Submissions

The Faculty Focus is a publication for all instructors at the University of Central Florida. This includes full- and part-time faculty and teaching assistants 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. It is envisioned that this publication will inspire more dialogue among faculty, whether in hallway discussions, departmental meetings, or in written articles. 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 <www.fctl.ucf.edu/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.

Welcome to the 2006–2007 academic year at the University of Central Florida. I hope you had a great summer and that the coming semesters bring new and exciting growth in your career.

The Faculty Center staff and resources support all aspects of your success on campus. The many programs, workshops and consultations designed by the faculty provide opportunities to meet and to share ideas, develop curricular materials, learn about innovative pedagogies, develop grant proposals, and much more. A monthly calendar of all our events is sent out to all faculty or can be found online at <www.fctl.ucf.edu>. All programs are voluntary, and it is at the Faculty Center that you will meet faculty from all over campus. Drop in and meet the faculty and staff to see how we can support your success.

The Faculty Focus is designed to provide information and ideas to help new and returning faculty discover the many resources that are available to support them at UCF. Inside each edition you will find articles written by faculty for faculty on a variety of teaching and learning related issues, whether face-to-face or online. All of the issues are available online at <www.fctl.ucf.edu> under “Publications.” In this edition in particular, you may want to tear-out the back page and keep it by your computer for easy access to an array of contact information to answer most questions you might have about UCF.

On the Faculty Center website you will also find a treasure trove of resources for teaching, for the scholarship of teaching and learning, and for classroom and program assessment methods. We add to this every day, so keep checking back for new resources. We work closely with all units on campus and have collaborative events that are informative and engaging.

The Faculty Center hosts and facilitates a number of events throughout the year. You might want to consider joining us for our Teaching Circles, workshops or “brown bag” lunch groups, apply for the Winter and Summer Faculty Development Conferences that take place after the fall and spring semesters respectively. You can also join up with a team of people from your department or come on your own to work with the many support units on campus. These are opportunities to design a new course, develop new strategies for your curriculum or totally change a program’s structure. It is a great learning experience for all. The dates of the conferences and the RFP guidelines and deadlines will be available on the Faculty Center website.

If you have questions and you don’t know whom to call, then contact the Faculty Center at 407-823-3544 (3-3544 if you are on campus) and we will find the answer to your question or identify the person you need to talk to. We will save you time phoning around and getting frustrated. No question is too small or too large for us. Our mission is to support faculty success in any way that we can. We look forward to seeing you on campus and at our Faculty Center events.

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Karen L. Smith Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning
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1. Professor Kuhn, what teaching methods have you found to be most effective for your students?

I feel that students respond the best to a wide range of teaching methods you might choose, as long as you are enthusiastic about your discipline and maintain an active research interest in the area. Your excitement can become contagious. By being on the cutting edge of your discipline, you can focus on the present state of the discipline and explore future directions. Remember to maintain a sense of humor, and if you make a mistake, simply say, “I made a mistake.” One additional point: I like using graphics such as PowerPoint, not for a mistake, simply say, “I made a mistake.” One additional point: I like using graphics such as PowerPoint, not for

2. What is your most memorable teaching experience?

There’s a question I can’t answer. Every class is different; every circumstance is different. Although one can teach the same course many times, it’s always different because the students in your class are different. Although one can teach the same course many times, it’s always different because the students in your class are different. Although one can teach the same course many times, it’s always different because the students in your class are different. Although one can teach

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

I don’t know that student learning has changed, but the focus on what somebody wants out of the class has changed. In years past, people would say they didn’t quite get the grade they wanted, but they really learned a lot, and that’s why they took the course. Now it’s not quite that simple. People want and think they deserve a high grade because they are consumers. They don’t view higher education as a privilege any more. Thirty years ago, it was a privilege to go to college, and one felt privileged to be associated with professors. Now it’s “I’m paying your salary; I am a consumer and here’s what I want out of your class.” I don’t get it. It’s not what they can learn, but what they can apply to a job. It’s a natural change and we just have to get used to it.

4. Why did you become a university professor? What kept you in the profession?

Thirty years ago, it was a privilege to go to college, and one felt privileged to be associated with professors. Now it’s “I’m paying your salary; I am a consumer and here’s what I want out of your class.” Thirty years ago, it was a privilege to go to college, and one felt privileged to be associated with professors. Now it’s “I’m paying your salary; I am a consumer and here’s what I want out of your class.” Thirty years ago, it was a privilege to go to college, and one felt privileged to be associated with professors. Now it’s “I’m paying your salary; I am a consumer and here’s what I want out of your class.”

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

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MyUCF Grades

We are pleased to announce a new electronic grade reporting system for students called the MyUCF Grades. No longer will posting of grades outside classrooms or offices be necessary. Available for all courses beginning Summer 2006, a new page will automatically synchronize with your official class rosters. The Faculty Center will offer workshops and one-on-one consultations on creating and maintaining Excel gradebooks or using the myUCF Grades pagelet for your courses. Faculty Center staff are also available to visit with your department to demonstrate this new way for students to access their grades.
As the semester progressed I also found that I knew nothing about the assessment assignment. That just did not seem to be the case in the beginning. Unfortunately, I soon discovered that my work would be well beyond the committee work for the GEP. It was exciting because it would allow me to make a difference in a larger scale than ever before. The problem for me was that the position required that I become intimately involved with program assessment, of the General Education Program (GEP) no less. I could do the large class work if I wanted, but the assessment work was required.

This produced a large personal conflict. When you think of assessment what feelings arise? Are they pleasant or inspiring? My feeling was always one of dread and avoidance. Whenever I was asked to participate in anything to do with assessment, I would always find a justification for being unavailable. Now, if I did the assessment work, I could do the large class work that I really wanted to do. But after a lot of painful self-analysis sessions, I decided it was worth it. Being terribly naïve, I also figured that the assessment work would be minimal and bearable as a result.

At first the task seemed manageable since the committee members I was working with were colleagues who were both very knowledgeable and patient. I kept being warned, though, that the assessment assignment was a big job. That just did not seem to be the case in the beginning. Unfortunately, I soon discovered that my work would be well beyond the committee work I was asked to participate in. I did care about it, and we spent many hours discussing important issues in great depth. I also got to sit in on other meetings of my colleagues with faculty and learn more. Meetings started going better and things started to make sense.

Finally, after several very long and impassioned discussions with faculty who saw assessment the way I used to, I had an epiphany. Assessment is a tool to link teaching and learning. It is a cyclic, always evolving process, that actually allows instructors to find fulfillment, and it assures that students gain what they need for the success they are working towards. Suddenly, assessment was a very positive and important thing to embrace, instead of something hideous to avoid at all cost.

Once I achieved my enlightened state, I changed my approach in my own classes and even in my research so that I began to actively assess what I was doing. Some findings from that assessment were a bit shocking, but they have led to a more satisfying and productive classroom environment, and more productive research as well. This understanding has also made working with faculty to accomplish quality assessment of the GEP rewarding and quite successful.

To my utter amazement, over the year, assessment has changed from something that is hideous and to be avoided to a very important and useful tool that is rewarding to use. More interestingly, assessment turned out to be a much more important issue in large classes (as well as small classes) than the things I initially considered critical. I am very thankful for the opportunity I have had this year and will use what I have learned for the rest of my career. I will also continue to carry the torch to help others do the same.

Michael Hampton is Professor of Chemistry. He received his Ph.D. in Analytical Chemistry from Texas Tech University, and his research focuses on hydrogen storage systems, ion selective electrodes, piezoelectric oscillators, and inorganic materials.
Incorporating Cross-Cultural Issues into a Leadership and Strategic Management Course at the Rosen College of Hospitality Management

**Fevzi Okumus**

Associate Professor Fevzi Okumus joined the Rosen College of Hospitality Management in August of 2005. He holds a Bachelors of Science degree in Tourism and Hospitality Management from Cukurova University, Turkey, a Masters of Science degree in International Hotel Management and Ph.D. in Strategic Hotel Management from Oxford Brookes University, England.

His research interests include strategy implementation, competitive advantage, learning organizations, knowledge management and cross-cultural issues. He teaches leadership development, strategic management, strategic human resources and strategic marketing.

I began working at the Rosen College of Hospitality Management in August 2005. Prior to coming to UCF, I taught at universities in England, Turkey and Hong Kong. During my first two semesters at the Rosen College, I taught two sections of the undergraduate level HFT4295 Leadership and Strategic Management course. As this was my first teaching experience in the US, the first semester was particularly challenging and also a learning experience in terms of having a better understanding of the students' expectations and teaching practices at a hospitality college in the US.

HFT 4295 Leadership and Strategic Management is a capstone course. It aims to provide a holistic view of political, economical, socio-cultural, technological and ecological environments globally. It also requires analyzing global issues related to the hospitality industry and business practices. It was surprising to notice that many of the students in my Leadership and Strategic Management classes had very limited knowledge and understanding about developments and business practices in the global environment.

Upon realizing this towards the end of my first semester, I included one session on international hospitality management. In this session, we defined and discussed national culture and its impact on the business environment, particularly the hospitality industry. We talked about Hofstede's (1980) cross-cultural dimensions: individualism vs. collectivism, masculinity vs. femininity, uncertainty avoidance and power distance. Related to these issues, I provided examples from different countries. To my surprise, most of the students showed much interest not only in listening to these issues but also in contributing their ideas. This created a lively and interactive learning environment.

During my second semester I also taught two sections of HFT 4295 Leadership and Strategic Management. Based on my experience during the first semester, I revised the course syllabus and included two sections specifically on international hospitality management. During the first session, we defined and discussed national culture, problems with ethnocentrism, and Hofstede's cross-cultural dimensions. In the second session, we looked at two case studies on how Disney had certain problems when they opened their theme parks in Paris and Hong Kong. We also had discussions about what kind of global issues should be considered when establishing business in different countries. In addition, when discussing the general environment and the hospitality industry, I gave more examples from other cultures and countries.

My experience in both semesters indicated that the students in my Leadership and Strategic Management class were very interested in learning about cross-cultural issues and the impact of national culture on a country's business practices. I therefore intend to incorporate more examples and case studies in this topic in the upcoming semesters. Finally, I have also noticed that, at the Rosen College of Hospitality Management, there are no courses at the undergraduate and graduate levels on management of international hospitality firms. Therefore, with a number of colleagues at the Rosen College, we intend to develop and deliver an elective undergraduate course on this area soon. We hope that such a course would prepare our graduates to interact and work with customers and employees from different cross-cultural backgrounds.

Finally, I have also learned a great deal since joining UCF in August 2005. Reading the book by Althen, Doran, and Szmania, *American Ways – A Guide for Foreigners in the United States* has been indeed very helpful. Now I know more about American culture, working practices at a leading hospitality college in the US, and the hospitality industry in Orlando.

**References:**


Thinking About Teaching and Learning: Developing Habits of Learning with First Year College and University Students by Robert Leamson

Leamson supports claims by many college instructors that teaching first year students is becoming more difficult because students are less prepared. Prior efforts at remediation and "transferring" skills, however, are not encouraging. A more effective strategy, he insists, is to focus on the central obstacle to student success—language use. He believes most of what is packaged as "new" pedagogical tools are simply repackaged old teaching strategies now formalized and validated. Technologies and techniques are generally peripheral to core issues of interactive teaching whose build on prior course. He urges instructors to clearly articulate their teaching philosophy and their definition of learning, to restructure their pedagogy around the language of their discourse, to know their students well, to believe in their mission, and to embrace the hard work of achieving long-term goals. Leamson situates his argument within the context of brain-based learning and relies much on the work of Lev Vygotsky and Neil Postman. He believes most learning occurs—and should occur—outside of the classroom, while classroom time is best spent in activities which inspire the student to "struggle with the discipline, both inside and outside the classroom." The instructor should use a variety of delivery methods, shifting from one to another as appropriate and to avoid establishing routines. He continues with a discussion of technologies in education, writing as a teaching and learning technology, the computer, the web, etc. But no technology, he claims, can solve society's or education's problems. Leamson concludes with a call to expand and to tailor to my teaching style.

A Course Innovation Experience
Anne Prucha, Instructor of Spanish in the Department of Modern Languages

My experience teaching Spanish Composition (SPN 3420), has been an interesting journey and one that has led to my own learning and professional growth.

The first time I taught this course, I was taken completely by surprise. One year, there had been personnel changes in the department, and just a few days before classes started, I was asked if I could teach this class (I had taught a Spanish composition course only once, many years before, at another university). So, what does one say when asked at the last minute to teach a course that she is not prepared to teach? "Yes," of course! I spent the better part of the weekend preparing (and sweating) and familiarizing myself with the textbook (and worrying) and writing a syllabus (and doubting myself).

I think you get the picture. In other words, I was not giv

e ample time to prepare, either logistically or mentally, but in the long run I believe that this "last minute" experience benefitted students by making me a very successful teacher. Going into the course without having had time to plan much ahead required me to work harder than usual. I really wanted that course to be a success.

This course has really evolved over the semesters. In fall of 2005 I taught it again. The textbook that had been assigned had not been useful for my previous courses, so I used my own materials, all based on a very good Spanish grammar text, Manual de gramática by Eleanor Dosier and Zhuña Iguina. My colleague Julie Po
erneau had taken Italian Composition (ITA 3420) with our course, and I realized that his approach was very effective for writing successfully in the target language. I asked Dr. Ferri if he would share his ideas with me, which he did, and he gave me a lot of material on which to expand and to tailor to my teaching style.

Essentially, the course was comprised of various writing assignments, but they were not all "compositions" per se. They included reading and analyzing, and, in most instances, writing prose, poetry, newspaper articles, popular music lyrics, blogs, movie reviews and narration. My objective was for the students to write as much as possible in Spanish with out inhibition, but, at the same time, to pay close attention to grammar, syntax and vocabulary, and to hone their editing skills. I thought that it would be best if they could write about what interested them and choose their own topics of interest.

The writing assignments were the key to the course. Composition práctica: conversación y repaso by Trinidad González and Joseph Farrell. It includes a journal and activities that can be used to expand and to tailor to my teaching style.

Having moved from very prescribed writing assignments tak

en from a rather dull textbook, which, incidentally, is written in English, to a more open-ended style, by which students are freeer to choose the topics about which they want to write, has been a great experience for me and for my students. We now have a newly selected textbook for this course, Composición práctica: conversación y repaso by Trinidad González and Joseph Farrell. It includes a journal and activities that can be done on the Internet. My colleagues and I will also incorpo
rate digital technologies and the web, and I will be able to lend themselves to a more interactive class in which students will be able to combine formal assignments tailored to their interests and with personal reflection.
If you have walked around campus recently, you may have noticed the bright orange “What IF?” Information Fluency banners populating the grounds. Information Fluency (IF) is defined by the Information Fluency website (www.if.ucf.edu) as the ability to “gather, evaluate, and use information.” This initiative represents UCF’s selected model for a Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP). One function of the QEP (a new component of the SACs accreditation process) is to encourage universities to develop innovative new models for improving student learning. This article details my experiences working with Information Fluency in a digital media course. As part of a spring 2006 course innovation workshop, I had the opportunity to work on integrating the notion of information fluency into E-Commerce II (a course in E-Commerce II) classroom activities and assignments. While pursuing this goal, I hoped to motivate students to find a creative means to articulate the more abstract notion of information fluency into a more readily usable topic. In addition, by incorporating elements of information fluency into my lecture materials and discussing this topic in the classroom, I was interested in observing student reactions to the material and charting any of the emergent ideas that resulted from these interactions and conversations. I chose to associate the word “fluency” not only with the notion of an expert familiarity with a particular language or discourse, but also with the ability to adapt a communication in a more organic fashion, perhaps in order to sustain a particular interaction within a particular community of practice. Thus, information fluency became an exciting possibility to use this idea in the classroom as both a stimulus for class discussion and as a guiding principle for articulated digital discourse (in this case, in the form of Internet software applications).

An initial challenge in working with the IF model was to explain to students how information fluency differed from the way they were already producing in this particular course. Media for E-Commerce I introduces students to the fundamentals of databases, Internet programming languages, and Web-based usability. In E-Commerce II, these topics are re-introduced by requiring students to complete a series of Web-based programming assignments in a more project-based course. Projects from the past included online ordering systems for hypothetical pizza delivery clients, portfolio upload and management sites, and custom online calculators. For the spring semester, I asked students to drop one of these traditional assignments and instead produce what I described as an “interactive Information Fluency kiosk.” As we discussed our reactions to information fluency, the class considered the ways in which we might develop these intersecting ideas from the library sciences, information technology, and critical thinking into an e-commerce-type application.

Our initial challenge, then, was to decide a) if we were already “doing” information fluency, and b) if so, how could we do it better, or, if we were not already doing it, how could we do it in the first place? As a class, we decided that since we were building content to be displayed on the Internet, we were already gathering and using information to some extent. What we were not doing much, however, was evaluating information. So, we chose to design the concept for our Information Fluency kiosk based primarily on this particular stratum of IF. Furthermore, we noted the potential for articulated information fluency products to serve as teaching tools, either for digital media students or for students in other disciplines. Finally, we recognized the importance for feedback in our kiosk applications, so I decided to assign an interactive component in this particular assignment as well. The final objective for the assignment, then, was to create an interactive kiosk that a) focused on the evaluation of information, b) provided an interactive component, and c) could be used to teach or inform users about specialized content.

The final assignment description (available from the IF Web site) included these objectives and also contained a brief description of the UCF QEP plan and how Information Fluency is defined in terms of student learning. Students in the course then produced a wide variety of products based on this assignment description. One project was an art history tool that allowed students to upload their own annotated slide images and then browse a collection of artwork in either Flashcard (no details) mode or a mode with full details (name, artist, period, style, etc.) in order to study art history materials. Another student developed The Conjugator, an IF kiosk application for studying imperfect tense conjugations in Spanish. Other projects included a kiosk for the critique of Advanced Placement Art in high schools, a database for mapping expensive software programs to their freeware or reduced cost alternatives, and focused Wiki-type applications with content related to specific courses or disciplines, such as a film terminology Wiki, or a graphic design Wiki.

As I witnessed the quality of the IF kiosks and the enthusiasm that accompanied the IF project presentations, I was highly impressed with the way in which these students were able to critically examine UCF’s Quality Enhancement Plan and produce new ideas and project deliverables based on the concept of information fluency. They used this model to create a vision of what information fluency meant to them personally, as individuals and as a community of digital students. I look forward to seeing the results of this process in other disciplines and across campus as the program matures and develops in new directions.

Meeting in an Online World: Library Modules in WebCT Classes

Barbara Alderman
Allison King
Andy Todd

Barbara, Allison, and Andy are UCF librarians who work in UCF’s Southern Region. They continue to expand and review the library instruction and reference services they have been providing for online classes since 2001.

The Beginning

During the Fall term 2001, librarians and teaching faculty on UCF’s Cucos campus discussed the possibility of working together in an online environment. Dr. Mary Ann Feldheim, UCF Department of Public Administration, was in the process of converting her graduate courses to WebCT. She did not want to lose the valuable information the librarians had been sharing with her face-to-face classes. Three Southern Region librarians (Barbara Alderman, Marcus Kilman, and Allison King) took up the challenge. After making some telephone calls and sending some e-mails, we determined that no formal library instruction program existed for online classes. We met with Dr. Feldheim, drafted an outline, and determined a format. We decided to keep the information simple and to the point. Instead of providing page after page of reading materials, we would participate in the class and be available to answer questions. We also decided that instead of inserting graphical page images, we would include practice exercises with walk-through instructions and multiple choice answers. A final assignment, with open-ended questions, would be graded.

The module would include some generic information but would be geared specifically to the course being taught. It would consist of a text-based compilation of documents created in MS Word addressing many library-related topics in classes being customized for instruction on subject-specific databases and electronic resources, research strategies, and feedback to module improvements.

So, over time, the modules have evolved. In addition to faculty input, changes have resulted from observed behaviors, student comments, and the perspectives of new personnel with innovative ideas. Andy Todd joined the Southern Region team when Marcus returned to Orlando. Moreover, the number of librarians participating has grown and we are now collaborating with librarians from various UCF campuses.

The feedback from students has been positive overall, especially from students who are in their final class and are being exposed to all the information for the first time. They ask “why wasn’t I given this information in the first class of my program, I could have really used it last year.” Evaluations and student comments have substantiated support for a hands-on library module with practice exercises and a final assignment.

In response to various feedback, content has expanded. Some sections are unique to a particular course, but other sections, like a glossary and a discussion of peer-reviewed articles, are being incorporated into all modules. We still share an ID, actually we share two. We share one ID as a shared designer so that we can easily provide backup services for each other. We share another ID as a TA so we can input grades if desired by faculty. We share these IDs so we can easily provide backup services for each other.
If you have walked around campus recently, you may have read the bright orange “What IF?” Information Fluency banners populating the grounds. Information Fluency (IF) is defined by the IF website (www.if.uic.edu) as the ability to “gather, evaluate, and use information.”

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As part of a spring 2006 course innovation workshop, I had the opportunity to work on integrating the notion of information fluency into a digital media course (Thematic II) classroom activities and assignments. While pursuing this goal, I hoped to motivate students to find a creative means to articulate the more abstract notion of information fluency into a digital media course.

Students were expected to find digital media related to the assignments and key concepts so that we could explore how the Spring presentation of information fluency into my lecture materials was not fully realized and usable products. In addition, by incorporating elements of information fluency into my lecture materials and discussing this topic in the classroom, I was interested in observing student reactions to the material and charting any of the emergent ideas that resulted from these interactions and conversations. I chose to associate the word “fluency” not only with the notion of an expert familiarity with a particular language or discourse, but also with the ability to adapt a conversation in a more organic fashion, perhaps in order to sustain a particular interaction within a particular communicative context. One aspect of the Spring presentation of information fluency into my lecture materials was an exciting possibility to use this idea in the classroom as both a stimulus for class discussion and as a guiding principle for artificated digital discourse (in this case, in the form of Internet software applications).

An initial challenge was working in the IF model was to explain to students how information fluency differed from the way they were already producing in this particular course. Media for E-Commerce I introduces students to the fundamentals of databases, Internet programming languages, and Web-based usability. In E-Commerce II, these topics are re-introduced by requiring students to complete a series of Web-based programming assignments in a more project-based course. Projects from the past included online ordering systems for hypothetical pizza delivery clients, portfolio upload and management sites, and custom online calculators. For the spring semester, I asked students to drop one of these traditional assignments and instead produce what I described as an “Information Fluency kiosk.” As we discussed our reactions to information fluency, the class considered the ways in which we might develop these intersecting ideas from the library sciences, information technology, and critical thinking into an e-commerce-type application.

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Meeting in an Online World: Library Modules in WebCT Classes

Barbara Alderman
Allison King
Andy Todd

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The module would include some generic information but would be geared specifically to the course being taught. It would consist of a text-based compilation of documents created in MS Word addressing many library-related topics in classes. The objectives of the Spring semester, I asked students to drop one of these traditional assignments and instead produce what I described as an “Information Fluency kiosk.” As we discussed our reactions to information fluency, the class considered the ways in which we might develop these intersecting ideas from the library sciences, information technology, and critical thinking into an e-commerce-type application.

Our initial challenge, then, was to decide a) if we were already “doing” information fluency, and b) if so, how could we do it better, or, if we were not already doing it, how could we do it in the first place? As a class, we decided that since we were building content to be displayed on the Internet, we were already gathering and using information to some extent. What was not being done much, however, was evaluating information. So, we chose to design the concept for our Information Fluency kiosk based primarily on this particular stratum of IF. Furthermore, we noted the potential for artificated information fluency products to serve as teaching tools, either for digital media students or for students in other disciplines. Finally, we recognized the importance for feedback in our kiosk, so I decided to include an interactive component as the primary assignment. The final objective for the assignment, then, was to create an interactive kiosk that a) focused on the evaluation of information, b) provided an interactive component, and c) could be used to teach or inform users about specialized content.

The final assignment description (available from the IF Web site) included these objectives and also contained a brief description of the UCF QEP plan and how Information Fluency is defined in terms of student learning. Students in the course then produced a wide variety of products based on this assignment description. One project was an art history tool that allowed students to upload their own annotated slide images and then browse a collection of artworks in either Flashcard (no details) mode or a mode with full details (name, artist, period, style, etc.) in order to study art history materials. Another student developed The Conjugator, an IF kiosk application for studying imperfect tense conjugations in Spanish. Other projects included a kiosk for the critique of Advanced Placement Art in high schools, a database for mapping expensive software programs to their freeware or reduced cost alternatives, and focused Wiki-type applications with content related to specific courses or disciplines, such as a film terminology Wiki, or a graphic design Wiki.

As we witnessed the quality of the IF kiosks and the enthusiasm that accompanied the IF project presentations, I was highly impressed with the way in which these students were able to critically examine UCF’s Quality Enhancement Plan and produce new ideas and project deliverables based on the concept of information fluency. They used this model to create a vision of what information fluency meant to them personally, as individuals or as a community of digital students. I look forward to seeing the results of this process in other disciplines and across campus as the program matures and develops in new directions.
One librarian remains in the class for the semester and provides reference assistance on any questions students have (whether for that class or other classes they may be taking). We believe learning the process is more important than recording a grade. We want everyone to score 100 percent. With the faculty member's consent, we provide students with the opportunity to correct their assignments as they provide additional guidance. We strongly believe librarian participation is an important component of the library modules. We participate by grading student papers, providing bookwyrd, answering student emails, posting updates and items of interest on the discussion board, and offering search tips and research help to students. The librarian's participation also has expanded to include integrating the library's service to the course, service, and assessment of the students' learning.

We moved the practice exercises to stand-alone sections to help prevent students from getting lost. We experimented one term and made completion of these practice exercises mandatory, but it was determined that the students and faculty got more out of the assignments with much less resentment if they remained optional. The evaluations have been provided as Word documents and PDF files requiring attaching to an email, included as a quiz, and solicited from the discussion board. We are still working on figuring the best way to get the most responses returned.

Currently (Summer 2006), we are involved with almost 20 unique online classes, many of which include the complete package with comprehensive modules and librarian service, including, for more than 15 faculty. We have been participating in approximately 15 different WebCT classes each semester for the past 2 years.

The Future

With the advent of the revised WebCT (version 6/Vista), we are re-inventing our modules one more time. With the help and guidance from CDWS personnel, we are restructing the way we input the information to make updating much more streamlined. We will be assuming more responsibility for making changes and learning DreamWeaver along the way. We do not plan to use our own departmental web space, but will be using the service in the discussion board, and offering search tips and research help to students. The librarian's participation also has expanded to include integrating the library's service to the course, service, and assessment of the students' learning.

Thinking About Teaching and Learning: Developing Habits of Learning with First Year College and University Students by Robert Leamnson

Leamnson supports claims by many college instructors that teaching first year students is becoming more difficult because students are less prepared. Prior efforts at remediation and "transferring" skills, however, are not encouraging. A more effective strategy, he insists, is to focus on the central obstacle to student success—language use. He believes most of what is packaged as "new" pedagogical tools are simply repackaged old teaching strategies now formalized and validated. Technologies and techniques are generally peripheral to core issues of interactive teaching whose build on diverse discourses. He urges instructors to carefully articulate their teaching philosophy and their definition of learning, to restructure their pedagogy around these discourses, to expand and to tailor to my teaching style.

A Course Innovation Experience

Anne Prucha, Instructor of Spanish in the Department of Modern Languages

My experience teaching Spanish Composition (SPN 3420), has been an interesting journey and one that has led to my own learning and professional growth.

The first time I taught this course, I was taken completely by surprise. One year, there had been personnel changes in the department, and just a few days before classes started, I was asked if I could teach this class (I had taught a Spanish composition course once only, many years before, at another university). So, what does one say when asked at the last minute to teach a course that she is not prepared to teach? "Yes," of course! I spent the better part of the weekend preparing (and sweating) and familiarizing myself with the textbook (and worrying) and writing a syllabus (and doubting myself). I think you get the picture. In other words, I was not giv

The narrative writing project consisted of writing an original conclusion to a fairy tale. First we studied what a fairy tale is, its elements, themes and style. Many students did not know the difference between a fairy tale, a legend, and a fable. Once they chose a fairy tale that interested them, they were challenged by having to be creative and original and especially by the requirement of presenting a dramatic reading of what they had written. I was pleased when every student used costumes, props and dramatic expression in their presentations. It was truly a success and very enjoyable for the whole class.

I provided students with a short list of movies in Spanish. Once they voted on the movie they preferred, we watched Diarios de motocicleta (Motorcycle Diaries), which was based on the diary of Che Guevara that he wrote during a long motorcycle trip through South America in the fifties. The movie provoked many emotions and questions. Students were fascinated by the beautiful scenery and intrigued by the heroes and the political evolution of this legendary figure. They even saw their professor cry during the movie! After bringing movie reviews and critiques to class and discussing the elements of each, students wrote their own review of Diarios de motocicleta basing them on themes that they found to be of interest. These included politics, personal growth and friendship.

Having moved from very prescribed writing assignments taken from a rather dull textbook, which, incidentally, is written in English, to a more open-ended style, by which students were freer to choose the topics about which they want to write, has been a great experience for me and for my students. We now have a newly selected textbook for this course, Composición práctica: conversación y repaso by Trinidad González and Joseph Farrell. It includes a journal and activities that can be done on the Internet. My colleagues and I will also incorporate interactive teaching, which provided students with new tools and techniques for increasing their confidence and making them freer to choose the topics about which they want to write, has been a great experience for me and for my students.
Incorporating Cross-Cultural Issues into a Leadership and Strategic Management Course at the Rosen College of Hospitality Management
Fevzi Okumus

I began working at the Rosen College of Hospitality Management in August 2005. Prior to coming to UCF, I taught at universities in England, Turkey and Hong Kong. During my first two semesters at the Rosen College, I taught two sections of the undergraduate level HFT4295 Leadership and Strategic Management course. As this was my first teaching experience in the US, the first semester was particularly challenging and also a learning experience in terms of having a better understanding of the students’ expectations and teaching practices at a hospitality college in the US.

HFT 4295 Leadership and Strategic Management is a capstone course. It aims to provide a holistic view of political, economic, socio-cultural, technological and ecological environments globally. It also requires analyzing global issues related to the hospitality industry and business practices. It was surprising to notice how many of the students in my Leadership and Strategic Management classes had very limited knowledge and understanding of developments and business practices in the global environment.

Upon realizing this towards the end of my first semester, I included one session on international hospitality management. In this session, we defined and discussed national culture and the impact on the business environment, particularly the hospitality industry. We talked about Hofstede’s (1980) cross-cultural dimensions: individualism vs. collectivism, masculinity vs. femininity, uncertainty avoidance and power distance. Related to these issues, I provided examples from different countries. To my surprise, most of the students showed much interest not only in listening to these issues but also in contributing their ideas. This created a lively and interactive learning environment.

During my second semester I also taught two sections of HFT 4295 Leadership and Strategic Management. Based on my experience during the first semester, I revised the course syllabus and included two sessions specifically on international hospitality management. During the first session, we defined and discussed national culture, problems with ethnocentrism, and Hofstede’s cross cultural dimensions. In the second session, we looked at two case studies on how Disney had certain problems when they opened their theme parks in Paris and Hong Kong. We also had discussions about what kind of global issues should be considered when conducting business in different countries. In addition, when discussing the general environment and the hospitality industry, I gave more examples from other cultures and countries.

My experience in both semesters indicated that the students in my Leadership and Strategic Management class were very interested in learning about cross-cultural issues and the impact of national culture on a country’s business practices. I therefore intend to incorporate more examples and case studies on this topic in coming semesters. Finally, I have also noticed that, at the Rosen College of Hospitality Management, there are no courses at the undergraduate and graduate levels on management of international hospitality firms. Therefore, with a number of colleagues at the Rosen College, we intend to develop and deliver an elective undergraduate course on this area soon. We hope that such a course would prepare our graduates to interact and work with customers and employees from different cross-cultural backgrounds.

Finally, I have also learned a great deal since joining UCF in August 2005. Reading the book by Althen, Doran, and Szmania American Ways – A Guide for Foreigners in the United States has been indeed very helpful. Now I know more about American culture, working practices at a leading hospitality college in the US, and the hospitality industry in Orlando.

References:

*Experience without theory is blind, but theory without experience is mere intellectual play.*
- Immanuel Kant
warm and collegial help I was given to help in learning about going, along with the desire to learn something new. With the fortunate, knowledgeable and helpful colleagues kept me accompanied by an enormous learning curve. was painfully aware that the job was indeed huge and accom.

At first the task seemed manageable since the committee was excited because it would allow me to make a difference on a larger scale than ever before. The problem for me was that the position required that I become intimately involved with program assessment, of the General Education Program (GEP) no less. I could do the large class work if I wanted, but the assessment work was required. This produced a large personal conflict. When you think of assessment what feelings arise? Are they pleasant or inspiring? My feeling was always one of dread and avoidance. Whenever I was asked to participate in anything to do with assessment, I would always find a justification for being unavailable. Now, if I did the assessment work, I could do the large class work I really wanted to do. After a lot of painful self-analysis sessions, I decided it was worth it. Being terribly naïve, I also figured that the assessment work would be minimal and bearable as a result.

At first the task seemed manageable since the committee members I was working with were colleagues who were both very knowledgeable and patient. I kept being warned, though, that the assessment assignment was a big job. That just did not seem to be the case in the beginning. Unfortunately, I soon discovered that my work would be well beyond the committee. I would be interfacing with faculty both one-on-one and in groups to accomplish assessment of the GEP program. Worse, this is the year of SACS accreditation review, so the assessment was more critical than ever.

As the semester progressed I also found that I knew nothing at all about assessment. The ideas were foreign and the vocabulary totally new. Many words were familiar but somehow meant something totally different than I thought. Suddenly, I was painfully aware that the job was indeed huge and accompanied by an enormous learning curve.

Fortunately, knowledgeable and helpful colleagues kept me going, along with the desire to learn something new. With the warm and collegial help I was given to help in learning about assessment, I felt safe again. However, the first meeting with the faculty actually doing the assessment of the GEP courses arrived and I felt lost again. It took less than two minutes for questions outside my knowledge to start. Even Disney’s new Mount Everest roller coaster has nothing on the terror and adrenaline-pumping that this caused.

The rest of the year continued this way, but my knowledge began to grow and meetings got smoother. The chance to interact with faculty one-on-one to work out assessment actually proved very helpful. I learned that they really did care about it, and we spent many hours discussing important issues in great depth. I also got to sit in on other meetings of my colleagues with faculty and learn more. Meetings started going better and things started to make sense.

Finally, after several very long and impassioned discussions with faculty who saw assessment the way I used to, I had an epiphany. Assessment is a tool to link teaching and learning. It is a cyclic, always evolving process, that actually allows instructors to find fulfillment, and it assures that students gain what they need for the success they are working towards. Suddenly, assessment was a very positive and important thing to embrace, instead of something hideous to avoid at all cost.

Once I achieved my enlightened state, I changed my approach in my own classes and even in my research so that I began to actively assess what I was doing. Some findings from that assessment were a bit shocking, but they have led to a much more satisfying and productive classroom environment, and more productive research as well. This understanding has also made working with faculty to accomplish quality assessment of the GEP rewarding and quite successful.

To my utter amazement, over the year, assessment has changed from something that is hideous and to be avoided to a very important and useful tool that is rewarding to use. More interestingly, assessment turned out to be a much more important issue in large classes (as well as small classes) than the things I initially considered critical. I am very thankful for the opportunity I have had this year and will use what I have learned for the rest of my career. I will also continue to carry the torch to help others do the same.

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Michael Hampton is Professor of Chemistry. He received his Ph.D. in Analytical Chemistry from Texas Tech University, and his research focuses on hydrogen storage systems, ion selective electrodes, piezoelectric oscillators as chemical oscillators, and inorganic materials.

GTA Certificate Course

Our GTA Teaching Certificate program will be returning in the Fall semester, on Fridays. This non-credit course carries a stipend of $500 to those who complete course requirements. For more information, please see <www.fclt.ucf.edu/events/GTAprograms/gtacert>.
1. Professor Kuhn, what teaching methods have you found to be most effective for your students?

I feel that students respond the best to a wide range of teaching methods you might choose, as long as you are enthusiastic about your discipline and maintain an active research interest in the area. Your excitement can become contagious. By being on the cutting edge of your discipline, you can focus on the present state of the discipline and explore future directions. Remember to maintain a sense of humor, and if you make a mistake, simply say, “I made a mistake.” One additional point: I like using graphics such as PowerPoint, not for reading the slide, but simply to use it as a starting point for the discussion.

2. What was your most memorable teaching experience?

There’s a question I can’t answer. Every class is different; every circumstance is different. Although one can teach the same course, there are many times that I walked away from the semester thinking, “This was really fun.” These memorable experiences range from small graduate courses with 10 or fewer students to large classes of 230. One of the most enjoyable courses I recall was an Advanced Genetics course composed of 15 compatible graduate students who got along well. For whatever reason we were all on the same wavelength.

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

I don’t know that student learning has changed, but the focus on what somebody wants out of the class has changed. In years past, people would say they didn’t quite get the grade they wanted, but they really learned a lot, and that’s why they took the course. Now it’s not quite that simple. People want and think they deserve a high grade because they are consumers. They don’t view higher education as a privilege any more. They think they deserve a high grade because they are consumers. I don’t know that student learning has changed, but the focus on what somebody wants out of the class has changed. In years past, people would say they didn’t quite get the grade they wanted, but they really learned a lot, and that’s why they took the course. Now it’s not quite that simple. People want and think they deserve a high grade because they are consumers. They don’t view higher education as a privilege any more. They think they deserve a high grade because they are consumers. I don’t know that student learning has changed, but the focus on what somebody wants out of the class has changed. In years past, people would say they didn’t quite get the grade they wanted, but they really learned a lot, and that’s why they took the course. Now it’s not quite that simple. People want and think they deserve a high grade because they are consumers. They don’t view higher education as a privilege any more. They think they deserve a high grade because they are consumers. I don’t know that student learning has changed, but the focus on what somebody wants out of the class has changed. In years past, people would say they didn’t quite get the grade they wanted, but they really learned a lot, and that’s why they took the course. Now it’s not quite that simple. People want and think they deserve a high grade because they are consumers. They don’t view higher education as a privilege any more. They think they deserve a high grade because they are consumers. I don’t know that student learning has changed, but the focus on what somebody wants out of the class has changed. In years past, people would say they didn’t quite get the grade they wanted, but they really learned a lot, and that’s why they took the course. Now it’s not quite that simple. People want and think they deserve a high grade because they are consumers. They don’t view higher education as a privilege any more. They think they deserve a high grade because they are consumers. I don’t know that student learning has changed, but the focus on what somebody wants out of the class has changed. In years past, people would say they didn’t quite get the grade they wanted, but they really learned a lot, and that’s why they took the course. Now it’s not quite that simple. People want and think they deserve a high grade because they are consumers. They don’t view higher education as a privilege any more. They think they deserve a high grade because they are consumers. I don’t know that student learning has changed, but the focus on what somebody wants out of the class has changed. In years past, people would say they didn’t quite get the grade they wanted, but they really learned a lot, and that’s why they took the course. Now it’s not quite that simple. People want and think they deserve a high grade because they are consumers. They don’t view higher education as a privilege any more. They think they deserve a high grade because they are consumers. I don’t know that student learning has changed, but the focus on what somebody wants out of the class has changed. In years past, people would say they didn’t quite get the grade they wanted, but they really learned a lot, and that’s why they took the course. Now it’s not quite that simple. People want and think they deserve a high grade because they are consumers. They don’t view higher education as a privilege any more. They think they deserve a high grade because they are consumers.

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

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5. What advice would you give to new professors today?

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We are pleased to announce a new electronic method to report grades to your students called the MyUCF Grades. No longer will posting of grades outside classrooms or offices be necessary. Available for all courses beginning Summer 2006, a new page will be added to the site to document grades. Faculty members are being asked to find ways of making money for the university. As states allocate fewer dollars in support of higher education, it becomes important for universities to become corporations and act entrepreneurially. I would advise new faculty members coming into the university system to understand the times, adapt, and expect as much change in higher education over the next several decades as seen during my faculty tenure. Finally, with regard to tenure and promotion, new professors need to identify successful role models in their area, and pattern their development after those individuals. Success will follow.

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Faculty Focus is a publication for all instructors at the University of Central Florida. This includes full- and part-time faculty and teaching assistants 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. It is envisioned that this publication will inspire more dialogue among faculty, whether in hallway discussions, departmental meetings, or in written articles. 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 <www.fctl.ucf.edu/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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- Welcome Alison Morrison-Shetlar

Alison is the Director of the UCF Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning and Professor of Biology. After graduating with a Ph.D. in Biomedical Sciences from Dundee College of Technology in Scotland, she conducted research for many years and became Chair of the Molecular Biology Dept. at the Max-Planck Institute in Dortmund. On coming to the U.S. in 1993, Alison taught in Connecticut and Georgia, where she also directed the Center for Excellence in Teaching at Georgia Southern University. She joined UCF in 2002.

Welcome to the 2006–2007 academic year at the University of Central Florida. I hope you had a great summer and that the coming semesters bring new and exciting growth in your career.

The Faculty Center staff and resources support all aspects of your success on campus. The many programs, workshops and consultations designed by the faculty provide opportunities to meet and to share ideas, develop curricular materials, learn about innovative pedagogies, develop grant proposals, and much more. A monthly calendar of all our events is sent out to all faculty or can be found online at <www.fctl.ucf.edu>. All programs are voluntary, and it is at the Faculty Center that you will meet faculty from all over campus. Drop in and meet the faculty and staff to see how we can support your success.

The Faculty Focus is designed to provide information and ideas to help new and returning faculty discover the many resources that are available to support them at UCF. Inside each edition you will find articles written by faculty for faculty on a variety of teaching and learning related issues, whether face-to-face or online. All of the issues are available online at <www.fctl.ucf.edu> under “Publications.” In this edition in particular, you may want to tear-out the back page and keep it by your computer for easy access to an array of contact information to answer most questions you might have about UCF.

On the Faculty Center website you will also find a treasure trove of resources for teaching, for the scholarship of teaching and learning, and for classroom and program assessment methods. We add to this every day, so keep checking back for new resources. We work closely with all units on campus and have collaborative events that are informative and engaging.

The Faculty Center hosts and facilitates a number of events throughout the year. You might want to consider joining us for our Teaching Circles, workshops or “brown bag” lunch groups, apply for the Winter and Summer Faculty Development Conferences that take place after the fall and spring semesters respectively. You can also join up with a team of people from your department or come on your own to work with the many support units on campus. These are opportunities to design a new course, develop new strategies for your curriculum or totally change a program’s structure. It is a great learning experience for all. The dates of the conferences and the RFP guidelines and deadlines will be available on the Faculty Center website.

If you have questions and you don’t know whom to call, then contact the Faculty Center at 407-823-3544 (3-3544 if you are on campus) and we will find the answer to your question or identify the person you need to talk to. We will save you time phoning around and getting frustrated. No question is too small or too large for us. Our mission is to support faculty success in any way that we can. We look forward to seeing you on campus and at our Faculty Center events.