

# CTE Today

## A Newsletter for Teachers at USMA

Center for Teaching Excellence

February 2007

*“Setting an example is not the main means of influencing another, it is the only means.” — Albert Einstein*

### Faculty Mentoring and Assessment,

By Dr. Mark D. Evans, CTE Director

Faculty assessment and evaluation at USMA should seek to aid faculty development as teachers. The process should begin very early by articulating the mission, goals and vision of the department (consistent with the Academy's) and/or describing how department leaders interpret those of the Academy. That is, consistent with the Academy's mission, goals, and vision, departments should articulate to what activities faculty members should be allocating their time. Models of “right” should be presented to faculty, not models that need to be mimicked, but models that present a mark on the wall — “this is what success looks like”. Leaders should be distributing their own support form, or a simpler version describing what MAJ X or CPT Y's support forms might look like. Early counseling should include opportunities for new faculty to ask questions and make suggestions regarding their prioritization of activities, to see if they have properly interpreted their leader's intentions. In addition, leaders should provide spot-checks to provide formative feedback. The emphasis is on early formative feedback, not waiting to provide final evaluations at the end of the review cycle. So, leaders should routinely be

visiting junior faculty classrooms to see how they are doing and to provide formative feedback.

*“check to see if your mentoring/ counseling/ classroom visit systems are up and running smoothly”*

Until last week, I was under the impression that early counseling was routinely practiced across all departments (and in the Army), and that senior leaders routinely visited junior faculty (indeed, all faculty) classes to provide early, formative feedback. So, it surprised me to learn, in discussions with junior faculty, that some have never been visited in their classrooms while teaching. Not once in six months! I was also surprised that some have not received an initial, individual counseling with leaders or raters. Perhaps some leaders are thinking that sufficient information has been disseminated through group briefings, etc. that individual counseling sessions have not yet been required. However, some officers I spoke with are looking for more guidance and not yet feeling comfortable going up their chain to get it. In the absence of other guid-

ance, faculty will turn to peers for anecdotal information, but “straight from the horse's mouth” is always best.

So, this article is simply a collegial reminder, or request, to check to see if your mentoring/ counseling/ classroom visit systems are up and running smoothly. Run a systems check with your department leaders and see if you are where you need to be. I might suggest a visible classroom visit board, posted in a public area, like that used by BS&L. While getting a cup of coffee, you can spot-check who has or has not been counseled/ visited in the classroom recently. Such a display is a public reminder that mentoring is serious business here.

Thanks for all of your efforts to actively guide the development of our junior faculty.



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#### Announcements

##### Annual Luncheon Celebrating Teaching at USMA

Friday 14 May @1200  
at the Officer's Club

*more information will follow soon.*

##### Apgar Award Packages are due in the CTE office:

Monday 9 April

*See the CTE website for more information*

#### Conferences

Teaching Professor Conference, May 18-20, 2007, Atlanta, GA

<http://www.teachingprofessor.com/>

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

Creativity Workshop, July 13 - 22, 2007, Florence, Italy  
<http://www.creatingandexploring.net/educatoraward.html>

# USMA iPod Pilot Evaluation Summary

By Jeffrey Rohrlick, CTE

As part of its mandate to be a test bed for new technologies at the United States Military Academy, the Center for Teaching Excellence (CTE) conducted a pilot to test the educational value of iPods for use inside and outside of the classroom. During Fall 2007 Term 1 Dr. Laura Vidler provided iPod's to two sections of LS385 Advanced Spanish Through the Media. In all, 35 Cadets were given iPods. The pilot was successful in exposing Cadets to a new technology for teaching and learning. A summary of the iPod pilot results are described below.

**iPod Background:** The use of iPods for teaching and learning is a relatively new phenomenon. Only during the last few years have institutions of learning developed methods for transforming iPod Music devices into powerful tools for learning. Duke University is one of many institutions which have been a leader in the use of iPods. Duke developed a program called the iPod First Year Experience in 2004 as part of a University-wide initiative to encourage the use of technology in education. The program distributed iPods and iPod voice recorders to over 600 students and was used in more than 33 separate courses in a variety of disciplines. Student in these programs used iPods in the following ways:

... **Course Content Dissemination**

**Tools:** Portable access to course content such as lectures, songs, historical speeches, and foreign language

... **Classroom Recording Tool:** Capturing Lectures, Class discussion, and verbal feedback via the iPod Recorder

... **Study Support Tool:** Repeated listening and repetition of commercial and original audio content

... **File Storage and Transfer:** The iPod used to transfer or back-up files, particularly large multimedia files.

Some of the benefits of the program included: Greater student engagement in class discussions; the convenience of portable digital content; and location-independent access to course materials

For more information on the Duke initiative, the whole Duke report is available at: [http://cit.duke.edu/pdf/ipod\\_initiative\\_04\\_05.pdf](http://cit.duke.edu/pdf/ipod_initiative_04_05.pdf)

Want to learn More? Come to the...

## iPod Brown-Bag

14 & 15 Feb, 1200,  
120 TH

Learn from faculty using iPods in History, DFL, DPE, and CTE

### iPod Use in LS385 (Advanced Spanish)

At the completion of the 07-1 term, cadets who participated in the pilot program were given an evaluation survey. Survey highlights, as well as cadet comments are captured below:

#### **Cadet General Comments:**

*"I think it definitely helps in some aspects of academic life. I used it a few times for this class, but used it a lot for my Chinese class. I use it to record all of the dialogues and review them while working out. I just think is part of my success in Chinese class and speaking it better."*

*"I think it was a great idea. We could listen to Hispanic music all the time and it helped me learn the language better."*

*"Having the ability to record items such as dean's hour briefings and evening lectures for later reflection and FCDDT was an excellent asset to possess."*

*"When I knew I was going to miss a class, I had a classmate record the lecture."*

#### **Location of iPod Use**

In the Barracks	75%
In Class	4%
In the Gym	36%
While Traveling	64%
Other	7%

#### **Cadet Comments:**

*"It is easy to travel with and can hold a lot of information. If more lessons*

*involved the iPod (downloading and listening to a lecture/watching a video clip in Spanish then answering questions) it could really help out those who need to do work while traveling (particularly corps squad athletes) b/c they would be able to do the assignment on the bus without the need for a laptop or Internet access."*

*"I liked the flexibility that it provided. I could study and learn without having to sit at my desk/computer."*

#### **Overall Cadet Evaluation of iPods for Teaching and Learning**

The iPod has been a great tool to support learning	46%
The iPod has been an OK tool to support learning	50%
I don't have any real opinion about the iPod	4%
I don't think the iPod has been a good learning tool	0%

**Benefits for Learning:** The USMA iPod pilot survey summary underscores the fact that the iPods were well received by the Cadets and offer many potential benefits for teaching and learning. In particular, the ability to download and record music/podcasts/lectures was a powerful use of the iPod, particularly for the cadets who liked to learn outside the Barracks or while traveling. The recording capability offers particular benefits, especially for those studying foreign languages. In addition, if more lectures/classes are recorded and made available via podcasts, the cadets will have an unlimited number teaching/learning resources available to them in the barracks or while traveling.

**Lessons Learned:** There was one drawback to the pilot which was noted by the Cadets. Many Cadets thought that the use of the iPod needed to be more tightly integrated into the course curriculum. Because there were not enough iPods for all sections of the course, the instructor could not implement any mandatory assignments using the iPod. Cadets were encouraged through optional assignments to utilize the iPod.

**Next Steps:** Building off the overall success of the first pilot, 3 additional iPod pilots are planned for Spring term 2007. iPods will be utilized in 2 sections of HI108, 1 section of PL150, and 1 section of PL488. An evaluation will also be conducted at the end of these pilots.

# Once a Teacher, Always a Teacher, *part 1. in a series*

*In this three-part series, three former junior military faculty members share some insights as self-proclaimed “closet teachers,” still striving to educate subordinates even after departing their teaching tours. In their words, “inspiring students, facilitating learning, and contributing to professional development only start in the classroom.” In these articles are valuable insights for all faculty members, including recommended strategies to maintain mentorship relationships, opportunities to inspire critical thought and develop effective writing skills, as well as suggestions for senior faculty members and programs to leverage former faculty for realistic and relevant cadet projects.*

## Goodbye Doesn't Mean Forever

*By Major Holly F. West*

As staff and faculty members, we are trained to uphold the mission of the United States Military Academy. Specifically, while at West Point, an officer's tasks are to educate, train and inspire the corps of cadets. In addition to the classroom contact, most officers embrace their additional interaction with cadets by acting as officer representatives of teams, officers-in-charge of clubs, and sponsors of cadets. All of these roles help officers develop strong relationships with many cadets. Unfortunately, these relationships too often end once the cadets graduate. After I graduated from West Point, they all ended. When I was a junior officer, I did not have a mentor. However, as an instructor, I was determined to become a mentor for as many lieutenants as I could. Whether with cadets or junior officers, I have found mentorship relationships to be valuable and personally rewarding.

*“Because of our rapport, this officer felt comfortable asking me for advice on both personal and professional issues.”*

For many officers, mentoring cadets is relatively easy. Selecting a class, major, spring break destination, branch and first post of assignment are some of the most pressing issues for cadets. Mentoring new officers can be much more difficult, since

junior officers must balance myriad personal, professional and moral issues. By offering an open ear, and of course, some advice, I have been able to help many lieutenants weave through the web of officer life. Consequently, I have been able to help myself ease my transition from being a teacher to being a staff officer. Leaving the “instructor podium”, was very difficult for me, but mentoring junior officers has helped me continue my role as a teacher. So, how have I managed to mentor from Fort Knox?

**Maintaining Contact.** Reflecting on my 2LT time, I now understand how much I needed a mentor. At the time, there was no e-mail, and it was difficult to reach back to officers at West Point to seek guidance. In today's day and age, there is no reason for not maintaining relationships with recent graduates. We have e-mail and phone access in our daily lives. I frequently write to the lieutenants or junior captains who I mentor and ask for updates on their assignments. By maintaining open lines of communication, junior officers feel more comfortable writing when they have a problem or issue. One lieutenant whom my husband and I sponsored at West Point called us while in his basic course. He had volunteered to be a basic training company executive officer while he snowbirded (something I recommended to all of the cadets I taught!). He soon found himself in an ethical dilemma involving his company commander. Not having anyone else to talk to, he called us one night to ask for advice. Fortunately, we were able to help him ease out of a very difficult situation. Maintaining our contact through e-mail contact provided this LT with an open door for advice.

**Let cadets know details about your background.** Most of us, as instructors, began the semester by giving cadets a brief summary of our background. By continuing to elaborate on my personal and professional background throughout the semester, I provided cadets more details of experiences that I have had. Remembering my stories on dual career couple assignments, one former student contacted me to inquire about the same topic. He and his wife were both in the Army and were contemplating leaving the service because they were not sure if they could “make it work.” After a

detailed discussion about assignments and childcare issues, the conversation switched to graduate school opportunities. I then realized how many questions this young officer had and how little guidance he had received from any senior officer in his unit. Because of our rapport, this officer felt comfortable asking me for advice on both personal and professional issues. I am happy to report that both he and his wife have decided to continue serving in the Army.

**Establish an open door for communication prior to graduation:** During the last lesson of every section, I gave all cadets my AKO e-mail address. Additionally, I advised them if they ever needed any assistance, professional or personal, they could contact me. As a result, numerous lieutenants have asked me for letters of recommendation. Others have asked questions about protocol and etiquette, such as whether or not to write a thank-you note to the battalion commander after going to a hail and farewell. (I covered proper etiquette in all of the sections I taught). These examples illustrate the range of issues facing lieutenants.

*“Since leaving West Point, I have adopted the personal mantra “Once a teacher, always a teacher.”*

A recent U.S Army Research Institute survey showed that only 64% of 2LTs have a mentor. This means that there are more than 3000 junior officers who are making career decisions with little to no guidance. Mentorship has proven to be a vital asset to leaders in any organization. When 378 executives from companies across the United States were polled on the value of mentorship programs, 77% reported that it improves retention, while 66% said it develops new and emerging leaders (Summary of Mentoring Surveys). Our job as staff and faculty members is to develop young leaders, and it should not stop we leave West Point. In an *Army Times* interview, General John Keane, then Vice Chief of Staff of the Army, stated, “We're just not taking the time that we need to spend with our youngsters and their personal growth and

## Once a Teacher, *continued*

development. We need to do more of that.” (Naylor, 2000). As staff and faculty members, we have already established the mentor relationship with cadets—we simply need to maintain and then enhance these relationships. Maintaining the mentor relationships takes time and effort on the part of the mentor; however, the benefits for the mentor, the protégé, and the Army are significant and valuable.

COL Thomas Kolditz, Head of the Department Behavioral Science and Leadership, described a mentor to me as “a senior person with whom you have had an intensive and lasting developmental relationship. A mentor relationship goes beyond a typical senior-subordinate relationship in that it is both professional in focus, yet personal in tone.” (Martin et al., 2002). Some lieutenants are not able to build a lasting mentor relationship during their first assignment. In such cases, the only mentor these officers may know is their instructor, TAC, OR, OIC or sponsor. Just as we would not release our own children into society without offering them continuing support, guidance and advice, we should not let cadets enter the Army without the same support. I believe that it is not only our responsibility as staff and faculty members, but also our duty as professionals to continue to mentor these lieutenants.

Since leaving West Point, I have adopted the personal mantra “Once a teacher, always a teacher.” The skills we learn in the classroom are too valuable to be lost when we depart from West Point. As professionals, we should continually seek opportunities to teach, coach, mentor, and develop young professionals. Whether it be writing articles with junior officers, assisting in department outreach efforts, or mentoring lieutenants on personal and professional issues, we should all continue to use our educator skills. Educators are just as vital to the nation and to the Army as our graduates are.

### References/Sources:

Summary of Mentoring Surveys, Corporate Mentoring Solutions, [www.mentoring-solutions.com](http://www.mentoring-solutions.com), 2005,p.3.

Naylor, Sean D. “Keane Blames Leadership for Junior Officer Exodus,” *Army Times*, 25 December 2000, p.10.

Martin, Greg F., George E. Reed, Ruth B. Collins and Cortez K. Dial, “The Road to Mentoring: Paved with Good Intentions,” *Parameters*, Autumn 2002, p.122.

## Once a Teacher, Always a Teacher — Biographies

Major Holly F. West, USMA '91, served as instructor and assistant professor in D/Systems, 2001 – 2005, and as executive officer for BG Daniel J. Kaufman, former Dean of the Academic Board, from 2004-2005. She is currently the Competitive Research Analyst in the Accessions Systems Division of the Center for Accessions Research for U.S. Army Accessions Command at Fort Knox, KY.

Major Brian Tribus, USMA '92, served as instructor and assistant professor in D/BS&L, 2002-2006. He is currently a Strategic Marketing Planner for the Strategic Outreach Directorate of the U.S. Army Accessions Command at Fort Knox, KY.

Major Bret P. Van Poppel, USMA '92, served as instructor and assistant professor in D/C&ME, 2001-2004. He is currently the Digital Communications Analyst in the Market Research and Analysis Division in the Center for Accessions Research of the U.S. Army Accessions Command at Fort Knox, KY.

Each of them remains a Teacher!

# CTE

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Advanced Technology Classroom Laboratory (ATCL), 120 Thayer Hall

### ATCL, Advanced Technology Classroom Laboratory

*The ATCL (120 TH) is available for you to teach your sections in. 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 Rohrlick for*

## 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.