Making a Difference/Toute la différence
Making a Difference:
A Celebration of the 3M Teaching Fellowship

Toute la différence:
Hommage au Prix d'enseignement 3M

Edited by/Édité par MARILYN LERCH
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Editor's Note

Imagine a chamber group rehearsing in an empty hall. The players arrived with different styles, different approaches, but in this place, some amalgam must be achieved. The world outside melts away as heads bend toward the music. Always the music. A question of tempo comes up. The group tries different ones, often amid great hilarity, until one feels right. The imperative of balance asserts itself. More viola here, less cello. Always the music. The material itself is the inspiration, the players thoughtfully, respectfully shaping it, listening closely to all the voices and to each other. A collective intention found in the process. On and on through hours of focused, concentrated work, the energy level high and exhilarating. Always the music, always consensus, though sometimes not easily reached. This speaks to my sense of how Making a Difference/Toute la différence came into being. Always the book.

My sincere thanks to Alex Fancy, Clarissa Green, Guy Allen, Arshad Ahmad, Claude Lamontagne and Sylvia Riselay and to the authors who gave us the music.

A sustained round of applause is due Alex Fancy. It was his faith, tenacity and leadership that made possible the completion of this project in a dauntingly short time frame.

Marilyn Lerch
Acknowledgements/
Remerciements

Editorial Committee/Comité éditorial: Clarissa P. Green (Chair), Claude Lamontagne, Brent MacLaine, Mark Weisberg; Readers / Lecteurs: Carol-Ann Courneya, Diane Pacom, Wes Schreiber; Works Cited / Ouvrages cités: Margaret Fancy; Copy editing / Réviseur: Brian Ash.

Funded by 3M Canada / Publié avec le précieux concours de 3M Canada.
IN MEMORIAM
We remember the following 3M Teaching Fellows:
A la mémoire des professeur.e.s 3M suivants:

WILLIAM BARNES
JOHN BELL
ROB DUNHAM
PETER FROST
NORMAN GIBBINS
RALPH KRUEGER
MARILYN ROBINSON
A Message from 3M Canada

In an age characterized by short-term business and personal relationships, the twenty-year partnership between 3M Canada and the Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (STLHE/SAPES) is a commendable achievement.

The 3M Canada employees who have been actively involved with the 3M Teaching Fellowships Awards Program say, with remarkable consistency, that the reason the sponsorship is renewed year after year is the quality of the award recipients.

Mike Calhoun, former Manager, Development and Human Resources Planning, the person responsible for liaison with the Awards Program for ten years until his retirement in 2002, speaks about the significant impact the award has on recipients’ lives and careers. “I remember one university professor who received the award late in his career, at a time when he had accepted the fact he was unlikely to gain tenure. The following year, tenure was granted and even to this day, he maintains that receiving a 3M Teaching Fellowship was the reason that happened. He was in tears when he told me this—that is how heartfelt these situations are.”

It was John Myser, then President and General Manager of 3M Canada, who had the original thought to create a recognition program for higher education teachers, and it was he who got the whole thing going. John Dobie, former Director, Human Resources/Operations, headed the task force assigned to develop the 3M Canada side of the program from its inception in 1986 until his retirement in 1991.

STLHE was eager to collaborate with 3M Canada and the Teaching Fellowship Awards Program was born. Now, after twenty years, almost 200 teachers have received a Fellowship.

From the beginning, the vision for the Fellowships was to provide a springboard for the advancement of the teaching and learning experience and also to facilitate knowledge exchange among award recipients who are, by the very nature of the nomination and selection process, among the finest in the teaching profession in Canada.

With that in mind, STLHE proposed an annual retreat for award recipi-
ents, where the cohort could exchange ideas and information with an open agenda under the guidance of a highly skilled facilitator. Le Château Montebello was chosen as the venue for the first retreat, and to this day it serves as a crucible in which the intellectual energy of each year’s 3M Teaching Fellowship award winners is given the opportunity for uninhibited expression.

Current program administrator Sue Romyn, Manager, Public Relations, feels the same admiration for the 3M Teaching Fellowships and STLHE as did her predecessors. “This is not just another sponsorship,” says Romyn. “It is a true partnership, with both parties fully committed to advancing the program.”

Consistency within 3M Canada has been provided by Greg Snow, Manager, Corporate Communications, and a long-time champion of the program. “I’m looking at nineteen years of involvement and counting,” says Snow. “Very early on, the 3M Teaching Fellowships Program became more than a corporate or professional duty; it is a very personal commitment.”

As the date for the twentieth-anniversary celebrations draws nearer, Snow waits patiently to see where the STLHE and the recently formed Council of 3M Teaching Fellows, who serve as a national voice on teaching and learning issues in Canadian universities, will steer the program. “3M Canada has always described itself as the silent partner,” says Snow. “It is the STLHE, the Council, and the Fellows themselves who have grown the program and it is they who will determine the future direction. I’m delighted to be part of a company that has maintained such a strong relationship with this group for so long.”
Introduction

Like actors, teachers aim to move in the creative moment, going where it takes them and the other players, helping to shape the trajectory, all the while reflecting with some detachment on the magic of which they are a part.

The first 3M Teaching Fellowships were awarded almost twenty years ago. Since then reflecting on the magic—the scholarship of teaching and learning—has begun to find its place in the academy, and in society. We offer these reflections as a gesture of appreciation to 3M Canada and as a way of celebrating both the twentieth anniversary of our fellowship and the formation, two years ago, of the Council of 3M Teaching Fellows.

Teachers have made a difference for many centuries and in many ways, and we are but a few of those who are working at making a difference. However, the collective voice of our fellowship resonates with passion and commitment. We hope that the following pages will help that voice to be heard on the stage of higher education and beyond.

Think of teachers as actors whose goal is to become spectators. You will read in the following pages how teachers work in many different ways to help their students acquire a confident and effective voice.

We have also asked students to tell us how 3M Teaching Fellows made a difference in their lives. These spectators-turned-actors are now making a difference in the world they are inheriting from us.

We are very grateful to all the Fellows who responded so generously—and promptly—to our call for submissions; you will find that their reflections celebrate teaching and learning, support of these activities, and awareness of their importance to society.

Voilà déjà vingt ans que 3M Canada a pris la généreuse décision de célébrer l’enseignement supérieur canadien. Ce n’est toutefois pas d’hier que les professeurs parviennent à faire “toute la différence” dans la vie des étudiants et de la société, et les récipiendaires du Prix 3M pour l’excellence de leur enseignement ne représentent qu’une toute petite partie de ceux et celles qui concourent à changer les choses en 2005.
Quoique l'enseignement soit une profession de nature publique, toute personne qui donne des cours connaît aussi la solitude—des heures de préparation et de réflexion sans lesquelles cet acteur qu'est l'enseignant ne pourrait incarner son rôle. Depuis vingt ans, nous avons vu la réflexion et la recherche sur l'enseignement et l'apprentissage s'épanouir; les textes qui suivent offrent au lecteur des perspectives et des témoignages qui ne manqueront pas de le frapper par leur diversité et leur pertinence.

Tout comme le jeu dramatique, notre profession dépend de la parole et du dialogue, mais de nombreux enseignants ont constaté que leur voix ne s'entend pas, ne s'entend plus, dans la cité.

Cet ouvrage renferme des témoignages particuliers dont l'ensemble forme une voix collective et solidaire que nous souhaitons faire porter au-delà des lieux habituellement réservés à la pédagogie. Nous avons aussi tenu à présenter le témoignage de quelques-unes des personnes auprès desquelles nous avons un jour joué un rôle important, d'anciens spectateurs devenus acteurs et qui, à leur tour, travaillent à changer le monde.

ALEX FANCY
Président, Conseil des récipiendaire
du Prix d'enseignement 3M/
Chair, Council of 3M Teaching Fellows
The 3M Teaching Fellowship—
Making a Difference

Arshad Ahmad
1992 3M Teaching Fellow and Program Coordinator

In 1986 John Myser, President of 3M Canada, worked with members of the Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education to develop this unique program which he had conceived to acknowledge what teachers had given to him and to give recognition to the importance of teaching.

Christopher Knapper, who played a key role in the creation of STLHE, and Dale Roy, who coordinated the fellowship program for fifteen years, recently recorded, on the STLHE/SAPES website, a discussion concerning the beginnings and development of the Society and Fellowship.

The original vision and leadership of 3M Canada have been maintained by Mike Calhoun, Greg Snow, and most recently by Sue Romy. Greg Snow’s commitment is such that he has met every one of the almost two hundred 3M Teaching Fellows.

As well, both Jan Hargrove, President of 3M Canada and W. James McNerney Jr., Chairman of the Board and CEO of 3M Worldwide, have very recently demonstrated interest in and support for the program.

It is 3M Canada’s culture of personal concern and attention to the last detail that have ensured the success of the fellowship program.

On behalf of many in the Society, I would also like to recognize Sylvia Riselay and Diane Pagnuelo-Boyle for their commitment to our work and also to thank the STLHE and its past Presidents, Christopher Knapper, Alan Blizzard, Pat Rogers, Gary Poole and its current President, Julia Christensen Hughes, for their assistance in the development of the program.

In May 2003 a think tank was held in Toronto and was attended by representatives of 3M Canada and forty-two Fellows. It was on this occasion that the Council of 3M Teaching Fellows was conceived—an organization dedicated to making a difference in the quality of teaching at all Canadian universities. This book is one of the Council’s projects.
The Council's executive leadership has been provided by Guy Allen, Alex Fancy, Clarissa Green, Claude Lamontagne, Anna Lathrop, Michael Moore, Sylvia Riselay and myself.

Each fall, the magic of the Montebello retreat elicits the collective ideas of the 3M Teaching Fellows. In 1991, the Fellows issued a challenge to university administrators to put more emphasis on undergraduate teaching (a matter of concern for the Smith Commission). The cohort of 2001 re-emphasized this concern and issued a communiqué calling for action to improve undergraduate education.

Our Fellowship continues to produce initiatives large and small. Tim Pychyl transformed an idea into a trajectory called facultydevelopment.ca which has metamorphosed into a national Institute for the Advancement of Teaching in Higher Education; Gary Poole and Lee Gass are founding members of the International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning; Ron Marken and Michael Moore created a syllabus for teaching in higher education; Don Woods built a module on problem-based learning; and Mark Weisberg is leading reflection activities at Banff. These initiatives are changing the landscape of higher education.

Each spring, the Selection Committee members arrive from across Canada to undertake the very difficult process of deciding who will be recognized at the June STLHE conference as 3M Teaching Fellows. They also reflect on how to improve the nomination process, and craft citations for the winners.

Consider for example, Shannon Murray's citation which captures the essence of the 2004 cohort:

From placing interdisciplinary health management teams in Alberta Aboriginal communities, to instilling a passion for music throughout Newfoundland and Labrador, the ten 2004 3M Teaching Fellows are changing the world, one student at a time. Here are ten good news stories about university teachers who are reshaping medical education, inventing new ways to use technology in the classroom, bringing the space shuttle disaster into accounting classes, placing nursing students in Guatemala and Ghana, and inventing human rights codes for the classroom.

Each year the June STLHE conference and associated activities provide new opportunities for making a difference. As well, there are calls for participation at other conferences where the voices of 3M Teaching Fellows are heard.

One of these venues is the successful McGraw-Hill conference series where 3M Teaching Fellows continue to keynote and participate. Thanks to individuals like Joe Saundercook, Patrick Ferrier and Marlene Luscombe the fellowship has found new friends and relationships.
The 2003 cohort (which included an associate dean, a dean and a university president) challenged the STLHE to re-position itself by seeking new alliances with the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, thus strengthening its role in making a difference on the national scene.

The 2004 cohort, understanding the power of such alliances, has embarked on a series of public announcements acknowledging the contribution students can make to the improvement of university education. After all, students are the reason why the Fellows received recognition in the first place.

What will be the theme this coming November?

It is a privilege to be involved with the 3M Teaching Fellowships Program and to work with so many who are making a difference.
To Roam or to Perish
Denis Bélisle

I first met him more than twenty years ago in a tightly-packed classroom where fifty young adults were waiting as in a theatre but without the barely contained excitement, seats arranged in graduated levels around a central platform, which until then had been for me a pulpit devoted to dispensing "scores" already read and heard too many times. Nothing new under the rain on this September morning in 1980, even less in this damp room smelling of raincoats and wet clothes, as all busied with the cult objects of academe: notebooks, books, pencils, everyone preparing and dedicating their small altar for the ceremony of note-taking. I came with cigarettes, coffee, and the conviction that for anyone who has a little imagination, it is impossible not to waste one's life.

By self-mocking necessity, I found myself back in school, this halfway house between the wage-induced hypnosis of the work place and the hideous deprivations of vagrancy. Study, learn, understand ... the ultimate refuge of the self ever in need of reinvention, which grows out of self-doubt, annihilated certainties, obstinate expectations. I had always felt the existence of a realm of secrets, so near that would be revealed, but so far since no one seemed ever to have been there: the place where knowledge unfolds and possesses us, becoming indistinguishable from ourselves. My thirst was intense and unquenched. My first year at university had offered nothing but boundless emptiness of meaning, dispensed by insensitive glottises braying litanies of old recipes that pulled hundreds of eyes down to scribblings rather than lifting them toward something worth looking at. As soon as the last exam had been written, my throat on fire, I fled with thirty dollars in my pocket and thumbed my way west.

That summer I wandered more than 15,000 kilometers, taking odd jobs as necessity dictated, lingering in mountains and cities. I was offered ready-made destinies by strangers: a young man with wealthy parents who wanted me for a business partner; a young woman who fell in love with me; another one whom I loved; a thief who wished to drag me into smuggling ventures. I met other students, workers, native peoples, travelers all, on the move, against the various backdrops of the world, boulevards, ocean, skyscrapers, cliffs, houses,
forests. A career? Not for me. My sole aim was always to experience the human condition, and its most sublime expression seemed to be this inner life, this fluid pulsation of thought rising and falling of which no one ever speaks....

In the fall, like a migratory bird, I returned to school. By habit. That very morning, that back-to-school morning, making my way among the umbrellas and notebooks, I made a momentous decision: if something dramatically different does not happen soon, by next week, I’m going west again. To hell with this masquerade!

9:10 a.m.—He is late. He walks in, a cup of coffee in his hand. No books, no documents. He looks at us almost en passant, smiles, takes a sip of coffee. He paces through the room, glancing at us from time to time. For a few minutes, that is all he does. Suddenly, he stops and declares, “Hello. I’m here to travel with you on a stretch of road this term. I speak fast. I know I speak fast. I speak fast because I don’t want you to take notes. In this class, there will be no books, no exam. Rather we will talk—talk about knowledge....” And then he begins, his flow of thought pushes him to resume the pacing, back and forth, and like a big cat in his cage, he makes us dream of freedom.

I did not go back west the next week. Ten years later I was completing my doctoral studies with this character who in no way resembles how I pictured a university professor. Look at him: he laughs, he enjoys himself. He is bold, takes risks, and sometimes, God forbid, he is wrong. It has been a fabulous journey, swept along in his wake, like a wave pushing me towards my own discoveries. I have had scores of teachers, some of whom did not lack intelligence, scholarship or benevolence, but in light of the longing and intensity which marked my youth, I often have the impression that, as far as professors go, I only had one.
Making a Difference or
“The Beautiful Changes”: Reflections on a Pedagogical Theme

Brent MacLaine
2002 3M Teaching Fellow

In the first and obvious instance, “to make a difference” educationally means to facilitate change—a change of behaviour, attitude, or intellectual orientation. As educators, we initiate change in an attempt to improve the lives of our students and, if not to speed up their maturation, at least to ensure it. As professors, we want to be involved in this process. We are meddlers in other people’s growth.

That this intervention in students’ lives has affinities with parenting will be no surprise to the most committed classroom teachers. I have often noted something curious at convocation receptions when professors meet the parents of their students, usually for the first time. Parents and professors may seem a little awkward at these moments. There is a faint and curious recognition that we have both been involved in the process of making a difference in the lives of their adult children. That the parents’ involvement has been primary goes without saying; that ours may have been formative in some other deeply significant way accounts, perhaps, for the slight uneasiness. In some instances, there may even be a suspicion or resentment that our intervention has driven or has the potential to drive a wedge into the family dynamic. It is sobering to note that an educator’s influence may not always be welcomed unreservedly. Our meddling may seem presumptuous. We have undertaken the role of fostering change, a role that by natural right and for most of the student’s life has belonged primarily to the parent or guardian. In a manner, our intimate intervention has crossed a boundary. We may distance ourselves from this process and call it “professional”—as it surely is and must be—but to do so is not to strip the relationship of its fundamentally humanistic quality. That parents and professors care to make a difference—that much, at least, we share.
It is doubtful that a difference can be made in people's lives without an
intimacy of some kind. This is not a family intimacy, of course, and still less a
lover's intimacy, although it may share qualities with both of these. The kind of
intimacy I am referring to is neither warm, fuzzy love nor tough love. Yet, there
is a closeness in the best teaching, a genuinely engaged regard for the other, a
compassionate interest in the character, personality, and most of all, the future
well-being of the student. It also requires energy, skill, and generous amounts
of good will to fashion the kind of classroom environment where both students
and professor can share in the mutual rewards of engaged learning.

Making a difference also requires an intimacy with the subject. A profes-
sor who wants to make a difference must bring to the classroom an intimate
knowledge, background, and expertise in a subject, but beyond this, he or she
must also bring a heightened, compelling enthusiasm for sharing that subject.
Students may doubt the subject's relevance to their own lives, present or future,
but they ought not to have a shred of doubt about the professor's conviction
that the discipline matters. When we care deeply about a subject, it follows nat-
urally that we want to share that valuable and enriching experience with others.
Like laughter, the excitement of learning can be infectious. Thus, while I would
have a hard time defending the functional value of, say, Richard Wilbur's poem
"The Beautiful Changes," I am totally unapologetic about its artfulness, about
its beauty, about its genius, and about its relevance to any receptive, inquiring
reader. No one will ever convince me that such a poem "does not matter" in the
larger scheme of things. It has made and it does make a difference. I am sure
that my colleagues in other disciplines have equally as passionate enthusiasms
for elegant statistical formulae, for ornately miraculous biological systems, for
stunningly complex molecules, or for breathtakingly wonderful cosmological
principles. The researchers and scholars in these fields are intimate with their
subject, and it is this intimacy—their love of learning—that makes a difference
for our students.

If, as teachers, we sometimes have crippling doubts about our effective-
ness, or anxieties that it is mere idealism to think it possible to be successful
achieving the goal of intimate learning, then we need only think back to our
own days as students, and almost certainly, at least one teacher will stand out as
someone who has made a difference in our lives. That poem by Richard Wilbur?
Professor O'Grady helped to equip me with the skills to read that poem. He cer-
tainly has made a difference in my life. It is good to remind ourselves about
such successes because, while professors may be allowed their doubts, failures,
or frustrations, the one attitude that will surely defeat us is negativity. The most
serious charge that I have ever overheard a student level at a professor was not
that he was boring or incompetent but that he was "bitter." A successful profes-
sorship precludes such an attitude, which is what the literary and cultural
scholar Harold Bloom means when, in his most recent book, Where Shall Wisdom Be Found?, he says, "I am not a joyous nihilist, since I am a schoolteacher by profession."

To eschew nihilism or negativity generally, however, does not mean that we need be naive, incurable optimists; rather, it means, simply, that we ought not to lose sight of our goal to make an improving difference in the lives of our students, to contribute, in the most effective ways that we can muster, to their betterment. If our guidance, inspiration, or instruction leads to success, however modest or stellar—that civil servant took my organizational behaviour class; that concert pianist studied with me—and if, more importantly, our involvement with the people in our charge leads to a greater sense of self-worth, then we ought to be, not just gratified, but proud that we have made that kind of difference. This difference has both immediate and far-reaching consequences, most immediate for the student, most far-reaching for society. Perhaps, this is what Beethoven implied when, upon undertaking the guardianship of his nephew, he commented: "I know no more sacred duty than to rear and educate a child." Musicians sometimes trace the influence of their teachers over many generations. Flutists, for example, will note that their teacher studied with so-and-so, who studied with so-and-so, who was a student of Gaubert, who was a student of Taffanel. They actually draw musical family trees. I think all disciplines should create family trees detailing the history of knowledge and the sources of influence, for such family trees show what I have been emphasizing, namely, that teaching and learning are intimate—they create families that are both cumulative and generational.

There is, finally, another sense in which teachers make a difference, one that goes to the heart of the university's liberal humanist mission—and I do not flinch at the phrase. To make a difference is to make individual students different in themselves; it is to foster in them a desire to take charge of their own specialness and fashion an intellectual, a professional, and an ethical relationship with their world. And while we may measure the class average for the performance of a skill, the manner in which that skill has been understood, the manner in which it will be used, and the manner in which it is appropriated into a particular student's make-up has to be, necessarily, different in each case. By this argument, there is no such thing as rote learning—only rote teaching. That is to say, how a skill or concept is taught may be mechanical, but the learning of it, even in the most hostile pedagogical setting, has to be a matter of individual appropriation. When we encourage students to take charge of their own intellectual, moral, and professional growth, we are encouraging the best kind of responsible citizenship—everyone gains. This is, perhaps, the biggest difference of all—it is not so much teaching that makes a difference as it is that learners and teachers committed to an inquiry and to a subject make a difference.
Within the intimate fusion of this relationship, each attempts to fashion a responsible and positive change, a change that, as Wilbur’s poem suggests, has the power to influence the learner, but also, by virtue of the learner’s deeper understanding of the subject, the very nature of the world itself.

The beautiful changes as a forest is changed
By a chameleon’s tuning his skin to it;
As a mantis, arranged
On a green leaf, grows
Into it, makes the leaf leafier, and proves
Any greenness is deeper than anyone knows.

—RICHARD WILBUR
Invitation to Reflection

Mark Weisberg
1995 3M Teaching Fellow

WHITE SPACE
It requires a long time to take in a few words.

On either side of the word we need a patch of white, of silence,
like the white space that defines a Chinese painting, or the rests in
music that permit the notes to be heard.

By and large, our students are relentlessly over stimulated. They
sing the body electric: plugged in, tuned out, motorized. And we
are over stimulated, too. Many of us hate silence, especially in the
classroom. It is the teacher’s ultimate nightmare: what if I can’t
fill fifty minutes? And yet, if students spend twenty minutes in
silence looking at ten lines of Homer, it can be time well spent.

I heard a student talking the other day about the difference
between two sociology professors. “I love Professor Jones. He lec-
tures from the moment he enters the room, without ever looking
at his notes. You really get your money’s worth in there. I don’t
know about Professor Smith. Sometimes you ask him a question
and he looks out the window for a while before he answers.”

—MARY ROSE O’REILLEY, Radical Presence

In our busy lives, are we like Professor Jones, never stopping to look at our
notes? At our teaching? At our lives? Do we leave ourselves enough white space?
Do we make time to reflect?

However busy we are, by not reflecting, I think we’re missing a significant
dimension of our professional (and personal) lives; for me, moving from experi-
ence to reflection to experience constitutes an essential educational rhythm. That
doesn’t mean that people who don’t reflect must be poor teachers; however, I do
think reflecting increases our chances of being both effective and fulfilled.
There are no formulas for reflecting, but here are several strategies that individuals have found helpful:

1. Keep a log in which you observe your teaching activities, and visit it periodically to see what you discover. Pay attention to the feelings that accompany those activities and to the assumptions that seem to lie behind what you do. Explore whether your experience supports those assumptions.

2. Note and examine several critical incidents, both high and low points, in your teaching: a time when you felt yes, this is what teaching is all about, and a time when you wondered why you were in this profession.

3. Exchange classroom visits with a colleague and discuss what you have observed.

4. Read thoughtful and possibly provocative books about teaching, such as: Don Finkel's Teaching With Your Mouth Shut, Mary Rose O'Reilley's Radical Presence: Teaching as Contemplative Practice, Jane Tompkins's A Life in School: What the Teacher Learned, and Peter Elbow's Embracing Contraries: Explorations in Learning and Teaching. Discuss them with a group of interested colleagues.

5. Respond to Mary Rose O'Reilley's provocative question: “What are you doing? What are you really doing? What is your deepest sense of call? Your true vocation?” Put what you write into an envelope, address it to yourself, give it to someone you trust, and ask them to mail it back to you in three months.
His pedagogical style is marked by a variety of underlying methods and imperatives which operate to inspire, challenge and enthuse his students, many of whom (such as myself) become educators in their own right. It is his techniques—ones that culminate in the classroom becoming what Gramsci called a “prefigurative institution,” a place for the manifestation of future possibilities—which have most influenced me. His approach is fundamentally inductive, subtly and persistently open-ended, creating a climate where the students’ learning can be constructed as their own. The consistent encouragement for people to take risks in their learning, to see their learning as a precipitate of possibilities that can coalesce into a lasting sense of one’s own possibility as an agent in the world—as opposed to simply a consumer acquiring a product, or a devotee receiving sacred unction—can result in a pedagogy of liberation, of constant engagement and becoming.

—Basil Smith
Distinguished, my ass ...

Maureen Connolly
2003 3M Teaching Fellow

This narrative emerged from a workshop I had the privilege of attending as a 3M Teaching Fellow. It reminds me that whatever encounters I have with students, colleagues, and subject matter, I must always nurture the self-reflective vigilance at the heart of making a difference as a teacher.

The first time I experienced depression was the summer of 1997 when my partner’s two sons—aged nine and eleven, bright, precocious and somewhat devious—spent that summer with us. Before this, depression was something that other people, without my considerable strength of character and willpower, experienced. Nothing prepared me for that swift slide into worthlessness and unrequited rage. The real kicker was that the boys weren’t all that bad. They were just boys. I would go to the bathroom, turn on the shower and cry and cry. I would cry in other places and times as well and the summer unfolded into a succession of driving, cooking, cleaning and laundry commercials interrupted by daily rituals of tears and self-loathing.

Fast forward six years. The phone rings in my office. I find myself gazing around my space as I contemplate the consequences of answering the phone. Shelves are piled with books and files, the gifts of students, mugs, figurines, pictures of my nephew. There are unpacked boxes that reach the ceiling stacked on the corner of my long desk. A dresser sits in the corner, containing my fitness and training clothes. CDs and tapes are piled near the phone, my briefcase is hanging open, a mouth for papers, memos, and more work to finish at home. My students wonder if I am moving in or moving out. This semester’s course and committee files are my only anchor to the here and now. And I am here, now. I am tired of here and now.

I feel the familiar and terrifying slide beginning. And it’s not that things are that bad. It’s a fairly regular semester, a fairly typical day. I answer the phone. It’s Jill—her usual, damn chipper, high energy, see-the-good-in-every-moment self. She needs a title from me for the distinguished teaching award
address I will give in May. I say to her, "How about the university’s fucked and nothing that we do makes any difference?"

There is a long silence. Jill clears her throat. "Not a good time to ask you about this?" she asks. I wish that I had some magic button to stop the horrible ache in my throat and the tears in my eyes. I take off my glasses. The office fades to merciful fuzziness, the evidence of my incompetence temporarily, thankfully blurred.

"Give me a half hour," I tell her.
Real People

Clarissa P. Green
1996 3M Teaching Fellow

In the first act of the play, Peter Pan, Wendy asks Peter why he comes to their nursery window. “I come for the stories,” he answers, “I want to hear the stories ...” For Peter, the stories that Wendy’s mother tells at bedtime offer him a view of life beyond Neverland.

Like Wendy’s mother, I tell stories to invite students to enter someone else’s life for a while. The difference between me and Wendy’s mother is that the stories I tell aren’t fairy stories; they are real, drawn from experiences similar to the people my students will know during their careers as health care workers. Illness, after all, can be seen as a chapter in the life of a family, an experience with a beginning, middle and end, that tucks itself into the longer story of the family’s life together. Often I bring people living with serious illness into the classroom to tell their story in person.

For years my students have revealed, on course evaluations, teacher evaluations, and in conversation, the power of stories in their learning. Whether the stories emerge through film, live interview, written narrative or anecdotes swapped in a small group, the stories stay with them. Stories, they tell me, build bridges, link theory to life, create images that resonate, bring out the personal in the academic, help them know their place in someone’s illness experience. They remember the stories, especially the live ones that occur in class, for a long time.

Several years after a live in-class interview with a family in which the wife/mother was dying of breast cancer, I ran into a former student. “Clarissa,” she said, “what happened to the woman with breast cancer you interviewed in class? To her children? I still think about that morning. My mother died of breast cancer two years before I was at UBC. I wish I had known how to talk with a really sick person. I work in oncology because of what that woman told us.”

Dean Dorothy Smith at the University of Florida brought “real people” into her classroom, too. As a young undergraduate, I initially found this teaching strategy reprehensible. She told us her interviews were to “make concepts come alive,” and indeed they did. But I was convinced the patients had been coerced or
manipulated into appearing on a large stage in front of 130 first-year students. The day she wheeled into the lecture hall an IV pole and gurney on which lay a sixty-year-old man dying of kidney failure, I stomped up to the Dean after class. “You can’t do that! It’s cruel to interview someone who’s dying!” I tossed to her.

“I can’t?” she asked. “Why not?”

“Because it’s rude. It’s insensitive. He doesn’t want to talk in front of 100 people. He’s dying. He wants to be left alone.”

“Are you sure?” she asked.

“No one wants to talk in front of an audience when they’re dying!”

“Are you sure?” she asked again. “Would you like to ask him?”

Within an hour I sat by the bed of this man, and it was my turn to ask him questions about what it was like to tell his story when he was so sick. He looked at me for a long time, and then smiled and said, to my amazement, “It was wonderful. Too few people are courageous enough to ask what being sick is like. Thanks to your teacher,” he said, “I got to talk to all of you, to tell my story, which right now is about dying. What a gift! And look, here you are ... perhaps you will be one of those who grows enough courage to ask rather than silence people who are very ill.”

Because of my experience with that dying man, when I began teaching a course on the family’s experience of illness at UBC, I decided to do what Dean Smith had done, bring theory to life through the stories of live people in the classroom. Like her I would assign reading material that would create a context within which to “place” the story. I would do more, however. I would ask families if they would allow the students, too, to ask questions. I wanted to extend the power of the live story beyond linking theory with human beings’ lives; I wanted to reveal to students what I had learned from the sixty-year-old man. In my twenty-five years of interviewing families in class, no family has refused to entertain students’ questions and worries. Many families have insisted on talking directly with the students and not just with me. Often a student has voiced the same worry I did in Dean Smith’s class: “Don’t you find this embarrassing? Intrusive?” they have asked angrily. Families have said to these students what the sixty-year-old man said to me.

“This is an honour.”

“Telling our story to all of you, even though it’s a hard one, is healing. Too few people ask. Talking with you is healing.”

“I think every family with a child with osteosarcoma should have this opportunity.” One young child said, “This has been awesome. Usually everyone’s talking about my brother, because he’s the one with cancer. But today I got to talk, too.”
“The Great Professor”

Michael D. Moore
1993 3M Teaching Fellow

The theme of this anniversary volume of reflections—making a difference—daringly conceives of the best teaching in higher education not as a matter of dissemination, crowd-pleasing performance, or due diligence but, rather, as a matter of influence. It provocatively conceives of the best learning not as progress in the accumulation of specialized knowledge and skills but, rather, as a process of individual awakening and change. That emphasis or perspective matches up with my instinct, dating back to my own floundering student days, that a good teacher’s role is to be the activating catalyst in a chemical reaction.

Education implies change. The teacher’s value-added function, like any catalyst, is to do something for students that they cannot do for themselves. To elicit (e-duce?) something different. Otherwise, why would we suppose adult learners need teachers at all? Why would we much care whether this or that instructor better “facilitates” such unremarkable outcomes as relatively more digested information or relatively more efficient technique?

University teaching is more than putting a pleasant human face on arrangements for the “delivery” and absorption of a certain freight of prescribed information, opinion, or procedure. That would surely not be worth to its “customers” what it costs. We owe them more than a comfortable embellishment of what they (or we) already know. They deserve more than to be told what they want to hear. Helping them learn how to imagine, desire, and achieve something more, something different, is the purpose of university teaching.

So piquant a conception of our responsibility is of course no recipe for popularity among students or colleagues. That’s why my initial reaction to receiving teaching awards was surprise and bemusement. There is something profoundly ironic, and yet delicious, about official approval for iconoclasm. The prestigious 3M Teaching Fellowship has been especially gratifying and vindicating, because it signals not only the respect of so many students, alumni, staff, and faculty at my home institution, over so many years, but also the peer
recognition, in stiff competition, of a national community of interdisciplinary faculty and educational developers. It would be false modesty to pretend here that I'm not proud of earning that high regard. Or to deny seeing it as one rigorous test of my undoubtedly "different" philosophy of teaching.

Still, such thoughts lead inevitably to the question of how we can ever know in retrospect whether we have, by being different, made a difference for others. What kind of difference was it? Is it a difference that mattered? What so-called "outcomes" might ever be adduced to confirm it? Hence, the invitation to contribute to this volume, and to consider including the voices of former students, became for me an occasion to risk "testing" things further.

So, out of the blue, I've sheepishly contacted five former students from various eras, asking whether they remember anything "different" about my apparent conception and actual practice of teaching or mentoring, and whether it made any important difference for them? I chose these people because they were always reliably shrewd and frank (no pious platitudes) and because of their current professional perspectives. Here follow their answers, with my reactions.

More than a decade ago, Michele was my student in several courses ranging from an introductory survey of literature to a graduate seminar. Today she is herself an exceptionally fine university instructor. In an amusing (non-?) sequitur, she says, "Michael Moore is the teacher that I work constantly to be. The students sometimes dislike me." Exactly. Educating is not about being loveable, though it certainly is about caring deeply enough to coax learners well beyond the familiar or comfortable. That's why it's so gratifying to hear that my pestering was trusted, was different, and did make the intended difference: "What Michael Moore gave me ... was a sense that I had the power to come to know what I didn't know—that the power and ability was in me ... those ideas just waiting to be drawn out of myself—those thoughts awaiting my own discovery of their presence."

Aaron, now a lawyer, similarly remembers being both daunted and reassured by the risks, the mischief, into which all my students are invited—"a leap of faith in you as the leader and guide, and also a leap of faith in our own ability to engage with challenging ideas and gain the intellectual rewards ... an appeal for the individual student to step bravely and decisively into this strange new field of knowledge." As for making a difference, what more could any teacher want to hear years later than "It continues to make learning fun, even in ... securities law, auto repair, vegetarian cooking, or conversational Russian." Something tells me this guy never needed any leader or guide, or enticement into challenges.

But because even Aaron's sidelong glance at the more normative discourse of "teacher-centered" authority or "leadership" makes me uneasy, I also
particularly welcome the following reminiscence by a third respondent, Caroline, my student twenty years ago and a secondary educational consultant today:

I had a conversation with Professor Moore regarding the Robin Williams character in the movie Dead Poets Society. He told me that he felt Williams’ character was not a good teacher because what he did in the classroom was all about him, not about his students. It is quite the opposite with Dr. Moore ... He always had a knack for understanding what each of his students needed and finding a way to support them in their work.

Ah yes. The indelible image or myth of “the great professor” in innumerable popular films is a tough act to follow. Nor should it be admired, or expected. The spontaneous tribute paid to the schoolteacher by all the students at the end of that Williams film (leaping onto their desks crying “Captain, my Captain”) makes my blood run cold. Not simply because it so misrepresents the nature of academic life and work, but because its generic fantasy about life-changing virtuoso lecture performances (basically a dozen recyclable quotable quotes?) is a mockery of the many less histrionic ways in which real professors can and often do effect genuine differences among individual learners in an actual world.

What I remember most about another student, Dennis, is his hot jazz saxophone. Maybe that improvisational spirit is why he imagines he learned from me “to fail magnificently, to take the kind of risks that make difference and transformation not only the crucial elements of thought that they must be, but crucial elements of my own pedagogy as an English professor as well.” My far less heroic memory of the situation is that Dennis needed no encouragement to be more adventurous. On the contrary, in this case the intervention—the difference—that needed to be made was a gradual re-directing of his talent into line with what Dennis himself now calls “intellectual work.” In teaching there are times for lighting fires, and other times for banking them. I’m delighted that Dennis’ own students now have a teacher so determined to be a “positive, knowledge-affirming influence.”

Influence can exert itself ... differently. I presume that many people would rate wide research discipleship (self-reproduction?) as one token of great educating. I do not. Almost none of my students ever become professors in my particular areas of scholarly and teaching specialty. The “differences” I’m proudest of making are the modest successes of students who seemed least likely to succeed at all, who would least dream of pursuing academic careers, and who have probably long forgotten the subject matter of those courses. And yet I value highly (and not just for its rarity) the perspective of Nat, who does teach today...
in my own specialist fields. He too mentions "challenge" (Am I really so formidable? How little we realize the image we project!), but he also remembers that it was understood, and made a difference to him and to others:

I know that it was this kind of effort to respond to our thinking that often inspired our class to our best efforts ... because we knew how closely and carefully he read our work. So, on the one hand, his style was performative, provocative, and calculatedly frustrating, while on the other, he cultivated a sincere pedagogical relationship with his students, and I believe that this combination is what made his teaching so effective; he did not simply "make us think," he made us engage with the very process of our education.

If any of that is even partly true, it is perhaps the kind of "teaching evaluation" most worth having. Even if it represents (as surely it does) an idealized rather than any embodied professor, it expresses a powerful idea about teaching and learning. An idea I'm grateful to have somehow fostered among students past and present. In the face of so much that is adrift, cynical, and disheartening in higher education today, it confirms that at least sometimes we are doing the right thing, not the easy, pleasant, or conventional thing. And that this difference is sometimes recognized and appreciated by our students. And that it did (and still does) make a difference.
In her world, no one is left behind. If you show promise and want to journey forward, she will never let up on you. She was also a wonderful presence outside the classroom. Many times I would pop up to her office for help before an exam, along with two or three friends. She would simply move some books aside and make room for everyone.

—Kelly Redman

From the first moment I stepped into her classroom, I could feel something like a spell take hold of me. The classes were about four and a half hours long, yet at the end, many students still lingered. We could hardly wait until the next class. It was like reading a good book. You cannot put it down. One day we started talking about grief and soon were deep into personal stories. She altered the agenda to allow us to spend the rest of the class on the subject of grief and loss. What came about was memorable. Some of the students admitted to never having shared these intense and personal stories with anyone before. In her classes, we talked, we argued, we listened, we laughed and we cried. We were often loud and sometimes very quiet and somber. Through all of this, we learned.

—Janice Penner

The first day of class with her was far from typical. She stated her personal and professional code of ethics and her expectations of us with the greatest conviction I’d ever witnessed in an academic setting. A few years later, I served as one of two peer facilitators for a course of hers which had 150 students. She mentored me in teaching and tutoring. When she fell ill, she convinced the Faculty with great faith and optimism to permit us to teach the course in her absence. It was an honour to have been given such an opportunity and to have been trusted to present properly the curriculum she had devised.

—Susie Turner

So much passion radiates from her, you can feel it. She awakened something in me. I felt the strength and desire to test my limits. She taught me there were deep reserves of talent in myself that I didn’t even know I had.

—Amy Martin
A Workshop Model for Promoting Inclusive Teaching Practices

Bluma Litner
1996 3M Teaching Fellow

For the last decade or so, I have become increasingly aware of the changing complexion of the student body at the university where I teach. Also, I have been critically assessing my own experiences as an educator, my own positioning vis-à-vis the power/knowledge relationship. I have come to realize that, beyond the power inherent in my status as the professor which a priori separates me from all the students of any given course, there are significant differences in students' positioning, both in relation to me and in relation to each other.

These differences depend on the extent to which my students reflect the dominant, white, patriarchal, heterosexual, non-disabled, middle-class North American culture. These differences can present major obstacles to the successful learning experience for those of my students who become the "others" by virtue of their relative distance from the dominant order and culture. Socially marginalized students are often discriminated against, muted or simply overlooked or they are called upon to speak as representatives of their group. Course content and curriculum have typically reflected the dominant group's assumptions, definitions and perspective on what has historically counted as knowledge.

Thus, the challenge for me became to learn, through both study and practice, to develop course designs, teaching approaches and a classroom environment that would foster the inclusion of all class members. I developed a workshop model to sensitize faculty, regardless of their disciplines, to the importance of re-thinking their teaching in light of the diversity and the differences that are present in the students who attend their classes.

The workshop is experiential, with the emphasis on participants' active involvement in critiquing, analyzing and problem-solving a learning situation, their own or one that has been presented to them. A video produced by the
Derek Bok Center for Teaching and Learning and the Office of Race Relations and Minority Affairs at Harvard University, entitled Race in the Classroom: The Multiplicity of Experience stimulates critical engagement with the issues of diversity and inclusive teaching. Another valuable video series is Critical Incidents, produced by the Learning and Teaching Centre at the University of Victoria (BC). Working alone or in small groups, participants are given the opportunity to reflect on their attitudes, opinions and interpretations and to connect the concepts being presented to their own learning and future teaching practice.

The aim is for faculty to develop a climate of co-inquiry where the taken-for-granted assumptions that students make about each other and their interactions and about course content can be exposed, critiqued and, it is to be hoped, revised. Ultimately, my goal, regardless of course content, is to help students develop an understanding of their identities as socially constituted and as a multiplicity of positionings in terms of gender, class, ethnicity, age, etc. The design calls for individuals to think about an incident in their own educational experience when they felt alienated, silenced or excluded. Working alone, they are asked to write a brief outline of the incident, including what came about, how it affected them and what insights they gained about the learning/teaching relationship as a result.

What I am trying to create is a disjuncture, to loosen the hold on what participants claim as certainties about themselves, their students and the social order. I believe that this disjuncture is the starting point for faculty to take up the struggle to “alter what has long not been altered” and to question the natural, the truth and the taken-for-granted assumptive world of their classrooms.

The design then calls for participants to work in small groups. The focus at this stage is to describe quickly what they thought was occurring in the video situation or to describe their own past incident and the impact either of these has had on their thinking about how the teaching and learning experience could be more equitable for, and representative of, all the members of a given course. If participants are using their own personal material, the groups are asked to pick one story that they can work on together after checking whether the group member whose story has been selected is comfortable.

As a facilitator, I come prepared with one of my own stories as an alternative if any or all of the groups express reservations about using their own material. The goal here is to have participants discuss how they might intervene to transform the classroom situation into a more inclusive one.

The design then requires groups to select a spokesperson to summarize the key points in their group’s discussion and to report on the interventions they came up with that would purposefully promote inclusive classroom interaction.

The last phase of the session is to propose to participants a series of con-
siderations and practices which have been found effective in promoting inclusive teaching and learning. Some of the specific practices that I have incorporated in my teaching include the following:

1. At the beginning of a course, I introduce exercises that help my students get to know and appreciate each other's backgrounds (for example I have created a "diversity bingo" game).

2. I ask students to develop a set of ground rules that will govern how we collectively manage the classroom climate to optimize learning. Periodically, I call "time outs" with the class as a whole or in small groups in order for students to discuss the class dynamics as well as how they are doing. This operates as a "check up" and as a reminder that the quality of our learning is affected by the classroom environment in which the learning takes place.

3. I deliberately use models and examples that represent the experiences of different members of the diverse classroom membership.

4. Whenever possible, I prepare my course reading list to reflect the academic diversity of the class.

5. I ask students to restate an idea that they disagree with before they counter it.

6. I plan a variety of assignments appropriate to a variety of learning styles.

7. In conflict situations, I carefully monitor how students are treating each other and I stress the importance of separating people from the issue or problem at hand.

8. When a student puts forward a racist or sexist comment, I address it in general terms immediately. Without demeaning the speaker, I use the moment to talk about how unquestioned generalizations and stereotypes are perpetuated and are typically based on myths, lack of information or misinformation.

The central message that I strive to convey in these workshops is that inclusive teaching starts with a willingness to re-think our pedagogy, regardless of our discipline or course material, and to apply intentionally a critical lens to the classroom environment that we create. It is about critically assessing and critiquing our part in reproducing institutionalized racism, sexism, classism and homophobia in the university and in society. It is about the unlearning of hegemonic universal truths and the re-learning of alternate realities that make it possible for differences to appear rather than disappear.
Carla

John Hoddinott
1994 3M Teaching Fellow

I think all effective teachers accept the first of Chickering and Gamson's Seven Principles of Good Practice in Undergraduate Education that encourages contact between students and faculty. The reason behind it is that contact promotes learner motivation and involvement. What is often unstated is that it enhances faculty motivation and involvement too. On special occasions, something about the human spirit is learned.

Through the fall term one of my students had been arriving at the lecture theatre in a wheelchair. One of her peers had been recruited by the Specialized Support and Disability Services unit as a note-taker to make her life a little easier. It was an eighty-minute class and, at the half-time break, I would often talk to her. While other students could move around and chat with their peers, Carla was somewhat isolated in the area where she could park her wheelchair. I always enjoyed our conversations because she was interested in the material and was always ready with a smile when I walked over. Suddenly she was absent from class for several weeks and I was pleased to see her return as she seemed to be enjoying the course. That she had been ill was all she shared with me, but she did say she had been catching up on the notes from her note-taker.

During my office hours the week of her return, Carla stopped by. My office access is not wheelchair friendly: two right-angle turns in a short space. I immediately offered to talk with her in my lab, which would involve no turns. She simply thanked me for the offer, said it would be fine, persisted with her manoeuvring and eventually wheeled herself up to my desk. We then went over the material she had missed.

Before the mid-term exam I handed out a list of ten essay topics, one of which would be on the exam along with a range of multiple-choice questions. During the term I had been introducing my students to the ideas of John Biggs and his Structure of Observed Learning Outcomes (SOLO) Taxonomy. His model not only gives a rubric to help me with marking, it is one I can share with my students to explain what I am looking for in their written work. When I
reminded the students of the SOLO Taxonomy categories and their meaning, there was some grumbling as the class ended. During office hours before the exam, Carla stopped by and, after my usual offer to meet in the lab and her manoeuvring up to my desk, we again reviewed some of the course material.

When the mid-term marks were in, the average result on the essay portion was not outstanding compared to the multiple-choice section. Explanations to the class that the feedback would enable them to do better on the final did not seem to go down well. Later in the day Carla wheeled into my office. To my surprise she wanted to tell me that she thought the essay was a great idea for the exam, that it was just the sort of thing she as a student should be doing and that I should not be put off by the mutterings of those who just wanted multiple-choice testing. I was quite touched that she would make the effort to work her way to my office to support my pedagogical approach to a course. Needless to say I thanked her for her support.

Carla completed the course but in large-enrolment institutions and introductory courses it is easy to lose contact with former students if they do not continue their studies in your department. Some months after the end of the course I was chatting with our Resource Room Coordinator. I happened to ask if she had seen or heard of Carla as I knew they had spent a significant amount of time together. I was shocked to hear that Carla had died of leukemia. Having a spinal injury had been only part of the challenge life presented to her.

I remember Carla as a warm, friendly, and positive young woman who happened to get around in a wheelchair. She never seemed frustrated or defeated by the obvious and hidden challenges that her physical condition presented. Subsequently I learned about her involvement as a board member of the Spinal Cord Injury Treatment Centre Society (SCITCS). That she cared about people who faced similar challenges and worked herself into a position to do something about them came as no surprise. In her memory, scitcs now sponsors the Carla Tabler Award for students who volunteer for an organization involved with people with disabilities, a very appropriate tribute.

I wish our lives had not diverged after the course was over. I wish our institutions were not so large and impersonal that the death of someone like Carla does not register more prominently in our community. However, I now understand why the first of the seven principles relating to contact between faculty and students must be ongoing and what the rewards can be. Of course, I still wish that more than one gracious first-year student would see the virtues of writing essays to demonstrate their learning.
Introduction to Toxicology

David Cook
1996 3M Teaching Fellow

I am in the process of writing yet another letter of recommendation for an ex-student. She is beautiful, brilliant, currently registered as an undergraduate in one of our best medical schools, and she wants to be an astronaut. And probably will be. As the words “talented, successful, unpretentious” appear on the page that will, with a little good luck, advance her career another step, I reflect on how much I did not want to teach the course in which I first encountered her. I did not need extra teaching, and many of my colleagues told me that teaching undergraduate science was a totally depressing experience.

However, my fellow 3M Teaching Fellows espoused a different set of beliefs. These people told me that any teaching can be rewarding, that students like to learn, and that they can be wonderfully creative, and they provided me with a rich vein of anecdote to support their views. This perspective made much more sense and corresponded with my own experience, so I decided not to fight it, and took on the teaching of a rather large, third-year Introduction to Toxicology course with as much good grace as I could muster.

Working in a medical school, where most of my teaching occurs, means that the content and approach become constrained by the overall curriculum and the professional needs of the students. But in a science course anything goes, provided it does not violate university regulations, and soon the extra forty hours of lectures stopped seeming like a “teaching load” and started to become something much more akin to a playground.

What did the students really need to learn? That was the first question. And it was immediately clear that the reproduction of minutiae was not what they needed to learn. All the ideas were out there. Surely, even in the harsh world of science, it was important that students be involved, be able to communicate orally and in writing, and learn how to work together and to explore unknown lands.

None of the ideas that I introduced were startlingly new, except to the students! They sat together in teams that worked collectively to answer questions
and to teach some of the material. Teams chose any area that had not been
taught, wrote a paper and presented it orally to their classmates. I changed the
structure of my lectures and the nature of examinations.

What needs to be highlighted is how students over the years have
responded to this approach. They produce some research papers that are better
written and more informative than offerings in the published literature, but
what really demonstrates their abilities are the ten-minute presentations. They
are funny, creative, informative and full of good science.

One team chose to look at tetrodotoxin, the poisonous compound much
prized in Japanese puffer fish or fugu, and presented their data as a mock-up of
a Japanese cooking school. Another team chose mustard gas, and started by
acting out a high-level military conference at the end of WWI. We have had TV
Family Feud discussions so that the group could show two opposing views about
a particular compound; wickedly accurate parodies of drug abuse presenta-
tions; and one memorable skit based on the toxin in the South American tree
frog which involved a group of incompetent white hunters in the Amazon and
a remarkably unlikely field surgical operation. They added PowerPoint, music,
movies and this year one group put their entire presentation on DVD, turned the
lights down and said, "Enjoy the show!" So much for "not creative," "all they
want is fact" and so on. And, no, they don't whine about their grades. In the
course evaluations most students believe that they put more effort into this
course, learn more and enjoy it more.

There is another aspect as well, in which the course has made a differ-
ence. Innumerable students end up in research, in one of the professional
schools, or just having a good time in a course they did not expect to enjoy.

The students are generous with their thanks, but in truth the amount of
sheer delight I get from the fact that they learn and enjoy the process is more
than sufficient reward. Although my friends in education here and across the
country have shown me so much, it is the students who end up providing the
real lessons, and who have turned a teaching experience I did not want into
something I treasure. Next year I will make some changes, partly because of
some new ideas in the literature, but mostly because the students say "it would
be even more successful if we could just ...."
The Set-up: Production Elements for a Superclass

Michael L. Atkinson
1998 3M Teaching Fellow

Teaching a large class (which could be any class size, but usually over 100) is a lot more difficult than teaching a small class. To be successful, the instructor must solve the problems associated with potential student anonymity, diverse levels of comprehension, and the challenge of motivating such a large group. Add to this the administrative quagmire of giving exams, record keeping, and managing a small army of teaching assistants and proctors. What do you really have to do to prepare for this kind of teaching? I try to answer this question by describing the preparation for a single large class.

12:35 p.m.
I've spent over ten hours preparing for today's lecture—about seven hours yesterday and three more this morning. Even though I've taught this huge class for over ten years now, it still takes a great deal of time to make sure that everything is right. New video, new PowerPoint, tweaks on the actual presentation, announcements, questions from last time ... it all adds up. Class starts in forty minutes, but I need to load and cue all of the audio-visual material, do sound and video checks, and talk to the students who have started to assemble in the lecture hall. The stage crew has already been here and set up the temporary stage at center court.

12:40 p.m.
Case unpacked, music playing; ready to cue the video material. In a huge lecture theatre (this one holds 1220) there is no room for miscues, AV errors or audio dropouts. The class must be run as a polished production—this is educational theatre. If my data projector does not work, class is over. If my audio cuts out, class is over. If the computer goes down, class is over. Sure, I have backups for the visuals, but all require the data projector (there is no black/white board and the optical slide projector requires pre-loading). In a pinch, I can simply talk
with the class, but I know that the amount of energy required to keep their attention will be much greater. If the audio system fails, I've got bigger problems. I can project to this group for about 10–15 minutes before I start to lose my voice. The audio system is the one absolutely essential component in this classroom. Without it, class is definitely over.

12:45 p.m.

Video loaded, checked and cued. PowerPoint is up and running. One of the advantages of being in class a full forty-five minutes early is the ability to use PowerPoint as a display tool for routine announcements and as a "set" for the upcoming class. Today the display alternates between room assignments for the upcoming exam, the outline for today's lecture, and announcements of upcoming workshops on exam strategies.

12:52 p.m.

Audio checks done. New batteries in the transmitter and the remote pointing device. Today I need to use the visual presenter (basically a document camera that allows for a live video feed from the desktop) and an audience microphone in addition to all the standard multimedia tools. Bill Cox (the technical director) is making sure both are working and switched into the system. He also checks my headset microphone to make sure I have it on correctly.

1:00 p.m.

All AV loaded and tested. Time to review the "script" with Bill. The opening video clip for today is a powerful presentation of conformity and obedience. It starts off with old WWII film segments, then moves to images of Tiananmen Square and finally to a courtroom clip of a soldier on trial for murder. His defense is that he was just following orders. We want to build the drama of this clip, so we have decided to start the tape about one minute early (class always starts at 1:15 p.m. sharp), leave the lights up at first, then bring them down quickly as the trial sequence begins. Bill reminds me that he will cue me to begin at 1:14 p.m. Also, Bill suggests that I wait a few seconds after the clip ends before I start to speak. The house lights will slowly return to the set levels, but the silence itself will make my first point.

Class normally ends around 2:30 p.m., but I need to push a little beyond today. Bill will give me a time signal at 2:20 p.m. and a three-minute cue at 2:27 p.m. When I have almost finished the lecture, I will touch my headset and return to center stage. This is Bill's cue to start the exit music. Today's selection allows me about ten seconds for a voice over.

The teaching assistants have started to arrive and I need to review some points about the exam with them.
1:07 p.m.

Class starts in seven minutes. The room is almost full at this point. I have moved off the central stage to the mezzanine section. Bill has taken up a position at the back of class with the audio controls. I like to spend about ten minutes walking around the room, taking questions and chatting with the students. This classroom setting can feel rather cold, impersonal and detached. I want to work against this perception by moving into the student space and taking some time to find out what issues are on their minds, psychology-related or not. This seems to work. Students have mentioned that my class feels more personal to them than some of their other much smaller classes (50 to 100). The teaching assistants are moving around the class as well.

1:12 p.m.

Time for final preparations. I return to the centre stage and look to Bill for a time check. Start in two minutes. I go over a mental checklist: fade music, start VCR, select VCR on the video switcher, stop current music and cue exit music, pause the minidisk player and reset music audio to fifty percent, drop lights to thirty percent at the start of the trial sequence, check focus on the visual presenter and be ready to switch back to the computer when we come out of video, house lights to set position, take computer, walk off stage, mike on. I'll review this list several times before starting, especially if there are complicated media switches. I retrieve my sports jacket from the back rail and put it on. The stage transformation is complete.

1:14 p.m.

Show time .... We're ready to roll.

REFLECTION

For me, the Superclass has been a very positive experience. I have learned more about teaching by offering this class than ever before. The feedback from the class is immediate if your lecture is not up to par. If two hundred people start talking to each other, it is quite noticeable. If four hundred people do not show up, the empty seats make a loud statement. You must hold the attention of the audience or you will lose them. Proper use of nonverbal behaviour (movement, voice modulation, eye contact, etc.) is critical. Along the way, you have to become somewhat of a technology specialist as well. In a large venue, you must move to digital displays (PowerPoint), construct slides using proper graphic design principles, learn the basics of how the equipment works, and be ready to embrace new technology. When I first started teaching, most of my effort was devoted to content and getting enough material for a class. Now I spend most of my time reducing the amount of content and increasing the visual impact.
You also become somewhat of an administrator. The Superclass is easily the size of a small college and may be larger than some of the students' hometowns. I believe that I have heard every excuse and experienced almost all classroom management problems possible in the last twelve years. Add to this the supervision of a seminar-sized group of teaching assistants and a small army of proctors for each exam (about fifty)—coordination and organization are essential.

By the time class ends, I will have logged ten hours of prep time, two hours of lecture, and an additional half hour of student questions after class. Bill and I will spend about half an hour over coffee reviewing today's class while it is still fresh in our minds. I'll need at least another hour and a half to "decompress" when I return to my office—I'm completely drained mentally and physically (I probably lose a few pounds every class). In addition to my fifteen hours, Bill has logged two and a half hours today plus a few hours yesterday editing videotape. The stage crew needs one hour to set up and another hour to tear down. The four teaching assistants will spend two hours each in class. A total of about thirty hours to mount. Is it worth it? Absolutely! Student feedback has been extremely positive and "Superpsych" is consistently rated as the top first-year class at Western. We're making a difference and we're ready to do it again tomorrow.
Path Maker

Judith Johnston
2003 3M Teaching Fellow

When I began teaching, I saw myself as an Explainer or Persuader, someone who talked a lot and imparted an organized body of knowledge to a listener. Now I see the role of a teacher as being that of a Path Maker, someone who puts the trail markers in the forest or the stepping stones through the garden. We indicate the direction of travel, put signs up where the road splits, and strategically position a few benches to encourage pauses for reflection. But the Teacher as Path Maker cannot determine what students will see or experience as they walk the path. That will depend on what they are looking for, what captures their attention and whom else they meet along the way. We can assure ourselves and our students that they will reach the other side, and we can chart their paths through the most interesting and revealing parts of the woods, but we can’t predict what they will have learned when they arrive.

We also can’t predict what we will have learned. As students make their way along the path, in their own fashion, they point to things we never knew were there. And so, my view of Teaching as Path Making guarantees that I remain a learner too. In the final analysis this may be my most important contribution—to be an example of someone who finds great pleasure in new ideas, who creates plans of inquiry, and who embodies the principle that ignorance and questions are not reasons for embarrassment, but invitations to learn.
Making a Difference:
Building the Next Generation
of the Professoriate

Anthony Marini
1997 3M Teaching Fellow

Since becoming a 3M Teaching Fellow in 1997, I have been given many opportunities to promote the importance of quality teaching on my campus and on many other campuses across the country. In particular, it has been a privilege to nurture the next generation of the professoriate. The University Teaching Certificate Program (UTC), which I recently initiated, is currently the focus of my teaching development work at the University of Calgary.

The program is designed to provide graduate students and post-doctoral fellows wishing to enter the professoriate with skills and knowledge related to effective teaching. Each cohort typically includes twenty-five students who are enrolled in Masters or Doctoral programs, or who hold post-doctoral fellowships. The course activities involve approximately eighty hours of class time and six hours of teaching practicum in the student's home department. Participants also develop a course syllabus, design assessment activities to determine student learning, and assemble a teaching portfolio to begin documenting their development as instructors. Each participant presents a forty-minute teaching session to group members who then provide detailed written and oral feedback. The sessions are videotaped so that participants can reflect on their teaching and prepare for a meeting with course facilitators where they review the videotape and identify areas of strength and areas for improvement.

While the program recognizes the need for a core of central teaching skills, the facilitators also recognize the individual teaching needs that participants bring to the UTC program. Therefore, facilitators observe participants teaching in their home departments and meet to discuss these observations. They also meet with participants to refine the written assignments.
Since its implementation in September 2002, the UTC program has awarded over 100 teaching certificates to participants from faculties across campus. Reaction to the program has been overwhelmingly positive; waiting lists are lengthy. Janice Kinch, from the Faculty of Nursing, found the experience transformational. “My teaching world has changed. This opportunity must be opened up, even made compulsory for all new teachers,” she says. Other participants address the issue of confidence building. Marianna Hofmeister, from the Faculty of Communication and Culture, commented on her increased comfort in the classroom. “Now I can look forward to teaching and I can feel confident that I’ve got some of the skills to move forward in this career,” she says.

Students seldom have an opportunity to be in a learning environment with students from other disciplines. The opportunity to learn about each others’ areas of study and observe diverse approaches to teaching has been of significant value to all UTC participants.

It has been particularly rewarding to watch groups build their own community of support where they feel comfortable enough to provide each other with honest and insightful feedback. Through these relationships, professional development and networking continue on an ongoing basis well after the program requirements have been fulfilled.

But perhaps the most significant value in building an effective professoriate is cited by participants like Jan Macor, who, as a result of attending the UTC program, are motivated to want to join the professoriate and become excellent teachers. Says Jan, “I want to be a professor now, more than ever.”
L'Intervention fait toute la différence

Alex Fancy
1988 3M Teaching Fellow

Le rôle de l’enseignant consiste à aider les apprenants à identifier, puis à exprimer leurs résistances. Une telle entreprise peut cependant être compromise par différents facteurs: une réticence innée, un milieu socio-culturel qui valorise la complaisance plutôt que la contestation, ou encore notre participation à une société de production et de consommation.

Ainsi le terme “intervenant” s’applique-t-il à l’enseignant qui souhaite “faire toute la différence” dans la vie de ses étudiants, donc dans la société. Il se voit comme un allié, plutôt que comme un adversaire, il privilégie la cogestion et ose, probablement de manière implicite, nommer l’innumable: l’absurde surgissant de l’écart qui nous sépare d’un monde incompréhensible, voire hostile.

Ceci dit, l’apprenant souhaite que ses progrès soient aussi bien objectifs que subjectifs et lui permettent d’occuper une place à part entière dans la société. Le projet du professeur s’avère donc double: favoriser l’épanouissement de l’apprenant tout en l’aidant à atteindre un certain statut professionnel et matériel.

En langage de théâtre, nos étudiants cherchent à esquisser un “gestus social” qui se situe entre caractère et action, entre les deux phénomènes que Patrice Pavis qualifie d’“ensemble de traits propres à un individu” et de “praxis sociale.”

Une autre analogie théâtrale s’impose: quel que soit son sujet, tout enseignant propose à ses étudiants un texte, ou script, contenant des éléments d’interprétation qu’ils vont peut-être utiliser, voire incarner, ultérieurement. Ce script les aidera-t-il, dès qu’ils l’auront assimilé, à s’intégrer dans la société? À l’interroger? À la changer? Le professeur est un acteur qui souhaite devenir spectateur, un intervenant qui espère en inspirer d’autres à prendre sa place.

C’est dans le théâtre d’intervention que l’enseignant qui cherche à faire une différence peut trouver son meilleur appui théorique. Ce genre de théâtre encourage la prise de parole par ceux qui, jusqu’alors, sombraient dans le
silence. Jonny Ebstein, un de ses théoriciens, explique qu’il vise à “fournir aux hommes le moyen de se politiser au lieu d’être politisés.”

Ce défi peut paraître redoutable à l’enseignant lorsqu’il entreprend d’intervenir auprès de jeunes qui hésitent sur le seuil de l’âge adulte, l’adolescence étant, par définition, un lieu de combat. Paul Denis nous livre deux définitions intéressantes à ce sujet:

**Adolescence**: Période de non-retour qui voit l’immolation des dernières figures impériales de l’enfance. L’adolescent lutte contre l’enfant en lui, enfant qu’il lui faut installer dans la peau d’un homme et qui résiste à son incarcération.

**Adulte**: Notion purement empirique dont il n’existe aucune définition métapsychologique; l’adulte est toujours le fils de l’enfant.

Témoins involontaires du phénomène que Jung qualifiait d’effondrement de l’enfant, nos étudiants s’avèrent résistants timides qui souhaitent prendre leur place dans le monde des parents tout en écoutant l’enfant en eux qui refuse de mourir.

Cet enjeu a influencé mon propre enseignement du français et du théâtre d’une manière importante. Professeur de français, langue seconde, j’ai pu affirmer dès le début de ma carrière l’importance que j’accordais aussi bien à l’expression de soi, de son caractère, qu’à la communication (selon les codes formulés par l’autre, et visant à l’action).

Ce fut la base des cours d’expressivité dont l’objectif tend à créer un rapprochement entre le caractère et l’action, un phénomène dramatique qui englobe aussi bien le subjectif que l’objectif, le gestus que le cursus. Le cursus désigne l’activité propre au comédien qui utilise le mot, le ton et le geste (et non le gestus) du personnage qu’il incarne pour faire apprécier à ses interlocuteurs le sentiment ou le point de vue de celui-ci à un moment précis de sa vie.

Quelle que soit sa discipline—ou ses disciplines!—la question suivante s’impose à tout enseignant: le cursus (scolaire) favorisera-t-il l’épanouissement d’un gestus (social)?

Non contents de demeurer dans la classe, mes étudiants et moi avons trouvé dans le théâtre un véritable laboratoire pour réfléchir à cette question primordiale. Des codes artistiques formulés à partir de la langue seconde ont permis aux jeunes, qui étaient à la fois étudiants et comédiens, de partager le vécu et la subjectivité de personnes parlant la langue cible et l’utilisant comme outil de résistance. Cette réflexion s’est poursuivie pendant trois décennies.

Le lecteur ne sera sans doute pas surpris de découvrir que nous avons retenu de nombreux textes mettant en vedette de jeunes résistants qui interro-
gent leur monde tout en incarnant un phénomène que certains psychanalystes jungiens qualifient de "refus de grandir." En voici un exemple. Tout récemment, nos jeunes comédiens et spectateurs ont été captivés par l'ahurissement de Bérenger, protagoniste de la pièce 

"Tuer sans gages" d'Eugène Ionesco. Cet homme crédule et enfantin découvre qu'un tueur rôde dans la Cité Radieuse laquelle ne manque pas de rappeler au public le World Trade Centre, bien que la pièce ait été écrite dans les années cinquante: "On ne peut pas, on ne doit pas laisser cela comme ça! Ça ne peut plus aller! Ça ne peut plus aller! ... Ça n'ira pas comme ça! Il faut faire quelque chose! Il faut, il faut, il faut!" Cet adulte enfantin, incarné par notre comédien interprétant un hystérique qui tape du pied, interroge notre monde occidental, obsédé de progrès et féro de rationalisme. Ce monde sacrifie ses enfants, phénomène dont on chuchote, selon Jung, depuis des siècles et que Martin S. Bergmann qualifie de traumatisme universel.

Jung s'émerveillait de l'immuable facilité de rebondir de l'enfant effondré qui joue et refuse de mourir. Pour notre part, nous avons choisi de créer, de manière collaborative, de nombreux personnages sources qui, par l'intermédiaire du jeu, ont encouragé jusqu'ici plus de 80,000 jeunes spectateurs des écoles de notre région à interroger notre monde. Dans la plus récente de ces créations collaboratives, un bébé géant aux allures shakespeareennes titube sur le quatrième mur en disant: "Quitter ou ne pas quitter la garderrie?"

Comme le comédien qui intègre la dynamique théâtrale muni d'un gestus, nos étudiants choisissent le gestus social qu'ils proposeront au monde en y intervenant.

Giuseppe Rensi, auquel certains attribuent depuis peu le statut de premier philosophe de l'absurde, soutenait que "Ce qu'il y a d'odieux dans le travail ce n'est pas tant d'être pénible que d'être imposé" et décrivait la liberté de choisir son travail ainsi: "C'est toute la différence du travail au jeu." C'est aussi toute la différence de l'éducation à l'intervention.
A Few Words on the 3M
Teaching Fellowships Program
... mmm ... Where to Start?

Dale Roy
3M Program Coordinator, 1986 to 2000

I suppose I remember the early years a bit better because the whole idea was
brand new and unpredictable. We were busy trying to convince 3M Canada
that the Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education was a very
real and substantial organization, just the right group to help them celebrate
great university teaching in Canada. And yet we weren’t too sure just what that
would mean. We were very familiar with the work of some of the best teachers
on our own campuses and knew there wouldn’t be any shortage of talent to cel-
ebrate.

At that time, most of the great teachers worked in isolation from their col-
leagues. Their success was something private, held closely by their students but
not something to be paraded or celebrated in front of their colleagues. We
began to speculate about what might happen if we gathered up ten such stellar
teachers and gave them an opportunity to compare notes. And more, what
might happen when they discovered like-minded passionate colleagues scat-
tered around the country. If we had a plan, it was just to explore these possibil-
ities.

3M Canada was convinced we were on the right track and sponsored the
first gathering at Montebello. We did a few things right that first year—the
venue was perfect and we found ten magnificent teachers. They were just the
master teachers 3M Canada was hoping to recognize—the kind of teachers that
you really want for your own son or daughter—the kind of teachers that change
students’ lives.

Each year thereafter, we tinkered with the details. We tried to fix what
wasn’t working well and refined the mechanics of the award. Some changes
were clearly positive (encouraging nominations from under-represented insti-
tutions and parts of the country, working in both French and English, encour-
aging more women to apply, giving better feedback to nominators). Other changes were quickly abandoned when they proved to be less useful. We worked hard to ensure that the selection process identified exactly the kinds of teachers we could all be proud of. In this, we clearly succeeded.

Over the first fifteen years of the program, I learned from all of the Fellows. When I teach today, their conversations, stories and anecdotes echo in my classroom.

Mostly I made some very good friends.
Dans les coulisses du comité de sélection

Aline Germain-Rutherford
Membre du comité de sélection, 2001-2004

PREMIERS CONTACS

 Dix-huit heures, à peine descendue du train en provenance d'Ottawa, je me précipite à l'hôtel où je vais faire la connaissance des autres membres du comité de sélection. Je suis à la fois curieuse et anxieuse. Serai-je à l'auteur de la tâche? “Ai-je bien assez lu, relu, et re-relu les vingt-six dossiers qui m'ont été envoyés il y a trois semaines? Mais comment expliquer, sans passer pour une demeurée dépourvue de tout sens critique, que j'ai trouvé tous les dossiers fabuleux et que selon moi ils méritent tous le prix? Je me rassure en me disant que je dispose encore de toute la soirée pour me replonger dans les dossiers et affiner mes commentaires. Illusion! Je n'ai pas encore reçu les clefs de ma chambre qu'Arshad Ahmad, en organisateur soucieux de garder tous les membres de son comité occupés, me lance en m'apercevant à la réception: “Rendez-vous avec les autres dans le hall d'entrée dans cinq minutes!”

Et c'est ainsi que s'annonce le rythme, effréné, du week-end de sélection.

LA “DURE” RÉALITÉ DE LA TÂCHE!

Arshad nous ouvre la porte de la salle qui sera notre refuge-prison pendant deux jours: pas de fenêtres, une longue table de bois clair, et des chaises qui, très vite, nous sembleront aussi dures que de la pierre pour le postérieur. Mais qu'importe, nous débordons d'énergie pour discuter des dossiers de ces merveilleux professeurs, leaders du monde de l'enseignement supérieur! “Et d'ailleurs, me dis-je, un dîner dans l'un de ces excellents restaurants montréalais nous récompensera bien de la peine que nous nous donnons pour commenter en détail les premiers dossiers.” Autre illusion perdue! Vers 21 heures, alors qu'il est désormais impossible à quiconque, même pas à notre “gentil organisateur,” d'ignorer la cacophonie des estomacs qui crient famine, Arshad annonce calmement: “Je descends commander des pizzas. Végétariennes? Double fromage? Café? Thé? Coca? Surtout ne vous en faites pas, je m'occupe de tout, vous pourrez continuer à travailler en mangeant!”

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MAIS TOUT N’EST PAS NOIR ...

... dans la vie des membres du comité de sélection. Découvrir au fil des pages la générosité, l’engagement et la passion des professeurs nominés ne peut que nous ressourcer et nous remplir d’optimisme au sujet de cette merveilleuse carrière. La lecture des lettres de soutien des étudiants nous offre maints témoignages concernant la profonde influence qu’un enseignant exemplaire peut avoir dans la vie de nombreux étudiants. L’ingénuité et la justesse des stratégies et des outils pédagogiques décrits dans les dossiers sont en soi une formation inoubliable pour l’enseignante que je suis et la conseillère pédagogique que je suis devenue.

Il y a aussi cette amitié et cette merveilleuse complicité qui se développent entre les membres du comité tout au long de ces deux journées de travail intensif, ponctuées de nombreuses discussions passionnées!

ARSHAD A ENFIN COMPRIS!


LES CHOIX SONT FAITS!

C’est avec une énergie renouvelée que nous attaquons la dernière journée de travail qui comporte la rédaction des textes portant sur les dix récipiendaires 3M de l’année. C’est une tâche longue et difficile, car comment résumer en quelques phrases percutantes, les réalisations de toute une carrière? Chacun est mis à contribution, qui pour son talent à faire des métaphores, qui pour sa conclusion, qui pour ses dispositions poétiques.

Une discussion sur la préparation et le déroulement de la cérémonie de remise des prix au prochain congrès annuel de la SAPES vient traditionnellement clore ce week-end de travail, nous plongeant à l’avance dans l’excitation du moment. Nous sommes maintenant tous impatients de connaître, en chair et en os, ces mystérieux candidats dont les dossiers n’ont pourtant plus aucun secret pour nous!

Une expérience sans pareille!

Mon arrivée dans le monde des formateurs en pédagogie universitaire s’est faite très tard, et presque par hasard, après plus de vingt ans comme professeur à l’université. Quand à ma découverte de la merveilleuse communauté des professeurs 3M, elle s’est faite, elle aussi, très tard alors que je venais tout
juste de prendre mes fonctions de directrice du Centre de pédagogie universitaire de l’Université d’Ottawa. Je ne remercierai jamais assez Arshad Ahmad, coordonnateur du prix 3M, et tous les membres du comité de sélection avec qui j’ai travaillé ces trois dernières années, pour m’avoir permis de partager avec eux des moments précieux lors des discussions passionnantes que nous avons eues sur la pédagogie universitaire, sur notre rôle d’enseignant et sur l’avenir de notre profession. C’est en grande partie à eux, et aux nombreux professeurs nominés dont j’ai eu l’honneur de lire les dossiers, que je dois ma formation et mon intégration dans le monde de la pédagogie universitaire. C’est une expérience que je souhaite à tout nouveau professeur et conseiller pédagogique: il n’y a pas meilleure école que le dialogue, même par dossier interposé, avec ces praticiens et ces leaders exemplaires!
Making it Worthwhile

Bente Roed
Selection Committee, 1994–1996

During the three years when I read, ranked and discussed nominations for the 3M Teaching Fellowship, only a single nomination package appeared as if it had been dusted off after being hauled out of the bottom drawer. All others were fresh and up-to-date and addressed the criteria. The selection committee read and ranked each nomination blind with the criteria in mind and without attention to anything else. We were looking for the best teachers.

The instructors whose dossiers we considered constituted a most diverse group. What united them was the passion for their students, their discipline, and their colleagues. It was heart-warming to read what they had accomplished, how they had done it in such creative and caring ways, and how they were continuing to provide leadership in their own individual and unique manner. They make it worthwhile for someone like me to be part of academe and to point proudly to their accomplishments.
Will Teachers Never Learn?

Christopher Knapper
2002 3M Teaching Fellow

A funny thing about university teaching is that although most of us have no formal preparation for the task, we have all been learners—in kindergarten, school, and university—and hence have a wonderful worm’s-eye view of just what good teachers do (and, even more important, what bad teachers do, and fail to do). Yet when we face our first university class, in our general panic to get through the hour, we generally abandon any self-insights we had managed to acquire in twenty years as students, and just teach as we have seen our own professors do, often with indifferent if not disastrous results.

I went to school in England, and on the whole loved it. I was a working class lad taught by teachers who had for the most part risen from the working class themselves. As a result they were empathetic and ambitious for their students. They badly wanted us to succeed as they had, and many of us did so. This was true both of my elementary and high school, and even at university (Sheffield) there was lots of encouragement for people with my background. In other words, I had some wonderful models as teachers. Why did it never occur to me to use them as examples for my own teaching?

FIRST STEPS
Although I had taught a few short non-credit courses in England, my first real university-level teaching took place when I arrived in Canada as a psychology instructor at the University of Saskatchewan in 1966. Predictably, I based my approach on the kinds of methods used in my own undergraduate career. This of course meant lectures, practicals (laboratories), and formal examinations. At Sheffield I had generally liked the labs because they involved interaction with other students and gave me some control over the learning task to be completed and the end product (written reports). Lectures I had found generally boring (but at least there were not many of them), and I could cope with exams only because I was a relatively good writer, which can make up for an awful paucity
of information. (I had worked as a part-time journalist at school and university, and at Sheffield I edited a literary magazine).

Before coming to Canada I had been told I would be teaching introductory psychology and had been sent the (daunting) textbook in advance. I assumed that there would be lectures, but had really no idea how to plan them. I managed to get through my first term only with the help and guidance of a very tolerant department head who started teaching the course for me and let me watch how he went about it until I felt comfortable.

I gradually became quite good at lecturing (or at least students rated the lectures positively on the annual evaluations), but the method left me generally dissatisfied, especially when I looked at what students wrote on their exams and could see that they often had a terrible conceptual understanding of the basic principles and methods of psychology. Nowadays I can see that I was encouraging surface-level learning, largely because the textbook and exams encouraged rote memorization rather than the processing of ideas. I knew very few students personally, but tried to overcome this by carefully planning the weekly seminars that were run by a team of teaching assistants. We had hugely enjoyable meetings at the start of each week, and at the end of term we held a communal exam-marking bee in which we enlivened the tedium of marking short-answer questions with reading aloud some of the more hilarious misunderstandings that students had submitted.

THE ROAD TO DAMASCUS

My teaching was generally successful, but I still struggled to encourage more interaction or activities in class and to find better approaches to assignments and exams. Then after about ten years teaching this way I had a major breakthrough. I was selected as part of a group of academics who went to Sweden to take part in a workshop on teaching sponsored by the Swedish National Board of Higher Education, which was one of the pioneers of educational development well before it became widespread in North America. The Board sponsored annual ten-day retreats in a beautiful rural setting in northern Sweden. Typically, a dozen or more Swedish academics from different universities would take part, but on this occasion a group of Canadians had been invited because the intention was to hold the event in English to improve the Swedes' language skills.

The retreat was run as a simulation, in which we played the role of the students and the leaders acted as teachers. The first few days we were subjected to very formal didactic teaching, with a prepared curriculum (the topic was European History), and at the end, a formal exam which produced great controversy and resistance and even some cheating! The second segment was advertised as "student-centred" learning (twenty years before Barr and Tagg!), and
we were simply given some topics, given access to a library and told to study by
ourselves. The results were more or less disastrous—at least for the Canadians.
In the final segment we were placed into small teams (with both Swedes and
Canadians on each team), and asked to explore some aspect of the local
regional culture. We were provided with modest funds and access to other
resources if we needed them (such as use of a car). For me this was undoubtedly
the most productive and rewarding learning I had engaged in for some time,
and our group threw ourselves into the task of finding out about the local folk
artists of the region. We also learned a good deal about each other in the
process, and about learning itself. I still have a reproduction of one of those folk
pictures on my bedroom wall, and looking at it never fails to bring back warm
memories of a wonderful learning experience. I also recall a few of my col-
leagues who were highly resistant to the whole notion of reflecting about teach-
ing, and who came away more than ever convinced that content is everything,
process nothing.

WHAT I THINK NOW
I would like to say that this immediately transformed my teaching, but of course
it did not. It took many years to digest the lessons of that experience and try to
incorporate them into my own teaching practice. Many other factors con-
tributed to my change from lecturing to an approach that emphasizes student
activity and student tasks, collaborative learning, and encouragement of
reflection about the learning process itself.

I still have not got it right, and have never taught a class where I am even
close to being satisfied that students have learned as much as I hoped they
would, but I do think I know what I want to achieve. Firstly, I am much less
interested in students acquiring subject-matter content than I am in their de-
hoping generic skills in thinking, independent work, teamwork, and self-assess-
ment. The most important skill a student can attain in university is gaining
insight into the learning process itself ("learning to learn"), or what has also
been described as lifelong and life-wide learning. In other words the process
of learning is at least as important as the content—though of course there has to be
content for students to engage in, or learning would be quite meaningless.

In practice, for me, this means trying to do less talking (though that is
difficult!), and to encourage activity around a set of focussed tasks or projects—
preferably ones that have some relevance and meaning for students. My job as
teacher and subject-matter expert is of course to plan the instruction, but also
to use all my powers of enthusiasm to engage students since if there is no
engagement there will be little learning. I am not a great believer in formal
examinations, since they seem to me to bear little resemblance to the variety of
tasks students will be asked to perform outside university. Hence I try to evalu-
ate student learning on the basis of some tangible product (a paper, a poster, a presentation), and I try to involve students in assessing the quality of their own work and commenting on the work of their peers, even though I do not relinquish my own ultimate responsibility for evaluation and grading.

TEACHING AS VALIDATING

Perhaps the most important element in teaching—sadly compromised these days in a context of increasing enrolments and large classes—is the personal interaction among students and between individual students and the teacher. It is, I suppose, possible to teach students without knowing anything of their lives, but it is much more meaningful if students and teacher can share experiences and find common ground among them. Some of the greatest rewards of teaching come after the event when former students get in touch to share aspects of their lives that in some way have been affected or stimulated by contact with a teacher. When I think back to the three or four teachers who have had the most influence on me (one in primary school, a couple in high school, one at university) I can recognize that they all had an important quality in common. It had nothing to do with brilliant lecturing or presentation skills, or even having a good sense of humour. Instead it was their willingness to listen to me and take what I had to say seriously—seriously enough to enter into a dialogue as they would with any adult. In doing this they validated my sense of worth and certainly helped my self-confidence and intellectual development. My hope is that I have done the same for at least some of my students.
My professor's amalgamation of undergraduate-level students into his research program is a testament to the success of his philosophy of making research a key part of the education of those who wish to pursue their scientific development. The results speak for themselves—an active, vigorous research program producing peer-reviewed papers co-authored and built on the foundation of work done by students who have had no previous research experience.

—Peter Mason

My favourite hobby is the equestrian sport, dressage. Simply put, it involves learning about the intricate nature of balance between rider and horse. In its true form, it is an art. Teaching too is an art.

—Lucy Cumyn

He has an incredible ability to communicate something that is simultaneously very serious and very funny.

—Bonnie Poon
Return to the “Sandbox”

Monika Schloder
1996 3M Teaching Fellow

During my childhood in Germany, ten or fifteen of us would meet daily after school at the neighborhood sandbox where we collectively created a variety of projects from castles to zoos. We shared and discussed different ideas, agreed and disagreed and decided which ideas to build on. Sometimes we worked silently. Sometimes the process was very dynamic and sometimes it was competitive as we voted for the best solutions. One of my favourite games was “add on” where we took an idea and everyone built on it to see what was going to be the final outcome. This process encourages creative and innovative thinking as well as critical analysis, all of which we children called play.

It is not surprising then, that I see education as a cooperative art in a setting where teachers and students develop a symbiotic and reciprocal relationship based on mutual respect and trust. The question is how do we achieve such a learning environment today? Given the “numbers game” affecting current classrooms, how can we ensure that all students are given an opportunity to express their thoughts in a critical and logical manner and to demonstrate the ability to seek creative solutions? In the course of my thirty-five years of university teaching, I have found the “Sandbox” approach to be an excellent teaching and management tool and one that enhances these goals.

I created a course at the University of Calgary called Peer Tutor Facilitation. Senior students, having passed a senior course in International Sport Perspectives with an A or B grade, act as facilitators and peer tutor/mentors for first-year students in Sport Sociology. They meet with me to plan the week’s lecture sessions and attend the classes.

The students in the first-year course (with an enrollment of about 150) work in small groups and are assigned issues and encouraged to think creatively. Plastic charts are attached to the classroom walls on which the group discussions are summarized. The peer tutors and I rotate among the groups, assisting and providing probing questions. I follow up with lectures and
PowerPoint presentations on the issues. Peer tutors present a series of mini-lectures and videos on selected topics. Presenting lectures, leading debates and producing videos are skills acquired in the course.

The students and peer tutors are very stimulated to learn, eager to discuss and to solve problems. They are engaged in more than just sitting and taking notes. The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. The "Sandbox" approach works for me.
The Syndrome

Gary Poole
1994 3M Teaching Fellow

I am a compulsive teacher. This might sound admirable, but it has its pros and cons. For example, if I am visiting a totally unfamiliar city and am approached by someone for directions, I will take out my map and direct the person. I don’t even want to think about some of the places I have sent people.

On the positive side, I have infinite patience as a teacher. When working with students, I can virtually guarantee that their patience will run out before mine does. In fact, I have made that promise to students.

This might be all fine and noble, but my compulsiveness has made it difficult at times for me to simply get out of the way and let people learn. Phrases like “Let me explain” or “Let me show you how to do that” can be the bane of my teaching existence.

People have let me be a compulsive teacher. Like being with a compulsive dishwasher, no one complains. Indeed, students have enabled my compulsion. They have thanked me for my explanations and demonstrations. They have returned for more of them, or for the same ones repeated because they were so passive the first time they didn’t actually learn anything. Because of this, when I have taught large classes, there has been a line of students outside my door during office hours. Colleagues were impressed. People were happy.

I was jarred out of this educational euphoria when I was introduced to the concepts of transformative learning. Ironically, it was a student who made the introduction. During a directed studies course, she brought in the work of Jack Mezirow. Most specifically, I was very taken by a 2 x 2 table that combines challenge and support. The theoretical claim is that the optimal combination for learning and growth is high challenge and high support. My compulsiveness ensured that I was providing high levels of support, but was I providing the challenge? According to transformative theory, high support and low challenge yields dependence. This was the last thing I wanted to engender in my students.

Clearly, I had to make changes or accept the reality that I was satisfying my teaching compulsion without optimizing student learning. So now I have a
life project. I ask more questions, I tolerate silence better, I pontificate less. As anyone who has tried to control a compulsion will tell you, it takes time. But I'm getting there. However, if you see me walking down a street carrying a map, don't ask me for directions.
A Few Good Days in the Classroom

Ron Marken
1987 3M Teaching Fellow

Almost forty years ago, I started teaching at the University of Saskatchewan. This morning, I asked myself, “What happens on a good day in the classroom?” My mind flooded with images.

One afternoon, I came into my senior modern poetry class and said, “Today you will read T.S. Eliot’s The Waste Land.” That’s all I said. Then I sat down in the front row, with my back to them. I waited for five, long, silent, shuffling minutes. Then a tentative voice murmured, “April is the cruellest month.” And their reading began. She read a stanza, then stopped. More empty silence. Then another voice. And another. Two drama students in the back row teamed up to read the dialogue in the “Game of Chess” section. A British-born student contributed the publican’s working-class accents. After thirty-five minutes, someone whispered, “Shantih Shantih Shantih,” and the poem was over. I stood up and walked out of the room without another word. In our next class, I could scarcely contain the students’ spontaneous outpourings about the poem. A year later, I tried the same strategy. It bombed.

A first-year group of engineering students, discussing Macbeth, was hived off into pairs to discuss how they, if they were directors, would cast and costume the play’s three witches. This was not a lesson plan, but a sudden hunch that grew out of seeing a recent production of the Scottish play. In that performance, one of the witches was young and beautiful—a startling and compelling vision of evil. But none of my first-years would have cast her in the role. Even more curious, all eighteen groups of two arrived, independently, at exactly the same requirements for their Weird Sisters: old, ugly, dirty, screechy, “with moles on their noses.” “Where in the play,” I asked, “did you find the nose moles?” All had found them in Walt Disney’s Snow White. That class turned into a serious examination of stereotypes, of the prejudices readers bring to even the most familiar texts.

I remember the time in the seventies when a group of twenty-eight maximum-security convicts in the Prince Albert Penitentiary told me to “Go to hell!”
when I asked them to comment on a recording of King Lear I had just played. A week later, I learned that their response was meant to shut me up—not because they hated the play but to prevent me from spoiling the powerful emotions the recording had awakened in them. Two weeks later, when we left Lear behind, I asked, “Which author on the syllabus would you like to study next?” “More Shakespeare,” was the immediate and unanimous answer. I have never heard that sentence uttered in a classroom before or since that day. We left the syllabus and danced into As You Like It.

Once I came absentmindedly to a first-year class assuming that the students had copies of a certain poem with them. They had assumed I would supply copies, since the poem was not in their texts. There we were, scheduled to study a poem they did not have. So I started to write the entire Thomas Hardy poem on the board, beginning with the title: “Proud Songsters.” Then a dim question formed in my absent mind. “Looking at the title, can you anticipate what the poem is going to be about? What do you expect?” I asked. Their answers started off as a discussion about “proud,” and “pride,” about archaic diction (“songsters”), about titles, and about music. Then I wrote the first line. They read it aloud together, noting rhythms, sound effects, and meanings. I asked them to predict the meter of the second line. Six of them got it exactly right. “Proud Songsters” is twelve lines long, and, proceeding line by line this way, the students’ attention remained so intent and focused that they were able to write two and a half of the last six lines almost word for word before seeing what the poet had written. That day, I learned a potent new technique for teaching short poems.

One spring, I taught an introductory English class to a group of fifteen Cree and Dene students in La Ronge, Saskatchewan. The syllabus included works by writers you might expect: Shakespeare, John Donne, Gerard Manley Hopkins, Andrew Marvell, Robert Frost, Margaret Laurence, and Sheila Watson. Among those books was the Irish play by Brian Friel, the famed Translations. It was the first book we studied and to this day I do not know why I even assigned it. A difficult work, Translations appears to demand familiarity with Irish history, not to mention nineteenth-century Irish peasant life, marginalized agrarian economics, and George Steiner’s philosophy of language. My students had none of these prerequisites. Many had never so much as seen a live play on a stage. For them, reading Friel on the cold page was so puzzling that when I asked even the simplest plot or character questions they looked at me blankly. So, in one of those moments of frustration, I set up chairs at the front of the room, arbitrarily assigned speaking roles, sat the “characters” in the chairs, and asked them to start reading. They became actors on stage, not watchers in the audience.

At first, there was a good deal of confusion, giggling, and predictable
self-consciousness, but, before long, they began to enjoy themselves, noting differences in character, sensing basic motivations, and discovering humour. The play was there now, and, more important, it was theirs—out loud, oral. As the students entered into their roles with increasing enjoyment, Friel's Latin and Greek passages came out sounding soft and rich, like Cree. Irish names took on a northern Saskatchewan flavour: "Seamus" became "Sēe-a-moos"; "Maire," "Mah-éer-ah"; "Hugh," "Hoog." When that rehearsed reading was over, the tall grandson of a chief announced, "This is the first book I've respected that's been written by a white man." Brian Friel has seldom received higher praise. And that day Translations helped shape the students' awareness of colonization. In another student's words, "That Irish guy, he understands what happens when you steal people's land, names, and language."

What do these few anecdotes have in common? I see two things, and when both are present I know I could be having a good day in the classroom—or a colossal disaster. The first element is risk. When I leave my notes behind, get in front of the lectern, or sit down among the students, I run the risk of "missing the point," "getting off topic," "digressing," or "wasting time." But I know just as surely that there is gold in those hills. It is worth leaving the trail to look for it. To alter the metaphor, there is as much value in dwelling upon the splendour of a single sunflower as there might be in racing past ten golden acres at 100 km/h. I like what Pat Rogers once said, "Coverage is a virtue only in house paint." The second element is selfishness: when I am having a good day, I am also learning something myself, something I did not expect to learn. Instead of filling empty vessels from the limited quantities of my knowledge, I am allowed to learn along with them, letting the students and the literature collide creatively. And watching the sparks fly.
Breaking All the Rules

Richard Butler
2002 3M Teaching Fellow

From grade school to now, I have been and continue to be unable to learn by reading alone. While not disputing the utility of the written word, I have to think in pictures (Temple Grandin, Thinking in Pictures) if I am to understand anything. I often think that this is the gift that anatomists have. Through graduate school and the early years in my academic career, I assumed that all students needed to think in pictures as well and this is still the approach I take. They build their own images that have meaning for them in their own minds. I am amazed at how well students respond and the level of fundamental understanding they achieve. Who among us has not asked a class "Have you already covered this?" and had the answer, "Yes," refuted by a fundamental lack of understanding?

After thirty years in the academy, I know what my job is—to get students to look and think. After thirty years of teaching, I am very confident that most undergraduates can do neither. As Richard Feynman observed, "...I finally figured out that the students had memorized everything, but they didn't know what anything meant" and I think this is universal. So then, what's the use of subject content if students don't really understand what it means? The answer, of course, is "no use." In my classes, the subject matter has now become merely the frame on which the exercises of looking and thinking are stretched. The ability to really look at and think about a subject is much more important than transient attention paid to huge volumes of memorized information. At the university level students finally get involved rather than experiencing grade fifteen.

How do students think? The following is from a letter written by Jody Powers, a former student:

Despite having heard raves about Dr. Butler, I really had no idea what I was in store for as I rushed to my first class last semester. I had no idea what he would open my mind to in only four short months. I had no idea such a drastic improvement could be made in the way I process thought.
There was no text assigned to Dr. Butler’s class. This was a little unsettling at first. About eight different texts had been put on reserve in the library, so that we might find the one that presented concepts in a manner that best appealed to our personal style of learning. While it may seem obvious that different styles of writing would appeal to different students, this was the first time I had ever seen a professor make such accommodations.

There was no detailed lecture. While he did have a schedule of how many lectures would be spent on each topic, the direction the discussion took was largely dependent on where our questions and ideas directed it. This was perhaps the most awesome element of Dr. Butler’s teaching style, which even drew other professors to his classes to observe. To approach problems without there necessarily being a right or wrong answer waiting for us, yet to be confident in our answer simply through the logical manner it was arrived at.

Yet another facet of Dr. Butler’s effective approach to teaching arose when we discussed the first test. He explained that his tests did not have an “answer key.” In fact, his questions were not awaiting a specific answer; they were rather inviting us to use our acquired knowledge and to apply it. In essence, to think. There is no way you could predict the questions that would be asked, and furthermore, no expectations as to how you might answer.

No assigned text. No specific lecture outline followed. No marking key for exam or tests. No expectations other than to show original and logical thought. Dr. Butler seemingly broke all the rules followed by most professors and in doing so, we students broke out of our usual approach to education. Instead of gearing my studying and test answers to what I thought my professor was looking for, I found myself simply reading all that I could so that I would be well equipped to seek out my own answers.

In this sense, Dr. Butler gave us ownership over our education.
Donnez-leur seulement un point d’appui ...

*Claude Lamontagne*
2003 3M Teaching Fellow

Qui se résigne à chercher des preuves d’une chose à laquelle il ne croit pas ou dont la prédication ne l’intéresse pas?

—Jorge Jorge Jui Jorge

La signification profonde des structures réside tout entière dans leur genèse.

—Canon piagétien

La “philosophie pédagogique” que je défends semble m’avoir habité de tout temps, ce qui explique probablement pourquoi j’en ai cherché l’origine dans mon milieu familial. Je suis maintenant persuadé d’avoir retrouvé sa trace émouvante dans le sourire qui brillait dans les yeux de ma mère, ce sourire infiniment complice qui respirait une absolue foi en moi. Une foi que rien, jamais, ne parvint à ébranler, pas même le cinglant “le p’tit Claude, vous ne ferez jamais rien de bon avec ça!” que lui avaient servi les sœurs de la Charité de l’école Saint-Louis-de-Gonzague à Québec quand elles annoncèrent à ma mère que je redoublais ma troisième année, et qui n’a filtré jusqu’à moi qu’une fois adulte, une fois immunisé contre son impact néfaste possible. Mes souvenirs de l’école Saint-Louis-de-Gonzague en font un lieu où les objets de foi privilégiés n’étaient pas, comme à la maison, les enfants, mais bien *Le petit tatéchisme* et la grammaire française: difficile de ne pas voir mon expérience d’écolier comme le premier contact avec l’adversaire qu’allait devenir l’enseignement-centré-sur-la-matière-à-apprendre.

Après les affres du primaire à Saint-Louis-de-Gonzague, ce furent les délices du cours classique—qui comprenait les niveaux secondaire et collégial—au Collège des Jésuites. Mes dispositions initiales à assurer ma survie en
façant étalage de ma parfaite maîtrise du Petit catéchisme donnèrent lieu, dans le regard de mon premier maître jésuite, à ce nouveau type de sourire qui allait prolonger celui de ma mère... "Ici, tu sais, tu peux parfaitement te déclarer athée... seulement... tu devras défendre ta position." Moi? Défendre ma position? Difficile de ne pas voir mon expérience au Collège des Jésuites comme le premier contact avec l'allié qu'allait devenir le principe de l'enseignement-centré-sur-la-résistance-bienveillante, pierre angulaire de la manière dont je comprends maintenant la pédagogie-centrée-sur-l'apprenant. Si je vois la période de mes études classiques au Collège des Jésuites comme celle où se sont élaborées à mon insu, les bases de ma profonde opposition entre la pédagogie-centrée-sur-la-matière-à-apprendre et la pédagogie-centrée-sur-l'apprenant, je vois l'étape suivante, celle de mon baccalauréat en psychologie à l'Université Laval, comme celle des premières prises de conscience explicites de cette opposition. C'est qu'au moment où j'attendais, bien naïvement, de l'université une sagesse pédagogique toute jésuitique, déployée sur un nouveau plan, supérieur, à la fois plus mobilisant et plus libérateur, il s'avéra que cette université n'avait essentiellement à m'offrir qu'un retour à peine déguisé dans l'univers de Saint-Louis-de-Gonzague. J'y eus pour lot piles de manuels de cours à apprendre par cœur, et séries de monologues "magistraux" qui, la plupart du temps, lorsqu'ils ne paraphrasaient pas les manuels, les reprenaient mot pour mot.

L'idée de l'apprenant comme moteur de son apprentissage semblait absente du paysage pédagogique. Heureusement, les huit années de saine pédagogie dont je venais de bénéficier avaient suffi à mettre mon esprit au monde. Je pus facilement simuler le conformisme tout en me nourrissant des occasions de résistance que le milieu pouvait accidentellement offrir. Une de ces occasions, qui s'avéra particulièrement déterminante, prit la forme d'une série de visites de Seymour Papert, un chercheur du MIT. Ce que je compris de son message était simple, mais... bouleversant: pour qu'une réponse ait un sens, ne faut-il pas qu'il y ait d'abord une question qui ait un sens? Avec le questionnement de Papert, s'amorça la seconde phase de ma vie intellectuelle qui devait finalement me conduire, à ma grande surprise ainsi qu'à mon complet ravissement, à la découverte d'arguments éminemment rationnels, tant scientifiques que philosophiques, quant au bien-fondé de mes intuitions. Ces arguments confortaient ma tendance instinctive à louer les vertus éducatives de la pédagogie-centrée-sur-l'apprenant, cette pédagogie fondée sur la question, et à dénoncer les vices cachés de la pédagogie-centrée-sur-la-matière-à-apprendre, cette pédagogie fondée sur la réponse.

Ces arguments se profilèrent tout d'abord en réponse à la question que j'avais choisie pour sujet de thèse de doctorat. J'étais inscrit à l'École d'informatique et d'intelligence artificielle de l'Université d'Édimbourg, en Écosse, tout à l'euphorie d'avoir découvert un milieu universitaire à la hauteur de mes espoirs.
 Là-bas, je retrouvais la sagesse pédagogique du centré-sur-la-résistance-bienveillante de mes maîtres jésuites. À la question “Comment un cerveau peut-il permettre la perception du monde?”, formulée dans le contexte général du canon méthodologique central de l'intelligence artificielle—à savoir l'implantabilité informatique, ou computationnelle, de toute réponse éventuelle—ne tarda pas à s'imposer une réponse étonnante: “Tout ce qu’un cerveau perceptuel, en tant que mécanique computationnelle, peut faire, c’est offrir un ensemble de constellations catégorielles hypothétiques quant à la Réalité.” Cette cristallisation était encore toute fraîche lorsque je découvris Karl Popper. Le délic un immédiat, et le propos poppérien précipita une reformulation généralisatrice de ma problématique et de la réponse qui s’était imposée. Cerveau devenait esprit, et perception devenait connaissance, la question devenant: “Comment un esprit peut-il permettre la connaissance du monde?” La réponse, où le terme de mécanique inductive remplaçait, en le précisant, celui de mécanique computationnelle, devenait alors: “Tout ce qu’un esprit, en tant que mécanique inductive, peut faire, c’est offrir un ensemble de constellations catégorielles hypothétiques quant à la Réalité,” réduisant toute forme d’espoir d’acquisition de nouvelle connaissance au potentiel réfutatoire de cette inatteignable Réalité, c’est-à-dire à son potentiel de résistance devant nos hypothèses!

Éminemment sympathique à mes intuitions initiales en la matière, la portée dévastatrice de ces réalisations relativement à toute tentative de légitimation rationnelle de la norme que constituait toujours la pédagogie-centrée-sur-la-matière à apprendre ne tarda pas à s’imposer à mes yeux de nouveau professeur.

Je me souviens très bien de mon premier regard sur ce groupe de garçons et de filles du département de psychologie de l’Université du Québec à Montréal, ma classe, ma toute première classe. C’était en septembre 1975, je descendais à peine de l’avion, ayant réussi à déposer ma thèse l’avant-veille. Je me souviens très bien de mon point de vue d’alors, celui de l’ancien étudiant déçu, plutôt que celui du nouveau professeur, et je me souviens d’avoir scruté leurs regards, y cherchant cet espoir qui m’avait toujours animé de se voir enfin permettre d’être. Je me souviens très bien comment cette force irrésistible issue de mes nouvelles convictions épistémologiques monta en moi comme une vague qui déferla jusqu’à mes lèvres, y déposant un sourire qui n’allait plus me quitter, le sourire de celui qui se sent la force de permettre à l’autre d’être! De ce sourire, sortirent les premières formulations des consignes “révolutionnaires” qui sont toujours en vigueur, plus d’un quart de siècle plus tard, dans mon “enseignement.”

Il n’y a pas de manuel obligatoire, en fait je vous défends de lire autre chose que ce que vous allez vous-même écrire en réponse au questionnement
que je vais tenter de provoquer en vous et, en classe, je vous suggère de résister à la tentation de prendre des notes. Je préfère que vous me regardiez ... j'ai besoin du contact avec vos yeux pour me guider dans la résistance que je veux vous offrir, car c'est tout ce que je pense qu'un enseignement authentique peut offrir de la résistance ... un point d'appui ... pour vous permettre de soulever le monde!

Je me souviens très bien de l'éclat de surprise et de désarroi que ces consignes firent apparaître au creux des regards curieusement attentifs. Une réaction fidèle au rendez-vous depuis, aussi fidèle que sa transformation, chez une majorité toujours grandissante, en éveil progressif à leur infinie puissance d'apprenant, à leur infinie légitimité d'avoir foi en soi, métamorphosant l'éclat de surprise et de désarroi de leur regard en un brillant éclat de reconnaissance.

Cet éclat de reconnaissance, répercuté sur plusieurs générations d'étudiants de tous les niveaux universitaires, irradié de tous ses feux en un trésor aussi fabuleux que difficile à transcender dans la poursuite de ce qui s'est progressivement imposé à mon esprit comme l'objectif ultime de l'acte pédagogique: la transparence totale! Car la reconnaissance, aussi douce soit-elle à l'âme qui se la voit offrir, ne représente-t-elle pas cette portion du processus d'apprentissage que n'a pas pu s'approprier l'apprenant? Tout comme "la colombe légère" de Kant, "qui, dans son libre vol, fend l'air dont elle sent la résistance" et qui "pourrait s'imaginer qu'un espace vide d'air lui conviendrait mieux encore," l'apprenant ne doit-il pas d'abord, pour développer la force lui permettant d'atteindre les hauteurs vertigineuses de l'autocritique et de la découverte de la nécessaire interdépendance de l'altérité et de l'ipséité, être convaincu de sa toute-puissance? N'était-ce pas cette profonde conviction de la nocivité d'une humilité de l'impuissance qu'affirmait l'absolue confiance qui brillait dans le regard de ma mère? C'est ce que je crois et ce qui me porte irrésistiblement à tenter d'être, par tous les moyens dont je dispose en tant que professeur, cette résistance aérienne qui, sans en avoir "l'air," permet à l'apprenant de prendre son envol.

Donnez-leur seulement un point d'appui ... et ils soulèveront le monde!
I hope that my students have already and could in the future provide testimony to the differences I might have made in their lives and their learning. In this piece I would like to acknowledge some of the people and ideas that have had a significant impact on my own learning and on the way I think about my work as a teacher. While I take pride in the recognition of my achievements as a teacher, I now think of my role as a learning professional; that is, one who is continuing to work at developing his knowledge and skill at promoting learning—my students’ as well as my own.

During a recent four-year appointment in Hong Kong I met John Biggs, a psychologist and educator and the author of Teaching for Quality Learning at University: What the Student Does. At the beginning of his book, he captures the change in my own thinking about teaching with a wonderful quotation from T. J. Schuell:

If students are to learn desired outcomes in a reasonably effective manner, then the teacher's fundamental task is to get the students to engage in learning activities that are likely to result in their achieving those outcomes .... It is helpful to remember that what the student does is actually more important in determining what is learned than what the teacher does.

Biggs is not alone in his focus on the student and the need for a more “constructive alignment” of learning goals, teaching methods and assessment. Barr and Tagg in their 1995 article in Change Magazine described the shift from a teaching-centered paradigm to a learning-centered paradigm. If our focus is on our students’ learning, we need to change the questions we ask ourselves about the curriculum (What do we want students to learn? What skills, competencies, and attitudes?), teaching (How should we design the learning environment—in
class and outside of class—to produce the learning outcomes we desire?) and assessment (Does our assessment support and improve student learning?).

The recent efforts by the Carnegie Foundation, as well as by others, to promote the scholarship of teaching (and learning—which was added later) reflect the growing concern that we don’t pay enough attention to undergraduate teaching (and learning!). One of their strategies to help faculty develop a scholarly project on teaching/learning is asking them to identify a concept or topic in their discipline which their students have particular difficulty learning. Our training as researchers in our discipline has not prepared us to do research on how our students learn our discipline. Even if (when) our institutions recognize the scholarship of teaching and learning, we still have to become more knowledgeable (scholarly) about learning and about how to do research on learning before we are in a position to be able to contribute to that scholarship.

Donald Schön in The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action and Educating the Reflective Practitioner provides numerous examples of what and how we can learn from carefully examining our practice. His work with Chris Argyris in Theory in Practice: Increasing Professional Effectiveness provides concepts (espoused theory and theory-in-use, single-loop and double-loop learning, etc.), which have informed my own reflection on my practice and helped me to identify ways in which I have limited both my effectiveness and my ability to become more effective.

Many people have made significant contributions to our understanding of human learning (Bloom’s taxonomies, Kolb’s learning styles, Knowles’ andragogy (the art and science of teaching adults), Myers-Briggs psychological types, etc.), but the most inspiring work for me goes beyond education as information and considers it as transformation. Robert Kegan, a developmental psychologist, in his book In Over Our Heads: The Mental Demands of Modern Life describes human development and its challenges in our private lives (parenting and partnering) and in public areas such as work, dealing with difference, and healing. In his section on learning he emphasizes the need to understand the learner by a quotation from Kierkegaard:

If real success is to attend the effort to bring a person to a finite position, one must first take pains to find him where he is and begin there. This is the secret of helping others .... In order to help another effectively I must understand what he understands. If I do not know that, my greater understanding will be of no help to him .... Instruction begins when you put yourself in his place so that you may understand what he understands and in the way he understands it. (emphasis added.)
My hope is that more of us will be able to find campus communities that will encourage, support and sustain our transformation into learning professionals.
Using Study Aides in Exam Writing—
Lessons Learned from Practice

Maureen Connolly
2003 3M Teaching Fellow

About six years ago, I decided that the exam agony which accompanied each semester was not an experience I wished to continue, my Catholic upbringing notwithstanding. Agony for agony's sake is poor fuel for positive transformative pedagogy, and so I embarked on the adventure of the "cheat sheet" or "study aide," as my institution calls it, which could be prepared ahead of time and brought into the exam with the student.

I remind students that creating a cheat sheet is as much a study practice as it is an exam assist. I have been doing teaching and learning research on these cheat sheets ever since.

Research of this type does require an internal ethics approval and provision for an informed consent form, so that students know that various pieces of their course assignments will be used for my research. Students remain anonymous. The only information transferred to the cheat sheet is gender and year code and the grades on various exam questions plus a letter-number combination to keep each sheet distinct. Sheets are not coded or analyzed until the final grades for the courses have been submitted. Only I and my research assistants handle the materials and exams are shredded within one year.

The types of analyses that can be done on cheat sheets run from literal, content-based bean counting to critical, semiotic poststructural inquiry. I have done comparisons of correct answers on cheat sheets and incorrect exam responses; categorizations of types of knowledge; similarities across study groups; subject matter; font size; use of graphics, charts and mind maps and colour; organization; and how students establish priority material.

Rather than report on the studies, I will present five insights from the past six years which allow me to be absolutely confident in encouraging and continuing this strategy of exam preparation, regardless of the subject matter.

First, students report feeling less anxious by virtue of having read and re-
read the course material, selecting what they felt they needed, and being able to have it with them at the exam.

Second, course material actually does get read. Third, no one seems to be disadvantaged because of the cheat sheet strategy. The “good” students enjoy the organization of material they feel less confident about. The less enthusiastic participants do read the priority material and are able to practise organizing their thoughts. Fourth, the overall grade results seem unaffected. The preparation is what is actually important, since many students do not seem to refer to their cheat sheet during the exam.

Fifth, I see not only what is considered relevant course material, but how students organize and categorize it. This is invaluable for me since I can refine and revise the course for future students.
Sharing the Teaching, Sharing the Learning

Robert Hawkes
1988 3M Teaching Fellow

When most of us think of university teaching and learning, settings such as lecture halls, teaching laboratories, and seminar rooms come first to mind. However, I would like to argue that undergraduate research experiences offer the most fertile ground for meaningful, long-lasting, and potentially life-changing learning. It is here that the learning is most active, creative, student-directed, interdisciplinary, collaborative, discovery-based, experiential and open-ended.

The Boyer Commission prescribed “Make Research Based Learning the Standard” as the first of ten ways to improve undergraduate education. In a recent article on physics teaching, Rowat argues that undergraduate research experiences offer an effective way for students to see that the subjects we teach, whether they be English Literature or Physics, are products of human creativity.

When I first began my university teaching career, I mistakenly thought that I had an obligation to be an expert in all aspects of the research. Fortunately, I quickly discovered that the student working with me knew far more than I ever could about computational aspects of our project that summer. A true collaboration, in which the student and the faculty member bring certain areas of expertise to the problem, leads to a far better learning environment. Just as too didactic an approach stifles learning in our lecture halls, faculty must not be over directive in the research laboratory. The history of science is full of stories of discoveries made because student researchers or research assistants took the liberty of following paths other than those suggested by a supervisor.

Student researchers should play important roles in defining and modifying the research problem, brainstorming potential approaches, considering all aspects of data collection and analysis, and communicating the research results both in the form of written papers and conference presentations. I call this sharing the learning (or sharing the research). This does not mean, of course,
that the faculty and student researchers will play equal roles in each of these aspects. Lopatto has recently summarized some of the points characterizing an effective undergraduate research experience.

Of course research experiences are not the only ways to integrate research into the undergraduate curriculum. Courses can be taught with problem-based learning and inquiry-based approaches. Components of courses can integrate research skills through projects and other collaborative, independent approaches.

If we should share our learning (research labs), then we should also share our teaching (classrooms). We all learn best when we teach, and to the degree possible we should provide opportunities in our classes for students to learn by teaching. In our experiential physics approach at Mount Allison, we have replaced a lecture+lab approach with integrated collaborative learning experiences taught within a laboratory setting. While there are many components which work together for the success of this program, in my opinion the most important is that students in their collaborative groups have frequent opportunities each class to discuss problems, experiments and concepts. Through this collaboration students interweave teaching and learning.

Of course we can, and should, involve our students in other ways in teaching during their undergraduate experience. The most direct means is through employment as undergraduate teaching assistants. Our conversion to experiential physics has placed new challenges on our undergraduate teaching assistants, and the success of our program is in no small part due to their skill and enthusiasm as teachers. We offer periodic workshops on teaching topics, and a certificate program to recognize competence in teaching assistant work. Just as in the research lab, the more that the faculty member and the teaching assistants can be colleagues, the more successful will be the learning environment. There will be some aspects of the teaching that the student teaching assistant will be more skilled in (for example they have a conceptual base closer to that of the students, and as a result may be able to find a more effective explanation for a difficult concept), while in others the deeper subject experience of the faculty member will be important.

Other experiments in student teaching have included student teaching in classes. In these, we do a disservice to our students if we encourage or accept didactic modes of presentation when we truly believe that interactive modes of instruction are more effective. I suggest that when we have student "seminars," we should ask students to consider (and state) learning objectives for the class, and how they will make the learning interactive.

The way our collaborative learning classes work is that groups raise their hands if they need assistance from the professor or student teaching assistants. Sometimes the groups are happily making progress and a number of minutes
go by without anyone asking for help. I sometimes joke at these times, “Does anyone need any help, I am feeling useless.” Of course, upon reflection, I guess that should be our goal as university teachers: to become unnecessary so that our students can learn fully without us. I would argue that key avenues to this ultimate goal are to share, truly share, both our classrooms and our undergraduate research laboratories.
Nancy stared unflinchingly into my eyes. She knew I was nervous. I felt her hand touch my sleeve, nudging me toward a chair draped in a clean white sheet. "Sit here," she said. My eyes studied her face and hands and I realized it was impossible to figure out how old this woman was. Folded in wrinkles, a bone-white braid hanging to her waist, the backs of her hands ropey with veins, Nancy seemed timeless to me, as if the number of her years was beyond counting. Her clear gaze met mine. "This will be an important afternoon in your life," she said to me. "We will talk about your past, present and future in ways you never have before."

Theresa, my student, waved a book at me, smiled and said, "See you later, Clarissa." Then she disappeared out Nancy's front door and I was alone with a stranger, standing on the raw edge of my trust.

Theresa had told me en route to Nancy's, a journey that took three hours, that she would wait for me while I spent time with her friend. She said she had a book and a pillow and would be fine under Nancy's willow tree. I saw the massive willow tree when we drove up. It dwarfed Nancy's small hut of corrugated metal. Located close to a tangle of railroad tracks and guarded by a large yellow Lab, Nancy's property looked more like a movie set than an actual home.

All Theresa had said to me when she offered this meeting as a special thank you for my teaching was that she wanted to introduce me to the most important person in her life. She said Nancy had special powers, knew things other people didn't know, could see into other worlds. "You are the first teacher or supervisor who has believed in me. I'm used to being told my ideas are crazy. Because your course was the best experience I've ever had, I must do something that matches my appreciation. And that's introducing you to Nancy." She had gone on to say she wouldn't say more about Nan because she didn't want to ruin my experience.

On the way, Theresa and I talked about her life with her husband and teenaged children in the small town where she lived, her plans for the future
when she finished her Bachelor of Science in Nursing, and what it was like for her to attend university after being out of school for so many years. When Theresa turned off the highway onto a dirt road, I asked, "What have you told Nancy about me?"

She laughed. "I don't know much about you, Clarissa. She knows that I am bringing my teacher to her, that's all. All I really know about your personal life is that you have two sons." This was by far the oddest thank-you gift I had ever received.

During the winter, Theresa had taken a course from me on conceptual frameworks used in nursing practice. The primary assignment for students was to articulate in writing their beliefs about their practice, test these in a clinical setting, and write a paper that critiqued this experience, including literature written by others that supported these beliefs. All twenty-five students were experienced practitioners who were back at school earning their baccalaureate degree.

She had told me when she turned in her paper about her beliefs that it would be fine if I didn't let her practise what she believed. "I'm used to it," she said, "so just tell me what I'm supposed to believe and I'll do that instead." I was intrigued. Theresa's paper revealed that she believed healing happened through touch, the full presence and intense listening of the nurse, and through encouraging the patient's description of the experience of being ill. I could see why her practice made people nervous and knew I would have difficulty finding a clinical placement for this student. In a world increasingly pressured to use health care resources efficiently and focused on obvious quick results, Theresa's practice, in addition to being seen as weird, would be considered a poor investment. I knew, however, that there were others who shared her beliefs. There was nothing in her paper that seemed dangerous or unethical to me, so I approved it.

It took many calls to find a clinical facility willing to offer her a place to practise what she believed. The only facility that welcomed her, albeit cautiously, was a care home for very old seniors, most of whom were seriously compromised and without visitors. "Oh, thanks!" she said when I told her. "I'm impressed you found anyone who would take me on. But, see what I mean?"

Over the next few months, Theresa worked with several very old people, putting her beliefs into action and documenting what happened. I met with her weekly to talk about her experiences, to encourage her and steer her toward literature that would help her with her second paper. She needed to read about others who shared similar beliefs. While Theresa's hand floated above wrinkled backs and hands, her soft voice gently coaxing, her ears turned intently toward tired creaky voices, the care home staff paid an uncomfortable amount of attention. One morning three weeks after she began, Theresa accompanied a
shuffling ninety-three-year-old woman into the day room, a woman who had not walked since her entry into the facility. “She did this with magic hands!” said the woman, her face bright with pride. “And she didn’t poke or prod! Look at me, I’m walking again!” The staff stared, incredulous. Not long after, another of Theresa’s patients, a ninety-six-year-old man who was considered deaf and silent, began to converse with other residents. “How did you do that by just sitting there?” asked other nurses.

Theresa’s final paper revealed the thoughts of a reflective, mature woman who had put long-held beliefs into action, and a beginning scholar who had read about others who also used therapeutic touch, presence and witnessing to foster healing and health. As I read the last page, I saw a card clipped to her folder. It read: “I entered this course wondering if I was crazy for my beliefs about the essence of care. That’s what I’ve been told for years. I leave validated, curious and eager to study more. This has been the best learning experience of my life and I need to thank you. As thanks, please let me take you to meet someone deeply special, my friend and my guide.”
Does a 3M Teaching Fellowship Make a Difference? A Personal Account

Clarke W. Thomson
1989 3M Teaching Fellow

For me, 1989 had to be the most rewarding year in a long career of university teaching. In the spring of that year I received the Alumni Award for Excellence in Teaching which, at that time, was the only award for teaching at Brock University. In the fall of 1989, I was awarded one of the prized national 3M Teaching Fellowships. The stress of all the long hours of preparation and marking, and the effort over many years that I had put into trying to become a better teacher and to promote teaching at Brock, were almost wiped away by the euphoria and warm feelings that filled my mind.

I say "almost" because I had gone through the process of applying for promotion to the rank of Professor several years earlier and was painfully aware that, when push came to shove, teaching counted for little. Despite what I thought was a very solid dossier of success as a university teacher, backed by publication of a three-year research project, the reviewing committee concluded that my teaching credentials were not good enough to offset what they considered to be "weaknesses in scholarly activity."

So, after the announcement of my 3M award, when several colleagues suggested I reapply for promotion, I declined. But in November of that year I was approached by the chair of the Brock University Faculty Association (BUFA) who informed me that the association wanted me to apply for promotion. At first I refused, but he persisted and added two arguments that caused me to reconsider. The first was that if I did not apply on the basis of earning a nationally recognized award, I would be doing a disservice to any faculty member who might, in the future, want to use one or more teaching awards as criteria for promotion and/or tenure. And, second, this time I would have the full support of BUFA, not only in preparing my submission but also to the extent that if the promotion was rejected by the university, the association would file a grievance and provide the necessary resources to argue an appeal. Almost reluctantly, I agreed to try one more time.
Using arguments similar to those used in my earlier hearing, the committee in charge of promotions turned down my application. However, this time the matter did not end at that stage. True to their word, BUEA filed a formal grievance and obtained agreement from the university administration for an appeal before a committee of peers, where the results would be binding on all parties. Thanks to their efforts, including providing a brilliant advocate to argue my case, the appeal received majority consent and I was promoted to the rank of Professor.

Now the point of this story is not to describe my “great victory,” but the background is important in answering the question of how significant the 3M Teaching Fellowship can be.

I received numerous phone calls and notes from faculty who stated that my promotion gave them an added impetus to continue their own efforts to improve their teaching skills and to think seriously, rather than simply dream about using teaching as the important criterion for promotion. More telling, I think, was the fact that within a month of the formal announcement of my promotion, I was approached by the dean of another faculty to enquire how he could get an outstanding teacher from that faculty promoted to Professor. It is also fair to say that the whole process helped raise the status of teaching within the university.

What began in 1988 as the Office of Teaching and Learning staffed by one part-time executive assistant and one faculty member who served as director in his spare time, has evolved into the Centre for Teaching, Learning and Educational Technologies, staffed by four full-time employees, a part-time assistant, plus a full-time faculty Director. Representatives of the Centre now sit on the Senate Committee for Teaching and Research which is responsible for making recommendations to the administration on matters affecting teaching throughout the university.

I rest my case.
The Singing Professor

Lindsay Kings

(Vancouver Sun Observer, Saturday, July 5, 2003, excerpts reprinted with permission)

Victoria—It's a sunny Friday morning at the Oak Bay Beach Hotel and the man voted a favorite professor by this year's graduating class at Harvard University seems happy to be home. Brian Little, sixty-two (1995 3M Teaching Fellow, Carleton University), will be wearing a sweltering, blue and gold doctoral gown later in the day for his class reunion at the University of Victoria. But right now the former Empress Hotel page boy looks cool and relaxed in shorts and a golf shirt, a patio umbrella overhead, the ocean stretching out behind him.

"This is home," he says. "It really is home." He grew up just steps from here in the house his father built with his own hands—"everything except the electrical work"—the house where his family gathered around the piano each night, singing and laughing.

It was there, perhaps, that the young performer first emerged. Brian Little, boy soprano, began singing on stage at age two and, even though puberty eventually stole his voice and left him with an "utterly mediocre baritone," he's still wooing university crowds all these years later.

Last year, seventy undergraduates took his course and gave him a perfect 5.0 rating.

"The topic that I teach is personality psychology," Little says. "It's very hard not to be a good teacher of that, because it's so intrinsically interesting: Why are we like we are?" His students think there's more to it than that.

"Brian Little is the most engaging, entertaining, and caring professor I have ever encountered," Adam Grant, who nominated Little as one of Harvard Yearbook's Favorite Professors, wrote recently.

"Working with him has been the most rewarding experience I have had at Harvard; I cannot even begin to explain the myriad ways in which he has positively affected my life."
That Brian Little is at Harvard at all, let alone winning raves from students, is a testament to the influence of his father, who never graduated from high school.

“He never pushed,” Brian recalls. “He just took great delight in any academic success and it was always important to him.

“Towards him, education was something to be cherished.”

His son learned that lesson well. Brian Little loved school, got shivers of excitement from new knowledge and insights into the world around him.

Once, in junior high, a science teacher came into class and said: “Here’s today’s question, why are there more Joneses than Smiths in the Victoria telephone directory? You tell me tomorrow.”

The next day, when the teacher asked for answers, Little put up his hand and volunteered a theory. So did another student, and another. Until, finally, the teacher said: “Okay, first lesson of science: There aren’t more Joneses than Smiths in the Victoria telephone directory.”

Little followed his passion for science to Victoria College, which became the University of Victoria, where he graduated with the first class in 1964.

There, the future professor got a rare opportunity to study in a small, intimate setting, “one where professors really cared, knew their students, and cared deeply about them personally.”

“Professors are a little bit like different kinds of wine,” he says. “Students need to appreciate that there can be tart, chippy little wines and there can be rich, aromatic, deep wines, and that each, in its own way, can be delightful and edifying.”

From one professor, a classicist who taught Greek history with tears running down his cheeks, Little learned the importance of passion. Though “In retrospect, he also chain-smoked, so I may totally have misinterpreted what was happening,” Little says, laughing.

From psychology professor Bill Gaddes, Little discovered the power of enthusiasm. Gaddes, he says, was so enthusiastic about his work that students couldn’t wait to get to class to find out what he couldn’t wait to tell them.

And he cares deeply about his students. He estimates that he spends two hours answering emails from his students; his wife figures it’s closer to three.

He came up with the idea of getting his students to keep a research journal, where they can express what is really on their minds and which counts for marks in the course. “I think that until I developed the notion of everybody being able to do a journal ... I was probably missing some students who were too shy to speak up in class.”

The emails and journal entries help fuel the “matters arising” component of Little’s lectures, where he discusses issues raised by the students. “That way they feel as if it is truly a dialogue—even though there are 250 students in there—
and they are participating. I think you can do that with a class of 1,000, frankly."

It's in class that Little truly shines, in large part because, although the
voice may be gone, he is blessed with impeccable comedic timing, Grant says.
"He reminded me a lot of Robin Williams; I think he gets that a lot."

The humour, Little says, builds up credit with the students which then
allows him to be deadly serious on other matters that touch the hearts of his
students.

"It's like a symphony," he says. "There's a slow movement and there's an
allegro movement. You can be allegro vivace for three lectures and then largo."

After a lecture, he often escapes to a washroom, where he finds an empty
cubicle, sits down, pulls up his feet so nobody can find him, and takes a long
moment to reflect. The washroom retreats bring momentary peace and restore
Little's true nature.

He once explained this to Peter Gzowski on CBC's Morningside, telling the
famous radio host: "After a talk, I'm in cubicle nine." Gzowski confessed,
"After a show, I'm in cubicle eight."

"If you find out what your core projects are, what deeply matters to you,
what you have committed to, then I'm in a really good position to help shape or
understand the shaping of your life," he says. "Because for me, one's personal
projects are what are crucial to human flourishing."

The concept puts a different twist on understanding personality, he says.
People may be born introverts or extroverts. A four-month-old introvert will
move away from a loud hand clap; an extrovert would turn toward it, and that
same characteristic would be found in personality studies of the same children
twenty years later at university.

But one's personal projects can make you act out of character, he says.
"One project for me is to profess with passion ... so that, as a professor, I am
'on' as a pseudo-extrovert."

This does not make it wrong or phony, he says. But it does help to under-
stand what is occurring, so that you can take time to re-balance and reduce the
risk of burnout.

People, he says, go against their natures for all kinds of personal proj-
ects—love for their spouse, their children, their job.

"Those are what I call 'free traits' and the 'free-trait agreement' is that I
will act out of character in the service of that which I cherish if you will afford
me a restorative niche every now and then which will allow me to regain my first
nature.

"And it doesn't mean I don't love you, that I want to be off by myself in
Ladysmith for a weekend."

"But I might better love you, even more, when I get back restored."
The one sad note in all this is that Little's father never lived to see his son
play Harvard. Richard Little died in 1992 at the age of ninety-three. But there is little doubt that he was already immensely proud of his boy.

Once, a few years before his death, he said to Brian: "You've done well, Son."

"Thank you, Dad," Brian replied.

"I always knew education was important."

"I know, thank you."

"And your Mom, too."

"Yes."

"You went to Berkeley."

"Yes."

"You taught at Oxford."

"Yes, Dad."

"You never went to Harvard, did you?"

Brian Little doubles over with laughter, recalling this conversation.

"It wasn't as if he was saying, 'Oh yeah, but you haven't gone to Harvard.' He genuinely couldn't remember whether I had gone there or not. He was ninety! But this became the family great story, 'This is my Uncle Brian. He's never been to Harvard.'"
L'Art d'être professeur en gestion

Laurent Lapierre
1991 3M Teaching Fellow

Nos premiers apprentissages auront une influence indéniable sur nos façons d'enseigner. Un musicien, ou un interprète, a obrigatoirement appris d'un maître. Il pourra donc beaucoup plus facilement qu'un dirigeant, à qui on n'aurait transmis que des connaissances abstraites, favoriser une formation de type "apprentissage." Si nous avons la chance d'être en relation avec un mentor ou avec des maîtres dirigeants, nous apprenons, par osmose, sur l'apprentissage lui-même et faisons-nous même notre propre talent.

Nous pourrions alors penser que seuls les grands dirigeants sont de bons candidats pour devenir professeurs de gestion. Or l'expérience nous montre que peu d'entre eux possèdent la capacité ou le goût de devenir chercheurs ou formateurs dans leur domaine. Etre pédagogue demande des qualités particulières, un long travail de préparation et un recyclage continu. Si on gère comme on est, dans le domaine de la formation en gestion, on enseigne aussi comme on est, avec toutes les exigences et les lacunes que cela comporte.

En fait, très peu de hauts dirigeants deviennent de bons professeurs, encore plus s'ils croient que l'enseignement se limite à raconter leur expérience. Ils risquent de n'en avoir que pour quelques heures! Former des dirigeants ne consiste pas, surtout pas, à créer des clones de ce qu'on a été. On ne naît pas bon professeur de gestion.

Même si, comme tous les talents, celui de maître en direction donne une longueur d'avance à la personne qui le possède, une très grande partie des aptitudes du maître s'acquiert et se développe; l'inné n'en constitue qu'une base.

Devenir professeur suppose que le haut dirigeant se recycle vraiment, qu'il se documente sur les multiples façons d'exercer la direction et qu'il se prépare à devenir un véritable maître, un "passeur," une personne capable d'en aider une autre à cheminer par elle-même, c'est-à-dire capable de faire émerger son talent propre. Il le fait souvent avec des plus jeunes et plus brillants que lui. De la même façon que des parents, qui ne souffrent pas d'envie, sont comblés.
lorsque leurs enfants font non seulement les choses différemment et mieux qu’eux, mais parviennent à les dépasser, quelle fierté pour un professeur de voir les jeunes faire mieux que les générations qui les ont précédés!

Le maître enseigne avec ses connaissances, certes, mais aussi avec ses qualités et ses défauts, ses forces et ses faiblesses. Ce qu’il est et ce qu’il fait est plus important que ce qu’il dit. Lorsque nous croyons vraiment à la puissance et à la richesse d’une approche pédagogique inductive, même si nous en connaissons les limites, nous savons faire confiance à l’intelligence de la personne qui est exposée, non seulement à un apprentissage spécifique, mais aussi à un apprentissage de l’apprentissage. Le but consiste à permettre à la personne qui veut apprendre et affiner son jugement à devenir autonome.

On peut être bon pédagogue sans avoir exercé le métier de gestionnaire! Toutefois, le professeur qui ne possède pas lui-même une expérience de gestion et n’en connaît pas la pratique doit avoir, plus encore, l’humilité et la sagesse de faire appel aux personnes qui ont vécu l’expérience de la gestion, qui en ont l’intelligence et qui connaissent du succès. Il doit également accepter d’apprendre de ses étudiants, qui souvent ont eux-mêmes une expérience de gestion, et avoir recours à des approches pédagogiques, telles que la méthode des cas, qui lui permettent de pallier son manque d’expérience et de réfléchir avec ses étudiants sur la pratique des autres.

Pour qui est lucide, enseigner la gestion est profondément insécurisant, car il faut résister au désir naturel et légitime du professeur d’enseigner, à sa propension à professer, qui est internalisée tout au long de l’éducation que nous avons reçue. Former de cette façon, c’est renoncer à vouloir impressionner comme professeur.

**REPENSER LA FORMATION EN GESTION**

Les chiffres, les statistiques, l’usage du langage mathématique et des méthodes quantitatives sont nécessaires, voire indispensables, à une bonne gestion et à la proposition de solutions efficaces. Ces aspects sont des plus importants et constituent plus facilement des objets de formation. Mais il sera toujours nécessaire de revenir à l’essence même de la gestion: une praxis, c’est-à-dire une philosophie de l’action et de la création incarnée dans le bon sens. Là réside l’aspect le plus déterminant du fait de gérer, qui consiste à fixer un but et des objectifs, à développer et, en s’en remettant à son jugement, à assumer la direction des personnes.

D’ailleurs, il est important de se rappeler qu’une organisation peut avoir un bon produit ou offrir un service de qualité tout en ayant une gestion artisanale ou qui sorte des normes reconnues, des canons de la rectitude, des processus normatifs et des théories populaires. Alors que la gestion peut
paraître déficiente aux yeux des experts, l'organisation peut connaître, malgré cela, beaucoup de succès. De même, un dirigeant peut n'avoir aucune formation universitaire en gestion et exceller dans la conduite d'une organisation. À l'inverse, on peut difficilement affirmer que l'usage d'un processus de gestion à la mode ou reconnu soit garant de succès, pas plus que ne l'est le fait de posséder un diplôme d'une école de gestion prestigieuse.

Cela ne signifie évidemment pas qu'il faille remettre en question l'existence des écoles de gestion. Lorsqu'elle est en contact avec les milieux d'affaires, avec le monde de l'action, dans tous les domaines, l'école de gestion peut permettre à ceux qui la fréquentent d'acquérir des connaissances pour éclairer l'action, de structurer des pratiques, de se constituer un réseau de connaissances, de gagner du temps, de nourrir son esprit critique, de former ou d'affiner son jugement, d'apprendre à convaincre et de découvrir son talent propre. Il appartient aux universitaires eux-mêmes (directeurs d'école de gestion, professeurs, chercheurs) de rester vigilants et d'éviter les dérapages. Ils ont la responsabilité de protéger la raison d'être première de leur institution.

Le message actuellement transmis, directement ou indirectement, aux jeunes professeurs, formés dans les programmes de doctorat en gestion, est de produire un type de recherche s'adressant à d'autres collègues professeurs. Pour avancer en carrière, ils doivent faire en sorte de se voir publiés dans des revues savantes, lesquelles sont cotées en fonction du nombre de fois que les articles de ces revues sont l'objet de citations par d'autres chercheurs. Les accréditations internationales que recherchent les écoles de gestion poussent encore plus vers une normalisation de la recherche et des programmes de formation.

A force de vivre dans sa tour d'ivoire, de ne communiquer qu'avec ses semblables, le professeur chercheur peut en arriver à ne plus tenir compte de ce que font les personnes qui dirigent vraiment des organisations, dans la vraie vie, à les regarder de haut avec ses modèles théoriques ou normatifs, pire encore, à les mépriser. Il ne faudra donc pas s'étonner de voir les écoles de gestion se couper du monde de l'action et se diriger droit vers une crise de légitimité.

En gestion, il faut toujours être vigilants pour faire davantage place au bon sens, au jugement et à la création! Les théoriciens doivent rester à l'écoute de l'expérience pratique de la gestion s'ils veulent que leurs réflexions soient pertinentes. Les écoles de gestion doivent assumer dès maintenant un véritable rôle de leader en ce sens et former à la liberté de penser, de créer et de gérer. (Ce texte a été adapté d'un texte plus long intitulé Gérer, c'est créer http://www.hec.ca/pages/laurent.lapiere/).
How to Survive, and
Thrive, in Large Classes

Gosha Zywko
2002 3M Teaching Fellow

My classes this year are the largest ever, including close to 200 engineering students in a single lecture class; yet with no "difficult student" in sight and a classroom full of a productive buzz when students work on an activity, I must be doing something right.

I have read somewhere that students make up their minds about the teacher and the subject within the first ten minutes of the first class, and that it is very difficult, if not impossible, to change those first impressions. However intimidating that is, my experience confirms that if I want to get the message across to my new class that I care about them, want them to succeed, and that this course will be different, I need to model every new element right there in the first class. Thus I approach the logistics of the first day with great care. I come in about twenty minutes early to set everything up, to chat with the students as they stream into the auditorium, and to ask their names. When I start the class, rather than proceeding with an overview of a course outline, management and content, I introduce a concept of active learning that I want the students to engage in, and then model it immediately.

Since I teach an introductory course in systems control, I get a group of volunteers to enact a skit illustrating basic principles of feedback. I bring props: a blindfold, a big target and a bunch of big labels that we pin on the volunteers describing their roles—Reference, Feedback, Disturbance, Error, System Response, and Safety Limit Switch. We get the System Response volunteer blindfolded, rotated a few times and sent on his/her way across the stage in quest of the target. System Response is accompanied by Safety Limit Switch who models shutting down the system if its operating range is exceeded (simply making sure that the blindfolded person does not fall off the stage). Disturbance acts as an unexpected signal that may affect the system performance, by sneaking up on the hapless System Response and nudging him/her in
the wrong direction. Much hilarity usually ensues with System Response missing the target by a mile. We then repeat the whole exercise with Feedback providing continuous verbal clues to the System Response to get him/her on track and to avoid “sneak attacks” from Disturbance. This activity drives home two useful points—it provides an introduction to the whole concept of feedback systems design that can be easily understood without any preparation, and it shows the students that when I talk about getting them actively involved, I really mean it.

I follow up with a video clip of a real-life control system to show that we will be connecting theory to real-life applications, and then I introduce new software tools and the course website. I make a point of using visualization tools that I either developed for the course or made available online. I talk about learning styles and different in-class, online and take-home activities I plan for them. I summarize the first class with my trademark line, “I am not here to teach you—I am here to help you learn,” which drives home the point that with partnership comes the responsibility of taking ownership of one’s learning.

Richard Felder, an engineering professor and well-known educator, recommends designating Class Ambassadors and meeting with them regularly as one of the most helpful strategies for a large class, and I can attest to its effectiveness. In the first week I visit every one of the class’s several lab sections. Class Ambassadors are elected by their peers right there and then, one to represent each lab section. I get the measure of the class “pulse” through the Ambassadors, as some students may feel intimidated to express their concerns to a teaching assistant or a professor, but all speak freely to their peers. We meet every three weeks or so to discuss, often over pizza, whatever issues need to be addressed. Our meetings combined with short Start-Stop-Continue surveys provide me with formative feedback and allow me to respond to concerns before they become a headache, and to keep the class morale high. The Ambassadors in turn get a practical lesson in how to resolve problems, learn accountability to their constituency and generally get to hone their leadership skills. They also help out with class activities, where logistics of getting materials out to so many people can eat up valuable time.

Since my students need to complete several lab experiments and engineering design projects in teams, each team of four selects its Team Leader. Team Leaders are responsible for getting the correct assignments to their teammates and for making sure that their team is on task and on time. I also ask them for periodic status reports.

Having Class Ambassadors as my primary conduit to the class, with Team Leaders as a secondary tier, keeps me connected to my students without being overwhelmed. It also leaves me more time for individual counselling and for asynchronous communications allowing me to reach more students.
WHAT'S IN A NAME?

I make a pledge to my students in the first class that I want to get to know them as individuals, and that includes quickly learning their names, despite the class size. I ask the students to send me a short "Introduce Yourself" essay, and more than 60% do that. Some write about plans to go to a law school or to get an MBA, or to work for NASA. Others write about their volunteering, sports and music, painting, writing poetry or about their children. Some write about their journey to Canada from war-torn places, settling in with no support networks that we often take for granted. Others write about a struggle with disability, chronic illness, about working night shifts, supporting their families. Reading these stories is a very rewarding experience as I learn how diverse my class is, and how multidimensional these wonderful young people are, with so many interests outside narrowly defined academic disciplines, and with big dreams.

I follow this by taking a digital snapshot of each team during the lab visit, and then I create cue cards with pictures, names and some helpful factsoids that I learned from the essays. Believe it or not, this works! And students, resigned to anonymity in most of their classes, are floored when I address them by their name. The names exercise is very important to me on an emotional level, because I know from personal experience how unpleasant it is to be invisible, and because I believe that students deserve to have us recognize them as human beings, and not as cogs in some sterile education-processing machine.

Many of the students who take that large class sign up the following year for a professional elective that I teach. By graduation day, I will have known them and worked with them for two years, and I feel a bit like an anxious mommy bird watching her chicks take off for the first time. They go on to live their lives, and I am greeting another cohort of young faces. But some stay in touch for years, and I get to enjoy their successes vicariously, knowing in my heart that I indeed made a difference.
In 1986, it became clear to me that it was necessary to return to school. My television viewing had risen sharply, my library had begun to resemble a drug store magazine rack, and I was beginning to have difficulty employing words of more than two syllables. I enrolled in a course in reasoning skills. My plan included no more than to find some respite from mental doldrums. But that first encounter with my professor's passion for both the subject matter and the art of teaching captured me so thoroughly that my entire life has been shaped by it. I am now, proudly, the first and only member of my family with a university degree.

—Nancy Nadalin

He wanted to hear what we, the students, thought and felt. After a public school education based on "colouring within the lines," this approach revolutionized the learning experience for me. There was no single point in a "lesson," but a heuristic process by which a group of people, he among them, could arrive at a deeper and wider understanding of the literature and of themselves than would be possible alone. This placed responsibility fully in our collective hands and made us accountable to each other. I struggled, then I grew. Nothing has been the same ever since.

On stage, he opened another door to possibility by extending our relationship beyond the group to the audience. We were exposing ourselves more than ever to the unpredictable moment, the essential surprise of being alive, and the actor must be true to that uncertainty and learn to love it. Performing for people we had never met, we had to be brave. He handed us courage as directly and palpably as you hand a kid a hockey stick. Now, nearly twenty years later, I can reflect on the perennial return of his teaching in my life. In 1999, I took the courage he gave me into the ghetto of Bushwick, Brooklyn as a teacher of English and Drama.

His work empowers each individual voice and thereby unites people in collective creation across language, age, class and culture. More than creating a model for a better world, he helps make that world come true.

—Stephen Haff
La Dernière Classe

Alex Fancy
1988 3M Teaching Fellow

We read Alphonse Daudet’s La Dernière Classe with Miss Olding, my grade eleven French teacher. In those days study of a French text meant wrestling it into submission, and into English, word by word and sentence by stubborn sentence. This laborious process of extracting English from foreign prose was de rigueur if we were to excel in the provincial examination and uphold the honour of our school. The previous year’s class had translated their way into second place in the entire province! The gauntlet was down, we beavered unlike any class before us, or so we were told, and under the baton of our unrelenting drill sergeant we crafted perfect translations.

But it is probably also to Miss Olding’s credit that I shared the anguish of the Alsatian school-master and his students who were having their last class before submitting to an invading foreign power. This spare and feisty woman somehow found time in the midst of all the deciphering to remind us that this was the story of real people, victims of the Franco-Prussian War who had suffered a humiliating attack on their cultural and personal space.

Thirty years later, and just a few days after an epic weekend of celebrating teaching and learning with my new friends from the 1988 cohort of 3M Teaching Fellows, I was in Alsace, helping a group of our students benefit from their junior year abroad, when word reached me of Miss Olding’s death.

Flash forward to December 3rd, 2004 and les dernières classes of the semester in the small university where I teach.

9:30 a.m. French 3151 (L’Expressivité). I tell students that this course is about self-defense because it develops French expressive capacities and strategies, as well as building confidence in the performative self.

Twenty-three of twenty-five students were present. One of the two absentees had just had the baby she hoped would not appear until after the end of the semester. However, little Gabriel Alexandre, born to a woman re-discovering her Acadian heritage through re-connecting with the language, had other
plans. On the previous day, the class had written their congratulations on a card containing greetings in phonetic symbols, a challenging segment of the course to which they had devoted considerable attention in order to better analyze accent variations, pronunciation faults and rhythm.

Playing off the current vogue of voting for the “ten best” of just about everything, I had asked the class to list, in order of preference and during discussion in small groups, their ten favourite expressions learned in this course which aims to give students the tools to negotiate their way through diverse exchanges. I had tabulated all the choices, and there was palpable excitement as the top ten expressions were revealed. Number two: un vieu xînâck. Number one: superfantasmatorique.

Prior to the last class students had constructed a lexicon to support a particular interest, and had either written a dialogue or sketched an interview that featured terms from their lexicon. The co-management of the learning process extended to evaluation, as all students had completed a brief appréciation of their peers’ scripts and interpretations.

On the last day I gave each student a detailed narrative evaluation incorporating comments by their peers, and asked them to discuss these assessments with their original interlocuteur. We then had a full-group discussion of this project, which encouraged students to interpret a passion in their second language. We did not omit common difficulties and challenges remaining to be met as students worked towards achieving their full expressive potential.

Then we had a preliminary discussion of world, regional and local issues students would like to highlight in the subsequent course, L’Expressivité II. I encouraged them all to continue their study of French, and to call on me for advice, or to have a coffee, at any time in the future. The class finished five minutes early to give students time to say au revoir to each other before rushing off to other commitments.

10:30 a.m. French 3671 (Théâtre français contemporain). Students in this course had been invited to propose projets de création, rather than more conventional essay themes.

Three projects were presented on the final day, and were greeted by the usual applause, questions and suggestions for the final written version.

First, Sam shared her experience as stage manager for an all-night production of Sartre’s “existentialist melodrama,” Huis clos/No Exit. This Drama major outlined strategies used to ensure that actors and spectators experienced, on an aesthetic level, the engagement, or commitment, advocated by Sartre, and justified the approach through reference to Artaud’s case for the Theatre of Cruelty.

Then D’Arcy, a Fine Arts major, gave a PowerPoint presentation on animal imagery in contemporary French theatre, concluding with an original video fea-
turing, from a comic perspective, fear of animals. This provoked a discussion of
Cartesianism and the pseudo-rationality so decried by playwrights who saw the
world from an absurdist perspective.

I had worked hard to hear, and honour, student voices while also ensuring
a rigorous encounter with the richness and diversity of contemporary
French theatre. Rachelle’s presentation, a rewriting of Anouilh’s Antigone from
the perspective of the heroine, was a triumph of creativity as she gave back to
this icon of resistance the voice that had been stifled by a male-dominated util-
itarian society. We all marveled—not an overstatement—at how she had con-
trived, by dint of much concentration and hard work, to shape a lyrical voice
which resonates with the original yet speaks to the children of a new millen-
nium.

The vigorous applause for this final presentation also conveyed the pride
of fourteen people (myself included) who had immense respect for each other’s
commitment, imagination and capacity for hard work.

We finished with a brief sharing of a discovery or affirmation that had
come about during the course. I will give the last word to Matt, a fourth-year
History major whose projet de création had focused on the playwrights’ critique of
individual and political complacency, with special reference to Clint Eastwood’s
movie, High Plains Drifter: “J’ai compris que le théâtre peut être puissant, un
appel à l’action.” Matt is from Miss Olding’s hometown. She would have been
pleased.
bang

Deborah Schnitzer
2000 3M Teaching Fellow

(Editor's note: a student is recounting for a friend a meeting she has had with a teacher.)

FOURTH FLOOR BUFFETERIA,
UNIVERSITY OF WINNIPEG, OCTOBER

So then the prof said, Well how long do you think it should be? And I said, How the heck should I know? You're the teacher. You didn't say that. You're lying.
I am not. Do you want to hear what happened or not?
Okay. Just don't get into a snit.

Well, she said, you're the one who's doing the work and so I think you'll be able to figure out when you're done. And I said, oh come on—it's an assignment, you designed it and you're the one marking it (aren't you) and so you've got to have some idea about the number of words. And then she said it doesn't have to be only words or just words; you can approach this in any number of ways using any number of modes. And I said look, I read that stuff about a creative project in the course outline but I don't think I can take it seriously. Don't you really just want an essay? And she said, well there are many kinds of essays aren't there? And I said, no there aren't and I should know because I've been writing seven to ten a year for the past three years. She doesn't say anything. So I say an essay is about ten pages long demonstrating a particular argument using specific evidence from the text with quotes from relevant people and a decent bibliography that proves adequate research in the field.

You know I'm right, right?

Yeah. So what. Don't you think she knows what an essay is for heaven's sake? What's the big deal in reminding her.

Because she's pretending that there are other ways of doing things when it's the same old carrot. I want her to see that I've been around.

Shit. We've all been around. It doesn't make any difference.
Well I think it does.
Okay. Calm down.
Do you want to hear more or not?
Sure. Take your time.
Well, she says, yes, that kind of essay is one way of coming to terms with
what you’re learning but you can integrate other approaches—blend them—an
original composition in any medium—a quilt—a radio show—a multimedia
presentation—short story—dramatic representation—photographic essay—
painting—set design—interpretive dance—graphic form—mobile ...
And I’m thinking what the hell is this. I’m in a literature course. I’m not
in fine arts or creative communications. But I don’t say anything.

Good.

Then she says the analysis of literature is a fine art and you can explore a
variety of means to help clarify and represent what interests you. I don’t say any-
thing and she says think of the building of a reading as a work of art—it can
take any shape; can show the way you figured it out and then perhaps along
with the piece you can provide a composer’s log—help me understand the
questions you asked, sources you consulted, what you’re pleased with, what you
might reconsider.

She’s going after that whole process—not-just-product thing.
Of course. A lot of them say that at the beginning. True enough. And then
you get killed if you take them seriously. So what did you do?

I said, this doesn’t make any sense. I’m supposed to come to conclusions
here. Demonstrate what I know. Why the heck would you be interested in my
process? She doesn’t say anything but I’m on a roll and so I say and furthermore, what if I get stuck? What if it doesn’t work? What if I don’t come up with
anything good enough? What if I can’t paint or draw or sing or dance or read
dramatically or quilt or sculpt? And she looks at me and she says these are legiti-
mate concerns, but what if I asked you to tell me about the kinds of artistic
forms you’ve already explored?

I humour her—tell her that I used to play the piano; did some drawing but
that ended in grade five and haven’t touched anything since.

Which is true.

Absolutely. But you know she doesn’t give up. She says,

Why don’t you think about it—open things a little—look at what strikes
you as important in the work you’re reading—examine the forms that come—
give yourself permission to dream a little ....

Dream a little ... sure. I’m taking five courses and I’m going to graduate
school and I need a 3.8 and you’re telling me to dream a little. What if I screw
up?

You won’t.
What do you mean I won’t?
What do you mean when you say screw up?
You know. Get lost. Get stuck. Not figure it out enough.
Those are risks. They’re good ones. Worth the taking. Worth a lot. But
how do I know if it’s going to be any good?
Why not try and find out? That’s what’s important.
Easy for you to say.
I don’t think it is.
Oh yes it is. You’re the one with the degrees.
Yes I am. But you’re the one who’s defining the form, discovering the con-
tent. I’m telling you that I pay attention to that and every step along the way.
That’s central to what we’re doing together. I’m putting my word on this.
And what if I’m wrong? There is no right way of doing. No right answer.
Oh yeah. I’ve heard that before and then just when you think you can dare
something—try something out—depart from the teacher’s point of view—
bang—and it’s oh yes that might be interesting but ... I don’t have time to play
that game.
I am not playing that game.
Who says? I do.
You think she really knows what she’s saying?
I don’t know. So I tell her.
I don’t think you can get away with this.
Why not?
Because this is a university and there are certain standards and ways of
doing things and this sounds too loosey-goosey for me—too many risks—I
don’t trust it.
But I do. Just dream a little bit right now. Let’s pretend. I ask you: What
strikes you as important in Stein’s Tender Buttons?
Oh for God’s sake I can’t make sense of any of it. Every time I think I’ve
got a little bit figured out, I lose it.
Why do you think that is?*
Oh you’re gonna fall for it aren’t you?
Fall for what?
She’s just manipulating you so that you’ll forget who’s really in charge.
Wait a minute. I had some good things to say here. Listen. I told her, Stein
doesn’t play fair. She’s got this whole interior language—her own pulse; her
own associations; her own inside jokes. She won’t let me in.
Maybe you could show that.
What?
Well show how you try to enter the piece and how you’re thwarted. But I
don’t get anywhere.

Maybe you do.

No way. I just try and try and try and I’m blocked at every turn. It’s like a
hall of mirrors. One word bounces off another, takes a dip, ends up somewhere
else beside another word and I’m trying to figure out what the hidden meaning
is, what the trick is and then when I think I’ve got it, bang, she’s off somewhere
else and it won’t sit still. Won’t behave. Delinquent that’s all. Everything’s dis-
torted. Only sometimes. Maybe there’s a kind of sense.

Well. Why don’t you work with that? A kind of sense. You know that’s
what Stein says herself. Right here in her Afterword: “I took individual words and
thought about them until I got their weight and volume complete and put them
next to another word and this same time I found out very soon that there is no
such thing as putting them together without sense. It is impossible to put them
together without sense.”

I’ve got to admit I was pretty impressed with Stein on that one.
It’s just coincidence. That’s all.
Exactly. That’s the point you idiot.
Don’t call me an idiot.
Well don’t keep dissing what I’m saying.
Sorry.
No you’re not. Yes I am. I’m sorry.
Are you sure because I can stop any time?
No. Tell me.
All right. So she says, Why not show the hall of mirrors. Sounds kind of
silly.

Do you really think so?
I don’t say anything. I’m thinking. There are seven more people waiting
in the hall. Maybe she’s trying to get rid of me.

Probably.
But then I say, I could do that you know. Build a kind of box with mirrors
and words and have them play on surfaces and reflect and suggest and I could
use lighting and extend the distortions but choose the words carefully so that
possible associations are released so that ....

You could do that couldn’t you?
Well I could try. But how are you going to mark it?
Now you’re talking.
That’s what I thought. But she says,
I guess I’ll look at the integrity of the design, the form you created and
how completely it realizes your argument, the kind of word play you achieve.
MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Sounds a bit like working with Tender Buttons.
Seems to. That’s a good thing isn’t it?
You tell me.
So then what happened?
I don’t know really. I’m just going to think about it. I’ve got this idea ....

Don’t give me that look.
What look?
This could work you know.
And it could bomb. And there goes your grade.
No. I think I’m going to risk it.
Why?
I think this might be fun. I think she knows that. I think she wants me to actually have some fun.
What kind of fucking planet are you on?
I don’t know. But I’m going to risk it.
It’s your neck sweetheart and it’s your call. Seems to be.

POSTSCRIPT

In On Beauty and Being Just, Elaine Scarry reminds us that “beautiful things ... always carry greetings from other worlds within them,” inciting in us “the desire to bring new things into the world: infants, epics, sonnets, drawings, dances, laws, philosophic dialogues, theological tracts.” Art calls and engages what Maxine Greene in Releasing the Imagination describes as the “answering activity of the mind.” Scarry writes: “This willingness continually to revise one’s own location in order to place oneself in the path of beauty is the basic impulse underlying education.” Green advises: Teaching involves the “difficult task” of devising “situations in which” one “move[s] from the habitual and the ordinary and consciously undertake[s] a search” inspired by “a yearning to make some sense.” Both would agree that the seeing and telling of how that has been achieved represent the most serious, courageous and playful work human beings can do.
My professor’s first-year classes were filled with remarkable demonstrations and concrete examples. He broke down the traditional divisions between the classroom and laboratory, engaging students to learn concepts through active experimentation. He was readily approachable at all times, which makes a world of difference for students. He even gave out his home phone number. His joy for teaching stayed with me, and now, as a professor myself, his emphasis on sharing discovery guides my personal philosophy of teaching.

—David Fleming

I understand that she has not had an easy life, with single parenthood and leukemia being some notable examples, and as such, her commitment to her students is all the more impressive.

—Michael Patton
Heartfelt Images

Carol-Ann Courneya
1998 3M Teaching Fellow

The day that Maiya walked into my office with her submission for the Heartfelt Images contest stays with me to this moment. She came in holding a large framed, oil painting titled “Heart Sounds.” The painting was a semi-abstract image of the inside of a heart showing chordae tendineae, string-like structures, resembling violin strings. The body of the heart dissolves into the neck of a violin giving the illusion of the heart as a musical instrument.

Four years earlier I had devised an amateur photographic contest for first year medical and dental students at the University of British Columbia, whereby over five weeks of learning about the heart and circulatory system, the students were encouraged to submit photographs they had taken which encapsulated their emerging understanding of the cardiovascular system. The inspiration for this contest came from a session I attended at my first meeting of the Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education, the year after winning the 3M Teaching Fellowship. At that session, Chris Eleser introduced us to the potential for using Polaroid cameras to teach critical thinking.

With this in mind, the following year I arranged for London Drugs to supply me with disposable cameras that I distributed to the twenty-one individual problem-based learning tutorial groups in the first-year class. Each group working in a cooperative, creative way, was allowed to submit up to three pictures. In addition I invited the students to submit individual submissions using their own camera equipment. These pictures were to be more artistic and would be judged both on cardiovascular concept and on photographic quality. I called these submissions “Photographers Choice.” My aim was to capture the imagination of the students and invite them to think beyond the physiology and anatomy, in effect to see the science in the real world.

Each year I was more and more impressed by their submissions, which blended creativity and talent, rooted in a firm understanding of the scientific content. In 2003 with the submission of Maiya’s exquisite oil painting, we extended the contest to include submissions in “other media.” The students are now limited only by their imaginations.
Maiya wrote the following about the contest: “Heartfelt Images was a rare opportunity for me to combine principles of physiology with ideas borrowed from fine arts, music and literature. It gave new meaning to my understanding of the cardiovascular system.”

As a result of Vreni’s wonderful image of a Littman stethoscope, 3M Canada became a crucial sponsor of the competition giving out a selection of fabulous Littman stethoscopes to the top three submissions in the Photographers Choice category, as well as 3M products to the winners of the group submissions. Vreni’s photograph was a black and white close-up shot of the bell (the part that goes on the patient) and the ear pieces of a Littman stethoscope. It was a wonderfully balanced image, simple and elegant.

Michelle, who submitted “Atherosclerotic Wreck” wrote, “I thought the contest was a great way to combine the concepts that we learned in the classroom with a means of expressing ourselves creatively. I had fun exploring my surroundings and finding ways of relating them to the cardio block.” Her picture was of a beached log on Wreck Beach (a Vancouver landmark). The image centres on the blunt cut end of the log which exposes a hollow center clogged by the accumulation of rotted wood, thus resembling a plaque-filled artery in atherosclerosis.

For Maureen—“Sweet Fibrillations”—“The contest was a great reminder to take time out to see art and beauty in medicine.” When the heart is damaged and in chaotic electrical activity, it is described as a bag of worms. Maureen captured that image by photographing a bundle of colorful candy worms enclosed in a heart-shaped cellophane wrapper. Christina’s photo—“Fetal Lungs, Breath of Life”—was an opportunity to express how the study of medicine can be “an integration of so many themes—cardiology, histology, pulmonary, and art!”
Romance, Precision and Generalization

Peter Taylor
1994 3M Teaching Fellow

For most introductory courses in mathematics (calculus, linear algebra) the curriculum is generally regarded as a "set piece" adequately rendered in any one of a number of "identical" text books. What you teach is the stuff that's in those books and there's not a lot more to be said.

But maybe there is a lot more to be said. Open a standard introductory calculus or linear algebra text. Do you find those books interesting, engaging or imaginative? And don't excuse yourself with the apology: "I was never good at math." Imaginative means imaginative, in any language.

Let me put the matter somewhat differently. In a literature course the students are asked to read and talk and think about works of literature. Some of these are "great," others are not, but they are all works of art of some sophistication. And they are almost all "beyond" the student, not in the sense of her capacity to appreciate or gain some understanding of the art, but in the sense that she is not expected to be able to produce a work of comparable sophistication on her own. At least not yet.

Does this description apply at all to mathematics? What could be more artistic and sophisticated than calculus and linear algebra?

But somehow it doesn't work in the same way. The bulk of the students who take these courses don't tend to come away with a feeling of wonder for the greatness of the work, nor a feeling of pleasure in their capacity to engage it. The skills they learn are fragmentary and quickly fade. The ideas are abstract and set in a restricted, somewhat artificial context. So much injustice to the student, so much waste of a rich opportunity.

Not easy to put right. How are we to find imaginative, sophisticated examples and problems which engage the students, are faithful to the rich ideas of the subject, and which the students can handle technically? It is generally understood that the structure of mathematics is such that students really can't move forward without a fairly comprehensive encounter with the prerequisite ideas and techniques. There's certainly some truth in this, but for decades it has
been used as a blunt axe to fragment the rich and beautiful constructs of the discipline.

In order to tackle this question properly, one must have a good understanding of my bible on how learning takes place, Alfred North Whitehead's *The Aims of Education*. I recommend this short and transparent collection of essays to anyone engaged in teaching, particularly the essay on "the rhythm of education." Whitehead identifies three stages in learning: Romance, Precision and Generalization. They tend to proceed in that order, but over many different time scales, so that each small learning task goes through the stages, as does each course, as does the entire life of the learner. So although education flows through these stages like a river opening into the sea, the stages also cycle like eddies, especially when the stream flows fast and early.

And the tragedy is that most university lectures are pitched at stage II—Precision. Romance is the stage of initiation, wonder, mystery, surprise, even outrage, games, crazy logic, intuition. Precision is the stage of care, close attention, slow patient mastery of technique. Generalization is that wonderful pulling together of many strands. The first and last stages are filled with a sense of freedom, but they are different freedoms. The first is chaotic, the unruly freedom of a child, but the last is a mature freedom informed by the insight and skill acquired at the second stage. The middle stage is ruled by discipline.

A point Whitehead makes again and again is that it is bad to shortchange Romance. In a fast-paced world there is increasing pressure to cut to the chase and go after the skills before the student is ready. In doing so we incur a risk that the fruit will die on the vine before the harvest of stage III. In first year, I try to spend as much time as possible on the stage of Romance, even though it means omitting part of the "standard" skill set for the subject. I find my students are starved for this kind of activity.

A statement from one of my students, Joanna, addresses a number of these issues.

When I took his first-year linear algebra course, I noticed that he did a number of things to involve the class. His lecture notes were the textbook for the course. The great thing is that he wrote them in the first person, so when reading them I felt that he was writing to me. He also added personal exclamations throughout his notes, which highlighted concepts that were particularly fascinating. He would give the class a few minutes to figure out a problem and then take various solutions, even the wrong ones, and try them out to see which ones worked. It seemed that he was figuring out the problems in his mind at the same time we were. When we did come across solutions that worked, he would comment about how fasci-
nating they were, and most of us couldn’t help but share his enthu-
siasm.

One of the wonderful things about his course was that few peo-
ple felt pressured by the workload. It was not an easy one, his
assignments were tough and for many people they took a lot of
time. The key point, though, was that I trusted Dr. Taylor. He told
us exactly the type of problems that were going to be on the exam,
and those were the problems he put in his review. It was so refresh-
ing for me to be able to focus on understanding the material rather
than worrying too much about my mark.
To lead comes from the Latin verb "agere" meaning to set into motion. The Anglo-Saxon origins of the word to lead come from "laedere," meaning people on a journey. Today's meaning of the word leader therefore has the sense of someone who sets ideas, people, organizations, and societies in motion; someone who takes the worlds of ideas, people, organizations and societies on a journey. To lead such a journey requires vision, courage, and influence. To lead requires a deep and owned understanding of power.

Power is the privilege to influence. It is impossible to discuss leadership without addressing the issue of power—how leaders gain it and how they use it. Most conceptualizations of power, however, have been strongly influenced by twentieth-century Western conceptualizations, many with a subtext of hierarchical "power over" that no longer fits either the context of flattened, networked organizations or the more inclusive values of the twenty-first century. To many people, including the increasing numbers of women leaders and leaders from non-Western cultures, traditional twentieth-century notions and definitions of power are antithetical to the leaders they most admire and the styles of leadership they most want to exhibit. This session allows participants to identify their own definitions, meanings, and approaches to power. Taking an inductive approach, it allows participants to understand the types of contexts that facilitate and hinder their uses of power. One outcome of the session is a robust, richly textured, non-culture specific, owned conceptualization of power that is relevant to twenty-first century global leadership.

THE CLASS SESSION

Power involves the ability to influence the thoughts and actions of others. In the session, we first introduce traditional conceptualizations of power that rely heavily on the notion of "power over" and then contrast them with more contemporary definitions of power to, power with, and power within. The group
then brainstorm their own associations with the word “power.” Note that most groups produce a disproportionate number of negative associations.

To expand the meaning of power, we shift from a verbal to a visual process. We introduce the process with a selection of one or two quotes, such as the following:

**ARISTOTLE** “The soul ... never thinks without a picture.”

**IONESCO** “Not everything is unsayable in words, only the living truth.”

**ARTHUR FRANK** An aphorism by Goethe: “Every day one should read a poem, look at a work of art and listen to some music.”

Arthur Frank says, in *What Does it Mean to be Human?:* “I’ve carried that aphorism with me as an aesthetic credo that the mundane deserves to be informed by the artistic.” Participants are then invited to create their own visual image of power using an array of art supplies, but no words. As each person completes their power-art, they sign it (thus designating ownership) and post it. A vernissage (French term for a traditional first night art opening at a gallery) follows for everyone to view the created power-art. Then, in small groups, colleagues of each artist interpret the various notions of power expressed in the paintings. As each painting is discussed, the group begins to understand the range of participants’ implicit notions of power.

After the meaning of each art work has been discussed, the group creates a collective symbol of power. The outcome of this process, which allows the group to consolidate their notions of power, is a robust and owned definition of power. Paradoxes in the notion of power are able to be discussed, without either rejecting power altogether or labeling it as negative.

The Learning Space

Ralph H. Johnson
1993 3M Teaching Fellow

I have been teaching at the university level since 1963, and I still love being with students in the learning space. Over my long career, I have learned and been taught many lessons that form the basis of my teaching style and philosophy.

I carefully prepare an agenda for every class. However, I regard it as modifiable in case something else more important emerges, and dispensable in those rare moments when we hit pay dirt! I regret those times when, because of the agenda, I said something like, "It would be really interesting to pursue this further, but we have to move on." No, no! When you strike gold, mine it for all it's worth!

An important part of the art of teaching is knowing which role to take on. A good teacher is prepared to shift from one to another at a moment's notice, which is why teaching is difficult and wearing.

If students are to learn, which means taking risks, then I must create a safe and welcoming environment.

I can't stress enough that as much as I know, I am always learning from the insights of my students. From this it follows, "No dark sarcasm in the classroom" (Pink Floyd). Humor is important, but never at the students' expense.

I try to be honest and real. When I blow it, I fess up. When I don't know something, I admit it.

My pedagogy is not egalitarian—I do not let students call me by my first name—but it is based on mutual respect and cooperative engagement. Teacher and learner have different roles and different responsibilities. I am responsible for what happens and what does not happen in the classroom. Pacing is important. I am not afraid to entertain if that will help me achieve my objectives.

I want my students to experience the joy and fun of learning.

My students have a natural desire to learn. There may be layers of cultural drag in the way of that desire. My first job is to connect with that desire. My second is to present material in appropriate ways that will feed that desire. My third
job begins when something gets in the way of a student's learning. I have to work with the student to figure out what the obstacle is and then help develop a strategy for how to remove it. Often teachers complain about these impediments as if they were external, supervenient. But really, these obstacles are natural occurrences, only to be expected. They are a sign for us to roll up our sleeves, get to work and earn our keep.
While he was supervising my undergraduate thesis research, he sent me for a one-week astronomy research trip. When I returned and discovered that I had pointed the telescope at the Big Dipper instead of the Little Dipper, he worked patiently and enthusiastically with me for two weeks to salvage useful data from the wrong Dipper!

— Chris Pollock

By presenting each thinker in the best possible light, he left it to the students to decide which ideas were the most reasonable at the end of the day (though our conclusions had better be well-defended)! He required that we engage with the material wholly and completely. We had to earn the right to criticize the thinker, resulting in some very good work and essays I am proud of to this day.

— Amy J. Ohler

He always found a way of helping me understand that the struggle I found myself in was not a sign of some personal deficiency. Sensing what was at the root of my problem, he calmly repeated to me at every meeting that it was my job to create new ideas and get them down on paper and his job to make sure I stayed the course.

— Michael Boscariol
Teaching the Committed

Bill Gildorf
1990 3M Teaching Fellow

"E
ducation for The Real World" is the slogan of Concordia University, where I taught for twenty-five years. In Thailand, 20,000 kilometres from Concordia, I was brought face-to-face with teaching for the "real world." For the past three years, Susan, my partner, and I have travelled to Northern Thailand to work with Burmese living in exile from a violently oppressive military regime that governs "Myanmar"—the new name given by the ruling generals to Burma that exiles refuse to accept.

A small resort on the outskirts of Chiangmai, in northern Thailand, was the site for my first workshop with a group of officers of the All Burma Student Democratic Front (ABSDF), a group which included twelve men and three women, mostly in their mid-thirties. I had been told very little about the participants, except that they had little English and they wanted training in strategies to gain increased media coverage. A Burmese translator would be necessary for the six intensive, eight-hour days of media training.

The All Burma Student Democratic Front was one of the first oppositional groups formed after the August 8, 1988 uprising of millions of Burmese, to which the military government responded with brutal repression, killing thousands. For almost seventeen years, this group of former students, representing many of the twenty-six major ethnic groups in Burma, has been combining humanitarian aid and education with armed resistance "inside," a term used to refer to their homeland.

The maintenance of armed resistance has been a source of dissension within the group, and it was a troubling dilemma for me. The ABSDF military, now shrunk to about 100, is primarily used for defensive purposes when groups go "inside" to deliver medical or other assistance. Some of the fifteen people in my workshop spend an average of six months each year "inside," and the other six months working along the Thai-Burma border trying to improve the circumstances of the thousands of refugees and preparing for the inevitable return to
democracy. I am still struggling with the issue of armed resistance, yet I support the good work this group has done since 1988, and am in agreement with its objectives of restoring democracy and defending human rights in Burma.

One morning I arrived in our conference room fifteen minutes early, to find them already at work, organizing themselves into campaign issue groups. They chose four issues they believed must be placed in front of the eyes of the world. These were:

Forced labour by the military;
The on-again-off-again negotiations between the military junta and opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi, Nobel Peace Prize winner, under house arrest virtually since 1990;
Educational needs in the refugee camps and along the border where ABSDF was to open a high school in June, 2002 (which they did);
The imminent entry of foreign NGOs into Burma, which, while providing humanitarian assistance, may, in reality, be used by the military for propaganda purposes, permitting the diversion of funds into increased military activity.

Part of their “real world” is constant surveillance. To my surprise, but not theirs, we were visited three times by three different security forces, who just walked into the room unannounced, listened for a while, took pictures and names, and then left.

Because they gave so much, I felt challenged to give them my best, and to make the material and exercises as directly relevant as possible. I've always known that students learn best when they can connect ideas and practices to the lives they lead. From the intensity with which they took notes and threw themselves into exercises, I saw that this learning could lead ultimately to the presentation of a point of view that could challenge the propaganda of the military, prevent further abuses, and save many lives.

Since that first relatively luxurious experience at the resort, my teaching has taken me to work with other groups in a “safe house” in Mae Sot, a small town at the Thai-Burma border. There is something very “grounding” as a teacher to be in bare feet with students similarly shoeless, working in an open-air house at the edge of town that had been converted to a makeshift classroom. Visits by butterflies, other flying insects, dogs, and neighbourhood children replaced the earlier encounters with security forces.

While I know that I was able to satisfy a small part of the appetite for learning in these “students,” I am also aware of how much they challenged me and the skills for which I had been rewarded with a 3M Teaching Fellowship.
For me, there were many gifts. Most of all there was the gift of a renewed vision of the importance of teaching and learning, and the knowledge that for many, like those in the All Burma Student Democratic Front, education really is for the real world.
Problem-Based Learning:
UBC Collaborations in Nepal

Carol-Ann Courneya
1998 3M Teaching Fellow

On my first trip to Nepal in 1999 I met Dr. Arjun Karki, a Nepali medical doctor, who shared with me his vision for a new privately funded, not-for-profit, medical school. He wanted a school whose pedagogical structure would instill in the Nepali students a stronger social consciousness. His dream was that Nepali medical students would remain in Nepal (population 24 million) and practise in non-urban areas. Of the 500 to 600 new Nepali physicians trained each year, the majority remain in urban Nepal, with few providing health care in rural areas where 86% of the population lives. That’s a ratio of one doctor for every 30,000 patients outside the urban centers.

In early 2000, I flew to Kathmandu to begin discussions with Dr. Karki and colleagues about creating a medical school whose pedagogical structure would be similar to the University of British Columbia Medical School. They decided on a curriculum which would involve early clinical exposure, small group, problem-based learning (PBL) to study the basic sciences, and a strong psycho-social influence throughout the program.

Since 2001, I have made two trips to Nepal with various colleagues (Dr. Bill Webber, Dean Emeritus and Dr. Rose Hatala from the UBC Medical School as well as Dr. Martha McGrew from the University of New Mexico). The focus of these visits has been to enable the potential faculty to develop and to teach a problem-based learning medical curriculum.

Along with support from other North American universities, in 2004 a partnership was developed through Patan Hospital (Patan is a suburb of Kathmandu) to develop a Health Sciences University which will house the proposed Patan Hospital Medical School.

In April 2004, Rose Hatala and I gave a seven-day workshop for Dr. Karki and seventeen Patan Hospital doctors. The participants were introduced to PBL using actual PBL cases in which they were the students and Rose and myself
were the tutors. This was enlightening for some of the Nepali doctors who had never experienced small group, active learning strategies in their own medical training. Afterwards one exclaimed, “I was born too soon, I would have loved to learn medicine this way.” A day was dedicated entirely to PBL case writing. The participants were divided into four small groups which shared common clinical and professional interests. By the end of the day they had the scaffolding for four wonderful PBL cases that could be used in their curriculum. Each of these cases encompassed basic science learning objectives germane to the Nepali people and their culture. One of the key factors that brings the learning to life in medical PBL tutorials is the students’ motivation to understand the root of the medical problem they face. Without that it simply becomes an exercise in doing what the tutor wants them to do.

We asked the Nepali participants, whose previous learning settings had been entirely didactic, for feedback on how it had been to learn in this new “active” way. A very shy young woman put her hand up and said, “It’s the first time I was able to learn with my own mind, and not the mind of my professors!”
A Desire to Make a Difference

John Mitterer
2004 3M Teaching Fellow

While at McMaster University for my Ph.D. studies, I became a teaching assistant in Dr. Ralph Morrison’s Introductory Statistics course. This was the true beginning of my teaching career. It revolved around working with one student who had failed the course twice before and was giving it one last try. I worked with her in as many different ways as I could conceive. I wanted her to pass that course. In the end, she did not. What she did do was bake braided egg bread for me and write her heartfelt thanks for my efforts on her behalf. Through her, I found the motivation I would adopt toward my own students for the rest of my teaching career, which has extended over twenty-five additional years. One of Harold Bloom’s books is entitled The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry. Bloom believes that the creative spirit is driven by an anxiety of influence, a desire to make a difference. I am sure that I have that anxiety when it comes to teaching.

Since then, I have incessantly invented and reinvented myself as a teacher, as I search for what will invite my students to successful educational experiences. I have always remained open to new ideas about teaching, whether they spring from informed practice, theory or research. In this regard, my approach to teaching remains to this day unabashedly eclectic. Until recently, I had not found an overarching theory of teaching; rather I would have said I was a craftsman, a bricoleur. This is still one of my core attitudes. My goal is always and simply to “get it across” as best I can and every new bit of pedagogical knowledge I encounter constitutes a possible means to that end.
Us and Them

Mark Weisberg
1995 3M Teaching Fellow

What the fuck am I doing on the hottest day of the summer stuffing
and roasting two chickens at 425 degrees? I should be outside in the
yard with Joshua. He’s lucky Melissa isn’t there, so it’s OK for him to
go naked. No neighborhood mother telling her five-year-old daughter she can’t
play with her naked four-year-old friend. “What do you want to do?” we asked
him, when Melissa said he’d have to put on clothes or she couldn’t play. Josh
knew what he wanted: he calmly walked into the house, climbed the stairs to his
room, and returned five minutes later wearing his favorite tee shirt.

No Melissa today, so no tee shirt. Just Josh and his mostly naked Mom,
sunning herself to leather in the canvas lounge chair. It’s 90 degrees today and
sunny, so she doesn’t need the aluminum mirrors she uses in the winter on the
roof of the addition, wrapped to the chin in her sleeping bag.

The chickens won’t be ready for a while, so I think the cotton cloth of the
living room sofa might cool me off. I slip off my Birkenstocks and begin walking
through the dining room toward the sofa. The polished oak floors are cool,
smooth, and suddenly... wet. Pulling back my foot, I look down. There’s a puddle
on the floor, small yes, but definitely a puddle. In my dining room. Not near the
dining room table. Not near the kitchen. Not near anything. And not where
anyone’s been today... except Josh, on his way upstairs to go the bathroom or
to collect a toy.

“Joshua, come here for a minute.”

Quick to respond, as always, he stops kicking his Nerf soccer ball and
bounds through the back door, up the half flight of stairs, and finds me in the
dining room.

“Over here.” My index finger wiggles, showing the way he can clearly see.
I point to the puddle. “Did you do this?”

“No, Dad.”

“I’ll ask you again, Joshua. Did you do this?”

“No, Dad.”
I stare at him and try again. "You're the only person who's been in this room, and you're not wearing any clothes. Tell me the truth. Did you do this?"

"No Dad, I didn't."

I'm yelling now, bending to get my face close to his. "Don't lie to me; did you do this?"

"Yes, Dad, I did."

"This isn't OK, Joshua. There are two bathrooms in this house you could have used. Or if you'd had to go so badly, you could have done it on the lawn. And leaving it here is disgusting, unacceptable."

I'm so mad that I don't think I'll make him clean it up. "You're going to be punished for this. Go outside, and we'll discuss your punishment later." He skulks away, head down, chastened.

Have to get some towels to clean this up. It better not have warped the floor. As I step past the puddle, something hits my arm. It feels wet. I hold out my arm to inspect. Hit again. These are drops. They're not coming from the puddle. I look up. The plasterboard ceiling seems different, swollen really. And just above the puddle is a yellow-brown stain, from which extends what looks like a bubble.
Méditations sur un parcours universitaire

Diane Pacom
2004 3M Teaching Fellow

Permettez-moi d’emblée de dire que ce parcours fut riche et surprenant. À plusieurs égards il fut facile et plein de satisfactions, à d’autres rempli d’embûches et de frustrations, mais pour l’essentiel il fut dynamisé par une inébranlable certitude, celle de la nécessité de placer toujours l’étudiant au centre de la démarche pédagogique. La transmission des connaissances, but ultime du rapport pédagogique, ne peut être réussie qu’en passant par la compréhension et le respect de la réalité socioculturelle des différentes cohortes d’apprenants que la société nous donne le mandat de former.

C’est en 1968 que j’ai intégré en tant qu’étudiante le monde universitaire, pour y rester fermement enracinée jusqu’aujourd’hui. Jeune fille d’un pays du Tiers-Monde, je me faisais une image assez sommaire de l’Université avant d’y adhérer. La seule impression durable de l’Université que je garde de mon enfance m’a été fournie par ma vieille tante paternelle qui, lorsque j’avais 13 ou 14 ans, m’avait prise de côté un jour pour m’aviser très solennellement qu’il fallait que j’aille à l’Université. “Tu sais, Diane”, me dit-elle sur un ton grave, “dans notre famille on est traditionnellement tous des docteurs.”

L’intégration dans le milieu universitaire, la découverte de ses secrets, de ses formules, de sa culture politique est un processus constant, une démarche continue. L’initiation fut longue, les rites de passage exigeants. De 1968 à 1980 douze années de formation supérieure en même temps redoutables et extatiques ont instillé en moi la certitude que l’éducation d’une jeune personne est une démarche très délicate, sérieuse et engageante. L’enseignement est donc une activité complexe. Aux interstices de la logique et de l’esthétique, de la science et de la poésie, notre profession exige la capacité d’agencer constamment rigueur et souplesse, structure et créativité, intuition et certitude.

La date de 1968 s’est inscrite dans les annales de l’Université comme un moment de rupture important. En France comme aux États-Unis et ailleurs,
l'Université comme tous les traditionnels lieux du pouvoir est mise sur le banc des accusés par une génération entière d'étudiants: la mienne. Je réalise ainsi que mon engagement vis-à-vis des étudiants à qui j'ai le plaisir d'enseigner depuis un peu plus d'un quart de siècle est directement relié à ma participation active à cette mouvance estudiantine propre aux années soixante et soixante-dix.

La défaite (immortalisée par ma soixante-huit) des modèles traditionnels d'apprentissage centrés sur l'autorité incontestée des professeurs constitue la toile de fond de mes années d'étude. Au centre de cette vaste entreprise contestataire: la volonté de placer les étudiants au cœur du processus de transmission de la connaissance et de les sortir du rôle de récepteurs passifs pour les redéfinir comme partenaires dans l'apprentissage. La représentation des individus jeunes—comme réceptacle vide et/ou comme tabula rasa—était remise en doute. Étudier pour les jeunes de cette époque était en même temps acquisition des savoirs et compétences nécessaires mais aussi et avant tout un acte émancipateur d'intégration dans la Polis. Tel que nous l'a démontré Michel Foucault, un des héros de ma soixante-huit, le Savoir s'inscrivait désormais dans une équation avec le Pouvoir. La génération des étudiants de la grande contestation a revendiqué une place d'honneur pour l'activité pédagogique. Tout comme dans le cas de plusieurs sociétés de l'Antiquité où le rapport pédagogique relevait du sacré, les revendications des jeunes des années soixante et soixante-dix avaient comme but de faire de l'éducation un élément essentiel du processus civilisationnel.

Pour moi, cette croyance est devenue au fil des années une certitude qui continue à animer ma pratique d'enseignante. En effet, les éducateurs portent, tout comme les parents, la responsabilité lourde de conséquences de former des citoyens et des citoyennes aptes à assumer la gouvernance de la société. Quand je réfléchis au parcours de ma carrière universitaire je suis touchée par le souvenir de l'impact durable qu'ont eu sur moi certains de mes professeurs. Avant même que la notion de mentor ne soit à la mode certains jouaient ce rôle-là dans ma vie. Le souvenir de leur contribution accompagne mes faits et gestes quotidiens.

Ma première enseignante, une religieuse franciscaine italienne, a reconnu en moi les signes avant-coureurs d'un certain feu sacré et a jugé bon respecter la sensibilité d'une enfant de six ans catapultée du jour au lendemain (par un concours de circonstances particulier) dans une école dont je ne parlais pas la langue et dont j'ignorais presque totalement la culture. Consciente de mon aliénation, cette vertueuse enseignante a décidé, pendant les premiers mois de mon intégration dans ce nouveau milieu, de me garder toujours auprès d'elle, se rendant disponible et attentive à mes besoins particuliers. Aussi étrange que ceci puisse paraître, cette première expérience d'une gestion
réussie d’aliénation culturelle m’a toujours servie de guide et me sert encore aujourd’hui de point de repère fondamental pour comprendre la sensibilité particulière de tous ces jeunes naufragés d’une mondialisation trop abrupte qui débarquent annuellement dans mes cours, le regard hagard et le cœur en chamade. Le sentiment de panique ressenti ce premier jour d’école où j’ai dû faire face à vingt fillettes babillant dans une langue que je ne comprenais presque pas a souvent refait surface dans ma vie universitaire.

Adolescente plusieurs années plus tard à la Fac à l’Université de Lausanne et puis jeune adulte à l’Université de Montréal, j’ai dû affronter les défis reliés à l’acculturation, et cette expérience d’enfance me fut précieuse. J’ai retenu de ces moments l’influence jouée dans ma vie par ces personnages presque chamaniques qui, en devenant pour l’espace d’un instant mes guides, m’ont aidée à trouver mon chemin à travers les méandres du parcours vers l’autonomie et l’émancipation. Ces mentors informels ont su consciemment ou inconsciemment reconnaître que l’éducation d’une jeune personne n’était pas uniquement une affaire de transmission de connaissances mais une fusion de gestes, d’actions et de pratiques, tous déployés au bon moment envers un être social en devenir.

Certains de mes professeurs ont été des phares pour moi. Je serai toujours redevable à Marcel Rioux, mon directeur d’études graduées qui, au-delà de son énorme contribution à la discipline sociologique et à la vie politique québécoise, savait être toujours disponible à ses étudiants. Il répétait souvent : “Avant tout, j’ai une responsabilité morale envers mes étudiants.” Sa devise est devenue mon crédo. Je lui suis d’autant plus reconnaissante dans la mesure où lui et les autres qui ont fait une différence dans ma vie ont osé, envers et contre tout, choisir de placer leur travail d’éducateur dans un ordre symbolique accordant à cette transformation le sens et l’importance qu’il exige.

Mes méditations sur ce sujet m’amènent au contexte actuel : je constate ainsi avec regret que les professeurs qui désirent placer l’étudiant au centre de leur préoccupation pédagogique affrontent, encore plus que leurs prédécesseurs, de nouveaux dilemmes et défis qui freinent leur élan. À l’époque actuelle l’enseignement se trouve contraint par une certaine conception de la recherche scientifique. Le choix responsable de certains professeurs envers leurs étudiants prend souvent la forme d’une résistance solitaire et marginale, invalidée et parfois même dénigrée. Ils sont vus comme des ex-centriques (littéralement hors-centre par rapport à la tendance générale). La baisse graduelle du rapport passionnel qu’entretiennent les bons professeurs avec l’enseignement est une des conséquences regrettables de cette tendance-là. Ceci est malencontreux, d’autant plus que l’Université est un milieu reconnu par son idéalisme et sa passion.

Les raisons invoquées par plusieurs collègues qui avouent ne pas pouvoir
aller jusqu’au bout de leur passion pour l’enseignement, et avec qui je me suis souvent entretenue à ce sujet, sont nombreuses et parfois compréhensibles. Le manque de temps est la raison la plus courante. Notre temps est dévoré par l’idéologie écrasante de la productivité qui nous oblige à inventorier minutieusement nos activités de recherche en les renfermant dans une définition très étroite et instrumentale de la connaissance, de l’exploration et du savoir. Et puisqu’il est question ici de la distribution des tâches universitaires et de leur quantification, notons au passage que la productivité des professeurs se calcule en fonction de leurs subventions de recherche. Cette pression se comble d’une autre exigence—la nécessité vitale de publier les résultats des recherches—et un profil de carrière très restrictif se dessine à l’horizon des universitaires: celui du chercheur dont l’enseignement est une activité secondaire. Des mécanismes de dégrèvement et de dégagement de l’enseignement (“release” from the teaching “load”) viennent souvent couronner les succès en recherche des “bons” professeurs. Quel paradoxe! On récompense un bon professeur universitaire en lui enlevant de l’enseignement ...

Par conséquent des générations de jeunes étudiants se succèdent dans nos universités, souvent avec l’impression d’être de trop, de ne pas compter réellement. Leur seul recours est d’accepter la situation en essayant de se débrouiller avec les moyens de bord, en devenant de fins stratèges versant parfois dans un cynisme prématuré et calculateur. Les plus courageux vivent avec l’espoir que plus tard au niveau gradué les profs seront au rendez-vous. D’autres décrochent tristement tout en sachant qu’un bac universitaire est, dans la conjoncture économique actuelle, l’unique voie de sortie.

Chez les professeurs le discours du manque de temps se comble d’un autre grief, celui des lacunes chez les étudiants actuels: manque de formation, manque de motivation, manque de maîtrise de la langue parlée ou écrite. Ces manques sevissent de la même façon qu’à mon entrée à l’Université en 1968, où la formation préuniversitaire laissait grandement à désirer, et je me retrouvais face à mes études pleine de doutes, de carences et d’insécurités. Par contre, la fougue, la curiosité et la vivacité intellectuelle, dépistées et dynamisées par les professeurs éclairés, me servirent de mécanismes de compensation et de défense.

En tant qu’enseignante ma sensibilité à l’état jeune a été déterminée à l’orée de ma participation lors des années soixante-dix aux mouvements étudiants et aux cultures jeunes, ainsi qu’à la recherche que je mène depuis trente ans sur les valeurs et l’univers culturel des jeunes. Cette recherche, toujours en cours, m’a permis de mieux saisir les enjeux et les défis auxquels les différentes générations d’étudiants font face. J’ai vu ainsi des sensibilités générationnelles se développer, s’institutionnaliser et disparaitre en cédant sans répit la place à d’autres effets de cohorte, d’autres façons d’entrer en rapport avec l’être et le
connaître. Cette connaissance constitue le magma toujours changeant sur lequel s’est bâtie mon approche de l’enseignement.

Prenons-nous le temps de comprendre qui sont ces étudiants dont nous affecterons la vie si profondément? D'où viennent-ils? Quel a été leur parcours académique avant de venir à l'Université? Quelles sont leur attentes? Quel est leur rapport avec l'institution? Avec leurs professeurs? Qu'est-ce qui les allume ou les préoccupe? Des informations sur les enjeux et les défis auxquels font face les jeunes pourraient aider les professeurs à saisir les racines sociopolitiques des manques! Rares sont les études des caractéristiques particulières de la génération actuelle d'étudiant.e.s aux prises avec les problèmes sociologiquement inédits qui marquent leur vécu général—fragmentation; manque d'homogénéité générationnelle; individualisme; immigration; précarité affective, économique, familiale et politique; et leur rapport avec l'Université en particulier.

En confiant à nos bons soins leur intelligence, leur enthousiasme et leur désir d'apprendre, nos étudiants nous ancrer dans le présent et nous projetent vers l'avenir. A l'exemple de mes propres professeurs j'espère être pour eux un guide, un phare, un rayon de soleil brillant dans l'eau froide.
Sleepless in Sackville

Alex Fancy
1988 3M Teaching Fellow

It is a typical Saturday night in Sackville, New Brunswick, a small college town often described as “sleepy.” The Phantom of the Opera is playing to a full house at the Vogue Cinema, and the Struts Gallery—Sackville has more galleries than traffic lights—is hosting an opening. The pubs are heating up and meanwhile, on the Mount Allison campus in a formal hall best known for its Alex Colville mural, large numbers of people are being greeted by bellhops who stamp their passports before they enter Hell.

This is not just any hell, but Jean-Paul Sartre’s version of where people go after having lived in bad faith. And this is no routine production of his famous Huis clos, or No Exit which premiered in Paris in 1944, during the Occupation, and reminded spectators that “Hell is other people.”

This discovery is anticipated early in the play by the postal worker, a lesbian who is infinitely more honest than her two unlikely roommates for eternity, and is validated near the end of the piece by the would-be activist whose cowardice has led him to this place. They share their eternally lighted room with a socialite who secretly committed infanticide rather than admit to the birth of a baby by “the person (she) was intended to marry.” Heavy stuff for a Saturday night in Sackville.

And it gets heavier. The eighty-six minute existentialist melodrama is staged in French, repeatedly from 8:05 p.m. Saturday until 7:16 on Sunday morning, with two alternating acting teams supported by seven “hellhops” who deliver a non-intrusive narration in nine languages—Hell is an inclusive place.

When, near the end, the socialite uses a letter-opener in her efforts to stab the postal worker who reminds her would-be killer that she is already dead, the three share a rare rapprochement, united in hysterical laughter.

The visual generation saw symbols everywhere: a fireplace that was never used, not needed by people who have refined the art of psychological torture; the subtle heartbeat, created by our student sound designer, that pulsed through the space for eleven hours and eleven minutes; and the red door, “like
a huge flame” through which the characters are afraid to pass when they are mysteriously given the chance. This image inspired one student to write, “Le destin semble reculer d’un pas” (destiny seems to step aside for a minute). Such an intense and immediate experience can demolish the disconnect between signifier and signified, and even narrow, at least for one memorable night, the gulf between theory and practice.

My actor-students and I staged the play as alley theatre, with spectators seated on two long sides in widely separated rows to permit freedom of movement. Spectators came and went at will, often arriving with coffee purchased in The Limbo Café / Le Café des Limbes. Their freedom underscored the state of the characters imprisoned in Hell, to which admission is free just as it was to this production.

Some student spectators attended for five of the eight cycles, and numbers varied between twelve and one hundred, over the official capacity. Thirty-five spectators were in the room at 3:00 a.m. One said: “I never thought I’d be going to the theatre in my pyjamas.” Audience engagement was highlighted by one student who wrote: “We were witnesses, or maybe voyeurs, rather than spectators.”

As the play ends with the line “Et bien, continuons,” this was a non-stop event with one very moving curtain call at 7:16 a.m. One actor remarked when she left the stage for the last time: “I can’t believe what we’ve just done.”

My principal fear—a lack of vocal clarity and character motivation during the period just before dawn—was never realized even though only three of the thirteen actors were Drama majors. One of the three, who often deals with diction issues, spoke more and more clearly as the night went on. The actors were encouraged to train as for a marathon—from using techniques for visualizing the rhythm of the journey to consuming large quantities of water.

Like other director-teachers, I am never entirely satisfied with a production. However, this event surpassed our expectations as many generous people worked together to create a fiction at times more real than the October night we left behind when we entered this place. Our solidarity effaced those binary relationships that threaten to distract us at every turn—teaching vs. learning, curricular vs. extra-curricular, cognitive vs. affective, play vs. work—as we shared a night that made a difference.
Reflections on the Notion of “3M Currency”

Lee Gass
1999 3M Teaching Fellow

It became increasingly clear as I aged that the wages of strong commitment to teaching in research universities is second class citizenship and second class income, compounded for life. It feels horrible to say it this way, but it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that teaching is sinful in academe.

As a sinner with strange educational values, I was relatively isolated from my peers. I was isolated even in the small-scale world of the first-year biology program, because until much later, it was difficult for us to converse about intellectual growth. We had little shared language to speak about teaching and learning, and we assumed different things about how learning occurs and how best to foster it. More than once I was asked to leave committee meetings for repeatedly asking difficult questions about pedagogy that were considered to be (and were) disruptive.

In that environment it was difficult to speak of anything but subject-matter content, and content was the last thing I thought we needed to discuss. For most of my peers, it was intuitively obvious and therefore unquestioned that teaching involved a one-way flow of information from professor to students, that students were and should be passive recipients of that information, and that assessment of learning required only the provision of opportunities to recall it. I didn’t believe it, and I did less lecturing than anyone expected me to. But my students learned well and enjoyed themselves, and I felt successful even while I was criticized strongly for the way I taught.

Many interesting things happened in my courses in the first sixteen years, including wonderful collaborations with teaching assistants, but my pedagogical isolation continued. In fact, every time peers evaluated my teaching for promotion, tenure, or local teaching awards, at least one evaluator criticized my teaching strongly. One of them, a teaching award winner, even asked me in front of my students to explain why I had wasted his time, since he had come to
evaluate my teaching, not my students’ ability to work with each other in groups.

When I won a local teaching award, my Dean asked me to be reconsidered for promotion. But a few minutes’ discussion revealed that our Faculty was not yet ready to recognize my accomplishments in the practice of pedagogy (as opposed to publication about practice) and I refused. A couple of months later, I learned I had won a 3M Teaching Fellowship. Soon, my Provost called me to his office to convince me to be reconsidered for promotion. His argument that the university needed a “poster boy” for reform of promotion and tenure procedures was difficult to refuse, especially since he did understand my real strengths and promised to support me fully from above if necessary.

The next year was intense and public, partly because a colleague from another department made some very disparaging, very public statements about undergraduate education to which I had no real choice but to respond. Our comments eventually reached a major local newspaper. That article included both the conflict between research and education that our comments represented, and the related story of my non-progress through the promotion and tenure procedure. This embarrassing process did lead to my promotion, and it did result in substantive changes in promotion and tenure procedures. Undoubtedly, my 3M Teaching Fellowship played a key role in that transformation.

I have reflected a great deal on the notion of “3M Currency.” What was a vague, abstract notion has evolved into a powerful framework for intentional, transformative action in my work in education. I am responsible for the compounding of its value.

One of the returns on my investment was the CASE/CSAE Canadian Professor of the Year award in 2002. In effect, the second national award greatly increased the interest rate on my 3M Currency and revealed many opportunities to influence faculty development and institutional change at home and in many other places that I could not have imagined even a few years earlier.

I have no doubt that the 3M Teaching Fellowships Program and other ways of recognizing quality in teaching are social investments of a very high order.
I was devastated that my application to the Faculty of Education had not been accepted. I found myself in my professor’s office. “What can I do to help?” was her response. Within moments she had me calmed and excited about new prospects for the future. Making a difference on many levels boils down to the type of relationship teachers build with their students.

—MANDY FRAKE

I contacted him to set up a meeting to discuss collaborating on an honours thesis. I arrived expecting to be lucky to have an hour of his time. We talked for three and a half hours. I was shocked to receive an email from him that very night that expressed great enthusiasm for my ideas. His methods inform and inspire my research, teaching and advising. I use his impact as the ultimate standard for assessing whether my efforts are making a difference.

—ADAM GRANT

He helped me understand that art is important and that creating and sharing stories is a joy.

—BRUCE MCKAY

I learned from him that stumbling is part of the learning process, and you just have to pick yourself up again. I learned that you need to take risks as you rely on your commitment, instincts and skills and plunge headlong into what you’re doing. He taught me to think outside the box.

—RYAN VICKERS

She has been part of many of my “defining moments.” She gave me the courage to speak out about a serious illness I had suffered from—something which played a huge role in my recovery and healing process. She will not accept indifference from her students. At that critical juncture in many young adults’ lives, she is that strong presence telling you to get your act together when it is needed, but also giving her praise when warranted. She was a tremendous influence on my decision to become a teacher. I cannot think of a better compliment.

—BRANDY YEE-HICKS
In my office at the university I keep a folder labelled “Slush File” and into it I put all the complimentary letters and the cards that I receive from students. On Monday mornings, or late on Thursday afternoons, when the workload gets me down and I need a pick-me-up, instead of turning to caffeine, I take out my “Slush File,” extract a letter or card, and read it.

But I have received other things besides letters and cards and they do not always fit into the “Slush File.” On my desk are three apples, as hard as rocks, as wrinkled as walnuts, shrivelled and dehydrated. They were given me, on Valentine’s Day, labelled “For a wonderful teacher!” I know exactly who gave the apples to me and memories of those students thrive and survive on my office desk.

Then there is the painting on my wall. It came from a student who asked if she had to write an essay. And I answered, “No, not necessarily. What do you want to do instead?” “Paint!” she said. And I said, “All right!” And when I saw the painting I said, “Get out of here. Now.” And she did. And now she’s studying architecture. “Painting?” you ask. “Yes,” I say, “a painting!” But take a look around my office: there are no former students’ essays hanging on my walls.

And then there’s that little red teddy bear. When the telephone went, one Sunday night, at 11:00 p.m., a voice at the other end said, “We’ve got one of your students here and she’s asking for you. Will you come?” So I went to the hospital, and sat there all night, holding her hand, and stayed there till 6:00 a.m.; then I went home and showered, and taught at 9:30. But the student lived. And the little red teddy bear still sits on my desk.

And there’s that seashell from Puerto Escondido on the Pacific Ocean, and it bears a student’s name, and an inscription, in tiny lettering. That student gathered the seashell on the beach the first time she went to Mexico, and gave it to me when she came back. And there are two zapatista dolls in their black rebel uniforms with wooden guns and their masks draped over their faces. And there is a little black doll, handmade, wrapped round and round like a little tar
baby. And there are photos of the West Indian cricket team on a poster signed by Brian Lara and the rest of the players, brought all the way from a sunny Caribbean island.

But some things are missing. Gone is an onyx tortoise with a mother-of-pearl shell which I gave to a student who was struck by an oncoming car and had to take everything slowly, step by step, for nearly a year. I told her not to give it back, but to pass it on to another person who needed it, and now it’s on its third owner. I follow its progress, and yes, they have all written to me and they have all recovered, progressing slowly, like the tortoise, step by step. And there’s the Diccionario secreto of Camilo José Cela which contains the origin and meaning of all the naughty words in Spanish. And it’s signed by a group of students who went to Santander, Spain, and bought it there, and then brought it back, and was that really in 1976? And they brought me bottles of oculo—but the oculo didn’t survive; we had a homecoming party and finished that!

Dominating everything in the office is the statue of Don Quixote de la Mancha, three feet tall, enormous, lance in hand, thirty-five pounds of solid brass, imported from Mexico by a student who took the Don Quixote course with me and went to Mexico for a holiday and saw the statue, bought it, and brought it back. Now the statue has a wooden base, and round the periphery are small gold shields bearing the names of outstanding students, winners of the Miguel de Cervantes—Don Quixote Award, not just for academic achievement, but also for caring and sharing and helping others within the Spanish Section. The Don Quixote Award consists of a small statuette of Don Quixote, brought in from Mexico or Spain annually by another former student. And it comes with a cheque for $200 from an anonymous donor who was himself once a student and studied Cervantes and Don Quixote.

And just last week, we were visited in class by the only student from St. Thomas University who has ever won a Rhodes Scholarship. He completed his honours degree in Spanish in our section just two years ago and he dropped in to tell our upper-level classes about his Oxford experiences. Among them was the realization, when he went to Oxford University, on his Rhodes Scholarship, for his Masters, that he was more than competitive with the top international students who had congregated there from all over the world ....

... and what was the question you asked me? I know you wanted me to write something, but I got caught up in my memories and completely forgot.
Transition from School to Work

Fred Evers
2001 3M Teaching Fellow

About eight years ago I designed a Transition from School to Work fourth-year course for majors in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology. I had the support of our chair, Dr. Ron Hinch, and of colleagues such as Dr. Sid Gilbert. I believe that this course is an example of "making a difference" for our students. University campuses typically have career service professionals who can help students prepare and search for jobs. The University of Guelph has an excellent Student Life & Career Services Department. Unfortunately, many students do not use career services to the full extent because they are too busy. Many do not even prepare a professional résumé. A transition from school to work course makes time available for the students since they are obtaining academic credit for the course.

The foundation for the course is research I have conducted on the skills that university graduates need in the workplace. Drs. James Rush, Iris Berdrow, and I published a book on the topic in 1998, entitled The Bases of Competence: Skills for Lifelong Learning & Employability. In this book we present a model of eighteen skills which are grouped in four base competencies: Managing Self, Communicating, Managing People & Tasks, and Mobilizing Innovation & Change. We found that employers of university graduates are willing to train them in technical areas because they realize that university programs cannot include all aspects of the field of study. However, they do expect that university has prepared new graduates to write well, solve problems and find creative solutions, manage conflict, think critically, and most importantly, be able to lead a group when called upon.

In order to help students think about what they want to do after university, they research and present (orally to the class and as written papers) an Action Project. The project can be on any area that relates to what the students want to do next. Students may work in teams. Examples of topics include: ethical behaviour in the chosen field, gender balance in the workplace, the advantages and disadvantages of contract work, international comparisons of an issue in
the discipline, human resource issues, the history of a discipline, work opportunities in other countries, and types of specific training. It is critical that students are given the freedom to work on a topic that will help them prepare for their own transition.

The students also prepare skills portfolios focusing on the four base competencies. The portfolios are key to the course. Students need to have the time and space to reflect on all the academic, part-time work, summer jobs and volunteer actions they have accomplished. The portfolio also contains a one-sentence personal mission statement and an intellectual autobiography, a résumé, an example job cover letter, a log of job interviews, and an assessment of strengths and areas needing further development.

A number of my colleagues have told me that we should not give credit for a course on the transition from school to work because students should do (on their own) the activities we cover in the course. My response is two-fold: first, the course can be done with high academic rigor and second, students will not do (on their own) what we cover in the course. The course provides the space and time to do the work of transition. I receive very positive feedback from alumni who took the course. They tell me how the course helped them with the transition and that they have kept their portfolios up-to-date. Transition courses make a difference.
The 3M Teaching Fellowship—
Making a Difference?

Alex L. A. Middleton
1989 3M Teaching Fellow

I was just coming through a particularly difficult time in my academic career. My role as the Coordinator for Instructional Development, a seconded, half-time position, in the Office for Educational Practice had proved too frustrating to continue. As a result I resigned from the position, which I had taken up with so much eager anticipation, and returned to full-time activities in my home department (Zoology). I was exhausted, disillusioned and discouraged. Although I enjoyed being freed of the frustrations, I also felt jaded by the whole academic enterprise, including my teaching. I still had ideas about how my courses could be improved, but I had no energy to make the necessary changes. Besides, no one seemed to care. But a surprise was in store. I was nominated for a 3M Teaching Fellowship!

The nomination couldn't have come at a better time. I realized that at least some of my students and colleagues had valued what I had striven for over many years, both in the classroom and beyond. As a result, my self-confidence was restored and I regained my enthusiasm for teaching. Regardless of whether or not the nomination would be successful, I vigorously set about revising my senior ornithology course, including the labs which had become stale. Also, I began working on a plan to revamp our introductory zoology course, unchanged over many years. The nomination pushed me over the hump and I approached my work with renewed joy and passion. But there was more to come.

At my own university the formal recognition of the award was made at a reception hosted by the Provost, and with the news now out in the open, attitudes towards me changed. Virtually overnight I gained a credibility that was previously wanting! No longer was I seen as the hopelessly naïve dreamer with his head in the clouds. What I had to say gained currency.

This resulted in my being appointed to a host of advisory committees. I
was asked to lead and participate in workshops for new and experienced faculty on a variety of teaching-related issues and to chair my own department’s curriculum committee. Further, I was given encouragement and resources by my own department, including some release time, to get on with the revision of the introductory course. After many years of lonely struggle it seemed that my efforts had not been in vain.

Did the award of the 3M Teaching Fellowship make a difference? My students, I hope, benefitted from the many revisions that I made to my courses. I hope, also, that my department, college and university benefitted from the work that I contributed towards curriculum development and faculty development, and to the wider discussion of teaching and learning issues on campus.

The Fellowship gave me quiet satisfaction and a renewed faith in my abilities. On a larger scale, it was an important factor in my promotion to the rank of Professor in 1991. This promotion sent a signal to colleagues that effort devoted to teaching and learning is not wasted effort, is a worthy academic pursuit, and, if done well, it will be recognized.
Accounting for Love

Howard M. Armitage
2004 3M Fellow

Innovative educators share their love of their subject matter with their students. I have to confess, it was hard for me to write this line and harder for me to say it. It has to do with the word "love." I am more at ease with the words excitement, joy, enthusiasm, zeal, fervour, dedication or, if pressed, even passion. But love is the right word. As I watch inspired colleagues in action, I can't help being impressed by the love they have for their subject matter, and how important it is to be able to convey this sense of love to their students. Its importance is so strong that it clearly affects how they see and interact with their students.

I am no different. I've not said this out loud to many people other than my family but I love accounting. I really do. I love its mathematical elegance. I love conveying the implications of good and bad accounting to society, organizations and employees. I love watching TV shows or movies that feature accountants and I've even required some of my students to watch the original Japanese version of Shall We Dance so they could see the hell that this poor stereotypical company accountant went through to learn how to dance. I grieve when my students wallow at the debit/credit level and don't get to see the sultry, sexy, rich, intoxicating world in which accounting operates. I am definitely not alone. Innovative educators compulsively share their "love" of their discipline with their students.

Some years ago, Stanford University President Donald Kennedy said, "It is time to reaffirm that education—that is, teaching in all its forms—is the primary task of higher education."

Kennedy views teaching as an element of scholarship, where teaching both educates and entices future scholars. I strongly support this point of view. Excellence in teaching requires no less effort, and is no less important, than excellence in research. I believe that teaching is the highest form of understanding but that it is not adequately appreciated.
It's time for a story.

The dinner guests were sitting around the table discussing life. One man, a CEO, decided to explain the problem with education. He argued, "What's a kid going to learn from someone who decided his best option in life was to become a teacher?" He reminded the other dinner guests that it's true what they say about teachers, "Those who can, do. Those who can't, teach." The guests all laughed.

To emphasize his point, he singled out one of the diners: "You're a professor, Susan," he said. "Be honest. What do you make?"

Susan, who had a reputation for frankness, replied, "You want to know what I make?

I make students work harder than they ever thought they could.

I can make kids sit through ninety minutes of class and completely absorb their attention.

I can make students want to learn and practise their discipline.

You want to know what I make?

I make students wonder.

I make them question.

I make them criticize.

I make them sensitive to different opinions.

I make them write.

I make them read.

I make them do.

I make them know I will review their work for grammar, logic and content.

I make them experience the joy of learning, appreciate the meaning of good performance and take pride in themselves and their accomplishments.

I make them understand that if you have the brains, then follow your heart ... and if someone ever tries to judge you by what you make, you pay them no attention.

You want to know what I make?

I make a difference. What do you make?"
His method opens untold doors into the soul of the French language, the French people, that intimidating and inimitable Frenchness which makes all other “nesses” feel ever so slightly insufficient.

—Matthew Jocelyn

She was one of my first professors to encourage risk-taking and to work alongside her students to support them “out on a limb.” She encouraged students to recognize that the wealth of the process was as important as the outcome. The best gift I received from her was the gift of respect that comes from honouring the spirit that dwells within each person.

—Carolyn Iker

I was a neophyte in the university world, laden with the baggage of a life already half-lived, and unsure of my intellectual ability to make it in this milieu and my preconceptions of the insanity of returning to school at my age threatened to overwhelm me. My professor patiently and methodically obliterated those fears as she guided me into a deeper knowledge that we are all the same, that we all have gifts to offer and that challenge is the lifeblood of success. I rediscovered that my only limitations consisted of what I believed about myself.

—Ronald Thiessen

One of the best parts of having her as a teacher is that her door never closes. Even though I completed my undergraduate program ten years ago, I regularly seek out advice and guidance from her and continue to learn from her wealth of expertise and knowledge.

—Jennifer Baumbusch

To this day, I continue to call him to discuss my marketing plans, my balance sheet, my employee issues or quite simply my strategy for getting where I think I want to go. And when I’m not carefully looking around me three hundred and sixty degrees, he’s very quick to say what he’s been saying for almost twenty-one years, “Hey, Michael, open your eyes!”

—Michael Fish
Making a Difference—
A Teacher's Perspective

Rhonda Amsel
2002 3M Teaching Fellow

Making a difference—the topic questions my raison d'être. That I make a
difference I must believe. But what that difference is and how it is
attained is more elusive. The longer I teach, the more I feel like a
blindfolded archer shooting at a target. Sometimes I hit the head, sometimes
the heart, and sometimes the tree.

When I ask some of my students about teachers who “make a difference,”
not one of them talks about classroom activities or subject matter! They speak
of informal talks about future plans or past disasters, about common interests
in music, films or hobbies, or unexpected words of encouragement. In the past,
I have been disconcerted to find that what many of my students seem most to
remember is time spent in my office, chatting over tea and brownies. This no
longer seems odd. We make a difference when we are open to our students out-
side of as well as in the classroom. Students learn from what we are personally
as much as from what we know academically. And we learn from them.

One of my most pleasant academic duties is to compile dossiers for col-
leagues who have been nominated for teaching awards. It reminds me that I
work with teachers who care and whose work and caring have been recognized.
When I read the letters of support from their students, I am struck again by the
activities that students deem to have made a difference: “He always takes the
time to sit down and talk, no matter how busy he is.” “She listened to my sugges-
tions to improve lab meetings as if I were a colleague and then acted on
some of them.” “He took the time to fill out all thirty-five forms when I was
applying to graduate programs.”

My colleagues are often surprised that what they have done has touched
students. They are not trying to make an impression. They treat all students
with respect. They know that a close connection with students provides them
with the feedback that makes their teaching more effective.
What happens when, as a result of being a teacher who makes a difference, the class size grows to the extent that the teacher can no longer interact with, or even recognize, each student? These teachers find ways to stay connected. Depending on their styles, they make creative use of office hours, appoint classroom representatives or "ambassadors," use email or discussion boards. Their classroom atmosphere allows all students the opportunity to participate actively and to have input into the learning process. Admittedly, though, when the class is large, the responsibility for making individual contact devolves more to the student. It is the teacher’s responsibility to make it clear that such opportunities exist.

Teaching and learning—the partnership between teacher and student—is so much more complex than I imagined when I began to teach. It’s more than putting across course material, no matter what the style or teaching technique. It’s also about creating an atmosphere of respect in which students are receptive to learning, in which they feel safe to explore and to make mistakes.

But why would I promote an atmosphere that encourages mistakes? My mother recounts a story about the time she attempted to re-upholster a chair. Her father, a tailor, walked in on the end of the project and said, "You know, you really should not have been able to do that." She says she was able to do it because she didn’t know she couldn’t. I want each student to have an experience like that. Without mistakes there can be no progress. Careful planning of classroom activities and gentle formative feedback allow students the freedom to explore. Our own actions as teachers and our response to change can model an exploratory approach.

There is no comment more validating to a teacher than that of the student who says: "I met this challenge. Now I know I can try anything." I cannot be that teacher for every student, but with an atmosphere of respect, openness and trust I can create the conditions in which all can grow and some can excel.
There's nothing divine in calm and predictability.

Picture this. It's early January, about 8:00 p.m., in the first university course I ever taught. I'm lecturing in an auditorium in Alumni Hall. About 100 students are nestled comfortably in their seats, which rise gently in front of me. Two exits are behind me, one to my left, the other to my right. I'm explaining one of my favourite texts, the Gospel of Mark. This document is full of unusual narrative twists, and I've come to a story that I suspect my students have overlooked. They're tired, I can see, and this story has comic elements, so I decide to play it up. "Do you remember," I ask, stepping out from behind the lectern, "what happens in this gospel as Jesus is about to stand trial before the Jewish leaders, just after his disciples forsake him?" As the question hangs in the air, I see the faces of some students to my left break out in shock. Seconds later I hear a collective gasp to my right, and see the same situation repeat itself on the other side of the room. Then suddenly someone shouts, "There's a guy up there mooning us!" ... and the entire class erupts.

Here's the twist. My problem is not the fellow mooning behind me, or the class in chaos in front of me. It is the text I was about to dramatize. Mark 14:54-52 presents a young man in Jesus' entourage whose cloak is ripped from his body. The man runs away naked. I stare ahead. Students jump out of their seats to chase the mooner.

After a break, I complete my lecture as though nothing has happened. I omit the story of the naked man in Mark.

End of story? Not quite. The "uneventful" part of the evening was, I realize now, the decisive one. I should have talked about the connection, however we might understand it, between the naked man of Mark and the mooner. I
missed this opportunity.

The second university course I ever taught was an introduction to the first-century Jesus, "the historical Jesus" as he is called in the field. The academic approach invariably undermines almost everything that Christians have come to believe about Jesus. Students taking a course like this are mostly Christians. Some become defensive, even angry, when the scholarly arguments become difficult to brush off.

In the third week of this course, a student stood up and declared to the class, "Satan himself is standing in front of you." I was stunned, of course. Nothing like this had ever happened to me before and the incident, as far as I could tell, was not provoked by any single comment I had made. I was also upset since I was doing my best, I thought, to present a balanced view to the students. Later I chuckled over how anyone could imagine me as Satan, but at the time it was no laughing matter.

What faced me was how to respond to this direct, over-the-top challenge. At this point in my teaching career I had no quiver of experiences from which to pluck a tried-and-true retort, so I responded instinctively. I grasped for something that would give me time to think my way out of this situation. I said to the fellow: "OK. Tell the class what you'd like them to know, and I'll hear you out."

This took him by surprise, but he began to lecture his colleagues on the correct view of Jesus. He stopped, and sat down. As he spoke I had a few minutes to look around—enough time to see that other students were listening intently to him, and that at least some shared his concerns. When he stopped I had collected my wits enough to say, "Thank you. That was a coherent description of Jesus. Let me tell you what was traditional about it, then explain to the class exactly how it differs from modern scholarly approaches to Jesus."

The man's disruptions continued. Midway through the next class and the one after that, he stood up again, repeating his claim. I allowed him to have his say. Then he dropped the course, and I never saw him again.

The interruptions turned out to be a gift from heaven. In fact, the next time I taught the course I fantasized about contacting this student to ask him whether he'd like to enrol again.
Betrayal

Arshad Ahmad
1992 3M Teaching Fellow

Five minutes before the class starts, I try to mingle with as many as I can in the narrow space outside the classroom door. It is an important day for many reasons. A significant piece of work worth twenty-five percent is to be handed in.

"I can't believe what he did," whispers Michael. "I couldn't make it, but it's true isn't it? He gave out the f-ing solutions!" "Sure. The TA is the prof's protégé and wants to impress. But let me tell you who he impresses most: the three models parked in the front row. Anyway, what's the big deal, Mike? Good information levels the playing field!"

Amir's responses have a mixed effect on Michael. "But I don't have the damn solutions!" Michael heaves a deep sigh. Amir is persistent: "Don't you get it? What if my uncle was the minister of finance? The case was a take-home, solutions however you get them is fair game."

This conversation brings my antennas to full mast. I am amazed at how students find new ways of communicating with me. Then another exclamation: "Shit man, I really worked hard on that case."

What a sea of grim faces! There must have been something contagious about Michael and Amir's comments. My quick survey of the classroom prompts me to abandon the routine I follow at the start of each class. Another lesson learned must be tested today: Deal with rumors openly before they are permitted to fester into fatal wounds.

"Good afternoon class." Pause. "I heard about the tutorial. A number of students seem to love the TA." (Why on earth did I say that?) "Was the tutorial excellent or what?" (Will reverse psychology convince this class?) There is no response. A pen falls down and rolls towards the trash can.

"How many attended?" The majority of hands go up. I remark with satisfaction how pleased I am that so many students gave up their valuable weekend to attend a tutorial arranged at the last minute. "What an amazing group you guys are!" I exclaim. (Well, at least there is some truth in this statement. But
why must I go through these warm-up statements to be really honest with my students?)

Then I ask what the tutor covered. Again, there is no response. I ask again, this time referring to specific problems from specific chapters that were intended to help them with the case study. Silence. Then Meral, who can never help herself, divulges in a louder than usual voice: “He really was helpful, sir, he did a lot of stuff ....”

“Was he helpful in your analysis of the case?” I ask. Someone whispers: “Solve would be a better word.” More silence.

All of us are waiting for something to happen. Some in the back are squirming around in their seats. Others are not blinking. I finally ask in a confident voice (the kind reserved for questions I know the answer to): “Did the tutor solve the assignment?” Cold silence. “OK, you guys may have done a lot of work or even all of the work, but, did the tutor give out the solutions? Hey, if I know what happened, I can try and fix the problem.”

Meral blurted out: “Yes he did, but he’s really a nice guy. He’s also funny and he can do impressions, sir! You really shouldn’t get mad at him. It’s not his fault, you know. I mean, like that’s what any one of us might do ....”

Michael interrupts, “But what about those of us who had to work that day and couldn’t go? Is it fair that just because I have to work to pay my bills I get sacrificed? I did my work with Jean.”

“You’re choice, Michael. Stop laying the work routine guilt. I work longer hours than you ever will and made my choice.”

Wow. This was the first time I had heard Stephen talk.

More people talk.

“I don’t think I should count this assignment for marks,” I announce in a firm voice that suggests much contemplation, though I had come to this decision seconds before. Just as I begin to explain why, I hear “You are not serious!” This defiance triggers others to speak up. They are fuelled by the atmosphere of complaints. The noise rebounds until I hear Jason’s loud voice: “This really sucks. I mean it does not make any sense. Why should it matter to you how we solved the assignment? It was a take-home, for Christ’s sake!”

Samantha finally adds her critical judgment. Her summary will echo the swelling discontent of her comrades. Why does her voice command so much attention (respect?) from others? Academically, she is not as impressive as half a dozen others, but she always strikes the chord of reason. I admire the Samanthas of our class.

“A big H for hypocrisy, sir. You are one of the few pros who has been encouraging us to seek help and work with our buddies. What about your three commandments—combine, cooperate, collaborate? How many times have you repeated that mantra? We agree with you, sir. The most important learning
takes place outside of class. So what's the fuss all about? Can you please reconsider and just leave it alone. You'll know who didn't regurgitate the solutions, won't you? And we know you'll be lenient with them, right? Come on, it's the summer, let's move on!"

"By the way, Prof, this assignment is in the course outline. Remember the contract you discussed with so much reverence? Cancel this, then cancel the final exam. That would make a hay load more sense." "Why not change the textbook while we're at it?" "Come on, you're killing us, sir!"

Killing them? Good Lord, this situation has become a matter of life and death. I begin to respond but am cut off by another loud group sitting close to the door. Some of the shy students are visibly uncomfortable with what is now becoming a chaotic scene.

It is time for my gut to take over. It has been struggling with the brain to take action. It has even suggested that student empowerment has reached its limits even though the discussion so far has been quite reasonable.

Control is slipping away as surely as the clock is ticking. Three students stand up one after another and must have decided that they have had enough. They gather their things together and two of them move in defiance towards the door. I look at them helplessly, wondering how it has come to this.

I am crushing two tiny pieces of chalk. The chalk does not mix well with my cold and clammy hand. I feel trapped. The whole hour has somehow been reduced to ten minutes. Who stole my class? I feel a sense of betrayal. The TA I encouraged and apprenticed as my right hand had done the unthinkable. Wait a second. This is not about me but about the TA. Just stop thinking and act. Two students are now walking out of the class. What are you going to do about this, Arshad? Wake up!

There is a lump in my throat and for the first time in years I feel a cold sweat running down my spine.

I have no idea what I am going to do next.

POSTSCRIPT

We scheduled another class, another assignment, and another chance to learn from each other. I exaggerated the effects of unrest during that sunny afternoon just as I do when reacting to a single student evaluation that punctures my ego. Why is it so easy to lose the big picture, in the heat of the moment?
The Master: A Parable
in the Style of Oscar Wilde

Claude Lamontagne
2003 3M Teaching Fellow

When Socrates died, his family lamented so much that they ran out of words to express their sorrow. They sought the youth who had been so fond of his teachings, imploring them to provide new words to mourn him.

"We do not have enough words ourselves to do him justice!" the youth exclaimed.

"Yes! Of course!" The family replied, with a deep sigh, "How could your love for him not be infinite, his knowledge was so vast!"

"Was it really?" asked the youth.

"Who better than you would know that it was the case indeed," replied the family. "Did he not spend his life filling your minds with his boundless knowledge?"

"Not really," answered the youth. "What we actually loved of him was that when he spoke, it was the ever surprising unfolding of our very own thoughts, dressed as his words, which flowed out of his mouth."
Le maître: Une parabole
à la manière d'Oscar Wilde

Claude Lamontagne
2003 3M Teaching Fellow

Quand Socrate fut mort, ses proches se lamentèrent tant et tant de sa disparition qu'ils finirent par manquer de mots pour dire leur infinie tristesse et implorèrent les jeunes que le maître avait formés de leur en enseigner de nouveaux.

"Nous n'en avons pas assez nous-mêmes pour lui rendre l'éloge funèbre que sa grandeur réclame," répondirent-ils à l'unisson!

"Bien sûr," reprirent les proches, d'une voix étreinte par l'émotion, "comment n'auriez-vous pas adoré Socrate? Sa connaissance était si grande!"

"L'était-elle?" demandèrent les jeunes.

"Qui mieux que vous le saurait? N'a-t-il pas passé sa vie à tenter de vous inculquer cette connaissance sans bornes dont il disposait?" s'exclamèrent les proches.

"Si nous l'aimions," répondirent les jeunes, "c'est que lorsqu'il nous parlait, c'était du surprenant déploiement de notre propre pensée qu'il nous inondait."
Passion for Teaching in Higher Education: Two People Who Caught It

Lorne Adams
2004 3M Teaching Fellow

Anna Lathrop
2001 3M Teaching Fellow

THE TEACHER'S PERSPECTIVE

She came to my office in tears. I was very surprised by this turn of events. She was, in my estimation, the brightest member of the class. Her academic performance clearly set her apart from her peers. She was incredibly organized, hard-working and, some would say, driven. An advisor’s dream, she was doing her fourth-year thesis under my supervision. She did things that needed to be done without being asked. Her research was extremely thorough. She feared that she might miss something and that it would compromise her need to have all the pertinent information. Her writing was advanced. Clearly, she was an intellectual in the making. But now, this gifted person (who I would later tease for holding ultra-conservative and right-wing values) was sitting in my office in tears. She just couldn’t do it. She couldn’t manage all the work she had to do and maintain the standards she had set for herself. She was, as they say, “beside herself.” I offered these strategies—a little prioritizing, putting things in perspective, setting work for me aside for a while—and a little reassurance that the world would unfold as it should. Standards could and would be maintained.

After graduation, she came to me and indicated that she felt she needed to pursue a Master’s degree in physical education, and ultimately, an academic’s life. I provided what support I could and wished her well. Not long after that, or so it seemed, during my term as Chair of the Department, she made the short list for a position advertised by my institution. She was young, energetic and so full of potential. That potential may not have been clear to everyone, so as Chair,
I certainly supported her application—and, as some might say, lobbied strongly for her appointment. Her application was successful and we were no longer student and advisor. We were colleagues.

I remember distinctly when she first stated that she had a strong commitment to teaching. She told me that she wanted to be known as a storyteller. She wanted to bring subject matter to life and provide the richness and depth as only a good storyteller can do. She didn’t want to just teach; she wanted to captivate, to instill the same passion for learning that she herself felt so intensely. And so, her journey began. Once again, we shared chats along the way about expectations, students, success and failure, what might work and what might not. She was consumed by her passion for her subject, and as such, her teaching steadily improved. As Chair, I didn’t have to see her course evaluations to know that her teaching was effective. I heard it in the halls, in my office, in conversations with students and comments from colleagues.

As class sizes continued to grow, the demands on professors increased concomitantly. No longer was it possible for an instructor to give the lectures and run all the seminars. So the University increasingly hired teaching assistants to run seminars and to help with the marking. It is no surprise that in some departments, TAs were left pretty much to their own devices. “Here’s a seminar outline—go to it.” Also, not surprisingly, Anna was not one of those professors. Teaching assistants were screened very carefully and given formal training sessions. They attended weekly briefing and debriefing meetings.

Not content to do this only for her students and TAs, she approached the Instructional Development Office to share what she had to offer. She was welcomed with open arms. Sharing and mentoring became a large part of her professional life. Undergraduate students actively sought her out as a thesis advisor to the point that she had to set limits. Graduate students also actively pursued her as a mentor and supervisor. New faculty recognized her as someone who was not only incredibly gifted, but also incredibly willing to share. She was a member of the institution in the truest sense of the word—one who leads by doing. She was someone from whom you could learn—a storyteller in the truest sense of the word.

In 2001 Dr. Anna Lathrop, the young woman who had earlier sat in my office in tears, became the first faculty member in the Department of Physical Education to receive a 3M Teaching Fellowship. The mentee was now the mentor. It was I who was left with a tear in my eye.

THE STUDENT’S PERSPECTIVE

I first met Dr. Lorne Adams in 1974 during my undergraduate program of study. He was a relatively young professor who modeled a number of characteristics
that I neither liked nor appreciated. I held very conservative values. I believed knowledge was absolute, academic disciplines were discrete and well-defined, and that students were expected to absorb knowledge as it was delivered to them by the professoriate. Universities were sites of privilege that maintained the highest academic standards of inquiry. Students were to be rigorously tested. If they failed, they alone were responsible.

Dr. Lorne Adams challenged these values. He was unorthodox in appearance and demeanor. His style was relaxed and a bit too casual, it seemed to me. Covering course content appeared secondary to discussion and critical reflection. He seemed to model his subject and thus, classes were never boring. He was a “storyteller” weaving bits of biography, current events, and the generational markers that students would find relevant and meaningful. At the time, I considered this approach rather unnecessary.

In my third year, he was my professor in a health issues course. Naturally, every topic was rife with controversy, and I always appeared to be on the “right” end of the political debate. This experience, again, made me feel very uncomfortable; and yet I felt that I was being pushed to think outside the box—wrestle with issues in regard to human rights and diversity—in a way that felt “safe” and respectful. In year four, I found myself doing the unthinkable. I asked Lorne to be my thesis advisor. By this time, I recognized I wanted an advisor who would give me the freedom to pursue my research agenda and also, do so with a measure of academic rigor, safety, trust and mutual respect.

In a pattern all too familiar for a number of female academics, the next ten years of the journey might be described as academe disruptus. I entered graduate school. I married. I dropped out of graduate school. I gave birth to two children. (A senior university administrator would later ask what I had done for those “eight lost years” not appearing on my academic transcript. I replied that I was “fulfilling the dominant paradigm.”)

In 1988 I returned to my former alma mater, and there, in an interview that included my former professor, was hired as a sessional instructor. Over the next sixteen years my academic journey proceeded—still characterized by a struggle that entailed the completion of two graduate degrees while balancing the full-time demands of teaching and research. At this juncture, Lorne became a confidant, colleague and friend, ensuring that my shift from former student to full colleague was seamless. As a teacher, although I still struggled with the earlier ghosts related to covering content, maintaining professional distance and institutional gate-keeping, I had the benefit of working within an academic environment that included other colleagues, like Lorne, who truly valued teaching and embodied it in their every professional decision and interaction. I learned how to build the practices of teaching excellence into my courses, and I
began to see what institutional systems were essential in order to preserve and foster an academic climate that valued teaching.

Mossie May Kirkwood, one of a very small group of Canadian women who achieved university teaching positions early in the twentieth century, said "Scholarly passion is caught from persons by persons." I am indeed pleased that I caught a piece of this passion from one of my great teachers, and I am hopeful that I can pass it along to others.
More Testing—Less Anxiety?

Michael Collins
1998 3M Teaching Fellow

Students appreciate choice in the means by which we evaluate them since it gives them an added measure of control over their pathway through a course. In my main course (Biology 2040 – Human Biology) I used to set two in-class tests and a final exam (all compulsory), in addition to a term paper, principally because of the large class size. As class size increased I found that there were ever larger numbers of students missing tests (due to illness, participation in sporting events etc.) requiring me to produce make-up tests and to arrange times and places for them to be written. At this point I was beginning to think of reducing the number of in-class tests to just one, to cut down on the problem of make-up tests.

It was to my great delight then to read an article by Buchanan and Rogers in which they described similar problems with make-up tests, and offered a novel solution—to increase the number of tests! Under this system no make-up tests were given. They found that very few students missed tests and only 10 to 15% of the students elected to write the final exam. Following the article’s suggestions I decided to set three in-class tests and one final exam, in addition to the term paper. Students were only required to write three of the four tests. They could write the first three tests and not write the final exam if they were satisfied with the marks they had scored on those tests. They were also allowed to miss one of the three in-class tests but then had to write the final exam. If they chose to write all four tests, however, the final exam mark counted and then the next two highest scores.

The first time I tried this idea I was amazed at the reduction in the number of students requesting that their in-class tests (usually scored by student markers) be re-marked, perhaps because they knew they had the option of writing another test to replace a lower score. The biggest surprise with this new scheme, however, was the number of students electing to take their marks from the first three tests and not write the final exam. I had assumed that only students with high marks on their in-class tests would decide not to write the final,
but this turned out not to be the case. Even students with bare passes elected not to write the final. In fact that semester fewer than 15% of the class wrote the final exam and since then this has generally been the case. Having to mark so few final exam papers was, for me, a real bonus, and the students really liked the idea of knowing their final course mark prior to the final exam period. This gave many of them more time to revise for the other finals they had to write. It also removed much of the frustration students used to feel when one poor test result could jeopardize their success in the course.

So even though I adopted this scheme to save myself time, the big benefit was for the students who really liked the idea of having some measure of choice in their test assessment. Since that time I have always used this system of testing, and students in my other courses asked me to institute a similar scheme.

Having had success in giving students some choice on test writing, I decided to do the same for the written assignment that up to then had been a single compulsory term paper. Having come across “microthemes,” very short pieces of writing on specific subjects usually 150–400 words in length, I decided to allow students a choice of writing the usual term paper (worth 20%) or weekly microthemes. For the latter I would give out the topic in the Friday class, and the students would hand them in at the end of the Monday class. I would then return them marked on Wednesday. I gave twelve weekly microtheme topics during the term but students only had to write ten, worth 2% each. On average I have found that about one-third of the students opt for the microtheme route and the remainder for the term paper.

In general I have found this approach to assessment to be one my students really appreciate and this contributes to making my teaching more enjoyable. It is definitely an approach that I would recommend to all my colleagues.
Restoring the Magic of Learning

Alastair Summerlee
2003 3M Teaching Fellow

I am deeply and profoundly worried that we have lost our way. In response to the tightening noose of fiscal restraint, we have mistakenly bought into the false premise that teaching is a surrogate for learning. As a result, we have cast off our wizards’ robes and replaced the magical pioneering spirits that inspire learning with pedestrian teaching paradigms.

Where has the magic of learning gone and can we really do anything to stop the tide of mediocrity as it washes over our attempts to hold onto the critical tenets of learning?

Since the mid-eighties, there have been two trains heading on a collision course across the Canadian higher-education landscape: one train is the perfectly legitimate drive to increase participation in Canadian universities and it has resulted in massive increases in university enrolment, the other is the juggernaut of fiscal restraint. The resultant collision has caused a decrease in the quality of education, a tendency to increase class size, and an acceptance of the false premise that to manage the numbers in the face of restraint we need to be more directive in our teaching. Of course, this is a generalization and there remain some beach-heads of hope in the creation of novel learning conditions and circumstances.

Universities and the professoriate need to regain the moral high ground of high-quality education and need to re-think our approach to teaching and learning. As we move through the first decade of this millennium, can we not take the lead and adjust the focus on the process of learning for everyone’s benefit? Can we not take the bold step of major curriculum revision and, in the process, restore the concept of the value of the magical journey to learning?

First, let me explore the three fundamental tenets which I believe are critical for a high-quality learning experience.

1. There must be a reason to learn. There must be an internal mechanism to drive learning. Like Suzuki, the violin teacher, I would
argue that the drive to learn has to be nurtured but it should start from the premise that everyone is capable of being successful: we may be successful in different ways and at different speeds, we may use different approaches—but we can all be successful. Instilling that belief in the learner is the first critical step.

Once upon a time, the driver was clearly fear—the fear of failure and the fear of the examination. But such a process is not universally successful. It may be useful to “sort the sheep from the goats” but in a society that purports to celebrate and value diversity and difference, it is reprehensible as a strategy. On the contrary, I would argue that peer pressure, used in the right way, is a most powerful tool to drive learning.

2. Like radioactive elements, the kernels of knowledge embedded somewhere in our brains decay. We have all experienced this phenomenon. Likewise, the persistence of knowledge is determined by the strength of the original experience and the degree to which the material is repeated or rehearsed. This is not a difficult concept for us all to accept when it comes to a practical skill—it takes dedicated and repeated practice to be able to carry out delicate surgery or stitch appliqué onto a garment—but the same tenet applies to learning abstract or concrete information or skills. Repetition should not be boring and turn off the learner.

3. The end-point of university education must surely be creating lively and enquiring minds that are fascinated by problems and issues. Unlike the person who wins an episode of Jeopardy or Who Wants to be a Millionaire (although such skills would also be helpful) we need a person who does not just rely on recall. In fact, it is better to have a person who can articulate a passion for learning and be able to say, “I don’t know the answer to that—but I’ll tell you in a minute” and then actually go and find out the answer to the problem in a timely fashion. We all learn in different ways and the professoriate should take the responsibility for encouraging each learner to understand his or her own way of processing effectively and efficiently.

After having success in the formal lecture theatre, in seminars, tutorials and laboratories, I do believe that there is an approach to integrated learning which satisfies the three criteria. It is time for a major change in undergraduate education in Canada, a change as fundamental as the pioneering shift in medical education started by McMaster University in the 1960s. It is time to shift
completely the responsibility of learning to the student and to restore the position of the professoriate to that of guide and mentor in the learning journey.

IT IS TIME TO INTRODUCE PROBLEM-BASED LEARNING ACROSS ALL BACCALAUREATE PROGRAMS

But there are always barriers to change—particularly change on the scale proposed. Probably the most fundamental obstacle to the proposed innovation in education is the fear of loss of control by the teacher. The professoriate is used not only to control the curriculum but also its mode of delivery.

The status quo is a very powerful counterbalance to change. How many times do you hear “If it ain’t broke—don’t fix it”? My equally glib retort to such trite statements is: “The wheel is spinning but the hamster is dead.”

Faculty members tend to hold strong allegiances with their departments and schools, and fight relentlessly for time to be spent teaching minute aspects of their discipline, rather than focusing on general curricular development and the overall process of learning. Students themselves, socialized into a way of receiving information, are nervous and anxious about being cast adrift in a sea of knowledge.

The last, and perhaps the most relevant challenge to change, is fiscal. Problem-based learning requires students to work in small groups with faculty. How could it be possible in a cash-strapped Canadian university to teach in groups of eight or nine students with one facilitator, and how could we afford such an approach without overloading faculty? If problem-based tutorials were the prime means of students receiving education and faculty were the only people considered as facilitators (for the purpose of this discussion, no help is envisaged from sessional lecturers or graduate students), and assuming a student-faculty ratio of 24:1 and a group size of eight students, then faculty would have to teach three courses per year. Such radical change would therefore be possible. Moreover, every faculty member could be asked to deliver one lecture per year on their area of research which would make for a very exciting lecture series.

If we are going to change undergraduate education, it is important to develop a holistic approach to change as well as a holistic approach to curriculum and curriculum delivery. To be successful, I would suggest that we need to pay attention to seven principles:

1. Develop shared ownership of the change: faculty need to be broadly involved in the design and development of the curriculum. Set the overall framework for the change but include faculty in the process of reviewing the ideas and listen to every piece of advice and comment.
2. Use students to test and modify ideas; work with students as well as faculty to explore ideas and proposed innovations. Students are a boundless source of enthusiasm and can be empowering and inspiring when it comes to considering change but they are also strong critics of both process and ideas.

3. Compromise: the ability to adjust and compromise whilst not sacrificing core values and principles of a proposed innovation is essential for successful innovation. It is important to know which principles to fight for and which to let go.

4. Describe the innovation as an experiment: experimentation is a fundamental value for universities. The sense that the experiment could be short-term, can be modified and will be subject to rigorous analysis and debate, is critical for the success of the proposed innovation. Longitudinal evaluation strategies should be part of the original proposal so there is a sense of comfort for those who have concerns about the impact on students’ learning.

5. Encourage participation to develop understanding: curriculum change is sometimes difficult to explain. The best way to understand the proposed innovation is to experience and participate in it. Such exposure is usually non-threatening and may actually be enjoyable.

6. Share rewards and celebrate successes: it is unlikely that financial incentives for participation can be part of the innovation package, but it is possible to celebrate the successes. It is remarkable how emails of thanks, letters of appreciation and plaques affect the morale of the exercise. Copied to chairs and deans, such congratulatory notes carry an important message for the promotion and tenure process too.

7. Collaborate with other institutions: innovating alone is often difficult and costly. Experts from other programs and from more experienced programs can often inspire faculty, talk about pitfalls to avoid, reminisce about experiences that encourage continued work on the project, provide resources and support, and often help with comparative research in education which, in turn, strengthens the analysis of the outcomes.

Innovative ideas about education cannot bring about change in and of themselves. It is the relationship between these ideas and the political, economic and social environment that will determine whether such ideas take hold
Her classes were magical. One never knew what approach she would take in order to present a new idea or concept. She is a natural, intuitive teacher whose style is unquestionably student-oriented. She taught me to park my personal beliefs, values and judgments at my clients' front door and to listen, truly listen, to what they were saying. I've never been so pleasantly thrown into unknown waters.

—PAMELA INFANTI

His genuine enthusiasm and love for the material and for the scientific process itself is branded right into me. Like some radical convert to his social ecological camp, I can't help but share his findings and insights with others that I serve. The difference he made in my life now extends forward in time, through me to others.

—MARYANN JOSEPH
and flourish. The pressures to educate more students for less money will continue to rise. It is time to make a serious decision.

Learning should be a magical experience, a journey of epic proportions and, like all good epics, it should be challenging, emotionally draining and fun. It should be mentally and even physically tough, full of unexpected twists and turns interspersed with hints of dramatic vistas, frustrating, demoralizing and captivating (sometimes all at the same time). And journey’s end should be worth celebrating.
In the early nineties Alberta hospitals began laying off nursing staff. We were graduating nurses who quickly left Canada to pursue employment opportunities. The undergraduate students watched these new graduates leave, and many who knew they could not leave expressed frustration and dismay. Some became depressed at what they perceived as a bleak future. With the reduction of staff came a parallel process of reducing clinical opportunities for nursing education, resulting in the crowding of learners in hospitals. Professionally this was unacceptable to me, and so in 1994 I created an opportunity to teach nursing students mental health and psychiatric concepts in an inner-city elementary school. Those wanting community-oriented experiences would typically have observational experiences in agencies focusing on addictions, runaway youth, or sexually transmitted diseases. Our faculty had never used a school as a teaching site for nurses completing practicum or field placement requirements.

Over an eight week period, twelve third-year students planned and implemented sessions at Alex Taylor Community School in Edmonton. Its specific advantages included a receptive administration, a principal who had a history of being a pioneer and innovator in meeting children's needs, and children and families in need of emotional and physical support.

The innovation was a tremendous success. The idea spread to other faculty members and in our current curriculum nursing students are still learning in school settings.

This setting offered hope to the student nurses—they did not have to conceive of nursing as hospital-based. Secondly, when they compared their lives to those of the children, they understood that they had options and privileges and unemployment for them was a temporary situation. Thirdly, the students were given free range within parameters. I held workshops for them but they had to plan the group activities based on Watson’s Model. Lastly, they had to be cre-
ative and courageous. Alex Taylor was located in a high-risk area and students had to do everything on their own.

**EXCERPTS FROM A STUDENT JOURNAL**

Dana, an RN BSc student, kept a journal during her rotation at Alex Taylor Community School. These excerpts take us inside one student's thoughtful experiences.

**September 27, 1994**

It's 10:44 p.m. I've worked hard preparing for tomorrow, my first day at Alex Taylor School. Many emotions and doubts are tumbling around inside me. Above all else I want to have an impact on the life of a child. I want to be a vessel through which self-esteem, happiness, friendship, even hygiene flow. These kids will teach me more than I teach them. Changing people is neither within my power nor is it my responsibility. But it is my responsibility to present truthful information which might help someone to change his or her life.

**September 28**

Today was my first clinical day at Alex Taylor School. The inner city is like another world to me. I feel so privileged to be able to work with these children. The nursing program needs more "non-traditional" clinical rotations like this.

I try to imagine growing up without ever having slept in a bed or not understanding the concept of "dinner" or going to school in bitter weather without socks or mitts.

One child, D., touched me today. He did not want to be with me initially and kept his eyes downcast. So I showed him some of my photos, which led to a discussion of hockey and then to his story about how he's never met his dad (he's eleven) and how his sister gets beaten up at school. Underneath his tough shell, which he needs to survive, he desperately longs for a father figure. I felt very honoured that he opened himself that much to me our first day.

**October 6**

I can hardly believe bleach and food colouring could get across a point so well! It was a great aid for discussing feelings, enabling our kids to internalize the concept of "dealing properly" with "dark feelings." It thrilled me to see each little body stretched to watch the simple scientific experiment, followed by exclamations of Cool! Way out! How'd you do that? I know they'll remember that lesson.

C. said something which made my heart ache. We were discussing...
feelings and he said "I don't think I have ever been really happy in my whole life. I'm lonely all the time."

I think a lot goes through J.'s mind, because when he shares in groups, it is very moving and deep. He doesn't discuss the things a child usually does. Perhaps he's like B., who seems like an adult in the body of a child. S. is very touchy, wants hugs from me and won't let go. He said when he's mad he wants to punch people in the face. He's another one I'd love to take home. H. has very low self-esteem. She needs lots of positive reinforcement and encouragement too. I feel a sense of victory when she asks a question or maintains eye contact. I love to watch these kids blossom. It reminds me that "no one is a human being, everyone is a human becoming."

October 12
I love it when these kids soften enough to drop the mask and facade of "I'm tough! I'm cool! Don't get too close!" Many say they don't really have someone they can talk to, which makes me want a full-time job here! In my Developmental Psychology class we are again rehashing the nature/nurture theories. I don't understand how anyone can deny the effect environment can have.

D., my eleven-year-old boy for individual sessions, was very withdrawn and quiet today, preoccupied with the fact that his mom had given away his new kitten but kept her own. He felt let down and betrayed.

October 28
I never would have dreamed I would be using syringes to water Mr. Potato Heads, which just goes to show that nursing truly can be a creative art, not just a scientific process.

Last week I noticed H. really starting to open up, freeing herself to smile and share her opinion. This is great! She can relax, trust, and be free to be who she is meant to be. The principal encourages the school and the community to work together to combat loneliness and isolation. Yet they're everywhere.

S. from my second group is always a bit louder, more demanding than the others. This week he whispered after our session, "Do I make you mad? Do I make it hard to run your group? Does it bother you to have me with you?" When I assured him that the group wouldn't be the same without him and that I truly appreciated his presence, he put his arms around me and hugged me tight.
The different personalities of these children really shine through when they are given the freedom to experience their worth.

The past two weeks have left me feeling confident, self-assured. But tomorrow we are dealing with sensitive topics: change, loneliness, loss, group termination. Knowing how to deal with loss, that there is a “good” side to it, can affect someone’s whole life. We’re going to try a sort of meditation exercise to find our “secret places” to go to. I hope it works.

November 2
On my advice D. got his hair cut to show off his beautiful eyes. He seems in some ways like a different little boy, and he’s truly blessed me in the past eight weeks.

November 16
It is my hope and prayer that in these short eight weeks we were able to impact the lives of these children in some way. They have taught me so very much about life. My love for them will continue. When I hear the phrase “inner-city children,” I will no longer see negative images of lost little people. Rather I will always have a picture of sixteen lopsided, toothy little grins beaming up at me. On September 27 I wrote in this journal that I do not hold the power to change anyone, and still believe this is true. Yet now I realize that if I have instilled within even one child the confidence to change, I have some power all the same.
Errer ou périr

Denis Bélisle

Je l’ai rencontré la première fois il y a plus de vingt ans, dans une salle de cours bondée, où l’attendaient plus de cinquante jeunes adultes, assis comme au théâtre mais sans fébrilité, disposés par paliers, devant une plate-forme centrale qui jusque là n’avait surtout été, pour moi du moins, qu’une tribune servant à débiter du déjà lu déjà vu. Rien de neuf sous la pluie en ce matin de septembre 1980, et encore moins dans cette salle humide, sentant l’imperméable et le linge mouillé, alors que tous s’affairaient aux petits objets du culte académique: cahiers, tablettes, livres, crayons, chacun consacrant ainsi son petit autel et se préparant pour la cérémonie des notes—la prise de celles qui en apporteront, espère-t-on, une bonne à la fin. Moi, je n’avais que cigarettes, café, et la certitude que pour quiconque a un peu d’imagination, il est impossible de ne pas rater sa vie.

Par dérision, par nécessité, je me retrouvais encore à l’école. Ce moyen terme entre l’hypnose salariée des entreprises et l’indigence immonde de la cloche. Étudier, apprendre, savoir .... Le refuge ultime, toujours à refaire, le soir; qui se construit de doutes harnachés, de certitudes anéanties et d’anticipations acharnées. J’avais toujours pressenti l’existence d’un royaume de secrets, tout proche, prêt à être révélé, et pourtant si loin, puisque personne ne semblait y être allé. Personne même pour reconnaître qu’il y a là une forme essentielle de vie: la connaissance, celle qui se déploie et qui nous possède à un degré tel qu’elle se confond avec nous-mêmes. C’était une soif intense, déçue. Ma première année universitaire m’avait, encore une fois, exposé à une immense vacuité de sens, servie par des glottes inconscientes, annonçant des litanies de recettes aussitôt recopiées par des centaines de doigts, rabaisant d’innombrables yeux sur des blanches griffonnées, au lieu de faire les fronts s’élever et d’entraîner l’esprit à chercher quelque chose qui soit digne d’un regard. Aussitôt les derniers examens terminés, la gorge en feu, j’ai fui. Trente dollars en poche, le pouce, l’Ouest.

Cet été-là, j’ai vagabondé sur plus de quinze mille kilomètres, occupant divers emplois au gré des nécessités, séjournant dans les montagnes, traînant
dans les villes. J’ai rencontré des destins tout tracés, qui me venaient d’étrangers: un jeune homme avec de riches parents qui me voulait pour associé, une jeune femme tombée amoureuse de moi, une autre que j’ai aimée, un bandit qui voulait m’entraîner dans la contrebande, d’autres étudiants, des travailleurs, des voyageurs, tous des gens en mouvement, évoluant dans les décors de ce monde, faits de boulevards, d’océan, de gratte-ciel, de falaises, de maisons et de forêts. La carrière? Très peu pour moi. Mon seul but a toujours été de faire l’expérience de la condition humaine, et la plus sublime de ses richesses semblait être cette vie intérieure, cette pensée fluide qui se forme et se déforme en nous, qui nous habite, mais dont personne ne parle ....

Je suis revenu à l’automne, tel un migrateur, vers l’école. Par habitude. Mais ce matin-là, jour de rentrée, entre les parapluies et les cahiers des autres, les yeux encore pleins de soleil et d’aventures, j’en étais à préparer un choix—un choix capital. Je me souviens encore des mots exacts qui me venaient alors à l’esprit: “S’il ne se passe pas bientôt quelque chose de dramatiquement différent, la semaine prochaine je retourne dans l’Ouest. Au diable toute cette mascarade!”

ghro—il est en retard. Il arrive, un gobelet de café à la main. Pas de livres, pas de documents. Il nous regarde comme en passant, sourit, boit une gorgée de café. Il arpente la salle de long en large en nous jetant de brefs coups d’œil. Pendant quelques minutes, c’est tout ce qu’il fait, en buvant le café. Soudain il s’arrête, déclare: “Bonjour! Je serai avec vous cette session pour que nous fassions ensemble un bout de chemin. Je parle vite. Je sais que je parle vite. Je parle vite parce que je ne veux pas que vous preniez de notes. Dans ce cours, il n’y aura pas de livre, pas d’examen. Nous allons plutôt parler—parler de connaissance ....” Puis il offre son discours, sa pensée qui chemine et qui, par la sympathie des choses, le pousse encore à marcher, de long en large—comme un fauve en cage, il nous fait rêver de liberté.

Je ne suis pas retourné dans l’Ouest la semaine suivante. Dix ans plus tard je terminais mes études doctorales avec ce personnage qui, somme toute, ne ressemble en rien à l’image que je pouvais avoir d’un universitaire. Regardez-le: il rit! Il s’amuse. Il a de l’audace, il tente le sort et parfois même, Oh! Hérésie!, il a tort. Cela a été un voyage fabuleux, entraîné à sa suite comme par une vague me poussant vers mes propres découvertes. J’ai eu bien des enseignants, dont certains ne manquaient pas d’intelligence, de culture ou de bienveillance mais, à la lumière de ce que ma jeunesse avait de désir et d’intensité, j’ai souvenu l’impression que, de professeur, je n’en ai eu qu’un seul.
Voices

Mark Weisberg
1995 3M Teaching Fellow

The reason we’re here is because someone important once listened to us. Not because someone once told us something.

Janet Emig, English professor, to a group of teachers; quoted in Peter Elbow, What is English?

That’s what teaching should be about but isn’t: discerning the gift. Too often the central activity of our discipline is judging. The major thing we have learned to do in life is to assign grades.

Mary Rose O’Reilley,
The Peaceable Classroom

Human beings, no matter what their background, need to feel that they are safe in order to open themselves to transformation. They need to feel a connection between a given subject matter and who they are in order for knowledge to take root. That security and that connectedness are seldom present in a classroom that recognizes the students’ cognitive capacities alone. People often assume that attention to the emotional lives of students, to their spiritual yearnings and their imaginative energies, will somehow inhibit the intellect’s free play, drown it in a wash of sentiment, or deflect it into realms of fantasy and escape, that the critical and analytical faculties will be muffled, reined in, or blunted as a result. I believe the reverse is true.

Jane Tompkins,
A Life in School:
What the Teacher Learned

178
Attention: deep listening. People are dying in spirit for lack of it. In academic culture most listening is critical listening. We tend to pay attention only long enough to develop a counter-argument. We critique the student’s or colleague’s idea; we mentally grade and pigeonhole each other. In society at large, people often listen with an agenda, to sell or petition or seduce. Seldom is there a deep, openhearted, unjudging reception of the other. And so we all talk louder and more stridently and with a terrible desperation. By contrast, if someone truly listens to me, my spirit begins to expand.

MARY ROSE O'REILLEY,
Radical Presence:
Teaching as Contemplative Practice

I would like to meet the concern about turning the classroom into “some kind of therapy group” ... by observing that good teaching is, in the classical sense, therapy: good teaching involves reweaving the spirit. (Bad teaching, by contrast, is soul murder.)

The Peaceable Classroom

... every effective teacher owes it to students to teach them the art of reflecting on the personal and social meaning of what they are being taught.

WAYNE BOOTH,
The Vocation of a Teacher

Conventional classroom hierarchies encourage extremes of both unreflective passivity and aggressive competition. The structure of professional control over the content and evaluation of the learning process discourages independent thought and encourages participation more designed to impress than to inform.

DEBORAH RHODE,
Gender and Professional Roles

A class doesn’t get to know itself until it has been let go. People’s personalities won’t be visible, their feelings and opinions won’t surface, unless the teacher gets out of the way on a regular basis. You have to be willing to give up your authority, and the sense of identity and prestige that come with it, for the students to be able feel their authority. To get out of the students’ way, the teacher has
to learn to get out of her own way. To not let her ego call the shots all the time. This is incredibly difficult. But I think it is a true path for a teacher.

A Life in School

Good teaching cannot be reduced to technique; good teaching comes from the identity and integrity of the teacher.

PARKER PALMER,
The Courage to Teach

There are an infinite number of approaches to every concept. One can only wonder at the risks involved in grabbing a single way of looking at a topic and presenting it as a lesson.

VIVIAN PALEY,
The Boy Who Would Be a Helicopter

War begins in banality, the suppression of the personal and idiosyncratic. By contrast, “[a] language that takes our emotions seriously and gives them real weight in our lives encourages us to think and be and act differently .... [At] Harvard ... the first thing they learn is not to say ‘I.’ That is forbidden .... In learning the language of domination these students learn to give up their subjectivity, their emotionality, their range of experience, their partisanship." Such education feeds the purposes of authoritarian structures, governmental and religious ... fostering “a compulsive need for order, a fear of confusion or chaos, a desire for clarity and control ... a culture of obedience.”

DOROTHY SOELLE,
quoted in The Peaceable Classroom

The first goal of education—if we think it has anything to do with values—is to bring students to a knowledge of the world within: its geography and anthropology, depths and heights, myths and primary texts .... Our second goal should be to help the student bring his subjective vision into community .... The classroom, then, must be a meeting place for both silent meditation and verbal witness, of interplay between interiority and community.

The Peaceable Classroom
If research universities ... are going to become places where people like to come to work in the morning, where the employees have a stake and feel they belong, then they will have to model something besides an ideal of individual excellence. By the way they conduct their own internal business, they’ll need to model our dependence on one another, our need for mutual respect and support, acceptance and encouragement. If the places that young people go to be educated don’t embody the ideals of community, cooperation, and harmony, then what young people will learn will be the behavior those institutions do exemplify: competitiveness, hierarchy, busyness, and isolation.”

A Life in School

How a community treats its outsiders is the mirror of its moral landscape.

The Boy Who Would Be a Helicopter

When we listen primarily to what we ought to be doing with our lives, we may find ourselves hounded by external expectations that can distort our identity and integrity .... In contrast ... Frederick Buechner offers a more generous and humane image of vocation as “the place where your deep gladness and the world’s deep hunger meet.” In a culture that sometimes equates work with suffering, it is revolutionary to suggest that the best inward sign of vocation is deep gladness—revolutionary but true. If a work is mine to do, it will make me glad over the long haul, despite the difficult days .... If a work does not gladden me in these ways, I need to consider laying it down.

The Courage to Teach

Teachers teach who they are as much as what they know.

What is English

The longest journey a person can take is the twelve inches from the head to the heart. Who is helping our students to make this journey?

A Life in School
A Message from the Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education

Julia Christensen Hughes
President, STLHE/SAPES

This book celebrates many things. It celebrates the twentieth anniversary of the 3M Teaching Fellowships Program and the faculty from across the country who have been honoured for their exceptional commitment to university teaching and learning, including demonstrated teaching excellence, contributions to scholarship, and advocacy for the improvement of teaching within their academic communities. The voices contained within this volume demonstrate how passionately many faculty feel about their vocation.

Canadian society benefits tremendously from this commitment and passion. Noted educational philosopher John Dewy argued in the early 1900s that an effective education system is an essential underpinning of any democratic society, as it nurtures the ability for critical reflection, appreciation of the arts, and the opportunity to develop skills for understanding and resolving diverse points of view. Today, in addition to these societal benefits, we also recognize that higher education is associated with intellectual capital and a higher standard of living. In other words, effective teaching and learning are directly linked with many positive societal outcomes, and so we celebrate those who contribute to Canadian society in this very important way.

This book also celebrates the long-standing and productive relationship between the Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education and 3M Canada that has resulted in this unique program’s success. The Society is exceptionally grateful to John Myser from 3M Canada who helped found the program and Greg Snow and Sue Romyn who have continued to advocate on its behalf. Special thanks to Dale Roy who coordinated the program on behalf of the Society, from its inception in 1987 to 2000, and to Arshad Ahmad who coordinates the program today, along with Alex Fancy, Clarissa Green, Guy Allen, Michael Moore, Anna Lathrop, Claude Lamontagne and Sylvia Riselay, key players in the newly created Council of 3M Teaching Fellows. The Council is a highly
active group of award winners that continuously seek opportunities for fostering teaching excellence. In this way, in addition to supporting the national teaching awards, the 3M Teaching Fellowships Program represents a community that is committed to advancing the scholarship of teaching and learning and advocating for teaching excellence across the country.

Finally, this book celebrates university students. Their contributions clearly demonstrate how committed students can be to their own learning and how deeply appreciative they are of faculty who bring curiosity, creativity, and compassion, along with high expectations for themselves and their students, to the learning environment. Their voices should serve as heartfelt thanks to our current 3M Teaching Fellows and inspiration for those to come.
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