



CTE NEWSLETTER

To Test or Not to Test

By Vincent Granito, Ph.D.

Tests—Students hate them, faculty dread grading them, and some pedagogical specialists have questioned the effectiveness of assessing learning or knowledge based on test scores. This has led some educational teams to propose redesigning courses that primarily utilize other assessments of student knowledge, such as written assignments, group projects, class discussions, class presentations, and computer simulations. Although these are valid methods of assessment, some new research has come out showing that tests can be an excellent method to demonstrate the students' ability to grasp the course objectives. Researchers from Washington University in St. Louis demonstrated that taking tests can not only assess what one knows, but also found a relationship between taking frequent tests and long-term retention. This means that in classes where students are tested often, the material was remembered long after the course was

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completed. The students in the study were compared to students who simply read and re-read the material. The authors of the study also concluded that their results had some implications for how students prepare for tests. For example, it might be wiser to take practice tests as a study method, as opposed to just multiple readings of the material. The authors suggest that faculty provide practice tests for students, and administer frequent tests over the course of the semester.

Roediger, H., & Karpicke, J. (2006). Test-Enhanced Learning. *Psychological Science*, 17, 249-255.

Our Charge:

"The Center for Teaching Excellence is a community of educators serving as catalysts and resources for professional growth and innovative teaching to enhance student learning and achievement."

Course Re design is on its way!

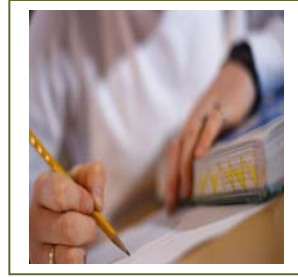
By Dorinda Smith

Based on research from the PEW Charitable Trust Model and The Center for Academic Transformation, LCCC teams are preparing to launch two re designed courses in Fall 2006 through the Enhancement Project awarded to the Center for Teaching Excellence. Interdisciplinary teams are on task at this printing.

Psychology PSYH 151 and American National Government PLSC 156, are in the process of being re designed to pilot in fall 2006. Each of these courses meet the criteria required in the Enhancement Project Proposal, including the goals of the *New Decade Challenge*. Each is being designed with plans to increase quality and student learning, to provide clear assessment procedures; to focus on retention and cost savings; to involve an interdisciplinary, collaborative team; and to appropriately allocate a reasonable budget.

The psychology course (being re designed by Vince Granito, with faculty team members Barbara Schuckman, Sharon Miller and Research Analyst Wendy Marley) is being re designed to convert to a multi-site videoconference course that will meet two days a week on campus. One day a week will be devoted to on-line laboratory learning. One hundred students will participate in the course that would typically be limited to 40+ students. This model incorporates elements of the Supplemental Model (maintaining the current class structure and content), as well as aspects of the Replacement Model and the Emporium Model, (blending face-to-face instruction with on line activities, along with the lab exercises with current course content).

In the re designed course, a faculty member will have support of a teaching assistant. All tests and handout materials will be moved to the Angel Courseware Management System to enable students to have ready access, to eliminate copy-related costs and to provide better efficiency. A new psychology lab will be readily available for students to access anytime



Psychology and American National Government

re designed to pilot Fall 2006

by Vince Granito & Dorinda Smith

and as many times as each chooses. Thus, students will be able to practice multiple times at their convenience and they will be able to apply their learning in a timely fashion.

The government course, (being re designed by Ralph Smith, with faculty team members Dorinda Smith, Jackie Holland, Mike Substeln; Distance Education members: Mary Jane Palmer, Sandy Crobar; Research Analyst: Wendy Marley; and Mayor John Piskura) on the other hand, will enroll 100 students (one section with four student groups of 25 each) with one faculty member and teaching assistant support, in a web-based course being totally re designed. The new re design will include: on line lectures for each topic covered; Jump Ball questions for each (discussion links); virtual field trips/tours; video guest lectures; tutorials for student practice and review; activities; quizzes (can be taken multiple times) and exams. This design fits the Fully On-line Model. All tests and handout materials will be available in Angel to enable students to have ready access, to eliminate copy-related costs and to provide better efficiency. It is posited that students who are actively engaged and finding success are much less likely to drop or withdraw from a course.

Round two proposals were received from four more teams and the blind review of those is completed. Meetings with the directors and teams to review those results are taking place in late April and early May. Announcement of successful projects will be announced soon. For information about Course Re design projects in the future, contact Dorinda Smith. For information about the two projects currently funded, contact Dorinda Smith, Director of the PLSC 156 Project, or Vince Granito, Director of the PSYH 151 Project.

FACULTY FOCUS

Student-Evaluations

By Vince Granito, Ph.D.

There has been a great deal of attention focused on the use of the student evaluations of faculty members over the last few weeks. Several debates have ensued, from the recommendations of the committee on student evaluations for faculty senate to the push to make student evaluations public information. The history of doing student evaluations for college faculty dates back to the mid-1920's, and was originally used as a private way for students and faculty to assess strengths and weakness of the course, so that changes could be made for future offerings. However, this focus changed when schools started using the evaluations for annual evaluations, salary considerations, promotions, and tenure. Furthermore, students have started pushing to make these evaluations public as a way to chose professors for enrollment into classes. This has given rise to public sites such as, ratemyprofessor.com, which offer students a confidential way to rate instructors and make that information public for other students. The validity and reliability have often been questioned with these evaluations, with some schools choosing to abandon the practice of having students assess faculty. Are there factors that influence how students rate their professors? Yes, and in some cases, these factors have nothing to do with the content of the course. Here are a summary of results:

- Class Size: Faculty who teach small classes and very large classes (70+) tend to be evaluated more favorable
- Upper level course students rate their professors more favorable than introductory courses
- Faculty who require less work have been rated more favorable
- Students who have had an instructor in a previous semester have rated them either very positive or very negative
- Female students tend to rate female professors higher, but no other gender differences have been found



- Students who have an interest in the information covered in the class rate their professors more favorable
- Students who have similar attitudes with the professor rate these professors more favorable
- Faculty rank has an impact with the higher rank (professor vs. instructor) faculty being rated more favorable
- Faculty who show enthusiasm and high levels of expressiveness are rated higher than faculty who do not have these traits
- Attractive faculty are usually rated much more favorable
- Higher ratings are given if the evaluations are not anonymous and/or the instructor is present in the room
- Higher ratings are given if the students are made aware that the rating will be used for tenure, promotions, or advancement
- The grade the student expects to achieve is related to ratings (higher grades=higher ratings)
- Some research has even shown that ratings could be increased if the faculty let students out early to complete the evaluations or if professors offer treats on evaluation day (cookies/candy)

Based on these results, it is hard to say that these evaluations could be useful in assessing teaching effectiveness. It is possible that the assessments are being made based on factors that faculty have no control over. How have faculty used student evaluations? We would like to hear from other LCCC faculty on creative ways to use these evaluations. Consider presenting this information as a roundtable, workshop, newsletter article, or continuing education session.

Spotlight On Faculty

Jim Jordan

We are spotlighting Jim Jordan, Adjunct Professor of Psychology from the Social Science and Human Service Division, and soon-to-be new full-time faculty member this fall in SSHS. Mr. Jordan received his graduate degree in psychology from Ball State University and his undergraduate work from Youngstown State University.

How long have you been teaching here at LCCC?

I have been teaching at LCCC since the Spring Quarter of 1992 after being interviewed and hired by Dr. McKinley. My first class was Principles of Psychology a 3 hour course that was structured for Associate Degree students. Needless to say this course is no longer offered.

What classes do you teach?

I teach all classes at LCCC but especially enjoy Social Psychology and Abnormal Psychology where I can contribute experiences from my 17 years of clinical work.

What hobbies do you have outside your LCCC life?

Hobbies include jogging, weight training, and I am a "vinyl junkie" collecting rare rock albums and CDs (over 700, nothing burned).

How do you see your role in the educational process?

I like to have students experience as many concepts in psychology as possible, since we can all easily relate to issues in psychology. I also enjoy discussing controversial issues in psychology, which helps students develop critical thinking skills.

"I teach all classes at LCCC but especially enjoy Social Psychology and Abnormal Psychology."

Do you have any unique activities that you would be willing to share with the campus community?

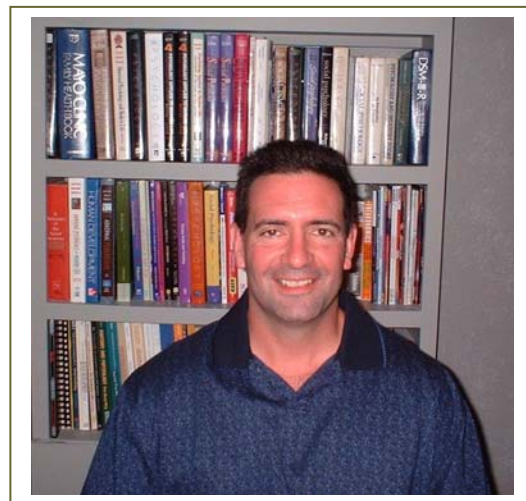
One activity that I try to incorporate in many of my psychology classes is to have students evaluate psychological issues, such as depression, on the internet. They quickly find that they all have symptoms of psychological disorders, but learn that this is only due to the fact that informational web sites are often written by pharmaceutical companies.

What type of student is your ideal student?

For me the ideal student is the highly motivated student who wants to have a career in psychology. I also enjoy working with students who have overcome personal difficulties and are excelling in college.

How has education changed since you entered into the field?

Since I entered the educational field 16 years ago, computers and technological devices in the classroom were unheard of. I am convinced that all the wonderful things we use today will be archaic in just a few years.



Jim Jordan, Adjunct Professor of Psychology

Study Group Discussions

World Is Flat study group

By Mike Zellers

Mike Zellers led a discussion group focusing on Thomas Friedman's influential book, *THE WORLD IS FLAT*. The book discusses the causes and effects of the unprecedented level of economic globalization experienced in recent years. The group discussed their overall reaction to Friedman's book, along with the implications of globalization for general education, specific academic disciplines and for educators.



Mike Zellers lead discussion for Thomas Friedman's, "World Is Flat" study group

My Freshman Year: What Professor Learned by Becoming a Student study group

By Chris Sheetz

Sabbaticals are intended to be a time to expand your skills, recharge your batteries and get a fresh perspective. Imagine taking a sabbatical to become a student at Lorain County Community College. Imagine viewing this institution from the other side of the lectern, the service counter, or the parking lot. What would you experience? How would you manage your time? You certainly would get a new perspective. Would you do it? Rebekah Nathan (a pseudonym) did. As an anthropology professor at a large state university, she took a year off for an ethnographic study of academic life.

Several LCCC faculty members are reading and discussing her findings. We are pondering questions such as:

- What behavioral expectations or rules do we as faculty have for students that we don't explicitly state or that we assume they have read in the college catalog?
- Should creating community be a goal of higher education institutions?
- Why are the most engaged and prepared students labeled as "potential witches" by their classmates?
- Why don't students do the required readings?
- Can diversity be achieved on campus?
- Should we adapt our teaching based on Nathan's findings?



Thomas Friedman's discussion group



Rebekah Nathan's discussion group lead by Chris Sheetz

Self-Study Quiz

Vincent Granito, Ph.D.

Often students have a difficult time focusing on appropriate reasons for why they have done poorly on a test. Many students focus on external reasons as opposed to taking responsibility for their own study habits. This is a natural tendency found in all human thinking, but an issue that frustrates faculty members. The following is a self-study quiz that was shared on the "Teaching Psychology Listserve" by Dr. Margaret Borkowski from Saginaw Valley State University. It can be adapted for use with your students and courses. It might be useful as an assessment tool for CARS.

- T/F 1. I thoroughly read the chapter to its end before coming to class.
- T/F 2. I do the pretest available online at the book's companion website before the chapter is presented.
- T/F 3. I create an outline of the chapter as I read.
- T/F 4. I compare my original outline with the professor's outline.
- T/F 5. I underline or highlight passages I think are important.
- T/F 6. I mark things I do not understand with question marks.
- T/F 7. I make sure I understand the figures and tables presented in the text.
- T/F 8. I make sure I ask questions about everything I do not understand.
- T/F 9. I visit my professor during office hours to ask questions and get clarification.
- T/F 10. I complete (in writing) the chapter's study guide.
- T/F 11. I complete (in writing) full essay answers to the study guide questions.
- T/F 12. I ask my professor if my practice essays are good.
- T/F 13. I complete the chapter's study guide and feel confident about the present chapter before the next one begins.

- T/F 14. I go online and use the text's website to help me study.
- T/F 15. I attend every class.
- T/F 16. I pay full attention in class.
- T/F 17. I take thorough notes from lecture material.
- T/F 18. I ask questions in class and participate.
- T/F 19. I review my notes soon after class, marking things that are unclear, things that I missed, or things that seem incomplete.
- T/F 20. I go online and take the posttest associated with the chapter before the next one begins.
- T/F 21. I retake the online quizzes until I get 100%.
- T/F 22. I reread the chapter again before the exam.
- T/F 23. I use most of the techniques and tips from the Memory chapter that we covered during the first week of class.
- T/F 24. I distribute my studying over many days rather than doing cram (long) study sessions.
- T/F 25. I attend the review sessions (or if I can't, I see my professor individually with questions).
- T/F 26. I do all of the extra credit possible.
- T/F 27. I force myself have a more positive attitude when I find myself not liking the class.
- T/F 28. I honestly put enough time and effort into this course.

The three points from above that I think are most important and that are going to help me the most are... 1.

- 2.
- 3.

T/F 29. I'm going to make a conscious effort to do at least these three things.

Executive Steering Committee, 2005-06

Dorinda Smith	Co-Chair, Coordinator of Enhancement Project, Enhancement Research Design Team
Vincent Granito	Co-Chair, Enhancement Research Design Team, Newsletter Editor
Dorothy Johnson	Vice Chair/Recorder
Marilyn Valentino	Coordinator of Innovative Projects Enhancement Research Design Team
Jennifer Kukis	Assessment Liaison Roundtable Co-Chair
Christine Sheetz	Website and Research Liaison
Valerie McGowan-Doyle	Roundtable Co-Chair
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Iona Abraham	Jacqueline Holland
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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Roundtable presentation

Nancy Kelly will discuss the pros and cons of different strategies for dealing with academic dishonesty in: **“Academic Dishonesty in the Age of Technology”**

Date: April 25

Time: 3:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Location: UC 308B

Study group discussion

Chris Sheetz is facilitating two more study group discussions focused on **My Freshman Year: What a Professor Learned by Becoming a Student** by Rebekah Nathan.

Dates April 19th & 26th

Time: 12:00 – 1:00 p.m.

Location: UC 209

Faculty Accomplishment

Valerie McGowan-Doyle received honorable mention for paper on Elizabeth I Society Agnes Strickland prize given at the South-Central Renaissance Society Conference in Houston, Texas (March 9-11, 2006). Congratulations Valerie!