

# Center for Teaching Excellence

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

Volume 3.23

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*Welcome back!*

*Best wishes as you begin the new semester!*

*Remember to talk with your students  
on the first day of your classes  
about completing the online evaluation of your courses  
at the end of the semester.*

- Course evaluations will be available in the 10 day period before final exams.
- When the online evaluation period begins, students are notified by an e-mail from the Dean's Office with directions on logging in at <http://services.pepperdine.edu/course-evaluations/>.
- After the initial instructional e-mail, those students who have not completed their evaluation will be sent reminder e-mails.
- The student's login password is unique and is not his or her Pepperdine network password, so the evaluation capability is in no way tied to our system.
- The process is completely anonymous.
- Each student will be able to print a confirmation page upon the completion of the evaluation for each course.
- You may have each student turn in this confirmation page as tangible evidence that he or she has completed the evaluation
- Faculty will also be sent an instructional e-mail at the beginning of the online evaluation period. Faculty may view response rates as they come in throughout the 10 day evaluation period. You will be given the number of students who have evaluated your course but not their names.
- Since faculty will have no way of knowing which students have completed your evaluations through the online system, the only way to verify whether a specific student has completed an evaluation is for the student to print out the confirmation of completion and bring it to you.
- After you have turned in your grades, you can log in and see both numerical responses and student comments.

# *Meeting to Share Teaching Tips*

*Emily Kinsky and Johny Garner  
from the Communication Division*

*will share tips from  
The Teaching Professor Conference which they attended  
last June in Washington, D.C.*

*Faculty Dining Room  
Wednesday, September 16  
12:00 to 1:00 p.m.*

*Bring your own lunch.  
Drinks and dessert will be provided.*

## *Workshops in Using Technology*

*offered by IT's Technology and Learning Group*

*September 1 to October 9*

*To read workshop descriptions and to register, visit  
<http://services.pepperdine.edu/techlearn/training/workshops.htm>.*

*Attend workshops to learn how to engage your students and organize your course materials with online tools like Blackboard, Sakai, and Elluminate. Also learn how to use services such as Turnitin, which detects plagiarism and educates students about proper citation, and Anywhere Storage, which has the capacity to store large data sets, collaborative papers, and more.*

*If you or your department is interested in a one-on-one consultation or group session, please contact Hong Kha, team leader, Pepperdine IT Technology and Learning, via email at [hong.kha@pepperdine.edu](mailto:hong.kha@pepperdine.edu) or by phone at 310-506-4257.*

August 26, 2009

## [Finding the 'Sweet Spot' of Teaching and Learning](#)

Avid golfers and baseball players often talk about the elusive "sweet spot." Find it, and you can make the ball go exactly where you want it to go, almost effortlessly. There's a sweet spot to teaching, too. And, just like in sports, it takes a little experimentation to find and is a thing of beauty when you get it right.

In the recent online seminar, [Balancing Challenge and Support in Undergraduate Teaching](#), Dr. Ike Shibley, associate professor of chemistry at Penn State Berks, guided participants through a variety of exercises for finding the sweet spot for an optimal [learning experience](#). The goal? To provide students with enough support to help them succeed but also enough challenges to help them grow.

Drawing from [Maryellen Weimer's](#) *Learner-Centered Teaching: Five Key Changes to Practice*, Shibley encouraged participants to think about different policies and [teaching strategies](#) that need to be kept in balance when addressing Weimer's five keys:

- Balance of power – Although teachers have the final say, what are some things you can do to empower students?
- Course content – How do you balance the need for your students to know certain facts with the desire for higher level thinking?
- Role of the teacher – Are you the "sage on the stage" or the "guide on the side?" Or can you play both roles depending on the situation?
- The responsibility for learning – Students have to be willing to learn, but it's up to the instructors to create the type of climate where this happens more readily. Are you willing to cede some control by offering your students more choices?
- Purpose and processes of evaluation – Do you offer self-check quizzes or allow student input on low-stakes assignments?

Shibley also used case studies to demonstrate different ways to balance challenge and support when creating [learning goals](#), [rubrics](#), and attendance policies, as well as the importance of making your students aware of campus support services.

*This article is from today's edition of Faculty Focus.*

*It is by Faculty Focus staff member Mary Bart from Madison, WI.*

*If you want some new ideas for improving your teaching, remember that in Payson Library there is an excellent collection of materials on teaching and learning in the Center for Teaching Excellence section.*

*Or contact me if you need help in finding helpful information.*