Special Report

12 Tips for Improving Your Faculty Development Plan

Brought to you by

ACADEMIC Leader

12 Tips for Improving Your Faculty Development Plan

Table of Contents

12 Tips for Improving Your Faculty Development Plan

Professional development should be an ongoing endeavor for all faculty members because their growth as instructors has a profound impact on their students. There are always opportunities for improvement, new teaching techniques to learn and master, and experiences to share with colleagues.

This is why we have created this special report. Whether your institution has extensive, well-funded faculty development initiatives or you operate on a shoestring, I'm sure you will find some useful information in this special report to help with your faculty development efforts.

The articles, compiled from *The Teaching Professor* and *Academic Leader*, offer inspiration and practical (and often inexpensive) ways to accomplish the goal of improved teaching and learning.

Rob Kelly
Editor
Academic Leader

Quick Reference

Tips for Academic Deans and Department Chairs compiled from the **Academic Leader**

When teachers think the only, the best, the most important way to improve their teaching is by developing their content knowledge, they end up with sophisticated levels of knowledge, but they may have only simplistic instructional methods to convey that material. To imagine that content matters more than process is to imagine that the car is more important than the road. Both are essential. WHAT is taught and HOW it is taught are inextricably linked and very much dependent on one another. **(3)**

The best teachers are not always, not even usually, those teachers with the most sophisticated content knowledge. The best teachers do know their material, but they also know a lot about the process of teaching. They have at their disposal a repertoire of instructional methods, strategies, and approaches — a repertoire that continually grows, just as their content knowledge develops. **(3)**

What can administrators do to help faculty marry content knowledge with appropriate teaching processes to enhance student learning?

• Support Comprehensive Training **(1)**

Countless workshops, seminars, retreats, and other training opportunities are offered under the assumption that they can positively affect how faculty teach, which in turn will help students learn more. However, there's evidence that short-term interventions, such as an afternoon workshop, don't have much of an effect when it comes to sustained behavior change. On the other hand, data suggest that well-designed, substantive training programs are worth the time and effort.

Gibbs and Coffey looked at the effects of training programs at 20 universities in eight countries. Each training program involved at least 60 hours (300 for the longest) and spread those activities across four to 18 months. Results provide confirmation that this kind of training does make a significant and lasting impact on teaching. Faculty who participated in more comprehensive training programs became more learner-focused and their students were more likely to take deep approaches to learning.

• Use Mentoring Programs **(5)**

The fact is well established that college teachers benefit when they have an instructional mentor; it is also well established that mentoring benefits the mentor as well. Here's a list of instructional topics that are particularly beneficial to discuss:

✎ **Complex Instructional Issues Mentors** can help mentees with the questions that don't have easy answers on a level that reveals how much more there is to learn about teaching and learning.

✎ **Student Ratings.** It's beneficial to consult with a colleague who's been around for a while, one who can look objectively at a set of ratings and say something like, "Well, if these were my ratings, here are the three things I'd conclude."

✎ **Syllabus Construction Mentors** can help a mentee see beyond the mechanics to convey the course design, i.e., what the teacher believes contributes to learning.

✎ **Exams Together.** The mentor and mentee can talk about how exam events can be designed to *promote learning* the course material not just as a means to grade student mastery of it.

✎ **Intellectual Judgments Teachers** need to give students accurate feedback about their performance, which is very different than saying or subtly conveying that a student doesn't have the intellectual muscle required to master the material. Mentors can help mentees see the difference.

✎ **Classroom Management.** It takes time and encouragement from a mentor to learn that students can be trusted—not believed in blindly, but trusted enough for teachers to show them respect and believe that it will be returned.

• **Commit to Meritorious Teaching**
It is time to move past the old teaching vs. research debate and consider useful ways to talk about these related but very different parts of a faculty member's job.

Michael Prince, Richard Felder, and Rebecca Brent [2] report that "integrating research into the classroom in the way integration is normally conceived — i.e., instructors discussing the content of their research — has not been shown to occur frequently or to improve instruction."

What these authors propose as a richer potential nexus are those forms of teaching (inquiry-based approaches and problem-based learning, for example) that mirror the research process. In this case, "a faculty member's research provides experiences that have the potential to enrich instruction by introducing students to the research process and to important research skills."

Southern Illinois University Edwardsville made a commitment to meritorious teaching for promotion and tenure in 1994-95. The new promotion policy included the following statement: "A candidate for promotion shall demonstrate, at the level commensurate with rank, *at least meritorious performance in teaching*, and at least meritorious performance in either scholarship or service and satisfactory performance in the other." As a result, improvements in the quality of student learning are found across SIUE. These improvements are supported by an array of activities and programs, including the commitment to meritorious teaching. [6]

• **Encourage Instructional Technology Integration** [7]
In a recent survey of college and university students, 98 percent reported owning their own computer (PC or laptop), and the same percentage reported owning more than one electronic device (such as a computer and a cell phone). As a result, these "digital learners … have different expectations of teachers, of the content, of the delivery, and of access to that content." What can administrators — deans and chairs, specifically — do to encourage IT integration so faculty are ready to meet these student expectations and needs?

✔ **Regular overviews** ensure that faculty are aware of workshops on the different technologies and what can be done with them.

✔ **Roundtable discussions** within departments can help faculty identify and articulate discipline-specific ways to achieve IT integration.

✔ **Emphasize student need and demand** and advocate for student participation in departmental or college IT roundtables and service on IT-related committees at their institutions.

✔ **Create departmental and course-specific templates** to lessen the learning curve for faculty and to provide students with standardized resources and materials.

✔ **Facilitate a peer review process** for courses using IT to help improve the quality of those courses and to clarify best practices criteria for instructors.

✔ **Increase the credit given to IT users** by promotion and tenure committees, and more clearly articulate how IT integration relates to the scholarship of teaching and learning development stages for their first online class. ●

Why Do You Teach?

By Maryellen Weimer

Let's imagine a "required" professional development activity for faculty: after 20 years of teaching, all college instructors must prepare (we'll skip the and-submit-for-credit part) an essay that explores the reasons why they teach. The idea for this assignment derives from an essay by Laura B. Soldner (reference below) who found herself restive during a sabbatical year. She couldn't seem to focus on the textbook she was supposed to be writing but kept revisiting the reasons she chose to teach and exploring how those reasons related to her current professional life. The four reasons Soldner chose to teach and that continued to motivate her to remain in the profession may not be reasons you'd list, but they illustrate the importance of this kind of introspection, and they might springboard your own reflection.

Sense of discovery—"I am continually struck by the simultaneous nature of teaching and learning. In one instant, I may be the teacher or facilitator of a lesson, discussion, or activity, but I am, at the same moment, a learner who is reconsidering previous knowledge, seeking out new information, or making connections between the two." (p. 73) Teaching is a profession for those who love to learn.

Quest for self-improvement—Soldner writes about the many changes teachers regularly face: favorite texts that go out of print, the increased presence of technology in the lives of students (and their teach-ers), the declining levels of preparedness of college students, and others. Teachers can bemoan these changes and respond to them with much complaining, or see them as opportunities for growth. Soldner says that her commitment to teaching remains because it provides her with so many opportunities to grow and change.

Ability to scaffold development—Soldner is a developmental educator. She works with students on basic reading and writing skills. She explains that the "ability to scaffold development, to provide students with the initial assistance they need and to withdraw that help gradually as they are able to use the skills and strategies independently, is another reason I find teaching so satisfying." (p. 75) The success of one's students can bring teachers much satisfaction.

Sense of "mattering"—"Developmental literacy educators are often the front line of defense in stemming student attrition. They may be the only ones to have daily instructional and personal interactions with their students." (p. 77) That makes their work important—to their students, to their institutions, even to our society—and this sense of doing work that makes a difference can be a powerful motivator for all kinds of educators.

Perhaps in preparing an essay on "why I teach," some educators may find that what brought them to education in the beginning no longer sustains them. Those teachers should make a change.

For the rest of us, this exercise can be a confirming and motivating experience. It's easy to forget the reasons or to take them for granted. Preparing an essay like this and then reading it at least once a year would be a beneficial endeavor for most faculty.

Reference:

Soldner, L. B. (2002–2003). Why I continue to teach: Reflection of a mid-career developmental literacy educator. *Journal of College Literacy and Learning,* 31, 71–78.

Teaching Circles:
Low-Cost, High-Impact Faculty Development

By Barbara A. Mezeske

Two years ago, a mid-career colleague in the mathematics department sent around an e-mail to all faculty at our college, inviting us to read a book with her. And as simply as that, a teaching circle was formed.

A teaching circle, the term we use at my institution, is simply a group of faculty interested in discussing teaching at regular intervals, ideally over food. As my colleague said, laughing, at our first meeting, "I need a support group, and everyone needs lunch!"

That first year, we chose to read Maryellen Weimer's *Learner-Centered Teaching*, a chapter at a time. We met every three or four weeks in a private room attached to the student cafeteria, where we picked up our lunches by going through the line. Our provost, perhaps impressed by our initiative, agreed to foot the bill for our lunches, a modest expenditure from his point of view. As many as nine people participated, though the core group consisted of five faculty representing sociology, nursing, chemistry, english, and math.

As we discussed each month's assigned reading, we shared stories and strategies. One person redesigned her entire approach to assessing student learning; our math leader incorporated lots of writing activities into her upper-level course. As we came to know each other better, someone suggested that we observe one another's classes, which several of us did. In the spring, six of us arranged to attend the first *Teaching Professor* Conference.

The group reformed at the beginning of the next school year and this time read two books, one each semester: Bain's *What the Best College Teachers Do* and Cross and Steadman's *Implementing the Scholarship of Teaching*. Our numbers increased to about a dozen faculty members. Currently, the group is in its third year, and as many as 15 people turn up for lunch and discussion. Our book selection this year is L. Dee Fink's *Creating Significant Learning Experiences.*

What makes a teaching circle work, and could it work at other institutions? Modest administrative support is helpful. In addition to paying for cafeteria lunches, our provost purchased books for participants, beginning in the second year. It is also important to have someone interested in leading the group, setting dates, and sending e-mail reminders. Our leadership has changed each year. We have decided together, at the end of one year, which book to read for the next. No other structure is necessary. No one ever takes attendance. There is a very populist, grassroots feel to what we do.

The benefits of ongoing conversation about the art of teaching are obvious. However, here are a few you may not think of:
- we have come to know one another better;
- we have become teaching resources for each other;
- we have embraced new ideas in our reading that we might have dismissed without the support of the group.

Most important of all, those of us who are at mid-career are finding new energy for our profession. What began as a support group for one individual has supported us all.

Barbara A. Mezeske is an associate professor of English at Hope College in Holland, Michigan. ●

A Focus on Teaching and Learning at Mid-Career

By Rob Kelly

Are your experienced faculty members as effective in the classroom as you would like them to be? If not, perhaps a faculty development program like the University of Minnesota's Mid-Career Teaching Program could be the answer.

Many faculty members currently in mid-career have probably had fewer teaching enrichment opportunities than their more recently hired colleagues, and just because they are experts in their disciplines does not necessarily make them good teachers. In addition, teaching is becoming more complex: student populations are more diverse than they used to be, and they often expect more from professors than students did in the past.

"Faculty at this level don't generally come together to talk about teaching. At a university like this and a lot of other universities and colleges, faculty may come together to talk about the administration, procedures and policies in the department, curriculum, research, or research grants, but it's relatively rare that faculty come together to talk about teaching in the classroom," says John L. Romano, professor of educational psychology and one of the early developers of the MCTP.

Goals

The program has four goals:
- introduce faculty to pedagogical strategies to improve student learning
- support faculty as they apply new knowledge and techniques in their classrooms
- provide faculty with an opportunity to converse with peers about improving student learning through effective teaching
- offer a forum for faculty to discuss mid-life events that have an impact on their personal and professional lives.

Recruitment

The program is intended to attract faculty from different disciplines and with different teaching abilities. "We set this up so that it isn't a program for people who are bad teachers," Romano says. To recruit interested faculty members, the Center for Teaching and Learning Services makes announcements at deans' meetings and on faculty and administration listservs. The program also offers a small stipend.

Some faculty members come to the program because they are good teachers who want to improve. Some are concerned about less-than-stellar evaluations from students. Some are looking to increase their emphasis on teaching now that they have tenure. Some are encouraged to sign up by their department chair or dean.

For purposes of this program, the faculty members determine for themselves whether they are "mid-career" faculty members. They don't need to be tenured, and are admitted even if they have been teaching for just a few years. Most participants are between 40 and 60 years old, and faculty members who are close to retirement age can participate as well.

A multi-disciplinary approach

The program brings together faculty from a variety of disciplines for 12 two-hour sessions (six sessions per semester) for a full academic year. They meet in groups of six to 15 led by facilitators from the Center for Teaching and Learning Services. The facilitators suggest topics, but encourage participants to refine those topics.

The following is a sample of topics this program addresses:
- Student Population: Characteristics and Learning Needs
- Educational Paradigms: From Teaching to Learning
- Inclusive Course Syllabus: Design and Detail
- Styles of Learning: Influences on Instruction
- Active and Cooperative Learning: Students as Participants
- Faculty at Mid-Career: Professional and Personal Themes.

The sessions are a mix of presentation and discussion. Between sessions, participants often continue conversations through e-mail and electronic discussion boards. Participants also consult with each other about issues within their classrooms.

Diversity within the groups is a strength of the program, Romano says. "We feel there is some benefit from a nursing faculty member talking to a business faculty member and a liberal arts person talking to someone from education because, especially in Research 1 institutions, people get fairly isolated within their own departments and sometimes within their own program within a department. We feel this cross-fertilization is important."

In addition to exposing faculty members to the perspective of colleagues in different departments, working with faculty members outside one's department also can create a safe environment to explore personal or embarrassing issues that might be difficult to bring up with critical colleagues or those who don't have as strong an interest in teaching and learning. Being able to open up in the group tends to

get easier over time as well. This was one of the reasons for asking faculty to commit to the program for an entire year, Romano says.

Recognition

Although department chairs and deans are not directly involved in the program, their support has helped it succeed. At the end of the year, the CTLS sends them letters reminding them who participated along with a copy of the MCTP syllabus. Participants also receive a letter of recognition from the provost. A copy of this letter is also sent to the department chair and dean.

The MCTP culminates in an event called "The Celebration of Teaching," which acknowledges each participant's commitment to teaching and learning. The event includes speeches from various stakeholders, including central administrators, the CTLS director, MCTP facilitators, and select MCTP participants.

For more information about the MCTP, visit www1.umn.edu/ohr/ teachlearn/faculty.

Reference

Romano, John L., Hoesing, O'Donovan, Kathleen, and Weinsheimer, Joyce. 2004. Faculty at Mid-Career: A Program to Enhance Teaching and Learning. *Innovative Higher Education.* 29, no 1: 21-48 ●

Web-Based Faculty Activity Reporting System Provides Easy-to-Update, Accessible Information

By Rob Kelly

Faculty activity reports have the potential to guide faculty development, resource allocation, and even fund-raising efforts. But too often faculty perceive these reports as a burden that yields few, if any, benefits. This perception can change with a user-friendly electronic faculty activity reporting system like the one Maryville University uses.

The main driving forces behind the creation of this system were the need to better integrate the university's mission with the process of recruiting and retaining the best faculty members, and to make clear to faculty how they contribute to the university's mission.

Development of the university's Web-based activity reporting system was based largely on the faculty roles that Ernest Boyer outlined in his influential book *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate* (1990, Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching).

The system is an electronic journal that enables faculty members to provide evidence as to how they are engaging in the various forms of scholarship (e.g., the scholarship of discovery, the scholarship of teaching and learning). "The key for us was that it provides a way to begin the dialogue on what it means to be a faculty member in an institution that is seeking to integrate liberal and professional learning," says Brian Nedwek, acting president of Maryville University.

A major concern in building this system was to make it as easy as possible for faculty to use. To this end, the university's system does not require faculty to input information about the classes taught or enrollment figures. That information is preloaded into the electronic forms from the university's administrative database. Inputting evidence on their scholarly activities is very similar to composing a Word document.

In addition, faculty have two months after the end of the academic year to make any final edits of their individual activity reports before submitting them.

The system provides examples of the various types of scholarship to help faculty categorize their scholarly activities. Faculty describe each of their scholarly activities and identify which categories they fit into. They do not provide the actual products of their scholarship, however. The quality of faculty's scholarly work is addressed in promotion and tenure reviews. The purpose of the annual activity reports is to ensure that faculty are on track for their promotion and tenure reviews and to indicate areas in which faculty need professional development.

The main criterion for scholarly activity is that it is made public through publication in a journal, a conference presentation, or other outreach activities. For example, if a mathematics professor investigates and determines why some students do not succeed in his course, develops interventions to address the problem,

and improves student success but does not share that work publicly, it would not count as scholarly activity.

"Transparency has to be a part of all activities. It's in becoming public that one begins to enter truly scholarly activity. That's where we leave it. We do not have peers evaluate or the dean evaluate the overall quality of that public scholarly activity. It's that spirit of faculty just coming out and taking that risk of being public that we think is going to continually transform the culture," Nedwek says.

Outcomes

Maryville University implemented this electronic faculty activity reporting system nearly three years ago, and in that time there have been several positive outcomes:

- The university is undergoing a major reconsideration of promotion and tenure criteria to reflect the Boyer orientation to scholarly activities.
- Capture of the data electronically and ease of use make it easy for academic leaders to see what scholarly work faculty are

involved in, and they can begin to build professional development programs around that to help faculty improve in various areas.

- The data can be made available for other management functions. "I can have a report in a couple of minutes that tells a donor what our faculty are doing in the area of applied research, and it comes out as a beautiful, easily read report," Nedwek says. "I also use it in my work with the board of trustees to demonstrate the faculty's productivity." (Of course, privacy is a concern, and the system has a series of security measures, and when the information is used for reports, faculty are asked for their permission to use the information.)

Motivation for compliance

Faculty compliance with the system has been good, Nedwek says. The ease of inputting their information has helped, but faculty also realize that they stand to benefit. "We have gotten enormous compliance on the part of the faculty, who are just beginning to see the utility of this approach for their requests for sabbaticals or as the

untenured faculty begin their dossiers for their second-, third-, or fourth-year reviews." (The main difference between the activity reports and the dossiers for formal reviews is that the dossiers include information that demonstrates the quality of the scholarship.)

At the department level, detailed information in these activity reports can bolster the strength of requests for new faculty lines or additional resources.

In addition, there may soon be monetary rewards attached to the information in these activity reports. "The issue facing us in our fourth year is, to what extent can we use the activity reports as a means for compensation modeling? That's a really tough question because when I was academic vice president, I sold this whole model on the notion that this is purely developmental, and now some might perceive this as changing the rules of the game. On the other hand, for faculty who are productive, it will finally be a way for us to begin to engage in merit pay," Nedwek says. ●

Jump Start Program Prepares Faculty to Teach Online

By Rob Kelly

Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis had mixed results getting faculty to develop and teach online courses before implementing its Jump Start program, a faculty development initiative that provides faculty members with a team of online learning experts to help develop online courses.

Now, rather than having to convince faculty members to create and teach online courses, the university can be selective as there is more faculty interest in creating online courses than the program can accommodate.

Despite the administration's interest in developing online courses, many faculty members were leery of the

amount of time it would take. "Their response was, 'I don't know how to create online courses, and I really don't know that that's what I want to spend my time learning to do,'" says Terri Tarr, director of instructional design and development at IUPUI's

Center for Teaching and Learning.

The Jump Start program was developed in response to this issue. "We provide them with support so they don't have to develop the course totally on their own. Their concern is mainly with the content and how to teach the course," Tarr says.

Selection for the Jump Start program is competitive because the program can accommodate only eight to 10 participants per year. Faculty members are given a $5,000 stipend so they can buy themselves some time, usually during the summer, Tarr says.

The program gives priority to high-enrollment freshman courses, courses that are part of online certificate programs, and courses needed by associate degree holders to complete a general studies degree. The selection committee also considers the faculty member's plan for the course, how well those plans fit with the university's goals, and how the program might be able to help a particular faculty member.

Each faculty participant is assigned a support team that consists of
- An instructional design consultant who:
  - helps faculty develop course objectives, activities, and assessment strategies
  - directs the creation of a work plan and design document for the course
- A subject specialist librarian who:
  - provides information resources
  - helps with remote access to library materials
  - designs library instruction specifically for the course
- Media production staff that
  - creates Web interfaces, images, illustrations, video, and audio
- A copyright management consultant who:
  - determines whether a work is copyrighted
  - assesses fair use
  - manages permission requests

- maintains copyright compliance records.

The program begins with a four-day workshop in which participants learn about the basics of online course design and best practices. "We found that faculty have trouble envisioning right away what an online course is and what it looks like. So we start off by giving them some ideas on how to write goals and objectives, and how to 'chunk' content. We show them examples of different Web interfaces they can use," Tarr says.

Then faculty spend time working on their individual courses with their design team, fleshing out their goals and envisioning different course elements. As they get farther along, they start considering which multimedia might be used in the course. "We talk about learning objects that can be sim-

ply altered or reused several times," says Rhett McDaniel, director of instructional technology at IUPUI's Center for Teaching and Learning. "Is the content best suited for a drag-and-drop exercise or some sort of 3-dimensional model?"

The goal for the initial workshop is for each participant to develop one module for his or her course, which is handed off to digital media services to develop a prototype. "We found that that's really important having that one very intensive week and getting that prototype plan developed. We've done some online course development without the Jump Start program and found it was very easy for faculty to keep spinning their wheels as they think about what they are going to do before they get started creating anything,"

Jump Start Week Workshop Schedule

Day 1
- Learn the basics of online course design.
- See examples of online courses with interactivity.
- Introduce writing goals and objectives.
- Consider Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance issues.
- Meet with design team to develop work plan.

Day 2
- Develop or refine goals and objectives for individual courses.
- Learn visual design principles for online courses.
- Meet with Digital Media Services (DMS) production group to learn about available production support.
- Consult with information resource library faculty about support for the project.
- Select user web interface and types of interactivity available for IUPUI Online courses.

Day 3
- Discuss best practices in online teaching.
- Identify departmental and school supports for the project.
- Work with copyright consultant to determine elements of fair use and those that will require permission.
- Learn about assessment of online courses.
- Continue course design work and develop prototype.
- Share your course design and view other faculty projects.

Day 4
- Continue course design work.
- Establish calendar for completion and finalize work plan.

13

Tarr says.

The program does not end with the four-day workshop. The entire process goes on for 67 days. Faculty participants work mostly with the instructional design consultant, and "the rest of the team members flow in and out of the process as they're needed,"

McDaniel says.

There is a showcase of all Jump Start project prototypes in June and a midpoint project check for content development. In July, faculty participants submit their course contents to the production unit, which completes production in August.

Faculty members who do not go through the Jump Start program still gets the same quality of help from the Center for Teaching and Learning, but without the structure that the Jump Start program provides, which keeps faculty members on a tight schedule and helps ensure quality. ●

Technology-Enhanced Faculty Learning Communities Expand Development Opportunities

By Rob Kelly

Faculty learning communities provide opportunities for faculty to get together to discuss similar interests and improve their teaching and learning practices. In the past 15 years, they have become more formalized through the work of Milton Cox and others as well as through use of Web-based technologies to connect faculty in new ways.

Web-based technologies can enhance faculty learning communities by providing faculty with more ways to communicate and by providing a collection of internal and external online resources, says Pamela Sherer, associate professor of management at Providence College.

Sherer, who helps faculty establish and maintain technology-enhanced learning communities, says that by using listservs, threaded discussions, chat, Webcasts, and portals, technology-enhanced faculty learning communities can bring faculty together across campus as well as from other institutions.

Sherer sees a wide range of possibilities for the use of Web-based technologies in faculty learning communities.

For example, an interdisciplinary group of faculty interested in discussing the teaching of statistics in various disciplines might use the technologies to:

- take an online course together on the teaching of statistics
- collectively or individually download trial versions of new software and talk about it
- participate in listservs and chat rooms with colleague from other institutions
- write a joint article for an online newsletter
- serve as a group of experts for other colleagues.

Web-based technologies also can make visible the work of these communities to a wider audience than the work of faculty who meet only face to face, which can be helpful for other faculty members. It also can let administrators know the kinds of activities the group is engaged in and the progress they are making, which can be helpful in seeking funding.

Creating and maintaining technology-enhanced FLCs

Establishing technology-enhanced learning communities is becoming easier to do as more faculty members become familiar with Web-based technology and institutions develop the infrastructure to support this technology.

Faculty learning communities should be a group of six to 16 people, Sherer says. They can be members of a cohort such as junior or mid-career faculty, or they may be faculty members brought together for a particular topic such as multicultural course transformation, problem-based learning, the capstone experience, teaching writing, teaching and learning in a lab setting, teaching a foreign language, or teaching and learning in large classes.

These communities may exist for a short time and have clear goals such as development of a published report or article, or they may continue indefinitely with new members sustaining the efforts and bringing new ideas to add to a growing list of best practices

that can be made available to others.

"Most faculty learning communities emerge out of an on-campus faculty development program with a person or persons helping to maintain them over time. That's where I think a faculty development person can help," Sherer says.

Faculty developers and department chairs can be instrumental in generating topics and identifying cohorts. To maintain a technology-enhanced faculty learning community, there should be a person in place to

- coordinate funding
- provide technology support
- educate faculty and administrators about faculty learning communities
- identify people with common interests
- help faculty find relevant resources
- form partnerships with others on campus such as student affairs and the library.

In technology-enhanced faculty learning communities, the goal is to develop a portal where community members and others can go to access all the tools and resources related to that learning community. A logical place to house such a portal would be on the institution's faculty development website.

Institutions with large faculty learning community programs such as Miami University, Indian University-Purdue University Indianapolis, and The Ohio State University can serve as resources for institutions that have faculty learning communities that are less established, Sherer says.

Benefits

Sherer says that the technology-enhanced learning communities can

- create more faculty development opportunities
- expand faculty development from an event on campus to everywhere, all the time
- provide resources for faculty in times of need

- bring the scholarship of teaching and learning to a wider audience.

Continued need for F2F communication

Sherer does not think the technology will replace face-to-face faculty learning community meetings but will become "just another way of conducting business."

"Contrary to what some other people may say, people do like to meet face to face, and I think face-to-face meetings have been critical and will continue to be critical for faculty learning communities," Sherer says. "I think we're developing our [communication] styles. These are major changes in how we communicate, how we get together, and what we consider being in touch. And for people like me where everything had been face to face, we need to learn new ways of thinking about things." ●

Talk about Teaching That Benefits Beginners and Those Who Mentor Them

By Maryellen Weimer

Beginning college teachers benefit when they have an instructional mentor. That fact is well established; as is the fact that mentoring benefits those who mentor. The influx of new faculty over the past few years has caused mentoring programs to flourish. All kinds of activities have been proposed so that mentors and mentees can spend their time together profitably. Addressed less often are those instructional topics particularly beneficial for the experienced and less-experienced teachers to address. Here's a list of possibilities.

Talk about teaching that gets past the pleasantries and basic techniques. Most new teachers do need help with the mechanics. But details about how many points for extra credit, what prevents late papers, and whether students should eat in class should be part of a first conversation. They should not dominate subsequent exchanges.

Early on, new teachers need to realize that real instructional issues are much more complex and much more intellectually intriguing. Mentors can help new faculty talk about teaching on a different level—the level of questions without easy answers and the level that reveals how much more there is to learn about teaching and learning.

How to put student ratings in perspective. Most college teachers don't get their best student ratings in the first courses they teach. But most new college teachers do take early ratings more seriously than those received subsequently. Much like beginning (and sometimes not-so-beginning) writers, new teachers have trouble separating themselves from the performance. So it's beneficial to have a colleague who's been around for a while, who can look objectively at a set of ratings and say something like, "Well, if these were my ratings, here are the three things I'd conclude."

Help seeing syllabus construction as the design of learning environments and the construction of learning experiences. For beginning teachers, there's the mechanical question of what goes on a syllabus—it's a pragmatic question and often needs to be answered in a hurry. But syllabus construction is not just about what happens in the course and when. It's really about course design. The policies placed on a syllabus convey what the teacher believes contributes to learning. Assignments dictate the terms and conditions under which students will have their most in-depth encounter with the content. A mentor can help a new college teacher see beyond the details and look for the assumptions on which a policy or practice rests.

Reminders that exams not only assess learning, they promote it. Too often faculty (not just new teachers, although new teachers are particularly susceptible) see exams as the means that allows them to gauge and then grade student mastery of material. Faculty forget that exams promote learning. They "force" an up-close and personal encounter with the content of the course.

Students review their notes, they read the text, they ask each other questions, they decide what's important, and they make guesses about what they need to know for the exam. All these activities promote the learning of course material. Together, the teacher with experience and the new teacher can talk about how exam events can be designed so as to maximize their inherent learning potential.

Warnings about the folly of predicting who will and won't make it in the course/major. Making judgments about who is and who isn't going to succeed in the course is natural, and with experience, the accuracy of those calls improves but doesn't mean it's always reliable. Honest teachers have lots of stories about how badly they missed.

What any teacher must avoid is letting students think that the teacher doesn't believe they have what it takes. Yes, teachers do need to give students accurate feedback about their performance in a course and what that level of performance will lead to if it continues. But that's very different than saying or subtly conveying that a student doesn't have the intellectual muscle required to master the material. Students need teachers who believe in them and who recognize that ultimately, the decision about success or failure is one that students make.

Wise advice on classroom management. Not being seasoned, confident pedagogues, new teachers can be suckers for rules, especially those that make clear the teacher's authority over life in the classroom. New teachers need to learn that the attraction to rules grows out of an interesting conundrum. Despite having lots of power over students, teachers are not in control of the classroom. It takes time and encouragement from a mentor to learn that students can be trusted—not believed in blindly, but trusted enough for teachers to show them respect and believe that it will be returned. ●

Content Knowledge: A Barrier to Teacher Development

By Maryellen Weimer

Now, there's a headline you might read in the educational equivalent of the *National Enquirer*. Aware that your material prevents instructional growth? How can that be?

A love of the material and a willingness to convey that to students only enhances learning. The problem is when the content becomes the be-all and end-all of the teaching process, when the content matters more than anything else. When content is that important, faculty are prevented from using methods that enhance how much students learn. In this case the content orientation of faculty hurts students, but the argument here is that it also hurts teachers.

When teachers think the only, the best, the most important way to improve their teaching is by developing their content knowledge, they end up with sophisticated levels of knowledge, but they have only simplistic instructional methods to convey that material. To imagine that content matters more than process is to imagine

that the car is more important than the road. Both are essential. **What** we teach and **how** we teach it are inextricably linked and very much dependent on one another.

Even though both are tightly linked, they are still separate. Development of one doesn't automatically improve how the other functions. So you can work to grow content knowledge, but if the methods used to convey that knowledge are not sophisticated and up to the task, teaching may still be quite ineffective. It may not inspire and motivate students. It may not result in more and better student learning. Because teachers so love the content, they almost never blame it. No, it's the students' fault. They aren't bright enough. They don't study enough. They don't deserve to be professionals in this field.

But teachers who teach courses in which large numbers of students struggle and routinely fail are not generally positive about teaching. They are more often cynical, rigid, and

defensive. The truth about how much isn't being learned in these courses is hard to ignore, no matter how routinely students are blamed.

The typical college teacher has spent years in courses developing the knowledge skill set and virtually no time on the teaching set. This way of preparing professors assumes that the content is much more complex than the process, when in fact both are equally formidable. Marrying the content and the process requires an intimate and sophisticated knowledge of both. Some kinds of content are best taught by example, some by experience. Other kinds are best understood when discussed and worked on collaboratively. Other kinds need individual reflection and analysis. Besides these inherent demands of the content itself, there are the learning needs of individual students, which vary across many dimensions.

The best teachers are not always, not even usually, those teachers with the most sophisticated content knowledge. The best teachers do know their material, but they also know a lot about the process. They have at their disposal a repertoire of instructional methods, strategies, and approaches—a repertoire that continually grows, just as their content knowledge develops. They never underestimate the power of the process to determine the outcome. With this understanding, content is not a barrier to teacher development. ●

Teaching vs. Research: Finally, a New Chapter

By Maryellen Weimer

The argument persists: teaching and research are complementary—each in some synergistic way builds on and supports the other. Standing against the argument is an impressive, ever-growing array of studies that consistently fail to show any linkage

between teaching effectiveness and research productivity. Because administrators have a vested interest in faculty being able to do both well, the two sides continue to exchange arguments and accusations in a debate that has grown old, tired, and terribly

nonproductive.

Could it be that the two sides are actually debating different propositions? That's what Michael Prince, Richard Felder, and Rebecca Brent

(all well-known in the field of engineering education) propose in the article referenced below. The first proposition rests on the notion that research has the potential to support teaching. The second side is arguing whether it has done so in practice, and the evidence supporting that it has not is comprehensive and persuasive.

In an extraordinarily well-referenced article, these authors move the discussion forward by exploring the effectiveness of three strategies that could strengthen the research-teaching nexus: 1) bringing research into the classroom, 2) involving students in undergraduate research projects, and 3) accepting broader definitions for scholarship. They review the literature to see whether and how much each of these strategies has improved undergraduate teaching, ways each nexus might be strengthened, and what further research questions merit attention.

Briefly, here's what they discovered about each. "Integrating research into the classroom in the way integration is normally conceived—i.e., instructors discussing the content of their research—has not been shown to occur frequently or to improve instruc-tion." (p. 286)

What these authors propose as a richer potential nexus are those forms of teaching (inquiry-based approaches and problem-based learning, for example) that mirror the research process. In this case, "a faculty member's research provides experiences that have the potential to enrich instruction by introducing students to the research process and to important research skills." (p. 285)

The effects of undergraduate research experiences have been studied in some detail. Does the opportunity for students to be involved in research projects strengthen the teaching-research nexus by producing better learning for the student? The authors answer that question with a qualified yes. Involvement in undergraduate research does correlate positively with retention and with the decision to pursue graduate study. Students evaluate their experiences positively and say those experiences helped them learn.

But direct evidence of impact on learning is scant. "[T]here is very little evidence that undergraduate research has much of an effect on students' content knowledge." (p. 288) Another limitation of this nexus: very few students have the opportunity to be involved in undergraduate research projects, and those that are tend to be the very best students.

As for whether broader definitions of scholarship make it easier for faculty to integrate their research and teaching work, the authors found "limited but encouraging evidence" that these models do help faculty make stronger connections between teaching and research.

It is time to move past the old teaching vs. research debate and this article provides a new and useful way to consider and talk about these related but very different parts of a faculty member's job. "The primary goal of research is to advance knowledge, while that of teaching is to develop and enhance abilities. Researchers are valued mainly for what they discover and for the problems they solve, and teachers for what they enable their students to discover and solve." (p. 283)

Reference

Prince, M. J., Felder, R. M., and Brent, R. (2007). Does faculty research improve undergraduate teaching? An analysis of existing and potential synergies. *Journal of Engineering Education*, 96 (4), 283-294. ●

Simple Commitment but Long-Term Challenge: P&T and SoTL

By David Sill

For well over 20 years we have heard that higher education does not reward teaching. We have also heard that research accomplishments come first in determining tenure and promotion decisions, and teaching second. At the same time, the imperative to increase our valuing of teaching continues.

The Spellings Commission Report calls for new forms of teaching and directs FIPSE to promote innovative teaching and learning models. Boyer's argument in *Scholarship Reconsidered* for broadening our understanding of faculty work to include forms of scholarship other than discovery, including a scholarship of teaching, underlies much of the conversation regarding

faculty roles to this day. Yet acceptable teaching is too often defined as "not disastrous in the classroom," particularly for stellar researchers. If there is no damage, no lawsuit, no newspaper headline about bad teaching, nothing illegal or immoral, then the teaching must be OK if the research record is great.

This leads to an interesting series of questions: What if higher education actually responded to these calls to increase the value of teaching? What if colleges and universities demanded higher levels of teaching performance for tenure, for example? Would that make a difference? Perhaps and perhaps not—making a commitment to higher levels of performance is one thing, but determining how to achieve higher levels of performance is another.

Southern Illinois University Edwardsville made a commitment to meritorious teaching for promotion and tenure in 1994-95 when the faculty senate and the provost negotiated new promotion and tenure policies. The new promotion policy included the following statement: "A candidate for promotion shall demonstrate, at the level commensurate with rank, *at least meritorious performance in teaching*, and at least meritorious performance in either scholarship or service and satisfactory performance in the other." The commitment to meritorious teaching raised four questions: How would we define meritorious teaching? How should we document it? How could we evaluate it? And how might we help faculty become meritorious teachers?

The four questions turned out to be interconnected, and all four presented challenges. The first question, how to define meritorious teaching, was far more challenging than it first appeared. The problem was that satisfactory teaching at SIUE was considered good teaching. To receive satisfactory rankings, faculty were expected to have strong student course evaluations; stay up to date in the field, incorporating new developments; use appropriate pedagogies; develop quality syllabi, handouts, and exams; and meet all normal responsibilities such as office hours. The challenge, then, was to determine what was better than good.

If meritorious teaching must be something better than good teaching, is that simply a matter of degree? One could look for higher course evaluations, better or more handouts, more developed syllabi, more office hours, or better class management. But where do we draw the line? Looking for super-quality syllabi or extra-appropriate pedagogies made no sense. The temptation is to slide the scale down so that what had been defined as satisfactory teaching now becomes meritorious, because the difference between quality and super-quality, between appropriate and extra-appropriate, is indefinable.

The same problems arise when looking at the differences between meritorious and satisfactory teaching as a matter of practice or of differences in student learning. Using improvement strategies, involving students in research or engaging activities such as service learning, and demonstrating quality student learning are expectations of satisfactory teaching. All these approaches are suspect when they are used to differentiate between different levels of quality teaching, because they are necessary conditions for good teaching.

The year after SIUE reworked its promotion and tenure policies, faculty began the Faculty Roles and Responsibilities Initiative (FRR), part of the Illinois Board of Higher Education's Priorities*Quality*Productivity mandate. FRR developed a multipronged approach to implementing a commitment to meritorious teaching by developing a meaningful peer-review system (course portfolios and reciprocal classroom interviews), exploring broader issues such as technology in the classroom and AAC&U's Greater Expectations, balancing faculty roles, and redefining rigor. Exploring the scholarship of teaching and learning, framing questions of quality teaching in broad intellectual terms, and modeling scholarly pursuit in teaching and learning became the means of defining, documenting, evaluating, and developing meritorious teaching.

FRR adopted the analytical framework from *Scholarship Assessed: Evaluation of the Professoriate* by Glassick, Huber, and Maeroff (1997), which includes six standards for scholarly work that apply both to teaching as a scholarly activity and to a scholarship of teaching and learning. The six standards of scholarly work are clear goals, adequate preparation, appropriate methods, significant results, effective presentation, and reflective critique.

Lee Shulman's claim that "intellectual communities form around collections of texts" (*Course Anatomy: The Dissection and Analysis of Knowledge*, AAHE Forum on Faculty Roles and Rewards, 1996) provides a useful heuristic at SIUE for making concrete the abstract framework provided by *Scholarship Assessed*. Peer review activities provide a variety of texts, from course portfolios to published articles, including model promotion-tenure dossiers in the library.

Each year, the dossiers that make the strongest case for promotion or tenure are selected for inclusion in library course reserves. We started with six dossiers the first year, and there are now 25. Some of the early dossiers have been removed because they are no longer models of best practice. Faculty with dossiers in the library participate in workshops and faculty development activities. The professional schools and the College of Arts and Sciences are represented. These dossiers indicate how to document meritorious teaching. The analytical framework answers questions

19

of definition and evaluation. FRR provides assistance for faculty to become meritorious teachers.

Improvements in the quality of student learning are found across SIUE. These are supported by an array of activities and programs, including the commitment to meritorious teaching. One of the strongest contributions from that commitment is the reward-ing of faculty who participate in other parts of the array, including internal grant programs, assessment activities, and faculty development programs.

While SIUE cannot claim to have found the answer to raising the value of teaching, we have found that there is no single answer. The answers rely on differences in degree, kind, practice, and student learning, but only if they are looked at through the lens of a scholarship of teaching and learning, supported by rich texts and institutional commitment.

SIUE's commitment to meritorious teaching was simple compared with the challenge of implementing that commitment. We have made much progress, but also know there is far to go yet.

David Sill is a senior scholar at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville. ●

Serving Students by Helping Faculty: Encouraging Instructional Technology Integration

By Maria A. Clayton, Thomas M. Brinthaupt, and Barbara J. Draude

In a recent survey of college and university students, 98 percent reported owning their own computer (PC or laptop), and the same percentage reported owning more than one electronic device (such as a computer and a cell phone) (Caruso, 2007). Starrett (2005) calls these students "digital natives" and uses the term "digital immigrant" to distinguish a good number of educators from them. Digital natives are individuals "born in the last 30 years or so, who [have] always or mostly known a life with computers" (p. 24). In addition to their bond with computers, Starrett argues, these "digital learners . . . have different expectations of teachers, of the content, of the delivery, and of access to that content" (p. 24).

Also referred to as NetGeners or Millennials, digital natives make up the great majority of students in academia. Although many faculty members are not part of that generation, the majority are increasingly aware of students' multitasking habits, their demand for immediate feedback, and, more impor-tantly, their expectations about the use of technology in higher education. Are faculty ready to meet these student expectations and needs? What barriers stand in the way of faculty integration of instructional technology (IT)? What can administrators—deans and chairs, specifically—do to encourage IT integration?

Even if we assume adequate levels of training, support, and access, there are many barriers to faculty members' adoption and integration of instructional technology. These barriers can be placed into two general categories: technology-related and academic-related. The most common technology-related barriers include the wide range of IT options, the potential for ensuing faculty role conflicts (for example, between being a technology expert versus a content expert), and the rapid pace of IT improvement and innovations. The most common academic barriers naturally include time and effort, concerns about the academic quality of courses that use IT, lack of adequate incentives and com-pensation, lack of tenure and promotion credit for the teaching and scholarship associated with the use of IT, and concerns about job security. An extended discussion of these barriers can be found in Brinthaupt, Clayton, and Draude (2008) as well as in the *EDUCAUSE Quarterly* 2002 Special Issue.

What can deans and chairs do to help their digital immigrant faculty overcome these many barriers and incorporate IT in their courses? First, academic leaders must recognize that different faculty will be interested in different kinds of technologies, depending on their interests, experiences, and disciplines (Beggs, 2000).

Working with campus IT trainers and consultants, deans and chairs can ensure that their faculty receive regu-lar overviews of or workshops on the different technologies and what can be done with them, especially within specific disciplines. Of course, deans and chairs would benefit from such

overviews and training themselves.

To minimize potential faculty role conflicts, academic leaders can encourage regular roundtable discussions within departments to help their faculty identify and articulate discipline-specific ways to achieve IT integration. For example, some institutions have created intradepartmental training programs that rely on experienced IT users to help prospective or new users (Clayton, 2005; Efaw, 2005). Identifying experienced faculty members within departments can also provide deans and chairs with local IT experts who can be drawn on for support and training.

Students will come to expect and depend on new instructional technology, further increasing the demand for incorporating IT into courses. Academic leaders, in addition to emphasizing this student need and demand, could also advocate for student participation in departmental or college IT roundtables and service on IT-related committees at their institutions.

Let's now consider the major academic barriers to IT integration. The greatest concern for both faculty members and academic leaders has to be how to reduce the time and effort needed to learn about and implement IT. There are several ways to address this concern. For example, some institutions have created departmental and course-specific templates within their LMS platform (Clayton, 2005). These templates lessen the learning curve for faculty and can provide students with standardized resources and materials.

There is also some discussion of university and departmental standards or requirements (Seminoff and Wepner, 1997), such as developing guidelines on the minimal technology tools that all faculty members need to understand and use. If an institution decides to mandate a Web presence for all its courses (e.g., having all faculty present their syllabi and contact information online), local support staff could facilitate this process, taking some of the time and effort load off faculty.

As institutions attend to accreditation standards, learning outcomes, assessments and benchmarks, and course design and redesign efforts, academic leaders must understand the pedagogically sound ways that courses can implement and integrate IT (Seminoff and Wepner, 1997). This will help address concerns about the academic quality of courses that integrate IT. One promising development along these lines is the creation of institutional centers that focus on learning and teaching. Such centers can help faculty to better understand the pedagogy associated with IT integration.

Academic leaders can also facilitate a peer review process for courses using IT. Such a process can help to both improve the quality of those courses and clarify the best practices criteria for instructors (Bombardieri, 2006). New IT users can reduce the time and effort involved by following the developmental guidance and feedback associated with such reviews. At the same time, experienced IT users can improve their pedagogical expertise by conducting these reviews.

Even if there are sufficient incentives and compensation to help faculty integrate IT into their courses, demands on time and effort will still be an issue. Deans and chairs must also work to increase the perceived value and necessity of incorporating IT into their faculty's teaching. Of course, faculty members will do this only if they are held accountable and if they get sufficient "credit" for doing so (Beggs, 2000). Thus, academic leaders can increase the credit given to IT users by promotion and tenure committees, and more clearly articulate how IT integration relates to the scholarship of teaching and learning (Bombardieri, 2006; Hagner and Schneebeck, 2001; Seminoff and Wepner, 1997; Young, 2002).

With regard to concerns over job security, open dialogues between academic leaders and their faculty offer a good beginning. Deans and chairs need to solicit and understand the job concerns of their faculty when it comes to the use of IT. For example, how will online and Web-enhanced courses impact teaching load, the use of adjunct faculty, what one teaches and how often? Failing to address questions like these will lead to greater faculty resistance and distrust.

References

Beggs, T.A. (2000, April). *Influences and barriers to the adoption of instructional technology*. Proceedings of the Mid-South Instructional Technology Conference, Murfreesboro, Tenn. Available electronically at www.mtsu.edu/~itconf/proceed00/beggs/beggs.htm.

Bombardieri, M. (2006, September 5). Harvard studies ways to promote teaching. *The Boston Globe*. Available electronically at *www.boston.com/news/local/articles/2006/09/05/harvard_studies_ways_to_promote_teaching/*.

Brinthaupt, T.M., Clayton, M.A., and Draude, B.J. (2008). *Faculty integration of instructional technology in higher education: Barriers and strategies.* Manuscript under review.

Caruso, J.B. and Salaway, G. (2007). ECAR study of undergraduate students and information technology, 2007. EDUCAUSE Center for Applied Research. Available electronically at *http://connect.educause.edu/Library/ECAR/TheECARStudyofUndergradua/45075*.

Clayton, M.A. (2005). Faculty development is only the beginning: How to get faculty interested in technology integration. *Higher Learning*, 5, 13.

Efaw, J. (2005). No teacher left behind: How to teach with technology. *EDUCAUSE Quarterly,* 28(4), 26-32.

Hagner, P.R. and Schneebeck, C. A. (2001). Engaging the faculty. In C.A. Barone and P.R. Hagner (Eds.), *Technology-enhanced teaching and learning: Leading and supporting the transformation on your campus* (pp. 1-12). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Seminoff, N.E. and Wepner, S.B. (1997). What should we know about technology-based projects for tenure and promotion? *Journal of Research on Computing in Education, 30*, 67-82.

Starrett, D. (2005, September). Do we have to talk the talk? *Campus Technology*, 24-26.

Young, J.R. (2002, February 22). Ever so slowly, colleges start to count work with technology in tenure decisions. *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 48 (24), A25.

Maria A. Clayton is a professor of English, Thomas M. Brinthaupt is a professor of psychology, and Barbara J. Draude is director of academic and instructional technology services at Middle Tennessee State University. ●

Senior Faculty and Teaching Effectiveness

By Maryellen Weimer

Now that I'm one of those "senior" faculty, I hear a lot of digs about faculty who need to retire … deadwood, still standing but hopefully about to topple. The belief that the teaching effectiveness of most "seniors" declines is strong and persistent. Is it true or yet another one of those academic myths?

Interestingly most of the research on the subject is rather dated. To believe it applies now, you must assume that senior faculty teaching today are the same as seniors were in the '70s and '80s. Given everything else that has changed in higher education, I'm not sure how valid the assumption might be.

Second, as with so many other topics in social science research, the limited results that do exist are not consistent. For example, one study from 1974 found that only 6 percent of the variance in ratings could be attributed to age. On the other hand, a 1989 study of 106 psychology faculty members (all faculty members are probably not like psychology faculty members) was able to document an overall negative correlation of .33 between age and general teaching effectiveness.

However, one of the definitive sources on senior faculty (see reference below), after a review of research on the topic, offers this conclusion: "In summary, no studies found a large negative association between a faculty member's age and effective teaching. If a negative effect exists, it is small. It is clear, however, that senior faculty are interested in, committed to, and devote significant time to teaching." (p. 31)

That last conclusion is justified in part by a study of New Jersey senior faculty who participated in a lengthy 50-question interview. The researchers wondered if these veterans still found "joy" in teaching. "The data were clear: the overwhelming majority enjoy teaching and care a great deal about student learning." (p. 25)

That's encouraging, but not everything that came out of these interviews was. The daily obligations of teaching keep even senior faculty very busy, leaving little time to focus on teaching per se. "Without periodic opportunities to revitalize their professional lives generally and their teaching lives in particular, faculty members report that their 'teaching vitality' tends to slip." (p. 24)

And despite these needs for renewal, half of these interviewees said that they did not discuss teaching with their colleagues. Only one in 10 reported talking to colleagues about instructional topics such as books, lab materials, and student complaints. And this kind of pedagogical conversation wasn't happening for this cohort in departmental meetings either. Only one in 14 reported that classroom teaching was discussed at those meetings. If faculty in this cohort talked about teaching, it was through some institution-wide faculty development program.

According to these data, "seniors" do care about teaching, and they don't decline precipitously in their effectiveness as measured by student ratings. But for these folks, those who know their institutions and colleagues best, teaching remains a private, isolated activity; and if it is this way for those with years of experience, it's not a big

stretch to assume the same for faculty in all age cohorts.

References:

For a good review of the research on age and teaching effectiveness see, Bland, C. J., and Bergquist, W. H. (1997). *The Vitality of Senior Faculty Members: Snow on the Roof—Fire in the Furnace.* ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report, Vol. 25, No. 7. Washington, DC: The George Washington University, Graduate School of Education and Human Development.

The results of the interview study of New Jersey faculty appear in, Finkelstein, M. J., and LaCelle-Peterson, M. W. (1993). *Institutions matter: Campus teaching environments' impact on senior faculty.* In Finkelstein, M. J., and LaCelle-Peterson, M. W. (eds.) Developing Senior Faculty as Teachers. *New Directions for Teaching and Learning,* No. 55. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

alsr08