

A Collection of gifts



Issue 7 Fall 2009

Great Ideas For Teaching

7.1 In This Issue...

Denise Stephenson and Holly Ordway

Wow! Here we are again. While the economy falls, or stalls, or whatever verb you are more comfortable with, MiraCosta enrollment grows. With unprecedented numbers on their way, we take a collective inhalation to prepare for the semester ahead. And while we do, we pause to imagine our courses anew, as we do each and every fall.

In this issue of GIFTs, you'll find pedagogical suggestions for small tweaks or large overhauls to your courses. On the smaller side, but with an eye to the future, **Nancy Diaz** describes a one-class activity that she uses early in the semester which focuses her students on the pet peeves they experience in classes. Following a brainstorming/venting session, she turns those annoyances around so that they create a code of conduct in the classroom that the students can lay claim to for themselves.

Carol Forseth's article on how to help our students read the difficult academic material we give them provides a small structure that can be repeated as often as students need it—with your guidance, or on their own once they've learned the technique. Actually, Carol offers two techniques for you to consider. Try either. Or both.

A small change to a traditional assignment with great learning potential comes from **Jeanine Donley and Mike Burg**. Rather than assigning a research paper, they ask students to combine visuals and small amounts of focused information in pamphlets and powerpoints. These projects can be so effective that some of the pamphlets have been used at American Cancer Society sponsored events.

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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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Academy

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www.miracosta.edu/StudentServices/WritingCenter

And finally, taking a skill that students need to develop in a class and creating multiple, purposed reasons for them to practice that skill can be found in **Adam Belt's** article about his drawing class. From the use of brainstorming, to the creation of lists and flow charts, the description of this semester-long project invites us to imagine creating assignments which cause students to change the focal length from telephoto to close up and back again, all the while thinking about and actively manipulating the content of their courses.

Last semester I tried the GIFT idea I'd picked up from an earlier issue in which Louisa Moon asked her students to create self-initiated

objectives. I found it focused students on their own goals as learners within the context of our content. This semester, I plan to try Nancy's suggestion in this issue to see if I can help students take more responsibility for class decorum. I know from being in Nancy's class and from conversation that this technique will work. What technique might you have that other faculty can learn from? Think about it in the coming weeks. And when a class goes amazingly well or students' assignments make you happy, send us an email or quickly jot down what created that success so you can share it in the next issue of GIFTs. We look forward to hearing from you. 🎁

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7.2 Pre-reading Activities for the Academic Disciplines

Carol Forseth, Letters

“Read Chapter Seven for Monday,” you tell the students. “Be ready for a quiz.” You probably give them a study guide, but what else can you do to help them attack the chapter in a subject area such as science, history, psychology, or business? Many studies have shown that if you activate the readers’ background knowledge, or “schema” on a topic, their comprehension improves. Here are two pre-reading activities to “activate your students’ schema” before they read. They don’t take much preparation on your part. Try one at a time during the semester.

Vocabulary in Context

Choose an important vocabulary word or phrase from the chapter and put it on a PowerPoint screen or write it on the board. Do not define it. For example, here’s a term from a world history textbook: *Pax Mongolica*

Have the students guess (on paper, with a partner, or out loud to the class) what the word might mean. Next, present one sentence or phrase from the chapter that contains the word, and some clue as to the meaning of the word. Discuss the information that this sentence contains.

For example: “But they did establish, for about a century, the “Pax Mongolica,” the Mongolian Peace, over a vast region, in which intercontinental trade could flourish across the reopened silk route.”

Present another sentence containing the word in context: Despite the Pax Mongolica, merchants still had to be prepared to defend themselves from attack.

...and so on: An unexpected effect of the Pax Mongolica was the spread of a plague--called the Black Death--that devastated Eurasia’s population in the 1300s.

...until the concept is clear from the context. Now your students are ready to read and understand the passage. As reading teachers say, you have “activated the students’ schema.”

To make this pre-reading activity even simpler, just write the important vocabulary word on the board and have the students themselves scan the chapter to find the word. When they do, invite individuals to come to the board and write the sentence containing the word.

K-W-L

Here’s another quick and easy exercise to prepare your students to understand the reading. Ask them to take out a piece of paper and mark three vertical columns. Label the first one K, which stands for “What do I already know?” Students label the second column W, for “What do I want to know?” and the third column L, for “What did I learn?” (“Want to know” doesn’t necessarily mean they can’t wait to find out, but just what they might learn as they read.) Once students have their columns ready, write an important heading from the chapter on the board. Give the students time to list at least three items in each of the first two columns.

For example, here’s a heading from a biology textbook: *Plant hormones interact to regulate*

plant processes

Under the K column, a student might write:

I know what plants are. I know what hormones are, such as estrogen, and testosterone We already learned what some plant processes are, such as photosynthesis. Interact means to work together or influence each other.

Under the W column, a student might write: What hormones do plants have? Do all plants have the same hormones? What do plants make their hormones out of? Which hormones regulate which processes?

Each student does his or her own writing. After a few minutes, ask students to share some of their K and W items with the class, write some on the board and invite them to add each other's facts and questions to their own lists. Then, when they read the assigned pages for homework, the students take out their KWL sheet and complete

the third L column (What did I learn?). Depending on the subject matter, their "L" column could become additional pages of notes, an outline, or a graphic organizer such as a chart or map.

In my ESL writing class, students were assigned two readings on the topic of "bullying" in preparation for a department-wide exit essay. We completed these two pre-reading activities on the day I distributed the articles. Although many of my students had never heard of bullying before the discussion, they not only understood it but also had some passionate opinions about it as they took the articles home to read, and most of them wrote informed, imaginative essays on the topic.

Pre-reading activities like these take little preparation on your part, yet they make your job of teaching easier because the students will understand what they read in the textbook. They will not only become stronger readers, but they will more easily learn your subject matter. 🎁

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7.3 Student Code of Conduct

Nancy Diaz, EOPS Counselor

I use the Student Code of Conduct exercise after a few weeks of class, when students have started talking during class or showing up late. This is a great way to have students self-identify and correct such behaviors.

First I ask students to brainstorm behaviors that get in the way of their in-class learning. I point out that these may be actions that make them feel irritated or bugged.

After seven or eight minutes, I ask them to rank the top ten behaviors in a list. This generally takes two or three minutes. With their lists in hand, I put them in groups of five or six and assign a leader by random choice: shortest person, longest hair, etc. Then, as a group they must come up with the top ten behaviors in consensus. This takes about ten minutes.

Finally, I ask each group to say their list out

loud as a volunteer writes the behaviors on the board. Duplicates are noted with the number of times an issue arises. Sometimes the wording is vague or unclear and the group is asked to clarify.

After each group has given their list, I review the most common issues such as arriving late, holding side conversations, not participating in group activities, and so on. I try to be impartial, but focus on how each item impacts other students, even if unintentionally. This lasts 15 - 30 minutes depending on the number of duplications. So the full activity runs 35-50 minutes.

This activity provides an opportunity for students to understand the “unwritten rules of college.” It shows them how their own actions may be perceived by others. After this class activity, I often see great improvement in classroom behavior: fewer late arrivals, more participation, fewer side conversations. I don’t have to raise my voice or express any frustration; rather, the improvements come as a result of their own reflection and self-correction. 📦

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7.4 Combining Pamphlets with PowerPoint Presentations in Biology

Jeanine Donley and Mike Burg, Biological Sciences

In our biology classes, we've started to use an assignment that asks students to produce from their research both a PowerPoint presentation and a tri-fold pamphlet. We think the skill of being able to read scientific literature and recognize which pieces of information are critical and which pieces of information are superfluous is crucial. To know they've done that, they need to be able to summarize the research in their own words. But when they are assigned a standard research paper, they struggle to do this well. The same with a PowerPoint alone. The two forms have different strengths and weaknesses; neither one by itself helped students demonstrate all the critical reading/thinking skills we sought. By completing this project, students meet several objectives; they gain experience and enhance skills in communication, critical thinking, information literacy, and productive work habits.

So for this project we students the pamphlet should be designed to educate a lay person on the research they've done. For Mike's class, they choose a cancer type and produce an educational pamphlet that they might find available from American Cancer Society or one in a physician's office. The physiology class chooses a disease with a clear connection to a major physiological

system covered in class. For Jeanine's class, students might research how bycatch operates within fishery markets or how a particular sea sponge bacteria provides insight into diseases. In both classes, we want them to practice the skills of finding information and condensing it to a form that is easily read by others. Students work as a team, much like they would in industry, to research a scientific topic, prepare a presentation and a hard-copy visual aid (that's where the pamphlet comes in), and communicate their findings to the class in an effective manner.

Students utilize PowerPoint to create a tri-fold pamphlet to communicate the most relevant topic points learned during library research. Jeanine offers students a complete description of the assignment, including specific expectations with respect to content and clarity as well as a grading rubric. Knowing that some students may not have experience with PowerPoint, she also offers them a sample, to act as a visual reference as well as a template for those students who are unsure how to format the page. Additionally, in the Spring semester she added an optional video tutorial on how to make the pamphlet via BlackBoard; the tutorial is presented in Captivate.

Both of us find that the results of this project are pretty cool. Mike's class actually displayed some of the pamphlets produced from his students at American Cancer Society sponsored events. Jeanine has found that an unexpected, added benefit was the creativity inspired in her students which they otherwise might not have had an opportunity to express. For these reasons, we find that the learning process associated with the presentation/pamphlet project has become much more than it was intended to be. ❏

See reverse for sample pamphlets.

What is Lung Cancer?

Lung cancer is the formation of a tumor in the lung. When your body stops regulating your cell division in your lungs it can lead to an uncontrollable cell division. These tumors can be Benign or Malignant, the Benign tumors are nothing to worry about they can be removed and they do not spread to other parts of the body. However, malignant tumors are more serious, they are hard to control because the cells are constantly dividing and the tumors can spread to other parts of the body if they are not taken care of.



Symptoms:

Symptoms of lung cancer may be different for each individual person. Some are often linked with lung cancer:

- Excessive coughing
- Trouble breathing
- Wheezing
- Chest Pain
- Coughing up blood

References:

MedicineNet.com
We bring Doctors Knowledge to you


LUNG CANCER

Causes of Lung Cancer:

There are many causes of lung cancer but the main cause is:

Smoking:
The leading cause of lung cancer is related to smoking and tobacco use. About 90% of lung cancer cases are related to tobacco use. The more cigarettes smoked a day the higher the risk for one to get lung cancer. Studies show that smokers have 25 times more of a chance of getting lung cancer.


Secondhand Smoke:
Unfortunately even if you do not smoke, if you live with or are around smokers on a regular basis you have a 24% more chance of getting cancer than a non-smoker that is not exposed to secondhand smoke.



Preventing Lung Cancer:

Although there are cases where one cannot prevent lung cancer. One way to lower your chances of lung cancer is to not smoke. If you are already a smoker, you should take the necessary steps to help yourself quit smoking. There are many options:

- Nicotine Gum
- Nicotine Patches
- Get help from a counselor



If you are worried about secondhand smoke, try leaving the area when people are smoking. Or ask people not to smoke around you, this will lower your chances of inhaling secondhand smoke.

Treatments:

Surgery:
The surgical method is the process of going in and removing the tumor from your lung. It is usually performed during stages I and II. About 10%-35% of lung cancers can be removed by surgery.

Radiation:
The radiation method can be used if a patient does not want to have surgery or if there cancer had spread/grown too large for surgery to take place. They use high energy X-ray radiation as well as other radiation methods to break down the tumor and stop the cell division.

Chemotherapy:
The chemotherapy method is the introduction of drugs to your body that stops the growth of cell division in the tumor cells. This can be given in a few different ways, for example in a pill form. Studies show that Chemotherapy can increase ones survival time greatly.

Sample student-created pamphlets on lung cancer and ovarian cancer.

All you need to know

worried about

More information:
For any questions or support regarding ovarian cancer:

- The national Cancer Institute – you may call 1-800-4-CANCER or visit www.cancer.gov
- Support Connection – www.supportconnection.org
- National Ovarian Cancer Coalition – www.ovarian.org
- American Cancer Society – www.cancer.org



Ovarian Cancer?

Martha S. Saray
Biology 316
Professor Burg

Main types of ovarian cancer:

- 90% of ovarian cancers are **adenocarcinomas**, also known as **ovarian epithelial cancer**. This common type occurs in begins with the epithelial cells found in the tissue that covers the ovaries.
- Teratomas** are benign growths that result from stromal or germ cells in the ovaries.

Symptoms:

It is important to note that the following symptoms are **not unique to ovarian cancer**, but are good indicators and **should be taken seriously** as well as followed through with a physician.

- Pelvic or abdominal pain or discomfort
- Bloating
- Back or leg pain
- Vague, but persistent gastrointestinal upsets such as gas, nausea, and indigestion
- Frequency and/or urgency of urination in absence of infection
- Unexplained change in bowel habits

- Unexplained weight gain or loss, particularly weight gain in the abdominal region
- Pelvic and/or abdominal swelling, bloating and/or feeling of fullness
- Pain during intercourse
- Ongoing fatigue
- Pain during sexual intercourse.

Prevalence In the US in 2008:

There have been **21,650** new cases, while there have also been **15,520** deaths according to the National Cancer Institute.

- One out of 55 women will develop ovarian cancer in her lifetime.
- Women with a history of breast cancer are 4 times more likely to develop ovarian cancer.
- Woman who haven't had children or started their menstruation before the age of 12 are at an increased risk.

Treatment Options:

- Local therapy:** Surgery and radiation therapy are local therapies. When ovarian cancer has spread to other parts of the body, local therapy may be used to control the disease in those specific areas.
- intraperitoneal chemotherapy:** Chemotherapy can be given directly into the abdomen and pelvis through a thin tube. The drugs destroy or control cancer in the abdomen and pelvis.
- Systemic chemotherapy:** When chemotherapy is taken by mouth or injected into a vein, the drugs enter the bloodstream and destroy or control cancer throughout the body. (directly from www.cancer.gov)

Research:

There are currently multiple clinical trial and research being conducted on this type of cancer. Some prevention studies are testing drugs that would help reduce the risk, while others are testing the efficiency of removing the ovaries before the cancer. Treatment studies are also testing for drug efficiency in preventing the growth of cancer.

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7.5 Using Semester-Long Projects for Research and Revision

Adam Belt, Art

A semester-long project can be an excellent way to help students explore and articulate an idea of interest to them, while at the same time developing technical skills. Rather than a final project with a far-away due date, the best kind of semester-long project helps students learn at every stage of the process, like the one described here for Drawing and Composition, an entry level drawing class. The overarching process described is applicable to any field where students must create and develop their own ideas and then produce in-depth work through revision and research.

Overview of the project: Students generate ideas, work through the process of developing their ideas, gather necessary reference and research material, and apply the technical understanding of drawing, culminating in a conceptually and technically refined series of three drawings.

Beginning of the Semester

We begin by discussing possible subjects to research and develop, such as family history, biology, portraiture, tattoos, etc. Then we brainstorm using a flow chart. Students place their interests in the center and branch out

from there. After a minimum of thirty minutes brainstorming, we cross out useless ideas and circle the remaining ones. Next, students list and number the ideas by level of interest. Finally, students select one subject that will compel them to do research and experiment with drawing on their own.

Assignment: Students write a one-page summary paper discussing their choice of subject, why they have chosen it, and possible visual resources.

This summary paper helps the students codify their ideas; it also helps me find artists relevant to their specific topics to use in the next part of the semester.

Early and Mid-Semester

As the semester continues I show a variety of images from artists related to particular skills we are working with. For example, if we are working with gesture line, I will show Frank Gehy's gesture sketches of the Guggenheim Balboa and the resulting building. Also I show them video segments from a documentary series called Art: 21 Art in the Twenty First Century. I point out the work ethic of the artists in the video, their creative process, and their use of visual or conceptual reference material. It is important for students to see artists gathering visual reference material to work from, as many students believe artists work from their imaginations only.

Assignment: Students make sketches in their sketchbook. This process offers an opportunity to develop a deeper relationship to their subject as well as a deeper understanding of their concerns as an artist.

The Final Six Weeks

Week One of Six

I hand out a schedule for the development of a series of three drawings for the final critique. We go through the brainstorming process again, this time with the sketchbook subject as the center of the flow chart. Students go through a process of visual brainstorming, quickly sketching ideas and relevant imagery that comes to mind.

Assignment: Students create loose sketches and reference material that will be used to draw from or as an influence.

Week Two of Six

The sketches and reference material are due. I meet with students individually to talk about their ideas. Often the initial ideas are trite and didactic, so we discuss their core interest in the subject once again as well as those artists we have seen throughout the semester whose work resonated with them. We also discuss which materials and processes used during the semester made the most sense to them. From these discussions a more powerful direction often emerges.

Assignment: Students generate three preliminary sketches in their sketchbook. I instruct them to experiment with the media they have chosen to explore its possibilities.

Week Three of Six

The Three Preliminary Sketches are due. I break up the class into groups of five or six. In these small groups they show their sketches and discuss their subjects, their drawings and the processes that have lead to the drawings in their current form. The small group discussions allow them to get feedback from their peers and observe how their ideas are translating. I also meet with students individually to discuss further revisions based upon the sketching process and the outcome of the small group discussions.

Assignment: Students produce three full size

rough drafts in the media they will use for the finale.

Week Four of Six

The Three Full Scale Rough Drafts are due. At this stage many students gain a deeper understanding of their projects and decide to make major adjustments to the series. Many find the imagery inadequate or decide to change the media. Absent of major changes, the conversations tend toward composition and technical issues with the materials.

Assignment: Students complete one drawing. 10% of the final project grade depends on this drawing being finished on time.

Week Five of Six

We meet individually and identify any problems with the completed drawing, then we discuss the remaining two drawings. Technical issues and composition remain the main topic.

Assignment: Students must have all three completed drawings for the Final Critique.

Week Six of Six

For the Final Critique, the class discusses the drawings before the artists can comment on their intentions for the work. This allows each student to hear how their drawings are received by an audience who does not know a great deal about the ideas behind the drawings. After the class comments, the artists can talk about their intentions, their interests and their processes.

Concluding Thoughts

The semester-long project has proven successful in drawing as well as painting classes and offers beginning students the opportunity to create work from their own ideas and concerns. It also offers students who may never take another art class the opportunity to go through the process of creative decision-making and apply that learned skill to other disciplines. 🎁