

CTE Today

A Newsletter for Teachers at USMA

Center for Teaching Excellence

May 2007

"Who dares to teach must never cease to learn."

- John Cotton Dana

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Announcements

Annual Luncheon Celebrating Teaching at USMA

Friday 14 May @1200
at the Officer's Club

Apgar Award Winner

will be announced at the
14 May Luncheon!

Conferences

The Lilly Conference on College Teaching for 2007,

our 27th year of presenting and celebrating the scholarship of teaching and learning! Join us in Oxford, Ohio, on November 15-18, 2007. Our Conference theme this year is "Blueprints for Student Learning." Please visit the Conference website (<http://www.muohio.edu/lillycon/>)

End of Course Feedback, *By Dr. Mark D. Evans, CTE Director*

End-of-course feedback has always straddled the fence at most institutions — one leg on the side of providing formative feedback to instructors and one leg on the side of supporting summative evaluations of instructors. Unlike most other institutions, the USMA course-end feedback system was originally formed to serve entirely as a feedback system for instructors. Its purpose was, and

continues to be, primarily to gather information for the purpose of improving and developing teaching. The information gathered is meant to inform change or reinforce good practice. Thus, the feedback must be sufficiently specific and concrete to suggest actions for improvement.

2007 Apgar Award

The winner of the 2007 Apgar Award will be announced at the Academic Luncheon

(see page 2 for a listing of applicants)

tion, then assessing the value of the changes implemented. Note that end-of-course feedback is but a single tool to gather information. Faculty should make rich use of classroom assessment techniques to gather timely, frequent feedback data during the semester.

Soon we'll be soliciting end-of-course feedback data from cadets in our courses. Below are some facts and suggestions to keep in mind when using the feedback system.

The USMA end-of-course feedback system dates back to the early 1990's. BG Galloway (then the Dean) tasked the faculty council Teaching Subcommittee to develop a feedback instrument. That original 30-question instrument was completed on mark-sense forms, which took weeks to process and get feedback to instructors.

The end-of-course feedback system is not a rating system. We are not asking cadets to rate you or the course you teach. Rather, we are asking for cadets' perspectives and input that we can use to improve the

Continued on p. 2

Fourth Annual Academic Luncheon

14 May

at the West Point Club

Cost is \$12.

Contact Jeff Rohrlick 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 3.



Apgar Award Applicants, 2007

End of Course Feedback, *continued*

courses, improve our teaching, and thus, improve cadet learning.

Feedback was always meant to be developmental for instructors and was provided directly to instructors. It was never intended that end-of-course feedback would be used for teaching awards, OER ratings, or annual counseling reviews. Instructors should not be compelled to provide survey results to their raters. We live and work in a very transparent environment where most are willing to share both good and not-so-good feedback with superiors. That is your choice and there is certainly some good in that behavior. However, keep in mind that course-end-feedback is gathered primarily to improve teaching and learning, and sharing that data with any others is optional.

Individual instructors are encouraged to write questions at the instructor level in the system. Since the focus of the end-of-course feedback system is to improve the instructor/cadet — teacher/learner feedback loop, then instructors should be asking questions of cadets. While feedback data might be valid for use in Middle States or ABET evaluations, that is not its primary purpose. Comprehensive USMA and department level questions are intentionally kept to a minimum so that instructors and courses directors may write specific questions. Do not overwhelm the feedback system by asking cadets to review every lesson and course objective. Rather, focus on a smaller number of questions that provide rich data regarding your teaching activities and behaviors and cadet learning.

Shorter, well-crafted surveys will generate better data. This is where we see the cumulative effects of this and the previous two points. To the extent that the end-of-course survey data is being used for purposes other than improving the teacher-learner dyad, it overwhelms the system with non-teacher/learner questions, and prevents us from offering short, well-crafted surveys to cadets. Surveys that are too long and not well-crafted simply do not

yield useful data. The entire survey generally should not exceed 30 questions.

End-of course surveys are not an exact science nor a direct measure of learning outcomes. Use a grain of salt when comparing results from two different populations. An apparent down-turn from a 4.7 one semester to a 4.6 the next might be caused by a single cadet with whom you did not connect, or might be caused by an L hour class rather than C hour. The course material and the instructor are but two of dozens of variables that could affect survey data. Clear and continuous trends up or down are meaningful, as are large differences in feedback values. However, variable such as the population in the course can dramatically skew data. One cannot conclude that teacher A is a better teacher than teacher B just because teacher A has higher feedback values. It would be important to know that teacher A teaches a firstie-level elective in a major's program whereas teacher B teaches a core course. So, interpret your data with a grain of salt.

At the instructor level, the use of the text box will likely solicit the most reliable information. Asking a question and letting cadets respond in writing, rather than checking a box from 1 to 5, will most likely capture true cadet impressions and will usually require the smallest degree of interpretation on your part. Consider using your own versions of the following questions:

Which specific lessons or activities did you findmost useful in helping you learn the material in this course?

... least helpful to your learning the material in this course?

List anything that ... you found helpful or contributed to your learning in this course.

... you think detracted from or hindered your learning in this course.

Please comment on anything that I should or should not change with regard to my teaching style.

The following individuals submitted applications to be considered for the 2007 Apgar Award. This award has been established to recognize, encourage, and reward faculty members at the Academy by supporting teaching projects that improve cadet learning. Three criteria are 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; preference will be given to those projects that have been implemented and can demonstrate impact on cadet learning.

—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, and creativity.

Please congratulate all the applicants for their excellent projects. This year's Apgar Award winner will be announced at the Academic Luncheon on 14 May.

A Learner-Centric Approach in Re-engineering the SE Sequence-The Systems Engineering & West Point Way, by LTC John B. Halstead and MAJ Ernest Y. Wong, Systems Engineering

High-Tech Teaching in a Low-Tech Discipline: The Blended History Classroom by MAJ Raymond Kimball, History

Revision of the Core Physics Course by MAJ Corey S. Gerving, Physics

A Better Way to Illustrate Atmospheric Dispersion in the Classroom by LTC Michael D. Hendricks and MAJ Phillip J. Dacunto, Geography & Environmental Engineering

Learning Equilibrium Chemistry using a Systematic Approach by MAJ Melinda Z Kalainoff and Dr. Andy Biaglow, Chemistry and Life Science

Applied Statistics Course by MAJ Ian McCulloh, Mathematical Sciences

Refresh Your Copyright IQ, *by Missy Hess, Reference Librarian*

There are a few predictable questions instructors will always ask during the academic year. Can I:

- Make a copy of this document and distribute it to the class?

- Download a music selection or scene from a DVD to illustrate a point?

- Copy information from a web site?

This may be followed by some interesting thought processes:

- This is a nonprofit, governmental institution. West Point has probably obtained clearances to cover these issues.

- Since this is an educational institution, it's probably covered under "Fair Use" or "Public Performance" rights.

Reality check. Sorry, West Point has no special permissions and has to follow the same laws every other educational institution follows.

"The "Fair Use" section is the one that nonprofit, educational institutions can sometimes rely on, but only to a degree."

What about number two? "Fair Use" and "Public Performance" rights. Aren't these catch-all clauses many instructors rely on?

Be smart. Before you download a scene from a DVD, or make multiple copies of a document, it's a good idea to refresh your knowledge of current copyright laws, such as the statutes in the U.S. Code, Title 17.

Fortunately, the Center for Teaching Excellence has a link to an excellent page by Stanford University on copyright and fair use. It can be easily found on the CTE website, under "Teaching and Learning Links/Copyright and Fair Use Issues." The Stanford site covers all the basic issues, and includes useful online guides for faculty to help you decide what you can and can't reproduce or play: <http://fairuse.stanford.edu/>.

Copyright protects just about any work, whether it's literary, musical, dramatic, pictorial, online, and more, because the work is "fixed in a tangible medium of expression" (17 U.S. Code, Ch. 1 § 102, 2003).

The "Fair Use" section is the one that nonprofit, educational institutions can sometimes rely on, but only to a degree. All discussions about "Fair Use" revolve around four factors:

- ... the purpose and character of the use
- ... the nature of the copyrighted work
- ... the amount of the portion used in relation to the whole work
- ... the effect of the use on the potential market for that work

The responsibility for use of copyrighted material rests on you, the user. However, three good sites that describe your options in straightforward language and can be accessed through the CTE website are:

[How I Learned to Love Fair Use](#), by Mary Minow. Her article discusses issues surrounding Fair Use, and provides a practical guide to help decide whether use of an item would be an infringement of the law or permissible. (http://fairuse.stanford.edu/commentary_and_analysis/2003_07_minow.html)

Indiana University's Copyright Management Center has a checklist to help you quickly weigh the factors that favor or oppose fair use for each item being considered. [Printable Checklist for Fair Use Indiana Univ.](http://copyright.iupui.edu/checklist.htm) (<http://copyright.iupui.edu/checklist.htm>)

For "Public Performance" rights, check The University of Texas. It has a good site for educators that covers visual and audio performance concerns: <http://www.utsystem.edu/OGC-INTELLECTUALPROPERTY/mono3.htm>

Finally, it is best to be aware of the difference between copying government documents, and copying documents obtained from the library's databases. Whereas the former are in the public domain, and many archival and government documents are readily available in digital format now, the

databases with full-text articles are in a different category. The library purchases a license for each database, and there are limits on how the material can be used. Each database license contains different restrictions and you probably know the library has many, many databases.

Faculty should note that, when a copy is made of any article, whether hardcopy or digital, it is still a copy and may be subject to restrictions.

To play it safe, remember that if you are able to access it from a library database or via a URL, the cadets should be able to access it the same way.

If you have any questions about reproducing one or more articles for classes, you are welcome to contact the library and we will check the license.

Reference:

U.S. Copyright Office. (2003). *Copyright law of the United States and related laws contained in Title 17 of the United States Code*, retrieved March 27, 2007 from <http://www.copyright.gov/title17/>.



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The Chronicle of Higher Education

The Chronicle of Higher Education online edition is now available to all USMA faculty and staff, free of charge. Simply log onto: <http://chronicle.com/> from your office computer, no password is required. This is the full online version, with news, articles, job listings, and searchable functions.

Search "USMA" and you'll find 3 job listings. Search "West Point" and you'll find: 8 matches in the Chronicle in print, 3 matches in Daily News, 4 matches in Scholarly Books, 2 Job Listings, and 1 People listing. In the Print listing was a short article about BG (Ret) Daniel J. Kaufman, past Dean of the Academic Board. Below is a brief synopsis from the print edition of The Chronicle: dated 9/23/2005:

Retired General to Lead New Campus in Georgia, by John Gravois And Rebecca Aronauer

"When the University System of Georgia decided it wanted to start a new state college in Gwinnett County, it started looking for a president who could issue the first marching orders. It settled on an actual general. Out of three finalists, the job went to **Daniel J. Kaufman**, 58, a recently retired brigadier general who spent the past five years as the chief academic officer at the United States Military Academy, in West Point, N.Y.

The as-yet unnamed college in Gwinnett County will rely heavily on online instruction and will contract out some of its administrative functions -- like financial aid and payroll duties -- to third parties. "It's a new model," Mr. Meredith says.

General Kaufman, who led a platoon in Vietnam, worked in the office of the Army chief of staff, and coached the West Point debate team for 17 years, says he feels ready and able to step up."

The Chronicle of Higher Education online edition is brought to USMA faculty and staff by a joint effort of the USMA Library and the CTE. Go online and check it out today. See what you might find of interest. Content is changed daily, so the site is worth visiting often.

TEACHING-RELATED REFERENCES FOR ALL 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.
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- 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.

We are on the web:

<http://www.dean.usma.edu/centers/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 in. Contact Mr. Jeff Rohrlick for more information.

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.