



# Faculty Focus

## "Making Meanings of Our Multiple Literacies" Opens Year-Long Campus Focus on Literacies

On August 20 and 21, TLA sponsored a two-day event, "Making Meanings of our Multiple Literacies," introducing on our campus a year-long focus on this vital teaching and learning concern. Glynda Hull, Associate Professor of Education in Language, Literacy, and Culture at Berkeley keynote Monday morning's Community Day of Welcome, reminding us that students gain literate identity when we foster students' sense of self as powerful users of language, print, and images. She asked us to consider what literacies we teach in our classes, and what ways we use to connect students to literacies in the community. "Literacy is a social practice," she explained, "and fitting literate activities into people's lives fosters strong literate identities with which to participate responsibly in the world."

Monday afternoon and Tuesday brimmed with dialogue, ideas, strategies, and reflection about the ways we do and can incorporate multiple literacies into our own teaching. Twenty faculty members offered presentations and workshops on a wide variety of literacy practices, including constructivist pedagogies in the context of literacies in math, science, social science, writing, liberal studies and the arts. Workshops ranged from hands-on practice for integrating information literacies into courses to "take-away" strategies for supporting writing, reading, and multi-cultural literacies in the classroom.

Faculty reported gaining a variety of insights from this well-attended event. "Literacies are always context-dependent. We really have to consider



our students' cultural and social identities to understand their literacies," one faculty member remarked. "Process, process, process," another faculty member said. "I was inspired to break the code and make new codes." "I am seeing literacy through new, fresh lenses," another faculty noted, "and I found strategies for teaching to our students' diversities."

Another important outcome of this two-day faculty gathering was what one member called "wonderful community building." Others remarked, "I was energized by talking with other instructors in other disciplines about strategies. It was a great opportunity for dialogue across disciplines."

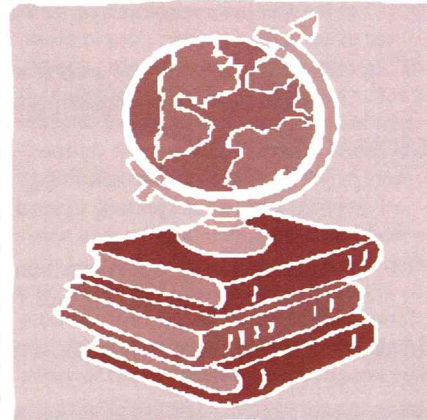
Appreciations to everyone who offered workshops and presentations during this event, and thanks to all of you who enthusiastically participated. Many faculty requested more workshops throughout the year, as a way to continue to exchange ideas with colleagues and to develop the values and practices introduced in the two-day event. If you weren't able to attend the two-day event, TLA will be offering "Literacy Lunches" throughout the year where we can continue to examine our values and practices related to academic literacies and to explore further ways to practice assets-based literacies instruction. Two workshops are scheduled for October. (See the announcement on page 2.)

If you would like to request a particular workshop topic, please contact Annette March or Amy Driscoll (x4517).



**Inside this issue:**

|  |   |
|--|---|
| The CSUMB Capstone Experience                            | 2 |
| Literacy Lunches   | 2 |
| Peggy Laughlin Puts the Vision Into Action               | 3 |
| Some Thoughts on Assessment                              | 3 |
| ULR's at International Assessment Conference in Scotland | 4 |
| Learning Styles Vary According to Learning Situation     | 4 |
| Educational Effectiveness Committee Prepares for WASC    | 5 |
| Further Considerations of Literacies                     | 5 |
| Teaching & Learning with Technology Roundtable           | 6 |
| Faculty Plan Community Events for Peace                  | 6 |
| Scholarship Opportunities                                | 6 |
| Recent Faculty Scholarship                               | 7 |
| Best Practices for Expanding Classroom Dialogue          | 8 |



# The CSUMB Capstone Experience: A Cross-Campus Survey of Capstone Practices

By Dan Shapiro

One of the many aspects I find so invigorating about CSUMB is the pride institutes take in their student capstone projects, something I can relate to after having coordinated the ESSP capstone experience for the past four years. Over this time period, however, I have had little opportunity to learn about how all the degree-offering programs at CSUMB have set up their individual capstone processes. During a meeting last January of Capstone Seminar Instructors and Institute Directors, it became clear that I was not alone: few of us really understood how other institutes ran their capstone programs. Consequently, a subgroup of Capstone Seminar instructors determined that a survey of all the capstone would be a useful activity for several reasons: 1) it would allow different institutes to learn about and share best capstone practices, 2) it would enable us to identify common challenges we all faced, 3) it would help us begin campus-wide discussions about how we can use student capstone projects to assess and improve the educational effectiveness of CSUMB, and 4) it would provide vital information and documentation for WASC's upcoming accreditation visit.

As a first step, I interviewed capstone seminar instructors from CSUMB's 12 under-

graduate degree-offering programs and the Masters of Arts in Education program. Over the summer I compiled and synthesized this information in a report, which includes brief descriptions to assess and improve the educational effectiveness of CSUMB capstone programs.

After conducting these interviews, what struck me as the most unique aspect of CSUMB's Capstone program is its interdisciplinary nature. Although many campuses require students to do a senior thesis, few are asking students to do the challenging interdisciplinary work our majors demand.

I also found that Capstone programs across campus faced similar challenges. Perhaps the most significant challenges are related to "scaling up." Many institutes are struggling to maintain the integrity and quality of the capstone experience in an increasingly resource-limited environment. While faculty and staff cherish the rewarding the one-on-one interactions that capstone spawns, the high quality of these relationships is threatened by increasing numbers of students having the potential of overwhelming faculty.

There were several recommendations that emerged from the report. Among those: 1) interview alumni to identify ways in which

they feel the capstone experience prepared them for post-CSUMB work, and ways the capstone experience can be improved to better prepare students, 2) get feedback from those who have employed CSUMB graduates about what appears to be working in CSUMB's capstone process, and what could be better; perhaps ask them to review capstone outcomes and evaluate their applicability, 3) develop systematic procedures for using student capstone work for program and university self-assessment, 4) post capstone guidelines, as well as assessment outcomes, criteria and standards for all institutes on a central capstone website to facilitate sharing of best practices among institutes and help those outside the university understand the CSUMB capstone process, 5) insure that institutional support for capstone increases with increasing numbers of students.

Of course, some institutes are already engaging in many of these activities, and it's clear we all have a lot to learn from each other. Clearly CSUMB should feel very proud of the capstone experience—what we and our students are accomplishing is truly wonderful. And it's also delightfully clear that we have yet to reach our full potential.

## TEACHING, LEARNING, AND ASSESSMENT LUNCHES: MENU FEATURES ASSESSMENT AND LITERACY ENTREES

We cordially invite you to spend one or more of your lunch hours at the Center for Teaching, Learning, and Assessment in Building 10 with your colleagues discussing issues, strategies, concerns, and successes related to assessment and literacy. Although the menu is slim in terms of food—we can't fund food anymore, so bring your lunch—the menu is satisfying and diverse with the ideas and discussions of rich classroom experiences. You definitely won't have to worry about calories with our offerings.

### ASSESSMENT LUNCHES:

Wed., October 3 with Amy Driscoll  
"Assessment Integrated in Your Pedagogy"

Wed., November 14 with Dan Shapiro  
"Assessment with Collaborative Learning/Group Pedagogy"

### LITERACY LUNCHES

Wed., October 24 with Peggy Laughlin and Annette March  
"Teaching/Integrating Critical Reading Skills in the Majors"

Wed., Nov. 21 with Sean Madden and Annette March  
"Email Culture, Ethics, and Tools"

**12 noon to 1:15 p.m.. Drinks are provided!**



# Teacher Educator Peggy Laughlin Puts the Vision into Action

When you ask Peggy Laughlin how she spent her summer, her eyes sparkle as she describes her time spent in the Salinas City Elementary School District as part of a grant for implementing an intensive English language project. As a teacher-educator, Peggy is aware of a growing knowledge base of information and approaches for working with second language learners, and she has been looking for a way to work more directly with classroom teachers. She queried, "What's really happening in classrooms? I wanted to find that out and to find a place to apply the pedagogy I am teaching in my CSUMB classes."

In May 2001, the opportunity arrived and Peggy agreed to be part of the implementation team in Salinas for an intensive English language project. During the summer she wore multiple hats as she developed workshops and presentations for the teachers, observed teachers and students in the classrooms, and taught model lessons to students. When she talks about the last of her responsibilities—actually teaching in classrooms—she gets excited. "I got to experience the whole picture, first hand

again, what it's like with all that is happening in a classroom." Peggy comes to teacher education with seventeen years of experience as a bilingual teacher in K-8 classrooms, but it's been five years since she left those classrooms. As she described it, "We tend to focus on our own area of expertise and lose sight of the whole picture."



Peggy described many insights from her experience of "being in the moment" in classrooms. She learned much from the veteran teachers and helped them connect to the new

teachers. While working in the school, Peggy was able to guide the transition of some of our recent CSUMB graduates, recent hires in the district. "It was a great opportunity to help them bridge our program to their school setting as they began their careers."

When asked about the impact of her summer on this year's teaching at CSUMB, Peggy never hesitated as she described several applications. "First," she grinned, "I have great student evidence at varying levels from my own teaching to use in my classes." She also described new strategies and insights from her model lessons.

Peggy views her summer work as a powerful professional development experience. She also sees much potential for both Scholarship of Teaching and Scholarship of Application. She hopes to continue developing links with schools and has several projects started that would be of interest and use in classrooms. Peggy's work certainly reflects much of the CSUMB vision in action.

## Some Thoughts on Assessment

By Amy Driscoll

One of the down sides of being Director of Teaching, Learning and Assessment is the lack of interaction with students after years of classroom teaching and a genuine love of the work. I am constantly looking for opportunities to dialogue with students about learning—looking for insights to weave into my work with faculty. I often find my opportunities in the community where many of our students work.

I have frequent interactions with a student who I encounter often in the community. I seek out conversations with her because she appears to be thoughtful and committed to her studies. She frequently describes, with great enthusiasm, what she is learning. I'd like to describe one of my conversations with her last May because her comments have continued to stay with me. I hope you will think about them with me.

Our conversation occurred during the last week of classes, and I naturally asked, "Are you finished with your coursework?" and "How have you done?" She described two courses in which she produced work all through the semester, was clear about her learning, and felt that she had achieved well (she has high expectations of herself). She described her other course with frustration and discouragement. "I don't even know how I'm doing in that class." When I was puzzled by that possibility, she responded, "Every-

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 2

thing is based on our final exam, and it's been hard to get clarity about that." Being who I am, I asked, "Were there specific outcomes in the course?" She couldn't remember seeing or hearing of any. We talked some more—I did not ask for the name of the course or the instructor's name.

Each student's impression is important and needs to be taken seriously, and although this feedback comes from only one student, she is a committed student with whom I've discussed pedagogy and course work for almost two years.

The student's comments have remained in my conscious memory for several reasons. First, the course assessment process did not sound like the kind of approach that fits CSUMB's pedagogy and philosophy of teaching and learning. Secondly, the practice described is a contradiction of good assessment practice. According to experts, "assessment is most effective when it reflects an understanding of learning as multidimensional, integrated, and revealed in performance over time." (AAHE, 2000.) None of those qualities can be associated with the "all or nothing" final exam approach. Finally, her experience was familiar to me. I remember similar frustration in my own university experiences at all levels. I recall courses that lacked clarity of direction and articulation of outcomes, and I suffered through effective (in terms of grades) but meaningless "cramming" for those

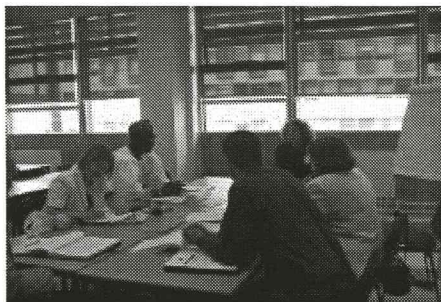
same high stakes exams.

Of course, it is true that students are often unaware that they are being assessed even when we consistently use assessment approaches in our courses. Some of our best assessment in the teaching and learning activities, and not explicitly evident as assessment. That may be the case for the student I described. However, even the most effectively embedded assessment can give students feedback on how they are doing, whether they are learning, and if they are achieving the outcomes.

Exams themselves are not what concern me, but I do think about my student acquaintance and her classmates. Are they learning well without the feedback they need during the semester? Is the instructor aware of each student's progress in the class in order to support that progress? Is there sufficient feedback from instructor to students to foster the faculty/student relationships that result in the most effective student learning? Students need information on the progress of their learning, because without that, they can't direct their own learning efforts. I hope you will question with me. Do your assessment approaches provide such learning supports? Are they explicit enough that students are aware of the information and supports you are providing?

# ULR's Featured at International Assessment Conference in Scotland

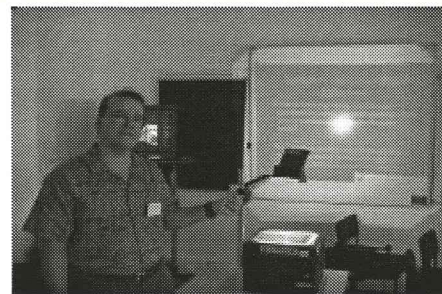
On July 25, 2001, Amy Driscoll, Ilene Feinman, and Swarup Wood described CSUMB's general education University Learning Requirements at the 13th International Conference on Assessing Quality in Higher Education in Glasgow, Scotland. Their presentation was part of a three-day meeting attended by educators from many



countries and coordinated by Trudy Banta from IUPUI.

In their presentation, Amy highlighted our campus' thinking about assessment and the processes with which we've developed our outcome-based approaches. Ilene gave first hand accounts of the ULR learning communities and their important role in our assessment model. She provided and explained several ULR examples for the attendees, who responded enthusiastically. Swarup presented the findings from his interview study of faculty who participated in the 2000-2001 development of assessment protocols for ULR's. His data has compelling implications for campuses considering an outcome-based approach.

The threesome had opportunities to listen to



and interact with assessment experts from the U.S., Great Britain, Australia, South Africa, and Hong Kong. They were inspired by new insights about assessment and heard many of CSUMB's approaches affirmed in conference sessions. They also enjoyed the history, culture and hospitality of the Scottish people.

## Learning Styles Vary According to Learning Situation

The idea of learning or cognitive styles has been around for some time now. The concept (documented by considerable research) that students approach learning tasks differently makes sense to faculty. We see it in the various ways our students tackle course content. And we see patterns, consistent ways of approaching the tasks that are characteristic of groups of learners, that allow for the identification of specific learning styles. And most faculty now accept that content is best presented in different ways that respond to these various cognitive approaches.

That's where we've been for a number of years, but now a number of researchers are objecting to the notion of learning style as some sort of stable trait that is impervious to the context. Biggs, Kember, and Leung are among these researchers and their work is referenced below. They argue convincingly for a much more complicated and dynamic relationship between learners and teachers. An "approach" to (or style of) learning results from the relationship between student, context, and task. There are three variables in the relationship.

First is the **preferred** approach that identifies the extent to which individual learners might differ. Here the interest is in comparing and contrasting the motives, strategies, and approaches of individual learners. The focus is on the individual learner.

Second is the **ongoing** approach that describes how tasks are handled. They are handled differently, not just because learners approach them differently, but because the tasks themselves are different and require different learning strategies.

And finally is the **contextual** approach that allows for comparisons between whole classes or even institutions. Context involves the different instructional methods that might be used in different classes. The argument here is that these methods do interact and influence the approaches taken by individual learners.

These approaches mean that an individual's learning style or approach is based on his or her individual learning proclivities but that style is mediated by the kind of tasks facing the learner and the context or environment in which that task and learner are situated. Biggs, Kember, and Lueng describe approaches to learning in the context of deep and surface learning. Some have seen deep and surface learning as "styles" in that learners may have a surface "style" in which they always memorize, focus on details, and regurgitate only what they think the teacher wants. Other students are "deep" learners and always deal with material at the level of conceptual understanding.

The researchers point out that some teaching and assessment methods encourage students to take "surface" approaches. If the course covers a great deal of material and if learning of that material is assessed via multiple-choice exams which focus on information details, students who may well prefer deep approaches are forced to take surfaced approaches, if they want to do well in the course. And one thing we know for certain about students, they are very good at figuring out what they need to do to succeed in a course. That's not to say they always do it, but they usually do know what it takes to succeed.

Biggs and colleagues argue from a different perspective than those who see learning styles as fixed, individual learning characteristics. They say that the approaches that prevail in a classroom, that is, how the students are approaching the learning tasks, "tell us something about the quality of the teaching environment," not just something about the characteristics of the individual learners. The implication, of course, is that individual approaches to learning can be influenced by, indeed changed, by the nature of tasks given those learners and learning contexts created.

And so, rather than the teacher working with fixed learning styles and finding different instructional methods that connect with different cognitive styles, this view allows teachers to use the dynamic relationship between individual approaches to learning, the nature of learning, the nature of learning task, and the learning environment to positively affect learning outcomes.

**Reference:** Biggs, John, Kember, David and Leung, Doris Y.P. (2001). The revised two-factor study process questionnaire: R-SPQ-2F. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 71, 133-149.

We're On The  
Web!  
[www.csumb.edu/academic/centers/ta](http://www.csumb.edu/academic/centers/ta)

# Educational Effectiveness Committee Prepares for WASC

Members of the Educational Effectiveness Committee are actively engaged in a process of inquiry, study, research, and documentation. Our colleagues have committed their efforts and expertise to respond to WASC's questions:

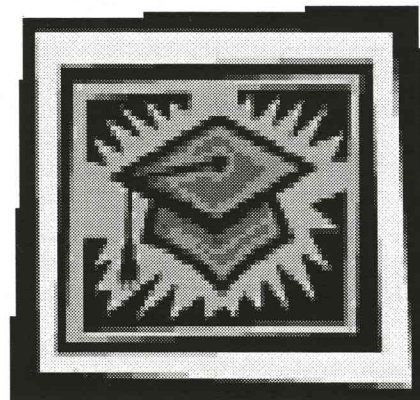
1. Does the institution have effective means to review and evaluate the outcomes of its educational model?
2. Is there a continuous process of inquiry and engagement by the institution to enhance educational effectiveness?
3. Does the institution utilize good practices to assess student learning?
4. Are institutional resources aligned with activities designed to achieve educational effectiveness?

5. Does CSUMB's educational model yield better outcomes for students and their employers than more traditional models and is there convincing proof of the value of this approach for student learning and talent development?

The Educational Effectiveness committee, chaired by Amy Driscoll, is made up of the following: Juan Avalos, Ilene Feinman, Rafael Gomez, Lynda Haddox, Joe Larkin, Annette March, Seth Pollack, Dan Shapiro, Brian Simmons, Swarup Wood, and Matt Fiori, supported by Linda Stamps and Salina Dilorio.

In planning a framework and a process for their documentation work, the committee aims to proceed in ways that are scholarly, visible, and learning oriented.

The committee members will intentionally engage all faculty members in a data gathering process within the institutes, a process surveying the use of "best practices" of assessment in each major.



## Further Considerations of Literacies

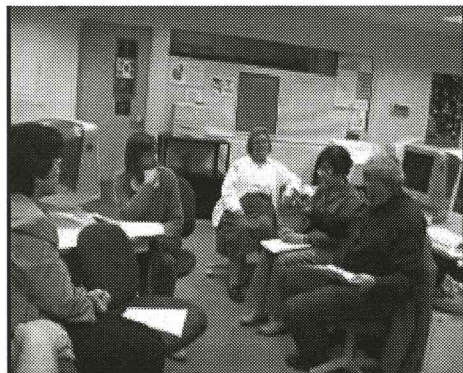
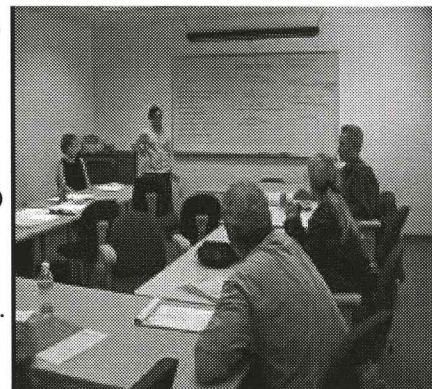


Our library and TLA hold a variety of resources for further reading about multiple literacies. Here are just a few of these titles. Books owned by TLA are available for you to check out in Bldg. 10.

L=Library      LO=On Order at Library      TLA=Center for Teaching, Learning & Assessment

- Dunn, P.A. (1995). *Learning Re-abled: The Learning Disability Controversy and Composition Studies*. (LO)
- Grabill, J. (2001). *Community Literacy Programs and the Politics of Change*. (LO/TLA)
- Grimm, Nancy M. (1999). *Good Intentions: Writing Center Work for Postmodern Times*. (L/TLA)
- Hourigan, M. (1993). *Literacy as Social Exchange: Intersection of Class, Gender and Culture*. (L)
- Hull, G. (1989). "Research on Writing: Building a Cognitive and Social Understanding of Composing." In *Toward the Thinking Curriculum: Current Cognitive Research*. L.B. Resnick & L. E. Klopfer, eds. (LO)
- Knoblauch, C.H., & Brannon, L. *Critical Teaching and the Idea of Literacy*. (TLA)

- Kutz, E. (1997). *Language and Literacy: Studying Discourse in Communities and Classrooms*. (L)
- Moje, E. & O'Brien, D. (2001). *Constructions of Literacy*. (L)
- Rose, M. (1989). *Lives on the Boundary*. (L/TLA)
- Rose, M. (1996). *Possible Lives; The Promise of Public Education in America*. (L)
- Shor, I. & Pari, C. (1999). *Critical Literacy in Action: Writing Words, Changing Worlds*. (LO/TLA)
- Shor, I. & Pari, C. (2000) *Education is Politics: Critical Teaching Across Differences, Post-secondary. A Tribute to the Life and Work of Paulo Friere*. (LO)
- Street, B. (1993). *Cross-Cultural Approaches to Literacy*. (L/TLA)
- Warschauer, M. (1999). *Electronic Literacies: Language, Culture and Power in Online Education*. (L/TLA)
- Zamel, V and Spack, R., eds. (1998). *Negotiating Academic Literacies: Teaching and Learning Across Languages and Cultures*. (L)



# Teaching and Learning with Technology Roundtable

By Juan Gutierrez and Mike Albright

The Teaching and Learning with Technology Roundtable (TLTR) has begun its second year of operations. During its first year, the TLTR achieved considerable success in creating a space for dialogue, in order to enhance communication between IT and faculty. This year TLTR will emphasize best practices in Teaching and Learning with Technology. The first upcoming session will discuss the implementation of an innovative Distance Learning Program for Liberal Studies (LS On-line).

TLTR was originally established in Fall 2000, following planning sessions con-

ducted by a contingent of 14 campus representatives at the TLT Summer Institute in Phoenix in July. More than 400 TLTRs on college campuses nationally are coordinated by the TLT Group, affiliated with the American Association for Higher Education (AAHE). Co-chairs for the CSUMB TLT Roundtable are **Juan Gutierrez** (faculty) and **Mike Albright** (tech support staff).

TLT Roundtables on campuses across the country are groups of 15-35 (or more) people who represent diverse parts of the university community. TLTR's meet regularly to discuss ways to improve teaching and

learning with technology. TLTRs are advisory bodies that provide recommendations to Chief Academic Officers, Chief Technology Officers, and other academic leaders about programs, policies, and resource allocations. TLT Roundtables are one component of the TLT Group's larger vision of "Connected Education and Collaborative Change."

## Faculty and Students Plan Community Events for Peace

A campus-wide faculty and student planning committee has chosen October 24, United Nations Day, to engage the community and campus in education and reflection about current events in the context of the Vision Statement. The UN Day Teach-In is one of several events planned by the committee to engage the CSUMB and Monterey Bay community in dialogue and reflection about local and global perspectives and contexts of the September 11 events.

During the UN Day Teach-In on October 24 from 12 to 2 PM, community and campus representatives will offer a series of speakers

and presentations in the main quad facilitating reflection on the events of September 11, and developing reflective responses to the tragedy.

A "Day of Dialogue" is being planned for November to continue this focus on current events, linking the Vision Statement's core values to a series of all-day educational events. A community mural project is also planned for that day as a way for the community to voice alternative visions and strategies in response to recent events. To get involved, contact Ilene Feinman or Seth Pollack.

## Scholarship Opportunities: Call for Proposals

Conference and Journal: 2001: A Teaching & Learning Odyssey. As technology becomes more and more influential in our teaching and learning, will we and our students be stronger than the machinery? The same questions can be asked about our other approaches such as cooperative learning, case studies, etc. Call for proposal and registration materials for regional conference: <http://www.iats.com> or call 800-718-4287. Journal on Excellence in College Teaching: <http://ject.lib.muohio.edu> or call 513-529-7224. National Conferences: <http://www.muohio.edu/lillyconference/> or call 513-529-6648.

National Conference on Diversity in Teaching and Learning in American Higher Education April 3-6, 2002. Berkeley, Ca. Proposal Deadline 12/31/01/ For more information : [www.TeachLearn.fhda.edu](http://www.TeachLearn.fhda.edu) or Dr. Toni Forsyth, Executive Director, Center for the Study of Diversity in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education, c/o DeAnza College, 408-864-8993.

American Association for Higher Education is sponsoring an annual conference, "Learning in Context: Who Are Our Students? How Do They Learn?" in Chicago on March 16-19, 2002. Proposals are due October 12, 2001. For information about proposal submission, contact the Center for Teaching, Learning and Assessment or go to [www.aahe.org](http://www.aahe.org).

13<sup>th</sup> International Conference on College Teaching and Learning. April 9-13, 2002. Jacksonville, FL. "Teaching, Learning, and Technology: Thinking Outside the Box...no boundaries...no limits." Deadline: Dec. 3 2001. <http://www.teachlearn.org> or Jack Chambers at [jchamber@fcej.org](mailto:jchamber@fcej.org) or 904-632-3231.

***ProSource catalogue is out! Check your mailbox—it's a colorful, multi-page publication. The catalogue represents a campus-wide, coordinated calendar of professional development events for all CSUMB employees.***

***For faculty events, see pages 20, 28, 29, 30, 31 and 32. Please also note the handy pull-out calendar in the middle section. If you did not receive ProSource, call Amy at TLA (x4517).***

## Recent Faculty Scholarship

**Randy W. Maule**, Professor, ICST, served as a delegate to the NATO Oslo Symposium in Oslo, Norway, September 5-7, and published "Knowledge Management for Experimentation and Analysis" in the conference proceedings. He also published "Framework for Metacognitive Mapping to Design Metadata for Intelligent Hypermedia Presentations" in the current issue of the *Journal of Educational Multimedia and Hypermedia*, Vol. 10, No. 1. pp. 27-45.

**Robert Van Spyk**, Professor, ICST, continues his work with the Study at Sea program, which is beginning its third year. Students spend two months studying aboard the training ship the Golden Bear and visiting various corners of the world. Next summer the voyage is scheduled to visit Fiji, New Zealand, Australia, and several Polynesian islands. Robert worked last year with ICST students to build a radio station in the back of Building 18, room 164. It serves to exchange email with the ship anywhere in the world, and also serves as the university's emergency communications facility.

Robert has been awarded a Senior DOD Research Fellowship. His work there focuses on various aspects of security of networks and peoples.

**Rafael Gomez**, Associate Professor, WLC, was the session chairperson for the Acquisition of Spanish as a First and Second Language Session at the 83rd Annual Meeting of the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese in San Francisco, California, July 5-9th, 2001. He was invited by the Master Program of Peace and Universidad Jaume I Castellón, Spain and the Universidad Autónoma del Estado de México to teach a seminar in Mexico on Latin American immigrants in the United States, and spent the month of June teaching and conducting research in Mexico.

During the Spring semester of last year, he presented a workshop at the Hawaii Association of Language Teachers (HALT) Conference "From Blackboard to Broadband:

Maximizing Resources in the Language Classroom", Honolulu, HI, March 17, 2001. He also delivered two papers: one at CIBER 2001: The Conference on Language, Communication and Global Management, San Diego State University CA March 28-April 1, 2001 and the other one at the International Conference on College Teaching and Learning, Jacksonville, FL, April 19-23, 2001.

**Judy Cortes**, Instructor, WLC, presented a paper at the Acquisition of Spanish as a First and Second Language Session at the 83rd An-



nual Meeting of the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese in San Francisco, California, July 5-9th, 2001. Her paper was entitled "The Writing Skills of Pre-service Heritage Speakers of Spanish." Judy works with first and second Spanish language speakers, and is involved in teaching and assessing students' writing skills. She is continuing her study in lexicon, sentence structure, verb tenses, and spelling in the acquisition of first and second Spanish language speakers.

**Ilene Feinman**, Assistant Professor, HCom, recently presented a paper entitled "(Un)civil Transgressions: Practicing Mestizaje Political Community," at the California and Rocky Mountain American Studies Association Conference in May, 2001. She was also a selected panelist at the International Assessment Conference in Glasgow, Scotland during July, 2001, discussing "CSUMB's Learning Requirements: Assessing More than Outcomes: Democratic Participation as a Process."

**Qun Wang's** latest publication is an article on Arthur Miller: "Arthur Miller: Creating the Timeless World of Drama" which was published a couple of months ago in *Proteus*. His article "Humor, The Blues, and American Ethnic Literature" will be a chapter in the forthcoming book, "Folk and Pop Music in Literature." The working title for his next book is *Community, Commonality, and Asian American Literature*. But, he says, "that's a ten year project." Qun is a Professor in HCom.

**Frances Payne Adler**, Associate Professor in HCom, has published a new poem: "Voices Are Coming Up." It can be found in the 25th Anniversary Issue of Calyx Publications, entitled *Cracking the Earth*.

**Rina Benmayor**, Professor, HCom, is co-author of the new book *Telling to Live: Latina Feminist Testimonios*, published in Fall 2001.

**Renee Curry's** new book, *White Women Writing White: HD, Elizabeth Bishop, Sylvia Plath, and Whiteness* was published by Greenwood Press in 2000. Her forthcoming article with Catherine Cucinella, "Exiled at Home: Daughters of the Dust and the Many Post-Colonial Conditions" is due out in MELUS in Fall 2001. Another article forthcoming from Renee, written with Susie Lan Cassel, and Dawn Formo, "The Effects of Corporatization on the Humanities in Higher Education" is due to be published in Spring 2002 in *Education*. Renee, HCom Associate Professor and Director of the HCom Institute, also recently attained a \$34,000.00 grant from the CSU Chancellor's Office to align information competencies with outcomes-based curricula in the Institute for Human Communication during 2001-2002.

**David Nickels**, Instructor, Math and Pro-Seminar 100, is being honored as "Administrator of the Year" by the California Science Education Advisory Committee at the annual meeting of the California Science Teachers Association in Palm Springs on October 25, 2001.

### WANTED! FACULTY SCHOLARSHIP DESCRIPTIONS

In the next issue of *Faculty Focus*, we will continue to feature *CSUMB Faculty Scholarship*. We want to hear from those of you who have had grants funded, teaching approaches recognized, books and articles published, honors bestowed, and all other forms of scholarly work recognized.

Send an email description (2 sentences or so) to Amy Driscoll during the month of October to meet the deadline for the November issue. We want to **support, celebrate, and acknowledge** all of the good work that goes on here at CSUMB.

# BEST PRACTICES FOR EXPANDING CLASSROOM DIALOGUE

By Tom Philleo

New technologies often translate into subtle pressure for faculty to utilize them. However, to enhance instruction, these new technologies require the same thoughtful effort (planning, reflection, attention to class dynamics and leadership) involved in incorporating any changes in curriculum or pedagogy.

Listserve are a convenient method for communicating via e-mail among a group of subscribers and software. To set up such systems is relatively inexpensive and easy to manage. E-mail messages are composed by a subscriber and forwarded to all subscribers. This mode of communication increases opportunities for student to share their questions and comments with instructors and other students outside the classroom setting.

Managing the application of this new type of communication involves several critical elements:

- setting a clear goal
- being proactive with problem postings
- developing strategies for encouraging and promoting conversation
- determining how participation can be assessed

Consideration of these components can be the difference between a productive engagement with participants or an unfocused collection of irrelevant comments.

## Goal Setting

The purpose(s) of your listserv should be determined in advance. The listserv can work to vary your instructional strategies. Your list may be informational (posting assignment due dates, special announcements or additional resources) or it could be a forum for student discussion on critical issues and questions. It could function as a way to conduct class meetings when you are out of town. It can be a vehicle to post results of individual assignments (so long as it doesn't allow the identification of individuals by others), suggest enrichment activities, or detail make-up work.



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Setting your goals clearly helps to insure that your list will enhance the learning process.

## Getting Started

To feel confident that the listserv is functioning for all students, it's helpful to expect that students will subscribe during the first week of class. One method for checking is to ask all students to send an introductory message to the list by the end of the second week of class. Using special commands, you may also be able to obtain a list of subscribers to the listserv software.

Another beneficial procedure at the beginning of the term is to require students to send private e-mail messages to you to confirm students' ability with electronic mail.

This will enable them to distinguish between sending private messages and posting to the list. In addition, storing messages from all students in a single directory or folder is a convenient means of accessing their e-mail addresses when needed.

To ensure students are aware that information is being distributed on your list, post something interesting early on, such as a scholarship announcement, date of an upcoming event, additional information about an assignment, or a joke. A strong start ensures meaningful exchange throughout the remainder of the course.

## Promoting Conversation

The complexities of conversing on a listserv are similar to those encountered in face-to-face conversations. Some students may be reticent, others domineering. Access to technology, time, and workload contribute to variations in student participation. We suggest you encourage conversation in the following ways:

- Assign students to post topics of conversation regularly
- Provoke conversation by posing exaggerated positions or discussion points
- As the instructor, regularly post encouraging and responsive comments
- Send individual e-mail to contributing students
- Make references to previous postings in positive ways
- Keep track of who is contributing—you may wish to contact individual students who are not participating
- Invite a guest to post a relevant comment to your list

## Proactive problem solving

Just as in conversation, individuals can become engaged in discussions that contain

unkind, inconsiderate or thoughtless elements. Participants may dominate the exchange by posting too frequently or in too much detail or they may post messages which are of no interest or simply frivolous. This may inhibit others from contributing.

Addressing these problems is best done quickly and firmly. Individual e-mail messages or conferences with students who have posted inappropriate comments work well.

It may be helpful to distribute a guide for posting emphasizing, for example, that messages should be short, reflective and focused. Model appropriate comments and praise students who post exemplary messages. Documentation of posting through archiving may be prudent.

Conversations on a listserv pose the same difficulties that any group discussion might experience. As the instructor, you are responsible for the tenor of the dialog.

## Assessing Participation

It's easy to document how many times a student contributes to the listserv but evaluating the depth and reflective quality is harder. Should we evaluate students for quantity or quality? If we want to assess quality, how would we do so? Perhaps that could be a discussion on the listserv with students (or among faculty colleagues). You could post an exemplary exchange and ask students to identify the characteristics that make it good. This could then become the criteria used to evaluate subsequent exchanges.

## Conclusion

The time required to implement any new methodology is usually substantial. Technology offers a new set of potential problem areas. Adequate preparation and consistent attentiveness will help smooth such transitions. The benefits of expanding classroom dialogue using a listserv can balance potential difficulties.

In larger classrooms, it can provide another avenue for getting to know students. Conversation online can be informal and personal. Time spent conversing on the listserv extends beyond designated meeting times; therefore, learning continues beyond the class schedule. This provides time for participation of all learners in the classroom and makes the extra effort worthwhile.

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