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The courage to speak must be matched by the wisdom to listen.

THE INTRA-CAMPUS E.Q.

The question was:

How are you dealing with the current decline in classroom and campus etiquette?

A few brave souls ventured an answer.

We assume that students come to campus having been taught or model classroom etiquette. I think not! First we need to model what we expect from students. The syllabus can give some guidelines for classroom etiquette. Not just what we don't want to happen, no phones, no children, etc. but what can they do if they need to call or have children out of school, etc. I even include how a paper or assignment is to look on the syllabus. No torn papers, single or double space, name class, etc. I encourage students to talk when they first get into class about anything they feel they need to get out. Usually the first 3 -5 minutes. Then it is classroom talk only. We practice listening, responding to others as teams at the beginning of the semester. We use name cards so students can address each other by name rather than "that student over there". It is important to set the climate for classroom etiquette, we know longer can assume they have it when they arrive.

Dan Hodgins

I have people complaining about classroom etiquette. I would like to enforce more, but I don't think that administration will support my curtailing the customer's behavior. The handout that was created and distributed by counseling was helpful to me, and I do duplicate it and pass it to students. I have students arriving very late, leaving very early or getting up and leaving and coming back. Some of these are regulars. Only one has a medical reason for needing to move around so much. I wish that the college established a policy that if students arrive more than 5 minutes late, they will not be admitted to the classroom. I teach in one of the "smart" classrooms. The door stays locked. This means that while I am holding class, I am continuously being interrupted by people knocking on the door wanting to be admitted. I find it very distracting and it is very disturbing to students.

Sharon Eisen

During the Clinton scandal, my minister told us that we have an obligation to talk to our children about character and integrity so they will KNOW what is expected of them. The students count as my children, so I have designed a "Standards and Practices" document in which I list what they can expect from me as a teacher and what I expect from them as a student. It is like a contract between us for the duration of the semester. From then on, if I have problems, I remind them of the document and of the obligations. It usually (though not always) works. (Of course, I would be willing to share that document if anyone wants it.)

My other comment would be that students (even "adult" students) learn by watching. They should see nothing but impeccable behavior from the faculty and staff. If faculty swear or use unacceptable language, the students think it is all right. (Their choice of words may be different from ours, but the concept is the same.) If faculty come dressed in less-than-professional attire, then students will dress similarly. Again, their concept of less-than-professional may be different from ours, but the concept is the same. If faculty demonstrate borderline dishonesty in any way, students will reciprocate with their version of walking the fence post (which may be different from ours).

I believe it is our obligation to present students with the best possible model in EVERY facet of life. Too many of them have been deprived of ANY significant, responsible role model other than a teacher. If we are dissatisfied with the way they think, act, perform, then first we examine OURSELVES to be sure WE are providing the right model for them. Every week, every day, every class, every situation. That's my opinion.

LindaLee Massoud

Many of our students are not part of professional, college-educated families. They attend MCC because they realize that an education will enable them to obtain a "better" job and life. I agree with

LindaLee that sometimes their college instructor is the only role model they may see. For the most part, students will follow the rules of the classroom as long as the rules are made clear. However,

the campus environment outside the classroom may contradict the behaviors instilled by an instructor. As I walk around campus, I pass groups of students in conversations using language that I do not hear in my class. I never say anything to those students and wonder if anyone ever does so. When students purchase their books in our college store, those books are placed in a bag that contains a magazine solicitation that prominently displays covers of pornographic magazines. Newly registered students are given a package of free samples at registration. A couple of years ago, there was a male and a female box of free samples. The cover on the female box displayed a young woman in a skimpy dress and contained a condom inside the box. Granted this is coming from a woman who wears skirts down to the ground, but nonetheless. . .! I feel that these things are degrading to our students. Do these things send the message that we value you as a person as we value education? Now, that's my opinion.

Here is a follow up. I spoke to Bettye Wilson about these samples. The samples are provided to the college by advertisers. Since those who complain (in this case--me) should also take action.

Samples For Teaching Problem Solving

This summer I attended a workshop at Kettering that featured NSF visiting scholar Dr. James Stice from the University of Texas Austin. During the workshop, which was entitled "How to Teach Problem Solving, we worked in pairs on sample problems that students could use to develop problem solving skills.

Dr. Stice suggested that students should work in pairs with one problem solver and one listener. The instructor should give the problem by overhead or on the board, so that students do not have to copy it. The problem solver reads the problem through aloud from start to finish. Then he/she speaks aloud as the problem is worked out. The role of the listener is to listen. The listener has only two possible reasons for interrupting: 1) if the problem solver has said something very strange or 2) after two minutes of silence. In general, the listener should not coach the solver, but a small amount of collaboration is permitted.

Dr. Stice encourages students who have a difficult time getting started to "shut up, think, and start somewhere". Whenever possible, students should draw a sketch, make a list, or use another tool to make the problem visual. He allows seven to ten minutes to work on one problem. He finds that two partners is the best arrangement. However, if three are in a group, one is the problem solver and two are listeners.

Dr. Stice also shared the following strategy with us for problem solving.

- 1) Define the problem.
- 2) Think about what type of problem this is--do I have what I need or do I need to acquire something.
- 3) Plan.
- 4) Do it.
- 5) Look back to see if a reasonable answer was obtained.

It was quite enjoyable working on some of these problems in the workshop, and each one did not require much time. Sample problems specializing in a particular subject area could also be developed. Find a partner and try some of the sample problems.

PROBLEM ONE

You have twelve pennies, eleven of which are identical in weight. The twelfth penny is either lighter or heavier than the others, but you don't know which. Devise a method for finding the different penny, and for determining whether it is lighter or heavier than the others, and in the minimum number of weighings. The method must work for all possible cases. A double-pan balance is available, and you have no other equipment.

PROBLEM TWO

One morning, exactly at sunrise, a Buddhist monk began to climb a tall mountain. A narrow path, no more than a foot or two wide, spiraled around the mountain, rising to a glittering temple at the summit. The monk ascended at varying rates of speed, stopping many times along the way to rest and eat dried fruit he carried with him. He reached the temple shortly before sunset.

After several days of fasting and meditation he began his journey back down along the same path, starting at sunrise and again walking at varying speeds with many pauses along the way. His average speed descending was, of course, greater than his average climbing speed has been.

Prove that there is a spot along the path that the monk will occupy on both trips at precisely the same time of day. Your proof need not be mathematical.

From Adams, Conceptual Blockbusting

PROBLEM THREE

You are a jaunty young knight who has set out to woo and win the hand of a fair princess. In your audience with her father, you find that he likes to play games. He is willing to give her to you in marriage, but he wants to be sure that you have the smarts to make your way in the world without a royal handout, and that you can keep her safe and happy. So you have to earn her hand. He takes you to a tunnel far under the castle and tells you to make your way to her.

After proceeding down the tunnel for a long way, you come to a "T". One branch leads to the room where the princess is waiting for you. (She is a comely lass, forsooth, and well worth the risk you are taking.) The other branch leads to a roomful of very unpleasant characters who will kill you and eat you.

Each branch is guarded by a large, muscular fellow, and each knows which branch leads to the maiden and which branch leads to death. One of the guards always tells the truth, and the other one always lies (bad genes).

You are allowed to ask one question only, and you may ask it of either guard. If you ask more than one question, the guards have been instructed to kill you--immediately and painfully.

What is the one question you should ask--and what will you do when you receive the answer?

PROBLEM FOUR

You are biking over some rather difficult roads, on your way to a friend's house. It is so hilly that you average only 6.0 miles per hour on the way to his home. On your return you pick an easier road, of identical distance, and average 10.0 miles per hour getting back to your house. What was your average speed for the entire trip, in miles per hour?

PROBLEM FIVE

You have only two containers, one which will hold 9.0 liters when filled to a mark at the top, and another which will hold 4.0 liters when filled to a similar mark. You have an unlimited supply of water, but no other equipment of any kind. How can you measure out a volume of exactly 6.0 liters of water in the 9.0-liter container?

Tech Gadgets in the Classroom

While a blackboard (or whiteboard) can be an effective teaching tool, there are many other learning aids that are available to us in the 21st century classroom. Some are better suited to certain subject matter than others, but the instructor's creativity is the biggest factor in determining which and how to use technology in the classroom. Here are some examples of ideas I have come up with. Please share some of yours!

1. Laser pointer - not a very high tech gadget, but it is very convenient for pointing out items on a blackboard or screen, as well as for showing computer students *where* on the computer screen they should be working.
2. Smart cart - in a regular classroom without computers, a smart cart with screen enables the teacher to use the computer for instructional purposes. Whether it is demonstrating how to do something, or showing web sites on the Internet that illustrate a concept, or showing graphics (art, photographs, architecture, etc.), the smart cart provides access to a broad range of instructional possibilities.
3. PowerPoint lecture slides - many textbook manufacturers now provide lecture "notes" in the form of PowerPoint slides (with accompanying textual material). These slides also include the graphics from the book, making it much easier to help students understand difficult concepts.
4. Streaming audio - this new technology is more applicable to distance learning students, but classroom students can also benefit if they have to miss a class for any reason. Rather than recording a lecture on a cassette tape recorder, a computer can record it digitally and make it available across the Internet ("streaming"). (There is some additional "fiddling" involved in making each lecture available, but the purpose of this article is to make you *aware* of the technologies that *could* be used.)
5. Streaming audio with PowerPoint - the same process can be used to record both audio and the progress of PowerPoint slides. This is still difficult to make available across the telephone modem because the download speed is too slow, but the lectures can be saved onto a CD and checked out from the Testing Center. This is a new technology that we are just now working on.

6. Blackboard website- which many faculty are already using, offers the opportunity to make files, documents, and web site links available to the student on a 24/7 basis (any time they are ready to study). Even in a traditional lecture class, the addition of a Blackboard website can greatly enhance the student's learning experience with a minimum of fuss on the teacher's part.

The two biggest challenges in using new technology are (1) getting the process figured out the first time and (2) thinking of a creative and *beneficial* way to employ the technology. The Faculty Support Center staff can help with both of those challenges. You only need to ask! The use of technology for technology's sake does not help anyone. Using technology as a "tool" to supplement, enhance, or clarify learning, however, is a win-win situation for everyone.



CETL FOCUSES ON CRITICAL THINKING

During the past academic year, the Committee for Excellence in Teaching and Learning has focused on the theme of critical thinking. We have explored methods of expanding our own critical thinking skills as well as techniques for helping our students develop this skill.

The CETL fall conference entitled Active Problem Solving was held off campus at the GASC. The presenter, Jim Gardiner, kept us mentally and physically challenged all day.

Mr Gardiner stressed the following principles for building effective divergent thinking:

- Don't judge the ideas.
- Look for lots of ideas.
- Accept all ideas.
- Make yourself "stretch" for ideas.
- Take time to let ideas "simmer".
- Join ideas together - "be a hitcher hiker".

Faculty

who attended the conference found the presenter to be extremely motivating and enjoyed his expertise and enthusiasm. High marks were given for the active nature of the group.

Dr. Leonard Kaplan, the chair of the Wayne State University Curriculum and Instruction Doctorate Program here at MCC, was the presenter at the CETL winter conference entitled "Can Our Student Think Critically? We Can Help!". He shared the following characteristics of a critical thinker.

To think critically one must:

- Hear and understand what is being said
- Read and understand what is written
- Have a knowledge or experience base related to what is being said or written
- Be open-minded
- Be able to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information
- Be able to communicate in verbal or written form
- Be able to defer judgment
- Be free of prejudice or stereotypes
- Persevere
- Know the opposition
- Have an ounce of skepticism
- Feel free to question
- Exercise good judgment
- Be intellectually curious

This is what faculty who attend liked best about this conference.

"Dr. Kaplan"

"Suggestions for ways of being creative in the classroom."

"The food" "Personal stories that I can relate in classroom situations to my students."

"Knowledge with humor."

"The group application process of teaching Hamlet."

"The speakers's love of teaching and appreciation of students and their learning processes."

"Humor, group activity great food."

"Practical information."

"Creative and entertaining teacher."

"Dr. Kaplan himself, and his very entertaining way of presenting information."

"Dr. Kaplan told a lot of stories to illustrate his points. The food was great."

"Lunch was great."

On March 21, CETL sponsored a brown bag lunch to share methods that we have used to encourage critical thinking in our students. Here are some ideas that were mentioned in the discussion.

- People have preconceived ideas or are closed to certain ideas. This prevents them from exploring new ideas. If an assignment is designed in such a way that students must explore something from an opposite or new perspective, it helps to overcome this barrier in thinking.

- An instructor can model critical thinking for the students if he/she uses these skills when answering student questions in front of the class.
- Students can learn about a concept that has not yet been defined, such as logical fallacies, by using the concept during the course of the semester. When the term is finally introduced, it is easier for students to grasp .
- Students can develop critical thinking skills by writing sample exam questions for other students or by critiquing other student's work. For example, online English 101 students analyze a writing sample for content and quality and also criticize the analysis made by other students. This analysis produces some thoughtful comments.
- Students can be asked to predict what something must look like or how it must perform in order to accomplish a particular goal.

Thanks to all who attended the conferences ad the brown bag lunch and thanks to those who sent comments about the BB lunch. Look for another lunch in April.

Jan Ackerman, CETL co-chair

Assessment Update

The results for the 2002 administration of the *Academic Profile* are back! As you may remember, the *Academic Profile* is the standardized test we have been using to assess our students in the area of general education. This is the third year in a row we have administered this assessment too. It was again administered to 500+ MCC student the last week in January. Thank you very much to those of you who helped with this project!

The overall mean for this year is 43642 on a scale that ranges from 400 to 500. This is slightly higher than last year;s score of 34.2 and very similar to the 200 score of 436.2. Our scores are all very comparable to other tow-year colleges. The test results also provide subscores for three academic areas;; Humanities, Social Sciences, and Natural Sciences, and for four skill dimensions; critical thinking, reading, writing, and mathematics. the results will be presented in detail at the September 2002 faculty meeting.

Now that we have three years worth of data using this assessment too., we will begin administering this test only once every other year. This will allow time for changes to be implemented before another measurement is taken.

As most of you know, we are now preparing to begin the Institutional Portfolio assessment starting next fall semester. The assessment teams have been formed and will have an orientation session on April 19th. This process will add a new dimension to our assessment of general education and hopefully provide us with some useful feedback about how well our students are learning. If any of you would like to serve on an assessment team and have not yet volunteered, please let me know. We can still use you!

Susan Edwards, Assessment Coordinator