

Friday @ the Center: September 15, 2006

Day of Common Learning: Globalization

As you plan for autumn quarter, please remember to schedule The Day of Common Learning on October 18 into your course syllabus. Classes between 8 a.m. and 3 p.m. will not meet, but you are encouraged to develop creative ways to encourage students to attend the morning plenary with Dr. Joel Carpenter and the afternoon breakout sessions. Explore ways to connect your course to the theme and consider assigning students to write about or discuss one or more sessions. Our many disciplines provide a variety of ways to approach globalization. If we all tackle this topic from a slightly different perspective, we will get a rich variety of ways to approach this pressing issue. And why not propose an afternoon session yourself? We still need more session sponsors. Contact me to propose a session or try out an idea. A complete list of all the seminars, with descriptions, will be available on the Day of Common Learning website on October 2.

Faculty Book Circles

Are you interested in meeting regularly with other faculty to discuss aspects of your vocation? Consider joining a faculty book circle. Each group will consist of five to eight people who will meet three to four times a quarter to discuss a book provided by the Center. If the conversation goes well, the group may elect to continue meeting into the next quarter. Book Circle 1 will examine *The Art of Reading Scripture*, edited by Ellen Davis and Richard Hays—the speaker at this fall's Presidential Forum. A collection of essays from a variety of leading Biblical scholars, *The Art of Reading Scripture* outlines ways of reading and interpreting biblical texts that provide invaluable assistance in our task to provide a biblically centered education for our students. Several book circles read this book last year and found it approachable and educational. Book Circle 2 will consider *Gender and Grace*, by Mary Stewart Van Leeuwen. The subtitle of this cogently written and well-researched book says it all: *Love, Work, and Parenting in a Changing World*. Van Leeuwen's insights will provide much fodder for reflection on our own lives as well as ways to think about working effectively with both our male and female students. If you are interested in joining either of these Circles, please send me an email with your name, the book circle, and a list of times that you would be available to meet during a typical week during fall quarter. Deadline to enroll: Sept. 22, 5 p.m.

Using Pretests

When you enter your classroom on the first day of class, you are not being greeted by a tabula rasa, even though it might seem that way. Your students already know some things, think they know even more, and probably have some pre-conceptions about your course. To ascertain some of this, a pretest can be useful. Try to design a test for your particular course that 1) demonstrates what they already know on the subject, 2) reveals what they don't know (did those prerequisites take?), 3) identifies some preconceived (possibly erroneous) assumptions about the subject, 4) identifies their preconceptions about the course itself and why they enrolled, 5) conveys through the type of questions asked (terminology, kinds of problems they will be able to solve after taking the course) what the course is REALLY about. Pretests can give you a baseline of student knowledge and attitudes that you can use for comparison at the end of the course, even by giving the same test again. You could also hand back the pre-test at the end of the quarter so that students will see how much they have learned. (Adapted from Dick Walters, Professor of Computer Science, UC Davis).

Grant of the Week

The National Humanities Center offers 40 residential fellowships for advanced study in the humanities from Sept. 2007 to May 2008. Young scholars as well as senior scholars are encouraged to apply, but they must have a record of publication, and the Center does not support the revision of a doctoral dissertation. In addition to humanities scholars, the Center accepts applicants from the natural and social sciences, the arts, and the professions who are engaged in humanistic projects. Fellowships of up to \$50,000, plus travel expenses, are available. Jack Levison, School of Theology, held this fellowship a few years ago, so talk to him if you'd like a more up close and personal account. Applications must be postmarked by October 15, 2006. See <http://www.nhc.rtp.nc.us> for forms and instructions.

Think globally . . .

Susan

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