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Issue 15 Fall 2015

Great Ideas For Teaching

15.1 Collaboration Takes Time

Denise Stephenson

It's been awhile since an issue of GIFTs was produced, and I apologize to the Career and Technical Education (CTE) faculty, who produced more material than one issue of GIFTs could handle, as well as to Leila, who has waited even longer for publication. And for those who contributed to the SLO piece, an apology that it took me longer to assemble than I imagined. However, once again, this issue of **A Collection of GIFTs** is filled with immediately useful ideas for teaching. There are two themes: 1) deepening students' metacognition of their learning, and 2) why working collaboratively serves everyone, students and faculty alike, in successful ways.

Whether at the classroom, program, or institutional level, learning outcomes are important. In this issue, faculty offer suggestions for making SLOs more visible to students so that if asked, students can articulate what they have learned succinctly and accurately.

If you're looking for classroom techniques that move students from uncertainty to clarity about what they are learning, **Leila Safaralian** offers two excellent strategies. One involves quiet and the other one produces lots of sound as students talk to each other. Both produce opportunities for deeper learning.

Jordon Molina's piece, which encourages
Student-Generated Content, provides an example
of putting students into the role of teacher.
Students must work very hard and be subjected to
the scrutiny of their peers as they create quizzes
for one another. Though it may appear that some
of the instructor's work is being completed
by students, Molina points out clearly that the
teacher's role changes, but does not diminish.

It's more than a spirit of collaboration, it's

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Submissions

Submissions are always welcome. There is rolling on-line publication and print distribution during FLEX week.

Please submit work to M/S 9 or dstephenson@miracosta.edu



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www.miracosta.edu/StudentServices/WritingCenter

a completely interdisciplinary endeavor that produces the Annual MiraCosta College Car and Motorcycle Show. If you wonder how such a feat is put on by students or what it takes for faculty to coordinate such an effort, **Steve Vail and Christina Hata** provide the details.

Finally, Sue Simpson describes the pathway

that the nursing program creates, in collaboration with the Career Center, to move students toward professional behaviors needed to stand out in the job market. If your students are headed out our door to look for jobs, you want to read this GIFT and consider how you or your department can create similar success strategies.

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15.2 Making CSLOs Memorable to Students

Myla Stokes Kelly, Librarian; Jeanine Sepulveda, Biology; Penny Skemp, Child Development; Denise Stephenson, Writing Center; Steve Vail, Automotive Technology

Navigating the many levels of student learning outcomes (SLOs) is challenging.

Among the most basic challenges is ensuring that students understand the importance of the learning outcomes for each course. Advice from a collection of chairs of disparate disciplines provides a wealth of ideas of how to get students to take notice of this vital course element.

Perhaps it all starts with making sure that SLOs are aligned with the course content. Then, they are naturally an integral part of each course throughout the semester. Assuming that's the case, indoctrinating students via syllabus on the first day of class is an easy next step. Asking who knows what SLOs are is one possible discussion starter. Helping students see that SLOs are the big concepts they will remember forever can be the key to relevance. Beyond the first day, pointing out to students each SLO as it comes up in class demonstrates the centrality of SLOs throughout the course. Using a Classroom Assessment Technique (CAT) when working on SLOs is another way to keep our collective eyes on these objectives.

All of that sounds good, but it's generic, and thereby, not very persuasive. Following are several specific examples of how faculty make SLOs relevance tangible to students. (Just for fun, you can guess whose class is being referenced.)

- 1) In my Marine Biology class, along with the objectives or goals of any given lab activity, a SLO for the course is also referenced. In the fish morphology lab, students investigate structure function relationships focusing on how one may infer ecological characteristics of a species based upon its morphology (an example of which is inferring diet based upon the spacing and length of the gill rakers and length of the intestine—both of which strongly correlate with prey size/diet). In the objectives for this lab activity, I highlight the fact that analysis of structure function relationships is a SLO for the course.
- 2) I often start the class by asking for examples of children's behavior (from their service learning or from real life experiences) and show how each example is connected to one of the SLOs. I include key words on the board so the SLOs are easy to remember. SLO 1: domains (physical, cognitive, social-emotional); SLO 2: theories (Erikson, Piaget, Vygotsky, Skinner); SLO 3: multiple influences (cultural, political, socioeconomic, historical). I also include the SLOs in the PowerPoint slides whenever appropriate.
- 3) For my online course, I weave the SLOs into course content throughout the semester. In each week's discussion board prompts, I show how that topic is connected to a specific SLO. In each week's lecture, I include an initial section in which I show how that chapter's content is related to a specific SLO.
- 4) In BIO 172, Marine Ecology, discussion board posts are used to gain insight into how well or whether students understand the big picture outcomes of the course (ie., the SLOs). For

outcomes of the course (ie., the SLOs). For modules of that course applicable to a given SLO, I may ask students to either research a given SLO and produce an article relevant to it or reflect on the module to provide a specific example of information that is relevant to a SLO. Here's an example of a prompt I have used in the past: "One of the learning outcomes of this course is to evaluate the efficacy of human intervention for the preservation of local marine habitats. For this discussion board forum, I'd like you to research (using either the MCC library databases or Google Scholar) this concept and post an article that presents evidence which either supports or negates anthropogenic efforts to preserve a marine habitat. In your post, briefly explain the following: Was the agency or research team involved successful? How was success measured? And what effect did humans have on the habitat?"

5) On the first test I include a bonus point question asking them to list one of the SLOs and explain what they have learned about that SLO in the chapters they have just read. Then,

for the second test, the bonus point requires them to list two of the SLOs (with examples). The third test has them list all three SLOs. At the end of the semester I often include one of the SLOs as an essay question in the final exam.

6) I have sometimes mentioned the rumor that members of the accreditation team will stand outside of classrooms as students are leaving class and will ask students what the SLOs for that class are. I want to look good, so I want to make sure my students all know the SLOs for my classes.

The bottom line is that students can articulate learning outcomes more confidently and competently when they have multiple and meaningful encounters with the outcomes in each course they take. This article has only touched on the ways we might help ensure students are conversant with student learning outcomes at the course level. Can you imagine what we might need to do as a college to ensure that students can articulate program and institutional outcomes? Seems there's always more work to be done...

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15.3 Teaching Techniques to Promote Student Success

Leila Safaralian, Mathematics

Although teaching techniques have different formats, they all share key components: providing individual think time, increasing engagement in learning, generating connections to prior knowledge and providing students with opportunities to practice skills and deepen understandings. In my opinion, the two strategies in this GIFT combine these components to maximize learning, engage students, and promote student success.

One technique I use in my classroom everyday to promote student learning is "one quiet moment." I use this technique when introducing a new strategy/method to solve specific problems, after doing a problem that has many steps, or after exposing students to a new idea. For example, I give my students a short time, two to three minutes, to rethink and review after covering a key concept. During this short time, students have time to complete their notes, think about the new subject presented, and connect it to their prior learning. When the quiet moment is over, they ask any questions that they still have. I also give my students "one quiet moment" to learn

and understand new formulas which I introduce. They use the time differently depending on their learning styles. For example, some students keep writing the formula over and over again while others keep repeating it to themselves quietly. From the beginning, my students liked this technique very much. While I use the technique frequently, sometimes my students remind me of their need for a quiet moment to make sure they completely understand the subject.

The "teacher/student" technique is another that I use in my classroom regularly. I believe one of the best ways to learn a subject is to teach it. Every day we do group activities in the classroom to create an interactive learning environment. Every student has a partner. One is called "A," and the other one is "B." After I do one problem on the document camera, I write down another problem similar to the one I did, and I ask student A to teach it to student B. This is a great opportunity for Student A to see how well he/she learned the subject and how confident he/ she is to answer student B's questions. Then, I write down another problem and this time student B would teach that step by step to student A. Usually during this activity, students will find out about their weaknesses and ask questions. First, they ask their questions of their partner and if the partner doesn't know the answer or he/she is not sure about the answer, they ask me. During this activity, I walk around the classroom and meet with each group to answer their questions.

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15.4 Encouraging Student-Generated Content: Giving Up Control and Liking It

Jordon Molina, Letters

Overview

I teach English, and recently I have come up with an activity that encourages students to actively engage with the course material, take ownership of their learning, and define their own goals. What is this silver bullet? I call it "Quiz Creation."

For a moment, imagine designing an assessment of material for your course. Now, isolate those steps you take to create an effective assessment. Typically, the sequence moves as follows: you familiarize yourself with the material, rereading sections, identifying key vocabulary; next, you evaluate what is important, what your students ought to know; after, you carefully craft questions that encourage critical thinking and reinforce the valuable content; lastly, you edit your assessment for precision and clarity. In the end, an effective assessment is not too easy, not too difficult, and reveals to the students what they should have been paying attention to all along. Now, consider your students in the role you just imagined yourself in: they are the ones having to show a mastery of the material; they must evaluate the content: the students have to pay attention to their language; and they must be held accountable for their work. All of these goals reflect the larger goals of a successful student.

Method

The general lesson described above is actually a specific one I assign in my composition

classes called "Ouiz Creation." Students select a chapter from our text and must create a quiz on this section that will be taken by other students in the class. This activity is prefaced with a discussion about quizzes in general. I ask students, "What makes a good quiz? What about a bad one?" Students establish their authority here as experienced quiz-takers and therefore familiar with the genre. They feel empowered to take on this role. From our discussion, we determine a variety of effective types of questions from true/false, multiple choice, short answer, quote analysis, to fill-in-the-blank. Students then begin crafting guizzes on their section in class and polish up their assessments at home. The following class session is dedicated to taking and grading the quizzes. Students are divided into groups with each group member covering a different reading section. Students take each other's quizzes and one-by-one, the quiz creator reads aloud his question and explains the correct answer.

Outcomes

Of the many outcomes of this assignment, three stand out as particularly powerful. First, students reflected that they knew the material better after they made their quiz. Of 48 students polled, 71% of students said they were "more knowledgeable" of their reading section after the exercise.

Second, students were held accountable for their work. An unclear phrase or ambiguous answer resulted in a chorus of complaints from their peers—an experience we, as instructors, are all too familiar with. As such, students paid careful attention to the quality of their questions so as not to dissatisfy their peers who took their quiz.

Third, students felt empowered through the

process. I trusted them to effectively quiz their peers. They established what was valuable in each section, not me. Students understood their authority as their peers' grades were determined by the assessment they produced. A student acknowledged she "had to know the chapter enough to be confident discussing correct responses." Many students polled described the difference between the "memorization" required for taking a quiz versus the "critical thinking" needed for creating one. Encouraging confidence and relying on students' evaluations empowered their unique voices.

Limitations

While the outcomes of "Quiz Creation" clearly propel students toward engagement, confidence, authority, and accountability, the limitations of student-generated content must be acknowledged. First, using student-generated content takes a considerable amount of time in and out of class. Simply put, handing over the reins to students also means handing over the clock—an unsettling premise for many of us.

Second, when we give up control of classrooms, students will take lessons toward unexpected territory. Additionally, as instructor-apprentices, students will not place value on the same content that we would. I do not hover over my students' shoulders and hint to them what should be covered which leaves poignant passages

left out of the discussions on these reading sections.

Lastly, students can be resistant to the new authoritative role. As Ira Shor puts it, some students want instructors to "do education to them." As we attempt to garner genuine interest and shared authority in the class, at times, our best efforts are met with self-doubt and even hostility. Admittedly, it may seem appealing to hold tight to the familiar power dynamics of a traditional learning environment.

Concluding Thoughts

Ultimately, though, we as educators know how to teach our students, which more and more subverts the roles of instructor and student A metaphor enlightens us on the importance of this learning model. Imagine our goal is to teach students how to cook. Why would we, the instructors, solely be the ones to shop for ingredients, test recipes, write clear instructions, demonstrate the techniques, and produce the finished dish while our students merely observe that crucial process? Does that sequence of "teaching" genuinely encourage someone to become a cook? We, too, must acknowledge that designing a class—and all of its components—is where the true work lies. When we shift even some of that process over to our students it is no wonder that they feel empowered and invested in the course

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15.5 The Car and Motorcycle Show: An Example of Cross-Discipline Collaboration

Christina Hata, Business and Steve Vail, Automotive Technology

Regardless of their program of study, many Career and Technical Education (CTE) students are likely to venture out on their own and open their own businesses. Even for those who don't go into business for themselves, an understanding of business protocols is necessary for success in any field. For this reason, business courses are required in many CTE certificates such as Yoga, Pilates, Automotive Technology and Design. Because of this interdisciplinary connection imbedded in many certificates, and the importance of exposing students to real world experience, CTE faculty are always looking for opportunities to work with other departments in order to enrich the learning experience.

This spirit of collaboration was the genesis of the Annual MiraCosta College Car and Motorcycle Show. The concept behind the show is simple: give business students, some of whom are enrolled in the automotive technology program, the opportunity to practice marketing and promotional techniques learned in the classroom, and give automotive technology students the opportunity to showcase the craftsmanship and technical expertise they have developed over their course of study. The show also has a philanthropic goal: proceeds benefit the Extended Opportunity Programs and Services (EOPS) and Veteran's scholarship programs.

The work takes place over the course of the semester and students see the fruits of their labor on the day of the show. They are responsible for most of the marketing and operations: soliciting vendors for raffle prizes, developing promotional materials, and working the event. Making sure they do their jobs properly and effectively is where we come in. As faculty, our job throughout this process is to ensure students are meeting the benchmarks established at the outset of the planning process. We also are responsible for some of the logistics: ensuring there is space, arranging food vendors, porta-potties, entertainment, etc. Constant communication is key. Steve keeps the business students informed about what shows they should visit for their promotional efforts and what vendors should be contacted, and he provides ideas about the types of vehicles and motorcycles that should be targeted as participants. Christina oversees all promotional communications, meets with the students regularly to provide feedback about progress and insures the lines of communication with the automotive technology department remain open.

As faculty, our prep for the show involves a lot of cross-departmental collaboration. Beginning in January, there are usually one or two meetings of the organizing committee to establish contact with volunteers, determine our to-do list, and assign tasks. Once complete, the students are incorporated into the planning process to receive their specific assignments. Over the course of the spring semester and up to the day of the show, we continually monitor student progress, work with them to overcome challenges in the marketing and promotional process, and help them to identify new strategies and tactics to gain exposure. Additional meetings are scheduled as needed to ensure everyone is on task.

There are many benefits to this sort of collaboration. First and foremost, students have the opportunity to experience and learn the importance of giving back. For many, the scholarship programs that benefit from the show's proceeds are programs close to their hearts, as there are many Veteran and EOPS students enrolled in both the business and automotive technology programs. Students also gain industry knowledge by speaking with representatives of local companies in the automotive industry, as well as small business owners from a variety of fields during the marketing and organizational process.

The show also generates positive public relations for the college and brings many community members to campus to experience the event. As faculty, we have the opportunity to provide our students with the real-world

experiences that are difficult to incorporate in the classroom. We also learn about our colleague's programs, which gives us insight into what they teach and how they teach it. As a business professor, it's nice to be able to hear "car talk" and understand what is being discussed. And as an automotive technology professor, it is nice to see students engage in the essential components of business skills, both hard and soft, which enhance their marketability in the field.

This collaboration is a win-win endeavor for all involved. It enriches the learning process and strengthens a student's chances for success, and it provides instructors with opportunities for professional growth, through interdisciplinary cooperation and the sharing of pedagogical strategies.

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15.6 Transitioning from Student to Colleague

Sue Simpson, Nursing

When the coursework is near completion and graduation is within sight, the student is then faced with the reality of securing that dream job in the real world. Armed with the knowledge and skills acquired in their chosen area of study, students must also have keen self-marketing and interview skills in order to make their dreams into reality given the demands of the current job market. Despite a nationwide nursing shortage, nursing positions here in San Diego county are limited for the inexperienced new graduate nurse. It was clear that the MiraCosta nurse graduates, competing with new graduates from over a dozen nursing programs in this county, needed enhanced skills to market themselves in this environment. For this reason, the assignment Ready for the Real World was developed.

Ready for the Real World is a tight, prescribed method of guiding students through the process of preparing themselves and their documentation for the job search and interview process. The assignment is given to the students at the beginning of their final semester in the program.

Initially the students are directed to the MiraCosta College Career Center¹ website to view selected "Career Advice Videos" clips. These grant-supported, professionally produced vignettes are concise, current, and entertaining as they deliver the much needed information for students to gain employment. While only a few of the video clips are assigned, many students report they view all that are available and glean pearls of information from every one. The videos meet

the needs of the inexperienced and experienced job candidate, answering many questions that otherwise go unasked.

A close working relationship has developed over the years between the nursing department and the Career Center. Utilizing the expertise of both disciplines, an exemplar nursing resume and cover letter have been developed and made available for the students to use as a template². The cover letter and resume are often key to securing the interview. The nursing resume exemplar models the information and discipline specific requirements the healthcare industry looks for in the new nurse graduate. The students use this model to tailor their descriptions of their own healthcare experiences, clinical practice and supplemental certifications to best showcase their unique qualities.

Once the cover letter and resume are completed, students are directed to create a free account at evejot.com³. Through this site, the student creates their own 60-second infomercial to introduce themselves using the tips learned in the video clips. Students are initially intimidated by this portion of the assignment but soon learn how important it is to make a good first impression in the hiring process. Programs receive hundreds of applicants and the infomercial potentially sets our students apart for a second look. Interviews outside of the county are often conducted via internet-based video system, such as Skype. With the eyejot.com experience and critique, students feel more comfortable selling themselves to the eye of the camera. Upon reflection one student summed the experience up by saying, "to be honest, I wasn't too thrilled about doing the eyejot at first, but it was interesting to see how I could potentially appear and come across during an interview type situation."

Once the cover letter, resume and info-mercial

are completed, the student electronically sends them both to the instructor, the Associate Dean of Nursing and a member of the Career Center staff for review. To receive professional critique from the Career Center staff, the students make an appointment to meet with a staff member in groups of 3 or 4. Students must arrive at the appointment dressed professionally, as if attending a job interview. During the appointment at the Career Center, students provide each other with peer review and support as well as receiving feedback from the Career Center professional. Student feedback regarding the Career Center experience has been overwhelmingly positive. They value the close personal review and critique that is delivered in a positive and encouraging way that builds up the students' confidence and assurance. They leave their appointments with feedback and suggested revisions to their documents that they eagerly make prior to submitting for final grading. In a follow up survey, student reviews of the Career Center included:

- I loved that I not only got suggestions for the layout of my resume, also the grammar, punctuation etc.
- The career center was very helpful with reviewing my resume and giving me feedback (via email). They were also helpful in making suggestions as far as some things to keep in mind when going to my interview. I liked seeing classmates resumes and watching our videos in front of each other. Even though these are classmates, they will be applying for the same position (RN). It was helpful to practice the process itself too. Getting my outfit picked out, making the appointment, driving to the school etc. were all very valuable
- I thought that the career center was a good professional type experience and gets us going on putting that resume together that

we will be proud to present to potential employers. I felt that the career center experience was open, honest and positive with their suggestions. They made some good points to help improve my resume and cover letter.

Throughout the nursing program, students are required to build an ePortfolio that shows a sample of the breadth and depth of their academic work while in the program. Each student is expected to complete an ePortfolio as a program requirement. The ePortfolio will be used as both a learning and assessment tool with the culmination being a collection of work reflecting the student's transition to professional nursing. The program graduate ePortfolio expectations are outlined on the attached document. The ePortfolio is not only a sample of their academic work but an electronic repository for their additional certifications, vitae and professional accomplishments. The students are encouraged to print up business cards that provide, in addition to their contact information, the URL to their ePortfolio that will provide potential employers with their individual character traits and qualities in addition to their professional qualifications. For the nursing program, the individual ePortfolios provide a capstone exhibition of the individual student's success in achieving both program and college learning objectives.

In addition to the ePortfolio, students are strongly encouraged to create an active presence on the social media site, LinkedIn, and maintain a network through this site with their peers, mentors, instructors, and other healthcare professionals. Through LinkedIn, students remain connected to each other and the program. The site announces to the individual's network changes in their job and work statuses. This feature has provided the program with much needed outcome data on where our students are employed as well as their career highlights.

The *Ready for the Real World* assignment is initially daunting to the students, yet, by the time

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they have travelled through it in its entirety, the students often report back on how valuable each 25 points

Notes

- 1. See http://www.miracosta.edu/instruction/careerservices/index.html
- 2. See http://www.miracosta.edu/instruction/careerservices/forstudents-write-a-resume.html
- 3. See http://corp.eyejot.com/

READY FOR THE REAL WORLD ASSIGNMENT

- 1) Go to http://www.miracosta.edu/careers
- 2) Review the following "Career Advice Videos" (don't limit yourself to just these, as there is great information in all the clips)
 - a. Resumes & Cover Letters
 - i. Stand Out Resumes
 - ii. The Cover Letter
 - iii. Email Etiquette
- b. Networking & Your Personal Brand
 - i. Your INFOmerical
 - ii. Importance of Network
- Create your Nursing Resume & Cover Letter following the outline found http://www.miracosta.edu/instruction/careerservices/forstudents-write-a-resume.html
- 4) Once you have completed your resume and cover letter your go to www.eyejot.com and create a free account. You will then have 60 seconds to introduce yourself, using the tips your learned in the above video clips record your INFOmercial. Send this introduction to ssimpson@miracosta.edu, and Joan Hackett at jhackett@miracosta.edu. Immediately after you have sent your video introduction send your letter and resume in a second email from your personal email account to jhackett@miracosta.edu. In the Subject Line write Nursing Resume, Last Name, First Name. If you do not have a webcam use a friend's or contact the instructor who will make arrangements for you. Be aware that this is the first visual impression you make upon a potential employer therefore be aware of your surroundings and dress professionally.
- 5) After you have sent your resume, cover letter and eyejot video email to jhackett@miracosta.edu create a small group of 4 students, review the available Nursing Review dates, and appoint one group member to be the lead. The **one** lead student will inform the Career Center which dates your small group of 4 will meet for the Nursing Review to obtain professional feedback on your cover letter, resume and video email. All resumes, cover letters, and eyejots are to be submitted to Joan Hackett and at jhackett@miracosta.edu at least 48 hours before the scheduled review date. (Dates TBA)
- 6) Attend this review appointment together (all 4 students) dressed professionally as if you were going to an actual job interview.
- 7) After the review appointment make the suggested changes to your resume and cover letter.
- 8) Go to www.wix.com and create your professional personal portfolio by uploading your revised resume, introductory (cover) letter and other exhibits that you want to share with a prospective employer. Scan certificates and add exemplary course work that you are proud of. This is your opportunity for you to BRAG about yourself think of this site as your own personal advertisement. Remember documents that you upload are most secure in a PDF format.

Example portfolios: http://cdburn2.wix.com/chrisburnham#!home/mainPage

http://heidichau711.wix.com/online-portfolio#!home/mainPage http://carolinebazarnik.wix.com/cbazarniksrn#!home/mainPage

http://elysej85.wix.com/elysejohnson#!home/mainPage

- 9) Create a LinkedIN account <u>www.linkedin.com</u> to network your website. Use your resume to create the portfolio in LinkedIN. Send a request within Linkedin to course instructor as well as linking with your classmates.
- 10) Once you have everything ready for final grading email ssimpson@miracosta.edu indicating such make sure you provide your professional portfolio web address in the email.
- 11) Breakdown of points: Online Portfolio/Resume Assignment due October 10/14
 - a. Cover Letter & Resume 25 points c. LinkedIn profile
 - b. INFOmercial (eyejot video email) 25 points d. Website/Online portfolio 25 points