Submissions
The Faculty Focus is a publication for all instructors at the University of Central Florida. This includes full- and part-time faculty at all UCF campuses. Its purpose is to provide an exchange of ideas on teaching and learning for the university’s community of teachers and scholars. This represents an opportunity for faculty to reach their peers throughout the growing UCF community.

The Faculty Focus invites you to contribute your ideas on teaching and learning in a short essay.

See the guidelines for submission online at <http://www.fctl.ucf.edu/publications/focus/guidelines.htm>. Publication dates will be the middle of the first and last full months of each semester, and submission deadlines will be the Friday of the week prior. MLA format is preferred. Please send your submissions to Faculty Focus, fctl@mail.ucf.edu.

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Faculty Focus
Volume 5
Number 2
April 2008

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Teaching Legacy: Voices of Experience
Cheryl Green

Cheryl Evans Green is an Associate Professor of Social Work. She joined UCF in 1978. Her research interests include multicultural clinical practice, Black women in leadership roles in organizations, and addictions.

1. What teaching methods have you found to be most effective for your students? I try different things. I usually have some type of experiential learning activity for students that allows them to have “hands-on” experience with the content. I’ll do a lecturette highlighting concepts from assigned readings—I don’t do long lectures anymore—and then students go through a simulation, role-play, case study, etc. used to clarify and reinforce the material. I plan to invite Theatre students to present client vignettes in a class so students can interact with them as they stay in character and confront students with the challenges of actual social work practice. When appropriate, I invite clients and practitioners to discuss practice issues in classes.

2. What was your most memorable teaching experience? I guess I’m fortunate; there have been a number of such experiences over the years. I just love it when I have a class where I believe that I’ve really “connected” with students and utilized “real life” experiences to stimulate their thinking. In one class recently, for example, several students were able to directly tie the material to their own experiences in making difficult but critical decisions at different life stages. It was sort of a cathartic but validating teaching moment for me to witness the students’ enthusiastic and rather impressive discussion of the content.

3. What single piece of advice would you give to new professors today? Find people both inside and outside your institution who will give you solid advice about what is required to be successful, not only with your scholarship but also teaching and service. Learn from their accomplishments and failures. I think that few faculty have had the benefit of one, all purpose mentor who guides the way. Usually several people, including family and friends, contribute to and support the process, so cultivate and nurture your allies. New faculty need to find out what is needed for tenure and locate a willing and able person or two who will help them stay really focused. They need to also do selected things in their teaching and service activities that keep their souls alive. What I didn’t do initially was link my research with my teaching, but there are ways to do that, such as the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning.

4. What kept you in the profession? I discovered that I really had a passion for teaching. I come from a family of people who are all teachers, so they were absolutely thrilled.

5. What changes have you seen over your career with regard to student learning and how have you adapted to them? I’ve seen the student population become increasingly more diverse. At first I saw this in cultural differences as more ethnically diverse students enrolled. Then I noticed the diversity of age as I realized that I often teach, in the same classroom, students who are 18, middle-aged, or even working retirees. Lately I’ve observed some rather troubling diversity in students’ desire to learn. There’s now, I think, a segment of students, and I hope this is a small number, who do not seem to want to learn that much. “Give me my degree and let me be” seems to be their mantra. Their presence in our classes, I think, challenges all of us to not give in to the demands for easy grades.
Benefits of Teaching on a Regional Campus

Betty Wendi Mayer
Scot D. Schraufnagel

A UCF grows to serve the educational needs of our state, multiple regional campuses have been created or expanded. The flavor, tone and pace of these campuses differ greatly from the Orlando campus. In casual conversations with colleagues in the UCF regional campus system, it can be easily noted that there are perceived advantages and disadvantages to working on one of the regional campuses. We set out to survey our colleagues most and any reported advantages and disadvantages from the Orlando campus. In casual conversations with colleagues, we can avoid department politics and much of the problems inherent in large bureaucracies, having more solidarity with other faculty.

The responses varied; however, there was much constancy as well. Below we summarize the three most commonly mentioned advantages and disadvantages reported.

Benefits of Teaching on a Regional Campus

Twelve of eighteen respondents mention smaller class size as one of the advantages of teaching in the regional campus system. The open-ended responses included comments such as “more intimate classrooms;” “smaller classes enhance student cohesion;” and “closer relationships are developed with students due to having them in multiple courses.” It should be noted, however, two survey participants recognized large on-line classes as one of their disadvantages to teaching on a regional campus.

Second, eleven of eighteen respondents mention better administrative support as one of the advantages to teaching on a regional campus. In particular, respondents mention and character of assistance they receive from office managers and their assistants. Comments were made about increased or easy access to copy machines and being able to “really know the office personnel” and depend on them for assistance. Although it may be its own category, one-third of respondents mention ease of parking, which is arguably a function of “administrative support.” It can be noted that some of the comments in the category of administrative support seemed to be made about the nature of the support, relative to what regional campus faculty experience when teaching on the Orlando campus. Fifteen of the eighteen respondents reported that they have taught courses on the Orlando campus.

The third advantage to teaching on a regional campus is related to a more collegial campus atmosphere. In all, we can count ten responses making mention of friendlier relations between faculty and students, faculty and administrators, and between faculty members. Some people were especially pleased with the opportunity to develop working relationships and friendships with faculty from different departments and colleges. Others argue that the regional campuses are more sociable and less frenetic than the Orlando campus. The following quote summarizes the basic sentiment expressed by those who mention something about the general campus atmosphere:

“With a smaller campus to deal with, there is a strong sense of community. You can avoid department politics and much of the problems inherent in large bureaucracies, having more solidarity with other faculty.”

Other advantages to working on a regional campus that received more than a single mention were 1) closeness to home; less driving, 2) being able to work on research with fewer interruptions, 3) less service requirements, and 4) more flexible schedules.

Disadvantages of Teaching on a Regional Campus

The primary disadvantage mentioned in the open-ended surveys was a lack of departmental socialization and interaction. The lower level of the within-discipline interaction was perceived to make it more difficult to achieve tenure and promotion. Respondents suggested that it is “more difficult to have contact with, and form networks with the colleagues in my discipline,” “there is less socialization and support between faculty and students.”Some people were especially concerned about the opportunity to develop working relationships and friendships with faculty from different departments and colleges.

Others argue that the regional campuses are more sociable and less frenetic than the Orlando campus. The following quote summarizes the basic sentiment expressed by those who mention something about the general campus atmosphere:

“Our campuses are often living in the midst of a sniping war between departments and regional campuses.”

Over all, respondents seem to suggest that the exchange of academic information is developed more clearly and easily on the Orlando campus.

Second, ten of eighteen open-ended responses can be categorized to suggest that faculty on regional campuses believe the consequence of subjecting new students to “disengaging” pedagogy: “In these formative experiences, [students] learn what it is required to be.” In particular, respondents are taught to be passive seekers and transcribers of information, that is what they become. Further, they set their sights accordingly in subsequent courses, often actively resisting our attempts in upper-division courses to get them to go beyond the information we give them” (1984, pp. 6-7).

These results are consistent with those generated by the Policy Center on the First Year of College, based on survey data collected from more than 60 postsecondary institutions and over 30,000 students. This national survey revealed that use of “engaging” pedagogy was strongly associated with first-year student satisfaction with the overall quality of instruction at their college were teaching practices that emphasized involvement with peers, faculty, and the course itself (Keup & Sax, 2002).

Conclusion

The research reviewed in this article provides consistent evidence that the lecture method, which continues to be the dominant instructional strategy in college classrooms, is not the optimal vehicle for promoting student learning, particularly learning that involves higher-level thinking and attitudinal change.

My motive for presenting this research was not to imply that lecturing (instructor-delivered information) should be totally dismissed, displaced or replaced. Higher education should still be a place where knowledgeable, learned professionals are able to share their knowledge and model thinking processes that students can emulate. However, the research reviewed here strongly suggests that the lecture method needs to be augmented, complemented, and punctuated by learner-centered strategies that empower students to take a more active and responsible role in the learning process.

It is beyond the scope of this article to include and review specific, learner-centered alternatives to the lecture method (Flavell, 1985; Joint Task Force on Student Learning, 1998; Piaget, 1972; Vygotsky, 1978; Weinstein & Meyer, 1991).


3. Self-Reflection — learning is deepened when students “step back” and reflect on their learning strategies (i.e., engage in “meta-cognition”); and when students reflect on their learning experiences — transferring these experiences into a form that makes sense or has personal meaning to them (“elaboration”) — enabling them to build relevant conceptual connections between what they are trying to learn and what they have already known (i.e., knowledge is personally “constructed”) (Flavell, 1985; Joint Task Force on Student Learning, 1998; Piaget, 1972; Vygotsky, 1978; Weinstein & Meyer, 1991).

4. Personal Validation — learning is enhanced when students feel personally significant, i.e., when they feel recognized as individuals and sense that they matter to their instructor and their classmates (Rendon, 1994; Rendon & Garza, 1996; Schlossberg, Lynch, Chickering, 1989).

When learner-centered teaching strategies effectively implement these principles, they can be expected to enhance learning, student motivation, and student retention.

Editor’s Note:
A list of works cited in this article can be found on the Faculty Center Web site: http://www.fctl.ucf.edu/publications/focus/
It may be that listening attentively to lectures for pro-
longed periods of time is simply not something that
the human brain is particularly well equipped to do.
Even if students miraculously managed to maintain attention
and concentration throughout a typical 50-minute lecture,
research strongly suggests that important educational outcomes,
such as higher-level thinking and attitude change, are less
likely to take place when students listen to lectures than when
they engage in more active forms of learning (Pascarella &
conducted an extensive review of the research literature on
college teaching methods and concluded: “If we want students
to become more effective in meaningful learning and thinking,
they need to spend more time in active, meaningful teaching
and thinking—not just sitting and passively receiving infor-
mation” (p. 77). Bonwell and Eison (1991) reached a similar
conclusion following their review of the research literature:
“The evidence suggests that if an instructor’s goals are not
just to impart information but also to develop cognitive skills
and to change attitudes, then alternative teaching strategies
should be interwoven with the lecture method during class-
room presentations” (p. 10). More recently, Bligh (2000) con-
cluded his extensive research review with this recommenda-
tion: “Use lectures to teach information. Do not rely on them
to promote thought, change attitudes, or develop behavioral
skills if you can help it” (p. 20).

Implications for First-Year Students
A substantial number of subscribers to this newsletter have professional responsibilities that involve the education and retention of first-year students. For these professionals, and the new students they work with, the implications of the foregoing research become even more significant when they are viewed in light of recent findings relating specifically to first-
year students.

Students are entering college today with substantially high-
er self-reporting levels of academic disengagement in high
school—they more frequently report “feeling bored” in class,
missing class, and spending less time on their studies outside of
class (Astin, et al., 1997; St. John, et al., 2005). These charac-
teristics apparently carry over to the first year of college, as
evidenced by a national survey of first-year educators who were asked to rank 18 different factors in terms of their “lev-
el of concern” for students experiencing them. Educators noted
that individual respondents report. For instance, it may be
the case that some advantages or disadvantages are associ-
ated with certain colleges or instructors versus those in tenure
track positions. As an aside, it can be noted that our pilot sur-
vey recently conducted during the fall 2005 term at the four
regional campuses, and there was no systematic evidence
that the length of service altered perceptions of advantages and
disadvantages. For now, smaller class size appears to be the
most significant factor. Students at small selective liberal
arts colleges such as Centre College, and the interaction with colleagues in one’s own discipline is perceived as the most significant
advantage.

Admitting new students to college who report experiencing increasingly lower levels of academic engagement and higher levels of academic disengagement, college and university counselors
and family obligations. This requires faculty to be cognizant
of their pre-existing levels of academic disengagement, passivity,
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sessions, students learn how to integrate course content and study skills while working together.

SI sessions are voluntary, anonymous, and free to all students enrolled in courses that offer SI. Students who attend SI have a wide range of academic backgrounds and ability. Therefore, they are not segregated for SI. Research shows that students who attend SI sessions on a regular basis can earn on an average one letter grade higher than their peers who do not attend. For example, in the Fall 2004 semester, students in Organic Chemistry I who attended SI sessions averaged a 3.0 final course grade vs. 2.3 for non-SI attendees. This difference was statistically significant, and the fact that SI participants had significantly lower incoming SAT scores than non-SI attendees indicates that SI attendance is probably the reason that SI attendees earned higher final course grades.

Organic Chemistry I and II are difficult courses for many students. Students who take these classes are typically science majors or in health and pre-professional career tracks. Students in the class are initially intimidated by the heavy academic pressure. Organic Chemistry I, did not learn how to work hard in high school, and have difficulty with visualization. In SI sessions, students can learn what it takes to master the material from someone who was successful in Organic Chemistry. I recall a young man who came to see me in my office. He had scored a D on the first test. He asked me what to do; I talked to him for a very long time about the value of working hard, bringing his study habits to a new level, and increasing his study time. He finished the class with a B and got an A in Organic Chemistry II. He is now an orthopedic surgeon.

The benefits of SI extend to faculty members as well. I recommend SI support to other faculty members because the availability of group study time outside the classroom generates more academically prepared students who can meet the expectations of the instructor and make class discussions more interesting. SI sessions provide more practice for the student in regard to learning the material that the faculty member has presented. As more students experience academic success, there will be higher student satisfaction, which translates to better evaluations for the course and the professor. The amazing part of the story is that SI does not take much time from me and the help is free to the student. Thus, SI is a win-win situation for students and faculty members alike.

Further information about Supplemental Instruction can be found at SARC:
Student Academic Resource Center
Phone (407) 823-5130
Howard Phillips 2005 C
Room 113
http://www.sarc.sdes.ucf.edu/aboutus.html

Video Game Playing to Enhance Learning
Michael Scantlebury
Michael Scantlebury is an Assistant Professor in the Tourism, Events and Attractions Department of the Rosen College. He joined the faculty of UCF in 2005 after completing his M.Phil. at The University of the West Indies, Mona, Jamaica, and his Ph.D. in the Recreation and Leisure Studies Department at Simon Fraser University in British Columbia, Canada. His research includes community and enterprise relationships in heritage tourism and to tourism development.

“I love it, I understand, it makes sense!” These are words I long to hear from my students as I teach and the light of understanding goes on. I try many and different ways to encourage and direct students on the journey to understanding the business of theme parks and attraction management. This journey I hope will lead ultimately to greater individual self-awareness.

The fast-paced world, the distractions of student life, competition for time, the changes in technology and the seemingly shrinking attention spans of students have made the journey more challenging. I have long abandoned the style of my own undergraduate education under the British system, a rigid system of lectures with rote learning, note taking, and exams. I now endeavor to engage students and encourage them to be curious about the role and function of the theme park and attractions business.

This past semester I embarked on an expedition to change my section of HFT 4755: Theme Park and Attraction Management to take it much more into the comfort zone of my students. HFT 4755 is a core course in the Hospitality Management Bachelor of Science degree program. I instruct approximately 75 students per section of this course. I will be introducing the computer game SIM Theme Park as an active part of my HFT 4755 course in the fall 2006 semester. Unlike many of my students, I am not a video game player by any stretch of the imagination. My mother always told me, “Don’t waste time playing video games.” When I shared this with my students, many smiled politely, some laughed outright, and others asked, “What’s Tetris?”

So began the journey of becoming comfortable with my son’s technology as a way of helping students conceptualize the conditions and controls associated with the management of theme parks. This has not been easy. Building the ride and other components of the park on the computer has taken some getting used to. I realize that you simply have to “just do it.” It is frustrating and exasperating, but this is the world of many young people. I am the dinosaur. Ultimately, I hope that by playing the game and reflecting on the decisions and A third “chunk” covers the State of Florida, including hospital licensure requirements, the Florida Legal Guide, and information about vital statistics, specifically birth and death registration.

In Spring, 2005, a guest speaker from the State told the students about the importance of the birth certificate reporting process for vital statistics. This presentation was taped by CDWS and provided me with an electronic copy of his PowerPoint presentation. To add streaming video to a course, the audio must be scripted and closed captioning provided, as mentioned above, for audio-impaired students. The result is that we will have the guest speaker introducing the topic, and on selected PowerPoint slides the students will hear the speaker give additional information.

The final chunk is “Medicare,” which admittedly is a work in progress. Conditions of Participation provide an agreement between healthcare providers and Medicare for reimbursement. Proprietary payment systems will also be included.

In the past, the Health Information Management program, which is a limited access program, consisted of only face-to-face courses in a lock-step progression. Currently about 75% of our coursework is online. This has caused fragmented and lack of cohesion. The first step to correct this is increased interaction during the on-campus courses. For the distance learners, I will use private discussion board assignments requiring interaction among those students. The program director and I feel strongly that this networking will benefit the HIM students while here at UCF, and as they enter the work force.

In the mid-1990s, clarion calls were sounded for a “paradigm shift” in undergraduate education from traditional methods of instruction, which have focused on the teacher’s behavior and the teaching process, to a “new learning paradigm” that focuses on the learner’s behavior and the learning process (Ames & Ames, 1995; Collins in The Educator’s Role; 1994; Angelo, 1997; Barr & Tagg, 1995). This shift is well illustrated by comparing the themes of two national conferences organized by the once-influential American Association of Higher Education (AAHE). In 1986, its national conference theme was, “Taking Teaching Seriously”; in 1998, it became, “Taking Learning Seriously” (1998). This teaching-versus-learning dichotomy has mutated into a new paradigm—Remanics. The new learning paradigm suggests a new starting point for improving undergraduate education that begins with a focus on the learner and what the learner is doing, rather than focusing on what the instructor is teaching. In the learner-centered paradigm, the definition and goal of effective teaching is facilitating student learning and, ultimately, promoting positive learning outcomes.

Among the major implications of the new learning paradigm for college instructors and student support-service providers are the following “shifts” in educational philosophy and practice:

1. Instruction becomes less teacher-centered and content-driven, and more learner-centered and learning-process-driven. For example, instead of having students receive information-packed lectures devoted exclusively to the coverage of course content, learner-centered instruction would involve engaging students in learning experiences that are designed not only to enable them to learn content, but also to learn process—the process of “learning how to learn” and developing “lifelong learning” skills.

2. The student’s role changes from that of being passive recipient or receptacle of information to that of engaged learner and active participant. While more traditional methods may be conceptualized as ranging along a continuum from instructor-centered to learner-centered. Extreme, instructor-centered teaching is best illustrated by the uninterrupted, formal lecture whereby the instructor does all of the talking and is in complete control of the class agenda. In contrast, learner-centered classroom instruction involves less instructor domination and shifts more communication, control, and responsibility to the students.

3. The instructor’s role expands from that of a knowledge-laden provider of information to that of being a learning facilitator or educator who assumes the following roles: (a) educational architect—designing learning tasks and creating conditions that are conducive to optimal learning; (b) educational consultant/facilitator—serving as an experienced coach/guide during the learning process; and (c) educational assessor—evaluating learning outcomes and using this assessment information as feedback to improve the teaching-learning process.

In the learner-centered paradigm, students would spend less time being “instructed” (lectured to or at) and more time en- gaging in learning activities that have them actually do something other than the rote recording of lecture notes. Let us forget, the lecture method still remains the dominant pedagogical strategy among students at all levels of education and see little change in its frequency of use over several decades (Bligh, 2000; Bowles, 1982; Costin, 1972; Marris, 1964; Nance & Nance, 1990). Arguably the major force propelling the movement toward learner-centered pedagogy in higher education is the well-documented ineffectiveness of the lecture method for promoting higher learning outcomes.

The Need for Learner-Centered Alternatives to the Lecture Method
Research suggests that college instructors have a tendency to overestimate their students’ level of cognitive involvement in Vol. 5, No. 2 2006 Vol. 5, No. 2 2006
As you begin to familiarize yourself with Wikipedia, you will see that it does allow links to pertinent research at the bottom of every entry. Not only are many of these links authoritative web sites, several are also credible books. In fact, an exercise for your class might be to have students add more authoritative sources to the entry. If anything, this will serve a much larger purpose than just looking at the information provided.

Wikipedia is just one example of how a wiki can be used for public document manifestations. Although the use of Wikiipe- dia is debatable, the use of other wikis in the classroom for internal purposes is not. I use the word “internal” because in this environment the wiki is password protected. Using the web site jot.com, five students per group can set up their own free wiki for group projects (mainly internal document generation). In this situation, using a wiki alleviates two of the biggest problems with group assignments—time management and accountability.

Time management is a headache for student projects. Not only must students try to fit in their course work among five different schedules, they often meet to produce a document or PowerPoint presentation, which is highly inefficient. Using a wiki to store, generate, and edit a document for the project will allow the group to meet in a virtual environment. Of course the students will have to meet for an initial meeting to set-up the project outline and to assign tasks, but after that, they can enter the virtual world of wikis and progress on their own timetables.

The problem of accountability is not only a student concern, but a faculty one as well. Too often student projects end up in a “he said, she said” battle, and it becomes a professor’s job to decipher the lies and accusations. When using a wiki, entry or change to a document is tracked. If the aforementioned situation occurs, simply ask the students to show how many changes were made to the project throughout the semester and who made them. Problem solved.

I have merely touched the surface as to what a wiki can do for a group project. Wikis eliminate a cluttered email box, and I have merely touched the surface as to what a wiki can do for a group project. Wikis eliminate a cluttered email box, and in this situation, using a wiki alleviates two of the biggest problems with group assignments—time management and accountability.

The Joint Commission on the Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO) is a major accrediting body for hospitals. In Spring, 2005, I doused off a JCAHO project which was well received by the students as I wanted to continue this project with improvements. The JCAHO regulations change yearly and therefore updating the project is important to maximize the learning outcomes. I prepared a detailed rubric which should be useful even as the assignment is adjusted each year. This project was incorporated in the critical thinking and communication areas of the Academic Learning Compacts (ALC) for Health Information Management, and the point value for the course (from the original 25 objectives). In the project this “chunking,” I am able to see immediately where course content and assignments are needed.

The results, they will understand theme park operation. I’m still not totally comfortable with the game and the technology, I look forward to interacting with the students and the technology. I will encourage them to be partners in the process of exploration.

A key ingredient to their success is reflection. Do students have time to reflect? They are already compressed between their two “part-time” jobs and the six courses they are taking. Am I expecting too much of the student lifestyle? It is not just about doing the readings, writing the papers, and responding to the questions on various assignments. Will your light go on to illuminate the path? When I hear the EUREKA! I do not know, but by including a reflective journal in the course, perhaps it will make the epiphany happen sooner and for more students.

I will have the students play the game and reflect on how the game differs from the real world. How can they make the game better? Where does the game “mess up,” and where does it deviate from reality? To ensure that they actually think about what they are doing, I’ll be asking them to maintain a reflective journal for the period of the course when the game activity is conducted. I will review the journal weekly to monitor entries and assess progress on the journey. I will also maintain my own journal of my experience this fall. I can see that it will be a valuable one for me.

“Wow, I got it, I understand, it makes sense!” At the end of the fall semester as I do my reflection on the things that I did well and those that I will do better in the ensuing year, I look forward to hearing these words resound.

The main idea behind innovating my course can be best summarized as “repetition of concepts and techniques with real-life examples.” In this context, the idea is not so much innovative as progressive. Throughout my teaching experience, I have noticed a constant and continuous tendency that students come to accounting classes with predetermined reluctance toward the subject. It is a trend commonly perceived in the area of Hospitality Management. Among the students of the Rosen College, it still exists, albeit much more benignly. However, I noticed great potential to alleviate negativity through progressive innovation of the delivery process in class.

Students’ reluctance toward the subject often causes apathy that prevents them from engaging themselves in class activities. By reducing this reluctance, I think students will learn considerably. The nature of Financial Accounting requires students to memorize numerous isolated jargon and rules. In addition, most jargon and rules do not make much sense, even when the learner has spent a year or two in the industry—simply because they seldom have opportunities to see their official accounting documents at work.

With this analysis in mind, I plan to implement a cyclical pattern of teaching. It is phrased this way because the method focuses on repeated practices of techniques and concepts. One more element to add is real life examples obtained from the Hospitality Management industry. However, repeated prac- tice does not mean that students have to go through the same material over and over again. Whenever the techniques and concepts are repeated, the complexity of the material increases accordingly.

This approach will familiarize students with the techniques and concepts of accounting, which will encourage their engagement. Once this objective is accomplished, this method will continue into the next level course, Managerial Accounting, and then into Financial Management. In this fashion, I anticipate that our students will become competent enough to apply their knowledge to advance their career.
In the first phase, the fundamental concepts of accounting will be introduced in a simplified structure with the focus on how accounting products finalize the operations into a set of reports: the income statement and the balance sheet. Real life examples will be obtained through the Internet. Relevant var- ious introduced in the textbook and relevant statements will be found in the sample reports along with definitions and GAAP (Generally Accepted Accounting Principles). Estimated length of time for this practice is about six sessions.

In the second phase, technical details of book-keeping pro- cedures will be introduced. This is where many students start getting lost. The hidden reason is that most of them have failed to develop a clear understanding of the prerequisites concepts covered in the first phase. Continuous repetition of the techniques with relevant concepts will enhance students’ comprehen- sion of the material, particularly with incremental complexity. Estimated length of time for this practice is about six weeks (12 sessions).

The third phase takes only two weeks. It is designed to veri- fy the competency developed by each student. At this stage, students are expected to demonstrate their ability to interpret real-life financial reports, and to predict a company’s short-term financial performance. Parameters are given for their prediction.

At the last stage, students will learn to calculate technical variations of specific accounting concepts such as inventory, depreciation, accounts receivable and bad debt, and payroll accounting. They are expected to demonstrate the ability to tell the impact of different accounting methods on the finan- cial reports. Since these are simple variations of what they have learned, these topics will be addressed mainly from a conceptual point of view.

The idea is a three-pronged approach: repetition, incremen- tal complexity, and a real-life example. It has developed by applying the mixed perspectives of constructivist theory and cognitive flexibility theory. When this idea is successfully im- plemented, the goal is to combine constructivism with cogni- tive flexibility into modified experiential learning.

You are invited to our 2006 Summer Faculty Development Conference.

All faculty are invited to attend sessions in the 2006 Sum- mer Conference on May 1-4. Please feel free to come to any and all sessions which interest you; no registration is required!

Additional details and the list of sessions can be found on our website:
http://www.fcl.ucf.edu/events/summerconference/

Disclaimer: This Course May Disturb You
Barry Mauer

Barry Mauer is an Assistant Profes- sor in English whose specialty, as a graduate student, he devotes much of his time to work with Film, Digital Media, Simulation, Drama, and Sociology. His research is aimed at inventing new media prac- tices for the academy and beyond, ap- proached through a program based on grammatology and heuretics.

Some course materials in literature classes can be disturb- ing: at times students complain that they did not expect to deal with such texts. And they get angry with me. What can I do to help students cope with potentially disturbing material and preserve the goals of the class?

“Modern Drama as Literature,” an online class I will teach for the first time this summer, presents a perfect case. The material in this course might disturb, offend, even traumatize some students, yet it would be irresponsible to ignore the ma- jor works in this genre; many of these works were designed to be transgressive; their authors intended to attack cherished be- liefs, provoke people, and divide audiences. If we can’t learn about such works in a university, where can we learn about them?

The first word in the first play we will be reading is an ob- sceneity. The play, Alfred Jarry’s Ubu Roi, provoked an uproar when it was first staged in Paris in 1896. Here is an account:

In attendance were “all the leading in the worlds of poli- tics, journalism and letters.” Grémier once again spoke the opening ‘Merdre!’ ('Shite’). The audience immediately burst out with a roar. Grémier was “unable to get a word edgewise for the next fifteen minutes” (Lennon, 49). It was the first time that someone had spoken such a word on the modern stage. Grémier tried to silence the audience by blowing a tramway horn (Beaumont, 100). Many people left the theatre. A fight broke out in the orchestra pit, while Jarry’s supporters yelled, “You wouldn’t have understood Shakespeare or Wagner either!” (Lennon, 48). Others shouted, “Can’t you see that the author is taking us for a bunch of damned fools?” (Barry, 100) claim Grémier had finally gotten slight control of the audience, he spoke the second word—another ‘Merdre.’ Needless to say, the audi- ence started to howl once more. They shouted at the stage and at each other. When a quieted down again the play proceeded as planned. Smaller outbursts continued throughout the performance. In the days that followed, the violent battle for and against Ubu Roi would move on into the Parisian press. (http://www.milkmag.org/jarry.htm)

Later playwrights considered the uproar over Jarry’s play to be a sign of success worth emulating the plays, many of which we will read, dramatize sadomasochism, fascism, athe-
In the first phase, the fundamental concepts of accounting will be introduced in a simplified structure with the focus on how accounting products finalize the operations into a set of reports: the income statement and the balance sheet. Real-life examples will be obtained through the Internet. Relevant jars intro-grown into the textbook and relevant statements will be found in the sample reports along with definitions and GAAP (Generally Accepted Accounting Principles). Estimated length of time for this practice is about six sessions.

In the second phase, technical details of book-keeping procedures will be introduced. This is where many students start getting lost. The hidden reason is that most of them have failed to develop a clear understanding of the prerequisite concepts covered in the first phase. Continuous repetition of the techniques with relevant concepts will enhance students’ comprehension of the material, particularly with incremental complexity. Estimated length of time for this practice is about six sessions (12 weeks).

The third phase takes only two weeks. It is designed to verify the competency developed by each student. At this stage, students are expected to demonstrate their ability to interpret real-life financial reports, and to predict a company’s short-term financial performance. Parameters are given for their prediction.

At the last stage, students will learn to calculate technical variations of specific accounting concepts such as inventory, depreciation, accounts receivable and bad debt, and payroll accounting. They are expected to demonstrate the ability to tell the impact of different accounting methods and to explain the financial reports. Since these are simple variations of what they have learned, these topics will be addressed mainly from a conceptual point of view.

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Learning from Each Other

Alice Noblin

Alice Noblin is an Instructor in the Health Information Management program. She completed her MBA at Georgia State University. She joined the faculty as an adjunct in 2001, and became a full time faculty member in 2004.

In the Spring of 2005, I developed HIM 3116, a health information management course which covers a broad range of unrelated topics. It is a mixed-mode course which must also accommodate distance learners. My first goal was to reorganize the information in this course. Instead of the seven original modules, which were redundant and overlapping, I divided the information into four major topics. Course Development and Web Services added the four new topics as buttons on the homepage. The semester will be split up to cover these four topics. Each topic contains links to course content. I will also redo/develop the course objectives to match these four major topics, with the plan being to streamline to 12 or fewer objectives for the course (from the original 25 objectives). In the process of this “chunking,” I am able to see immediately where course content and assignments are needed.

Quality Enhancement Plan: Information Fluency

The Joint Commission on the Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO) is a major accrediting body for hospitals. In Spring, 2005, I dusted off a JCAHO project which was well received by the students as I wanted to continue this project with improvements. The JCAHO regulations change yearly and therefore updating the project is important to maximize the learning outcomes. I prepared a detailed rubric which should be useful even as the assignment is adjusted each year. This project was incorporated in the critical thinking and communication areas of the Academic Learning Competencies (ALC) for Health Information Management, and the point value for the project was increased. I received guidance from local employers and incorporated their suggestions into the project as well.

Healthcare statistics are covered in this course as one of the four “chunks.” Dr. Debbie Hahs-Vaughn has successfully used Caniasis (a program to capture screen clicks as video) to explain statistics concepts in EDF 6401. In conjunction with CDWS, I incorporated similar technology into my course. This required PowerPoint presentations to describe the concepts with accompanying audio. CDWS requires a Word document of the script for closed captioning in the event of an emergency. The Hospitality Management industry. However, repeated practice does not mean that students have to go through the same material over and over again. Whenever the techniques and concepts are repeated, the complexity of the material increases accordingly.

This approach will familiarize students with the techniques and concepts of accounting, which will encourage their engagement. Once this objective is accomplished, this method will continue into the next level course, Managerial Accounting, and then into Financial Management. In this fashion, I anticipate that our students will be competent enough to apply their knowledge to advance their career.

Hyung-il Jung

Hyung-il Jung is an Assistant Professor in Hospitality Management. He completed his MS at Florida International University, and his Ph.D. in Hospitality Management & Tourism Management at the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. He joined the UCF faculty in 2005 at the Rosen College of Hospitality Management. His research includes issues of multiculturalism and service concepts.

The main idea behind innovating my course can be best summarized as “repetition of concepts and techniques with real-life examples.” In this context, the idea is not so much innovative as progressive. Throughout my teaching experience, I have noticed a constant and continuous tendency that students come to accounting classes with predetermined reluctance toward the subject. It is a trend commonly perceived in the area of Hospitality Management. Among the students of the Rosen College, it still exists, albeit much more benign. However, I noticed great potential to alleviate negativity through progressive innovation of the delivery process in class.

Students’ reluctance toward the subject often causes apathy that prevents them from engaging themselves in class activities. By reducing this reluctance, I think students will learn more effectively. The nature of Financial Accounting requires students to memorize numerous isolated jargon and rules. In addition, most jargon and rules do not make much sense, even when the learner has spent a year or two in the industry—simply because they seldom have opportunities to see their official accounting documents at work.

With this analysis in mind, I plan to implement a cyclical pattern of teaching. It is phrased this way because the method focuses on repeated practices of techniques and concepts. One more element to add is real life examples obtained from the Hospitality Management industry. However, repeated practice does not mean that students have to go through the same material over and over again. Whenever the techniques and concepts are repeated, the complexity of the material increases accordingly.

This approach will familiarize students with the techniques and concepts of accounting, which will encourage their engagement. Once this objective is accomplished, this method will continue into the next level course, Managerial Accounting, and then into Financial Management. In this fashion, I anticipate that our students will be competent enough to apply their knowledge to advance their career.
sessions, students learn how to integrate course content and study skills while working together.

SI sessions are voluntary, anonymous, and free to all students enrolled in courses that offer SI. Students who attend SI have a wide range of academic backgrounds and ability. Therefore, they are not stigmatized for attending SI. Research shows that students who attend SI sessions on a regular basis can earn an average one letter grade higher than their peers who do not attend SI. For example, in the Fall 2004 semester, students in Organic Chemistry I who attended SI sessions averaged a 3.0 final course grade vs. 2.3 for non-SI attendees. This difference was statistically significant, and the fact that SI participants had significantly lower incoming SAT scores than non-SI attendees indicates that SI attendance is probably the reason that SI attendees earned higher final course grades.

Organic Chemistry I and II are difficult courses for many students. Students who take these classes are typically science majors or in health and pre-professional career tracks. Students also often report difficulty with visualization. In SI sessions, students can learn what it takes to master the material from someone who was successful in Organic Chemistry. I recall a young man who came to see me in my office. He had scored a D on the first test. He asked me what to do; I talked to him for a very long time about the value of working hard, bringing his study habits to a new level, and increasing his study time. He finished the class with a B and got an A in Organic Chemistry II. He is now an orthopedic surgeon.

The benefits of SI extend to faculty members as well. I recommend SI support to other faculty members because the availability of group study time outside the classroom generates more academically prepared students who can meet the expectations of the instructor and make class discussions more interesting. SI sessions provide more practice for the student in regard to learning the material that the faculty member has presented. As more students experience academic success, there will be higher student satisfaction, which translates to better evaluations for the course and the professor. The amazing part of SI is that it does not take much time from me and the help is free to the student. Thus, SI is a real win-win situation for students and faculty members alike.

Further information about Supplemental Instruction can be found at SARC:
Student Academic Resource Center
Phone (407) 823-5130
Howard Phillips 2005
Room 113
http://www.sarc.sdes.ucf.edu/aboutus.html

Video Game Playing to Enhance Learning
Michael Scanbitter

Michael Scanbitter is an Assistant Professor of the Recreation, Education and Attractions Department of the Rosen College. He joined the faculty of UCF in 2005 after completing his M.Phil. at The University of the West Indies, Mona, Jamaica, and his Ph.D. in the Recreation and Leisure Studies Department at the University of Waterloo, Ontario, Canada. His research includes community and enterprise relationships in heritage tourism and tourism development.

"Wow, I got it, I understand, it makes sense!" These are words I long to hear from my students as I teach and the light of understanding goes on. I try many and different ways to encourage and direct students on the journey to understanding the business of theme parks and attraction management. This journey I hope will lead ultimately to greater individual self-awareness.

The fast-paced world, the distractions of student life, competition for the changes in technology and the seemingly shrinking attention spans of students have made the journey more challenging. I have long abandoned the style of my own undergraduate education under the British system, a rigid system of lectures with no room for questions to the professor, tutorials with uninformative graduate assistants, and year-long courses. Now I endeavor to engage students and encourage them to be curious about the role and function of the theme park and attractions business.

This past semester I embarked on an expedition to change my section of HFT 4755: Theme Park and Attraction Management to take it much more into the comfort zone of my students. HFT 4755 is a core course in the Hospitality Management Bachelor of Science degree program. I instruct approximately 75 students per section of this course. I will be introducing the computer game SIM Theme Park as an active part of my HFT 4755 course in the fall 2006 semester. Unlike many of my students, I am not a video game player by any stretch of the imagination. My closest friends and family believe that I only play video games in the context of a casino. When I shared this with my students, many smiled politely, some laughed outright, and others asked, “What’s Tetris?”

So began the journey of becoming comfortable with my son’s technology as a way of helping students conceptualize the conditions and controls associated with the management of theme parks. This has not been easy. Building the rides and other components of the park on the computer has taken some getting used to. I realize that you simply have to “just do it.” It is frustrating and exasperating, but this is the world of many young people. I am the dinosaur. Ultimately, I hope that by playing the game and reflecting on the decisions and actions of the characters, students will be able to reflect on how to manage the business of their own classroom. In the process, some students will learn new concepts about visualization.

A third “chunk” covers the State of Florida, including hospital licensure requirements, the Florida Legal Guide, and information about vital statistics, specifically birth certificates.

In Spring, 2005, a guest speaker from the State told the students about the importance of the birth certificate reporting process for vital statistics. This presentation was taped by CDWS and provided给我 with an electronic copy of his PowerPoint presentation. To add streaming video to a course, the audio must be scripted and closed captioning provided, as mentioned above, for audio-impaired students. The result is that we will have the guest speaker introducing the topic, and on selected PowerPoint slides the students will hear the speaker give additional information.

The final chunk is “Medicare,” which is admittedly a work in progress. Conditions of Participation provide an agreement between healthcare providers and Medicare for reimbursement. Proprietary payment systems will also be included.

In the past, the Health Information Management program, which had been a part of the program, was composed of only face-to-face courses in a lock-step progression. Currently about 75% of our coursework is online. This has caused fragmented and lack of cohesion. The first step to correct this is increased interaction during the on-campus courses. For the distance learners, I will use private discussion board assignments requiring interaction among those students. The program director and I feel strongly that this networking will benefit the HIM students while here at UCF, and as they enter the work force.

The “New Learning Paradigm”: Learner-Centered Instruction
Joe Curran
Marymount College (CA)
Originally published in the On Course newsletter, February 2006

In the mid-1990s, clarion calls were sounded for a “paradigm shift” in undergraduate education from traditional methods of instruction, which have focused on the teacher’s behavior and the teaching process, to a “new learning paradigm” that focuses on the learner’s behavior and the learning process (American Association for Higher Education, 1994; Angelo, 1997; Barr & Tagg, 1995). This shift is well illustrated by comparing the themes of two national conferences organized by the once-influential American Association of Higher Education (AAHE). In 1986, its national conference theme was, “Taking Teaching Seriously”; in 1998, it became, “Taking Learning Seriously”. This teaching-versus-learning dichotomy in the constructor of the learning process; and (c) educational assessor—evaluating learning outcomes and using this assessment information as feedback to improve the teaching-learning process.

In the learner-centered paradigm, students would spend less time being “instructed” (lectured to or at) and more time engendering in learning activities that have them actually doing something other than therote recording of lecture notes. Let us forget the lecture method still remains the dominant pedagogical strategy in the majority of colleges and universities. The change in its frequency of use over several decades (Bligh, 2000; Bowles, 1982; Costin, 1972; Marris, 1964; Nance & Nance, 1990). Arguably the major force propelling the movement toward learner-centered pedagogy in higher education is the well-documented ineffectiveness of the lecture method for promoting higher learning outcomes.

The Need for Learner-Centered Alternatives to the Lecture Method

Research suggests that college instructors have a tendency to overestimate their students’ level of cognitive involvement in
longer than 15 minutes), followed by opportunities to “act” on a predator or prey and then shift their attention to the next because it was more adaptive for our early ancestors to have wired to process information for prolonged periods of time (Bligh, 2000; Mackworth, 1970). This finding is captured inadvertently in the old saying, “During lectures, information passes from the lecturer’s notes to the students’ notes and through the minds of neither” (Bligh, 2000). Significant attention and concentration tend to drop off dramatically after 10-20 minutes of continuous instructor discourse (Pernner, 1984; Verner and Dickinson, 1967). However, it is important to note that this attention “drift” during lectures also occurs among students in graduate and professional school (Stuart and Ruthefurd, 1978) and among learning-oriented (vs. grade-oriented) undergraduate students (Millon, Pollio, & Eison, 1986). Thus, attention loss during lectures cannot be dismissed as a student problem, such as lack of motivation, lack of effort, or an outbreak of attention deficit disorder among today’s youth; instead, the problem seems to lie with the lecture method itself.

It may be that listening attentively to lectures for prolonged periods of time is simply not something that the human brain is particularly well equipped to do. Even if students miraculously managed to maintain attention and concentration through a typical 30-minute lecture, research strongly suggests that important educational outcomes, such as higher-level thinking and attitude change, are less likely to take place when students listen to lectures than when they engage in more active forms of learning (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991; 2005). For instance, McKeachie et al. (1986) conducted an extensive review of the research literature on college teaching methods and concluded: “If we want students to become more effective in meaningful learning and thinking, they need to spend more time in active, meaningful learning and thinking—not just sitting and passively receiving information.” (p. 77). Bonwell and Eison (1991) reached a similar conclusion following a review of the research literature: “The evidence suggests that if an instructor’s goals are not only to impart information but also to develop cognitive skills and to change attitudes, then alternative teaching strategies should be interwoven with the lecture method during class-room presentations.” (p. 10). More recently, Bligh (2000) concluded his extensive review with this recommendation: “Use lectures to teach information. Do not rely on them to promote thought, change attitudes, or develop behavioral skills if you can help it” (p. 20).

Implications for First-Year Students

A substantial number of subscribers to this newsletter have professional responsibilities that involve the education and retention of first-year students. For these professionals, and the new students they work with, the implications of the foregoing research become even more significant when they are viewed in light of recent findings relating specifically to first-year students.

Students are entering college today with substantially higher self-reported level of academic disengagement in high school—they more frequently report “feeling bored” in class, missing class, and spending less time on their studies outside of class (Astin et al., 1997; Sa, 1999). These characteristics apparently carry over to the first year of college, as evidenced by a national survey of first-year educators who were asked to rank 18 different factors in terms of their “lev-el of difficulty” in being retained by first-year students. These educators ranked “lack of [student] motivation” as the number-one factor (Policy Center on the First Year of College, 2003).

Admitting new students to college who report experiencing increasingly lower levels of academic engagement and higher levels of academic disengagement in high school, and then immediately immersing these neophytes in lecture-driven introductory courses, appears to be the ideal formula for perpetuating their pre-existing levels of academic disengagement, passivity, and boredom. In his book, “Handbook for the高等学校 teacher,” Kenneth Spear artfully expresses the potentially danger-

The third most commonly perceived disadvantage of teaching on a regional campus can be categorized as the special requirements of non-traditional students. Many regional campus students are taking classes while meeting full-time job and family responsibilities. This requires faculty to be cognizant of individual student circumstances, makes it more difficult to create an effective learning environment, and causes faculty to keep especially alert for community concerns such as hurrican-es and changes in area driving patterns due to special events. Moreover, some faculty feel it forces them to have a more liberal attendance policy. It is noted that students are less inclined to feel a sense of loyalty to the university and are less likely to display an allegiance to the university by wear-ing UCF-branded items.

Among the other issues that were mentioned as disadvantages more than once were 1) the burden of attending meetings in Orlando both in cost and time, 2) duplication of tasks such as ordering books, and 3) more limited library access for faculty and students.

We feel that the results of this limited survey are illuminating and provide justification for a broader analysis of this subject matter. An inventory of likes and dislikes, advantages and disadvantages, seems a logical place to start when trying to better any institution. Any future study of this question needs be based on a larger, more random sample. Moreover, data ought to be collected on the colleges and backgrounds that individual respondents represent. For instance, it may be the case that some advantages or disadvantages are associ-ated with certain colleges or instructors versus those in tenure track positions. As an aside, it can be noted that our pilot survey was conducted on a regional campus, and there was no systematic evidence that the length of service altered perceptions of advantages and disadvantages. For now, smaller class size appears to be the factor most closely tied to advantages; regional campus, and the lack of interaction with colleagues in one’s own discipline is perceived as the most significant dis-advantage. There is more unwanted individual responsibility to make their program a success. Here, the gist of the argument being made is that faculty feel they are burdened with less administrative handling of programs (or majors). Some point out the considerable amount of one-on-one student advising that they are required to do. One respondent argues that there is “little supervising and mentoring of students” on a regional campus, that because the regional campuses are in a growth mode, fac-ul ty have student recruitment responsibilities beyond those expected by colleagues teaching on the main campus. This assignment often involves visits, sometimes multiple and all-day visits, to local high schools, community colleges, hospitals, and other institutions where potential students are located.

Winning with SI: A Faculty Perspective on an Academic Support Program

D. Howard Miles is a Professor of Chemistry. He joined UCF in 1988. His professional interests include medici-nal and synthetic organic chemistry as related to the dis-eases of bacterial tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS, and heart diseases. His recent accomplishments include the award of eight UCF patents on novel synthetics from Russia that have the potential to be new drug-leads for the treatment of cancer and TB.
 Benefits (and Fits) of Teaching on a Regional Campus

Betty Wendi Mayer
Scot D. Schraufnagel

UCF grows to serve the educational needs of our state, multiple regional campuses have been created or expanded. The flavor, tone and pace of these campuses differ greatly from the Orlando campus. In casual conversations with colleagues in the UCF regional campus system, it can be easily noted that there are perceived advantages and disadvantages to working on one of the regional campuses. We set out to survey our colleagues regarding the advantages and disadvantages of teaching on one of the UCF regional campuses. We conducted a survey of eighteen regional campus educators in different departments throughout the university. The survey asked the faculty to report on what they perceive to be three advantages and three disadvantages to working on a regional campus. The responses varied; however, there was much constancy as we summarize the three most commonly mentioned advantages and disadvantages reported.

Benefits of Teaching on a Regional Campus

Twelve of eighteen respondents mention smaller class size as one of the advantages of teaching on the regional campus system. The open-ended responses included comments such as “more intimate classrooms,” “smaller classes enhance student cohesiveness,” and “closer relationships are developed with students due to having them in multiple courses.”

Second, eleven of eighteen respondents mention better administrative support as one of the advantages to teaching on a regional campus. In particular, they report that faculty feel free from interruptions, less service requirements, and more flexibility as one of the advantages to teaching on a regional campus.

The third advantage to teaching on a regional campus is related to working on a more collegial campus atmosphere. In all, we can count ten responses mentioning the development of collegial relationships between faculty and students, faculty and administrators, and between faculty and peers. Some people were especially pleased with the opportunity to develop working relationships and friendships with faculty from different departments and colleges. Others argue that the regional campuses are more sociable in terms of friendlier relations between colleagues in the UCF regional campus system, as individuals and sense that they matter to their instructor.

The primary disadvantage mentioned in the open-ended surveys was a lack of departmental socialization and interaction. The lower level of the within-discipline interaction was perceived to make it more difficult to achieve tenure and promotion. Respondents suggested that it is “more difficult to have contact with, and form networks with the colleagues in my discipline,” and that, “the open nature of the regional campus system makes it difficult to form a professional community.”

Other advantages to working on a regional campus that received more than a single mention were 1) closer to home; less driving, 2) being able to work on research with fewer interruptions, 3) less service requirements, and 4) more flexible schedules.

Disadvantages of Teaching on a Regional Campus

The research reviewed in this article provides consistent evidence that the lecture method, which continues to be the dominant instructional strategy in college classrooms, is not the optimal vehicle for promoting student learning, particularly learning that involves higher-level thinking and attitudinal change. The research reviewed here strongly suggests that the lecture method needs to be augmented, complemented, and punctuated by learner-centered strategies that empower students to take a more active and responsible role in the learning process. My motive for presenting this research was not to imply that lecturing is not useful. In fact, lecturing can be effective in the hands of a skilled teacher. Lecturing can be effective in the hands of a skilled teacher. However, if lecturing is to be effective, it must be accompanied by learner-centered strategies that help students develop the "large wealth of knowledge available from other faculty" on the Orlando campus.

Second, ten of eighteen open-ended responses can be categorized to suggest that faculty on regional campuses believe...
Submissions
The Faculty Focus is a publication for all instructors at the University of Central Florida. This includes full- and part-time faculty at all UCF campuses. Its purpose is to provide an exchange of ideas on teaching and learning for the university’s community of teachers and scholars. This represents an opportunity for faculty to reach their peers throughout the growing UCF community. The Faculty Focus invites you to contribute your ideas on teaching and learning in a short essay.

See the guidelines for submission online at <http://www.fctl.ucf.edu/publications/focus/guidelines.htm>. Publication dates will be the middle of the first and last full months of each semester, and submission deadlines will be the Friday of the week prior. MLA format is preferred. Please send your submissions to Faculty Focus, fctl@mail.ucf.edu.

Faculty Focus

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Vol. 5

The New Learning Paradigm: Learner-Centered Instruction

Teachers and scholars. This represents an opportunity for faculty to reach their peers throughout the growing UCF community.

The "New Learning Paradigm": Learner-Centered Instruction

Cheryl Evans Green is an Associate Professor of Social Work. She joined UCF in 1978. Her research interests include multicultural clinical practice, Black women in leadership roles in organizations, and addictions.

1. What teaching methods have you found to be most effective for your students?

I try different things. I usually have some type of experiential learning activity for students that allows them to have “hands-on” experience with the content. I’ll do a lecturette highlighting concepts from assigned readings—I don’t do long lectures anymore—and then students go through a simulation, role-play, case study, etc. used to clarify and reinforce the material. I plan to invite Theatre students to present client vignettes in a class so students can interact with them as they stay in character and confront students with the challenges of actual social work practice. When appropriate, I invite clients and practitioners to discuss practice issues in classes.

2. What was your most memorable teaching experience?

I guess I’m fortunate; there have been a number of such experiences over the years. I just love it when I have a class where I believe that I’ve really “connected” with students and utilized “real life” experiences to stimulate their thinking. In one class recently, for example, several students were able to directly tie the material to their own experiences in making difficult but critical decisions at different life stages. It was sort of a cathartic but validating teaching moment for me to witness the students’ enthusiastic and rather impressive discussion of the content.

3. What single piece of advice would you give to new professors today?

Find people both inside and outside your institution who will give you solid advice about what is required to be successful, not only with your scholarship but also teaching and service. Learn from their accomplishments and failures. I think that few faculty have had the benefit of one, all purpose mentor who guides the way.Usually several people, including family and friends, contribute to and support the process, so cultivate and nurture your allies. New faculty need to find out what is needed for tenure and locate a willing and able person or two who will help them stay really focused. They need to also do selected things in their teaching and service activities that keep their souls alive. What I didn’t do initially was link my research with my teaching, but there are ways to do that, such as the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning.

4. What kept you in the profession?

I discovered that I really had a passion for teaching. I come from a family of people who are all teachers, so they were absolutely thrilled.

5. What changes have you seen over your career with regard to student learning and how have you adapted to them?

I’ve seen the student population become increasingly more diverse. At first I saw this in cultural differences as more ethnically diverse students enrolled. Then I noticed the diversity of age as I realized that I often teach, in the same classroom, students who are 18, middle-aged, or even working retirees. I’ve observed some rather troubling diversity in students’ desire to learn. There’s now, I think, a segment of students, and I hope this is a small number, who do not seem to want to learn that much. “Give me my degree and let me be” seems to be their mantra. Their presence in our classes, I think, challenges all of us not give in to the demands for easy grades.