Journal for Academic Excellence

CAE Welcomes New Director Dr. Marina G. Smitherman

Center for Academic Excellence Dalton State College

A Division of the Office of Academic Affairs The mission of the CAE is to facilitate, support, and enhance the teaching and learning process at Dalton State College. The Center serves to ultimately improve student success and achievement of learning outcomes by promoting the creation of effective learning environments through the provision of resources and faculty development opportunities.

An email on May 14 from Assistant Vice President of Academic Affairs Andy Meyer announced that Dr. Marina G. Smitherman, Associate Professor of Biology, would take over as Director of the Center for Academic Excellence with the departure of Dr. Katie Pridemore.

Dr. Smitherman is a native of the United Kingdom. She earned a D.Phil in Biology and Master's in Public Health from Oxford University and taught there for several years before immigrating to the United States. She began teaching at Dalton State in Spring Semester 2008. She and her husband, Charles, who is an attorney in Dalton, have two young sons, Liam, 4, and Owen, 1.

Dr. Smitherman started the biology student honor society, Beta Chi Nu, and has also been active in undergraduate research. In April of this year she and her student Faith Stokes presented at the Council for Undergraduate Research's "Posters on the Hill" event on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC., and were also invited to the White House as part of this event.

Since beginning her career at Dalton State, Dr. Smitherman has been actively involved in teaching and learning, leading or participating in a book group every semester. Great teaching and facilitating faculty and student learning is something about which she is passionate.

Dr. Marina Smitherman

Dr. Smitherman was honored with the Dalton State College Foundation's Excellence in Teaching Award in April. Additionally, she was recognized with the Foundation's Excellence in Service Award in 2013, and says, "I think this job encompasses both these functions to be done well." She goes on to add, "I like to work hard and play hard, running and playing tennis in my spare time as well as being a member of the Dalton Junior Women's club for community philanthropy and engagement."

A Word from the Director

I am delighted to have this opportunity to serve such an excellent group of faculty by organizing professional development on campus to assist us all in continuing to do everything we can to help our students achieve. I have been involved in Teaching and Learning, either participating or leading a book group, every semester except one over my years at Dalton State, as well as designing and encouraging opportunities for undergraduate research in the Biology department. Student and faculty professional development is something that I am extremely passionate about, and I am enjoying working hard to serve you in this role.

Over the next few years, the CAE is focusing on how we can incorporate "High Impact Practices," which evidence shows motivates students of all ages towards learning, as well as providing them with the critical skills to help them succeed not just in our classes but in their careers and as advocates for the educational experience they received here at Dalton State. Expanding opportunities for undergraduate research, encouraging international study, providing them with a solid foundation in their first year, teaching them to write effectively, and embracing diversity, as well as doing our best teaching in the classroom amongst others, are goals that if met, with our low student-to-faculty ratio, will build a reputation for DSC as a top-class institution and will benefit us all.

We have some fantastic speakers booked for the Fall Semester, including Linda Nilson from Clemson University on creating self-regulated learners; Susan Albertine, Director of the LEAP project at AAC&U on high impact practices; Amy Buddie from Kennesaw State on undergraduate research across the curriculum, and Kim McCroskey from UTC on best practices for online, hybrid, and blended learning environments and what is new in instructional technology. DSC's very own Barbara Tucker has also kindly offered to run a workshop on E-Publishing to teach us all how to self-publish those books we are writing.

Our development book group for the year is Linda Nilson's *Teaching at its Best*, which has a little for everyone and is such a great resource that it will run over two semesters. We also have a couple of light-hearted "coffee and conversation" books including Parker Palmer's *The Courage to Teach* in the fall and *Teaching Underprepared Students: Strategies for Promoting Success and Retention* by Sandra Flake in the spring. The library has a fantastic calendar of Tech Talks and other opportunities, the ITSC will continue to provide D2L training, and we will be having some Career and Counseling sessions and Advising update training. The calendar also includes pertinent dates for local Teaching and Learning conferences - if you plan to go to these, let us know so we can organize transport as a group. Also new this year is a Facebook page and Twitter feed to help keep you up to date with our events, as well as RAP sessions or opportunities to reflect as a group and decide how material from our workshops can be applied to our classes and campus.

In a sneak peek for Spring 2015, our conference is set for March 20 with a theme of "High Impact Practices for Engaging and Retaining Students." Todd Zakrajsec, one of the country's most sought-after keynote speakers, will present on how research on learning is changing the way we teach.

We hope that through the CAE you all find something useful for your own development and in what you like to provide your students. In order to help us help you as best we can, please provide feedback to us often about what you would like to see offered on campus. If you would like to get involved with the CAE, please feel free to contact one of our leadership team members-- we would love to have you.

Welcome back to what we hope will be a fantastic year of professional development for us all,

Marina G. Smitherman, CAE Director

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From the Editor's Desk

Barbara G. Tucker
Department of Communication/
Faculty Fellow for Communication
and Publication

Welcome back! And to new faculty, welcome!

This is the academic year's first issue of the *Journal for Academic Excellence*. The publication schedule will be October, January, April, and June. You are encouraged to view the previous issues here to see the type of quality scholarship that has been published in the last two years. Submission guidelines are on the last page of this issue.

This issue is heavier on the announcement side and lighter on the scholarship side, but the second in a series of research on the self-directed learning practices of college faculty is included. The first in the series was published in the June issue. For the most part, we wanted you to have a hard copy of the schedule of CAE activities and other news. Normally, the *Journal* is published electronically and available on the CAE site.

For my part, I would like to share with you a CAE program that I will be directing over the next several months. In his book *A Long Obedience in the Same Direction*, Eugene Petersen writes about an encounter with a Red Cross bloodmobile worker who asked him, "Do you engage in hazardous work?" Petersen, a Presbyterian pastor, answered yes. The worker looked up at him, saw his clerical collar, and smiled. "I don't mean that kind of hazardous."

This story resonated with me a great deal in reference to my research. According to various websites, such as this one, being a college professor is one of the least stressful and most rewarding jobs in the country. I find this is an interesting assertion. I do find our work rewarding and less stressful than say, an emergency room nurse. However, to say that being a college professor is nonstressful and nonhazardous is to miss the daily life of the profession. It is stressful in the following ways:

1. The bar for success keeps changing; the external demands keep getting higher.

2. The source linked above says the median pay is less than $63,000.

3. The demands (and types and skills) of students keep changing.

4. Sometimes we are asked to be peace-makers, mediators, counselors, administrators, and other jobs for which we have not been educated. I had two experience within a week last spring where two students in the same class faced me with deep personal problems.

5. The politics and backstabbing can overtake collegiality (not at all colleges, of course; our institution is blessed with wonderful and helpful coworkers, but we know this is not always the case at other colleges).

6. Tenure in higher education is not what people think it is—permanent job security no matter what.

So, no, it is not physically stressful, and there are many rewards, but the research I am doing is showing me that the emotional, personal and intellectual demands can be quite daunting.

For these reasons, during the fall semester and probably into spring, the CAE will be having bi-weekly faculty mentoring groups. To accommodate the two ends of campus and busy schedules, these will be held in alternating locations. Although the discussion groups are based on Parker Palmer's *The Courage to Teach* and Peter Felten's *Transformative Conversations*, attendees will not be expected to read the books. These are opportunities to engage constructively and reflectively with colleagues from other disciplines and departments about what it means to be a college professor, especially at our institution. Coffee will be available but mostly a space for all of us to create relationships and talk about our experiences.

Faculty and Staff Recognition

Dr. Baogang Guo, professor of political science, conducted research on Chinese politics at the East Asia Institute of the National University of Singapore this summer in Republic of Singapore, where he served as a Visiting Senior Research Fellow. He wrote *Background Brief on China's Administrative Reform*, and published his paper, entitled "Virtue, Law and Chinese Political Tradition," on the peer-reviewed *Journal of Chinese Political Science*. He will also deliver a guest lecture on Chinese politics at the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy before returning to the U.S.

Dr. Kerri Allen, Assistant Professor of English, presented a paper entitled "On Birds and Men: And Now Presenting Thomas Churchyard" at the University of Southampton in Southampton, England, on July 14. The conference was The Society for Renaissance Studies on July 13-15.

Ms. Cheryl Owens, Assistant Professor of Nursing, presented a poster on her research at the National Nurse Practitioner Symposium in Keystone, CO, on July 9-13. The poster was entitled "Evaluating Student Health Needs at a Community College" and is based on her doctoral research.

Ryan M. Reece, Assistant Professor of Education, was invited by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (GaPSC) to serve as a member of the *English Education Task Force* for the State of Georgia.

The National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) updated NCATE Standards for English Education in 2012. As a result, the GaPSC *English Education Task Force* convened to review the existing English Education rule (505-3-.17) to determine needs for updating, refreshing, aligning or rewriting standards contained in the rule.

he purpose of this task force was to engage Georgia educators from colleges/universities, school systems, RESAs, and state agencies in developing educator preparation rules in the field of English Education.

Dr. Jonathan Gulledge, Associate Professor of Psychology, recently published the article "Judgments of Monkey's (*Macaca mulatta*) Facial Expressions by Humans: Does Housing Condition 'Affect' Countenance?" in *The Psychological Record*. His co-writers are Samuel Fernandez-Carriba, Duane M. Rumbaugh, and David A. Washburn. The article is available here.

Correction: In the June issue, Dr. John Lughart was listed as Associate Professor of Biology. He is a Full Professor.

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August 2014

Mon.	Tue.	Wed.	Thu.	Fri.
4	5	6 **New Faculty Orientation**	7 **Fall Faculty Assembly**	8 **Registration**
11 **First Day of A&B classes Late Registration**	12 **Late Registration**	13	14	15 **GERA Annual Meeting Abstract Deadline**
18	19 **Counseling Overview 9:30am & 3:30pm Brown 103**	20 **Open House, LIA 301, 2-4pm CAE Team**	21 **Coffee & Conversation – Courage to Teach, 12:30-1:30pm LIA 301**	22 **QPR – Suicide Prevention, 10am-12noon Brown 103**
25 **Coffee & Conversation – Courage to Teach, 12:30-1:30pm PH 202**	26 **Top Hat 12:30-1:30pm 3:30-4:30pm Brown 303**	27	28	29 **Promotion & Tenure Workshop, Sandra Stone & Celeste Humphrey Time TBA, Brown 103.**

notes

Teaching at Its Best Book Group led by Christy Price, Raina Rutti, Elizabeth Lucht & Marina Smitherman
Courage to Teach Coffee & Conversation Group led by Barbara Tucker
Counseling & Career Counseling run by Travis McKie-Voerste, Career Counseling.
Library Schedule organized and led by Melissa Whitesell and David Brown
ITSC Events run by Randy Ware
Schedule is correct as of August 6, 2014 and any necessary changes will be sent via Email, Facebook and Twitter
Further details on Professional Development conferences can be found on our website and will also be emailed.

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Sept. 2014

Mon.	Tue.	Wed.	Thu.	Fri.
1 Labor Day	**2** *Teaching at Its Best* 3:30-4:30pm LIA 301	**3** *Teaching at Its Best* 3:30pm PH 202	**4** Coffee & Conversation – *Courage to Teach*, 12:30pm, LIA 301.	**5** GALILEO Research Tools 9:30-10:00am & Creating ADA-Compliant Documents 10:30-11:30am & 11:45-12:45 Videos and ADA, Tech Tools for Classroom, Library
8 *Courage to Teach*, 12:30-1:30pm, PH 202. Scifinder - 1-1:30pm. ADA-Compliant documents 2:00-3:00pm, Videos and ADA 3:15-4:15pm All @the Library	**9**	**10** Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Journal Club, 2:00-3:00pm PH 202	**11**	**12** Linda Nilson, (Clemson) "Creating Self-regulated learners", 9:30am-12noon Brown 105
15 E-Publishing Workshop, Barbara Tucker 1:30-4:30pm Brown 105	**16** New Learning Express, Tech Talks @the Library 1:00-1:30pm	**17** Video Creation and Editing, Tech Talks @the Library 1:00-1:30pm Nilson RAP 3-4pm, LIA 301	**18** Coffee & Conversation – *Courage to Teach*, 12:30, LIA 301.	**19**
22 Coffee & Conversation – "*Courage to Teach*", 12:30-1:30pm PH 202.	**23** Intro to D2L, ITSC, 12:15-1:15 & 3:30-4:30pm Brown 303	**24** Alternatives to Powerpoint, Tech Talks @ the Library, 1:00-1:30pm New York Times in the Classroom, 10am & 3:30pm, LIA 201	**25**	**26** Amy Buddie (Kennesaw) "Undergraduate Research across the curriculum", 11am-12noon, Brown 105
29	**30** *Teaching at Its Best* 3:30-4:30pm LIA 301			

Oct 2014

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Mon.	Tue.	Wed.	Thu.	Fri.
	GURC Abstract deadline (Weds)	**1** *Teaching at Its Best* 3:15-4:15pm, PH 202 Intro to D2L, 12:15-1:15 & 3:30-4:30pm ITSC, Brown 303	**2** **Buddie RAP Session,** 2:00-3:00pm	**3** **Prezi Basics** 10-11am **Tech Tools, Library**
6	**7**	**8** **International Education Opportunities for Faculty & Students,** Time TBA, LIA 301	**9** **Midterm grades due**	**10**
13 **Fall Break**	**14** **Fall Break**	**15** **ePortfolios** 2:00-3:00pm **Tech Tools @ the library**	**16** **Coffee & Conversation –** *Courage to Teach,* 12:30-1:30pm, LIA 301.	**17**
20 **Coffee & Conversation –** *Courage to Teach,* 12:30-1:30pm PH 202.	**21** *Teaching at Its Best* 3:30-4:30pm LIA 301 **Drop Date**	**22** *"Teaching at Its Best"* 3:30-4:30pm PH 202	**23** **Mobile Apps and Web Tools for Education,** Tech Talks @ the Library 2:00-2:30pm	**24** **Susan Albertine –** **AAC&U, "High Impact Practices & LEAP.** 9am-12 noon **Brown 105.**
27 **Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Journal Club,** 12:15-13:15pm LIA 301	**28** **D2L Grading System,** ITSC, 12:15-1:15, 3:30-4:30pm, Brown 303 **Albertine RAP, PH**	**29** **D2L Grading System,** ITSC, 12:15-1:15, 3:30-4:30pm Brown 303	**30** **Coffee & Conversation –** *Courage to Teach,* 12:30-1:30pm, LIA 301.	**31**

Notes

Georgia International Conference on Informational Literacy, Savannah, GA Oct 10-11

STP Best Practices: Research based approaches for Teaching Psychology, Atlanta, GA, Oct 10-11

GERA Annual Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, Savannah, GA Oct 16-18

CAE
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Nov-Dec 2014

Mon.	Tue.	Wed.	Thu.	Fri.
3	4 Coffee & Conversation – *Courage to Teach*, 12:30-1:30pm PH 202.	5 Biofeedback/ Anxiety Reduction 10am & 3:30pm Brown 103	6	7
10 SEDSI Annual meeting conference deadline	11 D2L Quizzes, ITSC, 12;15-1:15 & 3:30-4:30pm Brown 303	12 D2L Quizzes, ITSC, Brown 303	13 Georgia Council of English Teachers Annual Conference Abstract Deadline	14 Kim McCroskey (UTC), "Best Practices for Online, Hybrid & Blended classes" 10am-12noon, Brown 105
17 Coffee & Conversation – *Courage to Teach*, 12:30-1:30pm PH 202.	18 "*Teaching at Its Best*" 3:30-4:30pm LIA 301 McCroskey RAP 2:00-3:00pm LIA 301	19 *Teaching at Its Best* 3:15-4:15pm PH 202	20 Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Journal Club, 2:00-3:00pm PH 202	21
24	25	26 Thanksgiving Break	27 Thanksgiving Break	28 Thanksgiving Break
Dec 1 Last day of A & C Session classes	Dec 2 Media in D2L, ITSC, 12:15-1:30pm & 3:30-4;30pm Brown 303 Finals	Dec 3 Media in D2L, ITSC, 12:15-1:30pm & 3:30-4;30pm Brown 303 Finals	Dec 4 Finals	Dec 5 Finals

Notes

AAC&U PKAL Network for Academic Renewal Transforming STEM Education meeting, Atlanta, GA, Nov 6-8

Core Matters Conference, Valdosta, GA Nov 6-7

Georgia Undergraduate Research Conference, Statesboro, GA, Nov 14-15

How College Faculty Use Self-Directed Learning, Part II: Adjustment to a New Role

Abstract: This article reports on the findings of qualitative research done with faculty members at an access institution in the Southeast. The four areas of self-directed learning that emerged from the action research project conducted from October 2013 to March 2014 were learning more about one's discipline, learning about information and instructional technology, learning to adjust to the role of college professor, and learning to adjust to the type of students at an access institution. Faculty who come directly from doctoral programs relate a sense of unpreparedness, although some have been fortunate to have mentors during their graduate assistantships. Faculty coming from elementary or secondary education can find the construction of lengthy syllabi, scheduling, textbook selections, and maneuvering relationships with new colleagues challenging. Faculty coming from the professions sometimes find that the students have unrealistic expectations about the profession and learning and that their job involves a number of roles in the didactic and clinical settings. The research also involved four faculty members from outside the U.S. who had to adjust to different student values.

Author Information: Barbara G. Tucker is an associate professor of communication. She has taught communication, theatre, English, developmental studies, and humanities for over three decades in private, technical, community, and four-year colleges. Her research interests are faculty development, political rhetoric, and research methodologies. She is a doctoral candidate at the University of Georgia.

This article is the second of a series of three reporting on the findings of qualitative research done with faculty members at an access institution in the Southeast (pseudonym SSC). The researcher investigated how the faculty members learned to improve their classroom instruction, especially through self-directed and informal means. The four areas of self-directed learning that emerged from the second cycle of the action research project conducted from October 2013 to March 2014 were learning more about one's discipline, learning about information and instructional technology, learning to adjust to the role of college professor, and learning to adjust to the type of students at an access institution. The first article in the series   discussed the self-directed learning of technology; this one will discuss the faculty's adjusting to the role of a professor, and the last will address how the participants explained their adjustment to the college's students.

Ongoing learning about one's discipline by itself was not the focus of this research; rather, how the faculty member became a better instructor of that content was in focus. As one long-term faculty member who engages in research stated,

his research in his field supported his classroom teaching. The time demands of faculty in a teaching institution put constraints on the amount of time faculty members can spend on research not directly related to classroom content. One overall observation from the interviews done with twenty faculty members in varying disciplines and at varying stages of their careers is that in the early years of college teaching, the faculty member tends to focus on the content involved in the specific classes he/she is assigned to teach, which is often at a freshmen or survey level.   Whether the professor comes from a professional field, from the P-12 system, or directly from graduate school, reviewing and sometimes re-teaching oneself the classroom content, as well as adjusting to the new role and institution, demands a great deal of time, and the faculty member may spend less time on innovative teaching methods at that point than later in his/her career.

The backgrounds of the faculty members bore upon their self-directed learning to adjust to this new role. Of the twenty faculty members interviewed for this project, thirteen came to teaching

from doctoral programs, often with very little class-room experience. Three came from P-12 systems or private schools, and four came from professional fields. Additionally, four were educated, at least undergraduate, in other countries, and four are currently enrolled in doctoral programs. This diversity was a benefit to this research. This article will be structured around the basic background experiences of the faculty participants.

Doctoral Programs to Teaching

Although thirteen came to teaching directly from doctoral programs, these faculty ranged in age from late 20s to 80, so there were in some cases several years between graduate school and working at SSC. Additionally, some came from other institutions that might have been research-oriented or comprehensive universities. Others had spent all their teaching lives at SSC. Therefore, not all of the participants mentioned adjusting to teaching per se, but all did discuss adjusting to the environment of an open-access college and to the types of student at SSC.

There has been a recognition in the last few years of the need to prepare doctoral students for teaching and not just research posts (Austin, 2002, 2003; Golde & Dore, 2001); however, these participants stated that doctoral programs did not necessarily prepare them for the routine and rigors of daily classroom teaching. One mentioned this perception several times through the course of the interview:

> I never had [Bloom's taxonomy] in school. . . . I didn't feel I knew what I was doing when I came here . . . I got some books, I'd ask some people about what the heck I was supposed to be doing here . . .I felt thrown into the deep end of the pool. That first year I was just trying to figure out what is meant to be a college professor.

A biologist reflected on his/her experience from several years ago:

> Most scientists come up with zero back-ground in teaching, so I had to teach myself everything about being a teacher.

Another stated,

> I have always wanted someone to help me how to be a better teacher. All through my doctoral program. and I guess people could say, that was up to you, you should have been doing that, and that's the self-directed part, I agree with that. . .

Interestingly, the four participants who are currently in doctoral programs and teaching full-time expressed some of the same perceptions that teaching was not expected of their programs' graduates.

> In the [program I am in] they tell us that we are going to teach you how to be a re-searcher. But don't expect this program to teach you how to teach. If you really want to teach and want a faculty position, we'll give you some classes, that is what the program does.

The second doctoral student stated:

> "Next semester [in my doctoral program] I have a one-hour class in teaching. The professor teaches in the university college and specializes in learning . . . . I read her syllabus and halfway through the course as part of the grade we have to do an illus-trated topic, a small teaching lesson . . .

In other words, one hour of the doctoral program is devoted to teaching.

On the other hand, a few younger professors did tell of helpful graduate teaching assistant experiences. One biologist recounted her time in a teaching assistantship:

> And when I was a TA in grad school, this is how I would up in the anatomy and physiology realm, I was a TA for a physiology class for pre-med and pre-vet. These were juniors and seniors, and the teacher who taught the class was really big on giving his TAs some autonomy to lead and teach the labs but he also provided a lot of feedback on, have you thought about this, why you are doing that that way, to make us think about why we were doing things. And I taught for him for six or seven

semesters so that was really good because he let us stretch out and not just be someone's little hired monkey and we got to really be the teacher once in a while.

One of the current doctoral students admitted that the stressors of doing two things full-time limited the ability to really focus on faculty development:

There are some things I want to learn but right now I have to be focused on the degree. . . . [I wanted to learn about] clickers (student response systems). Because [a colleague] had a program about it, and I wanted to use it . . . I don't remember a specific [CAE program] . . . I couldn't go to many of them because I have to leave here immediately to go to class [for doctoral program].

A young professor also disclosed a long-term view of adjusting to the college teaching profession:

I see how –I'm still at the front end of it. As time wears on, I can see how it can start to drag on you, I definitely have those days, where, this sucks . . . you have those days, and I imagine it can be easy to get cynical the longer you are at it, and I find try to be really aware of that, when I find myself slipping into that cynicism.

These findings corroborate what others (Austin, 2002) have concluded:

The problem is that not enough is being done currently to prepare aspiring or new faculty members for these different kinds of work and the various expectations that they are likely to confront. The external pressures confronting higher education institutions are creating the need for faculty members who are prepared with a range of skills. Some of these abilities and skills have long been expected of faculty members; others are new and are needed in the context of the changes occurring in higher education in the face of external pressures. (p. 125)

To this point, doctoral education seems to be ignoring the stressors and realities of the classroom that many, if not most, of its candidates will be facing if they pursue teaching. Austin (2002) also states that graduate education does not prepare future professors for the full panoply of roles, such as advising, committee work, grant writing, and community service. Colbeck (2008), in her discussion of professorial identity creation, advises that the contradictions between the research role advocated in doctoral programs and the teaching role awaiting most doctoral students can create great stress; additionally, "Much research about faculty work assumes that these identities and the activities associated with them are distinct, mutually exclusive, and conflicting" (p. 11). Golde (2008) concurs that "There is considerable evidence that new faculty members are not prepared for the professional life they enter . . . . Doctoral students are expected to infer from years of observation how to be a faculty member" (p. 16-17).

From P-12 to Higher Ed

Faculty who came from the P-12 system face different challenges. They are comfortable in the classroom environment but the college classroom is a new world. Learning a new kind of autonomy is the first task. One mentioned:

Yes, to use the Yodaism, I had to unlearn what I had learned and I'm still in the process of that even four years into it. I find myself asking permission to do certain things . . . because I was so programmed in public ed. They tell you in P-12 to think outside the box but never ask you who put you in the box to begin with.

Autonomy extends to picking textbooks. A first-year professor moving from a long career in public education said

I kind of botched that . . . Other [faculty] handed me books . . . I knew the author [of one of the books] from when I was in grad school . . . I ended up not asking students in these classes to get textbooks.

How many centers for teaching and learning have held workshops on selecting textbooks, yet it is one of the central tasks of college teaching? Related to choosing a textbook is construction of a syllabus.

> *"They are fourteen pages long. . . . I am clearly calendar challenged."*

One affirmed that his/her P-12 career had been invaluable in a specific way:

> *I know when I made the transition from public ed to higher ed, if I made that transition and it was difficult for me as an instructor, that gives me at the same time a wealth of information about what students are facing when they transition to higher education so it's benefiting me in ways that some of my colleagues aren't benefited.*

Professors coming from P-12 do not just face adult learners instead of minor learners; they face different ways of thinking about their discipline. To an extent, content takes precedence over pedagogy, and they find themselves having to spend most of their time in learning content in either a new way (more theoretical) or at a new level of difficulty. These challenges can cause anxiety.

> *My colleagues know where to put boundaries, they have more experience with this population. . . . I thought I'm not smart enough to be doing this, and it's really different working with adults . . . . [I've thought] I don't know nearly enough about this job to do it. . . . I feel like I've gone back to school . . I've been a practitioner of this but trying to explain it and make sure that I hit all the marks has been a process for me. . . . Holy cow, how did I get into this?*

Another change, of course, is dealing with a different kind of colleague who might engage in turf wars and who might not share the former P-12 professional's background.

> *I don't that some of my colleagues understand that readjustment because they haven't been in public schools and in some ways they've lived on an island of dreams. .*

> *. . When I heard people complain about their jobs I just kind of want to say you have no idea.*

Further, one said that while overall the college had been an embracing environment,

> *I know that [this] department is not looked at as highly as . . .*

Reflective Practice

In speaking to the former P-12 teachers, the expert-versus-novice distinction became clear to this researcher, as well as the conclusion that we are all experts in different topics. These former educators were the most knowledgeable and articulate about reflective practice. They spoke at length about their own methods for reflection, such as journaling through this first new semester in one case, and finding reflective practice to be a way of learning more valuable than typical workshops.

> *But if you're going to bring in a keynote speaker you've got to build time for reflective practice and say that reflective practice is important . . .*

However, although these faculty spoke the most about reflection, almost all the participants believed they had insufficient time for serious thinking about their teaching.

The subject of reflective practice as expressed by these twenty interviewees warrants a whole article. Some were unfamiliar with the term and expressed an aversion to "educational jargon." One younger professor said,

> *I'm totally not that kind of person.*

Others explained their own methods for reflection, which focused on the instrumental level as opposed to the deeper, adaptive level. In other words, faculty regularly spent time analyzing the classroom experience rather than reflecting on their assumptions, attitudes, goals, and values around teaching. For example,

> *I think I do that a lot in the sense of regret of what you were doing as reflective. After every test when I am grading them I think, why did they not learn that, and then I start*

regretting that I didn't use enough examples, so they will not do so bad on that program. After every single test I start thinking about what I can do differently about an area of the questions.

Reflection may be framed negatively because it often is motivated by a sense of deficit. However, not all professors experienced this feeling of incompleteness.

I don't think I've ever questioned my basic foundation. I'm pretty much what you would call old school. I was lectured to a lot, and I lecture, not all the time and . . . I have some nice tools to maintain the student interaction and all that kind of stuff, but I know what worked in terms of teaching me, so I incorporated what I saw from what I considered good professors and it seems to work for me.

The phrase, "what works, what doesn't work" or "what didn't work, what did" came up repeatedly. It became clear after several interviews that reflection was being defined, in practice, as focusing on the negative. This negative framing of the classroom life was a significant finding in this research. It was as if reflection meant only problem-solving and that the classroom was defined as a place of deficits. Further research is warranted to understand the roots of this bent toward self-criticism, its short- and long-term outcomes on the motivation and attitudes of professors, and if it is more universal than this environment.

Also, it was not clear to what extent reflective practice was seen as a learning process rather than a problem-solving process. Although some of the faculty could explain, when prompted, instances of a deeper level of reflection, these did not come as quickly to mind as times when they thought of reflection as figuring out why some instructional practice did not work. In fact, in a focus group held later with some of the participants, they were asked about this proclivity to frame reflective practice negatively. They agreed that they did not look at positives or successes in the classroom as much as seeming "failures" with the students. One professor said, "It's like voodoo" when the class works well, and although that is a humorous comment, the participants appreciated its aptness.

That being said, the faculty were not immune to deep reflection and insights. One professor, who had tutored athletes at a D1 university during her doctoral work, shared how that experience taught her not to assume she knew her students based on surface characteristics. She added:

I feel like it's kind of hard when you go in to a new class you know nothing about these people, and that's why it's so important for me to get to know my students because they are all coming from different places and if I'm not careful I'll just make blanket assumptions about all of them. . . . I find, that when I know that you are the single mom doing X, Y, and Z, it doesn't mean I'm going to make the class easier for you, it helps me to know why you are so exhausted every time you come into my class.

Another professor, teaching in the health sciences, stated:

The word assumptions, there were a lot of things I assumed and you just can't. I have to remind myself, they are just not there. Their life is their life. They have their own reasons for doing things.

One example, however, of adaptive learning involving reflection was mentioned repeatedly by faculty members who participated in faculty learning communities on course redesign and student engagement techniques. Faculty members were put in a position, through group interaction, to rethink their assumptions about the design of their courses. This experience mirrors what Garrison (1992) and others have claimed about self-directed learning. Although the learner exerts control in some choices, the construction of knowledge requires dialogue and collaboration with others to achieve the other necessary aspect of adult learning, critical thinking.

Coming from the Professions

Four of the participants came from careers in other fields—engineering and health sciences. The former engineer spoke about a professor in his undergraduate experience who chose not to follow the traditional wisdom of encouraging students:

> *He changed my life. He didn't intend to, but he did. He was the only one that I failed his class, one class in my whole undergrad, and it was him. He was the one who changed my vision for the doctoral program. . . It wasn't bad about failing. The class was just tough, he was tough. Even if I passed the class, the influence would have been the same. His background, his style of teaching. He was a life changer, he changed a lot of kids lives. . . . He wasn't nice to students, he was very realistic. He wasn't trying to say, the world is ok, you're going to be ok, you'll be fine, just work hard. . . If you can't graduate from this program you don't deserve to graduate from this program. And back in my head I said, I want to do that when I retire, teaching.*

However, one of his challenges with students was getting them to understand what his former professor inculcated.

> *I am concerned because the material is easy to read, but when the questions are asked in a different way but the concept is the same, they should be able to grasp the concept and apply in a different context and get the answer right. And I told them this is not about memorization, it is about creating critical thinking, you need to learn the concept and apply in a different context. They will complain that the test questions are wordy or opinionated, several comments, but I say, guys, these are standardized tests, kids from California are taking the same tests.*

Research participants were asked about professors in their pasts who had influenced them to become professor themselves. One explained that he learned from watching professors whom he considered good teachers. This observation leads this researcher to question how much our favorite teachers influenced our own methodologies and practices, even without our knowing it. Of course, we judged them to be good teachers *for us*, perhaps without regard to whether these professors were good teachers *for other students*. A faculty member in the School of Education explains how this factor affects education majors.

> *But they say, oh, anyone can teach, I've worked in camps, I've taught Sunday School or Vacation Bible school, and my favorite teacher in the third grade was Mr. So and so or Mrs. So and so. And they did these wonderful things that I want to do when I become a teacher, there is a difference in being an effective teacher who improves students learners and someone who engages students in activities and covers material or kept them busy, but then when you measure pre- and post-test there's been no impact on student learning. You can get up there and lecture and cover material, but at the end of the semester, the end of the year, how much growth have we really seen?*

The desire to teach is often sparked by memorable professors in our lives; the reality of the classroom demands a fresh and intensively reflective look at how that relationship may be affecting our classroom behaviors positively and negatively.

The other three faculty members coming from professional fields were in the health occupations. According to these interview, teaching in the health professions is different in several ways. As a former nurse said,

> *I feel like [learning to teach] is balls in the air, learning the teaching aspect. . . To go from clinical practice to teaching, it's a whole new ball game. And then the research, and staying abreast of the clinical knowledge.*

First, students face high stakes testing for

licensing and certification when they graduate, and expect the educational program to prepare them to pass a test so that they can practice. As one professor stated:

> Participant*: . . . but another obstacle was time, we had a certain amount of time to develop a certain amount of content, and it goes back to that need to know vs. nice to know. We just had to get the content in with the half to know.*

> Researcher: *You can't graduate people who can't pass the test.*

> Participant: *That's one of our benchmarks that determine how good the program is and our funding, and so much relies on the test results. Things like YouTube, and sure those are great, it wouldn't be testing teaching methods, and we didn't have the time to risk the students ability to get it, are they going to get it, and if not, and we can't get that time back.*

Second, the students expect traditional, content-driven teaching methods such as Power-Point lectures to prepare them for the tests, and tend to find nontraditional methods irrelevant to their purposes. Faculty members feel the pressure to cram a great deal of information into the classes. The students may not appreciate attempts to teach "differently" than straight lecture. Unfortunately, the students' perception of what the licensing test requires may be faulty.

> *But at the associate's degree level, and the caliber of students, they just want you to give them the answer, give me a question, give me the answer, and when I see it on the test I'll know it. The [licensing test] is requiring students to think, they give you case scenarios, and they ask they want you to answer questions based on those.   . It's not memorization like the students are conditioned to learn the material.*

Additionally,

> *It's almost like the students expected that, they come into the classroom with*

> *preconceived ideas of what to expect, from what they have heard from other students, word of mouth, they kind of know what to expect, and so that's what they expected, . . . they also come in with the expectation that I need the information that I will need for the [certification test], I really don't want the fluff, not the nice-to-know stuff but the need-to-know stuff. And they want that information given to them and PowerPoint was the way, and anytime I [try] to deviate from that and make the experience more fulfilling or take the learning to a higher level, there was resistance. . .*

Further,

> *My job is to make them safe practitioners, I want them to pass that test and be a safe nurse, and that's what I'm here for, but I can't give everybody the passions I have.*

This finding is not unique to students at the open-access institution under investigation. Levett-Jones (2007), in questioning the value of self-directed learning in undergraduate nursing education, cites several studies which show that nursing students "favor direct, concrete, teacher-structured experiences and highly organized activities with clearly stated requirements and expectations" (p. 366). She goes on to state that the pedagogical conditions to creating truly self-directed learning experiences for nursing students "may well create discord within teachers who for decades have taught in didactic, controlling, hierarchical educational systems" (p. 336).

Third, professors in a health sciences department are collaborating to produce a whole professional, and they must work together whereas differences might push faculty in other disciplines apart.

> *That's something to think about . . . . There's an end product, it's a program, we are creating a professional. In other disciplines they make it through your course, and they go to the next.*

Fourth, these faculty members approximate the old idea of "master-apprentice" in their clinicals

settings. They practice what Argyris called "Reflection-in-action"—they must quickly assess situations and respond in constructive, tactful, artful ways for the betterment of the student and the continued credibility of the program in the eyes of patients and professionals at the hospital or other site. Students can be extremely anxious. One professor said:

> You have to know what to say to them and what not to. And you have to figure out I don't want to burst their bubble too soon, but they've got to know this. There's a lot you have to think about as you go through this. And of course you learn to expect more and they gradually get used to it. They are really nervous out there their first semester, especially the first few weeks, sweat is pouring off of them, they go to a patient's room and they are shaking, and then by the end they know what to do.

Another related:

> That happens, and it's up to the instructor to intervene in a way to eliminate that distraction. In a way that will help the other students learn, but also, you're their mentor, they are looking at you for how to behave and act, so how you handle a situation, they're looking at that, they are learning. You are their role model.

Innovative procedures are needed in clinicals; one professor talked about her use of iPads.

> I introduced [the iPad] . . . and the students really like incorporating that into the clinical setting to look up drugs, disease process . . . they have instant access to the information but it's what they do with that information that's the link with the critical thinking process. You can be given information but it's what you do with it in applying that information to that specific situation. Each patient is different. You can look up a medication, and you can look up a disease and find out all about it, but each patient is a unique situation, so applying that

information to that patient's scenario is critical thinking in itself, and that's something you can't look up, so I think it's a good thing. It allows them to have access whereas they might have struggled before they had the technology. They might struggle to find that information and . . . you can't spend hours to find information because the time to act is coming on.

Finally, professors in the health fields have a burden of continuing education and recertification of their own in order to continue their ability to practice and teach—a responsibility that may not be appreciated by a college's reward system.

> When you talk about the medical disciplines, we may not publish a lot of things but we have to do so many hours of continuing education to maintain my advanced practice certification in the state of Georgia . . . to maintain my [license], I have to do certain things. . . . there is no place that it fits on that evaluation form.

How do these professors, coming from the world of health practice, learn to teach? Informal learning and attendance at CAE events or training were cited as helpful and needful for these persons. Because they are acculturated in their professions to attend training and orientations regularly, faculty development is part of the process.

> [In the faculty learning community] I learned what a rubric was, and I think that has helped me a whole lot especially as I am doing this online class to have rubrics and let the students know exactly how they will be graded and what I'm looking for. I learned the basics when I was sitting in there. They would say rubric and I would write it down and then go look up what a rubric was.

Another health professions professor said,

> I do, they were faced with the same challenges, but each has their own way of dealing with that. I feel like, my observation

was yes, and we would talk about it in faculty meetings and planning sessions on how to improve the program and classes . .. [They were] definitely informal but also planned meetings . . . and it was definitely encouraged by the, by each other, from higher up, to do that.

In terms of informal learning, one stated,

I think over here it's been more learning on the fly, like water cooler, what do I need to include, what does [the profession] want for this, it has been on the fly and such a crazy pace. They have three new faculty this year, out of 7, that's a lot of brand new people. So we do a lot of learning on the fly, but [our profession] is like that.

The same faculty member added,

And I was lucky enough to be able to sit in on their classes a couple of times before I actually started teaching so I had some information. I felt like that in the situation they did a good job in getting me ready, and as I went along I could go to them with questions.

(Not) Born in the USA

An interesting side benefit to this research into self-directed learning was to listen to the experiences and perceptions of faculty members who have immigrated to the United States. One of the participants was from South America, one from Europe, and two from Asia. In adjusting to the role of college professor, they have had to adjust to the role in a new culture. In three cases, the professors had experienced undergraduate or graduate education in the U.S. and therefore had familiarity with the American educational system. One, however, did not, and had moved from an elite European institution to the open-access environment. Their observations were rich, and their adjustments to the American college student will be covered in the last article in the series.

What struck this interviewer is their perception that American students view the professor-student relationship as more egalitarian and therefore less worthy of deference; the American students see the value of education as primarily instrumental (get a job or more pay) instead of intrinsically valuable; and they maintain the expectation that the learning experience was more the professor's job than the student's. These findings are not particularly new and have been discussed in other books, such as *My Freshmen Year* by Rebekah Nathan, an ethnographic study of student life at the University of Northern Arizona.

Conclusion

The ultimate goal of this research project is to create a more conducive environment for the self-directed learning of the college faculty. Understanding the variety of ways that these professors learn to adjust to their professional responsibilities through informal and self-directed means informs the intervention and helps faculty developers to create programs that meet specific faculty needs.

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Journal Submission Guidelines and Editorial Policies

1. Faculty members (and professional staff) may submit the following:

    *   Book reviews on scholarly works on higher education administration or issues, college teaching, or adult learning published within the last two calendar years.

    *   Scholarship of Teaching and Learning research. This is defined as a study in which an activity, strategy, approach, or method that reflects best practices or evidence-based research is tried in the classroom. The faculty member sets up an intervention, executes it, and assesses the impact, employing quantitative or qualitative methods. Articles should indicate that IRB process was followed where applicable, with documentation.

    *   Literature review that synthesizes, in a relevant and interesting way, the evidence, theory, and/or research on a particular aspect of higher education, college teaching, adult learning, brain research, etc. Professional staff could write about issues in student services or advising, for example.

    *   Essay of personal reflection of a classroom incident or phenomenon with an evidence- or theory-based approach to interpreting the incident or phenomenon.

    *   Articles should attempt to have c

2. Style Sheet

    *   Submissions should be in APA VI format and Times New Roman 12 pt. font. Use APA guidelines in terms of margins. The writer should try to preserve his or her anonymity as much as possible. The editor will redact the name of the writer from the document's title page before sending to reviewers.

3. Review Process

    *   The submissions will be peer reviewed by three faculty members, whose identity will be known only to editor and not to each other. One member of the review committee will be a faculty member in general discipline represented in the article, one will be a faculty member with an advanced degree in education, and one will be drawn from the advisory committee or other volunteer reviewers.

    *   Articles will be returned to the writers in a timely manner with an indication of rejection; conditional acceptance (revise and re-submit, with suggestions for doing so), and accepted (possibly with request to edit or make minor changes). A rubric will be used for assessing the articles. It will be available to potential submitters upon request. If none of the members approves the article, it will be rejected. If one of the members approves the article, it will be considered a conditional acceptance. If two approve it, it will be returned for the necessary editions and published when finished. If three approve it, it will be published as is or with minor corrections.

    4. Submissions should be sent as Word files to btucker@daltonstate.edu

    5. Published articles will appear in the *Journal for Academic Excellence*, which will be available on the Center for Academic Excellence's website and thus accessible by Internet searches.

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