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Section V: Enhancing Teaching-Learning and Classroom Climate

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Section V

Enhancing Teaching-Learning and Classroom Climate

Since the beginnings of faculty development in the early 1960's, professionals in the field have been asked to perform dozens of functions, but one has remained central: helping faculty improve teaching and learning. If there is a single *raison d'être* for faculty developers, this is it. Approaching their task with extraordinary energy and dedication, faculty developers have become true pioneers and innovators in the area of teaching-learning. Indeed, they have become some of the most assiduous students of the craft of teaching. And what they learn they generously share. Over the years faculty development professionals have made invaluable contributions to the literature of teaching-learning. The authors contributing to this final Section carry on this honorable tradition.

The opening essay, Peter J. Frederick's "The Medicine Wheel: Emotions and Connections in the Classroom," recommends a model of teaching-learning in which the affective dimension plays a primary role. Deploring the fact that emotions are "taboo" in higher education, Frederick urges teachers and developers to acknowledge the presence of emotions and feelings in the classroom. He goes on to suggest that as a symbolic tool the Medicine Wheel can help immensely in this endeavor, serving to constantly remind us of the four dimensions of learning: mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual. Barbara J. Millis's essay, "Putting the Teaching Portfolio in Context," also promotes a holistic approach to teaching-learning improvement by advocating the use of the teaching portfolio. Describing the teaching portfolio as an "idea whose time has come," Millis begins her essay by putting the concept of the teaching portfolio into an historical context, follows with a detailed

discussion of five key reasons for its viability, and concludes with some observations on the teaching portfolio's vital role in the "New Scholarship."

The remaining articles in Section V identify four other ways of improving instruction and classroom climate. In "Recognition from Parents: A Variation on Traditional Teaching Awards," Delivee L. Wright describes how the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's Parents' Recognition Award has served as a practical, low-cost device for encouraging good teaching as well as for making parents active participants in the learning process. Edwin Fenton, in "Coping with the Academic 'Tragedy of the Commons': Renovating Classrooms at Carnegie Mellon University," reminds us through an instructive case study involving a major renovation project at Carnegie Mellon, of just how important physical facilities are in establishing a congenial and fertile classroom climate. Linda Hilsen and LeAne Rutherford, in "Front Line Faculty Development: Chairs Constructively Critiquing Colleagues in the Classroom," concretely outline a plan to enhance instruction through the effective use of department chairs as peer observers. And, finally, Myrna J. Smith and Mark LaCelle-Peterson, in "The Professor as Active Learner," share important information about the New Jersey Master Faculty Program, a nationally-known consortial effort that uses various collaborative enterprises such as classroom observation, student interviews, and collegial reflection, to improve teaching-learning.