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Part IV: Improving Teaching and Learning

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Part IV

Improving Teaching and Learning

Helping teachers to help their students learn better is obviously a major concern of most faculty development programs. The articles in this section present a number of ideas and techniques for improving teaching and learning—most of them predicated on recognizing and dealing with the diversity of students' interests and learning needs. William M. Welty, in "Discussion Method Teaching: A Practical Guide," describes an approach geared to faculty members who have little experience with discussion and aimed at actively involving students in learning. In "Feminist Pedagogy and Education in Values," Mark T. Brown argues that courses grappling with questions of ethics and values all too often treat these questions in a way that fails to connect with the concerns of all students, particularly women and minority students. The alternative he offers would revise both the substance and the pedagogy of such courses.

M. Neil Browne, Nancy K. Kubasek, and Julie A. Harris also take up the issue of feminist pedagogy in their article on "The Challenge to Critical Thinking Posed by Gender-Related and Learning Styles Research." This piece examines the implications for the teaching of critical thinking of these two streams of research. Lastly, Barbara J. Millis, in "Helping to Make Connections: Emphasizing the Role of the Syllabus," describes a faculty development program that emphasizes the importance of the syllabus within a college that serves adult students. Her article contends that the syllabus provides a crucial means of "connecting" faculty and students from the outset of a course.