A Community of Teaching & Learning on Campus: Notes from CTE’s Fall Workshop Series

One of CTE’s fundamental missions is to provide UM educators a regular forum in which they work toward improved teaching and learning. CTE’s ongoing Teaching & Learning series demonstrates the campus-wide benefit of working toward that goal. At workshops and invited lectures, teachers from a broad array of departments and programs participate in productive discussions of undergraduate student learning. This fall, several scholar-teachers have enriched the community of educators at Maryland by leading valuable workshops. Workshops have been facilitated by Geraldine Foudy, of the University Libraries, invited speaker Anita Salem, from the Department of Mathematics at Rockhurst University, Janet Coffey, of the College of Education, Allison Druin, of the College of Information Studies, Timothy Helwig, of the Department of English, and Robert Dooling, Associate Vice President for Research VPRGS-VP & Dean for Research & Graduate Studies.

In her “Turning Students into Research Scholars: Using Library Resources,” Foudy argued that, too often, research is a skill we assume our students have developed. Faculty forget the wide gap between undergraduates’ understanding of a discipline and the discourse of its practitioners.

“Workshop Series...” continued on page 8

In This Issue:
- Director’s Notes, by Spencer Benson .. 2
- The Stakes in Your Classroom ............ 3
- How To Be A Great Teacher Without Being An Orator ................................. 4
- U ID Replaces Students’ SSNs .......... 5
- Editor’s Note .................................. 5
- Graduate Programs Report ............ 6
Finding Time for Food and Reflection

Like many of you, I find it difficult to believe that November is here and that the semester is rapidly moving into its final stretch. In only a few weeks Thanksgiving will be upon us, and once we return from the Thanksgiving holiday break we’ll face the usual onslaught of papers, projects, and other academic products to grade as we begin to think about final exams. Many of us have been so busy keeping up with the daily work of the semester that we have not had time to reflect on our teaching.

Before you get too busy with the semester’s conclusion, now might be a good time to meet a colleague for lunch or happy hour to talk about teaching. Discuss the things that are working in your course and seek advice on things that don’t seem to be going well. This simple exercise in formative assessment may help you when you begin to think about next semester’s courses.

Last week I attended the inaugural conference of the International Society for Scholarship in Teaching and Learning (ISSOTL) and was struck by the quality of the presentations on teaching and student learning. I asked numerous presenters how they had arrived at such good work in teaching, and they answered in two ways. “I tried a lot of things and these are the ones that worked” and “I had help from a colleague who I talked with a lot about this project.”

Spending a few minutes in conversation with a colleague will almost certainly help you to be more effective next semester.

As a researcher, I always talk about experiments as they unfold; as a teacher I have learned the same approach helps me become a better, more efficient teacher. Remember to reflect on current teaching as you plan for the next semester; we hope that you will review some of the pieces in this issue of Teaching & Learning News as you begin putting together spring semester courses. In the meantime, treat yourself to lunch with a colleague and talk about this semester’s successes and challenges. Enjoy your lunch!

By Spencer Benson
Director of CTE

Teachers who talk with other teachers about teaching become better teachers.

Want to improve your teaching?

WORK WITH A CTE FACULTY TEACHING CONSULTANT!

The Faculty Teaching Consultation Division is designed to help provide support for campus instructors who would like to improve their teaching. Teachers work one-on-one with a Faculty Teaching Consultant, based on their own goals. The requesting teacher determines the issues to be explored, and the consultant provides an outside perspective, peer support for a plan of action, and suggestions for additional resources.

Any faculty member who teaches for the University of Maryland at College Park can request a teaching consultation, and they are completely confidential. For more information, contact the Center for Teaching Excellence at 301-405-9356 or via email cte@umd.edu.
The Stakes in Your Classroom

Not sure how the First Year Book, Shibley Telhami’s The Stakes, fits in your course? Looking for ways to implement it in a spring syllabus? Visit the First Year Book website for a broad catalogue of resources and suggestions for making The Stakes an effective part of your course now and as you plan for the spring.

http://www.firstyearbook.umd.edu/stakes/index.html

A Note from the Director of the First Year Book Program

Each of the last eleven academic years, the Office of Undergraduate Studies has welcomed new students to campus with a copy of the First Year Book. Carefully selected by a diverse group of students, faculty, and staff, the First Year Book (FYB) program provides a shared intellectual experience for all freshmen with the opportunity to discuss the book from a variety of disciplines.

We are pleased to present all new students with a copy of The Stakes, by Shibley Telhami, the Sadat Chair for Peace and Development at the University of Maryland and a senior fellow at the Saban Center at the Brookings Institute. Dr. Telhami challenges his readers to explore the complex issues of US foreign policy in the Middle East and its impact on the rest of the world.

The FYB program is also about community. As new students enter the University, what are their expectations of others with whom they share classes, interests, and the pursuit of higher education? How is this related to the local, national, or global communities in which we live? And as our future leaders of tomorrow, what roles can students play in the development of peace in our world?

Lisa Kiely, Assistant Dean for Undergraduate Studies
How To Be A Great Teacher Without Being An Orator

Bill Destler, Senior Vice-President of Academic Affairs and Provost

1. Go over the material to be covered before each class/lab, and rehearse your presentation. Don’t use notes. Understand the material yourself before you try to teach it.

2. Hand out a course syllabus at the first class, and follow it.

3. Remember everything your professors did that you didn’t like when you were an undergraduate, and don’t do those things.

4. Start each class with a brief review of what was covered in the last class.

5. Return all homework, lab reports, and exams the very next class. Make yourself available to students who want to discuss your grading of their exam/assignment/lab report. If you make a mistake grading an exam/assignment/lab report, correct your mistake.

6. Treat every question as a good question, no matter how bad you might think the question really is.

7. Make the material easier, not harder for your students. Education is not a rite of passage – the goal is knowledge transfer and intellectual growth.

8. Don’t assign more homework than is necessary to convey the material.

9. Don’t assume that your class is the only one your students are taking.

10. At your first class, state clearly the method by which grades will be determined. Do not change this method later in the semester.

11. Don’t try to trick your students on exams or homework assignments.

12. Make sure your exams allow all students to show how much they have learned. Consider questions with multiple parts that start easy and get harder. Give partial credit.

13. Never turn a student away from your door, even if they come outside of stated office hours.

14. Be just in your grading. Students who do better should get better grades.

15. Use the same notation, terms, etc., as are used in the textbook or reading assignments. Be consistent.

16. Consider handing out and reviewing examples of previous exams prior to each exam. Similarly, consider providing examples of excellent lab reports at the beginning of lab courses.

17. Do not use problems from previous exams on your exams. Take the time to write original questions and problems.

18. Make eye contact with your students as you teach – you will be able to tell whether they understand you from the looks on their faces.

19. Come to class on time and end class on time. Stay a few minutes at the end of each class to answer questions, address concerns, etc.

20. Identify those students who are having trouble with your class/lab early in the semester and meet with them individually to address these problems. Offer to give them extra problems/assignments if appropriate.

21. Take pride in how many students do well in your course, not in how many do poorly.

22. Get to know your students, but don’t encourage personal relationships with them. Remember that you are in a position of authority over them, and any personal overtures to them on your part could be misinterpreted.

23. Have fun!
**Editor’s Note**

*Teaching & Learning News* belongs to the educators of undergraduates at the University of Maryland. It operates as one voice in a large chorus of teaching newsletters whose goal is to develop undergraduate learning and to recognize effective teaching.

You may notice that this issue of *TLN* places its emphasis on issues that are specific to this campus, and that its articles are all produced by members of the University of Maryland community. While we will continue to address matters of interest to faculty and graduate teaching assistants at all sorts of colleges and universities, we serve as this campus’ only regular medium devoted exclusively to matters of undergraduate teaching. As such, we are making an effort to do the following:

- Publish articles on teaching and learning by campus faculty and administrators
- Address issues that affect teaching and learning at the University of Maryland
- Offer suggestions for ways to improve teaching and learning that work on this campus
- Provide regular reminders of events, meetings, lectures, and workshops available to local teachers

This should not diminish the value of *TLN* for our off-campus readers. It is more than evident that teaching and learning on this campus takes place in an international community of undergraduate education, and, just as we benefit from reading deeply in the broad literature of that community, our discussion of teaching at the University of Maryland may help to enhance teaching elsewhere.

This issue’s cover story on the fall Teaching & Learning Series summarizes a few of the constructive discussions about teaching available on campus. Our overview of Graduate Teaching Programs is a timely reminder of the impressive work done by University of Maryland graduate students, whose contributions to undergraduate education are significant. Provost Bill Destler’s (reprinted) suggestions for improved teaching propose a number of ways to make classrooms more effective immediately. Our reminders about First Year Book resources and about the transition away from student Social Security Numbers as identifiers are there to keep our readers abreast of matters that affect their students today.

We invite contributions from those who teach on this campus. Write to us or propose an article on ways to improve undergraduate education at Maryland.

---

**Important Reminder from the Registrar - NO MORE SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBERS**

The University is piloting several new measures that will replace the use of Student ID numbers (Social Security numbers) with new nine-digit computer generated U ID numbers. Beginning this fall, these new U ID numbers will replace social security numbers on your UMEG/WebCT class rosters and grading lists. In addition, students will need to use their U ID number on any scantron answer sheets.

Students can easily obtain their U ID number by logging into Testudo and viewing their class schedule (www.testudo.umd.edu). These numbers are also displayed on the front of any student photo ID cards printed since June 2003.

Additional information about our efforts to limit the use of Social Security numbers is available at: www.oit.umd.edu/units/dataadmin/PersonalIdentification/. Thank you in advance for your assistance in protecting the privacy of our student’s information and for your patience as the University transitions away from the use of Social Security numbers.

David Robb, Registrar
The University Teaching and Learning Program (UTLP) is an elite cohort of graduate teaching assistants who come together informally to discuss aspects of teaching and learning, engage in mentoring relationships, and create their teaching portfolios. UTLPers have a common commitment to improving undergraduate education and an eagerness to make their classes the best that they can be.

In May, the following UTLPers were recognized by their departments and the Center for Teaching Excellence as Distinguished Teaching Assistants: Michael Black (EECE), Ed Chang (ENGL), Danielle Harris (CRIM), and Kate Kuvalanka (FMST). Fewer than ten percent of all GTAs earn this distinction.

Timothy Helwig (ENGL), a UTLP graduate, edited the Freshman Writing Program’s new Mentors’ Manual. Each year the Freshman Writing Program places thirty-five new GTAs in the classroom; fortunately, these new GTAs have experienced peer mentors to help them transition into teaching. The Mentors’ Manual is a seventy-six page guide for those mentors. Current UTLPers Dave Eubanks, Magdelyn Hammond, and Matt Hill each wrote sections of the Mentors’ Manual. The manual’s first printing was in September.

Current UTLPers and UTLP graduates played integral roles in this fall’s Graduate Teaching Assistant Orientation. Ed Chang (ENGL), Seth Coleman (BIOL and PSYCH), Robin Hill (BIOL), and Joshua Woodfork (AMST) sat on the Experienced TA Panel. Robin facilitated a workshop, “Staying Sane as a GTA,” with the Ombuds-woman and a senior counselor for the Counseling Center. Joshua worked with Counseling Center staff to present the workshop “Support Services and Shoemaker.” Ed teamed up with Cynthia Shaw (PSYC) and other GTAs to offer “Classroom Management Q and A.” Dave Eubanks (ENGL) offered his own workshop: “Grading Writing Across Disciplines.” Last but not least, Michael Black (EECE) led “Teaching Strategies for Engineering GTAs” with a fellow GA from EECE and the department’s Graduate Director.

Save the Date

New Graduate Teaching Assistant Orientation will be held on Tuesday, January 25 from 9:00-12:00 in room 0100 Marie Mount Hall (the Maryland Room). First-time graduate teaching assistants are encouraged to register for Orientation online at www.cte.umd.edu.

If you have questions about Orientation, please contact Peggy Jerome Stuart at mjstuart@umd.edu.
Thanks to all Panelists and Workshop Leaders

Philbert Aaron, Department of Education Policy and Leadership
Yuda Anriany, Cell Biology and Molecular Genetics
Sanem Argin, Nutrition and Food Science
Daniello Balon, Electrical and Computer Engineering
Michael Black, Electrical and Computer Engineering
Roger Candelaria, Office of Human Relations Program
Edmond Y. Chang, Department of English
Seth W. Coleman, Departments of Biology and Psychology
Christine Clark, Office of Human Relations Program
Joanne Desiato, Ombudsperson
Geraldine Foudy, Libraries
Amy M. Ginther, Office of Information Technology
Barbara Goldberg, Counseling Center
James Greenberg, College of Education
William H. Higgins, Department of Biology
Robin L. Hill, Department of Biology
Katherine Kuvalanka, Family Studies
Pam Lanford, Biological Sciences Program
Martin Lo, Nutrition and Food Science
Joseph Mahan, Kinesiology
Deborah J. Mateik, Office of Information Technology
Kathy McAdams, College of Journalism
John W. Merck, Jr., Earth, Life and Time
Daniel Newsome, Adaptive Technologies Lab
Sheri L. Parks, Department of American Studies
Phyllis Peres, Undergraduate Studies
David Peterson, Counseling Center
Pepper Phillips, Counseling Center
Paulette J. Robinson, Office of Information Technology
Eden Segal, Education Policy and Leadership
Patricia Shields, Cell Biology and Molecular Genetics
Pam Splaine, Education Policy and Leadership
Sivagami Subbaraman, Office of Human Relations Program
Johannes Thorsteinson, Electrical and Computer Engineering
Lois Vietri, Government and Politics
Joshua Woodfork, Department of American Studies
John Zacker, Judicial Programs
To counter the confusing assignments that regularly fail to bridge that divide, Foudy encourages teachers to make guided research part of extended assignments and to take the time to teach students about the methods and expectations of the discipline as they complete their own research. The libraries make that approach easier with a number of resources, including primary source holdings, subject librarians, and course-specific web pages. If we recognize the important role of research in student critical thinking, and use research assignments to develop that critical thinking, we go a long way toward better teaching and learning. See [http://www.lib.umd.edu/MCK/scholars.pdf](http://www.lib.umd.edu/MCK/scholars.pdf) for more specific material from Foudy’s workshop.

Salem’s talk, “Making Student Thinking Visible: A Close Reading of Online Conversations,” reviewed her study, co-Directed with Rockhurst’s Renee Michael (Psychology), of student learning in mathematics. Salem had her calculus students participate in a threaded electronic discussion of three problems over the course of one semester. Each of the three sought to test students’ ability to apply conceptual knowledge as they solved problems without the learned skills of mathematics. Salem’s goal was to study the difficulty students have as they apply a discipline’s discrete concepts to a variety of problems. The result is an intriguing chronological archive of students collectively working toward a solution. Details and examples are available at [http://www.cte.umd.edu/teaching/workshop presentations/Calculus Conversations.ppt](http://www.cte.umd.edu/teaching/workshop presentations/Calculus Conversations.ppt).

Coffey and Druin led a workshop on understanding student learning and applying that understanding to improve teaching. Coffey’s discussion, “Using Assessment to Facilitate and Support Student Learning,” introduced some of the contemporary literature on assessment and encouraged attendees to reflect on ways to incorporate assessment in learning. As she reminded us, formative assessment (the measures of learning that take place during and facilitate learning) is often as important as evaluative assessment (the sort of measures that generally take place at the end of the semester). Notes from Coffey’s workshop can be found at [http://www.cte.umd.edu/teaching/workshop presentations/Coffey.ppt](http://www.cte.umd.edu/teaching/workshop presentations/Coffey.ppt). Druin’s provocative workshop had participants collaborate in small groups to evaluate toys. This exercise effectively modeled an approach in which teachers put students in the dark with potentially disorienting problems and require collaborative problem solving. Both workshop leaders posited that successful student learning depends on much more than lectures, quizzes, and exams.

Dooling and Helwig offered a thoughtful discussion of ways to mentor graduate students as they become colleagues in the disciplines and in the classroom. Dooling suggested a number of criteria shared by good mentors and students, as well as ways to identify those criteria in both. Helwig presented his experience as a mentor trainer in the Freshman Writing Program and as the editor of that program’s Mentors’ Manual. Visit [http://cte.umd.edu/teaching/oct27.htm](http://cte.umd.edu/teaching/oct27.htm) for materials from the workshop, including Dooling’s traits of good mentoring and samples from Helwig’s experience as a mentor.

Upcoming Events in the Fall Teaching & Learning Series

“Teaching About Plagiarism: Whose Job Is It, Anyway?”
Diane Harvey, University Libraries
Tuesday, November 9th
2:00 - 3:30
Maryland Room, Marie Mount Hall

CTE Invited Lecture
T. Mills Kelly, History
George Mason University
“Taking the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Beyond the Classroom”
Friday, November 19th
2:00 - 3:30
Maryland Room, Marie Mount Hall

“Integrating Cultural Awareness in Your Course”
Shenglin Chang, Department of Natural Resource Sciences & Landscape Architecture
Shirley Logan, Department of English
Friday, December 3rd
2:00 - 3:30
Maryland Room, Marie Mount Hall

[http://cte.umd.edu/teaching/workshopseries.html](http://cte.umd.edu/teaching/workshopseries.html)
UNIV 798:
Introduction to University Teaching
Spring 2005

This one-credit seminar course will look at current topics and thinking in teaching and learning at the university level, and is applicable in a variety of disciplines. The format of the course will be student-led discussions based around weekly assigned readings. Dr. Spencer Benson, Director of the University’s Center for Teaching Excellence will facilitate the class. The class will meet 7:00-9:00 PM on Wednesdays. Enrollment is limited to 10 students.

Teaching & Learning: Calendar of Events for November & December

November
9 Tuesday 2:00 CTE Workshop: “Teaching About Plagiarism: Whose Job Is It, Anyway?”
9 Tuesday 7:00 College Park Scholars Series: Ruth Fassinger - “Every Dream You Have Is Possible: Career Journeys of 100 Women Who Changed Our World”
11 Thursday 4:00 Distinguished Scholar-Teacher: Michael Fu - “Simulation from Monte Carlo to College Park: A Random Sampling”
18 Thursday 4:00 Distinguished Scholar-Teacher: Jackson Bryer - “Reading Other People’s Mail: The Pleasures and Frustrations of Editing Correspondence”
19 Friday 2:00 CTE Invited Speaker: T. Mills Kelly, George Mason University - “Taking the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Beyond the Classroom”

December
3 Friday 2:00 CTE Workshop: “Integrating Cultural Awareness in Your Course”
7 Tuesday 7:00 College Park Scholars Series: Kalyani Chadha - “Imitating India: Bollywood Films and the Diasporic Imagination”