Reflections on Teaching and Learning

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CENTER FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING EXCELLENCE

In This Issue

HOW THE TEXT SYLLABUS FAILS:

WHY WE SHOULD DESIGN A GRAPHIC SYLLABUS

Linda Nilson, Ph.D. (Clemson University)

We know very little about how students respond to syllabi. We don't really know what kind of information they home in on to decide whether to stay in or drop the course. We don't really know if they "size us up" by interpreting certain words, the tone, course policies, and information on tests, assignments, and activities the same way our colleagues do. With a bit of research to draw from, we can wisely surmise that the savvy students at least examine the amount of out-of-class work (readings and assignments) and the testing schedule to determine whether they can "manage" their way through the semester while carrying the course (Nathan, 2005).

Actually, the only thing we *do* know about how students respond to syllabi is that many students don't read them carefully or completely. We know this from our own experience, of course—largely from the many questions we get from students throughout the semester that are answered in the syllabus—and from "teaching tips" we occasionally hear to induce students to read the syllabus (Nilson, 2003). For instance, have each student sign a contract stating that she has read the syllabus and understands the content, including the course grad-

(Continued on page 2)

Dr. Linda Nilson

Our Mission

The University of Scranton's Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence (CTLE) encourages and supports a strong culture of teaching, learning and scholarship in the Ignatian Tradition for a diverse university community. In collaboration with the Library, the University's CTLE works with faculty and students to help create an environment that encourages and supports student learning, faculty enrichment, instructional design, and the use of technology. The CTLE provides opportunities for faculty and students to work together to achieve academic success and have a positive learning experience at the University.

FROM THE DESK OF THE EDITOR

First of all, a very warm thank-you to our readers who have sent us comments about our first two issues. We are very pleased with the success *Reflections* has achieved.

We hope that you will find useful items in this issue. As usual, we have combined articles on teaching issues with news from the Center.

Our lead article presents an interesting approach to ensure that your students will get the most out of your course sylabus. The author, Dr. Linda Nilson, conducted a captivating workshop on this topic at the University of Scranton in September 2006.

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

HOW THE TEXT SYLLABUS FAILS *cont'd*

ing and attendance policies, as well as the institution's grading policies (Campbell, 2001). Or break students into groups and have them scavenger-hunt important pieces of information in the syllabus. (Bring some goodies with you to reward the fastest and most accurate team.) Or give students a test on the syllabus the second day of class, and have it count towards the final grade. Not all the questions need be simple facts out of the syllabus, such as the number of tests, the point value of various assignments, and the authors of the major readings. You can also ask and obtain useful information about your students, such as the learning objectives they are most anxious about meeting and the course topics of greatest interest to them (Nilson, 2003).

But why do we have to goad students into reading the syllabus carefully? All syllabi contain pretty standard information of the type students seem to want to know (e.g., when are the tests, when are the assignments due, what is the attendance policy, what happens to work submitted late), yet many students don't consult them. Since these documents are typically posted on the Web, students can't actually "lose" them. Why don't all students refer to their syllabus for what they want to know?

Could the reason lie in the fact that the syllabus is all text? Today's younger students comprise a visually-oriented generation. They are not on the friendliest of terms with the printed word—at least not with *pages* of printed words. Only half of 18-to-24-year-olds in the U.S. read a book of *any* kind in 2002, and only 22% of 17-year-olds read daily in 2004, a drop from 31% in 1994 (Hallet, 2005). The average reading speed for college students hovers around an unimpressive 250 words per minute and only 100 words per minute for scientific and technical material (slower for first-year students, faster for seniors) (Lewis, 2003; Steicher, 2003). And many students cannot focus their minds on academic material for more than five minutes (Blue, 2003). It's no wonder they dread tackling their reading assignments, and the vast majority don't do them without sufficient sanctions and/or rewards (Marshall, 1974; Self, 1987; McDougall & Cordiero, 1993; Burcfield & Sappinton, 2000; Hobson, 2004; Nathan, 2005). Why should the ever-lengthening text syllabus be any different?

Even if students do read the syllabus, the content-heavy sections might not make much sense to them. Certainly one of the most content-laden sections is the schedule of topics the course addresses. The topics usually contain technical terms of the discipline, terms with which the students are initially not familiar. If they already knew these terms, they wouldn't be in the course to learn about them. Not surprisingly, the topics in syllabi in the sciences, mathematics, and engineering fields are almost exclusively technical words that a typical student wouldn't understand until well into the course.

If the students don't know what most (or any) of the topics mean, what are the chances that they will be able to perceive the organization of the course? A sense of organization is based on an understanding of the concepts and terms being organized. No one can grasp the organization of nonsense words.

Organization itself might not be so critical if the mind weren't so dependent upon it for deep learning and memory. We process, recall, and retrieve knowledge not as a disparate aggregate of factoids but as an interrelated structure, a coherent whole with interconnected parts. In fact, learning and storage take place only in context of a logically organized conceptual framework. Deep processing, as opposed to simple memorization, necessitates seeing the structure of new knowledge and integrating it into one's existing structure of prior knowledge (Svinicki, 2004).

The organization of knowledge originates in the mind's perception of patterns and relationships across observations. Identifying patterns and connections is one of the mind's most important jobs. Through this process the mind devises logical foundations for generalizing from observations and simplifying reality. Otherwise, we would find reality too complex to operate within. We would experience repetitive events as novel every time they occurred, and we'd learn and remember nothing from them. The human mind is not unique in this capacity. Except where instincts are involved, animals learn

(Continued on page 3)

(Continued from page 1)

FROM THE DESK OF THE EDITOR *cont'd*

I am grateful for the devoted work of the editorial team, James Muniz and Eugeniu Grigorescu. A special thank-you to all of our contributors to this Newsletter and to Dr. Linda Nilson for her article on the Graphic Syllabus.

On behalf of the Staff members of the CTLE, I wish everyone a successful conclusion to the semester and a restful and productive summer.

Our services are available during the summer. Please consult our specialists about their vacation schedules.
André Oberlé, Ph.D., Director, CTLE

(Continued from page 2)

HOW THE TEXT SYLLABUS FAILS *cont'd*

the same way—or so countless behaviorist experiments on the operant conditioning of mice, rats, pigeon, dogs, and chimpanzees strongly suggest.

So dependent is our thinking on structure that if we don't have an established, complete logical structure to interpret and explain an observed phenomenon, we will make up connecting pieces or entire theories. For instance, Charles Darwin could not have observed mutations in progress, but he hypothesized, apparently correctly, that they do occur and are responsible for species diversity. However, making up connections is risky business, and we may be wrong. The now-classic videotape produced by Harvard University, A Private Universe, dramatically shows that many intelligent people will spin their own incorrect theories about common phenomena, such as what causes the change of the seasons, if they have not heard and deep-processed the scientific explanation. And once a human mind adopts a certain explanatory structure, it won't easily let go of it. The mind demands a lot of re-teaching and convincing that the new explanatory structure is superior to its own self-generated invention.

Let's bring all this cognitive psychology back to our students. They are disciplinary novices, and as such, they tend to miss the patterns and structures that we experts recognize so easily. Of course, we have internalized the most accurate explanatory structure and have stored a vast amount of knowledge and terminology within it. Students may come to our classes with faulty models and assorted misconceptions, and they definitely arrive without much prior knowledge and disciplinary vocabulary. Lest they leave our classes unchanged, we have much more to share with them than a lump of new content and things they can do with that content. We must also provide students with discipline-related structures in which to understand and retain the course content—that is, an appropriate organization of the new knowledge and strategies to help students reconcile and integrate it with the structure of understanding they currently have (e.g., practice in reinterpreting their prior observations and experience). Those in need of the most structure to guide their learning are students with little or no prior knowledge of the subject matter. Those with a sound content background should already have a viable structure to impose on new knowledge and facilitate its integration with their prior knowledge (Svinicki, 2004).

(Continued on page 19)

DEVELOPING A TEACHING PORTFOLIO

André Oberlé, Ph.D. (Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence)

Teaching portfolios—also known as "teaching dossiers" in some jurisdictions—are an invaluable tool for faculty advancement, self-evaluation, and for peer evaluation. They can assist faculty members in reflecting about their teaching practices, evaluating the effectiveness of their teaching strategies in achieving the learning objectives of their courses and meeting the main goals of their teaching philosophy. Portfolios are invaluable in the development of a coherent teaching philosophy that is applied in practice. In terms of peer evaluation, portfolios give a much more conclusive indication of the instructor's consistent performance in the classroom than other instruments and can give the necessary context to course evaluations. It is desirable that teaching portfolios also highlight the research, committee work, and other teaching-related activities to give a holistic summary of the individual's performance. Teaching portfolios are widely used in higher education. Many universities and colleges require them for hiring, regular evaluation, tenure applications, promotion, and teaching awards.

What exactly is a teaching portfolio?

Basically, a portfolio is a meaningful collection of documents or artifacts that are presented in a given context, such as excellence in teaching and learning, and connected through a reflective narrative. The reflective narrative serves to explain the significance of each document and presents it in its proper context. The narrative also shows how the teaching philosophy is influencing the choice of materials and the manner in which it is presented. As well, the portfolio has a definite focus in that it tries to achieve a given purpose such as establishing that all the criteria for a promotion or an award are being met.

According to Peter Seldin, a major scholar in the discussion on teaching portfolios, the portfolio is "a factual description of a professor's teaching strengths and accomplishments. It includes documents and materials

(Continued on page 4)

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DEVELOPING A TEACHING PORTFOLIO *cont'd*

which collectively suggest the scope and quality of a professor's teaching performance" (1993, 27). These qualities make the portfolio an ideal instrument for peer evaluation.

The teaching portfolio is an ideal instrument for reflection, self-evaluation, and self-improvement. Joseph Weber gives the following insights into the personal enrichment he found in developing a teaching portfolio:

> Developing a teaching portfolio was a way I could look critically at my own teaching and determine if I was meeting my goal of fostering student excellence. I realized three major areas of discussion were necessary. These areas include 1) reflecting on my teaching, 2) gathering documentation of personal and student excellence, and 3) planning future direction in my own career. (Joseph Weber in Seldin 1997, p.29)

What goes into a teaching portfolio?

Central to every teaching portfolio, regardless of its purpose, is the teaching philosophy of the author. This philosophy basically explains the author's understanding of how learning takes place and what role the teacher plays in this process. It will also show what special efforts the author makes to facilitate this process and to provide a nurturing learning environment.

Depending on its purpose, the portfolio will also contain the following items:

In a portfolio used to support a job application there will be a table of contents, an executive summary, and documents to show that the candidate is suited for a particular job opening (education, area of specialty, broadness and flexibility, job experience, balance of teaching and research). A resume is included as well.

In a portfolio used for self-improvement, there will be documents pertaining to the course(s) taught with reflections on all aspects of her or his activities by the author with a view to validating teaching strategies and/or improving teaching activities.

In a portfolio supporting application for tenure, promotion or teaching awards, there will be a table of contents, an executive summary, and documents to show the versatility and innovative practices of the author as suggested by the criteria for the promotion or award.

So, why portfolios? What's wrong with the traditional CV? There is absolutely nothing wrong with the traditional CV. As a matter of fact, most manuals on developing teaching portfolios encourage you to add a CV to the portfolio. CVs usually list a person's accomplishments in chronological order and do not normally have provisions for explanations to establish the context and significance of each item of information. Thus, in a CV the raw data is used to invite evaluators to come up with an evaluation. A teaching portfolio, on the other hand, suggests how the data ought to be interpreted by giving the context and significance of each item selected and tying it together will all the other items.

What is an integrated portfolio?

An interesting extension of the traditional teaching portfolio is an "integrated portfolio." In an integrated portfolio, the author of the portfolio will not only present materials pertaining to teaching activities but also committee work, research, community service and other teaching-related activities, such as student advising, in an effort to provide a more holistic summary of the author's performance. When portfolios are mainly used for self-evaluation, the integrated portfolio is undoubtedly the best form to use. In this kind of portfolio the teaching philosophy will be the element that ties together the various aspects of a teacher's activities.

How will a teaching portfolio help me to be more effective as a teacher?

Keeping a teaching portfolio invites us to reflect about the material we select for our students to learn, the way we teach it, and to what extent the learning objectives in our courses are being achieved. Through keeping a teaching portfolio, you can keep track of exactly what you did in a given class, whether and how it enhanced learning as intended, how you would want to modify the material to make it even more successful, and what other materials and activities would be beneficial. These are the kinds of thoughts that race through most faculty members' mind when they have finished their class. Unfortunately, we usually forget these things by the next time we teach the course again or find ourselves in similar teaching situations. The portfolio allows us to capture these thoughts, reflect on them, and articulate them for future use.

How do I develop a teaching philosophy?

The teaching philosophy is the centerpiece of the portfolio. The sooner you start with the development of a teaching

(Continued on page 17)

PROBLEM-BASED LEARNING:
GROUP WORK AND COLLABORATION CHARACTERISTICS

Eugeniu Grigorescu (Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence)

Introduction

Problem-based learning (PBL) is a constructivist learning environment and a teaching methodology first developed in medical schools and extended to other fields of study and research. Before proceeding with a detailed definition of PBL, let's have a quick detour on the constructivist path.

Constructivism is a perspective/epistemology which indicates that individuals form or construct most of what they learn and understand. It is a way of building knowledge about self, school, everyday experience, and society through reflection and meaning making (Shor, 1992). Vrasidas (2000) identifies personal and social constructivism and indicates that in social constructivism knowledge is created by user interaction. As Malopinsky, Kirkley, Stein, & Duffy state:

> *Constructivist theories of learning posit that knowledge evolves through social negotiation and through the viability of individual understandings, that our understandings come from our interactions with the environment, and that cognitive conflict or puzzlement is the stimulus for learning and determines the nature of what is learned. […] Rather than simply acquiring existing knowledge, the learner constructs knowledge through a complex set of interactions with the environment, culture, negotiations with other people, and tools (technological or otherwise) used in the process of learning (2000, p. 2).*

Problem-based Learning Characteristics

As the "characteristics of a PBL learning environment overlap with those of a constructivist learning environment" (Song, Grabowski, Koszalka, & Harkness, 2003), it is evident that PBL is a learner-centered approach to learning. To that end, PBL posits relevant, complex, authentic and ill-structured problems to the learners, who need to brainstorm in a collaborative manner identifying facts, generating ideas and learning issues, making meaning of the issues, and reflecting on the process and the outcome. According to Hmelo-Silver (2004), PBL is characterized by the following:

- Problems are authentic, ill-structured and complex.
- Learners develop effective problem-solving skills.
- Learners identify facts, generate ideas, and learning issues.
- Learners develop self-directed, lifelong learning skills.
- Learners become intrinsically motivated to learn.
- Learners become effective collaborators; group work prepares students for a real-life environment. They learn how to interact with peers on a professional level.
- Learners construct an extensive and flexible knowledge base.
- Learners perform formative and summative reflections.
- Facilitator scaffolds the learning process.

Other researchers (Savery & Duffy, 2001; Beer & Slack, 2005; Dolmans & Schmidt, 2006; Ertmer & Simons, 2006; Savery, 2006) have defined PBL in similar terms while stressing the importance of group work and collaboration as a vital component of it. Ertmer & Simons state, "Collaboration is a key component of PBL learning environments, as it allows students to draw on each other's perspectives and talents in order to more effectively devise solutions for the problem(s) at hand" (2006, p. 43).

Table 1 below, adapted from Hmelo-Silver (2004), presents the approaches to learning in PBL.

(Continued on page 6)

(Continued from page 5)

PROBLEM BASED LEARNING *cont'd*

Table 1. Approaches to Learning Situated in PBL

Problem-Based Learning

Problem	Realistic, ill-structured problem
Process	Identify facts, generate ideas and learning issues, self-directed learning, revise, and reflect
Role of teacher	Facilitate learning process and model reasoning
Collaboration	Negotiation of ideas; Individual students bring new knowledge to group for application to problem
Tools	Student-identified learning resource

As opposed to lecture-based students, PBL students "regarded themselves as learning problem-solving, communication skills, and developing a sense of 'personal responsibility'" (Greening, 1998, p.10).

Citing two meta-analysis studies of 20 years of PBL, Savery stated that a PBL approach was equal to traditional teaching methods "in terms of conventional tests…, and that students who studied using PBL exhibited better clinical-solving skills" (2006, p. 10).

Problem-based Learning: Online vs. Face-to-face

Two aspects of PBL vary in their implementation in online vs. face-to-face settings. One aspect is scaffolding; the other is collaborative work (including learner reflection). "*Scaffolding* implies that given appropriate assistance, a learner can attain a goal or engage in a practice otherwise out of reach" (Davis & Miyake, 2004, p. 2). The authors identify four key features of scaffolding: 1) type of task and support; 2) careful diagnosis of the learner's proficiency; 3) provide a range of types of support, and 4) support is temporary. As Quintana, et al. make clear, scaffolding in software "emphasizes the transformative nature of scaffolding rather than a more feature-oriented perspective" (2004, p. 340). Although scaffolding provided by a facilitator or a peer is different from scaffolding provided by technology, Quintana et al. (2004) argue that the important aspect of scaffolding is the final result, making the learner more productive. Fading is the process of removing the scaffold once the learner is capable of independent activity.

Learner reflection in the collaboration process is important as part of the meaning-making and construction of new knowledge. Reflection is one important element of inquiry. Garrison indicates that "in an online learning experience the advantage is given to reflection in a way that is not possible in the fast and free flowing face-to-face environment" (2006, p. 25). Koszalka, Song & Grabowski state that student reflective thinking has been influenced by the "student learning environment, teacher, and tools, ranked respectively. Of further importance was that the social activities within the environment were ranked as most important, demonstrating the importance of social learning to students" (2002, p. 6).

Collaboration is seen as a key component of PBL. Several researchers (Savery & Duffy, 2004; Beer & Slack, 2005; Dolmans & Schmidt, 2006; Ertmer & Simons, 2006; Savery, 2006) point to this element in PBL and stress that small group structure is essential in organizing the problem into a framework that can be pursued in a structured, multi-angled approach. Hmelo-Silver states that in PBL:

> *small group structure helps distribute the cognitive load among the members of the group, taking advantage of group members' distributed expertise by allowing the whole group to tackle problems that would normally be too difficult for each student alone (2004, p. 246).*

Another endorsement of the centrality of group work in PBL is provided by Kolodner, et al. (2003). The authors state that in PBL "students work together in groups where they pool their expertise and experience and together grapple with the complexities that must be considered" (2003, p. 505). Group work is a main part of the PBL process, yet there is no real division of duties among students. Dolmans & Schmidt (2006) stress that students study the same subject matter. The authors mention four different approaches to the study of group work: 1) motivational, 2) importance of cohesiveness, 3) development perspective, and 4) cognitive elaboration. In the traditional PBL model, a facilitator oversees the working of the group and keeps the group members involved in the discussion. In online PBL, group members need to impose more self-direction and motivation in order to make the group work as expected. Valaitis, Sword, Jones, & Hodges (2005) indicate that providing resources such as audio/video vignettes and having experts and a real client available to answer questions proved extremely valuable.

(continued on page 7)

(Continued from page 6)

PROBLEM BASED LEARNING *cont'd*

Research Findings

Several research articles indicate positive results of group work and collaboration in online PBL environments. Garrison states "There is evidence to suggest that online learning may in fact have an advantage in supporting collaboration and creating a sense of community" (2006, p.25). Valaitis, Sword, Jones, & Hodges' review found that "Researchers generally reported that students do as well or better in online PBL compared to face-to-face PBL" (2005, p. 232). Carr-Chellman, Dyer, & Breman (2000) discovered that a course in a traditional delivery method and a problem-based collaboration course met their course objectives equally well. Greening (1998) showcased a study undertaken with students in a first-year PBL program. Asked about the best aspects of the module studied the students selected working in a group as their first choice. The author states, "Interestingly,... the transition to group work does not seem to have been problematic" (p. 11).

Dolmans & Schmidt conclude that "the studies focusing on the motivational effects of PBL demonstrate that group discussion positively influences students' intrinsic interest in the subject-matter under discussion" (2006, p. 332). Luck & Norton undertook a study of a PBL course taught to a face-to-face group and to an online group and concluded that while there were no differences in grades achieved, "collaborative learning was perceived more favourably by online learners than face-to-face learners" (2004, p. 1). In a study using the distributed (online) PBL environment called the Asynchronous Conferencing Tool (ACT), Hawley Orrill points out, "it is apparent that PBL can be successful and worthwhile in a distributed learning environment" (2002, p. 53).

Not all research articles indicate positive results of group work in online PBL environments. For example, some research indicates difficulties encountered because of the changes in the roles of teachers and students (Lopez Ortiz, 2006), longer decision-making time online than face-to-face, confusion with posting of repetitive information, lack of non-verbal communication leading to miscommunication (Valaitis, Sword, Jones, & Hodges, 2005), and lack of clear feedback (Hawley Orrill, 2002).

Conclusion

Research in the area of PBL group work comparing face-to-face and online is not definitive regarding the learners' group work experience. While some studies suggest that learners prefer the online environment to face-to-face work, much remains to be examined in the field. The factors that make it possible for learners to collaborate effectively are not just technical; interactivity, social presence, and socialization are important components that play an equal role in online as well as in offline collaboration. Although the studies have not been conclusive regarding group work in online and face-to-face settings, a majority of the research indicates that PBL can be effectively implemented in either environment.

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JUST A REMINDER!

Most of our Faculty Advancement Events are videotaped and are available for viewing on our web site. If you have missed a presentation or would like to refresh your memory, go to www.scranton.edu/ctle.

THE CTLE TEAM

Front Row (left to right): Mary Ellen Pichiarello, Learning Enrichment Specialist; Paula Semenza, Office Manager; Aileen McHale, Instructional Technology & Enrichment Specialist;
Back Row (left to right): Eugeniu Grigorescu, Instructional Curriculum Designer; James Muniz, Reading Specialist/ Academic Development Program Director; André Oberlé, CTLE Director; Mary Burkhart, Writing Center Coordinator; Tom Leong, Math Specialist.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

André Oberlé, Ph.D., Director, CTLE

The CTLE has enjoyed a very productive fall term. The most significant changes occurred in the area of Math tutoring and the support of selected Math courses. Tom Leong, our new Math Specialist, has been extremely effective in developing strategies to significantly reduce attrition and increase student satisfaction with our services in the area of Mathematics. He enjoys an excellent rapport with all members of the Math department.

The Faculty Liaisons to the CTLE for the fall term were Dr. Anthony Ferzola and Prof. Betsey Moylan. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Anthony and Betsey for their excellent work. The effectiveness of the Center depends to a great extent on their important work.

(Continued on page 10)

(Continued from page 9)

DIRECTOR'S REPORT *cont'd*

The Faculty Liaisons to the CTLE for the spring term are Dr. Anthony Ferzola and Dr. Marian Farrell.

Awards and Recognition Dinners

The CTLE organized once again the Rose Kelly Awards and the Frank O'Hara Medals. The Award Dinner took place on December 6, 2006 in the Heritage Room of the Weinberg Memorial Library. On January 12, 2007 the CTLE held an Appreciation Dinner for Part-Time Faculty. The guest speaker was Michael Costello.

A recognition dinner for mid-career faculty was held on April 12, 2007. The guest speaker for that occasion was Sr. Mary Ann Foley, Associate Professor of Theology.

Faculty Advancement

During the fall term, eight Faculty Advancement events were held. During the spring, another nine took place. This year, a number of experts from outside the University have facilitated workshops.

- Dr. Linda Nilson (Clemson University) – 09/22/06 – "Designing a Graphic Syllabus"
- Drs. Edith Miller and Julianne Albiero Walton (East Stroudsburg University) – 12/01/06 – "Universal Design in Learning"
- Dr. Matt Ouellett (University of Massachusetts) – 03/21/07 – "Getting to What Matters Most in Teaching and Learning"
- Dr. Larry Silver (Georgetown University) – 04/26/07 – "Working With Students Diagnosed With Attention Deficit Disorder"

While we have lots of expertise within the University, it is also important to get professional input from experts at other centers.

Funding and Research Projects

The CTLE along with its equivalent at Marywood University received a collaborative grant in the amount of $10,000. The funds are shared equally by the two universities. The project looks at what students perceive to be challenges to learning and how faculty can use the principles of universal design in learning to create an all-inclusive and nurturing learning environment. The faculty members participating in this project are: Dr. Anthony Ferzola, Dr. Dona Bauman, and Dr. Lori Bruch. Mary Ellen Pichiarello, Jim Muniz and André Oberlé are the research members from the CTLE. Eugeniu Grigorescu is helping us with the statistics.

We also applied for a Strategic Initiatives Fund in the amount of $14,000 to equip all computers in the Center with copies of Inspiration (a software package based on mind mapping) and Kurzweil (a software package designed to teach reading skills).

First-Year Faculty Mentorship Program

The First-Year Faculty Mentorship Program is progressing well. The CTLE through the Liaisons and the Director has facilitated four of the 9 sessions. This collaboration with the ORS is a win-win situation for all of us. The sessions are:

- Critical Self-Evaluation
- Panel on Programs for dealing with Student needs
- Interpreting and Using Your Course Evaluations for Teaching Development
- CTLE Teaching Grants

Peer Tutoring and Students with Special Needs

We continue to monitor and evaluate all our activities and are working hard to become more effective and address the needs of the various constituents who use our services more effectively.

(continued on page 11)

(Continued from page 10)

DIRECTOR'S REPORT *cont'd*

During the fall term, the CTLE filled 921 requests for peer tutors. We are pleased to see that the number of request for Math tutors is declining as alternate services as outlined by Tom Leong were introduced. Preliminary evidence shows us that students perceive these new measures to be extremely effective. We are exploring the introduction of course support into other disciplines.

Our management of programs for students with special needs (disabilities) is extremely successful. Students appreciate the fact that all their needs can be looked after by one office. We have reviewed all the files and had an outside psychiatrist evaluate our work and help us with difficult cases in order to ensure equity and consistency in the services we provide. Currently we have 128 students with special needs registered. During the fall term, accommodations were made for 81 students.

During the fall, the CTLE facilitated 381 exams and tests (114 Final Exams!) in the Center. It has become necessary to increase the number of examination rooms by outfitting two further rooms with cameras and using our conference room and lab space for examinations.

Math Support Services

The Math Specialist made presentations in most Math classes and worked closely with Math professors. Students received tutoring in either Supplemental Instruction Seminars (185), Drop-in Labs (88), or through peer tutoring (172). The Specialist worked with another 76 students.

Reading and Writing Services

The Reading Specialist visited 22 freshman seminars for reading tests during the fall term. 261 students were tested using the Nelson-Denny reading test. The Specialist worked regularly with forty-four students on a one-on-one basis for a total of 139 hrs during the fall term.

The Writing Center Co-coordinator with the assistance of eight writing consultants filled a total of 546 requests from students working on their papers.

The evaluations conducted in all of these areas indicate that students are very satisfied with the level of support they are receiving at the Center.

Conclusion

All of these accomplishments are made possible by highly motivated individuals. I want to stress once again that I am a proud member of a wonderful team of dedicated and skilled individuals who want to give their best to serve faculty and students. It gives me great pleasure to report their accomplishments on their behalf. What has been accomplished is the result of very effective teamwork and the special effort of each and every staff member.

UPDATE FROM THE WEINBERG MEMORIAL LIBRARY

Katie Duke, Weinberg Memorial Library

Information Literacy Stipends

Since 2004/2005 twelve $500.00 Information Literacy Stipends have been granted by The Weinberg Memorial Library. To read the results, go to:

http://academic.scranton.edu/department/wml/bihp.html

The grants encourage faculty to embed information literacy into their course assignments. Each faculty member works with a librarian to fulfill this objective. Three Applicants for 2006-2007 successfully passed the review process.

(Continued on page 12)

(Continued from page 11)

WEINBERG MEMORIAL LIBRARY *cont'd*

In December 2006, Dean Charles Kratz awarded stipends to the following faculty:

Rita P. Fleming Cottrell, Assistant Professor, Occupational Therapy - Research Methods in Occupational Therapy; Bonnie Oldham, Consulting Librarian.

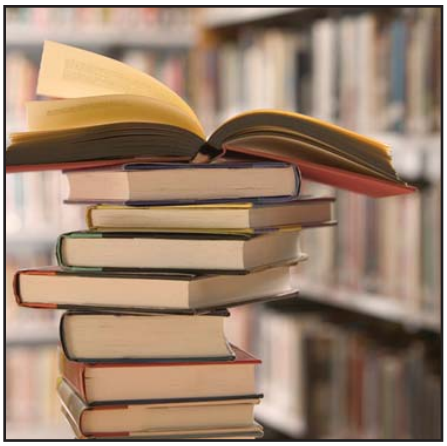
Tim Hobbs, Associate Professor, Education Department - Bookends: Information Literacy for entering and exiting special educators; Bonnie Strohl, Consulting Librarian.

Robert A. Spalletta, Professor, Physics Department - NSCI 208 "Science of the Day;" Katie Duke, Consulting Librarian.

Abstracts of the accepted proposals are located at http://academic.scranton.edu/department/wml/infolit-stipends.html

At the end of each project, written reports will be posted on the site.

Katie S. Duke, dukek1@scranton.edu



Staff Notes

FROM THE DESK OF MARY ELLEN PICHIARELLO Learning Enrichment Specialist, CTLE and **JAMES MUNIZ** Reading Specialist, CTLE

Students with Special Needs (Disabilities)

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 leave institutions of higher learning little choice when students document the need for accommodations. The effect of these two acts has been to greatly expand the categories of students who can participate in higher education. Student bodies on campuses across the nation have been diversified by these acts. However, the question of fairness and academic integrity always surfaces when discussing accommodations for some students. Paul Grossman (2001), writing in *Academe*, addresses the issue of accommodations for students with disabilities (special needs). Specifically, he addresses the fairness of providing accommodations for students with special needs. The most common accommodation for students on campuses, including ours, is extended time for examinations. Grossman (2001) reports that his experience confirms that this accommodation most disturbs faculty and leads to concerns about treating all students fairly. When proper documentation exists, extended time is provided to students in order to measure what students know rather than the impact of their special needs. Federal courts have held that giving students extended time does not provide unfair advantage. The courts cite research that denies extended time would benefit students without special needs. According to the Federal Court

(Continued on page 13)

Continued from page 12
STAFF NOTES *cont'd*

extended time "levels the playing field" and allows students to be tested on their knowledge (Grossman, 2001).

In most cases, faculty does not design tests to measure reading rate. Tests measure command of content. Because of special needs such as a documented reading disability or physical disability, students may need extended time to demonstrate their learning. Without the extra time, we simply get a measure of the effect of their special needs. Is it fair to provide extra time to some students and not to others? Since no evidence exists that extra time would help students without special needs, the provision for extra time seems fair when students document the need.

There are instances, however, when measuring speed of response becomes essential. Courts have held that medical students with special needs can be held to the same standards for timely response as their peers without special needs in emergency room situations. Decisions about essential functions within curriculum must be made everyday. A student who receives extended time for a written exam would not be automatically entitled to extended time for other aspects of evaluation of essential requirements that faculty may use. This practice is also fair.

Students with special needs must present documentation when they request any accommodations. At the CTLE, we examine that documentation, and when appropriate, we assist the faculty in providing accommodations that allow these students to demonstrate their learning not their special needs.

Reference

Grossman, P. D. (2001). Making Accommodations. *Academe* (pps. 41-47), 87 (6).

FROM THE DESK OF JAMES MUNIZ

Reading Specialist, CTLE

An appreciable number of students need help with study. These students present with adequate intelligence, but their prior educational experiences have not developed the skills necessary to deal with large amounts of material that must be learned rather than memorized. These students require more than help with reading skills. In fact, these students do not need help with reading skills as much as they need help in using their reading skills. Skills and strategies that they were never forced to use before must be developed. Students must learn how to underline, to annotate, and to summarize their texts. Again these are not brand new skills for these students; however, these skills now become critical to reducing text to manageable chunks. They now must employ these skills in a manner that helps them build meaning. They have to look at an annotation in text and "fill in the blanks." Students must actually think about what they choose to write as annotation. An annotation must help them recall what they have read. Also, as the amount of information increases, summarization becomes important, a summarization that helps them to recall a larger amount of information. These skills cannot be developed in a few sessions with the reading specialist. They can be explored, but sharpening these skills to the point where they help students deal with the content requires practice over time.

In order to provide effective help with the development of these skills, an approach of instruction and coaching has been developed. I meet with the students to discuss the difficulties they experience with their study. We create an academic success plan that details the skills that must be developed. We also discuss the need to develop organization skills to deal with the material that must be learned. The plan also recognizes that the students must develop their time management skills in order to efficiently implement any success plan. I schedule as many sessions as students feel they need to develop these skills. At the same time, they begin to meet with a coach. A graduate student serves as the coach for students willing to take advantage of this service. Meetings with the graduate student coach become "check in"

(Continued on page 17)

FROM THE DESK OF AILEEN McHALE

Instructional Technology and Enrichment Specialist, CTLE

An Update on Instructional Technology

The CTLE's technical resource staff and technical students (TechCons) continue to serve faculty and students. Some of the services offered include:

- Blackboard group training - providing training at the beinning of each semester on all modules in Blackboard course management software
- Blackboard one-on-one consultations - providing assistance in getting started using Blackboard and its advanced features
- Blackboard classroom visits - faculty can request to have a CTLE technical staff member or student (TechCon) visit their classroom to demonstrate to students how to navigate in Blackboard
- Developing web pages
- Creating E-Portfolios
- Assisting students with technical components of class projects. For example, using Windows Movie Maker and Flash software to develop presentations
- Enhancing PowerPoint presentations with sound and graphics
- Digitizing and audio/video recording and streaming services
- Using various multimedia software tools
- Scanning and other miscellaneous services involving instructional technology

After extensive research during the Fall 2006 semester, the CTLE purchased two new software tools to assist in the creation of multimedia presentations. The products are AuthorPoint and Visual Communicator. AuthorPoint enables users to easily synchronize PowerPoint presentations with audio and video. Visual Communicator is a sophisticated video presentation tool that enables users (even those who have never used video software before) to create compelling presentations that combine graphics with video, TV-style transitions and personal narration in just minutes. Both software tools could be used creatively to enhance course content. For example, Visual Communicator could be used to introduce the course to students through a video clip in which the professor welcomes the class, discusses course objectives, displays the textbook that will be required, and displays screen prints of different resources that will be used throughout the course.

The CTLE's team of technically savvy students, called TechCons, plays an integral part in providing quality instructional technology services to both faculty and students. In return, these positions enable students to gain invaluable training and experience in the field of instructional technology. TechCons are exposed to the use of high-end software tools and hardware. Each semester they are required to fulfill a "professional development" project that will enhance both their technical and pedagogical training and experience. This reflects very positively toward their credentials. The CTLE currently has four TechCons, two of whom will be graduating in May. Therefore, the CTLE will be seeking two new candidates for these positions.

This semester, the CTLE is anticipating requests for technical assistance from students in the Media Information Technology curriculum who are required to develop a project using Flash, a software tool that allows you to develop sophisticated multimedia presentations. Assistance is available on ways to use Flash to complete class projects. Students can obtain technical assistance in one of three ways: 1) Visit the CTLE Online Tutorials at: www.scranton.edu/ctletutorials; 2) Make an appointment to work with a student TechCon by calling Aileen McHale at 941-4365; or 3) Walk-in to the CTLE technical resource lab (STT589).

FROM THE DESK OF TOM LEONG

Math Specialist, CTLE

Active Learning in Mathematics

"*One must learn by doing the thing; though you think you know it, you have no certainty until you try.*" - Sophocles

The best way to learn is to do. A less effective way to teach is to lecture.

This last statement is a bit extreme, and I don't intend it as an absolute. I just want to be emphatic about not going along with the view that learning mathematics means going to lectures and reading books. We must *do* mathematics to learn mathematics. One principle of Supplemental Instruction (SI)—see previous issue—prohibits a re-lecture of material covered in class. We ask that the Instructional Assistants leading the SI sessions keep lecturing to a minimum and concentrate on involving the students, that is, have the students do mathematics and solve problems. Lecturing and reading books do not do a good job teaching mathematical skills.

For a student of mathematics, listening to mathematics is just as useful as a student of piano listening to someone talk about how to play piano or a student of swimming listening to a lecture on how to swim. You cannot learn to play the piano from someone lecturing you about proper fingering techniques. You cannot learn to swim from someone telling you where to place your arms and legs and how to move, and you cannot learn mathematics from someone telling you how to complete the square or how to substitute $u = \sin x$. Can we learn mathematics by reading? Although it is more active than listening, I am inclined to say no. It is better to read with pencil and paper beside you; we should do mathematics as we read mathematics.

I will even go one step further. We should learn to do mathematics before we can understand mathematics. It may sound reasonable that we should learn mathematical concepts (e.g., definition of a limit) before or alongside learning mathematical procedural skills (e.g., how to calculate a limit); however, I suggest it is the other way around. Consider, for example, how we learn to play chess. At first, we simply follow the rules in a mechanical fashion. After a while, we become more proficient in following the rules. Eventually, after some time and with a lot of practice, we learn to apply the rules automatically and fluently. Now we can begin to understand the concepts and strategy behind playing chess such as controlling the center of the board, occupying an outpost, and invading the seventh rank. It is only after mastery of procedural skills that we can achieve understanding of the game.

It is the same with mathematics. In fact, I can't imagine how one could possibly understand what Calculus is, where it came from, and how and why it works without first using its rules and methods to solve a lot a problems. Of course, one may view mastery of skills without understanding to be shallow, but, in my experience, conceptual understanding comes only after a considerable amount of procedural practice. How many of us aced our Calculus exams in high school and college, but only after receiving our degree and teaching and tutoring Calculus did we finally understand the concept of a limit? After all, the conceptual basis for Calculus wasn't established until 200 years after Newton's and Leibniz's invention of Calculus.

In a nutshell, Supplemental Instruction involves: learning math by doing math and teaching math by making students do math. We don't lecture; we provide stimulating activity; we must do math in order to understand math. Summarized in a Chinese proverb:

I hear and I forget.
I see and I remember.
I do and I understand.

FROM THE DESK OF MARY BURKHART

Writing Center Coordinator, CTLE

What's New at the Writing Center?

Consultant News

On Jan. 23, the undergraduate peer consultants participated in a pre-semester training workshop. During the practice sessions portion of the workshop, each person role played the parts of consultant, student writer, and observer, respectively. In addition, we reviewed office practices, on-line registration and record keeping, and discussed suggestions for improving the Writing Center. Consultant Rob Swinton presented helpful tips on working with English as a Second Language (ESL) students.

I would be remiss not to thank the English Department for the excellent adjunct support for the Writing Wenter. Once again, Glenna Dagher, Dale Giuliani, Bonnie Markowski, and Dave Wasson will consult with students. I am also grateful for the hard work and dedication of the undergraduate peer consultants:

- Stephanie Kazanas - Neuroscience/Pre-Med
- Caroline King - Theology, English, Coaching
- Kristin Manley - English, Counseling/Women's Studies
- Matthew Mercuri - English, Biology
- Chris Molitoris - Int'l Studies, Political Science, Philosophy
- Mary Ann Smith - Environ. Science, History, Pre-Med, Pre-Law
- Jonathan Sondej - English
- Sarah Suwak - English, Communication
- Rob Swinton - English, History

Student Workshops

If I have learned anything from teaching the process approach to writing and from working in the Writing Center, it's that sometimes we have no choice but to pull back, refocus, and revise. If a strategy meant to reach out to students and bring them into the center on their own time doesn't bring them, get rid of it, right? A strategy once considered essential can encumber rather than enhance when it does not fulfill its purpose. It becomes an albatross.

Such is the situation confronting the Writing Center. For the last several semesters, the Writing Center staff has developed, advertised, and held hands-on student workshops in the CTLE. The consultants have devoted a lot of time, effort, and revision to these presentations, and we have received mostly positive feedback from the few students who have attended them. Unfortunately, negligible-to-nil attendance disappointed the presenters and does not warrant the continuation of such extra-curricula workshops. Therefore, although we will no longer schedule the hands-on student workshops outside the regular curriculum, we will schedule them on a faculty-request basis.

Following is a list of the presentations we are currently prepared to schedule in the CTLE for your class:

- "Integrating and Documenting Sources: MLA"
- "Integrating and Documenting Sources: APA"
- "Preferring Active Voice"
- "Revising for Clarity"
- "Revising for Conciseness"
- "Drafting Introductions"
- "Drafting Conclusions"

If you wish to schedule a presentation for your class or if you wish to discuss our services further, please contact me at 941-7893.

Consultants in the Writing Center will work with students to help them develop as writers and will work with them as they develop more effective writing skills. They will not do the work for them.

(Continued from page 4)

DEVELOPING A TEACHING PORTFOLIO *cont'd*

portfolio, the better. Most colleagues know exactly why they are teachers, but they may find it extremely difficult to actually articulate this philosophy. I have found repeatedly that in workshops dealing with this topic, colleagues will find this the most daunting task. Just remember that you don't have to create a perfect product on the first try. Simply try to capture what the significance of learning is in your view, how you believe learning takes place, and what you believe your role as a teacher is in this process. Here are some leading questions that will help you get there:

- Why is it important that we provide good opportunities for learning?
- How do people learn?
- What are the characteristics of a good learning environment?
- What role do I play as a teacher (think of a metaphor: are you an explorer leading a team, a facilitator, a performer, etc.?
- What makes you special as a teacher?
- How do you know you are effective?
- What ongoing professional development do you engage in to make your strategies even more effective?

Is a course portfolio the same as a teaching portfolio?

No, the two are quite different. In a teaching portfolio, the author tries to give a holistic picture of all the teaching and teaching-related research activities engaged in during a given period. Such a portfolio would gather material on all the courses taught by its author.

A course portfolio gathers all the materials pertaining to one particular course in order to enable its instructor to reflect about all aspects of that particular course. Course portfolios are often used to provide a detailed record of how a course is being taught.

How do I get started on a teaching portfolio?

First of all, keep everything pertaining to your courses that would be useful in documenting various aspects of your teaching activities on an ongoing basis in an archive. If the sole purpose of your portfolio is to be a tool for self-improvement, then this archive is your portfolio. On the other hand, when you apply for a teaching position or for tenure, promotion or awards, you use only those documents that will have direct relevance and will support the purpose. Start working on a teaching philosophy. Select the documents you want to feature and connect them with a reflective narrative that establishes a context and shows how the documents are related to each other. Your narrative should also tie everything into your teaching philosophy.

Conclusion

This short overview is only designed to get you started with thinking about what teaching portfolios can do for you. If you are considering getting started, we will be pleased to assist you. For more information, please get in touch with Dr. André Oberlé at the CTLE (941-4040).

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(Continued from page 13)

STAFF NOTES (Muniz) *cont'd*

portunities. Students can brief the coach on the skills they attempt to implement. Together the coach and student can begin an evaluation process. The evaluation process determines the effectiveness of the selected strategies or if different strategies would be more successful. The student and coach can also examine the time management skills developed by the student. The coach assists in the development of the next step in academic success, evaluation. During coaching meetings, the students receive prompts that direct them in evaluation of their strategies. We want the students to realize that as demands change responses must change. Students must recognize these moments. They can only do this if they "attend" to the demands made upon them and spend some time in evaluation.

We hope this two-pronged approach that concentrates on both developing strategies and coaching their actual implementation will provide the support students need to deal with the academic tasks they encounter.

FROM THE DESK OF EUGENIU GRIGORESCU

Instructional Designer, CTLE

A new initiative, jointly undertaken by the Weinberg Memorial Library and the Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence, has been high on my agenda this semester. The Scholarly Research and Academic Integrity Tutorial uses scenarios to introduce freshmen and transfer students to a pertinent discussion about research at the college level as well as principles of academic integrity. The tutorial, adapted, with permission, from Georgetown University, will help students to understand research skills and the importance of research ethics, mainly how to find and use scholarly books and articles, keep track of sources, credit sources, and work in groups and share materials ethically.

The tutorial has been tested by several freshmen seminars and writing classes this semester in preparation for its launch later this summer. In addition to the scenarios, the tutorial includes practice questions that directly address issues raised in the scenarios, particularly proper citation and interpreting sources. Students are asked to complete the tutorial before the first day of class of the Fall semester and sign the honor pledge.

As part of the Faculty Advancement Series, Aileen McHale and I presented one seminar combining pedagogy and technology. Concept mapping is a technique to visually represent the structure of information, which allows for the development of a holistic understanding that words alone cannot convey. Since learners are compelled to pay attention to the relationship between concepts, concept mapping promotes active learning and critical thinking, and improves problem-solving ability. The presentation provided theoretical background for using and constructing concept maps and several software products for creating them digitally. Another presentation, also delivered jointly with Aileen McHale, was more technical in nature: how to store and organize the abundance of digital pictures.

As more and more faculty members introduce online components to their courses, the demand for using video in the courses increases. While the center has a video recording facility, a new teleprompter was purchased to make the video recording process easier for the user. A teleprompter uses a one-way mirror to display the script on the screen so that the presenter can read the text while looking directly at the camera. The teleprompter will be used in the recording of video that is not accompanied by other visuals. For synchronizing audio and video with PowerPoint slides, the center has several other resources. For more information on those products, please see Aileen McHale's "Update on Instructional Technology" on page 14.

I continue to meet with faculty one-on-one to assist with instructional design. If you are interested in a consultation, please feel free to contact me directly by email (eugeniu.grigorescu@scranton.edu) or phone (x5519).

WEB-BASED STIPENDS

AND TEACHING ENHANCEMENT GRANTS

Congratulations to the successful applicants of Web-Based Development Stipends. The Center for Teaching & Learning Excellence (CTLE) awarded a stipend of $3,000 to each of the following successful applicants:

Dr. Deborah E. Lo (Education)
Dr. Robert L. McKeage (Mangement/Marketing)
Drs. Dona Bauman, Kathleen Montgomery, Gloria T. Wenze (Education)
Dr. Satyanarayana V. Prattipati (OIM)
Dr. Dona Bauman (Education)
Dr. Terri Freeman Smith (HAHR)
Dr. Robert Spalletta (Physic/EE)

The following individuals were the recipients of Teaching Enhancement Grants. These grants vary in value:

Dr. Jack O'Malley (Psychology)
Dr. Sharon Meager (Philosophy)
Dr. Dona Bauman (Education)
Prof. Maria Squire (Biology)
Dr. Joe Kraus (English)

These stipends and grants are awarded in the fall. Watch for announcements. For more information consult our web pages at www.scranton.edu/ctle

(Continued from page 3)

HOW THE TEXT SYLLABUS FAILS *cont'd*

But it is difficult to judge the course level at which students may acquire a strong enough background, and this no doubt varies across individual students.

How do we supply this structure in our courses? Not with more text. With today's generation of students, we are likely to communicate more effectively using the "language" of graphics. This is why supplying a graphic syllabus, a flowchart of the organization and schedule of course topics, is so helpful to students learning. In this visual you depict your own conception of the organization of a field or subfield, at least for purposes of communicating it to students. Not that we should abandon the text syllabus; it allows us to provide a level of detail that a graphic might forbid due to space limitations. But only a graphic syllabus can convey to students how the course will flow and develop through the semester.

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DID YOU KNOW THAT?

In the the last census, about 54 million Americans—approximately 1 in 5—reported that they had some kind of disability and 26 million of them said they had a severe disability. More than half the Americans with a severe disability were between ages 22 and 64.

49.7 million people in the U.S. age 5 and over in the civilian noninstitutionalized population had at least one disability; this was a ratio of nearly 1-in-5 U.S. residents, or 19 percent.

46% of people with disabilities report having more than one disability.

These statistics are only the tip of the iceberg, as many individuals with disabilities try to hide them to avoid the stigma associated with them. At the CTLE we encourage students with special needs to become advocates for their own needs, so that they may continue to succeed once they are in the workplace. By presenting our services in a positive light, we also try to encourage those individuals who need assistance to seek it.

FROM THE DESK OF MARY ELLEN PICHIARELLO

Learning Enrichment Specialist, CTLE

Tutoring is, by definition, a one-to-one or small group activity where a person who is knowledgeable and has expertise in a specific content area or discipline provides tutelage, help, or clarification to one or more individuals. Good tutors are excellent role models of successful learning who can motivate the students they tutor to become better scholars. Tutors also provide an infinite source of energy, ideas, knowledge, motivation, help, and laughter – all the things that are so vital for an effective learning environment.

As the Learning Enrichment Specialist, I have been instrumental in expanding the categories of tutoring offered at the University of Scranton. The CTLE offers four categories of tutoring to our students. The first category of tutoring is individual tutoring. Individual tutoring offers an individualized, structured learning experience to improve the academic performance and personal growth of students. This type of tutoring is for students who are committed to meet with a tutor for one-two hours per week for the entire semester. Sessions are set up by the tutor and the tutee and take place in the CTLE Tutoring Center.

The second category of tutoring offered by the CTLE is group tutoring. Group tutoring is particularly useful for 100-level courses with high request rates and requires a more conscious leadership role on the part of the tutor. The primary advantage of group tutoring is the potential for the sharing of a variety of views and information so that all members of the group can fully participate in the learning process. An additional benefit of group tutoring is that students often network with each other outside of the session and form a learning community.

The Drop-in Tutoring Lab is the third category of tutoring offered by the CTLE. The Drop-In Tutoring Labs were created to provide immediate, short-term tutoring assistance. Students who just need to ask questions or need clarification but do not need tutoring on an individual basis for the entire semester can utilize this type of tutoring assistance. Tutors are available during scheduled times to provide assistance in commonly requested courses such as math, physics, chemistry, biology and various business courses.

The fourth category of tutoring is Supplemental Instruction. Supplemental Instruction (SI) is an academic enrichment program that utilizes Instructional Assistants (IAs) to conduct organized study sessions for specific Math courses offered by the University. SI sessions are designed to supplement—not replace—class lectures and recitations. These are regularly scheduled sessions where students not only deal with content but also develop complementary "how to learn" skills while working together with the instructional assistant as the facilitator. The instructional assistants are students who have been deemed course competent by the course instructor and trained in proactive learning and study strategies.

THE IMPORTANCE OF LEARNING STYLES

Individuals have different ways of learning. For the purpose of research, we generally talk about three learning styles. While most individuals learn in all three styles, in most learners one of these styles predominates. In a great many learners one of these styles is essential for sound learning.

Visual Learners: Learners in this category benefit more from seeing the teacher's facial expression and body language and depend heavily on the visual aids presented. They tend to sit closer to the presenter and take copious notes.

Auditory Learners : Learners in this category benefit more from hearing verbal lectures and engaging in discussion. The tone of voice and the way things are expressed are important to them. They often have to read text aloud to fully absorb it. Some ask for permission to tape the lecture.

Tactile/Kinesthetic Learners: Learners in this category learn best through hands-on work. They need active learning and need to be engaged in the learning process. They do poorly in an environment where lecturing is the exclusive teaching style.

Successful teachers address as many of these styles as possible during a given lecture or seminar to accommodate all learning styles and make classes interesting and keep their students engaged.

CTLE SERVICES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR FACULTY AND STUDENTS

FACULTY SERVICES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Faculty Awards and Grants — the following opportunities are available: The Provost's Part-Time Faculty Award for Excellence in Teaching, Web-based Course Development Stipends, Teaching Enhancement Grants.

Student/Faculty Teaching Mentorship Program — This program allows students to learn about college-level teaching in ways that transcend the traditional roles of faculty and students.

Faculty Advancement Workshops — We provide workshops and training sessions in the following areas: Faculty Advancement and Blackboard Instruction.

Course Design — Our Instructional Curriculum Designer will be pleased to assist you in the planning and development of sound instructional strategies and delivery methods for traditional and online courses.

Faculty Technological Needs Assessments — Let us assist you in determining your needs in the area of technology as it relates to your teaching and research.

Training in Instructional Technologies —Technical staff and student consultants are available to assist you in using and incorporating technology into teaching and learning. Services provided include scanning, audio/video digitizing and streaming, and graphics design.

Blackboard Assistance — Blackboard allows you to extend the classroom by making course materials available online and facilitating synchronous and asynchronous discussion. CTLE staff provides consultations to get you ready to use Blackboard either in a hybrid modality or solely online.

Web Consulting — We can assist you in creating, maintaining and updating web pages, and publishing course materials on the web.

Portfolio and E-Portfolio Support — Portfolios allow students to document their learning and reflect on their own growth. They are great assessment tools. Let us assist you in using portfolios.

Assistance with PowerPoint Presentations — This presentation tool has become increasingly popular in the presentations of lectures and seminars. Let us help you make the most of it.

Online Course Evaluations (OCE) — The Center provides support to faculty for the Online Course Evaluation System (OCE).

STUDENT SERVICES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The Writing Center Services — The Writing Center offers students the opportunity to improve their writing skills. Consultants will work with students on all aspects of writing including planning and drafting, organizing ideas, revising for clarity and coherence, editing for correctness, working with and integrating sources, and much more.

Reading Services — The Reading Specialist offers individual assessment and instruction to assist students to develop and/or enhance effective reading comprehension strategies.

Peer Tutoring Services — Peer tutoring, an integral part of the CTLE, provides individual and small group tutoring sessions for students to become self-regulated learners. Self-regulated learners are individuals who have the ability to develop knowledge, skills, and attitudes which facilitate their learning process. Peer tutors direct all tutoring activity towards creating an environment that encourages and supports student learning and development. The CTLE staff provides formal training for tutors followed by consistent support throughout the semester. Our Math Specialist specifically addresses the needs of Math students

Awards — The following opportunities are available: The Rose Kelly Award, The Frank O'Hara Award.

Online Course Evaluations — The Center provides support to students for the Online Course Evaluation System (OCE).

WHAT IS UNIVERSAL DESIGN IN LEARNING?

In terms of curriculum, universal design implies a design of instructional materials and activities that allows learning goals to be attainable by individuals with wide differences in their abilities to see, hear, speak, move, read, write, understand English, attend, organize, engage, and remember. Such a flexible, yet challenging, curriculum gives teachers the ability to provide each student access to the subject area without having to adapt the curriculum repeatedly to meet special needs. The curriculum will provide multiple means of representation to address different learning chanels. The curriculum will provide multiple means of expression to allow students to respond with their preferred means of control. The curriculum will provide multiple means of engagement for students.

STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS (DISABILITIES)

In our efforts to facilitate post-secondary learning and promote quality of life-enhancing experiences for students with disabilities, it is important for qualified students with disabilities to know their rights as outlined in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA).

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

"No otherwise qualified individual in the United States, shall solely by reason of his/her handicap, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance." (PL 93-112, 1973)

In order to be granted protections afforded to a person with a disability under Section 504, individuals must meet the following eligibility criteria:

- have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life functions
- have a history of such impairment
- be regarded as having such impairment
- be deemed to be "other-wise qualified" despite the disability

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA)

The ADA expands the provisions in Section 504 to the private sector. It prohibits discrimination against the same population as Section 504 but includes areas that were not previously covered under Section 504, such as private businesses, non-government-funded accommodations, and services provided by state or local governments.

Under the ADA, an individual with a disability is a person who has:

- physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities (including walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, and working);
- a record of such an impairment; or
- is regarded as having such an impairment.

Impact on Support Services/Academic Accommodations

The ADA, stipulates that an individual's disability must "substantially limit" a major life activity. Factors that may be considered in determining whether there is a substantial limitation include: Spinal Cord Injuries

- the nature and severity of the impairment
- the duration of the impairment
- the permanent or long-term impact of the impairment (29 C.F.R. § 1630.2[j]

Disabilities Covered by Legislation (but not limited to)

- Spinal Cord Injuries
- Head Injuries
- Loss of Limb(s)
- Multiple Sclerosis
- Muscular Dystrophy
- Cerebral Palsy
- Hearing/Vision/Speech Impairments
- Learning Disabilities
- Psychiatric Disorders
- Diabetes
- Cancer

The University of Scranton's Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence (CTLE) recognizes as its mission the assurance of efficient access to appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities. We also recognize that clear criteria for the required documentation of appropriate accommodations makes the process more transparent for students and parents. The University has therefore adopted the Educational Testing Service's (ETS) standards for documentation of appropriate accommodations. These standards are national standards from a well respected national organization, and many of our students will deal with ETS when they take praxis exams or graduate school exams.

DID YOU KNOW THAT?

A lot of individuals are reluctant to ask for assistance when they know have special needs to facilitate learning because they feel there is a stigma attached to having a learning disability. The term even has a negative connotation. People with special needs are not unable to learn, they may just need some accommodation to even out the playing field with other individuals. They are entitled to accommodations by law while they are studying and once they are in the workforce. At the University of Scranton we strive to create a positive attitude towards students with special needs.

ETS DOCUMENTATION CRITERIA

For more detailed information, including ETS's policy statements and guidelines about LD, ADHD, and psychiatric disabilities, please visit http://www.ets.org/disability.

Documentation for the applicant **must**:

- Clearly state the diagnosed disability or disabilities;
- Describe the functional limitations resulting from the disabilities;
- be current—i.e. completed within the last 5 years for LD, last 6 months for psychiatric disabilities, or last 3 years for ADHD and all other disabilities (Note this requirement does not apply to physical or sensory disabilities of a permanent or unchanging nature);
- include complete educational, developmental, and medical history relevant to the disability for which testing accommodations are being requested;
- include a list of all test instruments used in the evaluation report and relevant subtest scores used to document the stated disability. (This requirement does not apply to physical or sensory disabilities of a permanent or unchanging nature);
- describe the specific accommodations requested;
- adequately support each of the requested testing accommodation(s);
- be typed or printed on official letterhead and signed by an evaluator qualified to make the diagnosis (include information about license or certification and area of specialization).

Visit us on the web at http://www.scranton.edu/ctle

On our web site you will find detailed information about all the services we offer to faculty and students. There are tutorials and links to various online request forms.

You will find there a description of all our events, and you can register for them on the spot.

Our web site also contains our mission statement and strategic plan to achieve our goals.

There is a suggestion box where you may leave your ideas for improving our services.

You are also cordially invited to visit us any time in person. We are located on the fifth floor of the Harper-McGinnis wing of Saint Thomas Hall. We would be pleased to see you and assist you or just chat with you about our services.

THE CTLE ADVISORY GROUP

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Occupational Therapy

Dr. Satya Chattopadhyay
Management / Marketing

Dr. Rebecca Dalgin
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CTLE
CENTER FOR TEACHING & LEARNING EXCELLENCE