8.1 2010: A GIFT Odyssey

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Whether in the classroom, or preparing for it, good teachers demand much from their students and themselves. In this issue, you’ll find ways of working with groups and an idea about using props, both of which can add dynamism to the classroom. You’ll also find several strategies for assisting students in engaging actively and productively with assigned reading. And while we’re talking about reading, if you find that your students need to read a great deal for your courses, but they do so without the requisite comprehension, a current flex workshop and upcoming ones will focus on how to make reading more effective for students across the disciplines. Have questions? Contact Luke Lambert, our new reading instructor in Letters. Or jump in and read Kelly Hagen and Luke Lambert’s article in this issue which offers a structured multi-step reading assignment that you could use, especially early in a semester, to help students learn to read difficult material for your courses.

Along similar lines, Holly Ordway offers an adaptable reading response form. The goals: 1) keep students actively engaged and 2) prepare them for in-class work. Similarly, Jamie Clopton has a creative project using vocabulary which not only helped students learn course content in a fun way, but also increased their test scores.

Once students have done their reading and learned their vocabulary, they come to class, prepared to put their knowledge into action. David Detwiler suggests that we bring props to class not only to keep the students focused, but...
also to help connect course material to daily life. **Dara Perales** focuses on how group work can help students to successfully share their learning experiences by ensuring that they present a final product to classmates. She has recommendations on the size and creation of groups as well as the use of quiet students as sheriffs.

All in all, an issue filled with Great Ideas For Teaching which can be used right away—Spring 2010. With a decade already gone in the new millennium, don’t let time escape without offering a GIFT to your colleagues. As you head back into the classroom, pay attention to the assignment that works, the PowerPoint that held their attention, the group activity that went beyond your expectations, the student presentations that kept the whole room engaged. And when those moments happen—record them for all MiraCostans by submitting them for publication right here, next issue.