



BRIEFLY NOTED

Issues and Inquiry in College Learning and Teaching, edited by Robert G. Kraft and Sally Knight. Eastern Michigan University, FCIE Offices, 519 Pray-Harrold, Eastern Michigan University, Ypsilanti, MI 48197-2210, (\$15.00 per year).

This quarterly publication, formerly called *The Journal of Professional Studies*, addresses that growing audience of higher education faculty who are truly interested in improving teaching. The journal, which describes itself as innovative, was still willing, in its fall, 1991 issue, to devote two cover stories to "improving the lecture." The traditionalist, it would seem, could be as comfortable here as the innovator.

While *Issues and Inquiry* does not have a very professional appearance (obviously desk-top published), it does contain solid, timely articles written in a style which does not turn off college faculty who are often suspicious of anything smacking of "methods." With the loss of public confidence in post-secondary teaching, it is hard to find much fault with any publication addressing the improvement of teaching and learning. 🍎

Developing and Using Tests Effectively, by Lucy Cheser Jacobs and Clinton I. Chase. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. 1992. (231 pages).

Although not apparent from the title, this book is specifically about college-level testing. Considering that college professors spend as much as 20 percent of their time evaluating learning, it is ironic that so little preparation is given to developing the crucial skill of testing. At one time or another, nearly every college

teacher feels the sting of this deficit when students respond negatively to a test they perceive as being unfair or when half the class fails a test over material we thought they had mastered.

Developing and Using Tests Effectively covers every phase of testing from planning to assigning grades. It discusses validity and reliability and provides guidance in creating fair, clear and effective multiple-choice, true-false, matching, completion and essay questions. It examines the advantages and limitations of computer-assisted testing from machine scoring to item analysis. As more instructors move away from traditional modes of testing, the authors' treatment of take-home, oral and open-book tests should prove useful. Even a section on how to deal with cheating is included.

This is highly recommended reading for the new college teacher. However, if the goal is to continue to improve one's skills at creating fair tests which measure what they are supposed to measure, delineate achievement levels and teach students something in the process, even the seasoned professor may find this a useful volume. 🍎

Editor's Note: All materials reviewed in Briefly Noted are available from the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning, Rooms 220-221 in the Library.



REACHING THROUGH TEACHING

Please share with us your ideas about teaching and the exciting strategies you use for making your classrooms successful. Please send all articles, typed double-spaced, to Don Forrester in THE CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AND LEARNING.

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(continued from page 1)

These thoughts are echoed by Linda Lewis, a non-traditional nursing student who, after 20 years, re-entered college only to find herself stymied by the writing requirements of English 102. "Patsy Grider patiently walked me through the process of learning to write," she says gratefully. "And what's more, she helped me believe in myself."

Finding four teaching/learning generations on one campus may not be newsworthy, but it is, I think, immensely comforting and affirming to those whose lives are given to teaching. It is *our* story, symbolic of that stream of life and learning of which we all are a part.

And the story doesn't end here. 🍎