By Julie Lyon, Assistant Professor of Business, Roanoke College, and UTLP Graduate

I attended a few CTE workshops prior to teaching my first course as a graduate student in the Psychology Department at the University of Maryland. These early workshops gave me some needed confidence to prepare for my first solo teaching assignment: teaching Industrial/Organizational Psychology to 90+ undergraduate psychology majors. As I began attending more workshops, I heard of a new graduate course, Teaching in Psychology, and subsequently enrolled. In this course, I learned that I had already completed more than half of the requirements for earning a citation on my transcript through a program called the University Teaching and Learning Program (UTLP). CTE asked me to share some of my UTLP experiences with you and to describe how it impacted my career in academia.

UTLP Changed My Approach to Teaching

UTLP was one of the best experiences I had as a graduate student at the University of Maryland. UTLP helped me to efficiently prepare for my teaching assignments (while keeping my research as the number one priority) by helping me to find my own teaching style. I came to realize that I did not have to use the same techniques as others—I needed to

“UTLP was one of the best experiences I had as a graduate student at the University of Maryland.”

“UTLP Reflections” continued on page 10
Charting a New Course for General Education

By Spencer Benson, Director of CTE

Some of the many important conversations that are occurring on campus are conversations about CORE or general education (GE). Our current general education or CORE requirement is nearly two decades old and to a large degree based on “Promises to Keep” AKA the 1987 Pease report ( http://www.inform.umd.edu/CampusInfo/Reports/pease) on general education. CORE was approved by the campus senate in 1998 and went into effect in May of 1990. It represented the campus’s continuing evolution in recognizing the importance of high quality undergraduate education. While CORE has served the campus for many years it is clear that it no longer meets the needs of today’s students and students view CORE as a set if hurdles, hoops or distractions that get in the way of their “real education” i.e. the major. In the words of my respected colleagues, “CORE is broken”. Whether one agrees that the present system of CORE is or is not broken it is clearly time to step back and rethink the purposes of general education in the 21st century and what general education can and needs to accomplish in a large research institution.

As I listen to and participate in conversations about general education I am struck by the elevated level of passion in the faculty conversations. Perhaps this passion stems from the fact all of us experienced “general education” during the formative intellectual period of our undergraduate experience. Certainly my general education requirements contained aspects not generally present in our CORE program e.g. a two semester physical education requirement, a foreign language requirement. In truth I can barely remember what the other requirements were, or the classes I took to fulfill them much less how they impacted or shaped my educational journey or professional path. As students we experienced general education requirements (good and bad) at a variety of institution types and these experiences color what we

“General Education” continued on page 7

Try Clickers for a Day

Are you interested in the student response devices known as clickers? CTE has a loaner program. You can borrow a set of radio frequency (RF) clickers and a laptop equipped with the RF receiver which makes any classroom with an LCD projector a clicker classroom.

For more information about classroom response technology, visit http://www.clickers.umd.edu, see the November-December 2005 issue of Teaching & Learning News, or contact CTE at cte@umd.edu.
Campus Colleagues – Librarians and Faculty Onward Together!

by Lily Griner and Susan White

Campus Colleagues – Benefits of Librarian and Faculty Collaboration. This is the core of a presentation by Librarian Lily Griner and Finance faculty Susan White to be given at the Lilly-East Conference on College and University Teaching at the University of Delaware this April.

Research assignments can be frustrating to students, librarians and faculty. Students find them frustrating because they’re not sure what topic to select and how to go about collecting the often specified number and type of sources. Librarians are frustrated because the students just want to find the sources, without learning or thinking about research strategy. Faculty can be frustrated by the results.

Lily and Sue have been collaborating on class projects for several years, with both benefiting from the partnership. Sue teaches BMGT 340, Business Finance, required for all business majors and Advanced Corporate Finance (BMGT 440 for undergraduates and BUFN 758B for MBAs). She has developed projects for both courses, which require library resources. Using resources in the library, and VBIC (Virtual Business Information Center) in particular, Lily and Sue have collaborated to develop classes and exercises that instruct the student in using research resources to solve project problems.

The goals of their session at Lilly-East include: discussing the benefits of partnerships between librarians and faculty, exchanging views on educational goals for course-related research assignments, and outlining the characteristics of effective assignments.

“Research assignments can be frustrating to students, librarians and faculty.”

Mini Case: A Library and Business School Information Partnership

Sue and Lily had been colleagues for a couple of years when they first started working together to provide information services to Sue’s students. Sue teaches Business Finance, a large lecture class – 500 students split into two sections of 250 students. The class meets for lecture twice a week, and then students meet with teaching assistants for 50 minute Friday sessions with an MBA student.

Sue’s students are divided into groups in their Friday sessions. Each group is assigned a large, public company for their group project, due at the end of the semester. The project requires students to perform an industry and economic analysis, finding out how their company is poised to take advantage of – or not – expected economic conditions. Then, they perform a financial statement analysis and ratio analysis for their company – how has their company been performing over time? What are their strengths and weaknesses? And, finally, using original sources, they must calculate the cost of equity for their company, following the methods outlined in their textbook.

In partnership with the business school, the library has a database of data bases called VBIC, Virtual Business Information Center. While having all of that information easily available, both from any university computer and from students’ home computers, is wonderful, one could argue that there is so much information, that it is sometimes hard for students to find exactly the piece of information that they need. To address this need, Lily and Sue have met multiple times, dissecting the project into its component parts, while Lily has researched the best data bases from which to obtain this information. Lily developed a series of exercises for the students – data hunts that will help them seek and find some of the many pieces of information they will need for their semester-long projects. Sue’s 12 sections, with 35-40 students per section, go to the library during one of their regularly-scheduled 50 minute Friday sessions.

Now that Lily and Sue have addressed the basics – what information is needed and where to get it – they are working on some of the more subtle problems that have cropped up with their partnership.
Bring Your Class to Life with Wimba Live Classroom

by Jun Yang, Instructional Designer, OIT

Building a robust and dynamic learning community is an increasingly desirable objective in education. Now, with Wimba Live Classroom, faculty can easily teach live online, build an interactive learning community, and conduct online office hours right inside their ELMS (powered by Blackboard) course spaces.

Wimba Live Classroom is a real-time virtual classroom environment designed for distance education and collaboration. This fully-featured live classroom supports audio, video, application sharing, content display, and whiteboarding. It enables instructors to achieve a high level of interaction with their online students. Faculty can use this environment to make webcasts and hold live online classes, office hours, guest lectures, and meetings.

The Office of Information Technology (OIT) promotes Wimba Live Classroom to all University faculty through Wimba training workshops and monthly brownbag discussion meetings. Beginning this semester, students are also using the power of Wimba Live Classroom to meet with their classmates in the newly-released Virtual Study Space, an online gathering place where they can work on group projects or conduct group meetings and research. Students can access the Virtual Study Space via the MyUM portal or via the ELMS home page (http://elms.umd.edu) under “My Organizations.” The support site for students using Wimba Live Classroom is www.otal.umd.edu/wimba/wimba_students/index.html

Since OIT installed the Wimba building block inside ELMS one year ago and began its efforts to raise awareness about Wimba Live Classroom, more and more faculty members have begun to adopt this tool. Many faculty members feel that it is revolutionary. Dr. Helene Cohen, an early adopter of the tool, has enthusiastically embraced the technology and uses it to build interactive learning communities in her classes.

Dr. Cohen, a visiting assistant professor in the College of Education, has been using Wimba Live Classroom to conduct online presentations and meetings with her EDHI students. Dr. Cohen testified about Live Classroom from the student’s perspective, “Students often approach the experience with scepticism and even anxiety. However, they are quickly won over by the easy, intuitive, user-friendly platform.” One big plus of Wimba Live Classroom is its ease of use. One hour’s training will ensure effective use of this tool. A brief orientation from the instructor will also put the students at ease with Live Classroom. Faculty and students don’t need to install any software on their computers. The tool can be accessed right inside the ELMS course space.

Dr. Cohen continued to attest that “Wimba Live Classroom enhances learning outcomes in a virtual learning environment.”

“Wimba” continued on page 5....
which has interactivity, flexibility, and high-level participation.” Her students describe the online classroom made possible by Live Classroom as “adventuresome, meaningful, and challenging.” They especially appreciate the comprehensive nature of the experience. “I do enjoy multi-tasking. Being able to communicate in so many different ways was fascinating,” enthused one student. “The chat function allowed us to have multiple collective conversations going on that we would not have been able to have in a traditional classroom.” Instead of the stiff, artificial conversations they had anticipated, students were rewarded with conversations that were surprisingly rich and meaningful. “We can listen and talk to each other, have the instructor’s immediate feedback, express emotions and share Web sites and desktop applications.” “I would argue that our classmates were even more engaged and ‘present’ than in our normal setting.”

Students enjoy speculating about the impact and possibilities inherent in the medium. They are especially intrigued by the option of bringing together remote users, “This is a perfect vehicle to provide a more immediate form of connection between stakeholders that cannot meet together physically,” suggests Cohen. Wimba Live Classroom also extends students’ personal reach, “I feel like I am a bigger part of the world now,” said one student.

According to Dr. Cohen, “In general, students experience the online classroom as ‘fun and dynamic,’ a ‘delightful change to traditional learning.’” One student said, “The experience has opened up other avenues for me to explore.”

Dr. Cohen has also tested the just-released Version 5 of Wimba Live Classroom. One new feature in Live Classroom 5.0, “Follow the Speaker,” uses voice detection to achieve an automatic switch to the video display of the current speaker as a conversation progresses. Expanded phone conferencing capability is another new feature that enables participants to call in without the use of a computer.

For more information about Wimba Live Classroom, including training materials and support contact information, visit www.otal.umd.edu/wimba/wimbatraining/home.html.
Teaching Ethnographic Interviewing in the Online Classroom: An Oxymoron?

by Kirsten Crase, Graduate Teaching Assistant in American Studies

With online education constituting an increasingly significant component of college-level teaching, explorations of the differences between the virtual and face-to-face classroom are becoming ever more common, and ever more necessary. Scholars of all stripes have in recent years weighed in on the debate over the merits of online education, discussing everything from student-teacher relations to the quality of classroom discussions to the ability of students to retain information learned in this environment. When beginning my first foray into online teaching this past January, I was eager to explore how the online venue differed from the physical one in all of the abovementioned ways, but perhaps most of all, I was eager to learn how the online nature of the class would impact my ability to teach—and my students’ ability to learn—ethnography, a practice that I commonly introduce and teach in my undergraduate American Studies courses.

What does it mean to teach an oral communication technique—ethnographic interviewing—in an online classroom? How does teaching ethnographic interviewing virtually differ from teaching it in a face-to-face classroom? Are there advantages to teaching ethnography virtually? These are the questions I set out to explore this past winter-term as part of teaching in an online format the introductory-level American Studies 207: Contemporary American Cultures.

In setting up this course, many of my standard practices for teaching ethnography remained the same. The concept of ethnography was featured prominently in the course syllabus, it served as the subject of an early unit in the class in which students read ethnographic texts, ethnography exercises were assigned to give the students practice with ethnographic techniques, and the two major writing assignments for the course involved ethnographic interviewing and writing. Beyond this basic framework, however, a number of my teaching practices differed from the face-to-face classroom.

Since undergraduate students are often unfamiliar with ethnography as a concept, I generally introduce it in the face-to-face classroom by having students brainstorm ideas about what ethnography is and what it entails.

They thus have the opportunity to play with the concept a bit and let it marinate before being introduced to texts on ethnography and to actual written ethnographies. This was not possible in the online classroom, partly because I did not teach my class in real time, but more importantly because in the online venue there is no choice but to introduce a concept textually rather than by means of a freewheeling face-to-face discussion. Thus, I sought to take advantage of the preeminence of text in the online classroom, and...
"General Education" continued from page 2

think general education should be. While there is wisdom and value in reflecting on our own GE experiences, the nature of the world and even how people learn has changed in the decades that have passed since we were undergraduates. While I personally love the idea of every student taking a great books seminar, learning a foreign (second) language, engaging in an authentic research experience, being civically engaged, having a broad knowledge base, appreciating the arts, being able to effectively communicate and being quantitatively literate, this does not mean that these traditional GE components have to be our GE components. A simple reality check brings up an old adage “so much -- so little time”. While it is possible to impose a GE system that would encompass all of these laudable components, would it be a system that serves the need of our students? Or would the result be that, like me, our students will not remember what courses they took when they are mid-career professional 20 years from now? In truth, as faculty we love to learn and so this type of general education has tremendous appeal, but … our students are not us ….

When I do the hard work of looking for principles first, general education distils down to two essentials: a set of essential competencies and the ability to self-learn (self-teach). What I mean by essential competencies is the ability to communicate effectively through writing, presentations and emerging media; the ability to understand, use and appreciate the everyday mathematical aspects of the world we live in; and technology literacy or fluency, e.g. the ability to navigate and use the technology that is increasingly part of everything we do, from email to internet usage, to Web 2.0 social networks to virtual realities. The current CORE fundamental studies requirement addresses writing and math literacy, and technology literacy is embedded throughout the curriculum in a variety of ways, e.g. ELMS usage, digital presentation projects, discussion boards, etc. Ensuring that the next set of GE requirements meets the needs of our current and future students will require some modifications to our current fundamental studies, although the changes are likely to be more operational then changes in the underlying goals.

The idea that GE should enable students to become knowledgeable self-learners is different to the current goals of CORE’s distribute, diversity and advance studies requirements. Currently, CORE requires students to have classes in the sciences, humanities and the social sciences, a human diversity course, and two upper-level courses outside their major, one of which can be substituted by a capstone course in the major. For detail on the current CORE requirements see the CORE website. The purpose is to provide students with intellectual breadth and help in choosing a major. While these are important and relevant goals, the truth is that they are seldom met. To a large degree students choose CORE courses to get them out of the way and the primary consideration is most often when the class is offered or how easy it is perceived to be rather then the subject matter.

"In truth, as faculty we love to learn and so this type of general education has tremendous appeal, but … our students are not us ….”

"To a large degree students choose CORE courses to get them out of the way and the primary consideration is most often when the class is offered or how easy it is perceived to be rather then the subject matter."
it is perceived to be rather then the subject matter. Once in the course often it is the teacher or the pedagogy that turned students on or off to subject. In math and science it is well documented that we lose or alienate many students who might have gone on to careers in math or science because of teaching environments, as shown by the work of Shelia Tobias, e.g. _They’re not Dumb, They’re Different_ and others. While I believe and cherish the idea of GE being a part of a liberal education if GE requirements mainly serve to disenfranchise student from various discipline domains then the idea of forcing students to be exposed to each of our own cherished discipline domains may in the end be unwise.

Ultimately career success is determined not only by what we know, but how effective we are in learning and adapting to new environments and topics. General education needs to focus on helping students to learn how to learn in areas outside their major. The 2020 perspective component in the current draft general education proposal provides a vehicle which could accomplish the goal of helping students learn how to learn. The 2020 perspective courses will focus on current topic(s) and modes of thinking related to broad societal issues. If constructed correctly these courses will be the types of course that students well seek out and want to take. The Marquee Courses and World Courses are and were pilots of this concept and in both cases enrollments in these courses were student driven and met expectations. Students engage and learn when the topic is of interest and relevance to their life. The 2020 perspective courses, if correctly chosen, will be of this ilk. Moving students from learning about a topic they care about to thinking about their own learning is not difficult. It does require the instructor to tweak her/his of pedagogy so that metacognition is an expected part of the course. CTE has various resources on this. When students are required to think about their own thinking/learning learning improves. By helping student understand and practice learning we enhance their learning and their capability for self-learning. Truly the goal of GE should be to produce effective and engaged lifelong learners. If we are successful in this, then we have equipped our graduates to explore and learn any discipline when the need and desire for that learning are present.

Lastly before returning to your thinking about what general education needs to be and to accomplish, watch “ _A Vision of Students Today_ ” from Professor Michael Wesch and his cultural anthropology students at Kansas State University. In the end GE is about students and learning not about disciplines and academic castles.

If you would like to comment on this article or express other views on GE we have set up a CTE-GE blog. Simply visit: [http://www.cte.umd.edu/teaching/newsletter/2007-08/April_May_HTML/SB_page2.htm](http://www.cte.umd.edu/teaching/newsletter/2007-08/April_May_HTML/SB_page2.htm).

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**Faculty Handbook of Policies & Resources**

- Can I reschedule a final exam?
- What are the University’s guidelines for attendance policies?
- In what cases I am required to submit early warning grades?
- What must be included in my course syllabi?
- Do I need approval to sell my own textbook to students taking my course?

This guide offers a brief introduction to the University’s policies, procedures, and resources related to teaching, advising and mentoring. It is available at the following address:

[http://www.faculty.umd.edu/teach/InstructionalGuide.htm](http://www.faculty.umd.edu/teach/InstructionalGuide.htm)
Interview with Janet Liechty
University of Maryland UTLP Alumna
by Janet Liechty Assistant Professor, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

TLN: Do you feel that your completion of the University Teaching and Learning Program assisted you in your successful job search, directly or indirectly?

JL: I was involved with CTE programs at various levels during all five years of my doctoral program and these experiences definitely helped me on the job search. It was clear from my CV that I not only had teaching experience, but that I took teaching seriously through Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) projects, completing the UTLP program, and the CTE award for Teaching Assistants.

Through UTLP, I also compiled a teaching portfolio, which required me to think about my teaching philosophy, summarize my teaching evaluations, and compile various products that demonstrated my commitment to teaching. All of this gave me confidence on the job market, and these initiatives were seen as very positive by my prospective colleagues.

TLN: How has your work through UTLP helped to prepare you for your current teaching position?

JL: I felt prepared to teach, and had amassed a fat tool box of teaching techniques and approaches for different learning styles and ways of making teaching creative and fun. I think new instructors and faculty members may focus too much on the quantity and rigor of their content, at the expense of thinking about how to most effectively deliver content, stimulate learning, and create experiences in the classroom where learning happens naturally. I was very fortunate to be given the opportunity to teach courses autonomously through my department. However, it was primarily through UTLP involvement and CTE resources and workshops that I gained skills in reflecting on my teaching, assessment, techniques and activities, understanding different pedagogical concepts and tools, and conducting SoTL studies.

“I...it was primarily through UTLP involvement and CTE resources and workshops that I gained skills in reflecting on my teaching, assessment, techniques and activities, understanding different pedagogical concepts and tools, and conducting SoTL studies.”

TLN: Do you feel your experiences with UTLP changed your approach to teaching in any way?

JL: UTLP required me to think about my teaching philosophy, and this process gave me the desire to bring my teaching approaches (delivery of content, classroom climate, structure of discussions, relationships with students, and even grading policies) into alignment with my vision of the purpose of education. I also learned about dozens of great practical tips that I could put to use right away, including using things like pair sharing, buzz groups, flip charts and dots, grading rubrics, one minute feedback forms, peer feedback tools, mind maps, teaching around the learning style circle, and use of intermittent rewards during class. However, it really is more than a long list of tricks. I learned principles that facilitate student engagement that I fall back on every day. These include principles like:

- Make the content relevant and meaningful.
- Elicit and build upon students’ prior knowledge.
- Change the pace about every half hour.
- Involve students as actively as possible.
- Learning happens spontaneously when you’re having fun; humor

“Interview” continued on page 14
find what I felt comfortable doing and then to expand my comfort level with additional stretch experiences. After teaching four classes as the sole instructor, I became a much more animated lecturer, I used large-class activities more effectively, and I learned to create (and efficiently grade) critical thinking papers that required students to do more than bubble in responses to multiple choice exams.

**UTLP Supported My Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Project with Grant Funding**

The best experience I had with UTLP came from CTE’s support for teaching innovation. They encouraged me to join with other graduate students in the Psychology Department to develop a grant proposal on teaching (a TA Development Grant). We were funded for Spring 2007 through Spring 2008 to conduct a needs assessment of graduate student teaching and to develop resources and workshops for the Psychology Department. We named our project ADOPT, or Advancing Department of Psychology Teaching. My co-principal investigators (Cynthia Shaw, Hillary Gettman, and Scott Roberts) and I, as well as several undergraduate research assistants (Tina Thomas, Justin Roudiez, and Anthony Mercaldo), have been working for the past year to support graduate student teaching within the Psychology Department. This semester, Dr. Marci Marinelli has been helping us by leading several teaching workshops. Additionally, we have created a teaching resources wiki at http://adopt.wetpaint.com. We plan to conduct a follow-up questionnaire to assess whether the climate for teaching in the Psychology Department has improved in the past year. We would like to present our work at one of the Lilly-East teaching conferences.

**UTLP Helped Me to Land a Good Job**

UTLP gave me a boost on the job market. I was applying for more teaching-oriented jobs, though my CV showed a strong research background. Having gone through the two-day CTE Teaching Portfolio Retreat, I had reflected on my teaching, and I received a lot of feedback from the CTE staff. Writing and talking about UTLP helped my interviewers see that I was excited about and committed to good teaching. I am currently an Assistant Professor of Business at Roanoke College, a small, liberal arts college. It’s the best decision I have ever made, and I am truly happy at my new college.

**UTLP Provided Personal Attention and Support**

If I had to identify the best part of my experience in UTLP, I would say the personal attention and support I received from CTE staff. CTE offered support, guidance, and feedback in improving my teaching at Maryland and helped me find a very satisfying career path. I only wish that the departments encouraged more graduate students to seek help and support from CTE. I would recommend the UTLP to any graduate student interested in pursuing a job in academia. Additionally, even if you do not plan on going to a teaching school, you can learn to be a more effective and efficient teacher if you take advantage of Maryland’s Center for Teaching Excellence and UTLP.

I would be happy to discuss my UTLP experiences with you. Please contact me at lyon@roanoke.edu.

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**University Teaching & Learning Program**

**Graduate students, boost your teaching, boost your CV – join the UTLP!**

What is the UTLP? CTE’s University Teaching and Learning Program (UTLP) assists graduate teaching assistants (GTAs) in professionalizing as college teachers by encouraging you to self-reflectively practise and document your teaching in writing.

You complete the program with a notation on your transcript and a teaching philosophy and portfolio in hand. Institutions of higher education nowadays require teaching portfolios and philosophies from applicants for academic jobs.

Please visit http://www.cte.umd.edu/UTLP for further information on UTLP and electronic application forms.
CourseEvalUM: Steps in the Right Direction, One Step at a Time
by Renee Snyder, Coordinator of Course Evaluations

Dubbed CourseEvalUM by student leaders promoting the project with Institutional Research, Planning and Assessment (IRPA), the Senate-requested online course evaluation system was launched in the fall. The data collection system, results reporting, and access authorization systems are being built and piloted this year and next. Students completed 63%—or about 84,000—of the approximately 135,000 course evaluations on campus last semester, a terrific initial response given the challenges experienced. Some colleges had over 70% of their evaluations completed, even when their in-house traditional system was still in place during the fall pilot.

The development of this project is very intense and is requiring lots of cooperation and support from the campus community as it is built and tested. Thank you for your patience and support! When all is completed, however, the final package should provide Maryland with a state of the art system tailor-made to meet the varying evaluation needs of the colleges on campus. Throughout winter break and January the OIT programmer with the project created and tested the reporting and access systems and they were tested further in IRPA. By early February, instructors, administrators and students had access to the various results reports online, depending on their system access. Once the system is fully developed, the results should be available once the UMGE online grade submission deadline passes for each term.

A number of years ago CTE-Lilly Fellows suggested an online course evaluation system to the University Senate, as did SGA student leaders. While the Fellows and the SGA had somewhat different reasons for wanting such a system, and its authorization was granted only after much Senate debate, the overall hope is to provide the campus with a consistent way of evaluating courses at the University level while at the same time providing flexibility among colleges and departments to include their own survey items and student access to limited results. It’s exciting that the system will be able to support a more uniform way of examining areas of strength and areas for improvement of teaching and learning but at the same time assist departments, colleges, and even instructors in knowing more local information about their courses and how they are meeting student needs. Students, instructors and administrators have expressed positive views of the results reports, while at the same time offering timely suggestions for improvements as the system is developed.

“CourseEvalUM” continued on page 15

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For more than fifteen years TLN has included articles, notes, and schedules to keep the campus informed about new technologies, available grants, fellowship notices, workshops and roundtables, distinguished lectures, assessment, learning outcomes, classroom management strategies, consultation programs, new conferences, established programs, award winners, grant recipients, University policies on teaching, and other valuable information for faculty and graduate teaching assistants. Most important, it always suggests ways to enhance teaching for better learning. Subscribing to the TLN listserv list takes about twenty seconds and means that you will receive approximately five emails a year, notifying you that a new issue of the only regular campus-wide publication on teaching and learning has arrived.
“Here is the syllabus,” said the director of the program that had just hired me to teach two undergraduate courses. “Good luck!”

From my conversations with other Graduate Teaching Assistants on this campus, this wasn’t an isolated occurrence; yet its frequency did not diminish my uneasiness. The syllabus I was to teach in the fall discussed heavy issues such as race, class, privilege, gender, sexuality, language, power and post colonialism – and though I had previously taught four discussion sections at the University of Maryland, this would be the first in which I was facilitating the discussion of such important and sensitive topics. As a student I have made sure to enroll in classes where these ideas were discussed, still, the idea of teaching them left me excited and a little apprehensive: I looked forward to the challenge, yet I didn’t feel that I was adequately prepared by my experience, or sufficiently supported by campus resources.

What to do? Thankfully, during a presentation at the Academic Achievement Program, for which I was an instructor last semester, Dave Eubanks from the Center for Teaching Excellence mentioned the University Teaching and Learning Program. I applied and attended the Graduate Teaching Assistant Orientation in the Fall, which provided invaluable information and practical tips, but that syllabus still haunted me.

To bolster my self-esteem as an instructor, and to expand my teaching “toolkit,” I enrolled in the College Teaching course offered at the College of Education with Dr. Steve Selden. We discussed pedagogical theories of various professors around the country and were given terrific resources, such as McKeachie’s Teaching Tips and a handbook of Classroom Assessment Techniques. Yet the most valuable tool I took away from that class was a network of like-minded colleagues with whom I could discuss real-life issues and problems in the life of a GTA.

...“the most valuable tool I took away from that class was a network of like-minded colleagues with whom I could discuss real-life issues and problems in the life of a GTA.”

I tapped into this network immediately. Pulling aside a kindhearted classmate, Hillary Clemens, after the first session of College Teaching, I explained my concerns and asked for some practical suggestions. She advised me to let the students take over by assigning weekly student presentation, and I quickly incorporated the idea of student groups leading the class into the syllabus. The following day I explained to the class that they were to become an expert on an area of their choosing. As part of this process, they would connect the reading on their topic to a scholarly journal article, connect the reading to a pop culture issue or current event, discuss controversies surrounding key concepts in the reading, and provide the class with a handout/activity to help the other students develop deeper insights about key concepts in the articles.

In addition, student expert groups were to meet with me for about 30 minutes to an hour in the week before class to lesson plan. This gave me valuable face time with my students, and provided them with opportunity to think through the process of pulling out the most important ideas from the reading, ensuring the class understood them, and facilitating a discussion that would encourage their classmates to personally engage with these ideas with their instructor.

The response was incredible. Though this assignment was not graded (less work for me!) the pressure of presenting in front of their peers drove the students to excel. Correction: they excelled once I stepped back. I didn’t anticipate how difficult it would be for me to hand over control of my class to the student groups...

..."I didn’t anticipate how difficult it would be for me to hand over control of my class to the student groups..."

"Co-Teaching " continued on page 16...
to make ethnography as visually present and visually active as possible on the ELMS course homepage. It was featured not only on the syllabus, but also on the assignments and course documents pages, and most importantly, in recurring form on the announcements and discussion board pages.

I also did not have the opportunity in the online classroom to verbally demonstrate ethnographic interviewing techniques, or to allow the students practice interview sessions with each other. My discovery, however, was that this loss was not necessarily a bad thing. First, lacking a “practice” or “modeling” session served as a reminder to students that every ethnographic encounter is different from every other, and that in spite of our practicing of useful techniques, there is no real way to “prepare” for the unique encounter we will have with a particular research participant. The best we as ethnographers can do is to adjust from moment to moment based on the dynamics both of the research participant’s personality and of the particular nature of the “connection” taking place between ourselves and the participant. And second, lacking a practice session seemed to encourage my students in the online course to look more closely at the assigned ethnographic texts for clues as to how the authors had conducted their interviews. Indeed, judging from the amount and quality of discussion that took place on our discussion board featuring the assigned ethnographic texts, the students delved into this literature and demonstrated good critical thinking as to how it might relate to their upcoming ethnography assignments.

The primary disadvantage of teaching ethnography online, in my experience, was that students seemed less inclined to discuss their own experiences (on the discussion boards) with conducting ethnography. In my face-to-face classes, students have generally taken advantage of class time to discuss questions or difficulties they are encountering through the ethnographic process, sharing with and learning from each other.

My online students did not shy away from emailing me with questions about the ethnographic process, but unfortunately they did not generally post these questions publicly on the online ELMS page. Part of the fault for this may lie in my design of the course, since participation in the Ethnography Discussion and Exercises discussion board (intended to elicit discussion on the ethnographic experience) was not mandatory. Undoubtedly, students are motivated by mandatory requirements and by the influence of classroom participation on their grade, so in the future I will very likely make participation in this venue a required course component.

Luckily, however, I found much that was advantageous in the online teaching of ethnography. The primary advantage relates to the pre-eminence of text in the online classroom, as mentioned above. As one example of this, the required posting of the students’ ethnography exercises provided the class as a whole with a much vaster storehouse of documented ethnographic encounters than what they would generally have access to in a face-to-face classroom. After completing the exercise themselves, students could then look to see what the experiences of their classmates had been with that exercise, and hopefully learn from the collective insight of the class. Likewise, in the case of the readings discussion board based on assigned ethnographic texts, students had continual access to the kernels of wisdom present in these conversations, since unlike face-to-face conversations, they were saved in textual form rather than disappearing into vapor the instant they were uttered.

In short, teaching ethnography online is not a perfect enterprise, but it does offer some surprising benefits. It seems that the key to successfully teaching ethnography, whether in the online or face-to-face venue, is to recognize and harness the particular advantages available in each situation.
“Interview” continued from page 9
“makes the medicine go down.”

* Learn at least 10% of your students names right away.

* Think behaviorally (e.g. what behavior am I reinforcing?).

* Elicit feedback often.

With these and other principles in mind, along with repeated exposure through CTE and UTLP to creative ideas, and opportunities to teach, I am learning to trust my intuition as an educator.

Attending to teaching as a skill set in itself has afforded me greater objectivity about my successes and failures. It’s hard to overestimate the stress of teaching your first class of 65 students - alone. The first class I taught at University of Maryland four years ago I was so worried about being a perfect teacher and how the students would rate me. Not helpful! Now I can enjoy teaching and routinely evaluate my teaching without a lot of bruised ego about it all. I welcome student feedback often, am eager to experiment with new approaches, and learn from my mistakes and successes alike.

**TLN:** From your time within the UTLP, is there any particular experience that is especially memorable?

JL: Two events stand out. The first is the UTLP Portfolio Retreat held in January. We spent about 3-4 days in a group of like-minded interdisciplinary scholars and hammered out our teaching philosophies and developed teaching portfolios. We also met with experts on various topics like how to represent your teaching on your CV. The concentrated approach to this task was very effective and I honestly can say I might not have come around to it without this structure and support. Making a teaching portfolio is a big job, but well worth it.

The second is attending and presenting at the Lilly-East Conference on College and University Teaching for two years in a row. Even thinking back on Lilly-East now is a powerful reminder of the art and science of teaching itself (apart from our content areas) within higher education, and the many amazing national and regional scholars who make teaching and student development a top priority in their careers. Lilly is also practical - we all walked away with armloads of great ideas, presented in a fun way, that we were ready to put to use on Monday morning. Besides, it is also just a brief getaway from the daily grind of grad school and because you can apply for a grant from CTE to pay for the weekend (including registration, nice hotel, and meals), it was a little perk of being involved with CTE that graduate students on stipends can appreciate!

The Lilly experience felt like CTE was giving us both practical support and a symbolic “thanks” for investing time and energy into teaching at U. of M.

**TLN:** If you can identify the most important skill that you took away from UTLP, what is it?

JL: The most important skill I took away from UTLP was the ability and confidence to try new approaches in the classroom to reach students. I don’t think I will ever get bored with teaching, because I know there are a thousand things I haven’t tried yet – and I’m glad I have a long stretch in front of me to explore this territory.

**TLN:** What was the most useful requirement you fulfilled as part of UTLP?

JL: The Teaching Portfolio.

“I don’t think I will ever get bored with teaching, because I know there are a thousand things I haven't tried yet – and I’m glad I have a long stretch in front of me to explore this territory.”

**UTLP?**

JL: The Teaching Portfolio.
This semester’s key enhancement is the added ability to have more than one person per course identified as a person to evaluate. We are calling this the “multiple instructor” capability because it will, for example, allow two faculty members who co-teach a course to both have evaluation results. In the fall the system could only provide evaluation results to one of the instructors and students were asked only one set of questions per course. The system will now allow identification of items that are specific to an instructor (e.g., The instructor treated students with respect) that can be asked of students about each instructor as well as items more specific to a course asked only once per course (e.g., The course was intellectually challenging), all asked through a single course evaluation in a student’s Evaluation Dashboard. This mechanism can be utilized when the course scheduler for a department or college makes a change in SIS to indicate if more than one person should be evaluated and who those persons should be, whether a co-instructor or TA. This indication must be completed by April 7th for spring evaluations. We anticipate eventually a TA could be evaluated in a somewhat different way, allowing students to answer questions about the TA that are different than those answered about an instructor, but for now the items for both the TA, instructor of record and any co-instructor will be the same given the system capacities to date.

"Future enhancements will include the ability for colleges, departments and instructors to add items of interest. This feature, called the “hierarchy system” because it allows various levels of items to be added, will pilot tested in a future term."

Future enhancements will include the ability for colleges, departments and instructors to add items of interest. This feature, called the “hierarchy system” because it allows various levels of items to be added, will pilot tested in a future term. Eventually, an instructor, college, or department could even use the system to develop and launch other types of surveys or evaluations, say at mid-semester to see how things are proceeding or at the start of the term to get a sense of what capacities students bring to a course.

"CourseEvalUM" continued from page 11

Again, your support and patience as the system is built and tested is much appreciated!

More information about the project can be found at: https://www.irpa.umd.edu/Assessment/crs_eval.shtml

Access to evaluation results can be found on ARES under Faculty Services for faculty and on the Testudo main page for students.

The CourseEvalUM system opens Tuesday, April 29 and closes at 11:59PM on Wednesday, May 14 for this semester’s evaluations.

You can have a direct impact on this process by:

1) promoting student participation

2) reminding students to complete the evaluations and how important they are to help you know what works and what doesn’t in the course

3) helping students understand that your department or college may have another evaluation system running (paper, WebCT, or other) while this is being piloted (and we all need them t complete both), and

4) helping students know that they can see the evaluation results from here on only if they complete ALL the CourseEvalUM evaluations in their Evaluation Dashboard. (As a way to encourage participation for spring, this semester we let them see fall results even if they didn’t complete all their evaluations but that will not be the case for spring results.)
databases, e-journals, e-books, online catalogs, etc.

The session’s first activity will be to develop assignments, each with library components, using a topic everyone is familiar with, Shakespeare’s “Romeo and Juliet.” Bloom’s Taxonomy describes a hierarchy for categorizing the level of abstraction in questions and learning goals, moving from the most concrete to the most abstract goals – knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation.

Bloom’s Taxonomy describes a hierarchy for categorizing the level of abstraction in questions and learning goals, moving from the most concrete to the most abstract goals – knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation.

Finally, session participants, through a series of mini cases, will discuss common problems that arise in the use of library resources in course assignments. The discussion will emphasize ways to most effectively integrate library instruction and research into course instruction and assignments. Issues to be addressed include library/faculty collaboration in assignment development, assignment goals, and library instruction content, timing and logistics.

"I can think of no better way to increase student learning than by giving students ownership of the material by asking them to teach it."

..."I can think of no better way to increase student learning than by giving students ownership of the material by asking them to teach it."
CTE’s 2nd Summer Institute on Teaching and Learning with New(er) Technologies*
May 27-29, 2008 8:30am to 4:00pm
Application Deadline April 11

This working institute is offered for members of the faculty who have considered pedagogical enhancement with new(er) technologies. Faculty who need time, support, direction and feedback necessary for this sort of change are invited to apply. Faculty participants will benefit from guidance and colleagues’ experience as they consider ways to make new(er) technologies part of their pedagogy. The institute will help faculty address specific challenges—and meet specific learning outcomes—in their classrooms.

Faculty participants will receive a $1,500.00 stipend.

To find out more about the institute or to apply visit: http://cte.umd.edu/sti/
* This summer institute was made possible by support from the Office of the Dean for Undergraduate Studies

Call for Nominations: 2008-2009 Departmental Excellence & Innovation in Undergraduate Teaching Award
Nomination Deadline April 14

Sponsored by the CTE-Lilly Teaching Fellows, the Center for Teaching Excellence, and the Office of Undergraduate Studies. The Departmental Excellence & Innovation in Undergraduate Teaching Award honors a department’s commitment to and accomplishments in improving undergraduate education.

Departmental Excellence & Innovation in Undergraduate Teaching Awards recognize notable improvements and accomplishments in undergraduate education at the department or program level. Applications should highlight a current initiative or programmatic or curricular improvement that has made a positive impact on student learning and the quality of undergraduate education in the last two or three years. More specifically, applicants should describe how the department addressed a problem and how the initiative or improvement was the result of a combined effort of those in the unit. The efforts of individual members of a unit are not eligible for Departmental Excellence & Innovation in Undergraduate Teaching Awards. For examples of the type of work that has received recognition in recent years, more details about the awards, or to apply, visit: http://www.cte.umd.edu/programs/faculty/lilly/teachingaward/.

Submission deadline is April 14, 2008. Recipients will be notified in early May, and the award will be presented at the May 14 reception for Distinguished Teaching Assistants. The Office of Undergraduate Studies provides a $5,000 award.

Share Your Teaching and Learning News!
CTE welcomes your contributions to Teaching and Learning News. Submit an article, or send your news to cte@umd.edu.
Call for Nominations: Distinguished Teaching Assistants
Nomination Deadline: April 18

The Center for Teaching Excellence, the Dean for Undergraduate Studies, and the Dean of the Graduate School recognize outstanding graduate teaching assistants at the annual Distinguished Teaching Assistant Ceremony. This year the ceremony will be held at the Riggs Alumni Center on May 14, 2008.

Departments are requested to select the top ten percent of all teaching assistants in your unit. Awardees are selected by their departments based on positive student evaluations, classroom observations, and/or noted contributions to the teaching culture within the unit. Specific selection criteria are at the discretion of the individual unit. If another person in your unit has responsibility for selecting the unit’s nominees, please forward this information about recognition of Distinguished Teaching Assistants to him or her.

Please submit the names of the teaching assistants you have selected as Distinguished Teaching Assistants electronically via the Center for Teaching Excellence website http://cte.umd.edu/grants/DTA/awardees/index.html no later than April 18, 2008. If you have any questions about the recognition process, please contact Ms. Henrike Lehnguth at extension 4-1283.

We hope you will take advantage of this opportunity to recognize outstanding graduate teaching assistants in your unit.

The Center for Teaching Excellence and the Office of Undergraduate Studies seek applicants for the 2008-09 CTE-Lilly Teaching Fellows Program.

Application Deadline June 2

CTE-Lilly Fellowships have been a University highlight for more than fifteen years, and it is a pleasure to announce their continuation. The 2008-2009 CTE-Lilly Fellows will join an elite group of faculty leaders who have helped to define and shape the academic culture of the University. The 2008-2009 CTE-Lilly Teaching Fellows Program provides the opportunity for up to ten faculty members from the College Park campus to meet regularly during the 2008-2009 academic year to discuss and address important issues in undergraduate education.

Each fellow will receive $4,000, which can be applied to his or her individual needs (e.g., summer support, a graduate assistant, or professional expenses).

All full-time faculty members interested in undergraduate education are encouraged to apply. Your reasons for seeking a CTE-Lilly Fellowship, the quality of your ideas, and the evidence of your commitment to improving undergraduate education will be important to the selection committee. The application process consists of a simple letter.

Applications must be received by Monday, June 2nd, 2008. Applications should be submitted electronically via the CTE website. For more information about the CTE-Lilly Fellowship program see http://cte.umd.edu/programs/faculty/lilly/index.html or contact Spencer Benson at 4-1288 or sbenson@umd.edu.

The CTE-Lilly Teaching Fellowship application is available here:
http://cte.umd.edu/programs/faculty/lilly/LillyApplicationForm.html

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