



ATLE

Academy for Teaching and Learning Excellence

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CO-DIRECTORS

Dr. Steve Edison
Dr. Dave McAlpine
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ATLE THE ACADEMY FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING EXCELLENCE

From ATLE's Co-Directors

ATLE's co-directors share their reflections on teaching and their work with the academy on pages 6-8.



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CALENDAR

April 30
The ATLE office closes

Teaching Demonstrations

March 16, 2010

“Biology: A View from the Field”

Robert Sikes



“Take-Away” Strategies

- The way to learn something is to be involved in the most realistic situation possible.
- Students need to put theory into practice.
- Make use of the “teachable” moment to reinforce what may have happened in the lecture.
- Field-based experiences provide a better learning environment than the classroom.
- If we are not able to make the connection between theory and application, we are missing the goal.



Continued

“From Text to Activity”

Juliana Flinn



“Take-Away” Strategies

- Group work can be used to illustrate textbook concepts.
- Group work is great for those who haven’t done their reading.
- Group learning can be “fun.”
- Group work should involve all students.
- Group work can include peer instruction.



Teaching Demonstrations

April 2, 2010

“Drama Pedagogy”

Suzanne Wagner

Drama pedagogy is a holistic teaching and learning approach that uses techniques from the performing arts. It goes beyond the traditional (language) classroom and promotes humane sensitivities and understanding of interdependence. With its personalized yet content-oriented learning strategies, drama pedagogy addresses students’ needs and fosters their individual skills. Among other things, it promotes creativity; the communicative and interactive approach of language acquisition; emphasizes social, interpersonal, and kinesthetic learning; removes the teacher from the center stage; and is therefore a learner-centered teaching method.

Drama pedagogy is interdisciplinary and will aid you with its unique learning strategies. Through drama, you will be able to cooperatively build and learn new material. The communicative situations achieved through drama pedagogy, will stimulate and challenge your ability to take on grammar, literary texts, and cultural concepts.

“Take-Away” Strategies

- Talking with each other at the same time eliminates student fear.
- Drama pedagogy takes role-play further.
- Role-play helps students make connection with characters.



Continued

“Opening Day in Calculus I”

Tom McMillan

“Take-Away” Strategies

- Use examples and describe what they mean.
- Tell students on the first day a question that will be on the final.
- Use real world applications to keep students engaged.
- Show students how the topic matters and that the obvious answer is not necessarily the best one.
- Help students understand that math can impact how they think about the world



From ATLE's Co-Directors

(cont'd from front page)

According to Wikipedia, "reinventing the wheel" is a phrase that means to duplicate a basic method that has already previously been created or optimized by others. I have a history of many reinvented "wheels," both in my previous corporate life and in my subsequent teaching career. Often, my wheel has not been as true as the previous model. I find, to my surprise, that teaching is a very complex endeavor...encompassing a variety of sub-roles including creating and delivering content and course design, moderating discussions, assessing, and mentoring. I have reinvented (multiple times) each of these components for each class I teach. Now that I have been immersed in ATLE for a year, I see great value in the sharing process of the teaching demonstrations. I find ideas and practices in other disciplines that I can incorporate that would be unavailable to me without the ATLE activities.

My personal ATLE goal for the 2010/2011 school year is to investigate the changing role of college teaching in the 21st century. Students are changing (both younger and older), and technology is accelerating. Today's young students ("digital natives") are more at ease with technology than many faculty. On the other hand there is a growing body of older students with a far less sympathetic view of technology's promise.

One facet of the Teaching Academy should be to bring focus to these critical areas. Any input you might have would be appreciated. We will be formally asking for your input before semester's end and encourage you to participate.

Dr. Steve Edison

ATLE Co-Director

What a wonderful opportunity I was given three years ago! At that time I was appointed as one of the three Inaugural Directors of the new Academy for Teaching and Learning Excellence (ATLE). Actually, at that point the name was simply Teaching Academy. My Co-Directors, Dr. Carol Thompson and Dr. Michael Kleine, and I got to construct the academy from the ground up. Not many of us in our academic lives get the opportunity to design a university unit or program from scratch, and for this I am very grateful to the leadership of the Faculty Senate (Drs. Ford and Ramsey) and to Provost David Belcher. Those people allowed us the freedom to be creative without directives or intrusion.

I am very proud of the activities we created and offer through ATLE for faculty development, many that I am sure will become institutionalized at UALR. Among them are the very popular Teaching Demonstrations in which UALR faculty teach a 20 minute class in their specialty and then attendees analyze the lesson for applicability to their fields. The Shadow and Share program allows seasoned faculty to share their expertise with newer faculty. The keynote speaker series has brought renowned experts to campus to discuss college teaching with faculty. The Teaching Fellows Medal Award allows faculty members to share their ideas through attendance at ATLE activities, through sharing their written teaching philosophy, and through participation in discussions and presentations on the art of teaching both on and off campus. All of these ideas have made UALR a better place to teach and in turn offer a better education for our students.

In the fall of 2008 we moved into new space in Dickinson Hall. This move provided us with a presence on campus and a place for faculty to come and talk and to check out materials on teaching. DeAnn, Elizabeth, Ciara, Joan, and Reddy have worked as GAs in the ATLE office and have provided us with much-needed office and technological support during the past three years. (Continued on page 7.)

Continued

Dr. Steve Edison joined us this year as a Co-Director and I appreciate his insights and friendship. It has been especially rewarding for me to work with Carol, Michael, and Steve as we continue to shape ATLE for a permanent role on the UALR campus.

I know we have done good work and improved the quality of teaching at UALR. I sincerely appreciate having had the opportunity to serve the University in such a wonderful endeavor.

Dr. Dave McAlpine

ATLE Inaugural Co-Director 2007-2010

Derrick Bok, former President of Harvard University, and writer of the influential book about teaching, *Our Underachieving Colleges*, recently contributed an essay to *The Chronicle of Higher Education* in which he mused about the shift occurring in our universities. He notes that in the 1960's students were more likely to attend college to find a direction, a philosophy of life, a way of being, but in the 2000's students went to college to become competitive in the job market. Bok implies that something fundamental seems to be lost in this shift toward viewing the university as primarily a place where students are being primed largely to enter the job market.

When I reflect over my own educational journey beginning with college in the 1960's, I consider my motives for entering college: I wanted to learn, to know things, and I was willing to be influenced by the great writers, scientists, philosophers, and yes, instructors I encountered. Ask any of the students in your classes today why they are in college and they will say, by a huge margin, "I just want to get a good job." While being employable after college is certainly an important goal, something else should occur in college that shifts the focus from employability to the development of the human being. While we recognize students learn job related content in college, they also learn commitment, diligence and tenacity, and they are more likely to have grown into that elusive thing, an educated individual, who thinks broadly and critically about the world, who has been tempered in the crucible of great ideas.

Musing about these ideas this last year led me to read and reread several books that have been influential in our culture for the last hundred years or so. I looked again Victor Frankl's *Man's Search for Meaning*, for example, and several books by Eric Fromm, *The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher's Life* by Parker Palmer, and encountered yet again, the works of J. Krishnamurti. I found myself focusing on Krishnamurti and returned to several of his books and essays. I was intrigued by Krishnamurti's ideas because he writes about meaning in education, something implied by Derek Bok mentioned earlier. Krishnamurti argues in *Education and the Significance of Life* that if "we are being educated merely to achieve distinction, to get a better job, to be more efficient, to have wider domination over others, then our lives will be shallow and empty." This search for meaning in life reflects some of the perspectives I mentioned last year in my final ATLE essay found in Tisdale's *Spirituality in Higher Education* (on our bookshelves, by the way).

So what does all of this have to do with what I have learned as an instructor? Certainly, I want to create a climate surrounding my interactions with students that promotes a search for something deeper, beyond content. Krishnamurti phrased it this way, ". . . education in the true sense, is the understanding of oneself, for it is within each one of us that the whole of existence is gathered." Daunting words, words that imply that to be a good teacher in the fullest sense is to start observing ourselves and our interactions with others and to work toward the building of relationships between all the participants in the educational environment. (Continued on page 8.)

Continued

Another perspective, and one I ponder often, that Krishnamurti mentions again and again in his writing, the idea of equality in education, stating in one essay, “In the central concerns of education, which is to do with inner liberation, both students and teachers and learners are therefore equal,” implying that in this quest for inner development, which is an ultimate goal of finding meaning in education, both are working toward greater knowledge of self and, in spite of institutional constraints, the journey learner and instructor share together creates a more equal relationship.

In this Krishnamurti is echoing sentiments expressed by Paulo Freire in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* where he points out that deep learning occurs when both teachers and students are relatively equal, both learn from each other, and they do this through what he calls “authentic dialog,” i.e., real talk, honest talk. Following this line of thinking, then, an instructor must be willing to learn from students as together they co-create the classroom or the educational experience. Having the ability to shed the mantle of academic status and working toward co-construction of the educational experience suggests that the instructor must develop “deep insight into the hidden motivations of authority and domination. . .and this journey is the beginning of wisdom.”

I am still working on the wisdom part. No surprises here.

Dr. Carol Thompson
Inaugural Co-Director

Inaugural Co-Director Leaves ATLE

Inaugural Co-Director of ATLE David McAlpine is leaving his position at the end of Spring 2010. We will miss him. He was one of the first three directors of the Teaching Academy and put his imprint on this organization and the work it does for faculty. Dave, most particularly, was a star when it came to designing clever PowerPoint that described what ATLE did each year, designing invitations, and planning astutely for our programs and materials. Dave provided strong leadership in every phase of our operation: finances, planning, creation. If ATLE functions well, it is largely because of Dave’s insight.

However, he goes back to his department to work on even more pressing projects. We can’t say enough about his contributions to our organization. We wish him the best as he navigates the university without us, but we know he will continue to support us. Good luck, Dave!