

CTE Today

A Newsletter for
Teachers at USMA

Center for Teaching Excellence

April 2008

“Teaching people skills without giving them a vision for a better future, a vision based on common values -- is only training.”

Nido Qubein

Spring Teaching Tune-Up!, by Dr. Mark D. Evans, CTE Director

Spring is here, time to... clean the house, move no-longer-needed items to the garage for the yard sale, get the mower tuned and blades sharpened, put down pre-emergent crabicide ... time to close out the old and prepare for new beginnings in many areas.

“What teaching initiatives did you plan to work on this year? How did you do?”

Spring is also a great time to take stock of your teaching this year. What practices should be moved to the curb for removal? What activities need a tune-up? What things are working great and simply need to be reviewed and preserved?

I would recommend starting by reviewing your support form and teaching philosophy statement. What teaching initiatives did you plan to work on this year? How did you do? Did you remember to keep those activities on the front burner and actively collect as-

essment data, or were they forgotten as additional activities hit your plate?

Pull together data that you collected to assess your teaching activities. End-of-course feedback is good data, but just one data point, and why wait until the semester is over? What other data did you collect? Project grades, mid-term surveys of cadets, cadet interviews, your teaching journal (if you keep one), systematic meetings with other instructors in your course, feedback from observers, etc. all may be used as evidence of your teaching. For example — MAJ Jake Bruhl, DCME, put a short, check-list questionnaire on every problem set last semester to see what assets cadets used in their completion of the problem set (the web, video AI, the course text, other cadets, etc.). He also distributed a mid-course assessment form that asked cadets for feedback in several areas related to his teaching and cadet learning. He used all that data, along with his own assessment and with discussions conducted with other faculty in the course, to adjust his course and his teach-

ing as he moved forward to this semester. As you gather your own assessment data, evaluate whether you think the data and the sources are sufficient. If not, plan what you would do differently next time.

What external observations or mentors did you use for teaching feedback this semester? Some departments have rich systems in place to provide frequent observations and feedback. If you are not in such a department (or not in the MTP mentor program — see page 3) then seek out peers or senior faculty yourself and solicit their feedback. Invite them to your class, ask them to observe and keep notes, and ask them to share their comments with you after the class. I have never seen a senior

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NOTICES:

Apgar Award Packages are due in the CTE 1500 Friday 11 April 2008
See the CTE website for more information.
See page 2

Fifth Annual Academic Luncheon
1130 -1300 Monday
19 May 2008
at the West Point Club

Cost is \$12.50.

Contact Mr. Kermit Allen in the CTE or your department representative on the CTE Advisory Committee to sign up and pay.

Cash is preferred.
(A list of dept reps is shown on page 4.)

The Apgar Award for Excellence in Teaching, *by Dr. Mark D. Evans, CTE Director*

Purpose

This award has been established to recognize, encourage, and reward faculty members at the Academy by supporting teaching projects that improve cadet learning. Donated by The Honorable Mahlon Apgar, IV, former Assistant Secretary of the Army, this cash award (usually between \$300-\$500, but it can be as high as \$1,000) is presented along with the "Apgar medalion" which serves as a memento of the recipient's accomplishment.

Eligibility

Military and civilian faculty members who have taught at the Academy for one year or more are eligible for this Award. Preference will be given to junior faculty members whose projects show promise for affecting the largest number of learners and who have demonstrated promise as outstanding teachers, both in their impact on students in and outside the classroom and in their contributions to the art and methods of teaching.

**"Submission date for this academic year's award:
1500 11 April 2008
in the CTE office.**

Decision is expected to be announced at the 19 May Teaching Luncheon."

Selection Criteria

Three criteria of special relevance to the Award's purpose, the Academy's educational needs, and the donor's interests will be used in evaluating candidates' proposed projects:

the faculty member's contribution and commitment to developing and/or applying innovative concepts and methods of teaching that expand the cadets' horizons and their potential contributions as leaders and Army officers;

the faculty member's commitment to new teaching pedagogy and skill development among teaching peers;

the project's effectiveness in contributing to leader development--with special emphasis on developing integrity, responsibility,



MAJ Ray Kimball receiving a coin from the Dean at the Academic Luncheon last year for his selection as the Apgar Award winner for 2007.

ity, and creativity. (Note that the project may emphasize one or more of the criteria but need not address all three to be viable.)

Selection Procedure

The Superintendent will select each Award recipient, based on a nomination from the Dean of the Academic Board. The CTE Advisory Committee (representing all academic departments, DMI, and DPE) will make recommendations to the Dean based on submissions received by the Committee in accordance with the announced submission date.

Submission date for this academic year's award: 1500 11 April 2008. Decision requires confirmation by the Superintendent, is expected to be announced at the 19 May Teaching Luncheon, and the award will be conferred at the Fall Academic Convocation.

Format

Please submit nominations for the award to the CTE according to the following format in two single-spaced pages, exclusive of endorsement(s): Name of nominee, Academic rank, Department, Description of the Project, Needs, Endorsement of Department Head

Please note:

Individual departments are NOT limited to one nomination annually. All projects that conform to the Apgar selection criteria

APGAR AWARD RECIPIENTS:

- 2007 -- MAJ Raymond Kimball, History, "High-Tech Teaching in a Low-Tech Discipline: The Blended History Classroom"
- 2006 -- Dr Gary Solis, Law, "Development Of a Law Of Armed Conflict Instructional Program Appropriate for Today's Junior Army Officers"
- 2005 -- Major Christina Schweiss, SOCSOI, "SS490B -- "Winning the Peace.""
- 2004a -- COL Scott Hampton, MAJ Jamie Efaw, MAJ Silas Martinez, MAJ Toya Davis, and MAJ Samantha Breton, BS&L, "PL100, General Psychology for Leaders"
- 2004b -- Dr. Peter Hanlon, EE&CS, "Hands-on Mini Projects in EE&CS."
- 2003 -- MAJ Reid Sawyer, SOCSOI, "Terrorism: New Challenges for Security Professionals."
- 2002a -- Mr. Wayne Schepens, LTC Dan Ragsdale, COL Don Welch, EE&CS, "Annual Inter-Academy CyberDefend Exercise."
- 2002b -- LTC Edward Naessens, Physics, "Army Applications in the Core Physics Program."
- 2001 -- LTC Jerry Schumacher, EE&CS
- 2000a -- Dr. Morten Ender, MAJ Janet Chapman, and MAJ Susan Lee-Kratz, BS&L, "Service Learning, General Psychology, and the United States Military Academy"
- 2000b -- Mr. Lynn Fielitz, Dr. Susan Tendy, and Dr. Larry Butler, DPE, "Gymnastics Video Web Page"
- 1999 -- MAJ William Metheny, BS&L, "A Mentor Program for Cadet Troop Leader Training: Integrating Classroom and Field Experience."
- 1998 -- Dr. Gregory J. Gassner, DPE, "'Motor Learning' in the Plebe Boxing Course."
- 1997 -- LTC Charles Powell and CPT Vince Tedesco

may be nominated. Questions about this award and/or the selection process may be addressed to any member of the CTE Advisory Committee or directly to Mark Evans at the CTE. *Submissions are due in the CTE office by 1500 Friday, 14 April, 2008. Please see the CTE web site for more information. <http://www.dean.usma.edu/centers/cte/apgar.cfm>. The award is described in DPOM 05-06 (also available on the CTE web page).*

Good Luck!

Mentoring in the Master Teacher Program, *by Dr Kimberlee Bonura, Assistant Director, CTE*

As one component of the Master Teacher Program, participants are assigned faculty mentors. Mentors are either senior faculty members, or junior faculty who have successfully completed the two-year MTP. MTP participants are matched with a faculty mentor from outside of their department, who observes and provides feedback on at least two class sessions. Mentor-mentoree matches across departments provide the opportunity for junior faculty to

“One of the great strengths of the Master Teacher Program is the opportunity to bring together instructors from so many diverse areas to have a conversation about teaching.”

receive developmental feedback without pressure or concern about chain-of-command evaluation, and foster communication. According to our mentors and mentorees, it’s a mutually beneficial experience.

Comments were solicited from several mentor-mentoree pairs to see what their perspectives were regarding the mentor program. Comments from one pair appear below — Dr. Sue Tandy, DPE, had two mentorees she was working with — one of whom was MAJ Rob Meine, BS&L.

The Mentor Perspective, Dr Sue Tandy, DPE

I met with both candidates immediately after each observation session, while things were still fresh in our minds and the adrenaline and enthusiasm was still high. It’s always a good thing to reflect after a class; we don’t often have the luxury to do this given our busy schedules. So this was a good way to carve out some reflection time for the mentor and candidate. I guess I was amazed that both instructors were so interested in my feedback, and took



Dr. Sue Tandy demonstrating Lock Climbing as part of the Military Movement Class

to heart my comments, and actually made changes not only because of our discussion but also their internalization of the things we spoke about. There is great value in the

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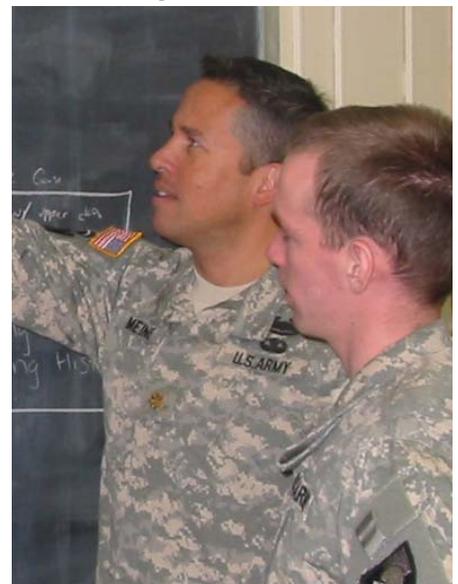
mentor and observation process. It takes a special person to volunteer to have their teaching observed by an outsider. I believe the impact on the mentoree is that they are validated as an important part of cadet development, and they are reinforced as candidates within a teaching program that has great merit. The program was beneficial to me as a mentor in that I became totally interested in topics that I had little knowledge about, and as a result I appreciated how smart these young instructors are!! I also took away some great teaching techniques and ideas that I am using in my own classes. One of the great strengths of the Master Teacher Program is the opportunity

to bring together instructors from so many diverse areas to have a conversation about teaching. My only wish is that more people take the opportunity to get involved either as a mentor or candidate. We are never too experienced to learn something new. I would recommend to other senior faculty that they set the time aside to get involved in this wonderful program. We all have different viewpoints on teaching, and the feedback may differ from person to person, but it’s the opportunity to communicate across the curriculum and share teaching ideas that makes it such a valuable experience.

The Mentoree Perspective, MAJ Rob Meine, BS&L

The mentorship program exposed me to an experienced instructor from outside my department, and therefore, someone with a fresh perspective on teaching. My mentor was more interested in the way the topic was being covered than the material itself, making the experience a refreshing change from most observations where the material played the most prominent role. It’s not hard to find senior instructors in my department who have wisdom to share, but personally, I don’t know any senior instructors

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MAJ Rob Meine explaining leadership concepts to cadets in PL100

Mentoring, *from p.3*

from other departments with whom I could have worked with as closely and still have focused so directly on the actual art of teaching. So it was really a privilege to have her as an advisor and to get the benefit of her time before and after class. What I also really appreciated was that during our pre- and post- discussions, my mentor told me that she was developing good ideas of her own, and that she'll try some of them in her classes. That proved to me that the mentorship relationship is not just a one-way association; rather, it's collaborative. By participating in the program, I felt like I not only improved my skill as an instructor, but that I was also contributing to the academic community. In that sense, it really felt like a win-win proposition. Therefore I certainly recommend others participate in this program. Some of the best ideas from which I've benefited have come from seeing my peers in Chemistry, Sosch, and EECS, to name a few, teach. The benefits are even more apparent to me now that a senior instructor has come into the equation. And although I'm only two years into the practice of instructing, I'll certainly volunteer my services next year, knowing that I still have ideas to share and ways to improve.

Mentors Needed

We need more mentors. For the 2008 Academic Year, we have almost 200 participants in MTP, and approximately 50 mentors. If you're interested in participating as a mentor, please let us know!



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Mr. Mark Vehec, Manager, Instructional Technology, Phone: 845.938.4670
(ATCL), 120 Thayer Hall

Mr. Kermit Allen, Secretary
Phone: 845.938.7947

Spring Tune-Up, *fm p.1*

faculty member at USMA refuse a direct invitation to attend and observe a class with the intention of providing formative feedback. So, if you know senior faculty through clubs, neighborhoods, faculty committees, or chance meetings at the PX — invite them to visit your class and observe your teaching. Both you and the observer will benefit from the visit.

As you wrap up this semester, prepare a brief written teaching AAR — just for yourself. On a single page or two, list what went well (retain those behaviors and activities), what needs improvement, and what new data collection or classroom activities, or teaching approaches you want to try next year. NOW is the time to capture those ideas, while they are fresh, and put a plan in place to implement in the Fall semester.



Right: Master Teacher Program participants past and present from EE&CS providing formative feedback regarding the MTP.

CTE



CTE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

<i>COL Sweeney</i>	<i>BS&L</i>
<i>Dr. Kowalski</i>	<i>C&LS</i>
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<i>Dr. Tandy</i>	<i>DPE</i>
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<i>LTC Sones</i>	<i>Physics</i>
<i>Dr. Welton</i>	<i>Law</i>
<i>LTC Ohlson</i>	<i>CEP</i>
<i>Ms. Swik</i>	<i>Library</i>

Newsletter Submissions

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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.