

# CTE Today

A Newsletter for  
Teachers at USMA

Center for Teaching Excellence

July 2006

## Special Issue for New Faculty

### Welcome New Faculty!

Summer is the time for new faculty arrivals and we welcome you. We hope your move went well and that you are settling into your new home — whether it be on post or off.

Take the time to get acquainted, or reacquainted, with USMA. There have been many physical changes over the past 5-10 years, since many of you graduated. There are many new athletic facilities for your use, a newly renovated gymnasium, a new road north of Michie Stadium, and you can watch construction of our new library, Jefferson Hall (pictured), in the location where General George S. Patton's statue used to stand. As you immerse in your depart-

ment's new instructor training, give thought to the cadet experience at USMA, and how you can maximize their intellectual development. Teaching is your primary mission (along with being a role model and mentor) and your summer training will get you off to a great start. However, your education as a teacher is only just beginning; all professions take a lifetime to master, and teaching is no exception.

The CTE (Center for Teaching Excellence) will offer many opportunities for you meet with other teachers, discuss current topics, read relevant teaching literature, and observe others role modeling activities, tech-



nologies, and practices. Your XO will distribute information periodically regarding sessions or workshops for you to attend. You may want to consider enrolling in the Master Teacher Program (MTP). Watch for the sign-up and ask others in your department what they think of the program.

See you at the CTE!

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### From the Director

Welcome new faculty. In your honor, this issue of CTE Today inaugurates a new look and layout for the newsletter. Please send me your comments on the layout, content, errors, and things you would like to see but do not.

All faculty are invited and en-

couraged to submit articles for publication in the newsletter. Send me your ideas, success stories, classroom research, book reviews, notices, conference dates, and photos of good teaching in practice and I'll make every attempt to use it in an upcoming issue.



Dr. Mark Evans, CTE Director

### Conferences

Teaching Professor Conference, May 18-20, 2007, Atlanta, GA  
<http://www.teachingprofessor.com/>

Students in Transition, Nov. 3-5, 2006, St. Louis, MO  
<http://www.sc.edu/fye/events/sit/index.html>

The First Year Experience, July 24-27, Toronto, Canada  
<http://www.sc.edu/fye/events/international/index.html>

# Inspire Cadets to Learn, by Dr. Mark D. Evans

Good teachers and good leaders share many common traits — and one is the ability to inspire. Cadets will learn better, and become better learners, if they are inspired by you in the classroom. Be passionate about the material you teach and most of your cadets will be excited by that passion; it's contagious.

Epstein (1981) wrote, "What all the great teachers appear to have in common is love of their subject, an obvious satisfaction in arousing this love in their students, and an ability to convince them what they are being taught is deadly serious."

All material delivered in any way in a classroom should be carefully prepared. However, the method of delivery should also appear spontaneous, as if the teacher were having these thoughts and presenting that material for the first time. This gives the presentation a sense of immediacy, making it appear fresh and interesting to the student. Very often, teachers will have new ideas or insights into the material while presenting. Good teachers will rarely consult their notes during their presentations. The notes should be on hand in case they are needed, but not referred to very often.

Scholarship must be accurate, whether it is interesting or not. But teaching must be interesting, even if it is not 100 percent accurate.

G. Highet

Maintaining good rapport with the students is crucial. Watch for signs of confusion or distraction, and solicit feedback by asking, "Am I going too fast?" or "Should I slow down?" Pause occasionally and ask students to write down their "muddiest points." Highet (1950) suggests keeping students engaged during occasional slow spots by asking, "Can you people in the back row still hear me okay?" Other brief, occasional moments of levity can break up

a lecture heavy with content. Good instruction should be fun for both the teacher and the student; it should occasionally be difficult for the student; and, most importantly, students should feel like they are really learning something.

Students like to work hard, but only if they perceive some gain or reward. Likewise, students will take responsibility for their

The best way to keep students from being bored by a subject is to show them that you are not bored by it.

own learning, but only if they perceive that the instructor is working too. Lowman (1995) wrote that "we instructors . . . are responsible for appropriately motivating all students, from the gifted to the barely adequate and from the overachieving to the underachieving, to do their best work in our class and to appreciate the experience of making that effort."

An observer describing a class taught with high intellectual excitement might say that the content is well organized and presented clearly. Relationships between specific concepts and applications to new situations are stressed by the instructor. Content is presented in an engaging way, with high energy and a strong sense of dramatic tension. Finally, the teacher appears to love presenting the material (Lowman 1995). Energy, pattern of speech, and changes in facial expression and in voice volume all bring life to a presentation and emphasize the organization of the lecturer's ideas. Students like instructors who are energetic and explain things well. You'll know your cadets appreciate your enthusiasm in the classroom when they write end-of-course comments such as these:

- The enthusiasm displayed when teaching the material is awesome and makes the class enjoyable.
- I thoroughly enjoyed the fact that we never knew exactly what you were

going to be up to that day in class. It was one of the few classes that I looked forward to attending each day because it was always interesting.

- Your enthusiasm showed and the only advice I can give you is to continue to go into class showing your enjoyment to be there. It helps a student on any level when he shows that her instructor loves what he is doing.
- The material was very interesting, challenging and fun. I also like the professor's energetic teaching techniques. It made the class fun. He was also easy to approach for help.
- Some teachers use a "lecture" format and students tend to lose interest in those classes. In our class we had a lot of interaction and that was good. The class was challenging and interesting. I like the relaxed atmosphere/ teaching style. This made the class a lot more enjoyable!
- I enjoy your teaching style very much. Class was always fun, which I feel is important to learning.
- Your teaching style is great. I learned a lot from you, even though I really, really, really dislike anything that has to do with Math.
- You were also very energetic and enthusiastic and you made me look forward to your class.

The bottom line is this: The best way to keep students from being bored by a subject is to show them that you are not bored by it. Highet (1950) wrote, "Scholarship must be accurate, whether it is interesting or not. But teaching must be interesting, even if it is not 100 percent accurate."

## REFERENCES

- Epstein, J. (1981). *Masters: Portraits of great teachers*, Basic Books, New York.
- Highet, G. (1950). *The art of teaching*, Knopf, New York.
- Lowman, J. (1995). *Mastering the techniques of teaching*, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco.

## From the Vice Dean for Education

What an exciting time to assume the role as Vice Dean for Education at USMA! Our academic programs are as strong as they ever have been, we are starting the 06-07 academic year with a new Superintendent, a new Commandant, 1300 new cadets, and all of you outstanding faculty reading this newsletter, whether you are new or senior, rotator or permanent, civilian or military. I extend a hearty welcome to all new and returning faculty. I hope your summer training goes well, that you immerse yourself in it, and that you come away with a real inspiration to teach cadets.

Inspire! That should be your watchword in all that you do with cadets this year. Of course, we should inspire cadets to pursue a “career of professional excellence and service to the Nation as an officer in the United States Army”, as stated in the Academy’s mission statement. We should also inspire cadets to excel in physical, moral and ethical development. But just as important is our duty to inspire cadets to excel academically and intellectually. Serve as a role model for cadets as you help them to see the true excitement in intellectual development. We are all members of the same profession — Teachers. Show your pride in that profession, put your heart into your teaching, and it will pay huge dividends in cadet intellectual growth and development!

The Center for Teaching Excellence is an outstanding resource that I recommend to all faculty as you hone your teaching skills and reflect on your teaching experiences. Take the time to meet the CTE Director,

Dr. Mark Evans, and talk with him about teaching and learning. Use him and the CTE services as a resource for your continued growth as a teacher. Remember the CTE’s purpose is to enhance cadet intellectual development through high quality faculty development. I am a firm believer that the CTE adds real value to faculty development – all one needs to do is show up at a brown bag seminar, sign up for the Master Teacher Program, or drop by the CTE for discussion.

I know you all work hard in your teaching, leadership, and scholarship activities. Just remember to have fun too and enjoy time with your family.

Have a great Summer and a great Fall Semester. Hooah!



COL Dan Ragsdale, Vice Dean for Education



### CTE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

COL Sweeney  
LTC Meyers

COL Ressler  
LTC Thoms  
Prof. Saldivar  
Prof. Richmond  
Prof. Bucher  
LTC Heidenberg  
LTC (R) Rick Metro  
Dr. Tendy  
LTC Powell  
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BS&L  
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EE&CS  
English  
DFL  
G&EnE  
History  
Math  
DMI  
DPE  
SE  
SocSci  
Physics  
Law  
Library

### TEACHING-RELATED REFERENCES FOR NEW FACULTY TO CONSIDER

- Angelo, T. A., and Cross, K. P. (1993). *Classroom assessment techniques: A handbook for college teachers*, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco.
- Bloom, B. S., ed. (1956). *Taxonomy of educational objectives*, Longman, New York.
- McKeachie, W. J. (1986). *Teaching tips: A guidebook for the beginning college teacher*, 9th Ed., D. C. Heath, Lexington, Mass.
- Wankat, P. C., and Oreovicz, F. S. (1993). *Teaching engineering*, McGraw-Hill, New York. (Note: useful for all disciplines)
- Orlich, Harder, Callahan, Kauchak, and Gibson (1994). *Teaching Strategies, A guide to Better Instruction*, D.C. Heath and Co., Lexington, MA.
- Browne, M. N., and Keeley, S. M. (1986). *Asking the right questions: A guide to critical thinking*, Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, N.J.
- Epstein, J. (1981). *Masters: Portraits of great teachers*, Basic Books, New York.
- Gregory, J. M. (1998). *The laws of teaching*, Baker Books, Grand Rapids, Mich.
- Lowman, J. (1995). *Mastering the techniques of teaching*, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco.

## Quotes for Reflection

“If you want to build a ship, don’t herd people together to gather wood, and don’t assign them tasks and work; but rather, teach them to yearn for the endless immensity of the sea.”  
*Antoine de Saint-Exupery.*

A rock pile ceases to be a rock pile the moment a single man contemplates it, bearing within him the image of a cathedral.  
*Antoine de Saint-Exupery.*

# CTE

Center for Teaching Excellence

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Advanced Technology Classroom  
Laboratory (ATCL), 120 Thayer Hall

## CTE Purpose and Mission

The purpose of the CTE is to enhance cadet intellectual development through high quality faculty development programs.

The mission of the CTE is to:

- provide consultation and resources to faculty
- conduct educational research & development
- serve as a conduit for educational information

We are on the web:

<http://www.dean.usma.edu/centers/cte/>

*“People don’t care what you know until they know that you care.”*

*Congressman Jack Kemp*

## ATCL, Advanced Technology Classroom Laboratory

*The ATCL (120 TH) is still available several class periods for your use with your cadet sections for the Fall Semester. Cadets have access to tablet computers while in the ATCL along with TurningPoint Student Response System, ipods, and other technology. If such technology would improve teaching and learning in your classes, contact the CTE to schedule. Contact Mr. Jeff Rohrlack for more information.*

## CTE Services and Activities

- Fall Orientation Meetings
- Master Teacher Program
- Brown Bag Seminars
- Newsletter
- TALENT conference
- Apgar Award and Incentive
- Annual Luncheon celebrating teaching
- Developmental Workshops
- Individual Consultation/ Evaluation
- Advanced Technology Classroom Laboratory)
- Technology Pilot Programs
- Video Tele Conferencing
- Technology Workshops
- CTE Web site

## Newsletter Submissions

### Editor

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**Submissions** to *CTE Today* are welcome and encouraged. When submitting, please keep these guidelines in mind:

- We are interested in a wide range of teaching and learning topics.
- We are interested in innovative strategies, techniques, and approaches that facilitate learning

- We are interested in reflective analyses of educational issues of concern.
- Write with the understanding that your audience includes faculty in a wide variety of disciplines and in a number of different departments.
- What you describe must be relevant to a significant proportion of USMA faculty.
- Write directly to the audience, remembering that this is a newsletter, not a journal publication.
- Keep the article short; generally between 1 and 3 double-spaced pages.
- If you’d like some initial feedback on a topic you’re considering, you’re welcome to share it electronically with the editor.