

Center for Teaching Excellence

This is the twentieth of a series of newsletters encouraging faculty enrichment and excellence in teaching by announcing opportunities, sharing ideas, and promoting collaboration.

Volume 2.10

April 2009

Happy Easter to you and yours!

Thanks again to those of you who agreed to give your classes online evaluations this semester.

Meeting to Share Teaching Tips

Faculty Dining Room

This Friday at Lunch

12:00 to 1:00 p.m.

Bring your own lunch.

On Friday, April 10

Handling Difficult Students

We will all share our experiences and talk about our successes as well as our challenges.

Seaver Faculty Colloquium

Thursday

4:00 p.m.

Kresge Reading Room

Payson Library

April 16

Lincoln Hanks

“Till Day Breaks:

Searching for Transcendence Now in Art Music”

A Second Teaching Writing Workshop

will be conducted by

Theresa Flynn,

Director of the Writing Center,

Thursday, May 14, 2009

Kresge Reading Room, Payson Library

Let me know if you plan to attend!

*You are welcome even if you were a part of the
workshop on May 6, 2008.*

*If you teach a course that is designated as “writing intensive,”
you are urged to come.*

Note: You will receive a small stipend if you attend.

Classroom Management: Discipline Pitfalls in the College Classroom

By Amy Getty

Although endless volumes about classroom discipline proliferate in the professional libraries of K–12 instructors, as college professors we seldom think we need advice on the issue. After all, our students choose to be in classes at our institutions. Many, if not most, are placing themselves and their families in huge financial debt to attend. Besides, we'll just kick them out of class if they display behaviors not tolerated in civilized societies.

It is true that we don't need threats of detention, or other tricks to coerce good behavior from college students. Nonetheless, classroom discipline is an issue for us. My colleagues and I routinely exchange stories about students who talk in class inappropriately, sleep through most of the period, attend infrequently, refuse to complete work, do assignments haphazardly, and answer cell phones in class. Some of these behaviors are carryovers from high school; some are the direct result of students reveling in their newfound sense of freedom. Regrettably, some of these bad behaviors develop in “good” students when they are provoked by our responses to these less than mature behaviors. That makes me think of the “Wizard of Oz.”

We all know the story. When Dorothy, Toto, the Scarecrow, the Tin Man, and the Cowardly Lion seek advice and wisdom from the Wizard, they are instead confronted by a giant head and pyrotechnics. When challenged, slightly, by Dorothy, the Great and Powerful Oz sets an impossible task to perform. When, against all odds, the group achieves this task and the Wizard is unmasked, they discover that behind the bluster of the giant head is really just a goofy-looking man in a bad suit.

In some college classrooms professors attempt to employ a similar godlike authority. Haven't we studied our field for years? Aren't we experts? Shouldn't students respect both our knowledge and authority? Of course. However, empowered by these beliefs, some professors adapt and cultivate an appearance of authority and expertise that looks too much like the charlatan Oz. Needless to say, this strategy rarely garners the respect intended.

This article is taken from Faculty Focus, April 8, 2009.

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If you have suggestions for improving this newsletter or any aspect of our teaching, please let me know.
