



EXCHANGE

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New England Faculty Development Consortium

Message from the President

Judith Kamber, President of NEFDC, Northern Essex Community College

As I begin my first term, I am excited and proud to be President of an organization that has accomplished so much and served so many. I follow in a long line of Presidents who have moved NEFDC forward, and none of our efforts could have been accomplished without the hard work and dedication of faculty and administrators who have served on our board since we began in 1998. Our current board members energetically dedicate themselves to the work of this organization and to our mission of supporting teaching and learning and professional development for faculty and administrators. We continually strive to find ways that NEFDC can be an even better resource for colleges and universities in New England. We are particularly grateful to two board members who have completed their terms of office: Eric Kristensen (Senior Instructional Consultant at the University of Ottawa) and Bill Searle (Professor at Assunetuck Community College in CT). Both have been great contributors to NEFDC, and we will miss their enthusiasm and insights. We are also

excited about welcoming our two new board members, Elise Martin (Director of Instructional Design and Curriculum Projects at Middlesex Community College) and Susan Wyckoff (Vice President at the Colleges of Worcester Consortium), who officially joined our board in June.

I am also very pleased to begin my term at a time when our Fall Conference promises to be one of great importance. On Friday, November 4, 2005, Dr. Gail Mellow, President of LaGuardia Community College, will be our keynote speaker and her keynote will address "Beyond Tolerance: Diversity and the Challenge of Pedagogy in American Higher Education." As we examine trends in higher education, we are all aware of changing demographics, an ever-growing percentage of non-traditional students, more diversity with higher minority participation, increased numbers of students needing focused attention in Math and English, and the list continues. Added to this mix are the needs and expectations of students, teachers, administrators, employers, the public and the policymakers.

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From the Editors:

The theme of the upcoming NEFDC Fall Conference is "Diversity and the Challenge of Pedagogy in American Higher Education." Accordingly, several of the articles and resources in this issue of the NEFDC Exchange address that theme. Melissa Juchniewicz's and Susan McCourt's articles look at different aspects of student diversity for their implications for our teaching. Appreciative Inquiry and Appreciate Process, as Bill Searle describes them in his piece, could easily and fruitfully be applied to the challenges involved in making sure that we create truly diverse communities at our institutions. Sharon Charette provides a useful bibliography of books and articles that address diversity. Richard Light's Making the Most of College: Students Speak Their Minds (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001) devotes two

chapters to the issue of the impact of diversity on student learning and satisfaction: quotes from the book are interspersed throughout this newsletter.

Other parts of the newsletter provide information about resources and activities that promote professional development. Charlie Kaminski describes the Community College Leadership Academy, an initiative to help train faculty and administrators to become effective leaders of their institutions. And of course the events, the newsletter, and the website sponsored by NEFDC, as described throughout this issue, all exist purely to support professional development for faculty and staff.

We hope you enjoy this issue, and we welcome your feedback and future contributions.

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Praising the Profession

Thomas S. Edwards
Thomas College

There can be a tension in higher education between the public and the private. At times, we take issue with assessment, accreditation, or performance evaluations. We resist the public review of our work in the classroom or the lab. We need private space for our teaching; our students need time and space to learn. We need quiet, we need focus, we need reflection.

Ultimately, however, it is the public aspect of our work that defines us as a profession: we profess, in public, the principles that draw us to higher education. And the best aspects of that public affirmation are seen when individuals volunteer their time, their effort, their energy and their expertise to advance the profession and their colleagues within it.

Two individuals merit special recognition for their public contributions to our profession: Eric Kristensen of the Centre for University Teaching at the University of Ottawa, and William Searle, at Asnuntuck Community College in Connecticut. Over the past twenty years, these two individuals have provided some of the best evidence of the values for which we stand as educators, teachers, and scholars.

Bill and Eric were founding members of the New England Faculty Development Consortium (NEFDC) as it grew from its origins in Massachusetts to now serve the

entire New England community. The NEFDC has been a constant in their professional lives, for Eric as he has moved from Harvard to the Berklee College of Music to Boston University and now Ottawa, and for Bill in his work in Connecticut, New England, and nationally with community college networks. They have hosted conferences, written for the newsletter, and carried the work of faculty development far beyond their home campuses.

Eric and Bill have nurtured the development of a tremendous organization. Since the mid 1980s, they have been teachers, administrators, and conference presenters. They have been mentors, scholars, and friends. Throughout my work with them on the Board, they have always been generous, kind, and patient.

As an academic administrator, I am often asked if I miss teaching. I have come to appreciate that there are as many ways to teach as there are to learn. In my time on the NEFDC board with Eric and Bill, they have taught me a great deal. Whether private or public, their work on behalf of individual faculty and administrators, on their campuses and throughout the NEFDC, represents the best that our profession can offer. As they step down this year from the NEFDC board, I want them to know that they have my respect, my admiration, and my very public thanks.

It is natural on a college campus to discuss and examine ideas. And who better to do it with than people who are different from you in some way?

(Light, 164)

Continued from Page 1: Message From the President

We have a challenge. Many colleges and universities are rising to the challenge and others are struggling. What we have learned is that successful initiatives are comprehensive and institution-wide. The issues and challenges that face our institutions require commitment, collaboration, action and excellence throughout our colleges. We are now called upon to reframe much of our work in student services, teaching, curriculum development, hiring and policy making. We must

develop new frameworks for change and inclusion. This fall conference may be a place to begin, to learn and to share ideas. I hope you will join us to explore the possibilities. I look forward to seeing you in November at our fall conference.

Judith Kamber
Dean of Professional Development
Northern Essex Community College

The NEFDC EXCHANGE

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The NEFDC EXCHANGE is published in the Fall and Spring of each academic year. Designed to inform the membership of the activities of the organization and the ideas of members, it depends upon member submissions. Submissions may be sent to either editor at tthibodeau@neit.edu or sberrien@bristol.mass.edu. Materials in the newsletter are copyrighted by NEFDC, except as noted, and may be copied by members only for their use.

Faculty Development for Community College Leadership

**Charles Kaminski, Assistant Dean of Academic Affairs
Business, Science & Technology Division, Berkshire Community College**

In recent years, there has been a great deal written about the need to groom future leaders for executive positions in our nation's colleges and universities. This is particularly true for community colleges. In a 2001 research brief titled "The Critical Impact of Impending Retirements on Community College Leadership," the American Association of Community Colleges reports that 45 percent of current community college presidents plan to retire by 2007. It also projected that in the next 10 years, community colleges will need to replace 800 of the 1,150 presidents.

In 2002, the Massachusetts Community College Executive Office and Community College Presidents' Council responded to this need by establishing the Community College Leadership Academy (CCLA). The Academy's mission is to develop community college leaders who are versed in current educational leadership theory and informed through practical applications; who will continue the effective response of community colleges to student and community needs; and who are prepared for the new opportunities and challenges of meeting the mission of open access to higher education.

Every year, each of the Commonwealth's fifteen community colleges nominates individuals from its campus to participate in the Academy's year-long program of leadership-oriented seminars and a culminating week-long spring residency. Graduate credit in Educational Leadership can be earned from the University of Massachusetts Amherst for participation in the Academy by CCLA participants, or Fellows, who come from all areas of their home campuses.

Over the three years of the Academy's existence, the greatest representation has come from campus offices with administrative or support functions. Despite the fact that it is essential that individuals with extensive classroom experience be represented within the ranks of future college leaders, there has been only minimal faculty representation among applicants and participants in the CCLA. This lack of faculty participation may be partially attributed to faculty members' lack of awareness of the CCLA or the scheduling challenges associated with accommodating faculty teaching schedules with the Academy's time commitments and expectations. However, an additional explanation may be limited faculty interest rooted in preconceptions of college leadership and the roles and responsibilities of administrators. One objective of the Academy is to broaden individuals' perspectives and develop a greater understanding of what college leadership is about.

Bill Heineman, full-time faculty member and Chairperson

of the Department of History, Government, and Philosophy at Northern Essex Community College, was a first-year Fellow in the CCLA. He had the following to say about his experience in the Academy and the extent to which it prepared him for a leadership role: "The CCLA was an extremely valuable experience in preparing me to exercise leadership. The breadth of the curriculum and diverse backgrounds of my colleagues provided a wider perspective than working in a single area of a college ever could."

In commenting on the extent to which his participation in the CCLA was impacted by his faculty member status and perspective, Bill noted: "It was so important to have representatives from many different functional areas of the community college participating. I was struck numerous times during the Academy by how many of the challenges facing us—especially the big ones—are common to us all. I was inspired by an academic administrator who questioned the morality of our heavy reliance on adjunct faculty and by a financial officer's impassioned defense of the educational accomplishments of our colleges. Both of these colleagues made better arguments than I, as a faculty member, could have."

Reflecting upon his year-long experience in the CCLA and the extent to which his participation influenced his professional leadership goals and aspirations, Bill acknowledged: "I entered the Academy with the notion that I might want to try an administrative position some day, and hoped that the experience would tell me whether to do so or not. I was both excited and sobered about what I learned in terms of how hard a job it is. I think that I will have to actually be in one of those positions before I can make a decision about whether it is more rewarding than teaching, which I really enjoy, but I feel like I have a much more realistic sense of what I'd be getting into now."

Of course, from this one faculty member's experience, it can't be said that the CCLA provides the ideal preparation for any faculty member interested in pursuing career development and exploration in higher education administration. However, the Academy's content and structure offer a valuable professional development opportunity to faculty by giving an overview of leadership theory, challenges, and prospects while also providing ample time to network with peers and colleagues from other institutions. It is hoped that this experience will pique further interest and provide direction and guidance to faculty members considering taking career steps towards a role with greater administrative responsibilities and leadership opportunities.

Literacy Identity and Diversity

Melissa M. Juchniewicz, EdD
Northern Essex Community College

The composition classroom is an ideal place to consider diversity, because of its purpose as a place to explore meaning-making, and because composition studies are common to nearly all students in a degree program. How do diverse students perceive the composition classroom and their participation in it? One way to approach this challenging question is to recognize that what we perceive as diversity, students often consider identity.

Literacy identity. For diverse students, identity is less about being “outside” the mainstream and much more a matter of “ins”: specifically, it is **inherent**, **indelible**, **influenced**, and **invented**. Identity is *inherent* in that many cultural attributes come from heritage, and other aspects have to do with ability. Identity is *indelible* in terms of experience, because what has been lived can’t be erased. Identity is *influenced* by close others, authoritative others (such as teachers), the media, and the larger world; and it is *invented* and reinvented by people making such intentional transitions as attending college. Features of identity migrate between these spheres, often disappearing from or reemerging in the latter two. In composition, it is the interplay of identity with literacy that interests us.

Only a few decades ago, literacy was defined as the ability to write one’s name; now it is a concept that

describes an individual’s interactions with the world. Beyond the discrete cognitive and physiological processes involved in reading and writing, literacy encompasses larger acts of reception and expression. *Reading* is also the transformation of lived experiences into knowledge, and *writing* is also the use of acquired knowledge to unveil new knowledge. Paulo Friere advocated for this interpretation of literacy throughout his career and proposed that critical literacy deems not only that we make sense of and from the world and its countless symbols (including alphabetic), but that our response, the meaning we interpret and create, contributes to the social structure as well as to our decisions about being active members of society and controlling our own lives. The thrust of critical literacy has been on the learner in context, but more recently the trend is toward a focus on the internalization of context, or how individuals perceive themselves as readers and writers of the world and the word; this is *literacy identity*.

Reading the world is a stance that develops with acquired knowledge of historical, social, and authoritative structures. *Writing the world* is a way of taking action and creating conditions for one’s self and others. If reading is reception, but also reflection and interpretation, then writing is expression, but also imagination and creation. Freire (1970) further asserts

"When students talk about diversity in their high schools, they do not paint a pretty picture. Their characterizations of high school interactions do not support the argument that simply exposing people to others who are different will inevitably lead to constructive learning and improved relationships. ... Diversity in high school...is not working well at all. ... American public schools...make remarkably little effort to build a sense of community or shared culture."

(Light, 137)

that non-elite people need to gain fluency in the dominant discourse, in order to understand power relationships and to work toward change. Lisa Delpit (1995) develops this idea of “explicit and focused instruction” (p. 155) to initiate all learners into what she calls the literacy *codes of power* in order to be fluent with forces that control aspects of their lives. Thus, reading and writing in the traditional sense – *reading and writing the word* – are vital skills needed for power over one’s life and for active participation in society. This makes the composition classroom a fertile setting for inquiries into identity and diversity.

Diversity in the classroom. Although concerned with internalized contexts, literacy identity is indeed political, especially for those on the margins of society, as many diverse students tend to be. Who are “diverse students”? In what ways can people be different (and different from whom)? How important is it that a teacher is sensitive to diversity and makes an effort to communicate that sensitivity in the classroom? These are questions for individual teachers to explore and for professional development programs to sustain.

The “ins” of identity can contribute to a campaign against full participation in the work of composition. How do we challenge discouragement and persuade students to feel included and safe to take academic risks? The institution does its part by providing protection against discrimination, facilitating the organization of groups and activities, and offering supports for diverse students’ needs. But in truth, what really matters is what goes on within the classroom, between teacher and student and among classmates. Most of whatever else goes on in the college is in the interest of supporting just that. Can we, or should we, individualize instruction to the extent that we address the diverse needs of every student? If diversity is more than a series of categories, if it is identity, then do we proceed by attempting to seek “common ground” with each student, or is our purpose to encourage assimilation with the dominant discourse

group? Many students don’t self-identify about group membership for all sorts of reasons, not the least of which is attending to the invented sphere of identity. And certainly one member of a group is not representative of the entire group and shouldn’t be called upon as such (as in, “Tommy, you are under 20, what do the young people think of this?” or “Sabine, how does the Black community feel about this issue?”). It’s clear that a consideration of literacy, identity, and diversity elicits more questions than certitudes.

Diversity is not a matter of imposing categories on individuals but a concept that each individual develops in accordance with the “ins” of identity. Nor is it a reason to modify expectations: just as each student defines his or her own identity, each should have the opportunity to reach the goals set out for all. We can’t accommodate everyone’s differences, but we can create a climate in which students feel included and provide tools students can use to make adaptations for themselves. We can ask them to help us understand their needs and help them with the language to define those needs. In composition classes, students are asked to identify themselves and make meaning, in the midst of transitions often characterized and compounded by attending college. Recognizing this complexity can be the start of better, more principled teaching.

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- Delpit, L. (1995). *Other people’s children: Cultural conflict in the classroom*. New York: The New Press.
- Freire, P. (1970, 2003). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York: Continuum.

An expanded version of this article, entitled “The ‘ins’ and outs of identity for diverse students in a composition classroom: Reflections on an action research project,” will appear in the forthcoming *Teaching For Our Times, Volume Five*.

Connecting With Others

There are two dominant national organizations of people who do faculty development work. Both have excellent fall conferences, with many sessions appropriate for faculty members interested in professional development.

The Professional and Organizational Development Network in Higher Education is primarily four-year college and university professionals. Link up with POD at www.podnetwork.org. POD’s 30th annual conference—A Gathering By The Waters: Exploring Possibilities and Engaging Ideas—will be in Milwaukee starting October 27th.

The National Council for Staff, Program and Organizational Development is an affiliate council of the American Association of Community Colleges, and is primarily two-year college professionals. Link up with NCSPOD at www.ncspod.org. NCSPOD’s 28th annual conference—Building Bridges—will be in Montreal starting November 9th.

Dwell in Possibility

Bill Searle

Asnuntuck Community College, Connecticut

Emily Dickinson was right. Pulling the best out of ourselves, our colleagues, and our students requires that we build upon the best in order to create new strengths.

A relatively new approach to working with people, called Appreciative Inquiry (AI), is showing great promise. It provides a way to structure our thinking and actions so that we are constantly looking for possibilities. Sound interesting?

Appreciative Inquiry's basic principles are ideas familiar to those of us in higher education.

Words Create Reality. We know the power of perception. AI just emphasizes the importance of being very careful about what we say, how we say it, and how our words are perceived. Using positive words, dwelling in possibility instead of in constant problems, changes the way most of us perceive the world, and we begin to change.

Image Inspires Action. When people have an idea that they believe in, they will work to make it happen. Creating a clear picture of a positive future gives everyone a view of what they are working toward.

Positive Questions Lead to Positive Change. Ask people to draw upon their best, to describe themselves working at their best, and they remember that they can. Success is contagious, but so is failure. Which do you want to infect students with?

We Can Choose What We Study. The power of choice, and the resulting responsibility for action, are forces that motivate faculty members in every college in the country. AI proposes harnessing that same power of choice for everyone.

Inquiry Creates Action. We know the very act of studying something makes it change. Asking positive questions, involving people in creating positive images of being excellent, creates its own initial movement. The initial movement to overcome inertia is frequently what does not happen with other approaches to improvement.

Can it be that all five principles are ones that we in colleges understand, albeit not in an integrated context? Yes. At some level all of us understand AI's basic principles. The key is combining them into an integrated approach.

A variant of AI, called Appreciative Process, actually fits more easily with typical college classes. It

builds upon the same basic philosophy as AI but concentrates implementation on four processes.

1. Decide what you want **more of**. Remember, **more of** - not less of. Not "I want fewer students who skip class, come in late, act disrespectfully," but rather "I want more excited students, who are alive and engaged with life, with each other, and with learning."

2. Actively seek out situations where what you want more of is already happening. Assuming the example of engaged and active students, keep careful records of every time students act like that. What is going on when good things are happening? Find the underlying pattern(s).

3. Simultaneously, "fan the flames." Whenever the desired behaviors are happening, do everything you can to make them continue. Engage yourself. Praise. Reward. Make the outcomes successful. Please do not read that last sentence as meaning that we need to make students successful by giving them little to do. Appreciative Process makes people successful by helping them do excellent work.

4. Teach students how to fan the flames themselves. This new way of working must supplant other habits. This is extremely important, else all depends upon you to continue. Any process that relies on one person continually pushing it is doomed to failure. The appreciative process relies on the belief that when people know how to be excellent, are rewarded for doing so, and know how to continue, most will jump at the chance.

You may be asking, "How do I start?"

When someone asks me how she/he can change to get into this appreciative perspective, I tell them the same things I tell the girls on my softball team. "Practice. Practice every day, in every way, at every chance, with everyone who will join you." It works.

The next article will discuss some practical ways of bringing Appreciative Process into our classes and interactions with students. However, if you cannot wait, you can learn more about Appreciative Inquiry and Appreciative Process by going to the NCSPOD web site at www.ncspod.org. You can also take the basic principles above and begin to apply them today!

As long as students interact across groups both in classes and in situations of living, working, studying, and socializing, they can learn something different, something more, than what they would learn on a campus without those racial and ethnic differences.

(Light, 152)

Meet Our New Board Members



Elise Martin is currently the Assistant Dean for Assessment at Middlesex Community College, where she is responsible for supporting a multi-tiered program for the assessment of student learning outcomes at the institutional, program and course levels. Elise has worked at MCC for five years, most recently as the Director of Instructional Design and Curriculum Projects. Prior to coming to MCC, Elise did project management work as a consultant for Education Development Center, Inc., in Newton, MA, as well as having held the position of Educational Technology Facilitator for the Lowell, MA Public School system for several years.



Susan C. Wyckoff currently serves as Vice President of the Colleges of Worcester Consortium, and has an extensive background in higher education administration, particularly in the areas of academic policy development and implementation, faculty development, curriculum development, and program review/assessment activities. Susan holds a Ph.D in Higher Education Administration and has significant teaching experience at the undergraduate and graduate levels, working with both traditional students and adult learners.

NEFDC FALL CONFERENCE

*...Enhancing the professional development
of faculty and administrators*

***“Beyond Tolerance: Diversity and the Challenge of
Pedagogy in American Higher Education”***

Keynote Speaker: Dr. Gail Mellow

**Friday, November 4, 2005
Westford Regency Inn & Conference Center
Westford, Massachusetts**

For a complete listing of presentations, visit our web site at: <http://www.nefdc.org>

Cognitive Diversity in the Classroom: Teaching and Learning Styles

Susan McCourt
Director, Lash Center for Teaching and Learning
Bristol Community College, Fall River, MA

An often overlooked yet crucial form of diversity in college is cognitive diversity, the diversity in the way students learn. Unlike individual differences in abilities, cognitive style refers to a preferred way of processing information: thinking, remembering or problem solving. As instructors who have been successful in our educational experiences, we often rely on our own approach to learning to inform our teaching practice, i.e. we teach as we were taught. But if we relate our dominant teaching style to our students' learning styles, we may discover dialogue with some learners and discord with others.

Students often choose or reject courses, programs and careers based on the cognitive style of the faculty teaching introductory courses. [Barbe, W.B. and M.N. Milone, "Modality Strengths: A reply to Dunn and Carbo," *Educational Leadership*, Mar. 1981, p. 489.] When instructors' teaching strategies rely on their own cognitive preference, many students are less engaged and perform poorly. [Godleski, E.S., "Learning Style Compatibility of Engineering Students and Faculty," *Proceedings, Annual Frontiers in Education Conference, ASEE/IEEE*, Philadelphia, 1984, p.362.] When students understand and use their cognitive style to plan their own learning strategies, they are more successful, regardless of the teacher's style. [Felder, R., "Matters of Style." *ASEE Prism*, 6(4), 18-23 (1996).]

Teachers and learners can use and understand their cognitive style to learn new strategies for teaching and learning. I suggest that both teachers and their students benefit from pedagogical practice that uses not only their preferred cognitive style but also more challenging pedagogical strategies.

Learning specialists and teachers use numerous cognitive classification systems. Below, I briefly describe three, with suggestions and strategies for meeting some students' cognitive style while challenging others'. Consult your own college's experts—Teaching and Learning Center staff, Librarians, or other faculty and staff—for particular resources for faculty to consider in planning course materials, pedagogical strategies, and formative and summative assessments that respect cognitive diversity and encourage cognitive growth.

Three Learning Style Models

The explanations are based on articles by Richard Felder, Professor of Chemical Engineering, North Carolina State University, particularly: Felder, R., "Matters of Style." ASEE Prism, 6(4), 18-23 (1996) and Felder, R., "Learning and Teaching Styles in Engineering Education." Engr. Education, 78(7), 674-681 (1988).

The **Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI)** describes learners as:

extraverts (try things out, focus on people) or *introverts* (think things through, focus on ideas) . Learners are E (for extravert) or I (for introvert).

sensors (practical, detail-oriented, focus on facts and procedures) or *intuitors* (imaginative, focus on meanings and possibilities) (S or N)

thinkers (skeptical, decisions based on rules and logic) or *feelers* (appreciative, decisions based on personal considerations) (T or F)

judgers (set and follow plans, seek quick answers, even without full data) or *perceivers* (adapt to change, prefer more data before a decision) (J or P)

Each learner has a preference in each of the four dichotomies, leading to sixteen types (such as ESTJ or ENTP). Faculty members can consider using individual and collaborative experiences to meet and challenge extraverts and introverts; give detailed facts or procedures and creative exercises to meet and challenge sensors and thinkers; foster critical thinking and appreciation for others to meet thinkers and feelers; and have some lessons "off the syllabus" as well as others that follow the plan to meet and challenge judgers and perceivers.

The **Kolb Learning Style Model** classifies learners by how they input information and how they process and internalize information. Learners may prefer: *concrete* or *abstract concepts*, and *active experimentation* or *reflective observation*, leading to four types:

- *concrete reflexives* ask "Why?" They prefer relevance to their interests and future careers.
- *abstract reflectives* ask "What?" and prefer

organized information with time for reflection.

- *abstract actives* ask “How?” and prefer well-defined tasks and learning by experimentation.

- *concrete actives* ask “What if?” and prefer discovering applications of course materials to new situations in order to solve real-world problems.

Faculty members can consider discussing the relevance of each topic (*concrete reflexives*), presenting basic information and methods (*abstract reflexives*), providing opportunities for practice (*abstract actives*), and encouraging exploration of applications (*concrete actives*).

The **Felder-Silverman Learning Style Model** includes a holistic category as well. Learners are mainly:

- *sensing* (concrete facts and procedures) or *intuitive* (concepts, ideas, theories and meanings)

- *visual* (pictures, diagrams, maps and charts) or *verbal* (written, spoken, readings)

- *active* (experiment, collaborative) or *reflective* (think things through, work alone)

- *sequential* (linear, orderly, small steps) or *global* (holistic, prefer systems, leaps)

Faculty members can balance facts and theories as well as the order of their presentation, meeting or challenging the *sensing/intuitive* dichotomy. You may include diagrams and lectures, beginning with one or the other balancing the *visual/verbal*. Assign collaborative active learning and reflective, solitary assignments for *actives* and *reflectives*. Finally, you can use a linear organization of material with outlines as well as a holistic format, such as concept maps.

Teaching Techniques to Address

All Learning Styles

Felder, R., “Learning and Teaching Styles in Engineering Education.” *Engr. Education*, 78(7), 674-681 (1988).

- Motivate learning. Relate the material being presented to what has come before and what is still to come in the same course, to material in other courses, and to the students’ experience (*inductive/global*).

- Provide a balance of concrete information (facts, data, real or hypothetical experiments and their results) (*sensing*) and abstract concepts (principles, theories, mathematical models) (*intuitive*).

- Balance material that emphasizes practical problem-solving methods (*sensing/active*) with material that uses fundamental understanding (*intuitive/reflective*).

- Provide explicit illustrations of intuitive patterns (logical inference, pattern recognition, generalization) and sensing patterns (observation of surroundings, empirical experimentation, attention to detail), and encourage all students to exercise both patterns (*sensing/intuitive*).

- Follow the scientific method in presenting theoretical material. Provide concrete examples of the phenomena the theory describes or predicts (*sensing/inductive*); then develop the theory or formulate (intuitive/inductive/ sequential); show how the theory can be validated and deduce its consequences (*deductive/sequential*); and present applications (*sensing/deductive/sequential*).

- Use pictures, schematics, graphs, and simple sketches before, during, and after the presentation of verbal material (*sensing/visual*). Show films (*sensing/visual*.) Provide demonstrations (*sensing/visual*), hands-on, if possible (*active*).

- Use computer-assisted instruction—sensors respond very well to it. (*sensing/active*).

- Do not fill every minute of class time lecturing and writing on the board. Provide intervals—however brief—for students to think about what they have been told (*reflective*).

- Provide opportunities for students to do something active besides transcribing notes. Small-group brainstorming activities that take no more than five minutes are extremely effective for this purpose (*active*).

- Assign some drill exercises to provide practice in the basic methods being taught (*sensing/active/sequential*) but do not overdo them (*intuitive/reflective/global*). Also provide some open-ended problems and exercises that call for analysis and synthesis (*intuitive/reflective/global*).

- Give students the option of cooperating on assignments (*active*). Active learners generally learn best when they interact with others.

- Applaud creative solutions, even incorrect ones (*intuitive/global*).

- Talk to students about learning styles, both in advising and in classes. Explaining to struggling sensors or active or global learners how they learn most efficiently may be an important step in helping them reshape their learning experiences so that they can be successful.

This article is based on Volume 2, No.2, October 2003 issue of Bristol Community College’s Lash Center for Teaching and Learning Newsletter.

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Keynote Speaker



Our keynote speaker is **Dr. Gail Mellow**, President, LaGuardia Community College.

Dr. Mellow is a social psychologist with extensive experience in higher education. Dr. Gail Mellow is president of LaGuardia Community College. She has served in various capacities at community colleges in Maryland, Connecticut, New York and New Jersey: as an adjunct faculty, tenured faculty, Academic Dean, Provost and President. In addition, she was the Director of the Women's Center at the University of Connecticut and the Director of the Project on Women and Technology. She is a community college graduate. LaGuardia Community College is one of the most diverse community colleges in the country, with its 13,500 credit and 28,000 non-credit students hailing from over 150 different countries and speaking over 110 different languages.

Active in community affairs, Mellow has served as a gubernatorial appointee to the NJ State Employment and Training Commission, a member of the NJ Commission on Higher Education Technology Committee, a member of the Executive Committee of the Gloucester County Workforce Investment Board, the Chair of the Northeast Connecticut Economic Alliance, as well as on the Boards of many civic organizations. She serves on several national higher education boards and commissions, including the American Association for Higher Education, the American Council of Education, and the American Association for Community Colleges.

Dr. Mellow is the co-author of two books, and over 20 articles on community colleges, faculty evaluation, job training technology and teaching and learning. She received an Associates Degree from Jamestown Community College, a Baccalaureate from SUNY Albany, and her Master's and Doctorate from George Washington University.

WWW.NEFDC.ORG

Have you visited the NEFDC web site lately? It is maintained by Board member Rob Schadt from Boston University. Information on the annual fall conference and the Spring Roundup for Faculty Development Professionals, contact information for the board, membership forms, and related data are all available online. Take advantage of this valuable resource and bookmark us at www.nefdc.org

NEFDC Membership Meeting and Board Meetings

The Annual Meeting of the members of NEFDC will be held at the Fall Conference on Friday, November 4, 2005 at the Westford Regency Inn and Conference Center in Westford, Massachusetts. If there are items you wish to discuss, or if you need more information, please contact the President of NEFDC, Judith Kamber.

The NEFDC Board will meet next in May, 2006. If you are interested in getting information to the Board, or in making a presentation at a Board meeting, please contact the Board through the NEFDC web site.

**Fall Conference Nov. 4, 2005 – Beyond Tolerance:
Diversity and the Challenge of Pedagogy in American Higher Education**

NEFDC EXCHANGE
Tom Thibodeau, Assistant Provost
New England Institute of Technology
2500 Post Road
Warwick, RI 02886

Board of Directors

The fifteen members of the Board of the NEFDC serve staggered three-year terms. Board Members are available for and welcome opportunities to meet and consult with members of the NEFDC and others who are interested in faculty development. We welcome nominations and self nominations for seats on the Board.

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