

Director's Column

Mary Stephen, Ph.D.  
Director, Reinert CTE

The first issue of *The Notebook* for this academic year focused on Ignatian pedagogy. Reflection



Fast forward 2,000 years and you find Richard Feynman turning the harmful product to his advantage. Here is James Gleick's account:<sup>2</sup> Charles Weiner, encountering with a historian's glee a batch of Feynman's original notes and sketches, remarked that the materials represented 'a record of Feynman's day-to-day work.'

Feynman reacted with unexpected sharpness:

'I actually did the work on the paper,' he said.

'Well,' Weiner said, 'the work was done in your head, but the record of it is still here.'

'No, it's not a record, not really. It's working. You have to work on paper and this is the paper. Okay?'

Next time you assign a small group discussion, make sure to go around the room looking at the notes taken during the class. More importantly, pose a problem and check to see how many write something down in order to solve it. Chances are you will see students attempting to solve the problem in their head so that they can then record the solution on paper. So when your students want to reach for the stars, get them to grab a pad of paper and to start thinking on it.

<sup>1</sup> "Orality and Literacy," Walter J. Ong, Psychology Press, 2002 (see pg 78)

<sup>2</sup> "Genius: The Life And Science of Richard Feynman", James Gleick, Pantheon Books, 1992 (see pg 409)

### **"Midterm evaluation: A reflective tool for decision making"**

Kimberly Levenhagen, PT, DPT, WCC

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Midterm course evaluations can be a powerful tool to improve our understanding of the classroom learning environment before we are left scratching our head and wondering what went wrong during the semester. As a novice teacher, I was aware of the need to request student feedback regarding course objectives, course material, and instruction of the content at the conclusion of the semester. After reflecting on students' comments, I was disheartened to discover the classroom did not create an excellent learning environment and my assignments and objectives were not always clear. I quickly realized that many of the comments could be corrected if had been identified earlier. I determined that I wanted to make changes to assist students currently enrolled in the course. Therefore, I implemented midterm evaluations in my

courses with two goals in mind: 1) to allow me to improve the learning experience while the course was still in session and 2) to demonstrate the process of reflective thinking.

In addition to providing the teacher with feedback, midterm evaluations allow the student to understand the process of gathering, analyzing, and then synthesizing the information. Many students do not realize how they can use reflection as a learning tool. Students must be taught that reflective thinking is part of the critical thinking process, referring specifically to the processes of analyzing, evaluating and making judgments about a decision. While not all comments warrant a change in the course, explanations of the choices made about the course help the students learn why you, as an instructor, have selected a certain teaching style and format. Changes can demonstrate your willingness to listen to the needs of your students which can help the student learn to appreciate the requests of their future clients or patients. Chew and McInnis-Bowers wrote, "Enhancing decision making requires that we learn from our successes and failures and catalogue mentally for future retrieval what has occurred and why." Each classroom experience has successes and failures, midterm evaluations allow us to turn them into teaching moments.

## FEATURED ARTICLES

**"Shining Light on Student Evaluations"**

## **“Journaling with SLU Global”**

Jeanne Eichler, MOT, OTR/L, MT, CP-BC  
Instructor, Occupational Science & Occupational Therapy

Students are always asked to reflect on what they have learned, challenging them to see how new knowledge and understanding fits into their lives so that they may apply it. In a world of technology, where facebook, twitter, and texting are a part of everyday life, SLU Global seemed the logical place to go to encourage effective and frequent journaling for my Occupational Science (OS) students. Journaling electronically creates a personal pathway between the professor and the student, allowing a personal dialogue that makes even the largest class

requested teaching approaches within the same course keeps me alert, and the changing of the course delivery every year prevents me from getting in a rut. I truly didn't think SGIFs would always be a part of my teaching, but they are, and they will continue to be so. How else am I to know if I am optimally meeting the students' learning needs?

**“Can do!”**

Anne McCabe, Ph.D.  
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One goal I strive towards is getting my students to accept student learning outcomes for a course as theirs (and not as mine). For example, in the first-year writing courses, we go through several cycles of explanation of outcomes, perusal of assignment rubrics, application of rubrics to sample assignments, peer review of students' drafts, rewriting, my application of rubrics to their

display their engagement with the material and seems to raise the personal stakes for them without increasing the pressure of "writing" a response.