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INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

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INTUITION IN THE TEACHING OF FINANCE

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There is hardly any consensus on the meaning, worth or even the existence of intuition, let alone on the role of intuition in teaching. The idea of intuition does not easily lend itself to any clear or precise definition. Some would characterize intuition as an irrational process, devoid of any scientific validity. Yet we instinctively know what intuition is: an understanding of the concept based on our feelings, knowledge and experience.

The role of intuition in the teaching of mathematics, and to lesser extent, nursing has received some attention. For example, in the "novice to expert" model in nursing education, one source of expertise is the intuitive base an expert works from. Similarly some studies of entrepreneurship suggest that more successful owner managers are also more intuitive in their cognitive style than the general population of managers.

If intuition depends on the cognitive structure of an individual, which is partly shaped by his or her own previous experience, can we legitimately assume that what is intuitive to the teacher is also intuitive to the students, given that the teachers tend to have feelings, knowledge and experience different from those of the students? Can we then operationalize intuition as a basic cognitive process that is equally accessible to all? What happens when an experience we try to explain appears to be counter-intuitive? These are but some of the many questions for which there are as yet no clear answers. The science of psychology continues to grapple with different aspects of intuition- where it comes from, how it works, and whether we can trust it.

For the purpose of teaching finance, I do not interpret intuition as the "sixth sense". I simply try to explain financial theories or hypotheses or practices in a way that make them "feel right" to students. My intuition is based on observation, logical reasoning and common sense. The idea is to use intuitive skills for learning the "right" lessons from experience. I think I can best explain my approach to the use of intuition in the teaching of finance by giving a few specific examples.

Risk is a central concept in finance in that a significant part of the returns on financial assets is considered to be a compensation for the risk associated with these assets. Risk is the degree of uncertainty concerning possible changes in returns from such assets. Higher is the risk, higher is the expected return. Measuring such risk then becomes the key step in estimating the return to be expected from a financial asset. How much price I am willing to pay for an asset depends on how much return I can expect from such an asset. The financial market makes a distinction between how risky a particular asset is by itself and how risky it is when it is part of a portfolio of assets. Within a portfolio, changes in the returns from different assets may to varying degrees offset each other, thus reducing the overall risk of the portfolio. The market expects investors to reduce

INTUITION IN THE TEACHINING OF FINANCE (CONTIMUED FROM PAGE 1)

their risk to the maximum by diversifying into different assets, and does not reward the investors for such "diversifiable" risks. From our experiences, we also know that certain risks (high interest rate, high inflation etc.) affect all financial assets. And, therefore, replacing one asset with another does not help in reducing the overall risk of a portfolio. Or in other words, investors by themselves can not diversify away these risks, even if they are willing and prepared to do so. Isn't it then logical and fair for the market to reward the investors for risks that are beyond their control to manage? Based on this intuitive understanding of the financial market process of quantifying risk, I introduce my students to the all important concept of beta, the market's measure of risk.

Another area where I have to make a strong appeal to intuition is derivatives in general and option pricing in particular. We imagine that Jennifer, a student in my derivatives class, will need to buy a large quantity of gold come September, but she is afraid that the price of gold will shoot up over the next few months. What can she do to protect herself from the risk of rising gold price? One possible action is to buy the gold now and hold it till September. This however means that her cash will remain tied up in gold for several months, cash that she could have used for other purposes. Moreover, storing the gold safely will also cost money. Wouldn't she be better off if she could buy a right that would allow her to buy the gold in September at a price agreed upon today? Good news is that she can buy precisely such a right- all she has to do is to buy a few "call options", for example. How much is she willing pay to buy such options? It is intuitively clear that we pay for something what it is worth. How much then are these options worth to her? Suppose the options give her the right to buy gold at $400/oz, and the market price in September turns out to be $500. The option is now quite valuable because Jennifer can use the options to buy gold at $400/oz and sell it in the open market for $500, making a profit of $100/oz. What if the market price of gold in September turns out to be $300? How much are the call options worth? Jennifer is better off buying gold from the open market at $300 than buying gold exercising the options at $400/oz. Or in other words, in this scenario, the call options are worthless. The important point is that the value of the call options depends on the value of gold in September, and Jennifer does not know today what the price of gold will be in September! The good news is that Jennifer will have the choice to either buy it from the market or by using the right, depending on whatever serves her interest best. Options give us choices and we value choices, and therefore options should have a price.

Complex models have been developed to explain the price of an option in terms of several variables. One such variable is the rate of interest, and it is theorized that higher is the interest rate higher is the value of a call option. My experience is that unless the students develop an intuitive grasp of the relationship between interest rate and option prices, they tend to forget it easily. I present the intuition behind this relationship like this: First, for Jennifer, buying the gold now and carrying it till September is an alternative to buying call options; Second, Jennifer will always choose the preferred alternative; Third, if she buys the options rather than buy gold, she saves cash which will earn a higher return when interest rate is higher; Fourth, it follows that when the interest rate goes up; people will buy more call options which will increase their price.

I encourage my students to develop a similar intuitive understanding of the relationship between option prices and other explanatory variables. Such understanding is critical to the students' success in their subsequent encounter with the complexities of option-pricing models.

SAIFUL HUQ

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TEACHING THROUGH FIELD TRIPS: CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE INSTRUCTOR

COMPILED BY KATE FREGO / DEPARTMENT OF BIOLOGY

DOES THE VALUE OF THE TRIP OFFSET ITS EFFORT AND RISKS?

Both temporally and pedagogically, the primary consideration is the **learning value of the field trip**. Can it accomplish anything more than, e.g. a guest speaker or a visit to a website? In cases where the answer is "maybe", a field trip may not be worth the time and effort. In many cases, the answer is "yes, if…" This should be an indication that the experience must be carefully structured and facilitated to ensure that the conditions of "if" are met.

From this first consideration, the second follows logically**: what are the learning objectives of the field trip?** What exactly are the students expected to accomplish, or to be able to do, after the learning experience?

The third consideration is also a practical one: **what are the risks of the field trip?** Aside from chaos or boredom, it is critical (especially in the eyes of the institution's risk managers) to think carefully about the possibilities of physical injury or worse:

- should we avoid the risk? Does the value of the learning opportunities outweigh the risk?
- can we foresee specific risks? What risks, and what are their probabilities?
- how can we reduce risk? Are there steps that could be taken to reduce the probability of injury?

For an excellent discussion of the theory and practical aspects of outdoor safety management, see an excellent article by Rick Curtis at www.Princeton.edu

RISK FACTORS

The key to risk avoidance/reduction is thoughtful risk assessment. Hazard factors may be categorized as relating to the environment (particularly if it is remote or dynamic) or to humans (in terms of preparedness, responsibility). Depending on the field trip, the following may be risks to assess and prepare for:

1. Environment:

- Weather – check forecasts
- Tide – check tide tables
- Wildlife – What wildlife might students encounter? E.g. bears, wasps, poisonous creatures, poison ivy. For each, provide instructions on avoidance of, and reactions to, encounters.

2. Human

Preparedness is generally related to awareness of consequences of risks, whereas responsibility is related to maturity and choices: does the person choose to avoid risks? The first level of preparedness is the responsibility of the trip leader, who should be thoroughly familiar with the field trip site and its environmental risks. The second level of preparedness lies with the students. The trip leader should provide input on risks, consequences, and ways to reduce/avoid risks. Explicit verbal and written checklists and instructions should address:

- appropriate clothing, e.g. footwear, raingear, hat, etc.
- essential and suggested equipment, e.g. compass, hand lens, backpack, insect repellent; sunscreen
- food – inexperienced students may need guidance in what foods travel well, are easily eaten while walking, etc.
- water - most students need to be reminded about the need for realistic volumes of water, and the inadvisability of drinking from "wild" sources.
- behaviour – although much of this should be common sense, it doesn't hurt to be explicit about expectations, including no weapons, alcohol, drugs, etc. In addition, students should be given guidance on ecological aspects such as staying on trails, not disturbing wildlife or features unnecessarily, not collecting without permission or purpose (and the "1-in-20 Rule" i.e. collect only from populations of more than 20, removing no more than 1 specimen from each 20). Such behaviours should also be modelled by the instructors.
- descriptions of endangered species should be provided, with instructions on protecting them from disturbance.
- trash disposal – typically "pack in, pack out"

TEACHING THROUGH FIELD TRIPS (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3)

- washrooms facilities (or lack thereof), and procedures for personal hygiene
- procedures for dealing with getting lost or separated – meet at the van, stay put, etc. If appropriate, compasses and whistles should be provided, with instructions on their use.
- level of physical activity/strength/stamina required
- Instructors MUST explicitly ask students to inform them of individual health considerations (diabetics, allergy to bees, physical limitations, etc.). First aid kits should be accessible and instructors should know how to use them.

CONTENT/PROCESS

Preparation for leading/learning

Background – One of the most important investments of time and energy is to prepare for the field trip. This should include a visit to the site, especially if you have never been there, but even if you have… roads, trails and other features can change and mess up the best laid plans. It's also important to "study up" on the subject of the field trip, including the site features, fragile areas, dominant and rare species, potential hazards… and locations of such critical resources as washrooms and drinking water. Planning to "wing it" is a recipe for disaster: aside from being unable to accomplish basic pedagogical goals (thus negating the rationale for the trip!), nothing loses student interest as quickly as the trip leader bumbling about in confusion.

Student preparation – The second most important investment is in student preparation. Most of us prefer to have a clear target, so setting clear objectives for the trip, and providing explicit instructions and "deliverables" (such as a post-trip assignment) often helps to focus student learning. If the class size lends itself to breaking into learning groups, assign these in advance and encourage the students to organize their efforts, including mutual responsibility for safety, and constructive social interactions. For example, having groups meet ahead of time allows them to establish connections, learn each others' names, and be familiar enough that they will notice if someone is missing!

In the field, maximize student attention and motivation by maintaining some structure to the trip, with defined activities (and a few reminders of the objectives and deliverables). Be aware of direction of sun when speaking to the group, so that paying attention does not require looking into the sun. Similarly, minimize unnecessary distractions, e.g. do not stop for a "lecture" where noise or activity will distract attention.

In a post trip debriefing, raise the objectives again and ask individuals or groups to contribute their observations. An assignment to be completed using information from the trip can provide an efficient tool to encourage students to integrate the field trip and classroom learning, especially if it is presented as part of the objectives/deliverables before the trip.

MANAGERIAL ISSUES:

Transportation – consider logistics of vehicles, including comfort (school buses are not recommended for long trips on very hot or very cold days), safety (can the vehicle traverse the road to the site?), and dependability.

Permission from site owners – should be sought, preferably in writing, well in advance. Even public sites such as parks prefer to have advance warning of large groups.

University regulations – these seem to permeate all aspects of field trips. What vehicles are allowed, and who can drive them? Are "Liability waivers" or "remote location" forms required? Even if not required, careful documentation is recommended: a roster of names and emergency contact numbers for all, with copies carried by the trip leader and filed accessibly at university; all students should carry identification. If possible, emergency contact should be planned, with the trip leader carrying a cell phone and a reliable contact person at the other end.

CHECKLIST FOR FIELD TRIP ORGANIZERS

Leader preparation

- trip to site to assess:
  - ◊ risks (environmental vs human, likely vs unlikely, severe vs minor), and plan specific ways to reduce risks
  - ◊ access routes
  - ◊ travel time to/from site
  - ◊ locate features to visit, and assess accessibility
  - ◊ calculate time needed at site
  - ◊ plan trip duration, starting and ending times
- design
  - ◊ learning objectives:
  - ◊ deliverable/assignment

  Does the learning potential outweigh the risks?
- assemble and distribute preparatory materials (lists of species, maps, etc.)
- list and assemble equipment needed
- check with university re: regulations, liability, etc.
- roster of participant names in hand, with head count at each stop

Transportation considerations

- vehicle needed to access site
- size needed to carry participants
- time needed (and deadlines)
- driver needed
- cost
- booked in advance

Owners of site

- contacted for permission
- all gates open
- facilities open (e.g. washrooms)
- contact info in case gates, etc. are NOT open

Travel plan filed with **university administration**

- planned route
- vehicle description/license number
- date and times of departure, return
- roster of participants and emergency contacts
- contact info (e.g. cell phone of trip leader)

Student preparation

- informed of objectives and deliverables in advance
- risks outlined and instructions on e.g. risk avoidance, clothing, behaviour, etc. provided
- explicit request for warnings about allergies, medical conditions, etc.
- learning and/or safety groups assigned

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FOUR REASONS TO BE HAPPY ABOUT INTERNET PLAGIARISM

Teaching Perspectives (St. Thomas University) 5 (December 2002), [1-5]. Repr. *Teaching Options Pedagogiques* (University of Ottawa) 6:4 (August 2003), 3-5; repr. (abridged) as "Let's Hear it for Internet Plagiarism," *Teaching & Learning Bridges* 2:3 (University of Saskatchewan) (November 2003), 2-5.

[Note: this is an excerpt from a longer article, which can be found in draft form at http://www.stu.ca/~hunt/plagiary.htm]

The "information technology revolution" is almost always presented as having cataclysmic consequences for education -- sometimes for the better, but often, of course, for the worse. In postsecondary circles, perhaps the most commonly apprehended cataclysm is "Internet Plagiarism." When a university subscribes to **turnitin.com**, the local media invariably pick up the story -- "Students to Learn that Internet Crime Doesn't Pay" -- with the kind of alacrity usually reserved for features on political sex scandals or patronage payoffs. When the newest cheating scandal surfaces at some prestigious southern university known for its military school style "honor code," the headlines leap across the tabloids like stories on child molestation by alien invaders.

It's almost never suggested that all this might be something other than a disaster for higher education. But that's exactly what I want to argue here. I believe the challenge of easier and more convenient plagiarism is to be welcomed. This rising tide threatens to change things -- for, I predict and hope, the better. Here are some specific practices which are threatened by the increasing ease with which plagiarism can be committed.

1. The institutional rhetorical writing environment (the "research paper," the "literary essay," the "term paper") is challenged by this, and that's a good thing. Our reliance on these forms as ways of assessing student skills and knowledge has been increasingly questioned by people who are concerned with how learning and assessment take place, and can be fostered, and particularly with how the ability to manipulate written language ("literacy") is developed. The assumption that a student's learning is accurately and readily tested by her ability to produce, in a completely arhetorical situation, an artificial form that she'll never have to write again once she's survived formal education (the essay examination, the formal research paper), is questionable on the face of it, and is increasingly untenable. If the apprehension that it's almost impossible to escape the mass-produced and purchased term paper leads teachers to create more imaginative, and rhetorically sound, writing situations in their classes, the advent of the easily-purchased paper from **schoolsucks.com** is a salutary challenge to practices which ought to be challenged. One good, clear example of the argument which can be mounted against generic term paper assignments and in favor of assignments which track that writing process and / or are specific to a particular situation is in Tom Rocklin's online "Downloadable Term Papers: What's a Prof. to Do?" Many other equivalent arguments that assignments can be refigured to make plagiarism more difficult -- and offer more authentic rhetorical contexts for student writing -- have been offered in recent years.

I'm unconvinced that we can address the problem by assuring students that "they are real writers with meaningful and important things to say," or invite them to revise their work where we can see the revisions, as long as we continue giving them more decontextualized, audienceless and purposeless writing exercises. Having something to say is -- for anybody except, maybe, a Romantic poet -- absolutely indistinguishable from having someone to say it to, and an authentic reason for saying it. To address this problem, I believe, we need to rethink the position of writing in student's lives and in the curriculum. One strong pressure to do that is the increasing likelihood that empty exercises can by fulfilled by perfunctory efforts, or borrowed texts.

2. The institutional structures around grades and certification are challenged by this, and that's a good thing. Perhaps more important is the way plagiarism challenges the overwhelming pressure for grades which our institutions have created and foster, and which has as its consequence the pressure on many good students to cut a corner here and there (there's lots of evidence that it's *not* mainly the marginal students in danger of failing who cheat; it's as often those excellent students who believe, possibly with some reason, that their lives depend on keeping their GPA up to some arbitrary scratch). An even more central consideration is the way the existence of plagiarism itself challenges the way the university structures its system of incentives and rewards, as a zero-sum game, with a limited number of winners.

University itself, as our profession has structured it, is the most effective possible situation for encouraging plagiarism and cheating. If I wanted to learn how to play the guitar, or improve my golf swing, or write HTML, "cheating" would be the last thing that would ever occur to me. It would be utterly irrelevant to the situation. On the other hand, if I wanted a *certificate* saying that I could pick a jig, play a round in under 80, or produce a slick Web page (and never expected actually to perform the activity in question), I might well consider cheating (and consider it primarily a moral problem). This is the situation we've built for our students: a system in which the only incentives or motives anyone cares about are marks, credits, and certificates. We're not entirely responsible for that -- government policies which have tilted financial and social responsibility for education increasingly toward the students and their families have helped a lot -- but the crucial factor has been our insistence, as a profession, that the only motivation we could ever count on is what is built into the certification process. When students say -- as they regularly do -- "why should I do this if it's not marked?" or "why should I do this well if it's not graded?" or even "I understand that I should do this, but you're not marking it, and my other professors are marking what I do for them," they're saying exactly what educational institutions have been highly successful at teaching them to say.

They're learning exactly the same thing, with a different spin, when we tell them that plagiarism is a moral issue. We're saying that the only reason you might choose not to do it is a moral one. But think about it: if you wanted to build a deck and were taking a class to learn how to do it, your decision not to cheat would not be based on moral considerations.

3. The model of knowledge held by almost all students, and by many faculty -- the tacit assumption that knowledge is stored information and that skills are isolated, asocial faculties -- is challenged by this, and that's a good thing. When we judge essays by what they contain and how logically it's organized (and how grammatically it's presented) we miss the most important fact about written texts, which is that they are rhetorical moves in scholarly and social enterprises. In recent years there have been periodic assaults on what Paolo Freire (1974) called "the banking model" of education (and what, more recently, Tom Marino [2002], writing on the POD email list, referred to as "educational bulimics"). Partisans of active learning, of problem- and project-based learning, of cooperative learning, and of many other "radical" educational initiatives, all contend that information and ideas are not inert masses to be shifted and copied in much the way two computers exchange packages of information, but rather need to be continuously reformatted, reconstituted, restructured, reshaped and reinvented and exchanged in new forms -- not only as learning processes but as the social basis of the intellectual enterprise. A model of the educational enterprise which presumes that knowledge comes in packages (one reinforced by marking systems which say you can get "73%" of Renaissance literature or introductory organic chemistry) invites learners to think of what they're doing as importing pre-packaged nuggets of information into their texts and their minds.

Similarly, a model which assumes that a skill like "writing the academic essay" is an ability which can be demonstrated on demand, quite apart from any authentic rhetorical situation, actual question, or expectation of effect (or definition of what the "academic essay" actually *is*), virtually prohibits students from recognizing that all writing is shaped by rhetorical context and situation, and thus renders them tone-deaf to the shifts in register and diction which make so much plagiarized undergraduate text instantly recognizable. The best documentation of the strangely arhetorical situation student writing lives in that I know of is in the work done as part of the extensive study of school-based and workplace writing at McGill and Carleton Universities (Dias, Freedman, Medway & ParÉ, 1999; Dias & ParÉ, 2000).

4. But there's a reason to welcome this challenge that's far more important than any of these -- more important, even, than the way the revolutionary volatility of text mediated by photocopying and electronic files have assaulted traditional assumptions of intellectual property and copyright by distributing the *power* to copy beyond those who have the *right* to copy. It's this: **by facing this challenge we will be forced to help our students learn what I believe to be the most impor-**

tant thing they can learn at university: just how the intellectual enterprise of scholarship and research really works. Traditionally, when we explain to students why plagiarism is bad and what their motives should be for properly citing and crediting their sources, we present them in terms of a model of how texts work in the process of sharing ideas and information which is profoundly different from how they actually work outside of classroom-based writing, and profoundly destructive to their understanding of the assumptions and methods of scholarship.

When you look at the usual set of examples of plagiarism as it occurs in student papers, for example, what you see is almost invariably drawn from kinds of writing obviously and radically identifiable as classroom texts. And how classroom texts relate to or use the ideas and texts of others is typically very different from how they're used in science, scholarship, or in other publications. There are many such explanatory examples in print and on the Web; let me take one from the Northwestern University "The Writing Place" Web site. They offer the following as an explanation of how to do an acceptable and properly credited paraphrase:

Original

But **Frida's outlook was vastly different** from that of the Surrealists. Her art was not the **product of a disillusioned European culture**searching for an **escape from the limits of logic** by **plumbing the subconscious**. Instead, **her fantasy was a product of her temperament, life, and place**; it was a way of **coming to terms with reality**, not of **passing beyond reality** into another realm. Hayden Herrera, *Frida: A Biography of Frida Kahlo* (258)

Paraphrase

As Herrera explains, Frida's surrealistic vision was unlike that of the European Surrealists. While their art grew out of their disenchantment with society and their desire to explore the subconscious mind as a refuge from rational thinking, Frida's vision was an outgrowth of her own personality and life experiences in Mexico. She used her surrealistic images to understand better her actual life, not to create a dreamworld (258).

Key words and phrases in the original are in **boldface**. The changes in wording and sentence structure in the paraphrase are underlined.

What is clearest about this is that the writer of the second paragraph has no motive for rephrasing the passage other than to put it into different words. Had she really needed the entire passage as part of an argument or explanation she was offering, she would have been far better advised to quote it directly. The paraphrase neither clarifies nor renders newly pointed; it's merely designed to demonstrate to a sceptical reader that the writer actually understands the phrases she is using in her text. Without more context than the Northwestern site gives us, it's difficult to know exactly how the paragraph functions in a larger rhetorical purpose (if it does).

But published scholarly literature is full of examples of writers using the texts, words and ideas of others to serve their own immediate purposes. Here's an example of the way two researchers opened their discussion of the context of their work in 1984:

> To say that listeners attempt to construct points is not, however, to make clear just what sort of thing a 'point' actually is. Despite recent interest in the pragmatics of oral stories (Polanyi 1979, 1982; Robinson 1981), conversations (Schank et al. 1982), and narrative discourse generally (Prince 1983), definitions of point are hard to come by. Those that do exist are usually couched in negative terms: apparently it is easier to indicate what a point is not than to be clear about what it is. Perhaps the most memorable (negative) definition of point was that of Labov (1972: 366), who observed that a narrative without one is met with the "withering" rejoinder, "So what?" (Vipond & Hunt, 1984)

It is clear here that the motives of the writers do not include prevention of charges of plagiarism; moreover, it's equally clear that they are not -- as they would be enjoined to do by the Northwestern Web site -- attempting to "cite every piece of information that is not a) the result of your own research, or b) common knowledge." What they are doing is more complex. The bouquet of citations offered in this paragraph is informing the reader that the writers know, and are comfortable with, the literature their article is addressing; they are moving to place their argument in an already existing written conversation about the pragmatics of stories; they are advertising to the readers of their article, likely to be interested in psychology or literature, that there is an area of inquiry -- the sociology of discourse -- that is relevant to studies in the psychology of literature; and they are establishing a tone of comfortable authority in that conversation by the acknowledgement of Labov's contribution and by using his language --"withering" is picked out of Labov's article because it is often cited as conveying the power of pointlessness to humiliate (I believe I speak with some authority for the authors' motives, since I was one of them).

Scholars -- writers generally -- use citations for many things: they establish their own *bona fides* and currency, they advertise their alliances, they bring work to the attention of their reader, they assert ties of collegiality, they exemplify contending positions or define nuances of difference among competing theories or ideas. They do not use them to defend themselves against potential allegations of plagiarism.

The clearest difference between the way undergraduate students, writing essays, cite and quote and the way scholars do it in public is this: typically, the scholars are achieving something positive; the students are avoiding something negative.

The conclusion we're driven to, then, is this: offering lessons and courses and workshops on "avoiding plagiarism" -- indeed, posing plagiarism as a problem at all -- begins at the wrong end of the stick. It might usefully be analogized to looking for a good way to teach the infield fly rule to people who have no clear idea what baseball is.

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the Circulation Desk Staff at 648-5710.

AN INNOVATIVE APPROACH TO SUPPORTING PART-TIME FACULTY

DISCOVERING THE NEED

The Department of Nursing, at UNB Saint John, delivers an accreditated professional nursing program consisting of both theory and practice courses that complement and supplement one another. Although the majority of theory courses are delivered by full-time faculty, most practice courses are taught by part-time instructors. For example, during 2005-2006, the nursing department delivered the nursing curriculum with 13 full-time and 21 part-time faculty members.

The Department of Nursing is dependent upon the contribution of part-time faculty to deliver the Bachelor of Nursing program. Part-time faculty are recognized as experts in clinical practice and often have work commitments in addition to their teaching role. This situation creates both strengths and challenges: a strength in that students work with clinical experts; and a challenge in that, as clinical practitioners, part-time faculty are often physically removed from the university environment. Effective communication is affected by the difficulty of having all staff meet together and the lack of access to resources compromises professional development.

THE UNIQUENESS OF TEACHING A CLINICAL COURSE

Clinical courses are delivered using a low instructor to student ratio to maintain patient safety and respect standards of practice. One full-time faculty member usually assumes responsibility for coordinating the clinical course while working with their own student clinical group. In addition, the coordinator provides support to several part-time faculty (as high as 7-8 part-time instructors) each of whom works with six to eight students in the practice setting.

The full-time faculty member must balance the support provided to part-time instructors with the part-time faculty's own professional accountability. In other words, part-time instructors receive support and encouragement from full-time faculty; however, part-time faculty must demonstrate professional accountability by determining their own learning needs and implementing strategies that help to advance teaching competencies. All faculty teaching must also be mindful of the standards of practice set out by the Nurses Association of New Brunswick and the need for patient safety.

RESPONSE TO THE NEED

In the Fall of 2005, a Part-Time Faculty Resource Committee was struck with a mandate to be more efficient and effective in supporting part-time faculty. This committee works to provide ongoing support to part-time instructors who are working in either classroom or practice settings. The Committee is comprised of three full-time faculty members and one part-time faculty member. Each faculty member brings a unique experience that enhances the work of the committee. One full-time faculty member has many years of experience working with part-time instructors and has valuable insights into the needs of part-time faculty. Another has been through the transition from a part-time stipend position to a full-time faculty position and understands part-time faculty members' needs for information and support. The third full-time faculty member recently joined the nursing department and has valuable knowledge about the nature of teaching and learning. The part-time faculty committee member speaks to needs and concerns of her colleagues.

COMMON THEMES

The Committee began by identifying the common themes, questions and professional development needs of part-time faculty that could and should be either informally or formally addressed. These themes include: effective communication, understanding role expectations, understanding the curriculum, and encouraging professional development.

Effective communication. Many part-time faculty members expressed the need to feel more connected to the Department or Nursing. They identified a number of concerns regarding the lack of consistency in communicating key "need to know" information. These concerns included informing part-time members about: announcements and events within the department, departmental and university policy revisions or additions, and curriculum changes. The part-time faculty also repeatedly expressed a need to feel "part of the team." They also identified the need to be aware of available resources, viewing such information as critical in advancing their own professional development and in fostering student learning outcomes.

Understanding role expectations. The beginning part-time clinical instructor often feels overwhelmed with new role expectations; balancing patient safety and clinical teaching is a daunting responsibility. The clinical teacher has dual responsibilities for the health care needs of the public and for the students' learning needs. Part-time clinical instructors often express a need to understand what should be expected of students. Questions that have arisen include: What courses have the students taken in the past? How in depth should I go with this material? How challenging should a patient assignment be? What level of practice indicates that the student has failed the clinical practice rotation?

Understanding the curriculum. Unique to the Department of Nursing is the necessity to understand the curriculum as a whole in order to facilitate the socialization of students into the nursing profession. Teaching nursing is much more than teaching subject matter. Faculty expect students to adopt a "professional sensibility," professional values and a code of ethics that are threaded throughout the entire nursing curriculum. All faculty need to understand the common philosophical approach that is embedded in the nursing curriculum.

Providing for professional development. Many full-time faculty members have expressed concerns regarding the effectiveness of existing supports for part-time faculty. Course coordinators often fulfill the unstructured role of supporting part-time faculty which carries with it the risk of performing invisible work. In the past, full-time faculty teachers have often engaged in working with part-time faculty in isolation; each one approaching professional development needs differently. Answering questions and facilitating the professional development of part-time faculty takes time. While course coordinators are diligent in their support of part-time faculty, the need to support student learning often supersedes the need to support the professional development of part-time faculty.

THE RESPONSE

Initially, members of the Part-Time Resource Committee discussed the possibility of developing a part-time resource kit via a hard copy format. It was felt that a resource that part-time people could "get their hands on" would be helpful. Prior to making a decision regarding the format of delivering resource materials, the Committee held several meetings to discuss content or actual resource materials.

The Committee shared potential content topics at Departmental meetings on three separate occasions. Many full-time members (especially those within the resource committee) identified numerous gaps, and a startling lack of consistency in the approach to orientating new faculty. Variations existed in the use of departmental resources. For example, not all faculty were aware of a document that had been developed to guide the process of clinical evaluation. Other critical findings were that many documents needed to be revised and, in some instances, the Committee identified the need to develop new documents to assist all faculty in key need-to-know areas. Such realizations further signified the importance of our work and prompted us to consider the best format in terms of information sharing. The resource committee realized that a hard-copy method did not always work; therefore, we needed to find a more efficient mode of making learning/resource materials available to both full-time and part-time instructors.

The Committee, therefore, decided to develop a website that would provide up-to-date information for part-time instructors. Course coordinators continue to provide an informal approach whereby questions pertaining to clinical incidences are answered "on the spot;" however, the development of a more formalized approach via the creation of a website is helping part-time faculty to fulfill more complex teaching needs, such as understanding the process of clinical evaluation. In essence, this online resource helps orient new part-time faculty and offers support for on-going, broad professional development. Development of a website has had the added benefit of also contributing to the professional development of full-time faculty.

The format of the website allows for sharing and accessing essential materials. Since the curriculum is constantly evolving and new teaching resources are being developed or modified, a website is the best approach to share/communicate essential information. Since the information is meant for instructor use only, it is a secure website.

The Committee has been developing the website since the summer of 2005. Many documents have been either developed or revised, including: Structure of the Nursing Curriculum; Nursing Program – Evaluation Process (e.g., Canadian Association of Schools of Nursing Accreditation); Resources for Teaching and Learning; Faculty Professional Development; Evaluation of Student Learning and Professional Development; Frequently Asked Questions, and; relevant Departmental and University Policies.

Working together: Facilitating a team approach. The Committee obtained support from an on-campus web designer. The Chair of the Nursing Department also agreed to provide secretarial support to upload documents onto the website, to assist in keeping the website up-to-date, and in making changes to the website as directed by the resource committee.

While the committee members assumed the lead role in seeking strategies and opportunities for assisting part-time faculty members, ongoing activities are viewed as the responsibility of all departmental members. Some examples of collaborative efforts include: 1) a part-time member was invited to write a document regarding the use of concept mapping as a teaching and learning tool in practice settings. 2) two part-time faculty members have planned an up-coming Nursing Education day to discuss critical thinking and psychomotor skills, 3) the Health Sciences Coordinator developed a document to inform part-time faculty about student awards, including the importance of student nominations, and 4) an ad hoc committee will begin revising a document regarding student expectations within and between different academic years.

The sharing of expertise has also been fostered via the introduction of a series of professional development sessions. Prior to the first session, part-time faculty completed a needs assessment which indicated interest in learning more about the curriculum, obtaining teaching tips in relation to the application of theory to practice, and exploring the newly-developed website. With regard to exploring the website, the committee members sensed that some part-time faculty were hesitant because of limited computer skills. Activities have been developed to help part-time faculty familiarize themselves with the website.

The positive response to the preceding endeavours has been very encouraging. The involvement of both full and part-time faculty is extremely helpful to the work of the Commit-

AN INNOVATIVE APPROACH TO SUPPORTING PART-TIME FACULTY

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11)

tee, while providing opportunities to both recognize and share areas of expertise. A serendipitous outcome has been the validation of expertise and the development of a team approach to teaching. The Committee will continue to involve all faculty members in professional development and in adding to and revising the website.

OUTCOMES AND BENEFITS

Both part-time and full-time faculty members have benefited from the work of the Committee.

The benefits of the website for part-time faculty have been immediate. Following a professional development day for part-time instructors in December 2005, during which they were introduced to the website, many attendees reported that they felt that access to the site would help them become "a better teacher". The part-time faculty also appreciated the nursing department "taking the time and effort to keep us informed and in the loop". This feeling of being valued is no small achievement, especially when part-time faculty form such a significant component of the department's teaching complement. These feelings will be further fostered when the talents and accomplishments of part-time faculty are showcased on the site. For example, an announcement was posted when a Departmental Award for Teaching Excellence was granted to a part-time faculty member. Part-time faculty also voiced their satisfaction in having "access on a more permanent basis to information" that they need in order to perform their roles well. They also believe that this innovation will "contribute greatly to the fundamental goal of creating a cohesive approach to nursing education at UNB Saint John" and will lead to better student outcomes, which is the goal of any university program.

The benefits of the website for full-time faculty, especially those who assume course coordinator roles, have been to provide a vehicle for communicating the right information to the right people at the right time. No one is overlooked, no misinformation is given and no time is lost in communication. Once the information is on the website, everyone is informed.

The benefits for the Department of Nursing include a reduction in photocopying expenditures with more and more learning materials being available online versus a hard copy format. There will doubtless be other "unanticipated" benefits of the website that will become apparent in the months to come. The website is considered a work in progress, not an endpoint.

The website is proving to be a helpful resource for new full-time faculty who also need to "learn the ropes," become familiar with departmental policies and procedures, and become aware of professional development activities within both the department and the university. Old-timers often assume that newcomers know about the existence of such information and consequently, don't think to share it until after the event.

FUTURE POSSIBILITIES FOR THE WEBSITE

The terms of reference for the Part-Time Faculty Resource Committee state that the membership must include at least one part-time faculty member. Ongoing feedback from part-time faculty is crucial in identifying their learning needs and in determining the resources that need to be accessible through the website. A future possibility is that the website may provide a means for communicating with part-time faculty via an on-line discussion format. Such forms of discussion may help to highlight current needs of part-time faculty, therefore directing professional development endeavours of the Part-Time Faculty committee.

An introduction to the website will become an integral part of all future professional development activities for part-time faculty. At this time, information feedback suggests that this innovation is helping full-time faculty fulfill their responsibilities in supporting the professional development of new, part-time faculty. More formal evaluation is planned in the coming months. Ongoing administrative support needs to be available to ensure that the website is maintained and updated regularly and to ensure that new faculty have access to the website.

The website will continue to evolve over the months and years to come. Some future possibilities include the creation of a discussion board for troubling questions or issues, further links to other useful websites, posting of the Chair's Notes, news releases, and posting of employment opportunities. The website is an exciting initiative that we believe has, and will continue to have, many benefits and advantages for both the department and all faculty members.

Note: If faculty from other disciplines are interested in viewing this website, please contact the Nursing Program Coordinator, Sarah Wanamaker at swanamak@unbsj.ca.

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