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NEFDC EXCHANGE

www.nefdc.org New England Faculty Development Consortium

Message from the President

Jeff Halprin, President, NEFDC

With our country on a seemingly endless "brink of war"— a brink that has lasted so long I no longer have any guess whether that war will be fought while you read this—the question of "how to teach about war" comes up on our campuses and across our computers all the time.

It is a question that turns out to be surprisingly hard to answer.

Like many Profs my age, I went into teaching, out of the 'Sixties, with an idea of putting my dreams of a just world to work. Yet here a major social and political event is unfolding. Lives are on the line. Personally, I want to speak out against a rush to war which I feel is wrongheaded and cynically motivated. The importance of speaking out was a great lesson of those old, old days. But now, the longer I teach, the more important it seems to sometimes keep my mouth shut.

If school isn't a place to debate a looming war, then I have no idea where we should do it. But like every teaching moment, it turns out to be awfully complicated And it seems a perfect example of a place where the professor's expertise and authority has to stand aside; a place where getting students to repeat back our lectures is the opposite of teaching.

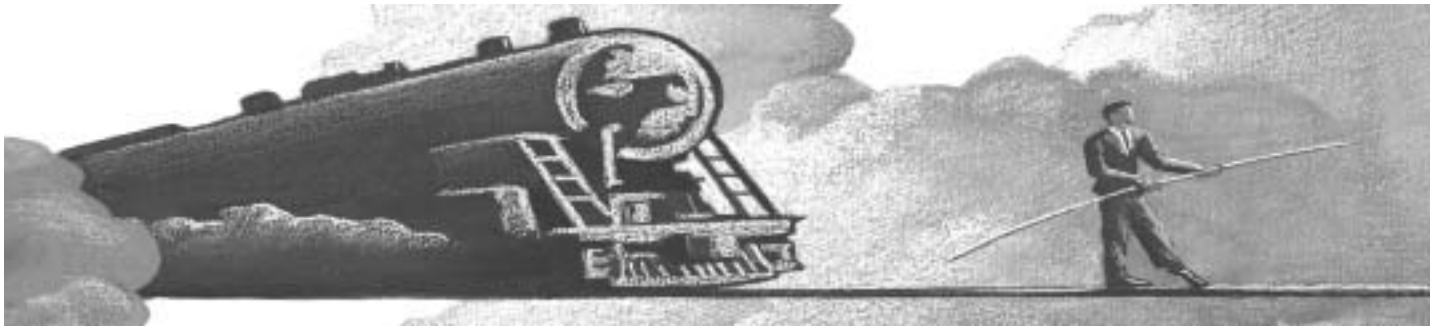
As important as the moment seems, as critical as it feels to get students to see our position—whichever position that is—as the just one RIGHT NOW while the debate over war goes on, as teachers, the larger goal has to be helping students learn how to decide for themselves.

Of course, when one of us is the only "expert" in the classroom, we can make our view seem the most reasonable, the most well-supported, the most moral. We believe it, after all, and we have a lot of practice crafting arguments. The bigger challenge is to express those beliefs and still allow an equal exchange of ideas to take place.

And from a teaching and learning perspective, the fact that I am sure I am arguing the moral position—whether about war or justice or equality or tolerance or whatever—is of no help at all. I see among my students a real suspicion of the "ideals" expressed by their teachers. I blame it on the way so much of the language of equal-opportunity and fairness and equality has been coopted by politicians and marketeers who use that language with a wink—to say "That is what we all have to say." Learning is a process. No matter how high the stakes, losing track of the process because we're focusing instead on the final product—whether it is the "right" position on the war or the right answer on a high-stakes test —has to undermine true learning.

It must be important for school to be a place where students debate and explore issues of war and peace. The challenge for us as professors is to create the environment where that can happen, and then step back.

Jeff Halprin is an Associate Professor of English and Director of the Nichols College Faculty Teaching Center.



In This Issue...

Keynote Speaker

Parker Palmer, Keynote speaker for NEFDC fall conference, 2003

The next NEFDC fall conference will feature Dr. Parker Palmer as the keynote speaker. Palmer is a writer, teacher and activist who works independently on issues in education, community, leadership, spirituality, and social change. His work spans a wide range of institutions. He serves as Senior Associate of the American Association of Higher Education, Senior Advisor to the Fetzer Institute, and Founder of the "Courage to Teach" program. His work has been recognized with six honorary degrees and numerous other awards. His publications include ten poems, over 100 essays and six widely used books (including The Courage to Teach).

Dr. Palmer will be leading an interactive session at the NEFDC conference. His title is "The Recovery of Community in Higher Education" and he will focus on knowing, teaching and learning as communal activities. The conference will be on Friday, November 14, 2003, at the Westford Regency, Westford MA. For more information about the conference, please go to www.nefcd.org

An excerpt from Dr. Palmer's article *Good Teaching: A Matter of Living the Mystery,* Jan-Feb 1990 v22 N1 p.11(6)

The Courage to Teach

The word "courage" comes from a root that means "heart," and I like to transpose the words. How can we develop and sustain, in ourselves and each other, the heart for good teaching (assuming that the mind is already available)? Good teaching requires courage—the courage to explore one's ignorance as well as insight, to yield some control in order to empower the group, to evoke other people's lives as well as reveal one's own. Furthermore, good teaching sometimes goes unvalued by academic institutions, by the students for whom it is done, and even by those teachers who do it. Many of us "lose heart" in teaching. How shall we recover the courage that good teaching requires?

We need institutional support in response to that question—workshops and institutes on teaching, promotion and tenure polices that reward good teaching as handsomely as good research. But we need even more to do the inner work that good teaching demands. "Taking heart" to teach well is a profoundly inward process, and there is no technique or reward that will make it happen.

Taking heart means overcoming the fears that block good teaching and learning. Fear is a driving force behind objectivism, that mode of knowing that tries to distance us from life's awesome energies and put us in control. Fear is a driving force behind the kind of teaching that makes students into spectators, that pedagogy that tries to protect both teacher and subject from the give-and-take of community, from its rough-and-tumble. When our fears as teachers mingle and multiply with the fears inside our students, teaching and learning become mechanical, manipulative, lifeless. Fear, not ignorance, is the great enemy of education. Fear is what gives ignorance its power.

In is original meaning, a "professor" was not someone with esoteric knowledge and technique. Instead, the word referred to a person able to make a profession of faith in the midst of a dangerous world. All good teachers, I believe, have access to this confidence. It comes not from the ego but from a soul-deep sense of being at home in the world despite its dangers. This is the authority by which good teachers teach. This is the gift they pass on to their students. Only when we take heart as professors can we "give heart" to our students--and that, finally, is what good teaching is all about.

Teaching In Community at Northern Essex Community College

Judith Kamber,
Director of Faculty and Staff Development,
Northern Essex Community College

Partnering for Reflection and Renewal

"To teach is to create a space in which the community of truth is practiced." That image of teaching has given me guidance in recent years, as has a related image of truth: "Truth is an eternal conversation about things that matter, conducted with passion and discipline." Good teaching, whatever its form, will help more people learn to speak and listen in the community of truth, to understand that truth is not the conclusions so much as in the process of conversation itself, that if you want to be "in truth" you must be in the conversation.

—Dr. Parker J. Palmer, from his article, *Good Teaching: A Matter of Living the Mystery*

The Northern Essex Teaching and Learning Center took this message to heart in 1999 when it launched a new project entitled Teaching in Community: Partnering for Reflection and Renewal. We know that the "learning community" of the classroom requires a merging of teachers, students and subject. We know, too, that teaching can be an isolating profession with the demands on teachers' time for non-teaching activities ever increasing. Often teachers (particularly community college teachers) encounter students who are under-prepared and distracted. Community College students are often working, raising families and balancing all this with their academic course work. Teachers have many challenges and often experience a disconnection from the opportunity to talk about what they learn from what they do—their joys, their frustrations, and their classroom work.

Recognizing the importance of providing a forum for teachers to connect with colleagues, the TLC (Teaching and Learning Center), with support of Academic Affairs and funding from the Office of Faculty and Staff Development, became the place to house our new project. Teaching in Community (TIC) is co-facilitated, and each activity is carefully planned, but includes time and space for flexibility in meeting participant needs. Building on the work of Dr. Parker Palmer, (The Courage to Teach) and Dr. Steven Brookfield, (Becoming A Critically Reflective Teacher), and adding a component of partnering in the classroom, the project began in the fall of 1999. We wanted to provide a way to bring teachers together to participate in a critically reflective process that would include (topics Brookfield suggests) "The lens of autobiographical reflection; Understanding how students perceive us; Conversations with colleagues; and Theoretical frameworks." Drawing on the work of Palmer, we integrated "the inner journey of the teaching self" throughout the project.

Fall Retreat

We begin our program with a fall retreat to set the framework, establish ground rules and get to know each other. We begin to explore what Palmer describes as "the inner ground from which good teaching comes and the community of fellow teachers from whom we can learn more about ourselves and our craft." During this first session, we also discuss the structure of the partnering experience.

Group Meetings

The group meets on Friday evenings once a month and the evening always begins with dinner by candlelight. The meetings are planned to address reflective practices, to discuss the partnering experiences and to talk about readings from the assigned books. One participant wrote of the meetings: "One of the ground rules of the meeting was to listen without making judgments, offering advice or immediately relating the speaker's experience to one of our own. What? To listen and not comfort and console, debate and emphatically agree? Could 11 teachers really do that? They did. It felt like a sanctuary to me."

Discussion Board

We developed a participant discussion board so that members of the group (not all on the same campus) could talk to each other regularly about their classroom experiences, pose questions, support each other and share some good humor. The discussion board is a wonderful resource for keeping the group connected in between meetings and often a faculty member would leave a class with a question, concern or triumph and post it immediately to the group. Often, they would get a response from 2-3 people before the day was over.

Partnering in the Classroom

It is often the case that faculty have a classroom visit only when it is time for evaluation, but faculty learn a great deal about teaching from colleagues, who can provide a new and different way to think about learning. Learning through

collaboration and communication with colleagues offers faculty not only support but also an opportunity to develop a different view of the classroom dynamic.

Faculty select a partner (often from a different discipline). Partners are coached to work together, not to evaluate each other. Partners visit each other's classrooms three times each semester. Each visit includes a pre-meeting to discuss expectations and a post-meeting to discuss observations and responses. The partnerships foster a new excitement as faculty invite each other into their classrooms. Many of the faculty begin to run student "focus" groups for their partners and report that this is one of the most eye-opening experiences in the project. One participant wrote, "The greatest lessons have come from my teaching partners. Just having a teaching partner made me grateful. Being able to share my experience, both good and bad created connections I value. The project has had a greater impact on me as a teacher and as a person than I had imagined."

Final Retreat

In May, the group travels to a lake-side retreat in New Hampshire for a weekend to bring closure to the year's project, evaluate the program, make recommendations for next year's project, say goodbye and compose a personal teaching mission statement. The following is the mission statement of an English Professor in the first year of the project:

"I teach because I love to learn and I know that learning provides physical, intellectual and spiritual pleasure. I share my best self and my best ideas with students because I believe that education can and should make us all kinder, more tolerant and nobler. Education enabled me to seek answers to the questions: Who am I and what is my purpose in the universe? I feel duty bound (in the best sense) to help others formulate their own questions and begin to search for their own answers."

Thirty-nine faculty have participated thus far and we are looking forward to our 2004 project. What is remarkable is the long-term connections of the faculty in this project. Faculty from the 1999 project will stop each other in other in the hallway to ask a fellow teacher for a quick TIC moment. In addition, the work of the project and the readings continue to crop up in conversations across the campus in different venues for years, building with each group of new participants. This phenomenon is not something I have seen in any other faculty development activity. To read more about the project and faculty comments, you may visit www.necc.mass.edu/departments/ofsd and click on the Special Projects link.

For further information, contact the author at
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National Institute for New Faculty Developers will be held June 28 to July 2, 2003, in Indianapolis, Indiana. The five-day intensive, hands-on working residential program is hosted by Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis, and co-sponored by the POD Networ. For more information, see www.opd.iupui.edu/ninfd/

The NEFDC EXCHANGE
Sue Barrett, Boston College
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 the members, it depends on your submissions. Please keep us up-to-date with listings of events you are putting on, as well as book reviews, descriptions of successful programs, and discussions of issues which have engaged your interest.

Reach me at: Academic Development Center, O'Neill Library, Boston College, Chestnut Hill, MA 02467 617-552-0835 and barretsc@bc.edu

From the Editor

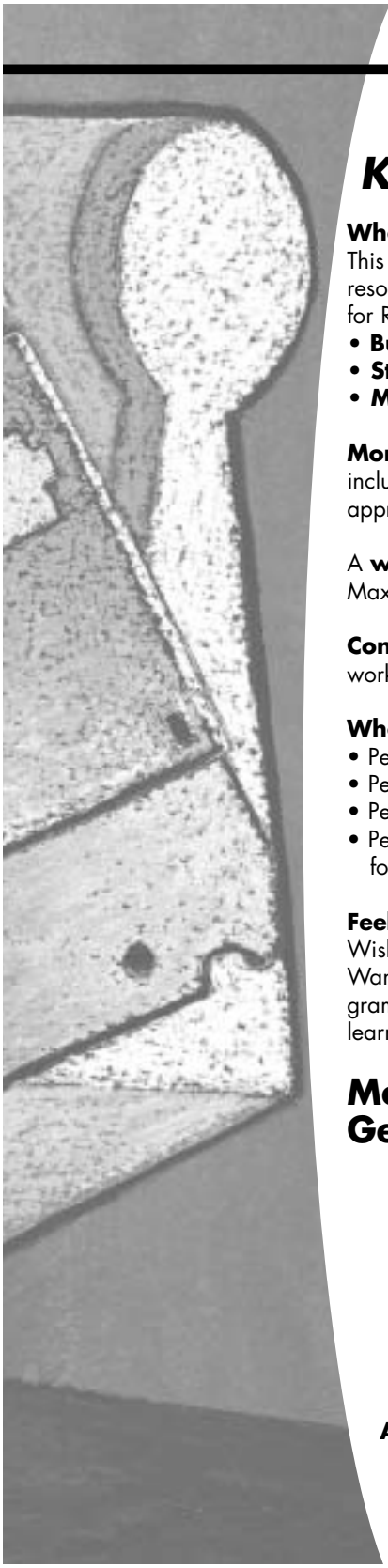
Thank you for all the great feedback on the newsletter. And for your wonderful contributions. Keep them coming.

We have some outstanding events coming up in the next months. I look forward to seeing you at the round-up. Spring is here!

Sue Barrett

6th Annual Faculty Development Roundup

Nichols College • June 6, 2003



Key Issues for Faculty Developers

What's going to happen?
This is a **participant-focused** and **participant-driven** workshop. We will use each other as resource people and have a full day of discussions on faculty development issues. The three strands for Roundup 2003 are:

- **Building and maintaining communities of learning**
- **Strategies for strengthening faculty support**
- **Making technology work for us**

Morning and afternoon sessions will feature small group discussions. Each group will include people with experience to help guide the discussion, field questions, discuss alternative approaches, and provide information.

A **working lunch** will provide time to talk with people who have interests similar to yours. Maximum discussion time.

Concluding social hour to enable you to network with others to discuss keynote speakers, workshop leaders, and other regional resources.

Who is this for?

- People responsible for faculty development
- People on faculty development committees
- People interested in faculty development
- People with administrative responsibilities for faculty development

Feeling isolated?
Wish you knew others doing what you do? Looking for ideas for speakers, workshops, programs? Want to talk about challenges with colleagues facing similar ones? Desire to share ideas on programming? Need advice on implementing a classroom assessment project, or "conversations on learning," or "the learning college," or...

Meet. Discuss. Question. Make contacts. Get ideas. Share thoughts.

Cost of registration: $45 for members $80 for non-members

Registration forms should be sent to:
Bill Searle, Asnuntuck Community College, 170 Elm Street, Enfield, CT 06082

A registration form can be downloaded from the website at www.nefdc.org
Federal Tax ID number is 04-3422583

Registration must be received by May 25, 2003.

Universal Design

Lisa Isleb,
Worcester Polytechnic Institute

Cultural, educational, and legal changes have significantly altered the mix of students in traditional classrooms. The challenge posed by greater diversity and greater accountability is to enable students with widely divergent needs, skills, and interests to attain the same high standards. It is impractical, if not impossible, to design everything so that it is accessible by all; however, for most types or degrees of impairment there are simple and low cost (or no cost) adaptations to product designs that can significantly increase their accessibility and usefulness. Insights garnered from the field of universal design may be applied to transform the pressures of diversity into opportunities for all learners.

Public acknowledgment of people with disabilities and progress toward universal design have developed along three parallel tracks of activities: 1) advances in rehabilitation engineering and assistive technology, 2) the movement from barrier-free design to universal design, and 3) legislation fueled by the disability rights movement.

Rehabilitation engineering and assistive technology emerged in the middle of the 20th century. In the 1940s, efforts to improve prosthetics and orthotics intensified with the return of thousands of disabled veterans from World War II. During the 1950s, engineering research centers sponsored by the Veterans Administration and other federal organizations were established to address other technological problems of rehabilitation, including communication, mobility, and transportation. The label "assistive technology" was applied to devices for personal use created specifically to enhance the physical, sensory, and cognitive abilities of people with disabilities and to help them function more independently in environments oblivious to their needs.

The barrier-free movement in the 1950s began a process of change in public policies and design practices. The movement was established in response to demands by disabled veterans and advocates for people with disabilities to create opportunities in education and employment rather than institutionalized health care and maintenance. Physical barriers in the environment were recognized as a significant hindrance to people with mobility impairments.

Early on, advocates of barrier-free design and architectural accessibility recognized the legal, economic, and social power of a concept that addressed the common needs of people with and without disabilities. As architects began to wrestle with the implementation of standards, it became apparent that many of the environmental changes needed to accommodate people with disabilities actually benefited everyone, and this laid the foundation for the universal design movement.

The Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s inspired the subsequent Disability Rights Movement, which produced laws that provided access to education, places of public accommodation, telecommunications, and transportation as well as prohibiting discrimination against people with disabilities. Several significant pieces of legislation are worth mentioning: 1) the Education for Handicapped Children Act of 1975 (now known as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) guaranteed a free, appropriate education for all children with disabilities; 2) the Telecommunications Act of 1996 applied to all types of telecommunications devices and services including phones, televisions, and computers; and 3) the New Freedom Initiative was designed to promote the full participation of Americans with disabilities in all areas of society by increasing access to assistive and universally designed technologies; and 4) Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act required Federal agencies to make their electronic and information technology accessible to people with disabilities.

The intent of the universal design concept is to simplify life for everyone by making products, communications, and the built environment more usable by more people at little or no extra cost. Assistive technology attempts to meet the specific needs of individuals. The point at which they intersect is a gray zone in which products and environments are not clearly "universal" or "assistive," but have characteristics of each type of design.

Universal design is based on the following premises: 1) varying ability is not a special condition of the few but a common characteristic of being human; 2) physical and intellectual change occur throughout our lifespan; 3) designs that work well for people with disabilities typically work well for everyone; and 4) usability and aesthetics need not be mutually exclusive. The term was coined by architect Ron Mace, founder of the Center for Universal Design at North Carolina State University, and challenged prevailing attitudes of the day.

Seven principles of universal design were developed by the Center for Universal Design and are intended to focus attention on those characteristics of design that

most impact all users. The seven principles of universal design are: 1) equitable use; 2) flexibility in use; 3) simple, intuitive use; 4) perceptible information; 5) tolerance for error; 6) low physical effort; and 7) size and space for approach and use. These principles may be applied to existing or new designs, as well as to educating designers.

Many universally designed products that were originally intended to provide access for people with disabilities have resulted in new, often unintended uses that benefit large numbers of non-disabled people. Closed captioning, developed for people who are hearing impaired, today assists children who are learning to read or adults who are learning English as a second language. Curb cuts, initially installed for people in wheelchairs, are currently used by bicyclists and skateboarders as well as people with shopping carts, baby carriages, and delivery carts.

Product manufacturers are beginning to recognize the market-broadening potential of more accommodating products. A number of products have enjoyed crossover success, often starting as assistive devices and becoming mainstream products.

In 1990, OXO International introduced its Good Grips kitchen utensils with thick grips for people who were limited by arthritis. These upscale products immediately found an enthusiastic audience. OXO International received the Ron Mace Designing for the 21st Century Award in 2000. It grew at a 40% to 50% annual rate from 1990 to 1995, to $20 million a year. Other companies quickly copied their approach.

In the majority of cases, accessibility can be added to a product's design for little or no cost. For example, Apple Computer has incorporated several special features directly into their standard operating system to accommodate individuals with various disabilities. For example: "Sticky Keys" for individuals with one hand available or who use a head or mouth stick to operate the standard keyboard; "Mouse Keys" for individuals who do not have the motor control necessary to operate a mouse; and "CloseView" for individuals who need to enlarge the screen image. These features are simultaneously available to those users who need them while being transparent to those users who do not.

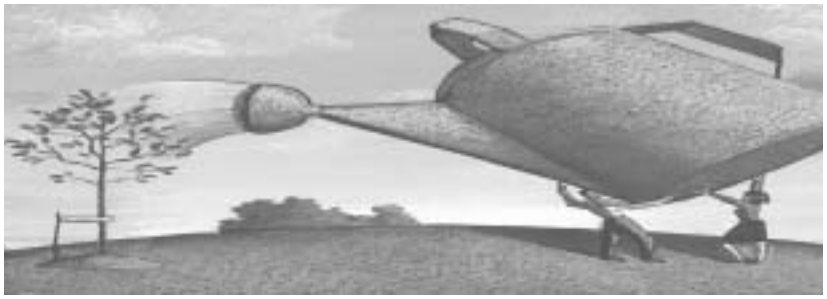
Microsoft is also a leader in implementing universal design and accessible design. It has incorporated a wide range of features in its products to make them easier for people with disabilities to use. In recognition for their work to make the Internet, multimedia applications and the Windows operating system usable by the broadest range of people, Microsoft also received the Ron Mace Award.

Similar to the Mac, the Accessibility Wizard, which is included in Windows 98 and Windows 2000, helps people adjust their computers to accommodate their needs and preferences (i.e., making text larger, changing screen colors, and making the mouse easier to use). Windows 2000 adds several useful new accessibility tools such as the Narrator, On-Screen Keyboard, and Magnifier.

Fortunately, technological advances have equipped educators with tremendous new instructional resources in the form of computers and digital media. New technologies offer us the opportunity to respond to the multifaceted individual differences in our student population by providing more varied media, tools, and methods. Because of their inherent flexibility, digital technologies may be designed to easily adjust to learner differences.

In the rapidly expanding capabilities of digital content, tools, and networks, we see the possibility of conceiving, designing, and delivering a curriculum that will accommodate widely varying learner needs. Essentially, this will transfer the burden of adjustment from students to the materials and methods they encounter.

The most significant cost is that of building the necessary knowledge and skills in our researchers, educators, and practitioners. In order to include design for persons with functional limitations in our college curricula, we will need to rethink the approach we take to design. This can be done most successfully through training and technical assistance, sharing resources, as well as showing by example what universal design is and how it can be integrated. Universal design provides a blueprint for inclusion.



NEFDC EXCHANGE
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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 - Contact Pam Sherer.

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