

Friday @ the Center: October 12, 2007

Getting Students to Read: # 1

One way to encourage students to do your course reading is to explain the relevance of the assignment. Without an explanation in the course syllabus as to why particular readings have been selected, students are less likely to complete reading assignments. Establishing the assignment's relevance to the course topic and structure (why read this now instead of later?) both in the syllabus and at strategic points within the term is beneficial. Most students, especially those who are beginning learners either in college or in an academic discipline, are not skilled at making inferential connections between items that are seemingly dissimilar or only loosely related. What may seem like belaboring the obvious to you is often news to students. The more overt connections you draw between a course's learning goals and the reading, the more likely students are to view the reading assignments as worth doing. Such connections need to be voiced repeatedly through the quarter; the more frequently students hear explanations of reading-to-learning connections, the better. (The first in an on-going series, adapted from The Idea Center's Paper #40.)

Day of Common Learning News

Check out the DCL website to plan which of the plethora of intriguing afternoon sessions led by your colleagues you will attend: <http://www.spu.edu/depts/csfd/dayofcommonlearning.asp>. And to help us learn more about Jürgen Moltmann and hope, Steve Perisho—librarian for humanities, theology, and fine arts—has compiled an outstanding bibliography, found at http://www.spu.edu/depts/library/general_reference/bibliographies/CommonLearning_07.htm

Grant Writing Activities

Did you know that SPU faculty members recently submitted grant applications to the National Science Foundation, the National Institutes of Health, Wells Fargo, the United Methodist Korean-American Association, United Engineering, and the Rotary Club? You, too, could write a grant application to support your teaching, research, and/or service. To do initial research into possibilities, look at the October edition of *The Grant Advisor*, which can now be accessed through on-campus computers at <http://grantadvisor.com/tgaplus/>. It contains 20-25 full program reviews and over 300 listings of grant and fellowship programs. If it generates any possibilities, be sure to contact Laura Lundahl (Lundahl@spu.edu), the SPU academic grant writer, for an initial conversation about your ideas and the grant writing process.

New CCCU Initiative Grant Opportunity

In the past few years, several SPU faculty members have received networking grants from the Council for Christian Colleges & Universities. The CCCU recently announced a re-design of the Initiative Grants for Networking Christian Scholars program. The purpose of this annual project is to enable small groups of Christian scholars to network in ways that will lead to individual and collaborative scholarship on focused themes of keen interest to the larger academy. Beginning with this round of applications, up to four 1-year **Scholarly Planning Grants** of \$2,500 each will be awarded annually to research teams wishing to *plan* a research project. Up to two 3-year **Initiative Grants** of \$18,000 each will be awarded annually to *implement* research projects. For a full description of both programs, application information, and criteria, see www.cccu.org/ig. Application deadline: Feb. 4, 2008.

Emily Dickinson calls autumn leaves, the “Ribbons of the Year . . . Worn to Nature’s Party.” Enjoy the party!



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