

Teaching Matters



Center for Teaching Excellence



October, 2004

A Keiser Collegiate System Publication

Volume 4, Issue 10

IN THIS ISSUE	Page
Who Moved My Cheese?	1
2004 Teaching Effectiveness Award Recipients	2-3
Breakout Sessions	4
Dr. Keiser addresses the faculty	5
Teaching Tips and Techniques	6-8

CALL FOR ARTICLES

Share your teaching experiences with your fellow instructors. Submit an article, in Word format, to Barry Friedman, Director Center for Teaching Effectiveness at barryf@keisercollege.edu

CTE

Center for Teaching Excellence



Each year all Keiser Collegiate System faculty and deans joined together in October to discuss curriculum, recommend course revisions, and to evaluate textbooks at the Annual Faculty Convocation. This year's convocation was held at the new Everglades University, Boca Raton Campus. Faculty had the opportunity to meet with their department colleagues for several hours, enjoy good food at the T-Rex complex cafeteria, to bond and network with their fellow instructors.

Dr. Arthur Keiser, co-founder and Chancellor of the Keiser Collegiate System, addressed the 335 convocation attendees. Dr. Keiser reminisced that in 1977, he and his mother, Mrs. Evelyn Keiser, founded Keiser College with one student in a facility with one classroom and two labs. Today, the Keiser Collegiate System has a current population of just under 8,000 students, attending Keiser College, Keiser Career College or Everglades University, located in 16 campuses throughout Florida, with three new campuses scheduled to begin operation shortly, training students in 25 different programs.

Dr. Gery Hochanadel, Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, presented five instructors and one Dean with this year's Faculty Teaching Effectiveness Award. This award is presented to faculty members with a combined total from student evaluations, post-test scores, student attendance, and completion percentages.



Keiser Collegiate System Teacher Effectiveness Award Recipients



Award winners (L to R) Lopez, Cline, Bannister, Franco, Handwork and Trevino awaiting their plaques.



Jill Cline, Physical Therapy Assistant Instructor, Melbourne Campus is introduced by Dr. Hochanadel. Ms Cline is a three time Faculty Effectiveness Award recipient having received the award for the 2004, 2003 and the 2002 academic year.





Eddie Bannister, Computer Instructor, Kendall Campus



Giselle Franco, Paralegal Instructor, Kendall Campus



Julio Lopez, Dean of the Kendall Campus, receives the Teacher Effective Award for Deans.



Bishop Handwork, Computer Graphic Design Instructor,
Orlando Campus



Patsy Trevino, Alternative Medicine Instructor,
Everglades University, Sarasota Campus University



Dr. Hochanadel (rear, right) discusses a serious accreditation issue with the Campus Deans, after telling one of his famous "Hochanadel jokes".



Alex Butakow, of the Sarasota Campus, Computer Network & Security Management Program Director, takes a byte out of a bit of information.



Bishop Handwork, of the Orlando Campus, Computer Graphics and Design Program Director, leads a graphic discussion.



Barbara Rolph, of the Melbourne Campus, Nursing Program Director, leads the Nursing Faculty in discussion.



David Kreitner, KCS Director of Quality Enhancement, addresses the General Education Instructors.



Ben Williams (front, left), KCS Director of Libraries, inquiries if the campus Librarians read any good books lately.



Ellen Chiafalo, Medical Assistant Program Director, Fort Lauderdale Campus checksher faculty's "vital signs".



Marianne Peiffer (center), Medical Diagnostic Sonography Program Director, Daytona Beach Campus, and her faculty listen for the "Ultrasound".



Ms Kristi Mollis, President of Everglades University welcomes the KCS faculty to the Everglades Boca Raton Campus.



Dr. Keiser address the faculty reminding us as to where we have been by reviewing some Keiser history and where we will going by discussing the plans for growth.



Dr. Keiser chats with 18 year Keiser College Instructor Tim Ramsdell, from the Daytona Beach Campus.

TEACHING TIPS AND TECHNIQUES

The following teaching tips and techniques were adapted from the University Pittsburgh Faculty Development Teaching Assistant Handbook. Retrieved from:

http://www.pitt.edu/~ciddeweb/FACULTY-DEVELOPMENT/TA_HANDBOOK/index.htm

Every college instructor dreams of the ideal classroom, in which students listen attentively, take notes, ask questions and are prepared to discuss the weekly assignment. Likewise, students want their class to be engaging, intellectually stimulating and relevant to their academic enterprise. Yet, while everybody wants the perfect classroom, establishing and maintaining a dynamic classroom requires continuous work. Teachers sometimes complain about unprepared and unmotivated students while, ironically, undergraduate students often grumble about dull instructors and boring classes. In the following section we provide tips and techniques that may enliven your classroom and stimulate your students' critical thinking skills.

DEVELOP A POSITIVE RELATIONSHIP

Research indicates that students who feel comfortable in the classroom and have a positive rapport with the teacher are much more likely to learn. Students often surpass normal course expectations when they feel positive about the learning climate. In the long run you will accomplish more by devoting the *first hour of class* to getting to know your students and building a supportive environment than you will by rushing into the course material.

KNOW YOUR STUDENTS' NAMES

We have said it before, but we will say it again: learn your students' names. Anonymous students feel neglected, mistrust the teachers' ability to grade them fairly and often drop out of discussions. By learning your students' names you take the first step in establishing a term-long relationship with them. If you have a difficult time remembering names, a seating chart or placards (placed on the desk in front of each student) may help.

KNOW YOUR STUDENTS

This may sound simple, but it requires a conscious effort. Finding out if students have children, what their hobbies are, and what sports they participate in can help to build a constructive and trusting relationship between you and your students. And knowing a little about your students can be an excellent teaching tool.

Keep in mind that establishing a personal relationship with students has to be a two-way avenue; if you want students to share their lives with you, you need to share your experiences with them.

CREATE AN INTELLECTUAL CLASSROOM

There are many subtle ways to keep a class engaged in the course material. Make sure that your notes are well organized, that you are speaking clearly and precisely, that you offer signposts (verbal outlines) to make it easier for students to take notes and listen attentively, and always, when lecturing or leading a discussion, that you be energetic. A monotone or a dull, tired voice will put even the most interested student asleep.

Add variety to the classroom experience. Consider a mix of in-class writing, discussion and lecture, rather than a whole class dedicated to only one approach to teaching. Use the board and the other media to organize the class, vary the pace and offer alternative viewpoints.

The common denominator among "great teachers" is that they are willing to experiment.

As you speak, move around the classroom. Approaching students will force them to pay closer attention to a lecture or help to involve them in a discussion. Eye contact works in the same way: It helps to make a lecture seem a little more personal.

And finally, work on controlling nervous habits. Fiddling with a tie or a lock of hair suggests a lack of self-confidence that can be unnerving to students. Students react positively to teachers who seem to be firmly in control of the classroom and the material. You know much more than your students and have every reason to feel confident.

USE THE BOARD

The board is perhaps the most common aid used by instructors and a useful aid that can be used to emphasize important information, clarify (using charts and graphs) difficult ideas and organize a lecture or discussion. Keep the following in mind when using the chalkboard:

Write Visibly. Make sure that you are not writing below the line of sight or writing in an illegible scrawl.

Keep the Material on the Board. Keep the material on the board as long as possible. Fill in each panel from right to left (if you are right-handed), one panel at a time, and erase only the first panel when you have filled in the last. If you are modifying a drawing, use dotted lines or colored chalk. Do not erase the original; you want students to be able to see the changes. If you make a mistake, the same

rule applies. Correct the mistake with additional notations and explain the mistake but leave the original in place so that your students can follow the corrections.

Allow Time. Give students time to copy chalkboard material into their notes before asking them to comment and before moving on to a new topic.

Do Not Doodle. Students rightly assume that what is on the board is important. Use the chalkboard to highlight and emphasize. Put no insignificant information on the board.

Check with Your Students. Occasionally check with your students to make sure that they can see the material on the chalkboard.

Plan. As part of your class planning, decide what material you will put on the board. Be selective. Only write down the basic principles.

COMPLIMENT YOUR STUDENTS

In the classroom, you are the authority and what you say to your students will have a tremendous impact on how they perceive their learning experience. Take the time to compliment a student on something he or she has done well. Be specific and genuine; focus your compliment on one particular element of his/her work that you liked.

BE ON TIME FOR CLASS

Be on time for class. If you are late, you not only give students the impression that class is not that important, but also you give them *carte blanche* to be late as well.

EXPERIMENT

The common denominator among "great teachers" is that they are willing to experiment. Great teachers constantly evaluate themselves and look for new ways to interest their students. If students come to class unprepared, have them prepare questions in advance and bring them to class. Keep track of your best ideas – those ideas that successfully engage the students and communicate the material you want to teach – but always be prepared to "tweak" even the most effective strategies.

ENCOURAGE QUESTIONS

Experts agree that students gain a greater understanding when they become active in the learning process. The simplest way to involve students is to encourage questions. Questions allow students to clarify what they do not know and to explore issues that interest them. Encourage students to interrupt with questions or provide time for questions at natural breaks in the class or recitation. While some questions may require a short answer, others might provide fodder for discussion. Consider saying, "Jane, that is an interesting question. Class, how might you answer it?"

If there are few student questions, it may be that students are not paying attention closely enough or not thinking about the topic at hand. Sometimes this is an indication that you need to work on developing a more engaging or varied approach to your class.

However, often students do not ask questions because they fear their questions will be dismissed, ignored or brushed aside. It is possible that they feel the instructor does not want students to ask questions. Such attitudes are seldom irrational; often the instructor has implicitly done something that discourages questioning. For example, dismissive statements such as "We discussed that issue yesterday" or "That question is really not on target" stifle further questions. If a student feels that his or her questions were unwelcome, that student may never ask another question during the entire semester.

Teachers discourage questions for a number of reasons. Sometimes they are rushing to "cover" material and are concerned about getting sidetracked. Sometimes they are insecure and do not want to lose control by opening the classroom to questions that they may not be able to readily answer. The potential for loss of control and loss of face is real. However, it is also true that the fear of this happening is often exaggerated. The teacher must weigh the advantages gained by permitting and encouraging questions against the need to maintain tight control.

"Respect your students. Avoid sarcasm, biting humor or public critiques . . ."

ASK QUESTIONS

Learning how to use questions effectively in the classroom accomplishes a number of teaching goals. First, by engaging students in a question and answer dialogue, the usual "one-way" flow of information from instructor to students is transformed into a more interactive process and students become active participants in their own learning. Second, skillful questioning can encourage students to engage in higher level cognitive processes (analysis, synthesis, and evaluation), thus helping to develop their capacity for critical thinking.

The following are some questioning techniques:

After asking a question, wait for a response. Do not answer the question yourself; repeat it, or replace it with another question until you have waited at least thirty seconds. Students need time to think about the question and prepare their responses. Research indicates that when you wait ten seconds, students respond more, use more complex cognitive processes, and begin to ask more of their own questions.

Don't rephrase the question. Teachers sometimes reword questions because they are uncomfortable with their students' slow response and are concerned that the question was unclear. Yet each time you rephrase the question, your students become more confused. Often they do not know which question to answer. Be patient. Give students time to consider your original question and to offer answers. If you feel you have been misunderstood, you can always ask a different question after students have answered the first question.

Ask only one question at a time. Do not ask a string of questions one after the other in the same utterance (sometimes called "shotgunning"). A quick series of questions will confuse any listener. Even the most experienced students will wonder: "What was the first question he asked? Which should I answer? Should I still address his first point when the rest of the class is talking about his last point?"

Vary the questions you ask. Ask questions that require different approaches to the topic. Avoid beginning your question with the words "why" or "explain" and instead phrase your questions with words which give stronger clues about the type of explanation sought. To encourage a chronological explanation, for example, instead of asking, "Why did we have a depression in the 1930s?" try "What series of events led up to the stock market crash of 1929 and high unemployment in the 1930s?"

"Research indicates that students who feel comfortable in the classroom and have a positive rapport with the teacher are much more likely to learn."

Hold Students Intellectually Responsible for their Ideas. Your job is not only to ask questions and get answers, but also to encourage the intellectual development of your students. While encouraging students to see all sides of an issue, be sincere and treat alternate views with the utmost respect. Students will stop participating if they feel their ideas are too quickly dismissed.

Praise your Students' Answers. Let your students know when they have given an impressive answer to a question. Often teachers only mildly acknowledge students with a weak "OK" or indecisive "all right." Use stronger language such as "absolutely correct" or "great answer" and refer to the student's best point. Strong reinforcement encourages students to speak and offers a model for other students to emulate.

Build on Your Students' Responses. If you continue to discuss a point or return to your lecture

after a student responds, try to incorporate the key elements of the response into the discussion or lecture. By using the student's response, the teacher shows that he or she values the points made. By referring to the student by name (e.g., "As Pat pointed out, . . .") the teacher gives credit where credit is due and encourages other students.

RESPECT YOUR STUDENTS

Avoid sarcasm, biting humor or public critiques of students. No matter how well-intended, a remark that embarrasses a student seldom encourages the student to work harder and often makes it difficult for the student to return to your class at all. Although it is not easy to determine what is appropriate in every situation, usually it is safe to model your behavior with students after their behavior with you. If they tease you, you can feel comfortable gently teasing them.

TREAT STUDENTS AS COLLEAGUES

Unintentionally, some instructors patronize their students. More effective instructors treat their students like colleagues and see the classroom as a place where both instructor and student can learn. Share your academic experience with your students. Let them know where you stand on academic questions – why you might feel a certain theory or position is in error – but provide room for them to disagree with you.

ADDRESS INEQUALITIES

Good teachers constantly evaluate their own experiences and make adjustments when necessary. If you notice that particular groups of students are not participating in class, you need to consider how you might address that inequality. Perhaps you have inadvertently given signs that their participation is less welcomed. Look for ways to include groups of students who have not been participating in your discussions. Consider small group exercises, or share your observations with the class and make it a class project to include everyone.

MAKE YOURSELF AVAILABLE

Make yourself available before class, during breaks and after class. Don't be the first one out the door. If you give out your phone number or e-mail address, respond quickly to calls or e-mail inquiries from students. Give your students advance notice as possible if you will not be available so they are not waiting for your response.

Make time to chat informally with your students about any subject that interest them. Don't limit the discussion only to your subject area. When you meet a student in the hall or on the campus, smile and give a personal greeting. Call each student by name; it makes a great deal of difference.