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The PDC in Brief



SUNY Fredonia Professional Development Center newsletter

Teaching Tips:

“The Fish Bowl “

The Fish Bowl is a great way to question students and increase their involvement and comprehension.

Students are given index cards and asked to write down one question concerning the course material. They should be directed to ask a question of clarification regarding some aspect of the material which they do not fully understand; or, perhaps you may allow questions concerning the application of course material to practical contexts.

At the end of the class period (or, at the beginning of the next class meeting if the question is assigned for homework), students deposit their questions into a fish bowl. The instructor then draws several questions out of the bowl and answers them for the class or asks the class to answer them.

“The One Minute Paper”

This is a highly effective technique for checking student progress, both in understanding the material and in reacting to course material.

Ask students to take out a blank sheet of paper, pose a question (either specific or open-ended), and give them one (or perhaps two) minute(s) to respond.

For more ideas, visit:
<http://www.calstatela.edu/dept/chem/chem2/Active/>

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<http://www.fredonia.edu/pdc/>

What Is Professional Development? And Why Should We Care?

Professional development may be loosely defined as any activity that improves an individual’s knowledge and performance. Professionals from every field, such as health care workers, software engineers, and accountants are often required to engage in some form of continuing education that includes best practices, current trends, and networking. In academe, given the diversity of roles and responsibilities of employees, professional development must take many forms and be tailored for certain audiences in order to meet such diverse needs.

SUNY Fredonia is truly unique with regard to our approach to professional development. Unlike most universities that house teaching and learning centers, SUNY Fredonia recognizes that all members of the university community are ultimately tied to students’ experiences and success. Secretaries, janitors, residence hall staff, administration, adjunct, and full-time faculty are just a few of the individuals that a student will come in contact with during his/her college career. And, each of these individuals must be capable of connecting with students on a personal and professional level.

Professional development cannot happen in only one day or through only one activity— professional and personal growth activities must be part of our daily work lives. Unfortunately, pressures at work and home leave us with little time (and energy) and these pressures may feel more exaggerated given the current state of our economy. Access to resources such as equipment and travel money are much harder to come by and public perception of our roles as professional educators is not always favorable. Yet, our campus and local areas house a rich supply of expertise that allow us to offer professional development programs that are inexpensive and easily accessible.

Given such circumstances, why should we care? As professionals, we owe it to ourselves and our students to be “on top of our game” while nurturing our passions to teach, lead, council, and investigate. While some may view our engagement in professional development activities as ‘selfish’, such endeavors are vital to sustaining a dynamic university community and adapting to the constantly changing paradigms in teaching and learning.

Coming This Spring to the PDC

The PDC will be offering a series of workshops that are open to ALL members of the SUNY Fredonia teaching and non-teaching community. Planned workshop topics include:

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|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Tips for Getting Published | Effective PowerPoint | Faculty and Staff As Entrepreneurs |
| Computer Literacy | Project Management | Using Small Groups in Class |
| Student Engagement | Writing Grant Proposals | The Big Read (series) |
| Creating Your Own Facebook Page | Getting Students to Read | Active Learning Strategies |
| Teaching Large Classes | The Paperless Office | Using ANGEL |
| Clickers In The Classroom | Interpersonal Communication | Your Money (series) |

PDC Associate’s Hot Topics (series) And many more...

See the PDC website for a list of workshops, times, dates, and locations!

<http://www.fredonia.edu/pdc/>



They're Heeere: The Millenials

The 2000 book, *Millennial Rising* (Howe & Strauss) described the generation of students currently sitting in our classrooms. Also referred to as Generation Y, Echo Boomers, or Trophy Kids, these are students born between 1980 and 2000. Their lives have been shaped by significant national and global events such as the Oklahoma City bombing, the Space Shuttle Challenger explosion, the Exxon Valdez oil spill, September 11, and Presidents Regan, Clinton, and Bush (x 2). They grew up with laptops, cell phones, and iPods. Many people describe them as: negotiators, digital natives, optimistic, special, entitled, practical, multi-taskers, gamers, liberal, and family oriented.

These characteristics are quite broad and not every student born after 1980 matches the profile of a true Millennial. In fact, many 40-somethings may be more "Millennial-ish" than some 20 year olds. In any case, these students bring with them certain set of skills, challenges, and strengths that may require some professional educators to re-think their teaching style. The following are a few strategies outlined in *Generational Learning Styles* (Coates, 2007):

- Develop opportunities for experiential learning. Small group discussions, projects, in-class presentations and debates, peer critiques, team projects, service learning, field experiences, developing simulations and case method approaches have been found to be successful for high school and college Generation Y students.
- Encourage the development of learning communities - small groups of students that can discuss and analyze readings and assignments. This also addresses the need of many Generation Y students for hands-on activities in the classroom.
- Provide lots of structure. Having grown up in a highly structured world, Generation Y'ers look for structure in their learning setting. They want to know precisely what is required of them, when work is due, and very specific information about expectations.
- Provide lots of feedback. Providing frequent feedback is essential for Generations Y's. This allows them to know when they are headed in the right direction and when they are getting off-track.
- Use technology. This is a generation that uses technology for "everything." A classroom that does not incorporate it will not meet students' needs for variety, stimulation, and access to information. Some classrooms still require students to study and learn in ways that, to them, are completely different from the ways they operate in every other aspect of their daily lives.

"Balance Your Job and Your Kids' Education"

You can balance your own job while helping your kids thrive in theirs:

Scheduling

Parenting expert Joe Bruzzese and his wife, Kimberly, an elementary school principal, hold weekly meetings with their two school-aged children so that everyone can put their activities and responsibilities on a master calendar. When your kids participate in scheduling and organizing activities, Youngstrom stresses, they're much less likely to forget what is happening when, both in their lives or yours.

Space

Just as you need the right physical space to do your best work at the office, your child requires an inviting place at home to complete school assignments and projects, particularly if you end up doing a lot of after-hours work on the kitchen table or in the living room.

For more tips, visit: <http://career-advice.monster.com/work-life-balance/Balance-Your-Job-and-Your-Kids/home.aspx>

A 'Connections' Update

Individuals who have been mentored "tend to be more satisfied with their careers, enjoy more promotions and higher income, report greater commitment to the organization or profession, and are more likely to mentor others in turn" (Johnson, 2007, p. 4).

Over the past month, 40 individuals have been participating in the PDC "Connections" Mentoring Program and will continue their mentor/mentee relationships throughout the Spring '08 semester.

The mentor/mentee teams represent an interesting mix of faculty and staff. All teams are cross-disciplinary and range in age and experience. The semi-structured format allows each team to meet when available and discuss topics that are most important to both the mentor and mentee.

The following are reflections from Connection mentors/mentees about their experiences thus far:

"The one meeting was really refreshing and also constructive. My mentor gave some advice and forwarded an assignment model that will help me reduce the amount of work in my classes in a pedagogically meaningful way."

"We discussed communication a lot... how to be professional, how to address different leadership styles and expectations, as well as tricky office politics and strategies for career advancement as well as general survival and sanity in the face of challenging situations."

"We mostly talk about what it takes to get a PhD and how to manage family, teaching, doctoral work."

"My mentor and I are having very productive meetings, in which we are

discussing professional issues, among others, how to find the proper balance between scholarly/service activities, and also important aspects of the tenure process. In one of those meetings, my mentor provided me with very helpful information on the completion of teaching portfolios – for annual reviews, tenure and promotion. In addition to giving me access to her annual dossiers, she also gave me a book – which focuses on teaching portfolios."

"We discussed issues regarding tenure and promotion. In particular we considered some alternative ways for financing of conference attendance, including in-campus and out-of-campus financing and conference planning."

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