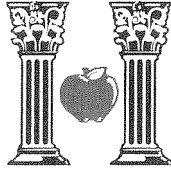


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# REACHING



# THROUGH TEACHING

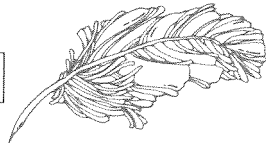
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A NEWSLETTER HIGHLIGHTING CLASSROOM PHILOSOPHY AND PRACTICE AMONG KENNESAW'S FACULTY

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THE EDITOR CONSIDERS. . .



## BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

**Don Forrester**  
Director of CETL

I have a fantasy about teaching that I occasionally replay on my mind's VCR. It involves what it would have been like to be a professor in one of the great European universities during the Renaissance. It is strange that the daydream never begins in the classroom, but just after class has dismissed. I assume that I was brilliant, because as I leave the lecture hall, students flock after me to ask questions, to bring up related issues or to debate a topic. Still dressed in cap and gown, I am being held captive in the hallway by a circle of eager, interested young people (and I am loving it).

Finally I interrupt, "Can't you see that I am hungry? If this conversation is to continue, it will have to take place at the 'Cock and Bull Tavern' down in the village." And so we walk, and talk, and postulate and counter, and continue to do so over food and ale or coffee. Other students and colleagues join and leave the group from time to time, but the ideas keep flowing until well past dark. I leave believing that my students are better for the experience, and knowing that I am wiser. Because of them, and because of my colleagues, I have, in that encoun-

ter, become a better teacher.

Back to reality! What has just been described seldom happens now. I remember only one faculty member from my own undergraduate days who consistently carried on this type of activity. In those days, drug stores still had soda fountains, and one such establishment was situated next to the campus. This particular professor, a true eccentric (he wore a trench coat in the summer, and occasionally absentmindedly lit the filter end of his cigarette), could be seen sitting in a booth with several students on any given afternoon, deeply involved in conversation. The soda fountain, alas, has disappeared, and today's counterpart, the fast food establishment, is not always in walking distance of the college campus. Nor would the typical McDonald's welcome the idea of having its booths loaded with students and faculty loudly debating intellectual topics for hours on end. Unfortunately our own student center has not been conducive to this sort of interchange. Our students have jobs, and families and innumerable interests which motivate them to leap into their fancy little imported machines and head for the freeway before the final bell stops ringing. One wonders, too, if Renaissance professors had quite so many committee responsibilities as is now the case.

Most of us recognize the importance of extra-classroom learning, where the

student has the opportunity to experiment with ideas in a less formal and less threatening environment. Hearing the professor discuss a discipline conversationally, and becoming involved with one's peers in a true-to-life intellectual situation may stimulate more learning than the best delivered lecture. Without a doubt, an important dimension is missing when a student attends class then studies alone, without some type of interchange outside the classroom.

This issue of *Reaching Through Teaching* focuses on the laboratory experience — one of the modes Kennesaw uses to provide extra-classroom learning experiences for our students. Once thought of as the domain of the sciences, labs now have proliferated to become a vital learning dimension of disciplines as diverse as accounting, music and writing. To gain perspective, first read Linda Hodges' article, "Facilitating Learning: The Laboratory Experience." Then move on to the other articles which describe the amazing variety of laboratory experiences available to Kennesaw students.

If my fantasy about teaching is unrealistic in the modern college setting, at least the sentiment rings true. There is comfort in the belief that creative, caring teachers will always find ways of providing full, rich learning experiences for their students, both in and out of the classroom. ●