



TEACHING MATTERS

newsletter

UNB SAINT JOHN

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Editor: Ken Craft

A Tribute to Judy Buchanan

David Creelman & Lucy Wilson

UNB Saint John has a vibrant teaching culture. Those of us who work here tend to know that, but we might be surprised to hear that others know it too. So try it: ask around at university Teaching and Learning Centres across the Maritimes, and even beyond, and you will hear high praise of UNB Saint John's teaching environment. New teachers are welcomed and supported, and seasoned teachers continue to try new techniques to enhance the experiences and outcomes for their students. This



teaching culture has not emerged by accident. People like Judy Buchanan have dedicated themselves with a sense of optimism, confidence and enthusiasm to promoting and fostering excellence in teaching. As Judy retires from her position as the founding coordinator of our Teaching and Learning Centre, we are glad to thank her for the profound difference she has made across the campus.

Judy Buchanan is a true pioneer at UNB Saint John. After a decade of lobbying by many members of the teaching community, our Teaching and Learning Centre opened its doors on April 3rd 2009, and Judy took up the post as the first coordinator. To her fell the task of designing and organizing that first office, and within weeks of opening the centre she was facilitating new resources, designing new programs, creating and populating a website, and organizing the campus's first permanent resource dedicated to helping teachers across campus develop their craft. With the help of the Vice-President's Excellence in Teaching

Committee (VPETC), Judy immediately set to work with all three Faculties to identify and meet the needs of key groups of teachers and to design programs to help.

Judy has for many years been a mentor and personal guide who has directly touched the lives of hundreds of teachers. Over the last decade, Judy developed and facilitated the Diploma of University Teaching (DUT), and under her enthusiastic care beginning teachers and graduate teaching assistants have been introduced to a deep understanding of adult education, the best practices associated with educational technology, and the rich resources available within the scholarship of teaching. A generation of teachers has benefited from her generosity. For the last three years she has been responsible for welcoming new teachers to the campus: her fall orientation programs have helped a host of teachers as they have designed their first classes, refined their first syllabi, and learned about the campus's rich teaching resources. Not only has she pointed new teachers towards successful practices, she has helped them develop their own voices as emerging educators. To further support young teachers, Judy undertook one of the most important programs on the campus, as she helped design and implement the Kate Frego Mentorship Program, which ensures that new teachers have access to practical and immediate support in the early years of their teaching career.

Beyond her dedication to the welfare of new educators, Judy has also been constantly attentive to the teaching culture of the campus as a whole. Along with the VPETC, she has been involved in virtually every workshop, brown-bagger, Effective Teaching Institute, and discussion group since the centre opened.

Through her initiative the national assessment expert David DiBattista came to campus to help us improve the way we design our midterms and tests. Working with a group of educators across campus, she helped develop a workshop on the Millennial Student which was presented at multiple universities and community colleges across the province. Driven by her passion for team-based learning, Judy managed to bring renowned scholar Larry Michaelsen to campus to host the largest ETI on record as more than 115 educators from across Southern New Brunswick gathered to learn the basics of Team-Based Learning (TBL). The TBL practice, which many people on campus have adopted, has been supported by a community created and maintained by Judy. Not only has she helped reshape the ways in which we teach, but Judy has been instrumental in the celebration of effective teaching and hardly a teaching award nomination has left the UNB Saint John campus without her having spent hours developing and refining the nomination package. As the coordinator of the Teaching and Learning Centre she has, in both quiet moments and profound ways, helped strengthen and transform our work in the classroom.

And Judy has been a trailblazer beyond this campus. As the bi-campus member of the Atlantic Association of Universities, she represented UNB as a whole at the AAU Showcases, during the association meetings, and most importantly on the AAU Faculty Development Committee. She was one of the key voices speaking for the central role of teaching during the development of the University's Strategic Plan, and she has been constantly working to help connect UNB to the wider Post-Secondary environment across

Southern New Brunswick. Her work on the Canadian Interprofessional Health Collaborative, the BRAID project, and her role as one of the people connecting educators at UNB Saint John with teachers at NBCC, Dal. Med, and the Atlantic Health Services Corporation, all testify to her desire to bring effective teachers together.

For the last three years, Judy Buchanan has worked long hours, managed a myriad of

demands, and helped this campus strengthen its roles as a committed, energized, and effective teaching environment. UNB Saint John will always be a better place to teach and learn because Judy Buchanan put her heart and soul into helping us reach further. Congratulations Judy. You helped change the environment around you, and we are better teachers for your work.

Groups of Two

Sandra Bell

For many years, group work has been an active learning strategy that I easily incorporate into my upper and lower level courses, which usually range from 20 to 45 students. I teach literature, and it is important for students to practice using the tools of the literary trade, so group work enables more students to participate, and ensures I'm not the only active member in the class. While I sometimes form groups on the basis of knowledge of or comfort with a subject, trying to include a range in each group, most of the time my group formation is ad-hoc; that is, I'm forming groups for shorter, specific activities, so the composition of the group is not as important as it is for long-term teams: "get into groups of 5, and try to work with someone you've not worked with before" is a favourite approach. There is always a focused question or topic that the groups work on, and a limited time within which to produce something to present to the class. Very frequently, I find that with some guiding questions, and instructions on participation, groups work well to produce very cogent analyses of texts, and it frees me then to push

them further in their discussions, rather than to provide the basics.

Group work not only obliges students to grapple with a text, but also helps students learn skills not necessarily associated with literature: for example, students learn how to articulate their ideas, how to listen to readings different from their own, how to synthesise new interpretations, and sometimes how to allow different views to co-exist.

What I have never been comfortable with is the assessment of group work. Despite the move of increasing numbers of my colleagues to Team-Based Learning, with its clear explanations of how to mark the processes and products of teams, I am reticent to base marks on group work. I'm perhaps overly concerned with students who do less than what their final group grade reflects, or students who feel held back by the group. I haven't satisfactorily navigated what I consider to be a balanced distribution of work, and an ability to judge that work. Thus, I rarely incorporate a graded group project into my evaluation of student work.

However, last year I faced a problem when one of my upper-year classes on Sixteenth Century literature, in which I wished to have seminars, ended up with 28 students. How could I still keep the seminars, which I considered pedagogically important to the class, with so many students? I was anxious about marking seminars produced by groups of 4 or 5 students. It randomly came to me that I might pair students: could “groups of two” work, for the assignment, the students, and myself?

Groups of two made sense on all counts. The assignment required that students in my Sixteenth Century literature course teach new material to the class in 10-15 minutes, using whatever formats (multi-media, handouts, lecture) they wished. They needed to provide some background, research the subject matter, organize material, and present their findings, indicating how their texts fit into the themes of the course as a whole; they also needed to provide me with an outline of their final presentation. (*A copy of the assignment follows.) Seminars can often be anxiety inducing for a student, and dealing with unknown Sixteenth Century texts could only increase that anxiety: the language is often challenging, the ideas not always immediately relevant, and secondary criticism that would ‘clarify’ the material can itself be difficult to parse. Having someone to share the researching of the material and organization of the seminar seemed to lessen student stress, however, and with only two people accountable, students divided the workload evenly. Also, with only two schedules to organize, students were able to meet outside of class more easily. According to feedback forms I gave students at the end of term, having another student standing with them at

the front of the class considerably reduced the pressure of public presentation.

At first, I told students I would use a “scientific method” to group them; I was planning on pairing up students myself, trying to balance groups based on their familiarity with the Renaissance, on success in English courses, and on their year. However, before I had done this, two students asked if they could work together, as they were friends. I couldn’t really think of a good reason to say no, and began to realize that friends would probably make strong groups of two; they would be more likely to meet, to work together, and to support each other. So, with the caveat that they keep in mind the goals of the assignment, and that they would pick friends with whom they would actually work, I allowed those who wanted to do so to pick their own partners. In the end, 11 pairs picked each other, and I paired up 3 groups.

Having groups of two also reduced my worries over ensuring each student contributed fully to the preparation of the material. A Peer Assessment sheet let me know what each participant had done to complete the assignment, how they had collaborated, and how they would grade each other on their participation. Without my indicating that they had to, all groups split the class presentation of the material in half. Thus, they allayed my fear that one person would ‘lead’ the group, or that anyone would not be participating fully. Groups of two appeared to have addressed the concerns of both the students and myself; the goals of the assignment, and of using group work itself, were also maintained. The grades received were generally strong (in the B and A range); while it is not unusual for grades to be higher for presentations (presenting to peers is

a strong motivator!), students really seemed to focus for this assignment, and the results were positive.

Part of my easy acceptance of the “groups of two” idea was a result of a team-teaching experience of mine two years ago. I paired with a colleague, Dr. David Creelman, to teach a course on literature 400 years outside of my traditional teaching area. We focused on two of our favourite twentieth century authors—well, at least James Joyce was a favourite of David’s, and Samuel Beckett was a favourite of mine. No matter how much I loved Beckett, however, I was extremely nervous about teaching his plays. In a number of ways, my own experience in that course reflected what I wished students to learn in my Sixteenth Century course: to bring to bear all the knowledge they had

learned—the literary and research skills, and the ability to work with others—in order to delve into material that was unfamiliar; to research background information; to organize what they discovered; and to present it all in a way that taught others how the texts fit into the overall course. In the team-taught course, I had had the benefit of a peer to assist me in developing ideas and structuring my approaches, and to be in the class to help me when I was teaching my material. And that class was one of the best teaching experiences I have had in a long time. What better way for students to develop their understandings—and perhaps even their appreciation (I won’t go so far as to say passion!)—for the literature in their undergraduate courses?

* Presentations

There are many texts / authors in your anthology that we are not studying as a group in class. For this assignment, you are required to give a 10-15 minute presentation introducing an author / text(s) to the class (possible choices are asterisked in the reading schedule. You will **NEED** to sign up for this, and you **MUST** present on the day indicated). This presentation will be prepared and presented in **PAIRS**—that’s a group of two (if two can be a group). I’ll be choosing the pairs.

In your presentation you should provide the following (though not necessarily in this order):

- a brief biography of the author (of details useful to your discussion of the text)
- a summary of the text: the content (what happens), the structure (how it happens), the genre (how expectations of the genre shape the content or structure)
- two or three main points about what the author / text is trying to do, along with three or four examples / quotations that highlight the main points / purposes

- a critical analysis in the context of other texts / authors / themes we have discussed in class

(We will discuss this and do some practice examples with a couple of authors in class so you know what is expected.)

NOTE: In your pairs, make sure you are sharing the work equally. Both of you should be participating fully: those of you who are somewhat reticent need to step forward a bit, and those of you who like to take over need to step back a bit. Work together; help each other do the best work. You will need to meet outside of class time for this to function properly. If you have any questions or concerns, please see me.

Your presentation can take whatever form you believe will allow your audience to understand you and the text(s) you are discussing most effectively: for example, key words on the board, handouts, powerpoint, multimedia—or a combination of these. (If you use any electronic media, make sure it works and that you are ready. Class time is not the time to figure out how to get

the computer / projector to work, or to discover your USB key is somehow dead.) Just make sure your presentation is clear, detailed and well-organized—and 10-15 minutes long. If you use any secondary texts, please make sure to cite your sources correctly and indicate to the class when you are using them.

You will be required to provide me with an electronic copy of whatever material you use in class. I will post this on Blackboard so that the class has access to it.

I will be marking this assignment based on the following:

1. a clear, detailed and organized presentation that is within the required length (time yourself)

2. connections to ideas / authors / texts discussed in class
3. a thoughtful and university-level discussion of the author and text

Because you are working in pairs, I will also have a Pairs Presentation Commentary Sheet for each of you to fill out—separately—commenting on your own and your partner's participation. I will also have a Class Presentation Commentary Sheet for class members to fill out. I will consider the class comments when marking.

From a Workshop to End of Class Hugs

Lisa Best

It all started with a workshop on Team Based Learning (TBL). At the start of the workshop, I was not considering restructuring my courses to incorporate this teaching approach. I attended the workshop mainly because it was being hosted by the VPETC and I had volunteered to work the Registration Desk. Given that I was on campus at 8am to work at the registration desk, it made sense to stay for the workshop. Going in, all I knew about TBL was that students were tested on material BEFORE the instructor taught the material. This sounded suspicious to me and I didn't believe the approach could be successful. At the end of the day, I was convinced that TBL could work and I decided I would teach a summer course (Introduction to Psychology) using this approach.

In designing the course, I decided not to try TBL half-way; it was either all or nothing. I incorporated the components of TBL discussed at the workshop and hoped for the best. There are four major components of a team-based classroom: (1) students work in instructor

assigned teams and they do so for an entire term. Students cannot switch teams; (2) students must come to class having completed assigned readings. At the beginning of a module, students complete an individual and a team based assessment to determine what material they understand and what they need to learn. These two quizzes make them accountable to themselves and to their team members; (3) a significant part of their final mark is dependent upon their team work; and, (4) in-class application exercises force students to think critically about the information. Teams are presented with a difficult question or scenario and must decide how to solve it. The class ends with a presentation and discussion of the solutions.

What Went Well

I am always quite careful designing my course outlines. I make sure that the outline includes a detailed description of the course objectives, the topics that will be covered, and the

evaluation methods. I found that creating a TBL outline was quite different because it was not enough simply to consider which chapters to cover, how students would be evaluated, and specific test and due dates. I spent more time than usual considering how many modules I would include and what chapters would be covered on each individual/team assessment. Because my course was in the summer, the class was only 8 weeks long and because I didn't want to have more than one test in a week, I decided on 6 modules with individual and team assessments. Thinking about the class in terms of modules rather than textbook chapters was helpful and it provided students with links between the individual topics.

Students in Introduction to Psychology actually wrote! I assigned two writing assignments in which students were assigned a journal article to read and summarize. I set it up so that each team was assigned four or five articles (one article per team member) and I personally assigned an article to each student. The students had to read and summarize their article in 500 words and although this is not much writing, it was challenging and the best students reported that it took them approximately three drafts before they were happy with their summary. All assignments were handed in on Desire to Learn, which made marking easier. The related team assignments involved integrating the information from all of the articles. Students had to submit a group paper and give an oral presentation outlining their opinions. Although these writing assignments were very short, they gave students the opportunity to write and receive feedback.

Students really loved the application exercises. I had a couple of pre-set ones before the beginning of the term but as the term progressed, I began to ask students what they wanted to learn more about and I designed the application exercises around their responses. For example, in May there was a CBC news headline about a drug that could prevent HIV infection that could be taken preventively before a person contracted the disease. One of the teams was very interested in the topic and I developed an application exercise that focused on the research/psychological ethics involved in deciding if the drug should be prescribed. Before completing the exercise, most students thought that the drug was a good idea but by the end of the discussion they understood the ethical issues involved with using the drug for this purpose. In a typical lecture-based introductory class, ethics would either not be covered or be covered in a very cursory manner. In this course, we were able to have a higher level discussion on what is ethical and what is not ethical.

What I Would Change

In setting up the course, I decided that I would not have a final exam. This decision was pragmatic and simply due to the fact that I was on the organizing committee of a conference that was running during the assigned exam week. In the future, I will definitely have a final exam that allows students to tie together the information they learned over the course of the term. I had three classes after the last assessment (7.5 class hours) and although I did have a team assignment that was worth a

significant part of their final mark, attendance and performance were not as strong as they had been earlier in the term. I think the addition of a final exam (either individual or team-based) would motivate students to remain involved in the last weeks of the course.

As suggested by Larry Michaelsen, I used peer assessments to assign marks for individual performance in the teams. Because of the eight week time frame, I had students do their peer assessments at the end of the term. I found that students had a difficult time assigning points to their team members. Since the assessments were completed so late in the term, students did not receive feedback on their performance nor were they able to improve upon how they worked in their teams. In the future, I plan to have three peer evaluations spread over the course of the term. Students will earn the same number of points for their peer assessment but will have the opportunity to improve their performance.

In this class, the total of each individual and the team assessment was 10% (7% individual + 3% team). If students missed an individual assessment, I allowed them to write a make-up individual quiz but they lost the points associated with the team quiz. In the future, I would have an additional assessment and have the policy that students can drop their lowest combined score. This would allow students to miss one assessment IF they had a documented excuse (illness, death of a friend or family member, etc.). In this class, I had three documented funerals and one case of mononucleosis. Although they made up the individual assessments, it was a bit difficult to

schedule make-ups and, in larger classes, scheduling would become more of an issue.

To Sum Up

I really enjoyed the team-based approach. Although it is a daunting task, I am going to use TBL in a large (~80 students) upper year class. I dedicated half of my last class discussing the approach with students and, overall, they enjoyed the experience. One complaint (that was not unexpected) was that they felt it was unfair that they were tested on material that was not covered in class. Several students suggested having a short, mini-lecture on the module before the assessments and although I can see why students would feel more comfortable with this approach, it really defeats the purpose of TBL. I did point out to students that the course average was a full letter grade higher than normal in spite of the testing method. The four students who had failed the course previously were quite vocal about how much they liked the method.

I feel that the course was a success. During the feedback class, students said things like, "at least it wasn't just another lecture course", "I loved being able to discuss important issues with other people", "I appreciated getting feedback on my writing", and "it was fun getting to know different people". At the end of the last day and at the suggestion of one of the students, team members said good-bye with a group hug. They left the class with a set of new peers and hopefully some of the relationships will continue.

What Mentors Do

Lois J. Zachary

Originally appeared in Rick Reis' *Tomorrow's Professor*, October 4, 2012

Mentors facilitate learning by keeping the learner front and center. To mentor effectively, you will use the learning approach most appropriate for your mentee. Asking questions, reformulating statements, summarizing, listening for the silence, and listening reflectively will help you do this. These strategies should always be part of your toolkit.

Ask Questions

Questions encourage learning by allowing us to reflect. Asking questions that require thoughtful answers (like those in the exercises in this chapter) is a good way to help mentees articulate their own thinking. Use questions to engage the mentee in the conversation. Remember ethical, role - appropriate questioning is a must. When you stray outside these boundaries, it is easy to exceed limits of appropriateness and fairness.

- Ask questions that support and challenge - for example: "That's a nice way of describing the culture. How would you apply some of that thinking to the staff?"
- Ask questions to stimulate reflection - for example: "Could you tell me a little more about what you mean by...?" "Is there another way to look at this?"
- Ask specific questions that draw on your mentee's unique thinking and learning style - for example: "That seems logical, but let's take a moment

to brainstorm some other possibilities." "It sounds like you have a lot of good options! Is there one that you really resonate with?" "That's a great idea. How do you think we might put it into action?"

- Allow time for thoughtful reflection - for example: "It sounds as if we've only begun to scratch the surface. Let's think about this some more and discuss it further in our next conversation."

Reformulate Statements

When we rephrase what we've heard mentees say, we can clarify our own understanding and encourage the mentee to hear and reflect on what they have articulated. This offers an opportunity for further clarification:

- Paraphrase what you heard - for example: "I think what I heard you saying is ..."
- Continue the process of rephrasing and paraphrasing until you clearly understand and the mentee is no longer adding new information - for example: "My understanding is ..."

Summarize

Summarizing what you've learned during a session reinforces the learning. It also serves as a reminder of what has transpired and acts as a way to check assumptions:

- Share the content of what you have heard, learned, or accomplished - for example: “We’ve spent our time today doing... During that time we... As a result, we achieved the following outcomes...”
- Leave judgments and opinions out when you summarize - for example: “Did you say that...?” “I understood you to say... Is that correct?”
- Deal with the facts of the situation, not the emotions - for example: “So, I am hearing three things. Number 1 is..., number 2 is..., and number 3 is..., Have I got that right?”

Listen for the Silence

Silence provides an opportunity for learning. Some individuals need time to think quietly. Silence can also indicate confusion, boredom, or even physical discomfort:

- Don’t be afraid of silence.
- Encourage silence.
- Use the silence as an opportunity for reflection - for example: “I notice that whenever we started to talk about... you get kind of quiet. I’m wondering what that is about.”

Listen Reflectively

Often we hear but do not really listen. When you listen reflectively, you hear the silence, observe nonverbal responses, and hold up a mirror for the mentee:

- Be authentic - for example: “What I’d like to see is...”
- Clarify - for example: “What do you mean by...?”
- Provide feedback - for example: “You did a great job with that. I like the way you... I also thought that... Next time you might try ...”

When your work is solidly grounded in principles of adult learning, you and your mentee can be colearners who both benefit and grow from the relationship. The two chapters in Part One will broaden your understanding of the learning process by exploring the role of context and its influence in the mentoring process.

From Chapter 1, Grounding the work of mentoring, in the book, *The Mentors Guide: Facilitating Effective Learning Relationships*, Lois J. Zachary. Copyright © 2012 by John Wiley & Sons, Inc. All rights reserved. Published by Jossey - Bass: A Wiley Imprint, 989 Market Street, San Francisco, CA 94103 - 1741 - www.josseybass.com. Copyright © 2012 by John Wiley & Sons, Inc. All rights reserved. Reprinted with permission.

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lynda.com

Using Student and Instructor Journaling to Connect With Your Students, Tailor Your Teaching, and Help Them Put the Pieces Together

Dale Roach

Anyone who has ever taught a class has been there: You walk out of class and wonder how much the students really got out of it. Did they really understand your lecture and how it fits in with the rest of your course? Did they really understand why they were doing the activity you spent hours researching and designing? And what of some of the other things like announcements about due dates for upcoming assignments, tests, guest lectures, or special events they must attend? Did they write them down while they were packing up their stuff? As their teacher, these are all pieces of information you want to ensure they are receiving and processing, so what can one do to address this situation?

In this article I will recount some relevant personal experiences from the past four years that pertain to a technique I have developed to foster a more open relationship with my classes, and to tailor the course delivery to their needs and preferences. In its simplest form, the technique uses instructor journaling to create a record of classroom activities that can be referenced by students to ensure that they are getting what you intended out of the classes, assignments, and activities you have prepared. The full model involves bi-directional communication between the instructor and the

students and gives the students the opportunity to provide the instructor with feedback which can then be used to customize the course delivery to address gaps in understanding of the course content and make informed decisions regarding teaching styles, classroom activities, and assignments. Though this technique is certainly not going to make all of your students happy (some are still going to despise group discussions while others are going to love them), you will at least know that by varying the mode of delivery you can make everyone happy some of the time.

This technique was born during the Winter term of 2008 when I decided to tackle a problem. One of the courses I teach was always stressing me out. It is a very technical course with lots of content to deliver and skills to develop in the students. Every year I would teach until the last minute of the last lecture. Throughout the whole term I would worry I was not on pace to finish in time and, to be honest, I never really knew if I would. To address the problem I decided I would “benchmark” my course by recording the material I had covered each day (an idea I got from a colleague in my department with many more years of teaching experience than me and an Alan P. Stuart Award to boot). In addition to the chapter and

slide numbers, I posted the work I had assigned, and included the occasional link to a relevant video to a discussion thread on Blackboard. This proved useful not only to me for my benchmarking exercise, but also to any students who had missed class or who wanted to review material covered in preparation for tests. The choice to use the discussion tool was convenient for me, and made the information readily available to the students. This procedure worked very well and the students seemed to really appreciate the resource.

Flashing forward two and a half years to the Fall of 2011, I was preparing to teach one of four sections of UNIV1003 – Everything You Need To Know In First Year; certainly a departure from my own discipline of Engineering. I had led the development of this course and was keen to see it succeed. I decided to employ the same technique of logging the content covered, etc. for this class to “benchmark” it, enabling me to review the course afterwards and assist me in any future offerings. Initially I proceeded in much the same way as I had previously but with an increased desire to capture the true objectives of each of the classes and their respective activities. One of my favourite teaching strategies is to create situations for my students to discover what I am trying to teach them on their own. I find that this strategy suits my teaching style and works best when implemented with group discussion as well as other active learning strategies (a new passion of mine). One difficulty that can arise with this method of teaching, however, is that I cannot be sure that the purpose of the activities has

been clearly communicated to the class even though I explain it and summarize the key concepts at the end of each class. Consequently, I am often unsure whether or not all of the students have a clear understanding. As a result, I began to write longer posts, detailing the exact purposes of some of the classroom activities. I would often include additional background and links as well as personal reflections on the activities, their delivery and approaches to choices of teaching strategies.

As part of my UNIV1003 class, the students were required to submit weekly journals where they were to document their activities and experiences pertaining to university life and to discuss freely what they do and do not like about the course. I do, however, establish some boundaries such as not including details about personal relationships, etc. but they may, for example, make non-specific statements about struggling with personal matters as these do impact their lives as students. Once I had gained the students’ confidence that I was truly interested in their opinions and they were not going to be punished for expressing themselves, they began to write about activities they liked and did not like as well as styles of teaching and learning they preferred and those they did not. This provided me with the feedback necessary to make adjustments to classroom activities throughout the term as I learned more about my class. I did learn, however, that one of the keys to successfully implementing this technique is to journal immediately after every class. It is not only important to capture your feelings and thoughts about how the different

components worked but also to record the details of announcements, etc. that you made. This can be very beneficial for students as they know they have a central location for these if they forgot to write them down or they missed your class.

Because UNIV1003 was being taught by four different instructors following the same curriculum, using the same text and essentially the same course outline, I invited the other instructors of the course to read my posts. Shortly after, while describing the interesting experience I was having by journaling with my class, a colleague who was not teaching one of the sections expressed interest in following along as well so I opened up the invitation to some of my other colleagues who had been involved in the development of the course and whom I knew to be passionate about teaching. A few of them took me up on the offer and began reading my posts and providing encouragement and feedback about my class. Having a group of enthusiastic teachers following my class made for fantastic discussions about not only teaching methods but the profession of teaching. While reflecting on this I came to the realization that this technique could be used to mentor new teachers. Following an experienced colleague along throughout a term and reading about how they overcome challenges both instructionally and personally may, in fact, be more productive than face-to-face mentoring due to the personal nature of reading someone's journal. All of this relies, of course, on the mentor being willing to share their thoughts.

Generally speaking I am relatively open with my students, but, like a lot of teachers, I am very guarded with them about my teaching. In fact, because of teaching's innate personal nature, I believe that many teachers are uncomfortable sharing their concerns regarding their own performance and even outright failures in the classroom with their colleagues and their students. As my comfort level grew with my class, I began to share my thoughts about the classes more than usual and tore down the artificial barrier that I generally keep between myself and my students as it pertains to my teaching. I began to write about my own feelings about classes and activities, openly discussing where I had felt I had fallen short of delivering, as well as what I felt were personal triumphs. I believe that the nature of the relationship between students and teachers, by definition, does impose a hierarchical relationship that is, in some respects, necessary and needs to be protected. As such, I believe that there is a need for some personal space for both teachers and students in their teaching/learning relationship to promote a healthy teaching and learning environment.

In conclusion, I have found that by openly journaling about my teaching to my class I have not only been able to provide my students with a resource to review for tests, or catch up on missed classes, but I am able to provide them with insight into my thinking about the course and how I build it. In addition to providing the students with the opportunity to see what I want them to learn from each class, blogging also provides me with a forum to provide extra resources and enhance my

engagement with my students without increasing my face-to-face contact time with them. This is not to be taken to mean that I do not enjoy such contact, but rather that they can participate at their convenience and they may experience contact as many times as they desire. When this form of journaling is paired

with student journaling and students are provided with a safe environment in which to make comments about lectures, activities, and assignments I discovered that I am able to modify my teaching style to fit the class's needs and learning preferences.

Celebrating Teaching ~ Louis Bélanger

Recipient of the Dr. Allan P. Stuart Memorial Award for Excellence in Teaching

"He is a professor that cares so much about his students and having them be successful in his courses." (student comment)

Dr. Louis Bélanger began his career at UNB Saint John in 1990 as a professor of French, a career driven by his passion for Literature and the language that gives it life. By his own account familiar emotions of pride, satisfaction, joy and mostly, humility, still accompany the decision he made those twenty plus years ago. Upon joining the campus community, he was assigned the task of developing a program aimed at converting his field of expertise into an accessible, yet challenging, new area of specialization for students. To this end, he has created over a dozen courses addressing cultural expressions (novel, drama, poetry, history, geography, essay writing) of Québécois, Acadian and Franco-Ontarian civilizations.

Since 1991 and through collaborative and collegial efforts, Louis has also brought in more than twenty French Canadian authors to



meet with UNB Saint John students and community members. He describes the ambiance of each discussion as enthusiastic and mutually respectful and adds that "Such moments are reminders of my privilege to be a teacher."

Louis Bélanger developed certain principles based on his initial exposure to teaching; principles that have stood the test of time. Amongst these are:

- Integrating continuous research in class highlights the importance of the synthetic relationship between theory and practice.
- Structuro-global teaching methods support the values of enthusiasm, dynamism and empathy.
- Reacting with tact, respect and understanding is a necessary response to students who experience desperation, frustration and potential

discouragement as humbling effects of learning challenges.

As well as abiding by these principles Louis developed a personal approach to classroom teaching. He provides detailed attention to all aspects that support student success, from careful consideration of how he presents the course content to providing students with opportunities to develop in French language skill and personal confidence. Students add testament to his interest in, and enthusiasm for student learning; for example “He shows a passion for his classes that makes it easier to learn.” Another student commented that “He conveys information in a fashion that is easily understood and extremely easy to listen to, he always held my attention.”

Louis states that “In retrospect, I do believe that my contribution as a teacher has had a positive impact on hundreds of individuals experiencing the ever challenging process of balancing young adulthood and responsible citizenship.” He goes on to add that “the academic and professional successes of former students can be viewed in part as evidence of a teacher’s more humble role of intermediary between aspirations and journeys come to fruition.” Louis Bélanger indeed demonstrates the virtues of both humanity and humility, qualities that contribute to making him a worthy recipient of the Dr. Allan P. Stuart Memorial Award for Excellence in Teaching.

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**Holiday Wishes from the
Teaching and Learning
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and the Members of the
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