Winter 2-1-1989

Volume 02, Number 02

Don Forrester Editor
Kennesaw State University

REACHING THROUGH TEACHING

A NEWSLETTER HIGHLIGHTING CLASSROOM PHILOSOPHY AND PRACTICE AMONG KENNESAW'S FACULTY

VOLUME 2, NUMBER 2 WINTER 1989

THE EDITOR CONSIDERS. . .

WHEN THE FLAME FLICKERS

Don Forrester
Director of CETL

". . . For the candles you set burning, Lighting paths of love of learning, Kennesaw we will cherish thee . . ."

There it is, tucked away in the first stanza of Kennesaw's Alma Mater, that often-used metaphor equating teaching with fire. It's a good comparison. Good teaching should glow with the fire of enthusiasm and radiate a warmth produced both by the love of the subject matter and the love of students. Teaching (and learning) can be like the slow, controlled burn of a candle, like the fast, controlled burn of an acetylene torch or, occasionally, like the urgent burn of a firecracker fuse, where there is that expectant rush ending in a eureka experience — an explosion of the mind!

The problem is, tapers burn to the candlestick, torches run out of fuel and firecracker fuses get soggy and fizzle. So it is with the fire in the bellies of teachers. Who among the seasoned faculty has not experienced it at one time or another? Faculty who have been spared burnout symptoms could be counted on Venus de Milo's fingers. Lack of interest in that lower division course we've taught forty times, apathetic attendance to faculty meetings, passive committee involvement, dread of advisement sessions and lackluster attempts at our research projects all signal a flickering of the flame that drives us as professors of our chosen and cherished disciplines.

What are we to do? Whatever burns is ultimately consumed. How do we keep from letting our lights go out too soon? Let us approach the solution negatively by pointing out some things to avoid.

Avoid a vacuum. Even a professor of music knows that fire, deprived of oxygen, dies immediately. If we, as faculty, keep to ourselves too much and fail to feed intellectually upon one anothers' ideas, we shut off one of our most vital resources. Sharing of ideas is the intellectual oxygen of an academic community. Serendipity often occurs when we, in a simple exchange with a colleague outside our field, share some question or problem about teaching. Perhaps we have all but given up finding a solution. But that colleague, by looking at the world from a different perspective, almost off-handedly provides the answer. The reason this doesn't happen more is that we don't try it more. The fresh breeze of a different point of view can bring the needed oxygen which fans one's flame back to life.

Avoid wind tunnels. In too strong a blast one of two things happens to fire: it is made to burn too rapidly and dies too soon, or else it is snuffed out in an instant. Wind tunnels are everywhere in academe, especially where a highly motivated faculty is found. The feel of the rushing winds of activity may be exhilarating to a point, but good judgement must prevail. We have our flames fanned too fast when we overload ourselves in any way. If one major project is so desirable, then two must be twice as good. The tendency always to say yes, even when we should say no, can often place us in the position of having our candles blown out. "Know thyself," is good advice. Know what your productive limits are. Do not, for very long, exceed those limits.

Avoid wet blankets. Oh yes, the Indians used them effectively to send smoke signals (an early form of the memo), but they are not useful commodities when trying to impart light and warmth. Thankfully, a wet blanket is seldom encountered at Kennesaw. Those few we meet have only lapsed temporarily into that state. Wet blankets put out fires by covering them with doubt, criticism and gloom. Avoid the wet blanket at all cost. Otherwise you may see your dreams about teaching go up in smoke. *(cont. pg. 11)*

AVOIDING BURNOUT

Don Forrester
Editor

After the philosophers had argued at length about how many teeth there are in a horse's mouth, one of them, with a white-hot stroke of shear genius, decided to settle the altercation by prying open the nearest equine jaws and counting the teeth! That's where we get the expression, "Straight from the horse's mouth." With equal brilliance, your editor saw the folly of writing about "faculty burnout" without going to the most readily available source of wisdom, namely colleagues who are subject to burn out, but haven't. Or if they have, they've somehow been able to get the fire going again.

It seemed like a good idea at the time to poll Kennesaw State's winners and runners-up of the "Distinguished Teacher Award." So a letter was sent asking each person to address, in 200 words or less, the subject, "How I Avoid Burnout." I sat back eagerly awaiting answers. When the replies were not quickly forthcoming, I decided to prime the pump a bit. On the elevator, I asked one of my potential contributors face to face, "Well, how *do* you avoid getting burned out?" "What makes you think I'm not," came his more or less good-natured reply. Another colleague answered that my request for this little essay was the thing that almost pushed her over the edge. As I said, it *seemed* like a good idea at the time.

Finally replies began to arrive, and good ones they were. One writer claimed that asking people who talk for a living to write something in 200 words or less was tantamount to imposing a vow of silence. But then she proceeded to pen this concise, thoughtful contribution:

"Burnout" is not unique to the teaching profession. Teaching, by its very nature, is repetitive. As a result, it becomes difficult to muster enthusiasm for one's 50th lecture on cell structure and function; or to enter a class with unbounded enthusiasm at the prospect of explaining cell division for (what seems like) the 100th time!

How do I attempt to recapture the enthusiasm of my youth? To rekindle the excitement of the graduate student who thinks she knows it all and must tell it to everyone? At times I think I've tried everything. Here are just a few approaches that have worked for me:

- *Design new ways of solving old problems.*
- *Relate biology to the everyday life of the student by making it ENJOYABLE, APPLICABLE, FUNNY (especially funny).*
- *Remember that they are hearing this information for the first time.*
- *Keep pace with the advances in my discipline and how they affect my students — bring this to the classroom!*
- *Remember my instructors who were dedicated to excellence.*
- *Remember those who were not.*
- *Always remember that TEACHING IS LEARNING — my students can teach me as much as I can teach them.*

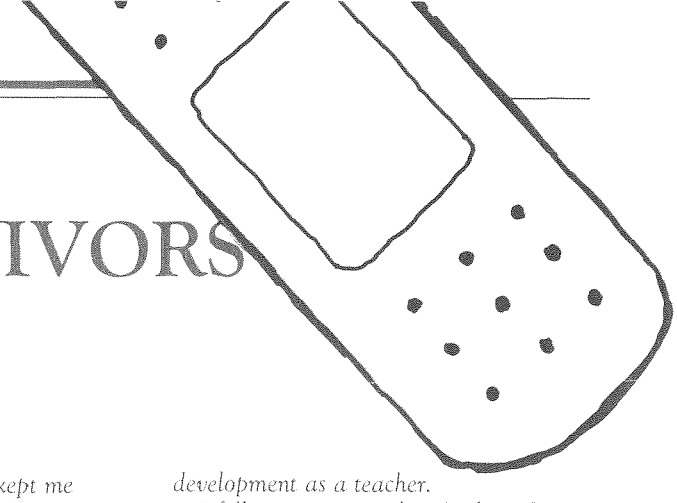
Since I can rely on an intelligent and loving husband who listens, encourages, and cares, managing "stress" and balancing demands becomes simple. — Kathy Fleiszar, Professor of Biology

Nearly every contributor alluded to stress as one of the principal burnout-producing culprits. It is also quite clear that much of this stress is self-generated. Without question, Kennesaw's great success as a teaching institution is due largely to the fact that we are a faculty of overachievers. But this phenomenon has its downside, for sometimes we lose control of our professional lives. When this takes place, we may blame the department chair, the administration or the system in general; but seldom do we face up to the fact that we got ourselves into this bind, and we have to get ourselves out. Observe how one chemistry professor developed her own treatment formula:

Since I began teaching at Kennesaw State College I have lived by two dictums: 1) If I don't do it, it probably won't get done; and 2) The needs of my students come before my own needs. Last year, it became clear to me that if I were going to remain in teaching, something had to change. What I have tried to do is to erase from my consciousness the two dictums by which I've lived. This year I am serving on the Strategic Planning Committee, the Graduate Policies and Curriculum Committee, and a subcommittee of the GPCC looking at graduate assistantships. I have turned down offers to serve on two other committees (something I would not have done in the past). I am allowing other chemistry faculty the opportunity to share in duties at the departmental level, rather than volunteering for the lion's share of the duties myself. I have instituted office hours four days per week in the morning and afternoon so as to provide even, but limited, access to me. My directed study students no longer dictate when we will work together. I tell them the hours I will be available and we work from there. I no longer give my home phone number to my students. I have instituted "Wonderful Wednesday." This is the day I use to read and study in the library or at home. I am actually able to keep current in my reading for my research project (a luxury I never allowed myself before). I must admit that I battle guilt about some of these changes at times, but I know that I will not have the energy to remain in teaching if I don't begin to consider my need for some privacy and for some contemplative time. — Patti Reggio, Associate Professor of Chemistry.

Do you agree that Dr. Reggio could never be accused of abdicating her responsibility? Three committees seem

ADVICE FROM SURVIVORS



more than enough; research is continuing, and she is still accessible to her students. It is still a busy, productive schedule; the point is, she has regained control.

Without a doubt, there are factors not of our own making which have the potential for producing stress, discouragement and, ultimately, burnout. Perhaps the greatest challenge of all is to transcend the hurtful influences of those things over which we have no control. The next contributor has found a way to create his own sphere of quality, which, though not impervious to outside influences, still allows for meaningful professional achievement over which he is in charge:

I once experienced the "burned out" feeling and did consider getting out of teaching. This was the day my high school principal, whom I had just heard cheerfully authorize spending $6,000 to replace the gym mats because they "don't look so good," refused to raise the annual science department budget $150 to implement a new laboratory-based curriculum we had spent all summer preparing. But, by then I knew that teaching was all I ever wanted to do and the feeling lasted for about twenty minutes. So, why don't I feel burnout now when faced with discouraging situations? Or when I too frequently confront stress? Or when I am so utterly exhausted from precariously balancing my responsibilities that I drop a few? My answer is simple. I only do what I choose to do. I won't take a job or a responsibility that doesn't deeply interest me, or that doesn't have genuine value to me in and of itself, or that I don't believe I can accomplish expertly. I may overload myself because I have many interests; I may overestimate myself, but I don't abuse myself by continuing to work on things that could make me resentful. I won't do anything professionally merely to please someone else or merely to have an accomplishment to cite. I long ago learned that being true to myself is the only way for me to serve others effectively. At the very least, it has kept me happy and productive for a very long time in the noblest profession of all. — Ben Golden, Professor of Biology.

Someone (I can't remember who) has defined a rut as "a grave with the ends knocked out." It is a condition we in the teaching profession often unwittingly and unwillingly create for ourselves. Digging a real ditch is about as hard a job known to humankind. The rut teachers dig is easy. All we have to do is take the path of least resistance, ignore what's happening in our field and avoid new approaches. During a long career, unless we remain vigilant, we may, time after time, find ourselves needing to climb out of yet another self-made grave. (It could give a new meaning to the term, "retrenchment.") Notice, in the following passage, the things this political science professor does to remain vigilant:

For me, the key to maintaining interest and enthusiasm in teaching is the fact that I like what I do! My work is both my avocation and my vocation. My interest in political science dates back to my childhood and has never waned. The courses I teach require constant change in order to keep them current. I therefore, participate, on a regular basis, in professional programs which enhance my knowledge of my discipline as well as my techniques of teaching. The fact that I continue to find the course material relevant and interesting, I believe, is transmitted to the students. I also do consulting work in my field, and find, that not only do I benefit intellectually from the stimulus of the work, my students also benefit. They are very interested when I use examples from my own work which illustrate the applied side of the discipline. My interest and enthusiasm in teaching is also enhanced by the opportunities to design and teach special topic courses. Collaborative work in special topics and projects with my colleagues also offers opportunities for growth and development as a teacher.

I follow a very simple rule that I believe is responsible, in large part, for my continued satisfaction in the work I do, which is that whenever I begin to bore myself, I know it is time to restructure, for if I bore myself, I certainly must bore my students. My job allows me the flexibility of change, and that's why I truly believe (most of the time) that I have the greatest job in the world — I am a college professor. — Helen Ridley, Professor of Political Science.

According to the *Book of Proverbs*, "A merry heart doeth good like a medicine." How anyone survives in the teaching profession without a sense of humor is one of life's great mysteries. Some believe it to be unprofessorial to laugh *about* our circumstances, to laugh *with* our students and to laugh *at* ourselves. But laughter takes some of the sting out of the harshest of realities. I offer the following example, in closing, from Dede Yow, of the English Department:

HOW I HANDLE BURNOUT IN 200 WORDS OR LESS
by
Paula P. Yow
Assistant Professor of English

How do I handle burnout? Well, every Spring quarter about midterm, I wake up real early in the morning and I say to myself, "I'm going to fall to pieces by the end of the week; I just know I am." And I do. I sweep into my Department Chair's office and begin to rant, "I haven't written a word, thought a thought, or read a book in months. How am I supposed to stay intellectually alive, emotionally balanced, spiritually serene with no time to think or write?" "Sit down," he always says calmly, benevolently. I do. We talk. I go home and eat my vegetables, push my bourbon to the back of the cabinet, and read my Emily Dickinson.

That's how I handle burnout.

Every Spring.

IT'S NOT WHAT YOU THINK: IT'S WHAT YOUR STUDENTS THINK!

David Jones
Chair, Department of
Liberal Studies

What is critical thinking? Can critical thinking be taught? If it can, should it be? The subject of teaching critical thinking in the classroom is a much discussed topic in educational circles today. One day last November some twenty-five Kennesaw faculty and staff members became better informed as they listened to a panel discussion of Chet Meyer's book *Teaching Students to Think Critically*. Participants on this panel, sponsored by the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning and by Leadership Kennesaw, included Judy Mitchell (Education), Ben Golden (Biology), Cary Turner (English), and Hugh Hunt (Philosophy).

According to Meyers and the panel, when we talk about thinking critically we're talking about putting to use skills and attitudes enabling us to work through a process of self-directed inquiry in a given discipline resulting in our being able to make sense and order of things. We would be able to make inferences, arrive at generalizations, draw concepts, establish priorities, engage in logical argumentation, come to sound judgments, and sometimes reach conclusions.

One of the major points made by Meyers is that methods of critical thinking vary from one discipline to another, that although certain knowledge concerning analysis, logic, argument is common to all thinking, thinking is not done in a vacuum. We think in disciplines. And different disciplines have different requirements, different standards. For example, critical thinking as applied to a literary work could not be approached in the same way as that applied to a chemical experiment. Hence, skills of critical thinking need to be developed in different ways by teachers in different disciplines. We need to keep in mind, then, the three stages of 1) input, 2) process and 3) output. Input, of course, refers to the content of a specific discipline: basic information, terminology that needs to be defined, methodology that needs to be explained. If one accepts, Meyer's idea that critical thinking varies among disciplines, then one must conclude that teachers in all disciplines should be involved in teaching critical thinking explicitly, that teaching critical thinking should not be reserved just for courses in logic or problem solving.

Let's suppose, now, that I've become convinced that teaching critical thinking in my classroom is both desirable and possible. What next? How do I begin? Well, I probably won't find it easy, perhaps not even comfortable for awhile. But there are some suggestions to help me. And those teachers who have consciously tried to teach critical thinking assure me that the results are rewarding.

The first thing that I may have to do in order to create an environment conducive to critical thinking is to reduce (God forbid!) the content in my syllabus and spend less time lecturing! What I must do is stop and ask myself just what it is I really want my students to know and to do. What are the real issues? Do I really want to do nothing but give out information just to get it back again? I must start with my own attitude, realizing, of course, that this may be just as difficult for the students as it is for me. After all, for twelve years or more they've probably been told what to do and what to learn. Not too many elementary and secondary school teachers encourage a questioning intellectual interaction among students in the classroom.

What I'm really talking about here is opening up the classroom to allow for many student responses, to allow students time to interact among themselves as well as with me. I must become willing not to take the narrow view, to be open to a variety of ideas, to respond positively (even when the student's response may not be a very good one) so as to enable students to feel comfortable in expressing their ideas. I must make a conscious effort to tolerate a lack of conclusion on occasion, to fight my own ego. Perhaps I can sometimes promote critical thinking by raising certain questions for students to think about before I begin my lecture, by having student dialogue take place in small groups, by having students put their ideas into short analytical papers, by allowing some time for thought. Perhaps every minute in the classroom need not be filled with talk, particularly my talk.

I hope that all readers of this article who have not read Meyers' *Teaching Students to Think Critically* will do so soon. Make it a New Year's resolution! It's short, only 120 pages. And it contains good examples of specific assignments to promote critical thinking, assignments which I've not taken the time to outline here.

Robert Frost, my favorite American poet, once said that he could never plan how to spend an hour in the classroom, that sometimes planning gets in the way of learning. He believed that the purpose of teaching is to evoke an answer from within, that teaching is giving people the freedom of their imaginations. He said that too frequently our minds are so crowded with what they've been told to look for that they have no room for accidental discoveries, that he as a teacher was looking for students who didn't want to be told what to think and what to do. Frost was teaching critical thinking, just as was Socrates in his time. Although many of us may be more involved in the teaching of critical thinking than we realize, it really does take a conscious effort to promote the development of critical thinking in the classroom. And maybe, after all, that is more important than having our students produce a list of novels written by Thomas Hardy or a list of dates of Civil War battles.

TEST REVIEWS

Faculty "Roast" or Student Learning Experience?

Annette Bairan
Professor of Nursing

Beveryly Farnsworth
Assistant Professor
of Nursing

Even though the effect is beneficial, test reviews are often anxiety-provoking, negative experiences for both students and faculty. Reviews can deteriorate into a defensive confrontation in which faculty defend their test items and students advocate their choices. Some faculty have referred to the situation as a faculty "roast." To make test reviews a more positive and constructive learning experience, we implemented a new approach.

Students are told to bring their textbooks and notes to class on the test day. Following the test, students are given a 15-minute break, at which time the tests are machine-scored and an overhead projector and screen are set up. When the students return from their break, tests and corrected answer sheets are returned to them; at the same time, a transparency with the item numbers, correct answers, rationales, and source(s) of all answers is projected on the screen. Students are instructed to check their notes and textbook sources if they have a question about a rationale. After reading the source, students are instructed to raise their hands if a question still remains and an instructor will go to them. The student then receives individual attention and feedback on the rationale in question. They can challenge the answer constructively, and other students can proceed at their own pace.

If a student thinks there is a valid, alternate rationale for an incorrect answer, he or she is allowed to turn in an individual written rationale and source that justifies the selected option. The instructor reviews these rationales and lets the individual student know if the rationale was accepted, and points are given for the student's answer. Blanket acceptance of items for the whole class is not given unless the item is incorrect. This discriminates between students who have a valid concern regarding an answer and students who chose the option in question by simply guessing.

Because the transparencies are changed only when all students have finished with each sheet of rationales, some students have to wait while others catch up. Three alternatives are: 1) set up another overhead projector and screen for an additional set of transparencies, 2) have a few extra copies of the rationales for the faster students to use individually, or 3) reproduce the rationales on paper — a copy for each student — instead of using transparencies.

An example of a test item with rationale is the following:

Mr. Smith's rehabilitation includes teaching him how to perform various activities of daily living. Mrs. Smith seems unable to accept the idea that her husband should do things for himself, even though he is hemiplegic. The nurse may be the most helpful in dealing with Mrs. Smith by:

a. telling Mrs. Smith to let her husband do things for himself.
b. letting Mrs. Smith know that the nursing staff has full responsibility for Mr. Smith's activities.
c. letting Mrs. Smith assume responsibility for her husband's care as she sees fit.
d. asking Mrs. Smith for her assistance in planning the activities most helpful to her husband.

Rationale for test item:

a. This option seems to overlook Mrs. Smith's need to help in her husband's care. Also, it does not offer an explanation as to why he needs to do things for himself.
b. This sounds defensive, plus not including Mrs. Smith may result in her feeling unneeded. Also, it is inadequate, in that including the family increases the amount of rehabilitation "carry-over" to the home. The client is not an entity unto himself.
c. This may prevent Mr. Smith from achieving his full potential of independence, plus Mrs. Smith may not be competent to assume such responsibilities.
d. This allows Mrs. Smith to participate in planning her husband's care, which will likely result in her feeling useful and needed.

Source: (author, title, page[s])

The results of this type of test review have been very favorable. When students anonymously evaluated the course in writing, the new test review method was rated superior to other types of test reviews by all the students. Their anxiety level was low during the reviews. They were able to concentrate on their weak areas and to have individual attention. They had the option of submitting an alternative rationale for consideration. Time was not wasted in attacks and defense, and the faculty felt better about the reviews — that is, not "roasted," but "warmed" by student learning.

Reprinted by permission from *Nurse Educator*, January-February, 1985.

THE CRAFT OF TEACHING

Karen Thomson
Associate Professor of English

Kenneth Eble has a distinguished career as a college teacher, administrator, and writer, and he has served in various capacities with national professional organizations. Having received his B.A. and M.A. degrees from the University of Iowa (1948, 1949) and his Ph.D. in English from Columbia University (1956), he is now a professor of English and University professor at the University of Utah. Among his many accolades are that he was a distinguished Visiting Scholar for the Educational Testing Service in 1973-74 and was one of ten finalists for the Council for Advancement and Support of Education's Professor of the Year in 1985.

The first edition of *The Craft of Teaching* was published in 1976 and has been referred to as "a classic on college teaching" and described as "one of the best books ever published on this topic." *AAUP Bulletin* said, "Eble's book is unmatched to date in its grasp of the essentials of effective teaching," and from *The Chronicle of Higher Education* we read that the first edition "is, in small measure, a manual of ideas for new professors. If it were only that, the book would have great value, but it is far more; for older faculty members who are concerned with effective teaching, or would like to be, it offers the kind of impact that reading any good imaginative literature yields." These same quotes apply to the second edition, yet the second is better because it is an enhancement of the first edition with several new chapters and sections, and it includes references to very current literature, like Bloom's *The Closing of the American Mind: How Higher Education Has Failed Democracy and Impoverished the Souls of Today's Students* (1987) and Hirsch's *Cultural Literacy* (1987). More importantly, Eble's new edition reveals the author's firm and intelligent grasp of what has happened in the past four decades in American higher education and brings us up-to-date with higher education's fascination in the '80's with writing across the curriculum, "critical thinking," faculty development, faculty evaluations, computers, and curricular reform. Besides being familiar with the literature in theories of education and educational studies as is obvious from his careful documentation, he is an English professor and refers effortlessly to various greats in western world literature. Selected quotes from such figures as Shakespeare, Thoreau, Emerson, Mark Twain, Henry James, and references to, among others, Socrates and Aristotle punctuate the book and are as unobstrusive as they are complementary to his task. Though English is this reviewer's discipline, his references to literature are neither pedantic nor intrusive and would not, therefore, serve to put those from other disciplines off.

Besides a broad grasp on the state of affairs in education on the national level, he also has an incisive focus on what happens in the classroom. For the students' perspective, he draws particularly from W.G. Perry's *Forms of Intellectual and Ethical Development in the College Years* (1970), "the most influential book of the past twenty years with respect to studying . . . the way college students respond to learning." For the teacher's perspective, he refers copiously to current studies and offers techniques, suggestions, and "discussion" as to what happens in a classroom, often quite candidly from his own experiences — what happens in the best of classes to what happens in the worst of classes. I found it refreshing and unmistakably healthy to hear him openly discuss some of the disasters that have happened even in his classes and which, whether we like to admit it or not, happen most assuredly to all of us at one time or another: "Every teacher experiences such classes, and it may be a comfort to the inexperienced teacher to realize that such bad classes don't entirely disappear with experience." He goes on to discuss what can make for a "bad" class, in a teacher and also in the students. The tone of his statements is conversational but with a background wealth of knowledge and experience so that the reader wants to continue reading to find out what he has to say. Never condescending and deceptively simple, the tone is that of a master and sage speaking to us from our time.

His views on teaching, teachers, and students are at once insightful, realistic, humane and very kind: "Good teachers I know are not all exemplars of even those virtues I choose to emphasize. Nevertheless, developing as a teacher can be described as becoming wiser and less judgmental, more generous, less arrogant and yet more confident; being more honest with oneself and students and subject matter; taking more risks; showing forth without showing off; being impatient with ignorance but not appalled by it." He spends some time at the beginning of the book explaining why he chose the title *The Craft of Teaching*. He believes good teachers are made rather than born and, therefore, teaching — good teaching — is a skill, a "craft" that is always being developed, being honed, always alive and responsive to changing dynamics. Though the book does have an extremely positive approach, one could not accuse Eble of being a Pollyanna who looks at an idealized classroom through rose-colored glasses. He has seen too much for such a perspective to be the case. He frequently throughout the book lets us know his perspective is grounded in reality: "in my observations of teachers on many campuses over the past decade, I have

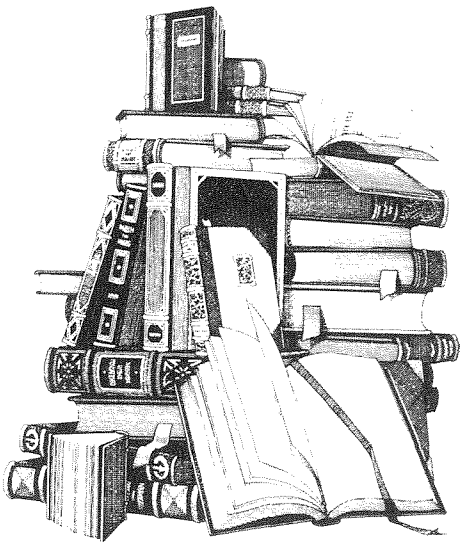
seen fewer charlatans than mediocrities and been less appalled by flashy deception than by undisguised dullness. And I have never encountered any evidence that a dull and stodgy presentation necessarily carries with it an extra measure of truth and virtue." What he does try to do is get us as teachers to do our best by being our best, and for him that is bringing the whole person — the teacher and the student — into the classroom: "I believe that teaching is a presence of mind and person and body in relation to another mind and person and body, a complex array of mental, spritual and physical acts affecting others."

In keeping with the conversational tone, Eble's style is characterized, too, by a soft brand of humor. With his emphasis on the teacher's bringing his or her whole self into the classroom, he offers this advice to the new teacher: "'Be yourself' is as good advice for approaching a class as any. And if you have a crumby self? Then there's only one thing to do: Stay away from teaching." And later he talks about difficulties in motivating students because of competing factors in their lives: "Once in college, motivation waxes and wanes as do love affairs and often in concert with them." Then he goes on to make his point, characteristically with warmth and compassion: "Without advocating a counselor's relationship with every student, I think a teacher sensitive to these and related matters is likely to have some success in motivating students."

I was interested in comparing Eble's thoughts and experiences with my perceptions of Kennesaw State College. At one point he offered a rather lengthy discussion on the importance of covering at the beginning of each quarter information that most of our faculty have routinely been covering for years now in a syllabus. However, he related a technique he once used in a "bad class" in which nothing he tried had worked. He then proceeded to dismiss class for a week and found that when the class again met, they were able to talk candidly about "the problem" together, attitudes had changed, and the problem was resolved. For those of us at Kennesaw and on a nine-week quarter, dismissing class for a week is simply not a viable alternative. I thought of Kennesaw again when Eble discussed what he labeled interesting current metaphors: "Like 'the cutting edge,' and 'the fast track,' [and 'the explosion of knowledge'], all are horrifying in their implications if one considers how explosives blow people up and knives cut them apart and speed shatters tranquility and order. Yet academics treat them as benign and lending excitement to a choice of life not exactly on the fast track." Once again, Eble's point is markedly sound and substantive, providing, as usual, considerable food for thought.

The Craft of Teaching is divided into four sections. Part One, Teaching and Learning, gives the author's main tenent in the book which is that good teachers are made rather than born and that good teaching can be nurtured into existence: "Potentially great teachers become great teachers by the same route [as athletes]: through conditioning their bodies, acquiring skills, and practicing in respectful competition with great teachers living and dead." The first section also discusses some common "myths" about teachers, for example, that the popular teacher is a bad and/or easy teacher, that teaching and research are complementary activities, that teaching a subject matter requires only that one know it. Part Two, The Skills of Teaching, is an extremely helpful discussion, beneficial for both new and also experienced teachers. Part Three, entitled Grubby Stuff and Dirty Work, is a discussion of just that: tests, assignments, grades, cheating, and other unglamorous aspects of a teacher's life. Part Four, Learning to Teach, summarizes Eble's thoughts on teaching. What follows are 13 pages of references used in his carefully documented work, and the book concludes with an index.

Upon completing this book and though it was a month and a half before Fall quarter was to start, I found myself looking forward to getting back in the classroom and trying some of his suggestions. Having been in college teaching nearly twenty years, I am not a new teacher but found *The Craft of Teaching* inspiring, and I came away equipped with new ideas and new skills to use. The 1988 edition gave me something valuable in terms of my learning and mental expansion. Thus, without reservation I enthusiastically recommend it to my colleagues.



"I believe that teaching is a presence of mind and person and body in relation to another mind and person and body..."

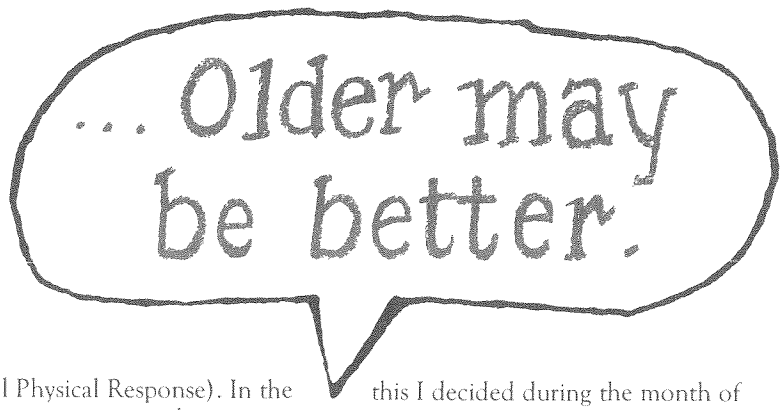
LEARNING A SECOND LANGUAGE...

Judy Holzman
Associate Professor of Spanish

For as many years as I have been studying and teaching Spanish I have been intrigued by the debate among teachers of second languages concerning children versus adult learning strategies. Coming from programs which emphasized a traditional literary approach to the study of a second language, I never had the opportunity in undergraduate or graduate school to study the issue in the classroom. This particular issue was left for informal discussion outside of the classroom. Very little hard evidence was presented in such settings, but fellow graduate students or teachers would recount success stories of one or two children which would then lead to the general conclusion that children learn second languages more easily than adults.

My years of teaching adults at Kennesaw State College and my years of studying Spanish with other adults caused me seriously to question the speculation regarding children success stories in foreign language study. Both in graduate school and at Kennesaw I have seen many adults who have successfully and rather quickly learned to communicate in Spanish. Also, during my years of teaching I thought that teachers should pay more attention to methodology and how different teaching methods affect children and adult learning strategies.

Last Spring when I read about the Teaching the Adult Learner Grant being offered through the Continuing Education Office at Kennesaw I knew that such a grant would give me the opportunity to investigate seriously the issue of child versus adult learning strategies in a second language. Fortunately my proposal was accepted and I was able to devote the past summer



to research in an area which had concerned me all of my professional life. The research over the summer gave me enough material to write two papers: "Older May Be Better" and "Foreign Language Anxiety and Learner Beliefs in Adult Foreign Language Learning."

The first part of my project was devoted to a comprehensive search of the literature. This search proved to be essential to my work, and also offered some surprises. One particular surprise was that very little concrete research on this issue has been done by foreign language teachers. Most of the research has been done by English as a Second Language professionals and many articles dealing with this area appear in *TESOL*, the professional journal for teachers of English as a second language. When I questioned colleagues at other colleges and universities about the failure of those in my discipline to contribute to this area of research, I was reminded that most foreign language programs, both undergraduate and graduate, still continue to emphasize the traditional literary approach to the study of second languages. In fact, many foreign language departments in the United States fail to regard research in the area of learning as legitimate to their field. This seems to me, as well as to my colleagues at Kennesaw, to be a prejudice which has done a great deal to hurt our discipline. Therefore, we have resolved as a department to continue the research which the TAL grant allowed me to begin.

Shortly after I finished the search of the literature in early July, I began one of the most interesting, and for me the most difficult, parts of the project, a hands-on teaching experience with one group of children and one group of adults. For both groups I had designed a series of lessons which would allow me to test development of two skill areas (comprehension and speaking). The particular teaching method chosen for this part of the project was TPR (Total Physical Response). In the future I hope to continue the project in order to test other teaching methods.

With the help of Mr. Greg Duncan, State Coordinator of Foreign Languages and Dr. Elaine McAllister, Coordinator of Foreign Languages at Kennesaw, I was able to participate in a program which allowed me, during the last two weeks of July, to teach fifteen five-year-old students for one hour daily. This proved to be the most terrifying and rewarding experience of my professional life. I had never before taught children and I must admit that I was unprepared for some of the spontaneity that this group brought to the classroom. During the same period of time I was able to convince fifteen adult students who had never before studied Spanish to participate in my project by allowing me to teach the same material to them.

At the end of the two-week period, both groups were given an oral test. This test proved to me that, at least in terms of the Total Physical Response Method the adult group, on some items, did just as well as the children, and on other items did better. The test results are recorded in my paper, "Older May Be Better." I chose this title because I realized that I have tested only one method on a small number of students for a short period of time. However, it is a beginning of an area of research which we must deal with if we are to strengthen adult foreign language programs in this country.

One unexpected result of the first study was an increased awareness on my part as a teacher of the important role of anxiety and learner beliefs in second language learners. My adult students sometimes let anxiety prohibit performance, and they would often tell me, without really knowing why, that "children learn more easily than I do." Or often times I would hear the adults say, "Oh, I wish I had started this when I was younger." Because of this I decided during the month of August to investigate these two particular issues.

With a second group of adult learners (34) I administered two tests. To measure foreign language anxiety I used the *Foreign Language Anxiety Scale* developed by Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope at the University of Texas. The second test, the *BALLI (Beliefs About Language Learning Inventory)* was used to survey student opinion on a variety of issues and controversies related to language learning including: (1) difficulty of language learning; (2) foreign language aptitude; (3) the nature of language learning; (4) learning and communication strategies; and (5) motivations and expectations. My goal was to determine if any of the beliefs inventoried by the *BALLI* were associated with higher levels of student anxiety. I sent my findings to Dr. Elaine Horwitz at the University of Texas because she was running similar experiments throughout the United States. We found several significant relationships between the two tests. For example, students who disagreed with the statement, "I have foreign language aptitude" were significantly more anxious than students who agreed with it. The tests revealed that anxious students would seem to believe that only some people are inherently able to learn a language and that they were not part of this group. Such information could be very valuable when teaching adults and could altar teaching strategies.

The TAL grant opened for me a rich area for research. My search of the literature revealed that we have much to do in this area. My pilot classes of children and adults may in some small way help to dispel the notion that children always learn a second language more easily. The unexpected insight into anxiety and learner beliefs will enrich my teaching of adults for many years.

HATS OFF TO "CAPS"

Improving Advisement, the Neglected Side of Teaching

Christine Ziegler
Associate Professor of Psychology

As a relatively new member of the faculty, I remember vividly how excited and pleased I was to have been offered a position at Kennesaw State College. There were many reasons I was so pleased, but one of the primary issues was the commitment of the faculty to provide each student with a quality educational experience. A key component of this commitment is the provision of comprehensive and competent advisement to each student.

The teaching component of the job was one with which I was already quite familiar, as I had been teaching since 1980. As for advisement, that was an entirely different issue. I drew heavily on my experiences with advisement, both as a former student and as an instructor in an effort better to understand what would be required of me. As a student, advisement consisted of determining my own schedule each semester and then hunting down my advisor for the coveted signature that would enable me to enter the hallowed halls of early registration. I recalled the sense of frustration at not having a knowledgeable person to talk with and the fear that somewhere along the way I would make some horrendous error that would delay my graduation.

When I began teaching I was an adjuct faculty member at two colleges. That meant I was not assigned any advisees but I observed with keen interest the advisement process and found essentially the same phenomena: students stopping faculty in the halls, after class, and sometimes even in the restroom to get a signature so they could register.

As I reflected on these memories, two thoughts occurred to me: "How fortunate the students at KSC were to get personal advisement," and "How in the world can I provide good advisement given that I have no experience with the process myself." Very calmly I concluded that it was not appropriate to panic, at least not yet. I still had a couple of months before school began, I would simply commit the whole catalogue to memory. The catalogue was easy enough to understand and this strategy proved useful, at least in easing my fears about not knowing anything at all.

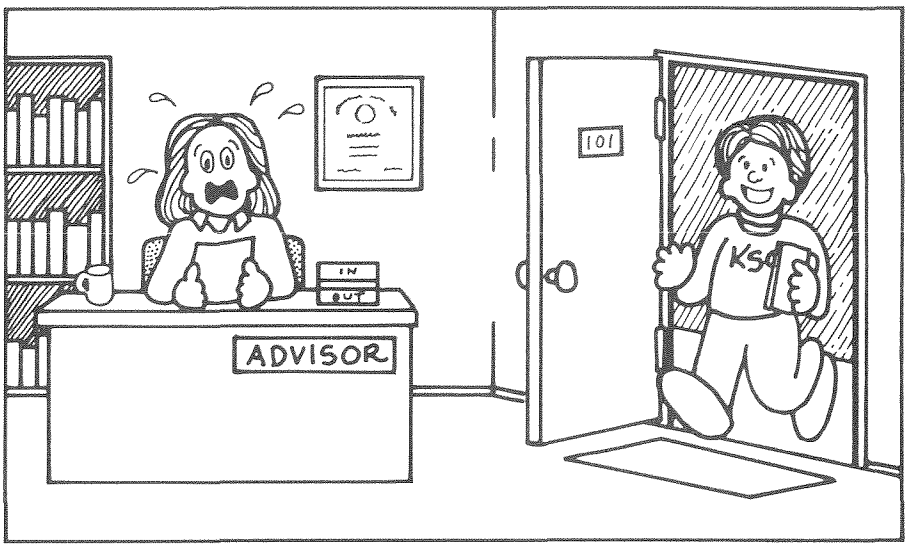
Then the fateful day arrived. A student appeared at my office door with a big smile, introduced herself and uttered the dreaded words "I'm here to be advised." *Now* was the time to panic. Memorizing the catalogue wasn't enough. I soon realized the unique nature of each student, each with a seemingly inexhaustible barrage of questions that required knowledgeable accurate answers.

My colleagues were tremendously helpful during this first quarter of advisement, answering all my questions and providing valuable insights. I was extremely grateful but I felt it was imposing too much on their time and patience.

Sensing my growing concern, Dr. Ruth Hepler suggested that I make an appointment at CAPS to get some additional insight into good advisement skills. I contacted Chuck Goodrum at CAPS and a process began that was of enormous benefit to me personally and, I believe, my advisees as well. On that first occasion Chuck spent nearly two hours explaining many issues that were still unclear. He provided me with many useful ideas and delivered a great pep talk. When I left I felt much better, more confident and certainly better informed.

Not long after that a memo was in my mailbox from CAPS asking for volunteers to do advisement. I thought that this must be a mistake, for surely they couldn't be interested in a neophyte such as myself. Not wishing to appear ungrateful, I called CAPS to bow out gracefully. I spoke with Julie Kelley. I suggested that since only the best advisors were at CAPS, perhaps I should wait until I had more experience. Julie encouraged me to volunteer for one quarter, as it would be an excellent learning experience. She also assured me that both she and Chuck Goodrum would be available to answer questions as they came up. I was very comforted when Julie added that there were no stupid questions and if something came up that couldn't be answered by someone at CAPS, that they would find the person who could provide an answer.

Feeling inadequate to the task, but greatly comforted by these kind words, I volunteered for the winter quarter at the CAPS center. Before actual advisement all of the new advisors received a very thorough program of training. We learned how the core curriculum works,



"A student appeared at my office door with a big smile, introducing herself and uttered the dreaded words 'I'm here to be advised.' Now was the time to panic."

the philosophy behind core requirements, and how to apply credits transferred from other colleges. These were areas with which I was already familiar, but now my vague understanding had congealed into a firm grasp of the nuances of the core curriculum. I breathed a sigh of tentative relief. I was feeling better already.

The next task on the road to becoming a CAPS advisor was to become familiar with the resources available to students. I was amazed at the wide variety including computer assisted instruction on study habits, tips on how to speak to a professor, and information about placement services. The CAPS center has something for everyone. For instance, the counseling workshops offered every quarter are aimed directly at providing exactly the kinds of skills and services critical to a student's success. What makes these workshops so unusual is their relevance to everyday living. Many of these resources I was not familiar with. As a new person on the faculty this information proved to be extremely helpful.

As I grew more familiar with the services provided by CAPS and the delightful group of people who work there, I began to feel that I could do a reasonable job there and that certainly I would get better with practice. I have to admit that when my first CAPS advisee came in for an appointment, I felt a little anxious, but I was more knowledgeable and that was reassuring.

Since my first chat with Chuck Goodrum I have done three quarters of CAPS advising. The experience has been invaluable. I have learned a great deal about Kennesaw students, the resources available to both students and faculty, and how and where to get answers to unique questions. At the end of every quarter the folks at CAPS were always very gracious in expressing their gratitude for my help. I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to these folks for their patience, assistance and sense of humor. Finally, I would like to recommend to all who would like to sharpen their advising skills and those who are already excellent advisors to consider a quarter of advising for CAPS, because one of the very nicest things about the philosophy at CAPS is that they welcome all, both novice and expert.

(con't. from cover)

To this point we have focused upon the faculty member's personal responsibility for maintaining professional interest, enthusiasm, and effectiveness. To a large degree we must control our own destinies. However, as pointed out in an article by Amour, Cafferella, Fuhrmann, and Wergin in *Coping With Faculty Stress* (Josey-Bass, 1987), faculty build and maintain successful, productive careers in an institutional environment that values and supports development. CETL's reason for being is to help foster both an attitude of support and to provide resources and opportunities for professional growth. Grants for research in Teaching Adult Learners (TAL), Instructional Enhancement Grants, and Faculty Development Grants all help to promote professional interest and maintain vitality. Leadership Kennesaw is a unique program which allows faculty to gain a renewed respect for our profession, to develop a network of colleagues, and to capitalize upon and improve individual leadership skills (both in the classroom and across the campus). Through this program, professors come to understand the interrelationships which exist among ourselves, administrators, students, our Board of Regents, and Kennesaw's broader consistency. Participants come away with a revitalized sense of self-worth and a mutual respect for the skills and divserse styles of colleagues. These and other programs administered by CETL are designed to rekindle our flames through professional growth.

Finally, we hope *Reaching Through Teaching* will help keep your fires burning. If it strikes one spark of interest in the mutual celebration of good teaching, or of doing what you do well even better, then its goal will be accomplished.

Teaching is an intense profession, with no apparent alternative to an uneconomical burning of intellectual and emotional fuel. We all must realize the need to refuel more often if we are to keep the flame alive throughout a long career. However, burnout, while a phenomenon to be avoided, is not a professor's worst end. As Dr. Noah Langdale, former president of Georgia State University, was quoted as saying many years ago, "I would rather burn out than rust out."

BRIEFLY NOTED

Effective Classroom Questioning, by Stephanie S. Goodwin et al. (Office of Instructional Resources, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign).

Published as a photocopy of a typescript, this interesting 35-page booklet provides much insight into the process of questioning as a teaching technique. In the *Foreward,* the authors state, "A timely, well-phrased question can capture students' attention, arouse their curiosity, focus upon important points or even occupy a student's thoughts after the class has ended. Students' responses to questions reveal their perceptions and comprehension of the material, levels of experience with the topic being presented and attitudes about the material or course in general."

Too often, we ask the wrong questions, according to the authors, and when the "correct" answer is not forthcoming, we can't resist providing it ourselves from the wealth of our own expertise.

This little volume gives some valuable directions about 1) levels and types of questions, 2) planning questions at strategic points in the class presentation, 3) developing interaction skills, and 4) methods for assessing our questioning techniques.

Because of its "homemade" look, this little book is likely to be disregarded by academicians, but its contents may well stir up our thinking about a little-considered phase of our teaching styles. — *Ed.*

Teaching and Learning with Computers by Barry Heermann (Jossey-Bass, 1988)

Heermann's audience is twofold: faculty and administrators who are thinking about adopting computers in the classroom or who want to use them more effectively. His purpose, though, is not to champion categorically the use of computers in higher education. Rather, it is to present information and raise key questions that will help faculty and administrators make intelligent decisions about using them.

Heermann pretty even-handedly evaluates practical applications, the problems along with the promise. He hopes this "concise handbook" will maximize the promise and minimize the problems. (At over 230 pages, however, the book hardly seems "concise.")

Even practiced hands at CAI should find at least parts of the book useful, especially the last chapter, which looks into the next decade's technological developments as they might affect CAI.

At the end are a basic glossary, a list of sources of academic computing information, and perhaps most valuable, a ten-page bibliography, impressively current.

In short, the book provides a wide-ranging overview of what computers have done, can do, and cannot do in meeting some of the challenges of teaching in higher education. — *Tim Ransom, Assistant Professor of English, Developmental Studies.*

Turning Professors Into Teachers by Joseph Katz and Mildred Henry (ACE/MacMillan, 1988.)

Far from being an "ivory tower" book, this volume is the result of two projects conducted between 1978 and 1987 involving fifteen colleges and universities. Several of its nine chapters are based upon interviews with students and faculty, classroom observation and responses to questionnaires.

The opening chapter examines current research in faculty development and student learning styles, and makes a strong case for new approaches to teaching undergraduates. The work provides as detailed a look as is currently available into the almost sacrosanct private relationship between professors and their classes.

The late Joseph Katz was senior fellow at Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Program and Director of the New Jersey Master Faculty Program. Mildred Henry is Academic Vice President of New College in California in San Francisco. Both authors are nationally recognized for their writing about the improvement of higher education. — *Ed.*

REACHING THROUGH TEACHING

Please share with us your ideas about teaching and the exciting strategies you use for making your classrooms successful. Our next **deadline for submissions is March 1, 1989.** Please send all articles, type double-spaced, to Don Forrester in THE CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AND LEARNING (CETL).

Giving guidance and vision to CETL is a Faculty Advisory Council including the following:

Mary Bumgarner	— Assistant Professor of Economics
Bowman Davis	— Professor of Biology
Kathleen Fleiszar	— Professor of Biology
Linda Hodges	— Associate Professor of Chemistry
Bill Hill	— Associate Professor of Psychology
Nancy King	— Assistant Professor of English and Director of CAPS
Beverly Mitchell	— Associate Professor of Physical Education
Thomas Roper	— Associate Professor of Business Law
Edwin Rugg	— Vice President for Academic Affairs
Paula P. Yow	— Assistant Professor of English

Don Forrester	— Editor
Cindy Best	— Secretary