engages faculty in an ongoing conversation about college teaching and learning and provides stimulating insight for colleagues and researchers eager to share new and useful approaches to more effective teaching.

The 60-day trial is a wonderful way for POD members to introduce The Forum to their campuses and build support for obtaining a site license.

To register for the 60-day trial site license or for more information, sample articles, and subscription and site license pricing details, visit <www.NTLF.com> or call (608) 255-4469.
Conferences and Workshops

Collaboration Conference, February 17-18, 2006. This conference on Building a Learning-Centered Institution will feature John Tagg, author of The Learning Paradigm College, and Jillian Kinzie, Associate Director of the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) Institute. The conference will offer over 30 concurrent and pre-conference sessions, a panel discussion with educational leaders, and opportunities for free consulting on campus teaching and learning initiatives. The Early Bird registration deadline is January 23. For more information, visit <www.collab.org>.


2006 Colloquium on the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, April 1-2, 2006, Madison, Wisconsin, co-sponsored by The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, the University of Wisconsin Office of Professional and Instructional Development (OPID), and the UWS Leadership Site for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning. The theme of the 2006 Colloquium will be Evidence, Impact and Momentum. The Colloquium will be held at the Madison Concourse Hotel. Conference registration fees will include conference materials, a sponsored reception and dinner, continental breakfast, and all concurrent and plenary sessions. For more information go to <http://www3.uwm.edu/dept/leadership-site/proposal/06.cfm>.

Lilly-East Conference on College and University Teaching, April 7-8, 2006, University of Delaware, Newark. Pre-conference sessions 1:30 to 4:30 pm April 6. The 2006 Lilly Conferences will highlight the dynamic and interconnected nature of learning and teaching: Learning so Everyone Teaches. Featured presenters include POD members Ron Berk (Johns Hopkins University), Milton Cox (Miami University), Luz Mangurian, (formerly at Towson University), Barbara Millis (University of Nevada, Reno), and Todd Zakrajsek (Central Michigan University). Conference information and registration information is available at <http://www.udel.edu/lillyeast/index.html>. The proposal deadline is January 16, 2006. Proposals can be submitted electronically at <http://www.udel.edu/lillyeast/proposal/index.html>. For more information contact Gabriele Bauer via email <gabriele@udel.edu>.

Colloquium on the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, June 2, 2006, Middlesex Community College, Lowell, MA. We’re Teaching but Are Students Learning? Presented by the MCC Carnegie COPPER* Cluster and the New England Faculty Development Consortium. Featuring Barbara L. Cambridge, President, International Leadership Site for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, and Momentum. The Colloquium will be held at the Madison Concourse Hotel. For more information and registration information is available at <http://www.nefdc.org>.


Calls for Participation

Co-Editor. Nominations are being accepted for a Co-Editor, to work with Ed Neal, on the new POD/NTFL database. The co-editor will coordinate a network of POD and other contributors, and will provide POD members with ongoing updates on new items, needed items, etc. If interested, please apply or nominate by email to <leora.baron@unlv.edu> by February 15th, 2005.

Travel and Internship Grants. Travel Grants assist members of under-represented institutions such as Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Native American Tribal Colleges, Hispanic Serving Institutions or Hispanic Area Colleges and Institutions, or under-represented groups (e.g., Blacks, Hispanics, Asian-Americans, Native Americans, people of color) in attending and participating in the POD Conference and POD Network. The Internship Grant provides a POD member institution with funding of $4,000 to support an internship for a person of color who wishes to explore career opportunities in faculty/TA instructional development. The POD Network encourages applications from candidates who would benefit from these awards and who would bring a fresh perspective to POD. The deadline for the POD Network's 2006 travel and internship grants is Monday, May 1, 2006. For applications and more information about the application process go to <http://www.podnetwork.org/grants&awards.htm>.

National Teaching and Learning Forum. The Forum is always interested in articles from fellow POD members. Articles should be no longer than 1500 words. They may address any aspect of improving college teaching and learning and should advance our understanding of good teaching and learning. James Rhem, Executive Editor. Email: jrehem@chorus.net.
POD Essays on Teaching Excellence
Toward the Best in the Academy

We continue featuring a selected POD Essay on Teaching Excellence in each issue of the POD Network News. The essay series is available by subscription, and reproduction is limited to subscribers. This essay by John B. Bennett first appeared in the 2001-02 series.

TEACHING WITH HOSPITALITY
John B. Bennett, Quinnipiac College

Fortunately, hospitality is practiced more than it is preached. A cardinal academic virtue, hospitality is essential in the classroom as well as in relationships with colleagues. This essay looks at why this is so (Bennett, 1998; Bennett, in press).

Although we seldom speak of hospitality as an academic virtue, many of us do practice it. We sense that it is more than a lingering piety, something inherited from the past whose point and purpose is now obscure. In fact, I suggest, hospitality is a cardinal virtue, an essential requirement for what we are about, however much we may at times ignore or even abuse it.

Hospitality is essential to our calling because without genuine mutual sharing, the interactions that constitute educational activity become thin, impoverished transmissions of data, devoid of the excitement and the full personal impact that mark learning and its advancement. Without genuine openness to others, peer review is hobbled; and the conditions whereby knowledge can be validated, corrected, and expanded are not in place. Without the mutual openness and reciprocity of sharing that are the marks of hospitality, the academy and the classroom become flat and impoverished - reverting to collections or conglomerates of individuals, not communities of learning.

I suggest three ways in which the openness characteristic of hospitality can generate more satisfying teaching and learning. Faithfully practiced, hospitality yields more appreciation for the distinct gifts of the other, whether student or colleague; a greater comfort about the role and burden of being an authority; and more attention to the special responsibility educators have to others, a responsibility often captured by the concept “trust,” and best understood in terms of covenant, not contract.

The Gifts of Others and the Rules of Conversation

The hospitable teacher is genuinely open to the particularity of the other and to the possibility that the other who is learner can also teach. Hospitable teachers work with the students they have-not the ones they might wish for. The particularity of these others-their unique talents and skills, distinctive experiences, and caches of learning-become resources rather than matters of indifference, and certainly not liabilities.

As a result, the various competencies the instructor is attempting to promote take root in the individual’s own identity and personal experiences. Learning is not seen as foreign or imposed, but becomes part of who one is. Hospitable teaching empowers and liberates individuals rather than constraining them. When this does not happen, the price includes continued loneliness, isolation, and little self-understanding. In the hands of the hospitable teacher, however, the class is open to the multidirectional flow of discourse that occurs when its members share and augment each other’s learning and its implications for who they are and can become.

And hospitable teachers learn from colleagues as well as students. Many communities develop an ethos that works against these hospitable interactions. Jane Tompkins’ (1996) recent memoir recounts her struggles in academe with what she sees as a pervasive, destructive emphasis upon personal performance. The burden of her narrative is to question a widespread culture that too often places primary value on “appearing smart” and validates personal worth through what one knows (Astin, 1997).

Contrary to what Tompkins experienced, the hospitable academic setting is one in which each member of the community of learners is a resource for the other. Colleagues are not ignored, standards are not relaxed, and the plurality of viewpoints is engaged for the common good. In addition, the provisional character of knowledge is recognized. That the best of today may be revised and improved tomorrow provides grounds for hope, not a reason for relativism or nihilistic despair.

An engaging metaphor for this mutual sharing and reciprocity is the “conversation” of the academy. David Tracy (1987) summarizes what it might entail: “Conversation is a game with some hard rules: say only what you mean; say it as accurately as you can; listen to and respect what the other says, however different or other; be willing to correct or defend opinions if challenged by the conversation partner; be willing to argue if necessary, to confront if demanded, to endure necessary conflict, to change your mind if the evidence suggests it” (p. 19). When teachers model this conversation for their students, the best kinds of values, energy, and example are modeled.

The Teacher and Authority

The metaphor of hospitable conversation also says something about authority. Hospitable teachers work at setting to the side their natural preoccupation with issues of authority and control. This is no easy task because in some larger sense the teacher is clearly responsible for the class. Working to assure others, and oneself, that the class is moving toward (rather than
away from) the announced goals and learning objectives often means that one simply cannot withdraw from a position of authority.

Yet, attempting to exert authority and control can clearly stand in the way of class learning. Once again, Jane Tompkins' (1996) reflections can illustrate this point. After decades of thinking that she had always been helping students to understand material, she reports her eventual realization that in fact “what I had actually been concerned with was showing the students how smart I was, how knowledgeable I was, and how well prepared I was for class. I had been putting on a performance whose true goal was not to help the students learn...but to perform before them in such a way that they would have a good opinion of me” (p. 119).

This preoccupation with performance, as well as the traditional in locus parentis attitude that the professor knows the students’ interests best, work against the development of student initiative and autonomy. Comfortable routines and the instructor’s convenience can easily trump the good of the student. Resolution is to be found in the hospitality that is open to the other but does not deny anyone’s identity and experience. Hospitable instructors use the strengths of their personality in the service of student learning. This is the middle way between the nondirective presence of one kind of instructor and the rigid authoritarianism or performance orientation of another.

**Hospitality and the Covenantal Community**

Teachers have a position of trust—a fiduciary responsibility for advancing the welfare and good of the student, not their own good. Being hospitable is another way of speaking of this responsibility. It points us toward, and helps create, the covenantal, not the contractual, community. The covenantal relationship involves committing with others to a common good, promoted through open exchange and reciprocity. Each gives others the right to ask for insight, to provide criticism, and to place a claim upon some of the individual’s time. Each accepts obligations to listen, respond and help the other. The greater the diversity of members, the greater (because the richer) the common good—so long as members remain respectful of each other and are committed to advancing the common good through incorporating members’ individual gifts.

The model of the covenantal community is often obscured by elements of the social contract, a competing model. The contract sets the limits of the interactions and specifies a narrow set of rights and responsibilities.

Other elements of this contractual view are familiar. Individuals are locked inside themselves, self-absorbed and preoccupied because they are cut off from all but transactional relationships with others. Fear is a primary emotion since others may threaten one’s own standing and security. Power is understood and sought as control rather than collaboration since advance by the other is often defeat for the self; and community is but a utilitarian convenience for an aggregation of rugged individualists where the goods of each are simply pooled rather than shared.

The list could be extended, but everything named reflects the notion of self as a substantial entity that has relationships rather than emerging from them. With its emphasis on control, the contractual concept lends itself to an emphasis upon teaching rather than learning.

By contrast, the concept of the covenantal community draws our attention to selves as relational—as constituted by relations with others and as helping to constitute them in turn. Individuals are ends, not simply means; and as ends they can contribute significantly to the experience of others. The covenantal concept directs us to the importance of the learning paradigm (Barr & Tagg, 1995) and its priority over that of teaching. Hence the importance of practicing hospitality—being open to sharing and to receiving, to being host as well as guest to the other.

**References**


This publication is part of an 8-part series of essays originally published by The Professional & Organizational Development Network in Higher Education.

**Essays on Teaching Excellence: -Provoke Thought, Discussion, and Action!**

The annual series of POD Essays on Teaching Excellence, begun in 1989, is a publication that can be used to promote significant faculty/administrative discussions --and action--on matters of currency and importance in the academy.

The series is available by subscription at reduced cost to POD members, and it is available in either a print version or HTML version. The subscription allows reproduction of the print version within the confines of the subscribing institution, and the HTML version can be posted on a website as long as the site is firewalled.

Each series includes 8 essays. The 2005-06 series includes the following topics:

- Patricia Comeaux, “Assessing Students’ Online Learning: Strategies and Resources.”
- Ron Berk, “LAUGHTER-PIECE Theatre: Humor as a Systematic Teaching Tool.”
- Laura Border, “Teaching Portfolios for Graduate Students: Process, Content, Product, and Benefits.”
- Marilla Svinicki, “From Passive to Active Learning: Helping Students Make the Shift.”
- Ruth Federman Stein and Sandra Hurd, “Student Teams, Teaching, and Technology.”
- Margaret Snooks, “Practice Tests as Innovative Teaching Method.”
- Mick La Lopa, “Student-Centered Assessment Techniques to Facilitate Greater Student Learning.”

For more information or to subscribe, contact the POD Office or go to the “Publications” link on the POD website <podnetwork.org>.
Contacting the POD Office

It is our goal at the POD office to respond to members’ questions, concerns, needs, and interests as courteously and promptly as possible. Please contact us at the address below if we can assist you.

Frank and Kay Gillespie, Executive Directors
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