

Friday @ the Center: November 4, 2005

Midterm Evaluations

You've been evaluating the learning that's been going on in your class via midterm exams, but the middle of the term is also a great time to solicit some feedback on the learning activities of the course, not just the content. A great pedagogical tool is a simple mid-course evaluation. Take five minutes at the end of class and ask your students to write a brief response to two questions: 1) What has helped you learn so far in this course? 2) What would help you learn more? Read through the answers and take five minutes during your next class period to comment on and address the responses. Student input may help you make some midterm adjustments to the design of your course, if necessary. And research demonstrates that if you take the time to do this exercise and provide the class with some feedback on their comments—showing that you have listened to them (even if you disagree)—your final course evaluations improve.

Ten Things to Do or You can Kiss Your Class Goodbye

Number 8 from Luke Reinsma: **"Give students the option of rewriting their papers.** Doing rewrites has three advantages. First, it invites students to actually read not just your grade but your comments. Second, it introduces them to the possibility of discovering new ideas. And, third, it gives students hope, which is what gets all of us up in the morning. For the record, it works best to limit students to a single rewrite (so that grades don't get ratcheted up interminably), to require students to submit both the first graded paper and the revision (so you can compare the two), and to raise the paper grade by no more than a grade (1/3 for editing, 2/3 for paragraph-level revision, and 3/3 for a substantial rewrite). Lest this seem too onerous a burden, you can skim these rewrites with ruthless efficiency—5 minutes a paper.

Grant Opportunities

- **INTERNAL:** Explore the possibility of integrating technology and instruction. Instructional Technology Services, the Center for Scholarship and Faculty Development, and Computer and Information Systems are sponsoring a grant of up to \$5000 to support innovative uses of instructional technology at Seattle Pacific University. Complete guidelines can be found at http://www.spu.edu/depts/its/grant/technology_grant.html. **Deadline: Jan. 3, 2006.**
- **EXTERNAL:** The Council for Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU) awards up to 3 grants of \$15,000 enabling scholars to meet, share research, critique each other's work and plan for future individual or collaborative research projects related to a common theme. Approved projects will create scholarly networks that hold promise for dissemination of scholarly results in high quality academic venues, thereby introducing Christian voices into contemporary academic conversations beyond the Christian academy. See www.cccu.org/projects/ig for application forms and criteria. **Deadline: Feb. 1, 2006.**

Barbara Walvoord Workshops

Don't miss the rare chance to participate in a workshop with renowned faculty developer Barbara Walvoord, a Fellow of the Institute for Educational Initiatives and Professor of English at the University of Notre Dame. On Monday, Nov. 14, from 3-5 p.m. the workshop "Classroom-Based Assessment and Grading" will be held in Otto Miller Hall 109. Tuesday, Nov. 25, from 9-11 a.m. a workshop on "General Education and Assessment" will be held in Upper Gwinn Commons. The

first workshop will be useful for any faculty member; the second should be of particular interest to department chairs and faculty who teach in the SPU general education program—including freshman seminars, CORE courses, Foundations Courses, and Exploratory Courses. That covers a lot of you!

Think of the rain as an opportunity for increased learning—snuggling before the fire with a good book.

Susan

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