Reflections

Newsletter of the Teaching Support Centre
The University *of* Western Ontario

Number 51 April 2004

Welcome to the Teaching Support Centre!

The Educational Development Office (EDO) has been renamed the Teaching Support Centre (TSC) and has moved to the main floor of The D.B. Weldon Library. Our name change reflects the broadening of the functions performed in the Centre. We are now a "one-stop shop" where in addition to our traditional programs and workshops, you can come to find answers to questions such as: what library resources are available to support my teaching, how might I use information and communication technologies (ICTs) in my courses, or how might I improve my students' information literacy skills? The Teaching Support Centre is a collaborative initiative between EDO, Western Libraries and Information Technology Services (ITS) aimed at improving the service we provide to faculty and teaching assistants to enhance their teaching and curriculum design.

Under one roof you can now access a variety of individuals to support teaching and learning at Western. For instance, to assist with the integration of information and communication technologies into your courses, some of the staff of the Instructional Technology Resource Centre (ITRC) will be available on a daily basis starting in May. You can also meet with an experienced instructional librarian (see p. 5), Tom Adam, who will work with you to facilitate the development of your students' information literacy skills. The TA Training Program is also housed here, and we hope to expand our offerings to new international TAs in the year to come.

The Centre is also home to the staff of the former EDO. Matt Wannan is our instructional designer and can assist you with the pedagogical design of your distance and blended learning courses. Judy Purves is our program coordinator. Don Cartwright coordinates the Faculty Mentor Program (now finishing its fourth year). Susan Rodger has worked with us to develop the TA Training Program. Mike Atkinson is our Faculty Associate focussing on large class teaching. As the Director of the TSC, I remain very interested in how to effectively use active learning techniques and in developing programs to promote academic integrity. We are all available for consultations, workshops and other presentations.

Nick Haffie-Emslie (left) from the ITRC and Dr. Damjana Bratuz, Faculty of Music

The Centre is comprised of a 40-seat classroom, a work area for the ITRC staff, library and meeting space plus staff offices. We hope you will drop by and visit us Monday to Friday between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. or join us at our official opening, which will be held in conjunction with our *Spring Perspectives* conference, on Thursday, May 6 at 12:00 noon.

Debra Dawson, Director

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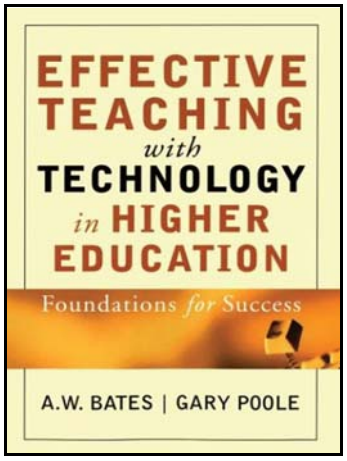
Book Review

BY
MICHAEL W. CLARKE,
MICROBIOLOGY & IMMUNOLOGY



Effective Teaching with Technology in Higher Education: Foundations for Success
A.W. Bates and Gary Poole
Jossey-Bass Publishers: San Francisco, 2003.

Is it realistic to suppose that an intellectually and professionally rewarding academic career at a university can be based on the teaching of one's discipline? For those who, perhaps secretly, would like to believe this to be true, Tony Bates and Gary Poole have written a book that suggests one approach to what has become known as the scholarship of teaching. Although premised on the use of information and communications technologies (ICTs) in higher education, much of the wisdom of this book can be extracted without reference to technology and applied directly to scholarship in the design, delivery and evaluation of undergraduate curriculum in general.

While this book is clearly written for university faculty who teach at the undergraduate level, it is not blatantly directed at the converted. Those who want to advance their teaching skills, who find teaching to be a chore or something they were protected from early in their career, or those who view it as a distraction from research, will benefit from this read.

Effective Teaching with Technology in Higher Education follows a previous work by Tony Bates entitled, *Managing Technological Change: Strategies for College and University Leaders*. This book focuses on the senior academic administration, providing the arguments, challenges and possibilities for institutional support for the use of ICTs in teaching and learning. Widely accepted formulae for success are outlined, including the operational and organizational alignment of educational technology support units with the department responsible for promoting university teaching excellence rather than IT services (this being an education driven, not technology driven, enterprise).

Bates and Poole build on this argument by presenting clear, practical and, thankfully, concise approaches for teaching faculty who are considering integrating ICTs into their courses. Tony Bates is the recently retired former director of distance education and technology in the Department of Continuing Studies at the University of British Columbia with a long and highly regarded career in academia including being one of the founding faculty of the Open University in the UK. Gary Poole, currently the President of the Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education, is the Director of the Centre for Teaching and Academic Growth, also at UBC. Each of these individuals brings their considerable and complementary expertise to this book – Bates from a long history of involvement in technology-enhanced teaching and distance education and Poole from an international reputation in the scholarship of teaching and learning.

This is not an "educational technology for dummies" book – you will not learn how to use PowerPoint or WebCT after reading it. You will, however, be able to ask reasonable questions of your Department Chair, Dean and Academic VP with respect to the logistics of ICT use in teaching and learning, including central support, funding, instructional design and evaluation. You will understand that ICTs applied to university teaching do not allow us to do the same things in a different format (i.e., direct transfer of classroom didactics to web-based brochure courses) but that it does allow us to do new and different things (i.e., developing a so-called "hybrid" course with a combination of on-line and face-to-face experiences) but not without some risk.

Risk-taking is seen to be an essential part of this new way of teaching and learning. Bates and Poole provide a useful review of the research literature that has dared to ask the question – does the use of ICTs in higher education result in a "better" or "worse" educational experience for students? The bottom line? The jury is still out, the field is still too new, there are no such things as "best practices" and it provides an excellent opportunity for experimentation in our teaching. Sounds a lot like an area ripe with research possibilities!

The authors make compelling cases for the use of ICTs in higher education while, at the same time, providing some essential caveats: "... and, to be blunt, if you do not have access to such support (*viz. instructional design*) we would strongly advise you not to get heavily committed to technology-based teaching" (p. 92); "... if the institution is not supporting the technology you want to use, you need to make a careful decision as to whether you are prepared to make the substantial effort needed to be an innovator in teaching" (p. 103); "... faculty should be prepared to spend more time on their Web course" (p. 127); and, finally, "... teaching with technology – whether during regular hours or extra-sessional, campus-based or distance, for credit or non-credit – should be seen as part of the regular teaching load of a tenured faculty member. If it is not, it is very unlikely that [faculty] will voluntarily take on the extra work required. The failure to take into account the workload associated with technology-based teaching is probably the biggest barrier to its use" (p. 132).

Subsequent chapters deal with the "why" and "when" as opposed to the "how" of using ICTs effectively in our classes. What arises from this discussion is clear: faculty workload issues can be addressed through the provision of support in both the instructional design and the technology needed for effective online learning environments. Now faculty can lead a design team rather than act as an individual course proprietor. It is encouraging to read, "... if an institution wishes to keep its reputation for academic quality, a technology-based course should be under the overall supervision of a tenured research professor ..." (p. 155). At UWO, we have this expertise available through the ITRC and through the new Teaching Support Centre to be officially opened in The D.B. Weldon Library in May.

A useful framework is provided that serves as a checklist for faculty as they proceed through the design of a course. This is the SECTIONS framework: Students, Ease of use, Costs, Teaching and learning, Interactivity, Organizational issues, Novelty and Speed. This framework provides the right questions to be asked when selecting specific technologies for specific educational purposes – for example using WebCT versus a stand-alone web-based conferencing system (their advice is to have both available). Although the authors are able to demonstrate benefits to various players when technology is effectively deployed at a university (including the administration who understand the value of being able to transform a conventional 3-hour lecture course into a 1-hour face-to-face session supported by a comprehensive on-line component), they concentrate on the benefits to students as the media, with proper design, lend themselves to individual learning styles.

The final chapter – Change and Stability in Teaching with Technology – provides some sobering final thoughts for those considering integrating technology into their teaching. The chapter begins, "By this stage, you may well be wondering whether it is really worth using technology for teaching if it means doing all the things set out in this book. It is a good question to ask" (p. 253). At which point the authors then reiterate the benefits to both teacher and learner when technology is appropriately integrated and go on to predict where new emerging technologies might find a place in higher education.

The only other criticism I can manage to muster is that the book does not explicitly clarify the widespread misunderstanding that educational technologies are relevant only to what is called "distance education" and have only a minor role to play at large residential, research-directed universities. Although ICTs can support a distance education unit, they are also able to provide effective learning opportunities in our on-campus face-to-face courses by allowing us to do new things and explore new ways of teaching with our students.

However, given Bates' background, there is a clear emphasis on applying technology to the development of 100% distance courses, an enterprise that has not yet been met with great enthusiasm here at UWO outside of the Western Centre for Continuing Studies.

For this reader the most interesting part of the book is found in Chapter Two – Introductory Remarks on Knowledge, Learning and Teaching – which appears to be mostly the work of Gary Poole. Here is a practical distillation of current knowledge in the area of learning theory – entirely accessible to this microbiologist and providing not only a clear understanding of how learning is accomplished but also how knowing this can be applied directly to what we do in class. Here it is shown that, as teachers, we carry our own biases and innate (i.e., naïve) understanding of what we do when we teach (my own suspicion is that these originate with the role model of a professor we ourselves experienced as

Gary Poole will give the keynote address at the Spring Perspectives on Teaching conference on May 6 at 9:00 a.m. in Somerville House, Room 3345.

students) and gives us, from the learning theory literature, an opportunity to map these personal traits to well known "epistemologies". All of us will quickly recognize our own selves and teaching philosophies in one section or another of this chapter while, at the same time, appreciating alternative ways of thinking about teaching and learning.

Sections in Chapter Two entitled, "The Nature of Teaching" and "Learner-Centered Teaching" are well worth the price of the book itself. Everyone will be able to take valuable lessons from this Chapter – lessons that could lead to a compulsion to totally re-think and re-configure what we do as teachers.

Which brings us back to the question posed at the beginning – given the implications that such a commitment to teaching would have on our time and workloads, which of us out there is willing to take the risk? Is there, in fact, a risk? Has such a commitment ever led to a rewarding academic career? Let me know.

Graduate Studies 500

The Theory and Practice of University Teaching

Graduate Studies 500, an interdisciplinary graduate credit course on the theory and practice of university teaching, will be offered this summer. The goals of the course are to familiarize students with background research and theory relevant to university teaching and to provide the opportunity for practice and feedback on basic teaching skills.

Class Time: Mondays and Wednesdays
1:00 – 3:00 p.m.
May 3 – July 12 inclusive

Registration: Monday, April 5, 2004
(*in person only*) Faculty of Graduate Studies
SLB, Room 130

For more information, contact
Dr. Debra Dawson, Course Coordinator
Phone: ext. 84621
E-mail: dldawson@uwo.ca

Tomorrow's Professor Listserv

"It might be disheartening to learn that even with a particularly entertaining professor, most students only pay attention for about 15 minutes at a time."

The article below provides some good suggestions on how to keep your students interested and engaged throughout your entire class time. It is by Phillip Wankat and Frank Oreovicz from the April, 2003 issue of ASEE Prism, Volume 12, Number 8 http://www.asee.org/prism/.

BREAKING THE 15-MINUTE BARRIER

by Phillip Wankat and Frank Oreovicz

Short lectures and lots of student participation will make your classes lively and keep your students engaged.

When you think about the time and effort it takes to prepare a lesson, it might be disheartening to learn that even with a particularly entertaining professor, most students only pay attention for about 15 minutes at a time. But don't lose heart; lectures are one of the best teaching tools we have. They can motivate, transfer information quickly, and provide overall structure for a topic. They also allow students to hear, see, and interact with you – the expert. So here are some suggestions for keeping your students wide-eyed and attentive during the entire class.

Focus on the audience. How much do they know? The lecture needs to be tailored to the group, whether it's first-year students, seniors, liberal arts majors, or practicing engineers. Develop the content accordingly and consider how you will interact with the class. Arriving five minutes early provides time to chat informally with students and may help to better assess the level of their knowledge.

Think about the 15-minute limit when structuring the lecture. Mini-lectures separated by short breaks can be an effective way to go. The mini-lectures can follow a simple format of opener, main body, and summary. The opener should connect with what occurred previously and the summary should connect with the break or with the next class period.

Make sure the breaks focus on learning. For example, give students a few minutes to catch up on their notes. By comparing notes with other students, the interaction will increase the energy level in the room and they will be refreshed. Have small groups brainstorm, solve problems, or develop good questions to ask you. Demonstrations also make effective, learning-based breaks.

Students prefer an energetic but relaxed presentation style that includes time for questions, so be spontaneous – although you can certainly check your notes for details. Rookie professors commonly over-prepare and spend countless hours on their lessons. This can give a lecture a "canned" feeling. Lecture preparation is best done in a series of small doses. And whatever you do, never read to your class from the book.

The best presentation medium – whether it's traditional chalk board, overhead projector, or PowerPoint – depends on your situation. Writing on boards and transparencies tends to be more spontaneous, but can be difficult to see in large lecture halls, especially if the professor has poor penmanship. Transparencies prepared in advance and PowerPoint slides will be neater, but they contribute to that dreaded "canned" feeling and usually make presentations go much too fast. A combination may be the best way to go: Prepare the main part of a lecture with high-tech tools, but use boards for information that can be referred to throughout the lecture. Also, if you provide students with partial lecture notes, they can learn by filling in solutions to examples and problems that you intentionally leave blank.

Students are motivated by grades. And while it won't make you the most popular teacher, students will attend lectures and pay attention if they know there will be a short quiz at the end of the period. Be very specific about the topic, give an example during your lesson, and be sure the quiz problem is straightforward. Since students are just learning the material, problems that seem very simple to you might be too challenging to them. A quiz every second or third class keeps students' attention without wearing them or you out.

You can learn to be an outstanding teacher by watching outstanding teachers in action and adapting some of their techniques to your style. Try these new techniques, and get some feedback so you can revise, refine, and try again.

Phillip Wankat is head of interdisciplinary engineering and the Clifton L. Lovell Distinguished Professor of chemical engineering at Purdue University. Frank Oreovicz is an education communications specialist at Purdue's chemical engineering school. They can be reached by e-mail at purdue@asee.org.

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Welcome Tom!

Tom Adam is Western Libraries' first Information Literacy Coordinator. Information Literacy, the ability to easily access, critically assess, efficiently assimilate and effectively apply the information that daily bombards us, is a set of competencies vital for the academic success of Western's students and an integral foundation for lifelong learning. With the Teaching Support Centre team, Tom will work closely with faculty, teaching assistants and instructional librarians to embed information literacy into teaching and learning at Western. One interesting project on the horizon is Phase III of Project SAILS, the Standardized Assessment of Information Literacy Skills. Headed by researchers at Kent State University in Ohio, this project is attempting to establish a reliable tool for measuring information literacy that is standardized and easily administered. Tom was a member of Western Libraries' Phase II Implementation Team this year and will coordinate UWO's participation in the next phase of the research in the spring.

Teaching Tip

Applying the Seven Principles of Good Practice in Undergraduate Education to Teaching with WebCT

In March 1987, the American Association of Higher Education published "Seven Principles of Good Practice in Undergraduate Education." The seven principles are a detailed analysis of five decades of research on good teaching principles by Arthur Chickering and Zelda Gamson.

Certainly, these principles apply to teaching and learning in both the face-to-face and online classroom environments. Since the Seven Principles were first published, new communication and information technologies have reshaped the way we think about teaching and learning in higher education.

Because various instructional strategies can be supported by a number of contrasting technologies, what follows are the seven principles, as well as available WebCT tools. Even after two decades in print, these principles still serve as a relevant measure of classroom teaching success.

Good practice encourages contacts between students and faculty. In WebCT, consider using Chat rooms, the interactive whiteboard tool, and discussions.

Good practice develops reciprocity and cooperation among students. In WebCT, consider assigning group activities and assignments that engage students in collaborative work. Also, require students to post feedback on readings, discuss themes and trends on a topic, or participate in peer review in the discussions.

Good practice uses active learning techniques. In WebCT, a variety of assessment tools such as quizzes and self-tests can be used. Discussion also enhances an active learning environment.

Good practice gives prompt feedback. WebCT creates an environment where feedback on self-tests and quizzes can be instantaneous. Consider asking learners to contribute feedback on assignments and discussions.

Good practice emphasizes time on task. The WebCT Calendar and selective release options both organize the structure of the course work and assist in keeping both learners and faculty on track.

Good practice communicates high expectations. Consider asking for feedback on course themes and content and use self-tests and quizzes to ensure that students are achieving course objectives.

Good practice respects diverse talents and ways of learning. WebCT allows for varied delivery of content. Learning will be enhanced by diverse teaching methods.

By applying best practice to the use of WebCT in online teaching, faculty can be sure that they are benefiting from use of the technology, while ensuring a positive learning experience for their students. If you would like information on teaching using WebCT at Western, contact Diane Goldstein in the ITRC or Matt Wannan in the Teaching Support Centre.

For more information on the Seven Principles and using instructional technology, you might enjoy reading Chickering, Arthur and Stephen C. Ehrmann (1996), "Implementing the Seven Principles: Technology as Lever," AAHE Bulletin, October, pp.3-6, available online at: http://www.tltgroup.org/programs/seven.html.

Needs Assessment

As part of the development of new programs for the Teaching Support Centre, we will be performing a program evaluation and a needs assessment starting the first week of April. We know that our faculty are changing as we find ourselves in a time of growth and renewal at Western. Furthermore, EDO has been in existence for 25 years, making our Centre one of the oldest in Canada, and as we change we want to find out from you what services you need or would like from us.

The survey will be posted on our web site **(www.uwo.ca/tsc)**, and we would like to hear from all of you by May 14. The survey will only take 10 minutes of your time to complete, but your results will shape the future of our new Centre.

Instructional Technology Resource Centre

Room 118, Natural Sciences Centre
Teaching Support Centre, The D.B. Weldon Library

The ITRC is a support facility for faculty who wish to integrate technology into their courses. The ITRC has the expertise and the facilities in the areas of: 3D Imaging; Digital Sound Recording; Digital Still & Video Photography; Image, Text & Film Scanning; Interactive Web Design; Video Conversion & Editing; VR Authoring and WebCT Course Design.

The ITRC is very fortunate to be part of the new "Teaching Support Centre", in The D.B. Weldon Library. Combining the instructional technology support with the support for teaching will definitely create a valuable resource facility for faculty at Western.

Shortly after the Teaching Support Centre moved to their new location the ITRC staff began to work in the Centre. In addition to the ITRC's facilities located in Room 118 of the Natural Sciences Centre, the ITRC has two workstations (PC and MAC) and a scanner located in the open area of the Teaching Support Centre. Either location can be reached by calling the ITRC at ext. 85513. Faculty are encouraged to drop by either of the ITRC's location and explore the various ways in which technology may be used in an instructional setting.

For more information, contact Diane Goldstein, Coordinator, at ext. 86028 or dianeg@uwo.ca.

STLHE 2004

University of Ottawa
Ottawa, Ontario

June 17 - 19, 2004

Sponsored by the
Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education and Teaching and Learning Support Service, University of Ottawa

www.uottawa.ca/services/tlss/stlhe2004

Teaching Support Centre

presents

Spring Perspectives on Teaching

May 6 & 7, 2004
Room 3345, Somerville House

Featured Speakers

Gary Poole, Director, Centre for Teaching and Academic Growth, University of British Columbia
"Making Decisions About Teaching Based on How People Learn"

Greg Moran, Provost and Vice-President (Academic), UWO
"A Twenty-first Century Balancing Act: The Future of Higher Education in Canada"

Tom Stavraky, Physiology & Pharmacology, UWO;
2003 Winner of Fellowship in Teaching Innovation
"What You Can Do With a Great Imagination and Web Technology: Interactive web-based animations for online teaching"

Ted Hewitt, Associate Vice-President (Research & International Relations) and **Kathleen Kevany**, Director, Centre for New Students, UWO
"Opportunities and Imperatives for the Internationalization of Teaching and Research in Higher Education"

The conference will also feature sessions on the following topics:

- managing e-mail
- current grading practices
- information literacy
- blended learning
- instructional web design
- increased cohort in retrospect
- knowledge translation and higher order reasoning

Join us for the Grand Opening of the Teaching Support Centre
May 6th at 12:00 noon
The D.B. Weldon Library

For conference details and to register online, visit
www.uwo.ca/tsc

Teaching Support Centre

presents

Construction Season: Workshop on Course Design and Renovation

May 18 & 20, 2004

Purpose: The purpose of the two-day workshop is to facilitate the design or redesign of a course that you will be teaching in the upcoming year. At the end of the workshop you should have completed your course syllabus.

Topics:

- Course and Instructional Objectives/Goals
- Universal Design for Course Construction
- Structuring an Effective Course
- Selecting Learning Activities
- Information Literacy Standards
- Team Teaching and Interdisciplinary Course Planning
- Preparing an Effective Course Syllabus
- Setting Course Policies
- Text Selection and Use of Course Packs
- Blended Learning: Using the web to enhance face-to-face instruction
- Matching Objectives to Assessment
- Assessment Standards

Limited Enrolment: Enrolment in the workshop will be limited to 15 faculty members so that the course goals and topics can be tailored to the needs of the participants.

Course Instructors: Debra Dawson (Director), Mike Atkinson (Faculty Associate), Matt Wannan (Instructional Designer) and Tom Adam (Information Literacy Coordinator)

Location: Teaching Support Centre, Room 122, The D.B. Weldon Library

Registration: Phone ext. 84622 or e-mail: tsc@uwo.ca by April 30, 2004.

Upcoming TSC Events

Spring Perspectives on Teaching
May 6 & 7, 2004

A two-day conference on teaching and learning for faculty, teaching assistants, and staff.
Keynote Speaker: Dr. Gary Poole
University of British Columbia

Course Design & Renovation Workshop
May 18 & 20, 2004

A two-day workshop on designing or revising a course syllabus.

Teaching at the University Level
August 16 - 20, 2004

An intensive course for new faculty members and those with only a few years of teaching experience to develop their teaching talents and gain experience with a variety of teaching methods.

New Faculty Orientation
August 31, 2004

A day of information seminars and teaching tips to aid new faculty members at Western.

Fall Perspectives on Teaching
September 2, 2004

A day of workshops and seminars dealing with topics relating to university teaching and learning.

Graduate Student Conference on Teaching (TA Day)
September 8, 2004

A day of workshops for graduate student teaching assistants and laboratory instructors.

For more information, contact the Teaching Support Centre
661-2111, ext. 84622
tsc@uwo.ca

Reflections ***The* University *of* Western Ontario** **April 2004** **Number 51**

Reflections is the newsletter of the Teaching Support Centre, The D.B. Weldon Library, Room 122, The University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario N6A 3K7. Telephone: **519-661-2111, ext. 84622**; Fax: **519-661-3076**; Web site: **http://www.uwo.ca/tsc**