
REACHING THROUGH TEACHING

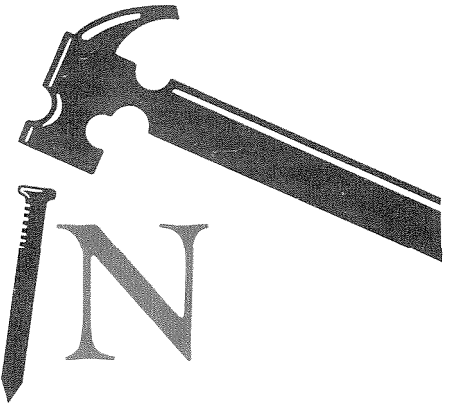
A NEWSLETTER HIGHLIGHTING CLASSROOM PHILOSOPHY AND PRACTICE AMONG KENNESAW'S FACULTY

VOLUME 3, NUMBER 1

THE EDITOR CONSIDERS . . .



BUYING IN



Don Forrester
Director of CETL

A young couple I know — married maybe four or five years — on returning from their honeymoon, moved into a nice little two bedroom apartment. She made curtains, he hung pictures; together they tried to make this rented space reflect something of themselves. They wanted it to look like “home,” which indeed it was to be for the next few years. Not having much money, there were limitations as to what they were able and willing to do in terms of “fixing up” the place. After all, it didn’t really belong to them. They vacuumed the carpets and kept the kitchen and bathroom clean, but after the initial decorating process, little of their energy or resources went toward improving something which belonged to someone else. “This is good enough for now,” they said.

Recently they bought their first house. They were able to move in with only a 5% down payment, but their house note was much higher than rent had been. To compensate, they began taking a sandwich to work for lunch, stopped going out to dinner, curtailed

their movie going, did without unnecessary new clothes; in short, they sacrificed many things in order to have a home of their own. The last time I was there, a collection of lawn and garden implements and some basic carpentry tools were neatly arranged in the garage. Much of their time and energy was being directed toward making *their* house into something extraordinary.

The fact that the house was theirs made all the difference. We all understand the dynamics at work in this scenario. For many of us it is *our* story. Never mind that they have little equity in the house and that most of each payment goes toward interest. Never mind that it is the lending institution which more properly could be said to be the owner of the house. The important point is that the two young homeowners have “bought in.” Now they’re committed.

Are not the most effective teachers those who have bought in and are continually in the process of doing so? We all bought into our disciplines as undergraduates, if not earlier, and, hopefully, bought into the love of learning at a young age. Later, as teachers, we discovered the necessity of buying into the curriculum, the textbooks, and into the lives of our students.

All of this is good, but insufficient without the continual buying into the process of becoming the best teachers we can possibly be.

How is the latter accomplished? In a variety of ways, some planned and efficient, some otherwise. This issue of *Reaching Through Teaching* focuses upon one strategy being used at Kennesaw State, whereby departmental faculty actively take charge of their own professional development as teachers. You will find descriptions of two *discipline specific* teaching conferences planned and implemented by the Departments of Psychology and Nursing. A third conference, sponsored by the Writing Center, was also held in October. Though each conference was distinct in audience, content and format, they all have two things in common: all three were highly successful in bringing together professionals in their fields, and all had as their purpose the improvement of teaching.

This is not the only way to make good teachers even better, and it comes with no guarantee, but it is a very positive approach, and one which the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning is promoting enthusiastically. Read about the successes your colleagues had. Maybe your department will consider it too. ●