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# REAC<sup>⌘</sup>ING

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# THROUGH TEACHING

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

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THE EDITOR CONSIDERS . . .

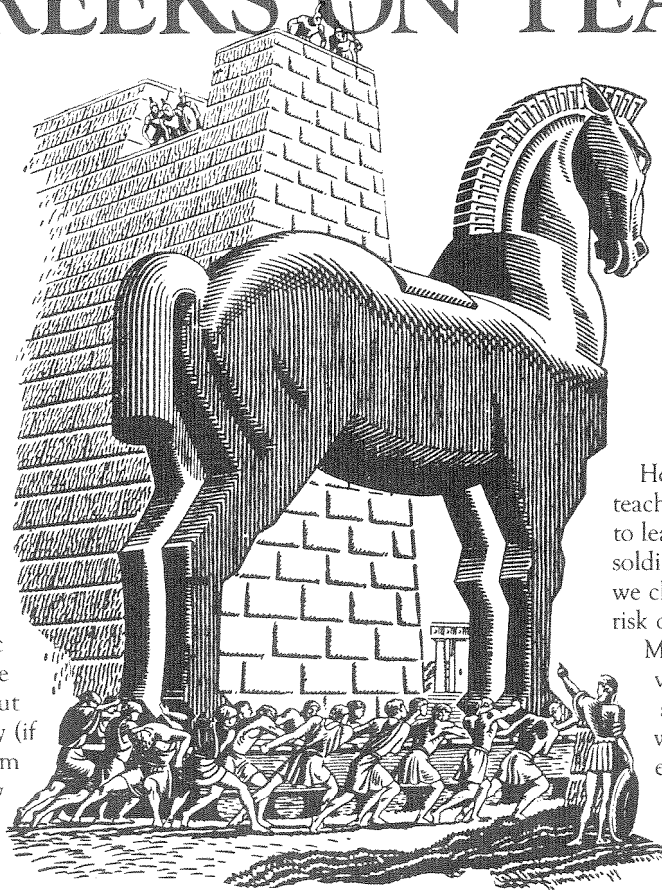


## THE GREEKS ON TEACHING

**Don Forrester**  
Director of CETL

I know what you're thinking. This is going to be an article about Socrates, the assumed father of the professor's mainstay, the Socratic method. Of it not that, you're expecting a discussion about Mnemosene, Goddess of Memory (if my memory serves), after whom the mnemonic device, or memory "crutch" is named. We would be in excellent company with those two, of course. But why would I risk incurring the scorn of readers of your stature with anything so obvious?

I would prefer an exegetical look at the story of the fall of Troy, where the Greek army, unable to penetrate the Trojan walls, left a giant wooden horse on their doorstep. The Trojans, of course, rolled the tremendous hobby horse inside the gates. You remember the rest; in the dead of the night, a trap door in the horse's belly opened and out came the Greek chieftains, who



opened the gates for their waiting comrades, and the great city of Troy was taken.

Teaching is a battle, I think we all agree. But let's manipulate this metaphor to suit our purposes. The *student* is not the enemy. The enemies are ignorance, inexperience, distraction, and especially, I think, apathy. Apathy becomes the wall around the student's mind, and is an obstacle the teacher must overcome to be victorious. It's up

to the teacher to find a way to open the gates.

How often in the dead of night have teachers everywhere fashioned horses to leave before closed gates? And which soldiers from among our legions have we chosen to hide inside? Do we dare risk our elite troops: Shakespeare, Mozart, Aristotle, Pythagorus, Cervantes, Michelangelo? Or do we send in the second squad—those who are not necessarily the strongest warriors, but who are good at opening gates? I would not presume to say; the students change, the circumstances change, the "gates" change.

I will say that ours is a noble cause; but, like the Greeks at Troy, we will not conquer by storming the gates. Instead, we continue our quiet search for ways to get inside without a fight. Having done so, unlike the Greek army, the only fires we light are the "fires of love of learning." This is our mission, because we have learned that the city unoccupied by the likes of Shakespeare, Mozart, Aristotle, and the rest, is a "Spartan" place indeed. ●