



When Educators Speak ..

"Everywhere I go I'm asked if I think the university stifles writers. My opinion is that they don't stifle enough of them. There's many a best-seller that could have been prevented by a good teacher."
~ Flannery O'Conner

"I am an idealist. I don't know where I'm going but I'm on my way."
~ Carl Sandburg

"He who asks a question may be a fool for five minutes. But he who never asks a question remains a fool forever."
~ Tom J. Connelly

"The harder you fight to hold on to specific assumptions, the more likely there's gold in letting go of them."
~ John Seely Brown

"To find fault is easy; to do better may be difficult."
~ Plutarch

"Experience is the name everyone gives to their mistakes."
~ Oscar Wilde

"He who laughs last thinks slowest."
~ Anonymous

"Man's mind stretched to a new idea never goes back to its original dimensions."
~ Oliver Wendell Holmes

"There would be no society if living together depended upon understanding each other."
~ Eric Hoffer

"Whenever you find that you are on the side of the majority, it is time to reform."
~ Mark Twain

"You only live once - but if you work it right, once is enough."
~ Joe E. Lewis

Quotation Station.<http://www.4degreez.com/quotes/quotes.html> accessed on 08/10/2005

We would like to hear from you! If you have an original quote or anecdote that you would like to share with other faculty about your teaching experiences here at HPU, please send them to the Teaching and Learning Center along with your name, your title, and your permission to publish it in the *Po'okela*.



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The *Po'okela* newsletter is a bimonthly publication featuring articles of interest to faculty regarding pedagogy, scholarship, and service at Hawai'i Pacific University.

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Po'okela

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APPLYING ARISTOTLE'S GOLDEN MEAN TO THE CLASSROOM:

BALANCING UNDERTEACHING AND OVERTEACHING

by Robert K. Noyd, director of Faculty Development and professor of Biology, U.S. Air Force Academy

In his Nicomachean Ethics, Aristotle argues that moral virtue and the right course of action is a "golden" mean, (aurea mediocritas) between two extremes, one involving excess and the other deficiency. The method Aristotle used to pinpoint the mean, or the virtue, was to first identify the two extremes. "*Courage is a mean between cowardice and recklessness, generosity is a mean between wastefulness and stinginess.*"

Aristotle added that decisions of moral virtue are situational and are made within a specific context. For example, under one set of conditions running into enemy fire may be considered courageous, whereas in a different situation it may be considered reckless.

This Aristotelian perspective was brought to my attention by a colleague from our Philosophy Department in a conversation where I felt that I was more invested in my student's achievement than they were. There seemed to be no limit to what I would do to help my students - I provided handouts that encapsulated the readings, test preparation hints, learning strategies, and lesson objectives. It seemed the pendulum had swung all the way in my teacher-centered classroom - all the way to an extreme of overteaching.

From that point on, I realized that I needed a framework to make teaching decisions and determine the right course of action for my teaching practice. What follows outlines my quest to find the golden mean where I strike the right balance between doing too little for my students, or underteaching, and doing too much for them, or overteaching.

How do I strike a balance? How do I decide the best course of action that promotes student learning as well as

reinforces desirable student behaviors? How do I find the golden mean in a given teaching situation? Using an Aristotelian approach, I identify both extremes and then use the following question to determine the context: Am I giving the right student the right amount of assistance, at the right time, for the right reason, and in the right manner?

Let's examine this five-part question. Because they're ready at hand as it were, I'll use examples from my own time in the classroom and the insights that time has brought me.

1. The right student

Knowing your responsibilities and those of your students in the teaching-learning process is the gateway criterion. If you don't know your students and the efforts they truly bring to the process, you cannot determine the right type, amount, time, or reason to give assistance.

Underteaching is characterized by making students responsible for almost all of the learning process. The teacher's investment in the learning outcomes is low and may communicate to students that the course is a "weed out" course and students are on their own.

Overteaching occurs when instructors shoulder too large a share of the teaching-learning process; that is, overteachers take on numerous responsibilities for learning that properly belong with the student. It is important for instructors to know who's responsible for what in the classroom. Depending on the context, overteaching may take the form of a last-minute review session or providing many pre-exam questions.

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Please visit us on the Web at
<http://tlc.hpu.edu>

Aristotle's Golden Mean

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2. The right amount

Teachers, by nature, are generous and giving of their time, their expertise, and their emotions in an effort to help students. This fact makes many outstanding instructors prone to doing too much, rather than doing too little.

We all know that our students may be at different developmental stages in terms of maturity, readiness to learn, expectations, and intellectual capabilities. Thus the appropriate amount of assistance you provide will differ among your students. Large, heterogeneous classes are the most challenging.

The amount of support you provide also depends on the degree of struggle you want students to experience. It is important to teach and value persistence because not all learning comes easily; a lot of it requires working hard.

Underteaching is characterized by not giving students enough guidance so that they can solve a problem or complete an assignment on their own. In terms of challenge and support, *underteaching* emphasizes the "challenge" without the appropriate amount of "support." The result is frustrated students who may give up.

Overteaching emphasizes the "support" over the "challenge." In several cases, I have eliminated or

Far and away, the best prize that life offers is the chance to work hard at work worth doing.

~ Theodore Roosevelt

reduced meaningful learning activities because in my context they represented *overteaching*. For example, in upper level courses I have sometimes given my students complete sets of notes and PowerPoint slides because I thought they would learn more and achieve better grades if I gave them this level of support and encouragement. But by doing too much, I created dependent students who relied on me to provide the "right answer."

3. At the right time

This part of the question refers to the timing of assistance and communication. Do students seek help the night before the exam or the paper deadline? How do we promote planning ahead as a student behavior and discourage cramming for exams? How do we teach students to organize their time to optimize their performance?

Underteaching occurs when I have not given enough guidance on project planning and have left it all to the student - in other words, when I've minimized my role in the process.

Overteaching occurs when I have front-loaded information when students don't need to know it and then kept reminding them along the way. This created students who depended on me to constantly remind them of a pending deadline.

4. For the right reason

An instructor's motivation for providing students with an amount and type of assistance at a particular time is an important consideration because it makes teaching decisions purposeful and intentional. What is the motivation for reviewing for an

exam? Is it to boost the exam average to meet the expectations of the class, or is it to be more efficient in giving extra help to a large class?

Underteaching is characterized when I have not had a stake in the learning success of my students. To be charitable, *underteaching* can occur when one places so much value on the process that (to the students) the product just doesn't matter.

Overteaching occurs when I closely link my teaching success to my students' achievement. In many courses, students measure their success by the grade they earn instead of the amount they have learned or the progress they have made. Their inflated grades gave me an ego boost, but it wasn't clear they actually learned more.

Overteachers overemphasize product over process. Moreover, when the student product has not been successful, I have overtaught (or poorly taught) in another way. I have protected or tried to soften my students' feelings of frustration, anxiety and disappointment - the genuine and appropriate feelings that often go with learning new and difficult material.

5. In the right manner

This criterion refers to the process of instructional delivery, whether it is lecture, multimedia, group learning, or computer-based systems. The teaching tools you use depend on the students' learning styles and preferences and contribute to the developmental appropriateness of the teaching behavior.

Underteaching occurs when one uses techniques that don't properly support students' learning styles. For example, I have lectured exclusively in a verbal style when the students in the class needed more support through diagrams and visual

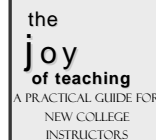
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To publish your articles in the Po'okela newsletter:

Everyone has favorite classroom tricks or stories. Help us celebrate yours, and encourage others to try out your best ideas! We are looking for lots of short, personal experience pieces. Focus on teaching and learning, describe pedagogy that has worked well for you, and write in a style/tone and from a point of view that would make your idea accessible to and adaptable by readers in other disciplines. If you are interested in writing an article, please send your title and article to Sandra Meyer at smeyer@hpu.edu or to 1188 Fort Street Mall, Suite 139, Honolulu, HI 96813. Articles may range anywhere from 150 to 1,000 words and are subject to peer committee review before publication. The TLC maintains editorial rights over materials published in this newsletter.

Book Review

by Sandra Meyer



Peter Filene, with a foreword by Ken Bain (2005).

The Joy of Teaching - a practical guide for new college instructors, Lilian Youngs Lehman Fund, University of North Carolina Press.

In this easy-to-read book, author Peter Filene proposes that teaching should not be like a baseball game, in which the instructor pitches

ideas to students to see whether they hit or strike out. Ideally, he says, teaching should resemble a game of frisbee, in which the teacher invites students to catch ideas and pass them on.

Filene, an award-winning history professor at the University of North Carolina on Chapel Hill, offers his readers sound advice acquired from years of experience, and delivers this advice in a conversational, rather than didactic way. He reminds his readers that teaching is a two-way process - a "dialogic". In one way or another, students and professors interact in a pedagogical relationship. However, he steers clear of delivering "the right answers" and instead, offers a variety of approaches to deal with diverse teaching and learning situations.

He addresses issues such as the characteristics that define good teachers, types of learners and their varied learning styles, campus cultures and so on. Filene also explores issues which college instructors will find all too familiar - a lack of student participation (which, he suggests, could be due to cognitive, interpersonal, logistic and attitude problems) and provides trouble-shooting strategies such as having students create a "how can we fix it" report.

Filene illustrates his chapters with vignettes gathered from his years of teaching experience. His philosophy is simple: "For me, teaching at its best is a joyful kind of work. I want to help you have a similar experience."

Most of what I really need to know about how to live, and what to do, and how to be, I learned in kindergarten. Wisdom was not at the top of the graduate school mountain, but there in the sandbox at nursery school.

These are the things I learned: Share everything. Play fair. Don't hit people. Put things back where you found them. Clean up your own mess. Don't take things that aren't yours. Say you're sorry when you hurt somebody. Wash your hands before you eat. Flush. Warm cookies and cold milk are good for you. Live a balanced life.

And then, remember the first word you learned: LOOK. Everything you need to know is in there somewhere. The Golden Rule and love and basic sanitation. Ecology and politics and sane living.

And it is still true, no matter how old you are, when you go out into the world, it is best to hold hands and stick together.

~ taken from "All I Ever Really Needed to Know I Learned in Kindergarten", by Robert Fulgum

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The Professor

in the classroom...

"Seven Ways We Influence Students"

We do influence students.

That is our mission as educators. There are three main ways in which we influence our students: the neutral way, the positive way and the negative way.

The *neutral* approach to influencing students is called *negotiation* or "give and take", which is a common form of influence used by people in positions of authority. This technique is regarded as the "keeping score" approach. The good news is that it can be reasonably effective in the short term. The bad news is that it often negates leadership, strains relationships and causes stress.

The *negative* approach to influencing students is through *coercion, intimidation and manipulation*. While this method, too, produces short-term results, it produces long-term drops in morale and can result in resentment and retribution.

Influencing students *positively* is the arena in which a professor *should* aim to function. *Persuasion* is a powerful tool and one of the most effective ways to influence students. It requires knowing how to stir hearts and minds to achieve results. A good professor can also influence his/her students through *education* - the more logic and information is provided, the more students will seek your influence.

The third and highest form of influence is *inspiration*. Professors who inspire could lead students to new levels of interest, focus and achievement.

The effective professor focuses on the three positive influences. All three are student centered and constructive. Even when our backs are against the wall, we'll find that positive influence leads to the best results for everyone.

"Influence is neither good nor bad in an absolute manner; but only in relation to the one who experiences it."

~ Andre Gide

Excerpts from "Seven Ways We Influence Students" *The Professor in the Classroom*, 11.10 (January 2005) Reprinted with permission.

Aristotle's Golden Mean

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depictions of the concepts. In terms of lecture, I underteach when I have talked "over the heads" of my students, leaving them inattentive and unengaged in the material. I have assumed that students can fill in the gaps between concepts because I, the expert, can. In this case I emphasized the "expert" when my students were "novices."

Overtaching occurs when I emphasize the "novice" in the expert-novice continuum. I elaborate novice concepts, unaware that the concepts are intuitive and familiar to students. Another example: giving students lower-level recall questions that they can easily handle, keeping the course "lightweight," or when I tell them the complete story, fill in all the gaps, and therefore leave little for their imaginations. I have learned that an important device in telling a good story is to leave something for the audience to figure out and not explicitly tell them everything. This way they stay involved with the storyline and plot.

This round robin of questioning, with a set of contextual perspectives in mind, has helped me adjust my teaching to the students enrolled in my classes; but you have to have a good idea who those students are before this dialectic becomes very useful.

As the renowned educator David Ausubel once said, "A person's existing cognitive structure is the most important factor governing whether new material will be meaningful and how well it can be acquired and retained."

An Aristotelian approach can be applied to making teaching decisions. The right course of action does lie along a continuum, whether it is in the expert-novice, process-product, or challenge-support realms. The right decision depends on the specific teaching-learning situation. For me, teaching is a constant attempt to determine the right course of action within this spectrum, the golden mean that promotes, rather than inhibits, the learning and personal growth of my students into independent, confident adults who meet our educational outcomes.

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There is a great difference between information and inspiration. You can get information by the careful and the wagonful and the libraryful and the Sunday newspaperful, or in any other chunks or lumps that you choose. . .It is cheap; it is common; and it is worth about as much as it costs.

But inspiration which comes from touching the life of truth itself is a priceless gem which comes only from close, devoted and continuous toil.

~ Martin Grove Brumbaugh



The road to success is always under construction.

~ Unknown

Melody

by Louis Schmier

A van pulled up. It was crammed with end-of-semester-moving-out stuff. At the wheel was Melody.

Her face was beaming an inner peacefulness - a far cry from those times over a decade ago. Once, Melody almost gave up on life. Now, she's bursting with it. I stopped, smiled, and reached out to clasp her extended hand. She was one of those who had helped me through my cancer just as, a decade ago, I had inadvertently helped her through the cancer on her soul. We talked for a few minutes. She was finally moving down to Tampa where her husband works, although she'd be back in the fall semester to do her student teaching.

After a quiet exchange, I leaned over and pushed my head through the open window. We hugged and gave each other a goodbye peck on the cheek. As I watched her car turn onto the street, I made myself a promise. Nothing will stop me from being there when she walks across the stage.

At that chance meeting a few days ago, I received a booster shot of fulfillment, accomplishment, and satisfaction as I worked on renovating my old house. Melody had sent me into a spin.

I've been thinking about the possibilities and opportunities that are always present in any given moment; all the worthwhile things you can do if you appreciate the beauty in each student; how we each can work to help make students better people, and how great it feels when you give of yourself to others.

So, I have been asking myself some profoundly "simple" questions. When I have to make choices about my time, effort, attention, and energy, what is number one on my top ten list? What is most on my mind? What is most in my heart? What is it that is most meaningful to me? What makes me most purpose driven? What fuels my tank, instills a power, pushes me past limitations, sends me soaring into new worlds, creates a euphoric mood, invites me to imagine and create, slows me into wonderment, lights my candle and overwhelms the darkness, fills me with hope and encouragement, allows me to delight in beauty and cherish life, parries discouragement and disappointment, opens barriers and lets me enter into vast vistas of opportunities, feeds my joy and gratitude, gives me the passion for the possible, opens my arms to the moment, imparts in me a sense of fulfillment, thrills me with exaltation, animates me to fully live life, gets me up each day with a trumpeting "yes" ?

What is it that gets me going and keeps me going? For me, it is in helping Melody and others live their lives so they can become the people they are capable of becoming.

Louis Schmier is Professor of History at Valdosta State University in Georgia and often reflects on teaching in posts to the POD (Professional and Organizational Development) Network. This excerpt has been reprinted with permission.

Tools for Teaching - Quizzes, Tests and Exams

by Barbara Gross Davis

Many teachers dislike preparing and grading exams, and most students dread taking them. Yet tests are powerful educational tools that serve at least four functions.

First, tests help you evaluate students and assess whether they are learning what you are expecting them to learn. Second, well-designed tests serve to motivate and help students structure their academic efforts. Crooks (1988), McKeachie (1986), and Wergin (1988) report that students study in ways that reflect how they think they will be tested. If they expect an exam focused on facts, they will memorize details; if they expect a test that will require problem solving or integrating knowledge, they will work toward understanding and applying information. Third, tests can help you understand how successfully you are presenting the material. Finally, tests can reinforce learning by providing students with indicators of what topics or skills they have not yet mastered and should concentrate on.

Despite these benefits, testing is also emotionally charged and anxiety producing. The following suggestions can enhance your ability to design tests that are effective in motivating, measuring, and reinforcing learning.

A note on terminology: instructors often use the terms tests, exams, and even quizzes interchangeably. Test experts Jacobs and Chase (1992), however, make distinctions among them based on the scope of content covered and their weight or importance in calculating the final grade for the course.

An examination is the most comprehensive form of testing, typically given at the end of the term (as a final) and one or two times during the semester (as midterms). A test is more limited in scope, focusing on particular aspects of the course material. A course might have three or four tests. A quiz is even more limited and usually is administered in fifteen minutes or less. Though these distinctions are useful, the terms test

and exam will be used interchangeably throughout the rest of this section because the principles in planning, constructing, and administering them are similar.

General Strategies

Spend adequate amounts of time developing your tests. As you prepare a test, think carefully about the learning outcomes you wish to measure, the type of items best suited to those outcomes, the range of difficulty of items, the length and time limits for the test, the format and layout of the exam, and your scoring procedures.

Match your tests to the content you are teaching. Ideally, the tests you give will measure students' achievement of your educational goals for the course. Test items should be based on the content and skills that are most important for your students to learn. To keep track of how well your tests reflect your objectives, you can construct a grid, listing your course objectives along the side of the page and content areas along the top.

Try to make your tests *valid, reliable, and balanced*. A test is valid if its results are appropriate and useful for making decisions about an aspect of students' achievement (Gronlund and Linn, 1990). Technically, validity refers to the appropriateness of the interpretation of the results and not to the test itself, though colloquially we speak about a test being valid. For example, the results of a writing test may have a high degree of validity for indicating the level of a student's composition skills, a moderate degree of validity for predicting success in later composition courses, and essentially no validity for predicting success in mathematics or physics.

Validity can be difficult to determine. A practical approach is to focus on content validity, the extent to which the content of the test represents an adequate sampling of

the knowledge and skills taught in the course. If you design the test to cover information in lectures and readings in proportion to their importance in the course, then the interpretations of test scores are likely to have greater validity. An exam that consists of only a few difficult items, however, will not yield valid interpretations of what students know.

A test is *reliable* if it accurately and consistently evaluates a student's performance. The purest measure of reliability would entail having a group of students take the same test twice and get the same scores (assuming that we could erase their memories of test items from the first administration). This is impractical, of course, but there are technical procedures for determining reliability.

In general, ambiguous questions, unclear directions, and vague scoring criteria threaten reliability. Very short tests are also unlikely to be highly reliable. It is also important for a test to be balanced: to cover most of the main ideas and important concepts in proportion to the emphasis they received in class.

Some Thoughts on Construction of Effective Exams

Prepare new exams each time you teach a course. Though it is time consuming to develop tests, a past exam may not reflect changes in how you have presented the material or which topics you have emphasized in the course. If you do write a new exam, you can make copies of the old exam available to students.

Make up test items throughout the term. Don't wait until a week or so before the exam. One way to make sure the exam reflects the topics emphasized in the course is to write test questions at the end of each class session and place them on index cards or computer files for later sorting. Software that allows you to create test banks of items and generate exams from the pool is now available.

Ask students to submit test questions. Faculty who use this

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Tools for Teaching

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technique limit the number of items a student can submit and receive credit for. Questions can be of the short-answer, multiple-choice, or essay type.

Students receive a few points of additional credit for each question they submit that is judged appropriate. Not all students will take advantage of this opportunity. You can select or adapt student's test items for the exam. If you have a large lecture class, tell your students that you might not review all items but will draw randomly from the pool until you have enough questions for the exam.

Put some easy items first. Place several questions all your students can answer near the beginning of the exam. Answering easier questions helps students overcome their nervousness and may help them feel confident that they can succeed on the exam. You can also use the first few questions to identify students in serious academic difficulty. (Source: Savitz, 1985)

Challenge your best students. Some instructors like to include at least one very difficult question—though not a trick question or a trivial one—to challenge the interest of the best students. They place that question at or near the end of the exam.

Try out the timing. No purpose is served by creating a test too long for even well-prepared students to finish and review before turning it in. As a rule of thumb, allow about one-half minute per item for true-false tests, one minute per item for multiple-choice tests, two minutes per short-answer requiring a few sentences, ten or fifteen minutes for a limited essay question, and about thirty minutes for a broader essay question.

Adapted from the hard copy book "Tools for Teaching" by Barbara Gross Davis; Jossey-Bass Publishers: San Francisco, 1993. Available online at <http://teaching.berkeley.edu/bgd/teaching.html>, and re-produced by The Center for Teaching and Learning, University of Iowa, <http://www.uiowa.edu/~centeach/index.html>.

Pedagogy of a Different Kind

by Dr. Lynette Cruz

In myriad ways we humanize our instruction, bringing spirit to the classroom. In this anecdote, Dr. Lynette Cruz shows us one strategy to connect students as a community, and to build a powerful group response to a student's personal need.

I try to incorporate a little 'check-in' at the beginning of each class to see how students are doing. Sometimes it is related to readings or some aspect of the class, but students are free to comment on anything they like, or to pass.

Sometimes I skip a class or two if there's a lot of work to do during class time, but I try to let students check in with me and with each other as often as I remember to do it. That could take some time if the classes are large. I think students who are shy become more comfortable when they are given opportunity to speak, whether they choose to speak or not.

One student mentioned his disappointment when we didn't do check-ins because he wanted to share something about his own life that seemed to fit nowhere else (in one instance, he had won an award and wanted to tell others, but I had skipped the check-in - he waited for the next class).

During a routine check-in last term, one of my students mentioned he was having a lousy week because he had spoken with his mom, who told him she had breast cancer. He broke down and cried in the classroom. Everyone was silent for a moment. Then the next person turned and spoke directly to him. She said she was sorry and offered him her personal support if ever he should need it. Voices all over the room echoed the same sentiments.

We sow with all the art we know and not a plant appears; a single seed from any weed a thousand children rears.
~ Anonymously

oooooooooooooooooooo

We continued until everyone who wanted to share did so, many of them offering support to this student.

At the end of the class period, with about five minutes left, I asked everyone to stand in a circle and to hold hands for a moment, and to practice what Hawaiians call *kukulukumuhana*, a kind of meditation or prayer of directed energy to help someone, not necessarily in the room. We directed our good energy, with no mention of god or other higher being, to this student's mother. Then it was over and everybody left.

I can't say if any of that helped his mother, but I think it did help everybody in the room. It made it okay for students to think about each other as people with lives, with concerns, with problems that had nothing to do with their academic achievements. It made them all, somehow, part of a small community of caring individuals.

At the end of the semester, I received several e-mails from students who felt empowered by the ability to help (or who perceived that they had helped) someone else. One student said she felt "privileged" to have been part of a group of people allowed to express their humanity in what might otherwise be seen as a rather cold and unfriendly setting.

I felt they had all grown a little with that experience, as had I. I realized that it was times like these that made teaching such a worthwhile endeavor, that made "academia" part of the human condition, rather than the other way around.

I suppose this is a kind of pedagogy. I have come to realize that I love my students.

Dr. Lynette Cruz is an assistant professor of anthropology at HPU.

Why Go To A Monastery To Write?

by Dr. Cheryl Crozier Garcia



Dr. Crozier Garcia

Why go to a monastery to write?

Why not? Monasteries have a long history of writing and scholarship. Prior to the development of the Gutenberg printing press, monastic women and men were copyists and illuminators. In their scriptoria, they preserved the ancient texts, and distributed these texts throughout the Western world.

Monastic women of ancient times, like Hildegard of Bingen and Julian of Norwich, and modern Benedictines such as Joan Chittister, Linda Kulzer, and Ann Kessler, use their respective monasteries as unique vantage points from which to observe and comment on the world.

St. Benedict's Monastery has a long history of supporting women's scholarship. The sisters founded the College of St. Benedict in 1913, and today, their Studium program hosts women scholars from around the world. Studium scholars join in the common life of study, work, and prayer, and share their research with the sisters as it evolves.

The college's and monastery's excellent library and archives are open to Studium scholars, facilitating research. The monastic community's observance of silence throughout most of the day makes it easier to concentrate on reading and writing than it might be in the office or at home.

This is my fourth trip to Studium in six years. I wrote my dissertation here, and have, over the years, returned to do additional research. Currently, I'm researching three articles for the Encyclopedia of Business Ethics and Society, which will be released sometime in 2006.

Scholars from all over the world are participating in this project - it's an illustrious group in which to be a part. I'm getting a great deal done, thanks to the support and advice of the Studium sisters. Over the years, they have become more than friends and advisors. I feel as if I have 200 "big sisters" looking after me, praying for me, and supporting my work.

Dr. Crozier Garcia has been a full-time faculty member in the College of Professional Studies since 1996, teaching classes in Human Resource Management and supervising the rigorous professional paper sequence for MAHRM majors.

Her research interests include workplace ethics, spirituality in the workplace, gender and leadership, and personal development. She is a former Studium scholar at St. Benedict's Monastery, St. Joseph, Minnesota, and a Benedictine Oblate. Dr. Crozier Garcia volunteers for a wide variety of community organizations, and is a popular speaker and presenter at national and international conferences.

Active Learning: Some Interesting Results

Conventional wisdom tells us that full-time students who live on campus experience more intellectual development than those who only attend college part-time and who have to commute. However, a survey of recently graduated students from various disciplines at a university in Hong Kong (not identified in this article) seems to dispute this belief.

More than 3,500 students completed a survey designed to provide program-level feedback. They reported perceptions of the development of their intellectual capabilities across nine different areas, including critical thinking, problem solving, knowledge of the discipline and communication skills, among others. They offered feedback on aspects of the teaching and learning environment, including measures of how active the learning environment was, the extent to which teachers were committed to student understanding, and the kind of interaction that occurred between students and teachers.

When reviewing the data, researchers found that all the scale scores favored the part-time students, who spend less time on campus, and less time in the company of fellow students. The research team attributed these surprising results to a number of factors: full-time students usually came straight out of a high-school system in which they had experienced mostly large classes. Most of the instruction was didactic. Part-time students, on the other hand, came to class after a day of work, and could not stay fully focused on three hours of lectures. Necessity forced them towards interactive learning experiences. They also tended to draw on a wealth of work experience.

Rather than having to rely on hypotheses, the researchers decided to test their theory. Their results suggest that this relationship was not linear or singular in effect, but was a "mutually reinforcing effect". Utilizing active teaching and learning approaches helps in the development of good teacher-student relationships. Well-developed relationships make it more comfortable for teachers to introduce forms of teaching involving active student participation.

Perhaps the most interesting point of this research was that the interactive teaching methods were able to overcome the potentially negative impact of these students not spending much time on campus or interacting with fellow students. These surprising results are another affirmation of the powerful effects of active engagement on learning outcomes.

Adapted from "The Influence of active learning experiences on the development of graduate capabilities" by Kember, D. and Leung D. Y. in *Studies in Higher Education*, reproduced in *The Teaching Professor*, Vol. 19, Number 7, 2005.

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