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New England Faculty Development Consortium

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Spring 2004

## NEFDC Exchange, Volume 15, Number 1, Spring 2004

New England Faculty Development Consortium

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# EXCHANGE

[www.nefdc.org](http://www.nefdc.org)

New England Faculty Development Consortium

## Message from the President

**Tom Edwards, President, NEFDC**  
**Vice President for Academic Affairs, Thomas College**

### The Things We Value

In November of 2003, the NEFDC welcomed Parker Palmer to speak as part of our annual fall conference. His presentation was an opportunity to reflect on some of the key themes from his teaching and lecturing over the past several years, and we found in his talk the depth of feeling and commitment that have consistently marked his work.

The reviews from the conference attendees reflected a similar depth and feeling related to their commitment to teaching and learning. The comment that was volunteered again and again on conference evaluations was "I felt validated in my work."

To feel validated. To have value. These are strong statements, statements that mirror the intense personal and professional commitment to our work as teachers and scholars. We want to know that our work has value, and that our work is valued by others. These days, that's not such an easy task.

How does one evaluate, or weigh the value of what we do, when our work is personal and private, yet also public and collective? My class, my course, my students, my department, my college, my discipline—the circle expands, and the landscape is constantly shifting. It is no wonder that there is such uneasiness surrounding the constant calls for assessment that come from both inside and outside of the academy.

"I felt validated" also speaks to the importance of community, which has been a hallmark of the work of the NEFDC. To come together, to share with colleagues, to claim membership in a community dedicated to improving teaching and learning, is all part of the process of sharing—and validating—our core beliefs. The message of Parker Palmer's work is that the process of sharing our successes as well as our failures is our way of finding some stability in the shifting landscape that is higher education.

What are the next steps? One is the Faculty Developer's Round-up, scheduled for June 4th (location to be announced) with the theme of "Building Community and Collaboration Through Technology." If you are looking for ways to jump start faculty development at your campus or for new strategies to enhance your efforts, this one-day event provides an excellent opportunity to network with like-minded individuals, and glean from them how they overcome challenges related to task. And looking ahead, our conference speaker for November 2004 will be L. Dee Fink, author of *Creating Significant Learning Experiences* (Jossey-Bass 2003), who will be focusing on the quality of student learning and what we can do to facilitate it.

In the meantime, we will soon be gearing up for spring commencement exercises on our campuses. This is always a special time of year for the students who are finishing their degrees, and moving on to the next stage of their lives and their careers. It is traditionally one of the most joyous events at any college or university, and a time for us to publicly and proudly celebrate what we do, who we are, and what we value.

And in that spirit of publicly acknowledging who we are and what we value, I want to take this opportunity to thank Sue Barrett, Director of the Academic Development Center of Boston College and Susan Pasquale, Director for Curriculum and Faculty Development at the University of Massachusetts Medical School, both of whom will finish their terms on the NEFDC Board this spring. Who we are today as a professional organization is due in no small part to their commitment to the formation and the growth of the NEFDC over the years. And speaking for the entire NEFDC, I can say that what we value is our association with them as teachers, as mentors, and as colleagues. There are none finer.

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# Metaphors For Teaching

**Polly Parker and Bill Searle**

At 2:00 on Friday afternoon you walk into a classroom. Ten faculty members are engrossed in a discussion about teaching and learning.

The same thing happened last month. And the month before. And, before that.

You look closely. One participant has 25 years teaching. Another 30. Another 6. Another nearly 40. The mix is toward senior faculty.

What is going on? One of our colleagues—a full professor of Accounting—is presenting the metaphor that she believes illustrates her teaching. Esther sent us a one-page summary of her metaphor and is now presenting it, with the implications for how it affects various aspects of her teaching.

A lighthouse. That's right. A lighthouse as a metaphor for the role of teacher. Esther presents a well-organized, cogent, and passionate vision of

We need that secondary way to reach students.” (People think about that, and jot notes to themselves.)

“You know, a lighthouse is pretty passive. It just sits there. It does not deal with the fog. And, many things can cause fog.”

“Hmmm. Yes. I need to do more to chase away the fog.” (More personal notes get written.)

Then, a person who grew up on the Maine coast adds, “Well, you know in the worst fogs, sound seems to come from everywhere and nowhere, and you can't see three feet in front of your nose.”

“Hmmm. Hadn't thought of that.”

Another colleague jumps in. “Well, experienced sailors have charts, know wave motions, listen for crashing waves—all that sort of stuff.”

“You have to learn that from practice. Practice, and learning from someone who teaches you how to navigate with what you have, where you are.”

“Sure. But, lighthouses do not get involved with teaching sailors ...”

Laughing, our colleague says, “You know, you characters are convincing me that my teaching is not like a lighthouse.”

“Well, I don't know about that, but do we—in college—have the responsibility of teaching students how to study? I like the lighthouse approach. We should not have to teach college students these skills.”

Discussion continues for another half hour. You get the point. Committed teachers, looking at the full implications of another's metaphor, often find nuances that reflect upon their own teaching. Perhaps there are long-forgotten issues. Perhaps there are areas needing re-examination. Perhaps a cherished activity needs to be examined as a habit, not a truth. As the metaphors get richer and more complex during discussions, thinking and clarity improve. We are all glad that we have plenty of paper for notes and ideas.

## How Did We Get Here?

Our local Instructional Excellence Committee meets monthly to discuss teaching and learning. Some committee members had read *The Courage To Teach* by Parker Palmer and liked his sugges-

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her work. She sees herself as a beacon for students, showing them the way to clear water—deeper water, or a safe harbor. The group is caught up in her presentation, and the ensuing discussion is lively. After 20 minutes questions arise.

“What if it is foggy, and people can't see the light?”

“Good question, well you know that most lighthouses have a secondary system, a foghorn.

tion of exploring metaphors and images as a way of reflecting upon practice.

As we talked we became excited about writing our own metaphors and sharing them with colleagues. We brainstormed possible teaching metaphors that highlighted our identity and integrity in the classroom. This helped most of us engage with the concept of 'a metaphor for teaching.' After that, each month one of us volunteered to present our own metaphor to the community at large. We emailed an invitation to everyone at the college and included a brief description of our metaphor. Metaphor discussions always end with dessert, coffee and tea.

### What Were Some Of The Metaphors?

(Yes, we do cheat and allow similes!)

- Sailing
- Gardening
- Running
- Road Trip
- Soda Vending Machine
- Coaching
- Hand Spinning
- Ice Breaker
- Sunlight
- Catalyst

### So, What Are You Waiting For?

Fully defining the metaphor by which one teaches requires effort, thought and concentration. Presenting it informally to others requires a supportive atmosphere, time, and the willingness to pursue what Parker Palmer characterizes as "teaching from the heart."

It works. Anyone can start the discussion, no equipment or outside speakers needed. Asking presenters to prepare a short outline of how their metaphor influences their teaching piques interest among others, and encourages people to attend. Incidentally, our "people" included counselors, librarians, administrators, and students.

*Polly Parker is Coordinator of the Early Childhood Education Program and Associate Professor of Early Childhood Education, and Bill Searle is Professor of Management and co-chair of the Connecticut Center for Teaching. Both are at Asnuntuck Community College in Enfield, CT.*

Since this will be my final issue as newsletter editor, I'd like to thank some of the people who've made this an enjoyable task over the past few years. Those include Jeff Halprin, my predecessor as editor, who passed on his knowledge and a great template; everyone who contributed articles and announcements; and my colleagues on the NEFDC board, especially the ever-supportive Susan Pasquale. Finally, thanks to Tammy Nordin-Garcia, the designer who puts it all together and makes it look wonderful—you're the best, Tammy!

**Sue Barrett**



### The NEFDC EXCHANGE

**Sue Barrett, Boston College**

The NEFDC EXCHANGE is published in the Fall and Spring of each academic year. Designed to inform the membership of the activities of the organization and the ideas of the members, it depends on your submissions. Please keep us up-to-date with listings of events you are putting on, as well as book reviews, descriptions of successful programs, and discussions of issues which have engaged your interest.

Reach me at: Academic Development Center, O'Neill Library,  
Boston College, Chestnut Hill, MA 02467 617-552-0835  
and barretsc@bc.edu

# Significant Learning Experiences

**Whenever we teach, our students have an experience. All caring teachers, however, want their students to have a *significant* learning experience. What might constitute a significant learning experience? How can we create learning experiences that are *more significant* for *more students*, *more of the time*?**

## ***Integrated Course Design Designing the Learning We Want into the Learning Experiences by L. Dee Fink***

If we want students to have a significant learning experience (rather than a boring or trite learning experience), we need to learn how to design that quality into the learning experience. To do that, we must understand the process of, and develop some skill in, designing learning experiences.

When teachers design any form of instruction (I will refer to designing courses, for convenience), what they are doing is making a series of decisions about how the course will operate. These decisions focus on a number of issues, but especially important ones include the learning goals for the course, the different kinds of teaching/learning activities needed to achieve those goals, and the feedback and assessment procedures needed to tell both the students and the teacher whether the desired kinds of learning are being achieved.

One major advantage of learning about the course design process is that it enables us to see more clearly how to use many of the major ideas on good teaching that have emerged in recent years, e.g., active learning, educative assessment, small groups, writing to learn, learning styles, learning portfolios, etc.

### **Designing Instruction for (More) Significant Learning**

Teaching is a complex human action. But the many tasks that are involved can be thought of as comprising four general aspects or components of teaching:

- Our knowledge of the subject matter we teach
- The decisions we make about the purpose and nature of the learning experience
- Our interactions with students (e.g., presenting lectures, leading discussions, holding office hours, etc.)
- Our management of the whole instructional event, be it a course, seminar or whatever

The degree to which we perform each of these tasks well directly affects the quality of the learning

experience that students have. However, my 25 years of experience in working with professors suggests that the ability to make decisions about (i.e., design) instruction is the one area in which college teachers are least prepared and the one that is perhaps most significant in terms of determining whether students have a significant learning experience. To the degree that this is true, what is it that teachers can learn about designing instruction for more significant learning?

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### **Two Ways of Creating a Course**

The most common way of deciding how to create a course (or any other form of instruction) is the content-centered approach, sometimes called the “List of Topics” approach. The teacher works up a list of important topics, often using the table of contents from one or more textbooks, decides how much time to give to each topic and how many tests will be given—and the

“design” is done. The advantage of this approach is that it is relatively easy and simple; the disadvantage is that it pays virtually no attention to the question of what students might learn beyond content knowledge which—when that is all there is—is easily forgotten.

The alternative is to take a systematic, learning-centered approach to designing our courses. The heart of this approach is to first decide what students can and should learn in relation to this subject, and then figure how they can learn that. This approach initially requires more time but it also offers the only chance we have to ensure that the majority of our students have a significant learning experience.

### A Model of Integrated Course Design

In another publication (Fink, 2003) I have offered a full description of an integrated approach to designing college courses. In this essay I will provide an outline of the key parts and ideas of this model.

The diagram in Figure 1 illustrates the basic components of this model. In essence, it indicates that, to design any form of instruction, the teacher needs to:

1. Identify important **Situational Factors** and then use this information to make three key sets of decisions;
  - a. What do I want students to learn? (**Learning Goals**)
  - b. How will the students (and the teacher) know if these learning goals are being accomplished? (**Feedback and Assessment**)
  - c. What will the teacher and the students need to do, for students to achieve the learning goals? (**Teaching/Learning Activities**), and then
2. Make sure the key components are **Integrated**, i.e., that they support and reinforce each other.

Fig. 1 © A Model of Integrated Course Design



Each of these steps needs to be done and done well, for students to have a significant learning experience. What are some ideas that can help teachers do this properly?

### Learning Goals: Significant Learning

For half a century, teachers at all levels of instruction have used Bloom’s taxonomy of educational objectives to generate

learning goals beyond “understand and remember” kinds of learning. This taxonomy has been extremely helpful, but it does not encompass all the kinds of learning that society and educators today believe to be important. Hence I have proposed a new taxonomy, one that identifies six different ways in which learning can be significant for students:

“A learning experience is significant if students learn...

1. **Foundational Knowledge:** understand and remember the basic content of the course—terms, concepts, principles, etc.
2. **Application:** the ability to use the content, to engage in effective and appropriate kinds of thinking, etc.
3. **Integration:** the ability to integrate different disciplines, major ideas, realms of life, etc.
4. **Human Dimension:** identify the personal and social implications of this knowledge
5. **Caring:** the development of new feelings, interests, and values in relations to this subject
6. **Learning How to Learn:** the ability to keep on learning about this subject after the course is over

As teachers work on the question of what they want students to learn in a given instructional experience, they need some conceptual framework—whether this taxonomy or some other one—that enables them to formulate learning goals beyond having students simply “know” a body of content knowledge. In the case of the present taxonomy, the more of the six goals one can include, the better: each type of learning reinforces and supports the other kinds of learning.

### Feedback and Assessment: Educative Assessment

Once we decide what students might learn, we need to figure out how we will know whether they are learning that. This is the Feedback and Assessment question. For each kind of intended learning, the teacher needs to search for appropriate kinds of assessment procedures. For some kinds of learning, the usual multiple-choice or essay question will suffice. Other kinds of learning will require different assessment procedures.

As we undertake this part of instructional design, the concept of Educative Assessment is extremely valuable. Wiggins (1998), the creator of this concept, argues that we should assess in a way that goes beyond “auditing” student learning to actually enhancing that learning as well. To do this, our assessment procedures must: involve authentic problems, have clear criteria and standards, and include opportunities for students to engage in self-assessment.

### Teaching/Learning Activities: Active Learning

Once the learning goals and the feedback and assessment procedures have been identified, we must decide what students will need to do to achieve that kind of learning. This is where the concept of Active Learning applies. The classic definition of active learning (Bonwell and Eison, 1991) refers to learning in which students “do something and then reflect on the meaning of what they do.” If one broadens this to include the positive function that occurs in passive learning (acquiring information and ideas), then teachers



need to identify a set of learning activities that together include opportunities for students to:

- Acquire **Information and Ideas**
- Engage in a doing or observing **Experience**
- **Reflect** on the learning process as well as the subject matter

#### Ultimate Goal

The ultimate goal of all teaching is for students to finish the course (or some other form of learning) and to have had a significant learning experience. The argument made here is that this will not happen to any substantial degree unless teachers learn how to design that quality into the learning experience. If and when teachers develop this capability, students will learn things that will have a positive, substantial and lasting influence on their personal lives, their work lives, and their ability to contribute to the multiple communities of which they are a part.

What an exciting prospect that would be!

#### References & Resources

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## NEFDC Fall Conference Keynote Speaker



The NEFDC Fall Conference will return to the Westford Regency Inn and Conference Center, Westford, MA again this year. The conference date is November 12. Please watch your mail and check [www.nefdc.org](http://www.nefdc.org) for announcements about the conference and the call for proposals.

NEFDC is pleased to announce that Dr. Dee Fink will be this year's keynote speaker. Dr. Fink is a nationally recognized expert on various aspects of college teaching, and has recently published two books. The first is about designing courses: *Creating Significant Learning Experiences: An Integrated Approach to Designing College Courses* (Jossey-Bass, 2003). He is also co-editor of another book on a

special teaching strategy: *Team-Based Learning: A Transformative Use of Small Groups in College Teaching* (Sterling, VA: Stylus, 2004; paperback version).

Dr. Fink received his Ph.D. from the University of Chicago in 1976, and then accepted an academic appointment in the departments of Geography and Education at the University of Oklahoma. He established the Instructional Development Program at Oklahoma in 1979 and has served as its director since then. In 2002 he became President-Elect of the Professional and Organizational Development [POD] Network in Higher Education, the major national organization for faculty development in the United States. His website is: [www.ou.edu/idp/dfink.html](http://www.ou.edu/idp/dfink.html)

**The NEFDC Spring Roundup will be held on June 4th (location to be announced).**

**This year's theme will be "Building Community and Collaboration Through Technology." Watch your mail for an announcement or go to the NEFDC website at [nefdc.org](http://nefdc.org) for more information.**

# UNH To Offer Online Certificate in College Teaching

**Michael Lee, Associate Director  
Center for Teaching Excellence, University of New Hampshire**

For almost a decade the University of New Hampshire's Academic Programs in College Teaching have been serving the faculty development needs of hundreds of UNH faculty members—full-time and part-time—while simultaneously providing rich and robust future faculty preparation experiences for doctoral students from virtually every Ph.D.-granting department on campus. In 2002, the programs won the TIAA-CREF Hesburgh Award Certificate of Excellence for their “proven success and impact” in the area of faculty development. Starting in the summer of 2004, UNH will be making these programs available to faculty and doctoral students everywhere via distance learning on the World Wide Web.

A distinguishing feature of the UNH model for faculty development is that it puts faculty in the classroom as learners, enabling them to engage with the scholarship of college teaching even as they experience first hand the “best practices” that have emerged from that scholarship. While recognizing the value of workshops and seminars as a means of demonstrating teaching techniques and offering practical solutions to problems of teaching and learning, the people at UNH have been convinced from the outset that exposure to the research that undergirds those methods and practices is essential if faculty development in college teaching is to have a lasting impact on the campus-wide culture of teaching and learning.

The result is a set of course-based programs offered by the UNH Graduate School in conjunction with the Center for Teaching Excellence. These programs carry graduate credit and lead to three different credentials—a Cognate in College Teaching, a Master of Science in Teaching with a focus on college teaching, and a Graduate Certificate in College Teaching. Each of the programs combines a set of core courses in areas such as course design, cognition and learning, classroom assessment, and student culture, with courses that explore pedagogical issues and models in specific fields and disciplines. For the most part, the courses are offered during the annual Institute on College Teaching, held at UNH at the end of May and into early June. UNH faculty have seen this as a convenient time to engage in faculty development activities, free from the pressures of concurrent teaching responsibilities.

In 2000, under a dissemination grant from the US Department of Education's Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE), the University launched a collaborative effort to create similar programs in a variety of institutions. The resulting Partnership for Academic Programs in College Teaching (PACT) includes the Colleges of Worcester Consortium, the University of Maine, Howard University, Syracuse University, and the Tufts University Department of Computer Science. The partnership allows members to share faculty resources, to help one another develop courses, and to offer participants the widest possible array of course options. Each partner has benefited from the collaboration, and all have brought to the table a unique set of strengths, resources, and challenges.

In the process of exploring means of disseminating its programs under the FIPSE grant, UNH began working with distance learning models for making courses available to an ever-widening circle of interested participants, mainly faculty and doctoral students from other PACT institutions. An important outcome of this effort is that UNH is now offering an online Graduate Certificate in College Teaching, with electronic courses beginning in May, 2004. Like the other UNH programs, this certificate is designed with one overarching purpose: to enhance the effectiveness of college teaching through immersion in the research and scholarship in the field. The 12-credit program engages participants in a consideration of course design issues, philosophies and methods of evaluation and assessment, active learning approaches, and the research into how students learn. In addition, participants complete a capstone experience involving development of a course portfolio by current faculty, or a teaching portfolio for future faculty.

In citing UNH for excellence in faculty development, the Hesburgh Award committee stated that, “clearly the UNH collaborative is achieving its central mission: to enhance the teaching effectiveness of UNH faculty and to increase the teaching readiness of doctoral students when they enter the academic job market.” The online certificate program extends these opportunities to a much wider audience. For course descriptions and more information about participating in the online certificate program, contact the UNH Center for Teaching Excellence at: [teaching.excellence@unh.edu](mailto:teaching.excellence@unh.edu); or (603) 862-0233.



# Assessment in New England: Announcing Discipline-Based Workshops

On April 23, from 9:00-12:45 the New England Educational Assessment Network (NEEAN), in collaboration with the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC), will offer an assessment workshop at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, geared specifically to the needs of faculty in psychology, sociology, and political science.

With this new initiative, NEEAN begins a series of discipline-based workshops specifically designed for faculty. Participants will have a unique opportunity to explore and design program assessment with colleagues from their own disciplines. Workshop leaders are faculty in the disciplines recommended by the American Psychological Association (APA), the American Sociological Association (ASA), and the American Political Science Association (APSA); they will utilize material published by those organizations.

This hands-on experience will provide the opportunity to:

- Define programmatic learning outcomes appropriate to each discipline's intellectual traditions and modes of inquiry;

- Identify qualitative and quantitative tools for collecting evidence;

- Weigh effective ways to "close the loop" by using assessment evidence to inform improvements in the curriculum, instruction, and other elements of social science programs;

- Connect assessment with the scholarship of teaching and learning.

Established in 1995, NEEAN works throughout New England to promote quality assessment of student learning and development and thus enhance the effectiveness of institutions of higher learning. Through its Fall Forum and the Spring "Dialogues in the Disciplines" the organization also provides participants with the opportunity to develop a network of colleagues engaged in assessment-related activities throughout the region.

For more information on the conference or NEEAN, please contact Martha Stassen, Director of Assessment, UMass Amherst [mstassen@acad.umass.edu].

## Conference: Faculty-Student Partnerships in Teaching and Learning

**SUNY-Geneseo (30 miles south of Rochester, NY) is planning a conference on: Faculty-Student Partnerships in Teaching and Learning May 10-12, 2004 (with post-conference workshop May 13).**

**We would like to extend a special invitation to you and your colleagues to join us for the conference, which features a course design workshop with DEE FINK, a team-based learning workshop with LARRY MICHAELSEN, effective lecturing and discussion facilitation workshop with ARLETTA KNIGHT, and a writing workshop with TARA GRAY.**

**We would be most honored to receive presentation proposals from you or others at your institution. There are a few slots open in the schedule, so we are accepting proposals until those slots are filled. The conference web site is <http://tlc.geneseo.edu/conference>.**

**We have already received expressions of interest from colleagues across the Northeast, so we are looking forward to a high energy, highly productive conference!**

# New England Educational Assessment Network (NEEAN) REGISTRATION FORM

Dialogues in the Disciplines

April 23, 2004

9:00 – 12:45

Directions: *Submit one form per person. Please complete and print this form and mail it with a check payable to "New England Educational Assessment Network" or "NEEAN" (tax ID number 04-3380742). Registration should be received by Friday, April 16, but early registration is recommended, as seating capacity is limited. You will receive e-mail confirmation and directions upon receipt of registration information.*

\_\_\_ Ms. \_\_\_ Mr. \_\_\_ Dr. \_\_\_ Other (specify): \_\_\_\_\_

First Name Middle Initial Last Name

For your name badge, first name and/or nickname

Title Institution/Affiliation

Mailing Address

City State Zip Code

Telephone no. FAX no. E-Mail address

## Registration

\_\_\_ Individual Registration.....\$65.00

## Program Session (Please select one)

\_\_\_ Psychology \_\_\_ Sociology \_\_\_ Political Science

## Meals and Special Needs

Your registration fee includes a continental breakfast and mid-morning coffee break. You may purchase a bag lunch to pick up after the sessions are concluded (at 12:45) for \$8.50.

Please indicate if you would like to order a bag lunch or if you will require special assistance on-site:

\_\_\_ Yes, I would like to order a Bag Lunch (please indicate preference below) ..... \$8.50

\_\_\_ Turkey \_\_\_ Vegetarian

\_\_\_ Yes, I will require special assistance (note: if yes, a conference coordinator will contact you).

**Please mail registration form and check** (amount should include registration fee and box lunch fee if relevant)  
**by Friday, April 16, 2004, to:**

Noreen LeMieux  
362 Whitmore  
UMass Amherst  
Amherst, MA 01003

## Questions about registration?

Contact Noreen LeMieux,  
nlemieux@admin.umass.edu  
(413) 545-2564

## Questions about the program?

Contact Barbara Wright  
wrightb@easternct.edu  
(860) 465-0057

**NEFDC EXCHANGE**  
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## Board of Directors

The fifteen members of the Board of the NEFDC serve staggered three-year terms. Board Members are available for and welcome opportunities to meet and consult with members of the NEFDC and others who are interested in faculty development.

### *Members Whose Terms Expire in June 2006*

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