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I have found it helpful over my career in faculty development to have a big picture of the teaching and learning process from which to plan specific faculty development activities. Models are useful because they help us see the holistic interconnectivity among fragments. A visual model provides a guide for thinking about what actions we should take, or suggest others take, when planning faculty development activities to improve teaching and student learning. The model I have developed shows college teaching is expressed in seven complex interrelated variables that influence one another: teacher, learner, learning process, learning context, course content, instructional processes, and learning outcomes.

These seven variables are not new to most faculty or faculty developers, however, many of us, for a variety of reasons, do not fully address the complexity of the teaching and learning enterprise. As a result, our efforts at educational improvement often focus on one or two variables (such as content and method) while neglecting the other variables. Faculty development programs should regularly offer activities that address each of these seven variables.

**Teacher:** Understanding who individual teachers are and what they bring to the learning situation can affect the quality of that experience. An instructor’s background (socio-economic status, race, gender, age, and culture), preparation (education, teaching experience and training) and individual characteristics (thinking, learning and personality styles, attitudes, values, integrity, and knowledge of subject) color one’s teaching and relationships with students. The more faculty members understand about themselves the better able they will be to capitalize on their strengths, minimize weaknesses, and improve teaching and learning.

**Learner:** Learners differ in the same ways that teachers differ. Students’ backgrounds, preparation and individual characteristics influence how, when and why they learn. Armed with this knowledge (which needs to be reassessed regularly because students change frequently) faculty members are better able to teach their students in ways that are appropriate to their skills, interests and needs.

**Learning Process:** In the past hundred years, human learning has been extensively researched. This research, however, is not fully utilized in the college classroom, laboratory, or out-of-class learning environment. Many faculty members focus on what they do in the classroom, on implementing some teaching strategy (i.e., cooperative learning or lecturing) without understanding the effectiveness of these approaches. Improved teaching should be grounded in an understanding of the research on the mechanics and transfer of learning.

**Learning Context:** Learning does not occur in a vacuum; where and when teaching takes place

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*Continued on page 3*
Notes from the POD Office

Snowed-in greetings from Colorado....

We had another record turnout for the 2006 POD conference with 744 members attending. As of January 1, over 30% of conference attendees completed the web-based Zoomerang conference evaluation survey. The feedback is being summarized and analyzed and will be used in the planning of the 2007 conference in Pittsburgh.

POD has been working closely with Dot.Inc to create a new online conference proposal submission process. It is hoped that the new layout and functionality will make the proposal process more user-friendly and efficient. As always, POD member feedback is encouraged and welcome.

Congratulations to the following POD Start-Up Grant recipients, each of whom received $300 to support budding faculty development activities on campus:

- Heide Hlawaty, Audrey Cohen School for Human Services and Education, Metropolitan College of New York;
- Carolyn B. Oxenford, Marymount University;
- Eron Drake, Montcalm Community College;
- Nan Peck, Northern Virginia Community College.

Thanks to Milton Cox and Todd Zakrajske of the POD Regional Outreach Subcommittee for their continued assistance with Start-Up Grant operations.

Best wishes to everyone for a great 2007!

– Hoag Holmgren, Executive Director

POD Welcomes 2007-10 Core Committee Members

Congratulations to the five new Core Committee members and sincere thanks to all fifteen candidates for their willingness to serve and guide The POD Network in Higher Education.

Class of 2010
Wayne Jacobson, University of Washington;
Kathryn M. Plank, Ohio State University;
Lois Reddick, New York University;

Douglas Reimondo Robertson, Northern Kentucky University;
and
Nancy Simpson, Texas A & M University.

THOSE WHO CAN, Write about Teaching

Announcing the second group of Essays in Teaching Excellence, to be published this spring. These include:
• Motivating Generation Y in the Classroom. Jim Westerman, Appalachian State University;
• Everything You Always Wanted to Know about Writing (but Were Afraid to Ask). Michael Reder, Connecticut College.
• Opening the Door: Creating Institutions that Support Teachers and Learners. Richard Holmgren, Allegheny College.

Do you have a 1500 word essay on teaching burning in your brain and struggling to get out? Tell me about it and we’ll decide whether it is ready for publication. Write Elizabeth O’Connor Chandler, editor of the Essays in Teaching Excellence at echandle@uchicago.edu
influences teaching and learning at both the macro and micro level. Classroom variables, such as seating plan, room size and design, and accessibility to instructional technology influence (and occasionally dictate) teaching strategies and student learning. Learning context includes the emphasis an educational institution places on instruction, its mission and purpose, and the process of resource and reward allocation, which can influence what faculty and students do in and out of the classroom. Local, state, national, and even international priorities shape what is taught, what our students learn and know, and even how we teach.

Course Content: Analysis of the accuracy, difficulty level, organization and meaningfulness of what is taught can improve teaching. With the ever-increasing expansion of knowledge in many disciplines and the corresponding demands this places upon students, faculty need to ensure that their course content is necessary, challenging, and well organized. Regularly reviewing curriculum and assessing course design is vital. What we teach students, how we integrate material across individual courses and how we relate our courses and majors to success in the field should concern every one of us.

Instructional Processes: What faculty do in the instructional environment is also important. The teaching strategies (competitive, cooperative, individual teaching techniques, computer aided instruction, etc.), teacher behaviors (such as oral and written communication skills, enthusiasm, organization, time management) and student learning responses (note-taking, class participation, student engagement and interaction, etc.) make up the teaching and learning in any course.

Learning Outcomes: The desired results of teaching should be identified at the beginning, during the course design process, before teaching occurs, and assessed on a regular basis throughout the instructional process. What faculty members do should be measured in light of what they want students to learn. Student learning can be assessed in a variety of ways.

This model for understanding the teaching and learning process can be a useful tool to guide us in our instructional improvement and faculty development efforts. The variables in this model are interrelated (as the lines in the model illustrate), each affecting the others; manipulating one variable will affect the others in ways that need to be analyzed and understood as faculty embark on instructional change.

I present this model to faculty members to help them develop a more academic and holistic view of teaching and learning. I also use the model in conversations with faculty members to describe the richness and complexity of the educational enterprise as well as for ensuring that our faculty development programming is broad and comprehensive. In this way, I hope to portray teaching and learning as multi-dimensional activity, difficult to master yet responsive to improvement efforts from many directions.

~Jim Groccia

POD has a new logo!

The stylized tree on the new logo is a symbol of our work, enabling and promoting growth and change through a variety of skills, strategies, research and programs. The three branches of the tree with their distinct colors indicate difference and our mutual respect for difference. The branches blend together and their circular holistic shape indicates the networked and connecting nature of POD. The colors represent growth, change, dynamic interaction, and differences.

In Memoriam

Long time POD member Elizabeth “Libby” Rankin died January 6, 2006. Rankin served on the faculty of the University of North Dakota for over 20 years. She directed the University Writing Program and became the Director of the Office of Instructional Development. She authored two books on writing, facilitated writing seminars on campus, and consulted at universities throughout the United States. She will be remembered for her dedication to teaching and learning. Donations to the Libby Rankin Memorial Fund will be used for the Advancement of Teaching and Writing.
New POD Web site soon to be launched

The web page redesign is nearly complete, with new photos, menus, layout and colors. Several new features will be added to the website, including a “What’s new” section, a “Members only” section, a site map, and site search capability. The website is an extension of POD and offers members an additional way to continually seek professional development and promote collegiality all year long. Visit it often, tell us what you think, let us know about great links – if something isn’t there, let us know. Join the Electronic Communication and Resources Committee if you would like to be even more closely involved in this exciting undertaking!

— Connie Schroeder
University of Wisconsin Madison
connies@uwm.edu

Ed Nuhfer Receives POD 2006 Innovation Award

Long-time POD member Ed Nuhfer of Idaho State University took home the top prize of the POD 2006 Innovation Award. Ed accepted his award at the POD Annual Conference, in Portland, Oregon, U.S.A. His idea centered on redesigning faculty orientation to make it informative and fun, moving from common models of a parade of 20 minute talking heads.

The POD Innovation Award recognizes new and innovative ideas in professional organizational development and is awarded each year at the national conference. This year 26 strong submissions were considered for the award. 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.

Seven finalists shared their ideas and were recognized at the award ceremony Saturday evening at the annual conference. Chris O’Neil, et al. (University of Michigan) developed a rubric to help write and evaluate the teaching philosophy. Steward Ross (Minnesota State University at Mankato) created an innovative teaching certificate program. Ellen Lavelle (Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville) integrated diverse voices and experiences via panel discussions. Mildred Pearson (Eastern Illinois University) promoted a ‘wholesome’ professor by balancing physical activity, mental activity, emotionality, and health issues. Sunay Palsole and Shawn Miller (University of Texas at El Paso) collaborated on a structured training program for faculty integrating technology into their teaching. Susan Marnell Weaver (University of the Cumberlands) created bookmarks with reference to online sites linked to the course text. Mary Wright (University of Michigan) used mentorships to assist future faculty members with their roles as teachers.

More information about this and past award winners can be found at the POD Network website at the following address: http://www.wku.edu/teaching/db/podbi/

Questions regarding the POD Innovation Award can be directed to Todd Zakrajsek (Central Michigan University) at zakraT@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 Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, U.S.A. at the POD Network meeting next fall.
Grant Recipients Recognized

The Diversity Committee sponsored a special session on “Faculty Development through a Lens of Diversity and Inclusiveness” at the POD conference in Portland. Eleven recipients of the 2006 Travel Grants participated in this engaging session. Travel grants were awarded to:

- Hannah Chambers, Oakwood College;
- Natasha Flowers, Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis;
- Deborah Freckleton, Bethune-Cookman College;
- Mario Gonzales, New Mexico Highlands University;
- Michael Jennings, University of Texas at San Antonio;
- Janice Lovelace, Everett Community College;
- Jacqueline Phillips-Farr, Talladega College;
- Nicole Powell, Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis;
- Marie-Therese Sulit, University of Minnesota;
- Edlyn Vallejo Peña, University of Southern California; and
- Etta Ward, Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis.

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 Diversity Committee’s Faculty/TA Instructional Development Internship Grant was awarded to the Office for Multicultural Professional Development at Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis. This grant provides a POD member institution with funding to support an internship for a person of color who wishes to explore career opportunities in Faculty/TA instructional development.

Information about next year’s Diversity Committee Travel and Internship Grants, see http://www.podnetwork.org/grants&awards.htm. The application deadline for both Grants will be May 1, 2007.

— Wayne Jacobson
University of Washington
jacobson@cidr.washington.edu

Members on the Move

Alan Altany, formerly Director of the Coulter Faculty Center at Western Carolina University, is now Director of the Center for Excellence in Teaching at Georgia Southern University in Statesboro, Georgia.

Bill Roberson, formerly Director of Instructional Support Services at the University of Texas at El Paso, is now Director of the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning, University at Albany, State University of New York. His new contact information is wroberson@albany.edu.

Congratulations

To Dick Walters, Emeritus Professor, University of California at Davis, the recipient of a $10,000 Dickson Emeriti Professorship. The Dickson Professorships are monetary awards for retired University of California faculty to keep them involved in teaching, research, and public service. Walters plans to use the money to continue his workshops on teaching, learning, and technology, which emphasize the art and science of teaching. Walters was also recently elected President of the UC Davis Emeriti Association.

To Cynthia Desrochers, Professor of Education, California State University Northridge, and a project leader for a $680,000 Fund for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education (FIPSE) grant to support case stories of exemplary teaching practices for use in faculty development workshops. The MERLOT ELIXR project team includes the California State University Center for Distributed Learning and eight California State University campuses; three MERLOT state system partners: Minnesota, Georgia, and Oklahoma; four individual campuses: Coastline Community College in California, Indiana State University, Brigham Young University, and The Ohio State University; and the Teach the Earth repository for Geoscience faculty.
Class in the Classroom

Lee Warren, Harvard University

Class is an often invisible form of difference. Yet it is there all the time, affecting how and what students learn at every turn. It pervades the values and the purposes of colleges and universities. It contributes to determining the courses offered and the books read and discussed. Still, it is a diversity issue rarely acknowledged.

Class is also very difficult to define. Ask a group to divide itself according to class, and chaos ensues. What is the difference between rural and urban poor? What about professionals who make very little money? What role does education, neighborhood, or kind of work play in the definition? For the purposes of this essay, I am going to draw the roughest of cuts between working class, middle class, and upper class recognizing the inexactitude of the division and assuming that most people have a general sense of what is meant - even though this is disconcerting. The descriptions offered here represent what people have said in workshops on the subject, in which they have discussed their own experiences as students.

How does class affect learning?

Lower class. The biggest factor affecting learning for lower class students is a lack of confidence based on real or perceived weaknesses in preparation. These students often come to college with a lower level of academic skills and sophistication than their middle and upper class peers. Not surprisingly, this affects their performance in the classroom. It also affects their perception both of their ability to do well and of their place in higher education. Although many are just as well prepared, uncertainty can lead them to be quieter and less visibly engaged in classroom encounters.

In addition, these students tend to be less able to work the system. They often have more difficulty navigating rules and regulations and finding the right people to help them. Moreover, many have trouble finding courses and majors that address their interests and needs and acknowledge their experience. Most of them need to work while attending school, which limits the amount of time available for study and can impact their program of study. So these students often feel unwelcome. They are very aware of class and of place and position.

On the more positive side, working class students are keenly aware of the value of higher education, tend to be highly motivated, and know how to work hard. They are often characterized by a fierce determination and goal-orientation. They have a strong work ethic and often manage hair-raising schedules of work,family, and college, pulling off the demands of each with grit and a clear sense of purpose. They understand diversity and appreciate what they have. Confusingly, they are both loyal to their class background and often in the process of moving to the middle class. This sometimes creates difficulties for them at home.

Middle class. Middle class students are the least aware of class. They assume a place in the institution, and they come fairly well prepared for higher education, although there is a wide range in their preparation. They are more protected than the lower class students and somewhat more naive, as well as more confident. They assume they will succeed and are prepared to work hard. Many work outside of school, though not as much as lower class students; and they see working as both an advantage and a disadvantage. They know how to play the game, but not quite as broadly as their upper class colleagues. Often they need some help with academic skills but usually have the basics in place.

Upper class. Upper class students generally come to college best prepared. They are also often skilled and sophisticated in the ways of the system. Their assumption that the system is there for them enables them to work the rules to their advantage. Because they are confident in their place, they are likely to speak up in class and to assume that their ideas will be heard; and they feel free to take risks because of their social and economic safety net. They experience a wide choice of careers and significant exposure to the world of travel, education, and art. They tend to be ambitious and value success, community responsibility, hard work, and excellence.

Many upper class students, like the lower class students, are intensely aware of class and may be embarrassed about their advantages. They may often try to hide their class background, while at the same time taking their privileges for granted. They feel at a disadvantage in understanding and communicating with people of other classes and feel they have a limited perspective that can leave them insensitive to others’ issues.

How can we recognize class differences in the classroom?

Class differences are not always easy to detect. However, some signals do exist. Yet even listing these signals is risky: for every example there is likely to be a counter-example. Nonetheless, it is important to have some suggestions of what to look for if we are to become more sensitive
to class differences and thus more inclusive pedagogically.

Language. In many parts of the country, class differences are sharply defined by accent, which can, of course, also be deceptive. In addition to accent, however, are varying vocabulary levels, which can signal levels of academic preparation and sophistication, often class-related.

Academic readiness. Differing levels of preparation and academic sophistication can sometimes be attributed to class background and the quality of previous schooling. They can also affect levels of participation. Quiet students are sometimes quiet because they are not trials as they move towards discovery. The instructor intercedes only to remove insurmountable obstructions. Student involvement is normally intense with a final eureka experience at the moment of discovery, a natural reinforcer of the learning experience (Bruner, 1971).

Problem-based learning (PBL) shares attributes of discovery learning but in its purest forms is more unstructured than the discovery learning approach. It uses “real world” problems as a context for students to learn critical thinking and problem solving skills and to acquire knowledge of the essential concepts of the course. In the typical PBL process, the instructor poses a problem for a small group of students to solve. Although students may have some prior knowledge related to the problem, it is not sufficient to solve the problem. After organizing what they do know, the students then identify “learning issues” that guide further research and investigation. Students share the information from individual investigations and bring it to bear on the problem at hand, working towards resolution (Norman & Schmidt, 1992).

Creating “Teachable Moments”

Instructors can also engender uncertainty by exposing students to concepts or ways of thinking that conflict with their current beliefs or ways of thinking. By creating “teachable moments” in which learners experience cognitive dissonance, instructors upset students’ equilibrium, stimulate their curiosity, and make them more willing to reflect upon current understanding of the concept (Hansen, 1998). For example, on the first day of class, before discussing the course syllabus, students in an introductory psychology class develop a collective concept map in which they organize the names, terms, and concepts they associate with psychology. After doing this, the instructor distributes the course syllabus and asks students to compare the class concept map with the class syllabus. Inevitably the class concept map is heavily skewed towards abnormal psychology, while the course syllabus addresses the foundations of normal psychology including sensation, perception, learning, memory, intelligence, and personality with no discussion of abnormal psychology. A well-constructed true-false test that exposes students’ misconceptions about a discipline can engender a similar receptive attitude to learning. In both cases instructors expose learners’ implicit understanding of a concept as well as its inadequacy as a stimulus for learning.

Finally, instructors can create cognitive dissonance by developing and juxtaposing two equally compelling but conflicting assertions about a particular phenomenon or concept. The technique emulates the use of succinct paradoxical statements or questions known as “koans” as a meditation discipline for students of Zen Buddhism. The effort to “solve” a koan arouses an intense spirit of seeking and a compelling sense of doubt, intended to exhaust the analytic intellect and the egoistic will and force discovery through intuition (Watts, 1989). The early founders of quantum theory experienced similar states of doubt and tension as early atomic experiments suggested a reality quite different from Newtonian physics, grounded as it was in human sensory awareness. By exposing students to some of the contradictions raised by modern physics, for example, physics instructors can stimulate comparable states of doubt and tension that demand resolution. For example, the Newtonian model suggests that the speed of light changes and time is constant, while modern physics suggests the opposite. (Capra, 1983).

Summary

Uncertainty plays an important role in the natural learning process. By consciously incorporating it into classrooms as a stimulus to learning, instructors allow students to experience the thrill and challenge of intellectual discovery and genuine learning. At the same time, they can help students appreciate the dynamic nature of knowledge construction and their vital role in the process.

References


This publication is part of an 8-part series of essays originally published by The Professional & Organizational Development Network in Higher Education. For more information about the POD Network, browse to http://www.podnetwork.org.
Member News

Editor’s Note: We are pleased to expand coverage of member news in the POD newsletter, per the recommendation of the Publications Committee. Members are invited to inform the membership of their promotions, new positions, publications, keynote address, invited presentations or workshops (not including for-profit consulting). Information may be submitted electronically to the editor at youngn@wou.edu.

Presentations

Christ also presented three online teaching/learning workshops in August, 2006 to faculty of South Plains College, Levelland, Texas, USA:
- “What Instructors and Students Need to Know About Online Courses”
- “Best Practices for Faculty Experienced in Teaching Online Courses”
- “Essential Information for Faculty New to Teaching Online Courses or Wondering About Teaching Online.”

Todd Zakrjashe, Director of the Faculty Center for Innovative Teaching at Central Michigan University, has been invited to give the opening plenary address at the Teaching Professor Conference in Atlanta Georgia, May 18 – 20, http://www.teachingprofessor.com/programs.html. Todd has also recently given 1 keynote and 4 invited workshops:
- “Learning Portfolios: Reflective Practice for Improving Student Learning,” University of Delaware, Winter Faculty Institute, 8 Jan. 2007.

Joseph M. “Mick” La Lopa gave a keynote for Sullivan University: “Lessons Learned from Practicing, Researching, and Teaching Other Faculty the Pedagogy of Problem-Based Learning.” Keynote to kick off the Sullivan University Quality Enhancement Project 2006/2007 Problem-Based Learning Faculty Advance Conference in Bardstown, KY. November 3, 2006.

- “Using the Learning Portfolio to Improve Student Learning,” University of Nevada-Reno, 2 Feb. 2007.
- “Facebook, MySpace, RateMyProfessor.com: Popular Communication or Devil’s Playground?” Lilly-South Conference on College & University Teaching, 16-17 Feb. 2007.

Frank L Christ, Emeritus, California State University Long Beach, recently presented 2 keynote conference addresses and one pre-conference institute:
- “Learning Assistance Leadership & Technology,” keynote at the 32nd annual conference of the Association for College Tutoring and Learning Assistance (ACTLA), in Berkeley, California, USA, April, 2006. At this conference, he was presented with a Lifetime Achievement Award from the association.
- “Technology: Professional Development Challenges/Opportunities” keynote at the annual conference of the National College Learning Center Association (NCLCA) in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, USA, October 2006.
- “Helping Course Instructors Integrate Learning Assistance in Their Online Courses” pre-conference institute at annual conference of the College Reading and Learning Association (CRLA) in Austin, Texas, USA, October 2006.

Todd Zakrjashe, Director of the Faculty Center for Innovative Teaching at Central Michigan University, has been invited to give the opening plenary address at the Teaching Professor Conference in Atlanta Georgia, May 18 – 20, http://www.teachingprofessor.com/programs.html. Todd has also recently given 1 keynote and 4 invited workshops:
- “Learning Portfolios: Reflective Practice for Improving Student Learning,” University of Delaware, Winter Faculty Institute, 8 Jan. 2007.

John Zubizarreta, Director of Honors & Faculty Development at Columbia College recently gave 3 presentations:
In the Spotlight: Teaching and Learning as a National Enterprise

Both Australia and New Zealand have placed a high priority on profiling teaching and learning in their current national reform strategies. While New Zealand is still in the process of determining its focus, Australia has progressed rapidly with its push towards recognition and rewarding quality teaching.

When first implemented in 2005, the Learning and Teaching Performance Fund prompted considerable discussion as it tied university funding to the rankings from the assessment process. There have been amendments to the criteria for the second round to increase the accuracy of the analysis, but there remain significant challenges in finding suitable measures for national benchmarking of institutional teaching outcomes. The strategy is being reviewed with some interest in New Zealand as a way of recognising institutions who have aimed to build strong support for teaching and learning. The exercise has been very beneficial in encouraging institutional consideration of the ways they can generate positive and effective student experiences and outcomes.

The Carrick Institute for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education is a second recent Australian government initiative. The Institute acts as a national focal point for encouraging quality teaching and exploration of teaching-related issues. Its areas of major activity relate to rewarding quality teaching, promoting scholarship of teaching and learning and encouraging discipline-based activities.

The Australian Awards for University Teaching, a highly regarded and longstanding national recognition scheme, have now been expanded from 13 to 260 awards. This has been carefully handled to ensure the value of being recognised is not diminished. 210 citations recognised teaching leaders, librarians, student support officers and university teachers who have strongly assisted student learning. In addition, the Institute will continue its smaller scheme where it recognises individual teaching excellence and programs that enhance learning. These awards are very prestigious and strongly profile the need to provide quality learning and teaching leadership.

Scholarship of learning and teaching is receiving a similar boost with the recent bestowal of three inaugural Carrick Senior Fellowships and eight Associate Fellowships. These prestigious awards will promote the value and importance of research relating to learning and teaching in a more public and credible manner. This is particularly critical as a new Research Quantum Framework emerges in 2007. (The Research Quantum will identify and reward quality research – but it is likely that teaching and learning will be only marginally recognised through this system as the publication routes are less well-recognised.)

It is very exciting to see the increased emphasis on teaching and learning across the two nations. The government initiatives have provided an important stimulus to the higher education community through their recognition and encouragement of quality learning and teaching. This level of sponsorship also promotes increased consideration of teaching and learning by policy makers and university leaders. The advocacy roles of the Carrick Institute for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education, its New Zealand equivalent and HERDSA in promoting the value of learning and teaching research and scholarship to those who judge research outcomes will also be very important.

As the stakes for teaching and learning increase, there will be an increasing focus on how each academic can contribute to the overall institutional and national positioning of this critical activity. Although the government strategies are generating wider interest and commitment from institutions, the effect of change is largely dependent on the work of each individual. There is still much work to be done by HERDSA and its members in making teaching and learning a fundamental concern for all who work in universities. But at least we are now in good company!

– Professor Shelda Debowski
President, HERDSA
Conferences and Workshops


The 6th International Institute for New Faculty Developers will be held June 24-29, 2007 at the University of Ottawa, Canada. Information at http://www.iinfd.org.

Inaugural conference - The SoTL Commons: A Conference for the Scholarship of Teaching & Learning will be held November 1 - 2, 2007 on the campus of Georgia Southern University (Statesboro, Georgia) sponsored by the Center for Excellence in Teaching. Keynote Speaker will be Dr. Mary Taylor Huber (Carnegie Academy for the Advancement of Teaching) and the featured Speaker will be Dr. Robert Beichner (Department of Physics, North Carolina State University). Early registration is underway and the submission of proposals period begins January 15, 2007. The conference web site is at http://www.georgiasouthern.edu/ijsotl/conference/

Books by POD members


Recently translated into Arabic:
The POD-IDEA Center Learning Notes address each of the 12 IDEA learning objectives, providing background information, helpful hints, assessment issues, and additional resources — many of which are online. The series compliments the 20 POD-IDEA Center Notes, published last year, and will provide a wonderful resource for guiding effective teaching.

Pod and IDEA have a long history of involvement in faculty development and teaching improvement and both organizations are dedicated to enhancing teaching and learning. The IDEA form was developed as a diagnostic tool to allow better understanding of the dynamics of teaching and learning and to be able to link teaching behaviors with the instructional objectives teachers have in mind for their students. Thus, the data can and should be used as a guide for enhancing teaching and learning. The purpose of these “Notes” is to provide users with a first reference in support of that goal. Although, this series of “notes” was developed primarily as a resource for users of the IDEA student ratings system, the topics addressed are important to anyone who teaches and should also serve as a valuable resource to those who do not use the IDEA system.

The “Notes” contain four sections:

- **Background.** Provides a context for the item and the rationale for its relevance.
- **Helpful Hints.** Describes three or four ways one might successfully employ this method.
- **Assessment Issues.** Describes ways to assess the teaching method or student learning goals related to the method.
- **References and Resources.** Lists resources that often provide background, theory and additional suggestions for improving teaching.

We hope that this series of notes will serve you well in your continued efforts to deliver high quality instruction.

— Mike Theall, Series Editor, POD

— Amy Gross & Bill Pallett, IDEA Center

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**New International Journal and Discussion List**


You are invited to join our international IJ-SoTL discussion list for any and all things connected with SoTL and the improvement of student learning: http://www.georgiasouthern.edu/ij-sotl/dl.htm. There are currently about 250 international subscribers.

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**Seeking Associate Editor for To Improve the Academy**

Members of POD are invited to apply for the position of Associate Editor for *To Improve the Academy*, beginning in the academic year of 2007-2008. The work involved is rewarding and of tremendous service to POD and the larger higher education community. While the duties are not overwhelming, it is a four-year commitment — two as Associate Editor and two as Editor. Responsibilities include, but are not limited to distributing the Call for Proposals, selecting reviewers, reading and editing manuscripts, and communicating with Anker Publishing Co., Inc.

Essential qualifications:

- Outstanding organizational skills
- Attention to details
- Excellent writing/editing and proofreading skills
- Adherence to strict deadlines
- Firm command of the faculty development literature

If you are qualified and interested in serving, please request an application form by email to Linda B. Nilson at nilson@clemson.edu.

The deadline for applications is March 2, 2007.
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.

POD Network News is published by the Professional and Organizational Development Network in Higher Education as a member service of the POD Network. Member contributions are encouraged and should be sent directly to the Editor.

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Bookmark POD’s Web site at www.podnetwork.org

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