

Insights & Ideas for Teaching and Learning

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Common Courses in Accounting

The accounting principles courses serve as the foundation for all other accounting courses and are contained in the pre-core of the business degree. On the average, eight sections of financial accounting and six sections of managerial accounting are offered each term. There can be as many as seven different faculty (including part-timers) involved in teaching each principles course.

For many years there had been a perceived disparity in course coverage, academic rigor, and final grade distributions among various accounting sections, despite the use of a common textbook. To insure that all students receive the same body of knowledge and are subjected to the same degree of rigor, the accounting faculty adopted the policy of requiring common syllabi, computer projects, and examinations to all students taking the course. Financial accounting, the first principles course to adopt this policy, began this program six years ago. Managerial accounting adopted the same course of action two years later.

The first step in moving toward common course requirements is the appointment of a course coordinator. It is the coordinator's responsibility to oversee the text selection process, order books, establish test dates and reserve classroom space for the common exams. Because common examination dates

require a two to three hour block of time, these examinations are generally scheduled for Wednesday or Friday afternoons or evenings. The dates and times are printed in the Schedule of Classes to forewarn students of potential time conflicts. All students (night and day, on and off campus) take the exams at the same time.

Once the text book has been selected, faculty teaching the course meet and agree upon chapter coverage, individual chapter assignments, point distribution and the division of duties. Each faculty member is responsible for drafting one of the exams or the computer assignment. Once prepared, first drafts of tests are submitted to the remainder of the faculty for review and comment. Different versions of the same test are created and the number of copies needed are distributed to the various faculty on the day of the examination. The faculty member responsible for drafting the test also prepares multiple copies of the solution for distribution to remaining faculty teaching the course.

Examination times are strictly adhered to so that all students are given the same opportunity to complete the problems. Faculty determine point distribution for problems and grade all examinations at the same time. If needed, a curve is established for the specific test and applied to all students enrolled in the course.

Faculty perceive common course requirements positively because the same

attention is given to assigned topics by all. Collaboration on exam preparation allows for input while distancing the individual faculty member from claiming sole responsibility for exams and exam results. The task of instructing part-time faculty on their responsibilities is virtually eliminated because the common syllabi directs their actions.

Standardization of grading and solutions also reduces student objections from one class to another and gives students a valid reference against which to measure their own performance. The practice of requiring common syllabi and common examinations has been used by the math faculty as well as accounting. It has merit for use by any course that serves as the foundation for other courses and which has several different faculty teaching the course over the year.

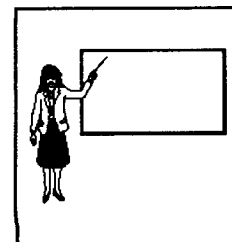
--Sandra Pelfrey

Metaphors for Teaching

Teachers create an image of themselves in the classroom. They can become more aware of how they envision themselves as educational practitioners by considering that metaphors control how they practice in the classroom. Because of the teacher/student power dynamic, teachers establish metaphors which control their behavior and that of their students. Public speaking teachers have traditionally created metaphoric roles of expertise as "information dispensers" and "performance physicians." Though these metaphors certainly help teachers solidify their authority in the classroom, it is important to notice their effect on students. As information dispensers, teachers position their students as passive recipients who learn through acquiring the information needed to speak well. As performance physicians, teachers treat their students as unknowing patients who await the doctor's expert diagnosis and prescriptive recommendations regarding the assimilation of this new information into speakers' performances. These metaphors set up teachers as "know-it-

alls" and students as "know nothings." These educational metaphors promote student dependence to the exclusion of responsible independence while also undermining the students' ability to grow stronger in managing their presentational interaction.

Instead, as Shor, Freire and Richards suggest, teachers could think of themselves as artists of their educational



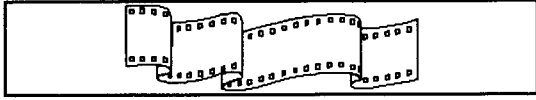
practice. This change in metaphor helps teachers to see themselves as artistic leaders who help shape the interaction which they and their students experience in the classroom. As Moreno points out, the creator metaphor, more than any other, empowers individuals to choose how they interact. When teachers see themselves as creators, they take responsibility for initiating interaction that generates a different sort of student learning. When teachers/artists/creators teach, they learn to look freshly at what meanings they envision their students forming in the classroom interaction. They treat each new communication challenge in the same way a potter treats clay. Teachers see their role in the power dynamic as generating the leadership to inspire the artist in their students. They experiment with ways of encouraging student speakers to become active creators and listen to the impact their teaching has on students. When speakers, in turn, learn to take responsibility for becoming creators, they see that creating meaning is an art form, and they listen to how their art reverberates with their audience. Like their teacher, they create an authentic voice which resonates with their individual distinctiveness in contributing something of value to others.

--David Lau

Moreno, J.L. (1971). *The Words of the Father*. New York: Beacon House

Richards, M.C. (1964). *Centering*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press.

Shor, I., & Freire, P. (1987). *A Pedagogy For Liberation: Dialogues on Transforming Education*. South Hadley, Massachusetts: Bergin & Garvey



Interacting with Videos in Spanish 215

As we all know, our students are products of a multimedia society and many are accustomed to being entertained without making a strong effort to learn. For this reason, and because we had the instructional audiovisual material and the equipment available, we decided to use videos in one of our classes--Spanish 215.

The program consists of a series of ten-15 minute episodes. The episodes have a continuing story line and thus are connected. The characters, who interact with people from everyday life such as older family members travel agents, hotel clerks, nurses, and many other persons, travel to several Spanish-speaking areas. Each video episode is divided into three parts: an introduction of the characters, the episode itself, and the practice section. The latter, offers two types of activities. In the first, the characters of the story appear and ask content questions on the video episode just seen. They pause after every questions, allowing for student response. The instructor may use a hand-held remote control unit to give students additional time for an answer, or even to play back a part of the episode from which the answer can be drawn, etc. In the second activity, one of the characters asks questions of the students who answer with information about their personal lives and experiences.

In order to be able to follow each episode with new situations, vocabulary and characters, the students are given some exercises in their workbook. Every such assignment should be completed before coming to class. This practice, aimed at encouraging the students to be attentive while listening, and to develop their oral skills, was very successful because they had the opportunity to study the vocabulary used

in the video and to do preparatory exercises. Consequently, they did not feel uncomfortable when exposed to every new episode in the video. Therefore, in this way we transformed what could be an obstacle into a helpful educational device.

--Patricia Montenegro

C a l l F o r N o m i n a t i o n s

Undergraduate Distinguished Achievement Award

Do you know of extraordinary undergraduate performance beyond that required for good grades? You can nominate an undergraduate for such achievements as exceptional reports, creations, or performances. Successful nominees receive a citation and \$500 at Fall commencement.

Watch your mail for the complete announcement on eligibility and criteria or call Geoff Brieger.

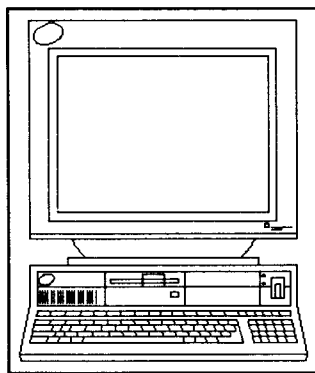
Enhanced Studies Program

The Academic Skills Center is offering a new and exciting program this fall to regularly admitted, under-represented minority students in business, engineering, mathematics and sciences at Oakland University. The program incorporates collaborative learning, insensitive faculty/student interaction, peer tutorial support, and motivational seminars on study skills, college transition, life skills and career awareness.

Gary Moss, the former Manager of the

M.A.R.C.S. program, is managing the Enhanced Studies Program (ESP). During the summer, he identified, hired, and trained nine Peer Study Leaders who conduct the study sessions for the specific sections of nine math, science, computer science, and accounting courses. These Peer Study Leaders are: Alex Cvetkovic, Lisa Dykstra, Amy Gibson, Pam Jackson, Vernita Johnson, Mesha Lee, Steve Ragan, Kathy Terbrack, and Ken Waddell. In addition, Michelle Cromer, a senior HRD major who is an intern for the program, assists Gary in his work.

One aspect of the program that makes it unique is the intense interaction of students and faculty. Four Faculty Liaisons have been given release time from their schools and from the College to mentor and advise students in the program, and to aid the administrators in providing appropriate services to ESP students. The faculty are: J. Curtis Chipman, Associate Professor, Department of Mathematical Sciences; Addington Coppin, Assistant Professor, Economics Department, School of Business Administration; Egbert Henry, Professor, Department of Biological Sciences; and Jerry Marsh, Special Instructor, School of Engineering and Computer Science. The faculty meet once a week with Gary Moss and Lynn Hockenberger, Director of the Center, to coordinate the work of the intern and the Peer Study Leaders.



One hundred and five students have applied to the program; five others are participating in the program by attending study groups and meeting with faculty but have not filled out applications. Sixty-four have signed a commitment form saying that they want faculty to report their grades in

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Editorial Information

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courses to the program manager, and eighty-seven are in courses specified as ESP sections or related ones. In addition to the support the program gives these students, the full range of services in the Academic Skills Center is available to them.

The Center has received a great deal of campus-wide support for ESP. During the spring and summer, the Office of Admissions and Scholarships identified students who were potential Oakland students eligible for this program. In addition, the academic advisers met many of them at Orientations and directed them to ESP. Since that time, the Office of Admissions and Scholarships has continued to talk to potential ESP students for the 1992-93 year and is distributing the ESP brochure to students in area high schools. George Stevens, Dean of the School of Business Administration, in response to a suggestion by Winfred L. Robinson, Computer Facilities Administrator in the School of Business Administration, has donated five AT&T personal computers for ESP students and all other students in the Academic Skills Center. The administrative Staff of the Center is very appreciative of the efforts that administrators, staff and faculty have made to enrich the services that this program offers to students at Oakland University.

--Lynn Hockenberger

Is there a topic you'd like to see addressed in *Insights & Ideas*? Call or write Virginia Allen, 520 ODH; ext 2190.