

Friday @ the Center: October 26, 2007

Students Headed toward Graduate School?

If you have students who are planning to apply to graduate school either this fall or in the future, encourage them to attend the CSFD's seminar, "The Nuts and Bolts of Applying to Graduate School," on Thursday, Nov. 1, from 9:30 to 10:20 a.m. in DH 261. Topics to be discussed include the application process and timeline, GREs, obtaining recommendations, and writing the personal statement. This seminar is offered every fall quarter, with a complementary seminar called "Is Graduate School for You?" offered each spring quarter.

Faculty Luncheon on Multicultural Pedagogy

A few spots are still available for the faculty luncheon exploring multicultural pedagogy on Thursday, Nov. 1, from 12:30 to 2 p.m. in Upper Gwinn. The new Dean of Theology, Doug Strong, will present a short talk called "Stumbling Toward A Multicultural Pedagogy in the Classroom" at 1 p.m. A buffet lunch will be served, so those who finish teaching at 12:50 are welcome to arrive a little later. Please RSVP to Anna Dufault (adufault@spu.edu), by **noon on Monday, Oct. 29**. This event is co-sponsored by the Diversity Committee, the Center for Scholarship and Faculty Development, and the Office of Academic Affairs.

Student Reading Tip # 3: Preview the Reading

When students open a textbook, they can be overwhelmed with the complexity, length, and vocabulary of a reading assignment. Prepare them for reading assignments by giving a brief introduction, mystery, or teaser. Preview the main idea of the chapter and explain how it fits into the organization of the class. Pose an intriguing question and ask students to note how the text answers this question. Tell them something about the reading that piques their curiosity: "You are going to learn some strange facts about rats in tonight's reading." Research suggests that merely mentioning something about the a specific reading during a class will increase the probability that students will complete the reading assignment. (The third in an on-going series, adapted from The Idea Center's Paper #40.)

Midterm Evaluations—of You?

During this midterm period of the quarter, as you assess how your students are doing in their classes via exams, papers, and projects, it can also be useful to solicit some reflective and evaluative input from them. A simple five-minute evaluation can give you lots of information about how the class is going. Simply ask students to write brief anonymous responses to two questions: 1) what are some of the things that have helped you learn the most in this class? and, 2) what kind of things are interfering with or keeping you from learning? Reading through their responses can give you some valuable input for midcourse corrections. After collecting their feedback, take a few minutes the next class period to respond, noting where there seem to be common problems or successes (i.e., "I'm happy to hear that your small group discussions have been lively and intellectually stimulating"). If students complain about some aspect of the course that you believe is crucial, you can explain again the rationale for the activity (i.e. "you need to write weekly reflection papers so that you can be sure to understand the reading assignments"). But if two-thirds of the class reports that they can't follow your lectures, it's time to do something different.

Watch this newsletter next week for more about our new plagiarism prevention service, SafeAssign!



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