



When Educators Speak...

"We could learn a lot from crayons; some are sharp, some are pretty, some are dull, while others bright, some have weird names, but they all have learned to live together in the same box."

~ Anonymous

"The essence of an international education is the acquisition of empathy."

~ James W. Fulbright

"A teacher is one who makes himself progressively unnecessary."

~ Thomas Carruthers

"What lies behind us and what lies before us are small matters compared to what lies within us."

~ Ralph Waldo Emerson

"Don't judge each day by the harvest you reap, but by the seeds you plant."

~ Robert Louis Stevenson

"How far you go in life depends on your being tender with the young, compassionate with the aged, sympathetic with the striving, and tolerant of the weak and strong. Because someday in life you will have been all of these."

~ George Washington Carver

"Greatness is not in where we stand, but in what direction we are moving. We must sail sometimes with the wind and sometimes against it -- but sail we must and not drift, nor lie at anchor."

~ Oliver Wendell Holmes

"Don't waste life in doubts and fears; spend yourself on the work before you, well assured that the right performance of this hour's duties will be the best preparation for the hours and ages that will follow it."

~ Ralph Waldo Emerson

Quotes from <http://www.wisdomquotes.com>

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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Building Connections

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interesting?

Social work teaches that, in order to make change, relationship is vital. That's the principle behind *Weight Watchers*, personal trainers, and Universities that don't simply hand students textbooks and tests.

So how shall we begin building bridges from us to our students? I believe that the foundation we use is our common humanity. We know that we are very ordinary, flawed human beings with laundry on the floor at home while we're up in front of the room "professing." Our students don't always know this. (And we don't have to tell them about the dirty laundry.) But I do believe that, for most of us, we should not hold ourselves out as the impossibly august professors, but as fellow learners a bit farther along the path.

Overall, we recognize that no matter how important school is, there is something more important. We are human beings together. And that means that sometimes world events, or the annual fall depression that hits about the beginning of November, or personal events, sometimes are more important than the lesson you have planned for the day. Is your lesson unimportant? That's not what I said. But on 9/11, some teachers walked into the classroom and started class as though nothing had happened. Everything we do teaches, one way or another. What lesson did these teachers teach about being human in the world?

Social workers have a saying: "Start where the client is." It means that you ask the client, "What brings you here today?" before you say, "Fill

out these papers, and I need to see your rent receipt." It's a very practical saying, because people can't pay attention to you until they get their own concerns out of the way. It only says, "Start." Once you have met their concerns, you can go on to what you want to cover. Otherwise, you may present the lesson, but it will fall on deaf ears.


There will be days that, for whatever reason, you walk into the classroom and students are not ready to learn what you want them to learn. Or you sense, by 25 pairs of glazed-over eyes, that they're not with you. This is the time to ask, "What's going on?" not as an accusation, but because you want to find out. Take a few minutes to talk with the students, perhaps give them some encouragement or at least a little understanding. Then you'll usually find that they are ready to learn.

I don't believe that the teachers who ignored 9/11 were heartless, although they appeared that way to their students. I think they probably didn't know what else to do. When I don't know what to do in my classes, I tell the students that and ask that we problem-solve together. They have never let me down. After all, many are responsible adults in their "other" lives, and that's what we're trying to teach the young ones. Other things that you can do in an overwhelming situation are to ask for a time of silence. Or simply ask them to talk about how they are feeling.

One thing we do have to be careful of is humor. Those of you who are new to teaching may think of yourself as just another person, but you have a lot of authority and status in the classroom. Use it well. Students can't fight back. I've found it most

effective to turn the joke on myself.

Most of all, love your students - in an appropriate way, of course. Love them enough, first of all, to share your love of a discipline in a way that invites them to love it too. Care about their success. Sometimes you hear caring teachers say, "I won't allow that student to fail my class!" Care about your students' growth and lives as people. You are one pillar of the bridge. Reach out, meet their hands, to create the span.

Let us all model for them the best of what it means to be a loving, caring, engaged human being. 

Learning is not a spectator sport.. Students do not learn much just by sitting in class listening to teachers, memorizing prepackaged assignments, and spitting out answers.

They must talk about what they are learning, write about it, relate it to past experiences, apply it to their daily lives. They must make what they learn part of themselves.

~Seven Principles for Good Practice, AAHE Bulletin No. 39 (March 1987)



How We Learn

- 10% of what we READ**
- 20% of what we HEAR**
- 30% of what we SEE**
- 50% of what we SEE and HEAR**
- 60% of what we WRITE**
- 70% of what we DISCUSS**
- 80% of what we EXPERIENCE**

And 90% of WHAT WE TEACH EACH OTHER

~ From the website of the Teaching and Learning Center, University of Nevada, Las Vegas (September 2005).

Adapted from the Handbook on Teaching Undergraduate Science Courses by Gordon Uno.

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.

What Makes a Good Teacher?

by Peter C. Beidler

This is the first of a two-part series by Peter C. Beidler from Inspiring Teaching, Carnegie Professors of the Year Speak, John K. Roth General Editor, Anker Publishing Company, Inc., Bolton, MA. Copyright © 1997 by Anker Publishing Company, Inc. All rights reserved. ISBN 1-882982-13-4 Anker Publishing Company, Inc. 176 Ballville Road P.O. Box 249 Bolton, MA 1-882982-14-2. [www.ankerpub.com]. Re-produced by Rick Reis in "Tomorrow's Professor", available online at <http://ctl.stanford.edu/Tomprof/index.shtml>. Reprinted with permission.

In this essay I want to talk about 10 of the qualities that make a good teacher. My method is absolutely unscientific. My evidence is personal, memorial, observational, and narrow. I have known teachers in Indiana, Pennsylvania, Arizona, Texas, England, and China. Like Henry David Thoreau, I refuse to apologize for writing so much about myself. There is, simply, no one else I know as well. My hope is that my readers will be inspired to think far less about what I have noticed makes a good teacher than about what they themselves have noticed.

1. Good Teachers Really Want to Be Good Teachers

Good teachers try and try and try, and let students know they try. Just as we respect students who really try, even if they do not succeed in everything they do, so they will respect us, even if we are not as good as we want to be. And just as we will do almost anything to help a student who really wants to succeed, so they will help us to be good teachers if they sense that we are sincere in our efforts to succeed at teaching. Some things teachers can fake. We have, for example, to act our way into letting our students know that we can't think of any place we would rather be at 8:10 on a Friday morning than in a class with them talking about the difference between a comma splice and a run-on sentence.

An acting course is a good preparation for a life in the classroom because it shows us how to pretend. Our students probably know on some level that we would rather be across the street sipping a cup of Starbucks® coffee than caged up with 24 pasty-faced first years who count on our joyous enthusiasm and enlivening wit to be the cup of Starbucks® that will get them ready for their 9:10 a.m. class.

But they will forgive our chicanery, even if they suspect that we are faking our joy. They will know it by the second day, however, if we don't really want to be good teachers, and they will have trouble forgiving us for that. Wanting - really, truly, honestly wanting - to be a good teacher is being already more than halfway home.

2. Good Teachers Take Risks

They set themselves impossible goals, and then scramble to achieve them. If what they want to do is not quite the way it is usually done, they will risk doing it anyhow. Students like it when we take risks. One of my own favorite courses was a first-year writing course in which I ordered no writing textbook for the course. On the first day I announced, instead, that my students and I were going to spend a semester writing a short textbook on writing. It was, I said, to be an entirely upside-down course in which the students would write lots of essays, decide as a group which ones were best, and then try to determine in discussion what qualities the good ones had in common. Whenever we hit upon a principle that the good essays seemed to embody and that the weak papers did not, we would write it down. Then we eventually worked our discovered principles into a little textbook that the students could take home with them.

It was a risky course. It was built on a crazy notion that first-year college students in a required writing course could, first of all, tell good writing from less-good writing, and, second, that they could articulate the principles that made the good essays better. My students knew I was taking a risk in setting the course up that way, but because they knew that my risk was based on my own faith and trust in them, they wanted me - they wanted us - to succeed.

We teachers have something called academic freedom. Too many of us interpret that to mean the freedom from firing. I suggest that we should interpret it rather as the freedom to take chances in the classroom. I love taking risks. It keeps some excitement in what is, after all, a pretty placid profession. I like to try things that can fail. If there is no chance of failure, then success is meaningless. It is usually easy enough to get permission to take risks, because administrators usually like it when teachers organize interesting and unusual activities.

For some risky activities it may be best not to ask permission, partly because the risks that good teachers take are not really all that risky, and partly because it is, after all, easier to get forgiveness than to get permission. Teachers who regularly take risks usually succeed, and the more they succeed the more they are permitted - even expected - to take risks the next time. Taking risks gives teachers a high that is healthy for them and their students. It makes good teaching, good learning.

3. Good Teachers Have a Positive Attitude

I don't much like being around people who are cynical about their work, who complain about students or student writing or student athletes or fellow teachers or administrators or trustees or teaching loads or salaries. I occasionally succumb to cynicism myself, but I find that I don't much like myself when I am waxing cynical, and I try to unwax myself. I like humor, but not when it is directed against others. I distrust whiners who put themselves into the role of victims.

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Introduction to Successful Teaching Workshops

by the Po'okela's roving reporter

In early October, the TLC offered, for the first time a day workshop called "Introduction to Successful Teaching". Our Po'okela reporter interviewed Mike Dabney, TLC's director, who facilitates the workshops, and Sandra Meyer, TLC's administrative coordinator.

Mike, what was your primary reason for designing this workshop? We know that many faculty are content-expert but want to learn more about how to engage students. Good teaching practice is supported by research, but most faculty don't learn about that in graduate school and don't have time to explore this issue and do the rest of their work. Most follow their models and teach as they were taught, sometimes in a style not consonant with their personality. We also know that many part-time teachers come to HPU from outside academia, and are sometimes unfamiliar both with HPU's expectations of pedagogy and with contemporary college students. We wanted to offer them tools, guidance, and a chance to meet colleagues and have fun.

Who signs up? We have registrants from all colleges, experienced and inexperienced, full-timers and adjuncts. We've had some non-faculty staff who support teachers and wanted to know more about pedagogy. We hope people will talk to colleagues about what they found valuable.



Sandra, what does the TLC offer workshop participants? For downtown sessions, we

validate parking in Kukui Plaza garage, and we give participants breakfast, lunch, or break-time snacks appropriate to the time of day. Each gets a binder of resource materials, a copy of Peter Filene's Joy of Teaching, and cold bottled water in the classroom. Mike is working on a resource CD. The small group means participants get a lot of individual attention. We send a reminder a week in advance and print individual certificates of completion, ideal for a portfolio - even for framing!

Mike, can you characterize the session? The overall goal is to improve the confidence and skill of every participant, and to open doors to new forms of instruction without being prescriptive. We encourage trying new things and taking small risks. To accomplish

this, I've embedded content inside a variety of teaching strategies. Teachers don't just hear about strategy - they actually experience it.

Details? We look at (a) learning preferences of the teacher, and how awareness of preferences may influence instruction; (b) the specific challenges of contemporary college students; (c) the frequent need to teach learning skills, and how to embed these into content instruction; (d) what personality traits and behaviors make teachers memorable and effective; (e) awareness and articulation of a personal teaching philosophy; (f) how to create low-threat assignments with a high probability of student success; (g) how to write learning outcomes at the levels of syllabus and of specific lessons, and how doing these things helps guide decisions about content, teaching methods, and assessment, and how to decide on a teaching method for particular content.

Sandra, what do participants say? We have received many comments in follow-up e-mail. Here are a few: "The biggest learning for me was examples of new learning activities and practices which could be used in (my) class." "The most significant learning for me was finally gaining an understanding about what constitutes a personal philosophy of education, and having the opportunity to begin formulating it and discussing it with other participants." "I liked the introduction of various skills and techniques that can be applied to teaching, the time management was excellent, and (I liked) the small size. The opportunity for various activities and the participation by all kept it very engaging." "It was very informative and done with such aloha! Your sharing of such *mana`o`i`o* is extremely helpful and it's too bad that the class isn't a week long" "It was one of the best uses of my time". Mike would love it if you asked him for the full roster of comments!

Mike, how is the impact of the session being assessed? We're comparing a pre-session and post-session knowledge survey, a technique we learned from a colleague in Idaho. We ask participants in follow-up e-mail to identify a significant learning and something they would change. About a month after the workshop, we'll ask for information about specific changes in teaching or planning that participants attribute to their attendance.

How does one register? Send e-mail to Sandra Meyer, smeyer@hpu.edu with your full name, college affiliation, and status. We'll acknowledge your request, and if the session you want is full, we'll offer you an alternative or wait-list you.



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