



Newsletter of the Center for Teaching Excellence, Bronx Community College, CUNY Fall 2007

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FACULTY DIRECTOR'S CORNER



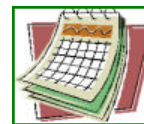
Dr. Harriet Shenkman
Faculty Director
Center for Teaching Excellence

The CTE continues to pursue four major goals: to foster growth in individual teaching skills throughout a faculty member's professional career; to use interdisciplinary tools and insights to seek solutions to pedagogical problems; to foster departmental exploration of goals, objectives, and teaching proficiencies within programs and courses; and to foster a campus environment where teaching and learning are central and valued.

Twelve faculty members completed Problem-Based Learning (PBL) training. Faculty members reported satisfaction and success with this approach. They stated, "Through the problem-based learning activity, students collaborated and have developed their critical thinking skills. They engaged in open discussion and formulated responses that illustrated their ability to solve problems by analyzing and evaluating the problems. In addition, they developed their abilities to present oral reports to the class on their findings. The problem-based learning activity assisted the students, who are of culturally diverse backgrounds to be more aware of the verbal and social differences among them. Students have also become more proficient in using the Blackboard system."

This semester, the PBL training will incorporate Quantitative Reasoning. Don Read of Business and Information Systems will coordinate the Quantitative Literacy aspect and Bruce Rosenbloom will guide the technology component. Twelve faculty will participate.

The second NEH Hall of Fame for Great Americans Summer Seminar took place in June. Two BCC scholars, Vaso Thomas from Social Sciences and David Gordon from History, and three renowned scholar consultants led faculty in exploring historical periods and social movements as they relate to selected Hall of Fame honorees. Twelve faculty from Lehman, BCC, and Hostos attended. The BCC faculty participants were Vincent Bonelli, Leon Battista, Tamar Rothenberg, and Alexander Lamazares. A typical comment in the feedback report received from



Upcoming Meetings and Events

Learning Communities: (*) Sept. 6, October 11, Nov. 3, Dec. 6

PBL/Quantitative Reasoning (*)
Sept. 11, & 25, 2-4 pm, Sept. 28, 10-12am

Constitution and Citizenship Week—Sept 17– Sept 20

CTE Advisory Board: 2-4 pm (*)
Sept 20, October 18, November 1

Adjunct Faculty Workshops (*)
October 17, 3-5 pm (Pedagogy)
October 23, 5-6 pm (Technology)

Multicultural Sensitivity (*)
November 14, 4-6 pm

(*) Events held at CTE Center:
Located in Lower Philosophy Hall

In This Issue

Faculty Director's Corner: <i>by Dr. Harriet Shenkman</i>	1
Quantitative Literacy Initiative <i>by Don Read</i>	2
Hall of Fame Seminars <i>by Valarie Calendar</i>	3
Learning Communities Forum	4
Randy Bass to Speak	5
Discussion Forums at CTE <i>by Bruce Rosenbloom</i>	5

(Director's Corner- continued from page 1)

faculty was: "Well organized, great group of faculty, interesting readings and lectures, stimulating discussions. Exceeded expectations." A film which captures the essence of the seminar will be available for viewing this semester.

The Freshman Learning Communities completed the second semester. Bonding among the faculty and students in the three clusters was evident. End-year projects and the culminating showcase were well-received and demonstrated integrated learning. A film about the learning community experience produced by Raymond Warden is available for viewing. This semester MTH 03 and ENV 11 will be included, and we are expanding our use of technology and digital storytelling.

Our New Faculty Seminars Orientation Program will continue. This semester we will serve 19 faculty. In addition, the CTE will conduct workshops for adjunct faculty. We will also sponsor, in conjunction with the President's Office, faculty workshops on Diversity. Citizenship Day, coordinated by Bruce Rosenbloom, is planned for September. We plan to continue to sponsor Women's History Hall of Fame in conjunction with the Office of Student Activities and the National Center for Educational Alliances.

A volume entitled "*The Scholarship of Teaching: Faculty Development Through Cross-Campus Collaboration*" is to be published this semester under the sponsorship of Title V. Articles by faculty from BCC, Lehman and Hostos fall under two major categories: *research and inquiry* or *practice and reflection*. Our goal is to disseminate the collection throughout CUNY.

Several new exciting faculty development initiatives are in the planning stages. They include a one-year Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Seminar, a program involving integrated curricula around Hall of Fame for Great Americans historic figures, and Mathematic Think-Ins. You will be hearing more as these programs develop.

Finally, our CTE Advisory Board is planning our annual CTE Week. This year CTE Week will be three days, Nov. 7-9. On November 7, we are very pleased to have as our campus guest speaker and consultant, Randy Bass. Dr. Bass has been a key leader in bringing the "scholarship of teaching and learning" into the national academic spotlight. We plan for him to work with selected faculty groups in exploring how we can bridge the gap between expert and novice learning.

Please drop by the CTE Center in Lower Philosophy Hall or contact us. We welcome your ideas, suggestions, and participation.

BCC Launches Quantitative Literacy Initiative

By Professor Don Read

Students have major difficulties with problems or concepts involving quantitative reasoning or numerical skills. Even if they have enjoyed some success in math courses, that success doesn't seem to transfer to other non-math courses where quantitative skills have to be brought to bear upon concrete, practical, real-world problems.

How much does it really matter, especially to people in the humanities, the arts, social sciences, etc.? The answer has to do with the way quantitative material of all sorts has crept into all of our lives, especially since computers have become so ubiquitous. The ability to understand, interpret, question and draw valid inferences from the flood of data that threatens to overwhelm us is crucial.

The goal of BCC's new Quantitative Literacy Initiative is to help our students move not only toward greater success in the quantitative aspects of their college courses, but also toward improved ability to make informed decisions about all aspects of their lives. As we launch BCC's QLI, we will be working together to find ways to incorporate some context-based quantitative-reasoning activity into all of our courses. The program will be offered under the sponsorship of the Center for Teaching Excellence and within the context of Problem-Based Learning. Faculty from the Mathematics Department will serve as mentors.



Title V Update Mitchell Wenzel, Title V Director

Our Title V Grant with Lehman College was due to end on September 30, 2007; but Lehman has asked the U.S. Education Department for a one year no cost extension. This extension will permit both institutions additional time to spend down their money.

Hall of Fame for Great Americans Seminar National Endowment for the Humanities

Valarie Callender, BCC Student

From June 11-21, 2007, the two-week seminar brought together a diverse group of faculty members from across the disciplines Craig Bernardini, Vermell Blanding, Carl Grindley, Cynthia Jones, and Greg Marks (Hostos Community College) Nathalie Bailey, Penny Prince, and Suzan Russell (Lehman College) and Vincent Bonelli, Leon Battista, David Gordon, Alexander Lamazares, Vaso Thomas, and Tamar Rothenberg (Bronx Community College). The seminar focused on developing humanities projects to augment and expand classroom instruction. Bronx Community College's historic landmark, The Hall of Fame for Great Americans, was the inspiration behind the seminar's exploration of great Americans of the past.

The discussions, lead by Dr. David Reynolds and Dr. Joseph Marbach, two distinguished scholars, focused on key figures during two periods in American History—the Civil War and the Progressive Era.

Dr. David Reynolds—Professor of English at Baruch College and the Graduate Center, author of *Beneath the American Renaissances*, and a Bancroft Prize winner—led a discussion on Walt Whitman.

Dr. Joseph Marbach—Professor of Political Science, Dean of The College of Arts and Sciences at Seton Hall University, and an expert on the Federalist Movement—addressed the Constitution and provided a greater understanding and clarity of the founding document.

Dr. David Gordon, Professor of History and Dr. Vaso Thomas, Professor of Sociology led workshops and provided exemplary leadership.

The seminar was a tremendous success. It brought together a dedicated group of faculty members. They collectively fostered a spirit which allowed each participant to develop projects to enrich their classroom instruction.

New Faculty Orientation Dates 2007

September 7 12:15-4:30 pm

October 5 10am-3pm

November 16 10am-3pm

December 7 10am-3pm

New Faculty 2006



Photos: (Top to bottom) BCC Hall of Fame, Tamar Rothenberg (History), Carl Grinley (Hostos-English), Lisa Easton (Speaker-Architecture)

Freshman Learning Community

Professor Georgene Osborne (Education and Reading)

“I Think Therefore I Am” was a Spring 2007 Learning Community experience that emphasized metacognition, that is, the process of becoming aware of and reflecting upon how we think what we think. We looked at critical thinking as a metacognitive process that challenged our community to think about our own thinking in five fundamental ways:

1. what it takes for a writer to link and support a claim
2. what it takes for a reader to link the main idea with supporting details
3. what it takes to draw valid conclusions
4. the reasoning we use to justify our choices and actions, and the ways we can think more critically about everyday issues.

Students read *The Four Agreements* by Miguel Ruiz as a basis to think through such claims as, “The agreements that you make with yourself and others will determine the quality of your life” and “Taking things personally means you agree that your value as a person is as low (or as high) as the way you have been treated by other people.” Through writing and dramatizing the issues, our learning community illustrated the complexity of thinking rationally and critically. In the end, the metacognitive process within critical thinking was best articulated in the words of some of the students in the following quotations:

“Critical thinking is trying to find the ‘why’ in everything you do.” YM

“Put your opinion aside and consider possibilities. Open your mind. See a claim from another person’s point of view.” MG

“You have to understand a claim deeply enough to guide your audience through your mind so you can transmit knowledge you have through details and examples.”YM

Professor Donna Kessler-Eng (English)

For the Spring 2007 Learning Community Showcase, our learning community students presented their best work of the semester on Toolkit websites. Our learning community’s theme was “Searching for Selfhood in the 21st Century.” Our faculty team, Ms. Eldiane Elmeus, Dr. Donna Kessler-Eng, Dr. Gilbert Marzan coordinated students’ virtual presentations of their identities. Throughout the semester, students were asked to write essays in response to readings with sociological themes exploring the issues of identity and gender, race, ethnicity, class, and family. At the end of the semester, students selected their strongest piece of writing to post on their Toolkit websites. Students expressed themselves by including Toolkit panels with photos, poems, songs, favorite quotes, and maps of the places they consider to be home. Toolkit websites gave our learning community students the opportunity to showcase their academic achievements and to be proud of their writing and themselves.

Professors Joan Wilson (Education and Reading), Nelson Reynoso (Counseling)& Vaso Thomas (Social Science)

One World, One Love Learning Community (2007)

This learning community integrates three courses at Bronx Community College: Introduction to Sociology, Orientation and Career Development as well as Reading and Study Skills. Our philosophy is to enhance learning, teaching and personal growth through the development of a community. Our perception of this community includes relationship between and among students and teachers, students and the college community, as well as the local and global community. It serves our freshmen population and facilitates transition into college life. Our community focuses on fundamental and relevant topics of Family, Race/Ethnicity, Gender, and Class.

The syllabi will include the General Education Proficiencies of Communication, Reasoning and Analysis, and Information Literacy.



Photos: (Top to bottom) Student presentation at LC Showcase; Dr. Kathryn DiTomasso handing out certificates; Dr. Vaso Thomas working with students in the learning communities; student presentations.



Discussion Forums

Bruce Rosenbloom
CTE Asst. Director

The Spring 2007 semester was an active time for the CTE Center—located in the lower level of Philosophy Hall. After opening the Center in the previous semester, I organized two “discussion forums” that were conducted in the Spring 2007 semester. The idea behind the forums was to create a dialog on the intersection of technology and teaching, with an emphasis on a current trend in technology. Higher education is exactly the place such discussions should take place as we can form a community around common interests.



CUNY Chief Librarian, Curtis L. Kendrick addressing the audience at the “New Digital Student” forum held February 27, 2007.

The first discussion was entitled “**The New Digital Students: Challenges and Opportunities**” and panelists explored Mark Perensky’s controversial article entitled “Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants”. In that work Perensky claimed that current students who have been raised using digital equipment and computers have markedly different needs in terms of how they are taught than students in the past. A panel consisting of myself, Steven Powers (Education and Reading), Curtis L. Kendrick (CUNY University Librarian) and Silvestre Sosa (Hunter College student) had an engaging forum that also included much audience participation.

The second discussion, “**Social Networking Tools: Engaging Students in and out of the Classroom**” addressed one of the fastest growing technological trends—social networking. With unparalleled growth in social networking sites like Facebook and Myspace, young people are embracing these sites in large numbers. The forum asked the panelists whether the tools used in these sites—blogs, journals and wikis—could also be productively used to enhance college courses and teaching. The panel consisted of myself, Howard Wach (History), Jordi Getman-Eraso (History), and Raymond Warden (CTE-multimedia specialist). Both forums were opened to faculty, staff and students from BCC and hopefully provided a first step to fostering a dialog on these important issues of pedagogy and technology.



Bruce Rosenbloom presenting at “Social Networking: forum at March 29th, 2007.

IMPORTANT DATES

CTE Advisory Board Meetings

September 20, 2007, 2-4 p.m.
October 18, 2007, 2-4 p.m.
November 1, 2007, 2-4 p.m.

All meetings will be held in the CTE Center, Philosophy Hall B02

Randy Bass

Keynote Speaker Planned for CTE Week –Nov 7th



Randy Bass has been a leader in the effort to highlight pedagogy and teaching. His focus on the “scholarship of teaching” has been recognized as a growing avenue for study in higher education. His widely regarded essay, “The Scholarship of Teaching: What’s the Problem” (*Inventio*, Vol. 1, No. 1) is among the most influential and widely distributed essay of the past ten years in the scholarship of teaching and learning.

Dr. Bass is Assistant Provost for Teaching and Learning Initiatives at Georgetown University, and Executive Director of Georgetown’s Center for New Designs in Learning and Scholarship (CNDLS), a campus-wide center supporting faculty work in new learning and research environments.

Dr. Bass will work with various groups of BCC faculty on November 7th, 2007



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Center for Teaching Excellence
Philosophy Hall, Lower Level, Room B02
Phone: (718) 289-5951
Email: CTE@bcc.cuny.edu
Web: www.bcc.cuny.edu/centerforteaching

Editor/Graphic Designer

Mr. Bruce Rosenbloom
bruce.rosenbloom@bcc.cuny.edu

Assistant Editor

Professor Doreen LaBlanc
doreen.lablanc@bcc.cuny.edu