

The Faculty Development Program

The Faculty Development Program supports faculty at Santa Clara University as teaching scholars. Programs and services promote two general goals:

- To enhance the professional development of Santa Clara University faculty.
- To explore how students learn and to support faculty in cultivating student learning.

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From Dreary Facts to Great Debates: Liberating the Survey Course to Engage Students' Minds

J. David Pleins, Professor of Religious Studies

"The sixties have been over for some time now, so it's okay to cut your hair short."

With that startling comment from a new hair stylist, an entire era came to an abrupt halt on top of my head. What happens when our teaching needs the same sort of buzz cut?

For me the rude awakening came when I was dumping out the old slide tray.

"What a cumbersome way to teach," I snarled. "Every time I want to insert a new slide for some archaeological dig, I have to lift out all the others and reset the lot just to make room for one or two more pictures."

And God help you if you forget to replace that ring on the tray only to dump out all the slides by accident, as I have done on several occasions.

My experiment began with digitizing some of those slides. That, of course, was liberation enough, as the computer allowed me to sort and cut and insert painlessly. But then the question arose, "How can I create a learning environment that is more engaging and less passive regarding the content of these slides?"

It's one thing to run through pictures of archaeological sites, statues of famous philosophers, and the like. It's quite another to explore the material as an intellectual problem.

So, I decided not only to put up images but questions. And here was the big revelation for me. The pictures and course readings were largely about ancient things—myths, philosophic treatises, gospels, etc.—but I realized that the questions that matter to me are the enduring ones.

So from the first class session right through to the very end of the quarter my students confront not just an endless stream of dreary pictorial "facts" but questions that provoke exploration and discussion:

- Why are we addicted to the hero myths?
- Do we need enemies in order to be civilized?
- Why are most terrorists male?

- Why is the world so cruel?
- Has the Holocaust destroyed belief in God?
- Are we prisoners of pleasure?
- Are we the playthings of blind nature?
- Does science or religion offer the better truth?

Well, of course, gone were the endless discussion sheets (and my hopeless attempts at plastic overheads). As with picture slides, the flexibility of digitized text slides permits revising discussion questions on a moment's notice.

By intermingling provocative questions and pictures, I've been able to have an on-going dialogue with students, even as I illustrate particular bits of the course readings. The key for me has been using the technology to bring together facts and dialogue. It's not just gizmos, but an orientation to the subject matter.

For their part, students also do a mix of readings that draw on ancient, modern, and postmodern things. So the Epic of Gilgamesh sits side-by-side an article on the terrorist "profile" today. Or a popular essay by Carl Sagan on our place in the scheme of things jostles with Archibald MacLeish's play *J.B.*, a modern rendition of the book of Job.

The questions prompt vigorous discussion, even as the images and readings find a context in which students debate what the material represents.

Now the tech savvy will realize that I'm talking about using that nefarious program PowerPoint. I'll be the first to admit I hated that program when it was first introduced and didn't keep track of its improvements. But the fact is I came at this technology backwards by asking what I wanted to do in the classroom, rather than letting the program's cookie cutter structure dictate how I present the material.

I suspect I do curious things not intended by the program, but a liberating pedagogy demands we remain creative as we construct our class sessions. Whatever you do, I encourage keeping those engaging questions front and center in your courses. ■

Services and Programs

Teaching Support

- Confidential Classroom Visits
- Open Classrooms with the “Faculty Development Professor”

Research Support: Grants

- Internal University Grants
- Faculty Student Research Assistant Program

Groups and Teams

- Mentoring teams or partnerships
- Grant writing groups and research writing groups

Resources

- Website: www.scu.edu/facultydevelopment
- Small resource library of books, videotapes, and articles

Programs

- Pedagogy in Perspective brown bag discussions
- Teaching Scholar Symposia
- Research Colloquia
- New Faculty Orientation, Workshops, and Retreat

Transference and Teaching: Learning and Emotion in the Ethnic Studies Classroom

Juliana Chang, Associate Professor of English and Ethnic Studies

There’s a saying: “The classroom isn’t therapy,” meaning that the classroom is neither the place for the display of emotions nor for the presumed goal of feeling good about oneself. This comment is often directed at gender studies and ethnic studies courses. It is as much a self-commentary as commentary from the outside. Professors in these fields often defensively assert the intellectual rigor of their fields against common perceptions that their courses are merely “feel-good” courses for women and people of color that function to make others “feel bad.” I believe that the classroom isn’t therapy, but I must clarify: Do I feel that a course is a success when many students demonstrate and articulate empathy with non-dominant populations? Yes. Do I think it is a good outcome when a student is able to make an emotional connection to the material and therefore becomes more deeply engaged in his or her own education? Yes. Am I afraid that at some point a student’s racial trauma will emerge and I won’t know how to handle it? Also yes. I do have a fear of being an inadequate “therapist.”

Thus, while I subscribe to the belief that the classroom isn’t therapy, I also think it is important to question that belief. Emotional and psychoanalytic dynamics are inevitably at play in every classroom. One of my colleagues put it this way: the classroom is a site of repeating and remembering. Students repeat what they remember. They remember what they have been told by authority figures – parents, pastors, teachers, TV provocateurs, peers. They may unconsciously challenge, address, or mimic these authority figures when they speak in the classroom.

What does it mean to think of the classroom as the site of transference – the site of the projection of feelings and

fantasies? How do students project their feelings and fantasies onto us as authority figures? What does it mean when the authority figure is a woman, a person of color, a woman of color? Why do courses engaging controversial subjects such as race and gender receive lower evaluations? How does a student who receives a lifetime of reinforcement, however subtle and unconscious, that he or she is superior to members of another group, feel when he or she is placed in a position of subordination to a member of that group? And what about the counter-transference? What feelings and fantasies do faculty project onto students? What emotional demands do we make of our students, consciously or unconsciously?

I want to name three feelings that I believe form a knot of emotions when students learn about and acknowledge suffering: anger, fear, and sadness. Anger is the most evident. Some feel anger at learning of injustice. Others feel anger when they think they are being blamed for injustice. How do we respond to the anger of our students? How do we respond to our own anger when we encounter ignorance (which can be both an excuse and a privilege)? And how might anger function as a way to not feel fear and sadness?

What about fear? When my student from Vietnam refuses to write a paper on the Vietnam War for fear of what her white classmates will think, or when students of color say things to us privately that they are afraid to articulate in class, what does that do to our learning environment? When Bridget Cooks shows photographs of lynchings in her class, the images inevitably evoke fear and horror. They also evoke defenses, attempts to manage the fear: students ask, for example, “What did he do to deserve being lynched?” as if a

reason or rationale would mitigate the terror and horror. And what about our fears – the fears, for example, that untended women faculty or faculty of color may feel about being evaluated by students who may feel threatened by our very authority?

What about sadness? When my class watches videos that dramatize the war in the Philippines at the turn of the century or the genocide of indigenous peoples, I feel sorrow but I don’t speak of it. Perhaps I have internalized the therapist model, believing that my role is to act as a blank screen to draw out the feelings and fantasies of my students? And what about my own feelings and fantasies? What are the consequences of silencing my feelings for the sake of encouraging student responses?

Psychoanalytic critics make a distinction between acting out and working through. Acting out is a more unconscious manifestation of emotion whose consequences can be chaotic or dysfunctional. Working through involves acknowledging emotion, going through the fire to emerge on the other side. Buddhists believe that emotions can dissolve, but only if we are fully present with them. My call is for us to learn how to be present with emotions in the classroom, both our students’ and our own. Being present, in Buddhism, as in psychoanalysis, leads not to hanging on, but to its very opposite, to letting go. I don’t believe in easy answers. But I do believe that peace, letting go, and frequently, real engagement and deep learning, are possible if one has the courage, for the moment, to not feel good.

■

Schedule of Events Winter and Spring 2006

	Winter Quarter	Spring Quarter
Pedagogy in Perspective Lunchtime discussion of teaching and learning 12:00-1:00	Gender and Authority in the Classroom Tuesday, January 17 Wiegand Room	Seeking a Balance between Overteaching and Underteaching Tuesday, April 11 Wiegand Room
Teaching Scholar Symposia A series of symposia on professional development 3:45-5:00	Focusing on Learning Instead of Teaching: Redesigning a Departmental Course Tuesday, February 7 Wiegand Room	How Assessment Can Help Students Learn (And How Angel Can Help Faculty Grade) Wednesday, April 26 Wiegand Room
Research Colloquia Conversations about research, scholarship, and the creative process 12:00-1:00	Fifty Ways to Promote Research Tuesday, February 28 Wiegand Room	Integrating Research and Teaching Monday, May 8 Wiegand Room

The Research-Productive Department

Diane Jonte-Pace, Associate Vice Provost for Faculty Development

How can departments promote a climate of scholarship at SCU? What is the role of department chairs? What sorts of institutional support would enhance the University's sense of being a "community of scholars"?

Twenty-five faculty gathered in November for a lunchtime discussion of these questions, with Catherine Bell (Religious Studies), Pat Hoggard (Chemistry), and Alex Zecevic (Engineering) initiating the conversation. The conversation focused first on the role of the department chair in mentoring, providing judgments, offering incentives, and creating a culture of scholarship. Second, the conversation turned to suggestions for institutional change that might better support research-productive departments. An outline of the conversation follows.

The Role of the Chair

Mentoring

The chair must play a mentoring role, pushing faculty gently but firmly toward high quality scholarship, helping them build a sense of confidence about their research, and ensuring that they understand the significance of publishing in top level peer reviewed venues.

When mentoring new faculty, the chair must aim to transform teachers into teaching scholars. One strategy: encourage involvement in national scholarly organizations.

The chair must encourage faculty to avoid focusing on tenure as if it's the major hurdle. Rather, the chair should counsel faculty to develop long-term plans for a whole career as a teaching scholar.

The chair should not encourage faculty to publish the dissertation. It takes too long. Instead, encourage new faculty to use the first two years at the University

to write two or three articles that move beyond the dissertation.

The chair should encourage new faculty to find a niche for service that interests them, where they can make a real difference.

Judgments and Incentives

The chair must be willing to make judgments: if faculty can't teach well after two years, let them go.

The chair can assign courses that will jump-start faculty research.

The chair can reward the department's best scholars with their choice of course schedules and with funds for conference travel.

Creating a Scholarly Climate

The department must discuss research together, *Continued on page 4*

Learning and Aging: Enhancing Cognitive Function Throughout the Lifespan

Patti Simone, Associate Professor of Psychology

The fountain of youth eluded Ponce De Leon. Even so, Americans born today can expect to live nearly 30 years longer than Americans born a century ago. The current challenge is not adding years to our lives, but keeping the life in our years. What can we do to age successfully?

Rowe and Kahn (1998) suggest three keys to successful aging: (1) maintain high cognitive and physical functioning, (2) stay engaged with life, and (3) avoid disease. In

this article I'll emphasize ways that we can improve cognitive functioning to promote successful aging.

Physical function is an important factor in successful aging. The benefits of exercise go beyond improving the cardiovascular system. There is mounting evidence that physical exercise also improves brain function. The brain suffers damaging consequences of aging. The hippocampus, a part of the brain essential for learning and memory (e.g., Numan, 2000), is especially targeted in the

aging process. Changes in the hippocampus are correlated with the decline in the ability to learn new tasks (e.g., Gage et al., 1984).

The deleterious consequences of aging on the hippocampus can be prevented or reduced by exercise. Studies have found that older adults (65+) who exercised throughout life lost less brain tissue than non-physically fit aged adults (Colcombe et al., 2003), and that aerobic fitness improved performance on cognitive tests (Kramer et al., *Continued on page 4*)

Research-Productive, continued

sharing their work-in-progress on retreats, seminars, through collaboratively written grant proposals, and in other contexts.

The department can organize regional conferences to showcase the scholarly work of the faculty.

The Role of the Institution Possible changes:

Streamline the annual evaluation systems, developing a more rational and less time-consuming approach.

Initiate a mid-associate review similar to the mid-probationary review.

Consider asking all faculty to apply for promotion to full professor within 12 or 15 years in rank.

Institutionalize interdisciplinary connections through the Centers of Distinction.

Support undergraduate research in a way that benefits faculty scholarship.

Promote a climate for scholarship by sponsoring regular lunches for faculty with common research interests. (Note from editor: SCU faculty are invited to apply for Faculty Study Group Grants to support this kind of gathering. Please see www.scu.edu/facultydevelopment/grants.cfm)

What's next?

To follow up on this conversation the Faculty Development Program invites faculty to participate in a winter quarter conversation on "Fifty Ways to Promote Research" on February 28 at noon in the Wiegand room. The article can be downloaded from the Faculty Development ERES site (but reading the article is not required for attendance).

We also invite faculty to read the recently published book, *The Research Productive Department*, Bland et al., 2005. A chapter can be downloaded from the Faculty Development ERES site. Contact the Faculty Development Program if you would like to borrow the book. ■

Learning and Aging, continued

1999). Sedentary people lose brain tissue faster than active people, with likely cognitive consequences.

While exercise is one way to improve cognitive function, it is not the only way. Simply being a college professor may help. Compared to the general population, college professors perform significantly better on cognitive tasks (Shimamura et al., 1995). How do our professorial responsibilities improve cognitive function? Just as we encourage our students to become lifelong learners, we also model that practice ourselves. We are constantly learning in the classes we teach and the research in which we engage. We are surrounded by intellectually stimulating events including colloquia, museum exhibits, and theatrical and musical performances. Our jobs and lives provide continuous mental stimulation. This stimulation has a positive impact on our cognition, and likely on our hippocampi.

Many universities, including Santa Clara, are inviting older community members to benefit from this rich learning environment. In 2004, with a grant from the Osher Foundation, Santa Clara University began an Osher Lifelong Learning Institute. Today SCU is one of 73 award recipients across the United States. SCU has nearly 200 Osher members (ages 50 and older) including regional alumni, parents of students, and local Santa Clara residents. SCU Osher lifelong learners are invited to many on-campus events and can register for a variety of members-only short classes (10 hours) and workshops (4 hours) taught by SCU faculty. These classes emphasize learning for learning's sake. There

are no tests, homework, or pressure. Members love the opportunity to learn, and the faculty who teach enjoy the opportunity to stimulate their hippocampi in new contexts. (See www.scu.edu/osher for further information.)

The University environment fosters successful aging for SCU faculty, staff, students, and community members by encouraging high cognitive functioning through the life cycle with a variety of intellectually challenging events. Those who participate are likely to age successfully.

A recent study by Milgram et al. (2005) gave explicit advice for successful aging. The study found that a diet rich in antioxidant foods, an active lifestyle, and continuous intellectual stimulation can reverse the negative effects of aging...in dogs. Yes, even old dogs can learn new tricks if they eat right, exercise, and have adequate mental stimulation. Professors too can learn new tricks. There's no magic pill or elixir, but aging successfully is something we all can do.

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