

-- INTRODUCTORY NOTE --

In this last issue of the year, we asked our faculty to tell us about their favorite teaching resources, and they responded! As you head into the summer, we hope that you'll discover – or re-discover – something on this list to stimulate your own thinking about teaching. (Many of these texts can be found in the CTE Reading Room and/or in Pius Library.)

Thanks to all those who responded, and have a terrific summer!

-- COLUMNISTS --

### **Mind the Gap**

Benjamin de Foy (Earth and Atmospheric Sciences)

Next time you're in London and stepping off the underground train at Piccadilly Circus, beware: one false step and you may find yourself sandwiched between the platform and the train. Mind the gap. The station was built more than a hundred years ago. Nowadays we don't do things that way. The consumer is king, and s/he better not fall through the cracks.

A similar thing has happened in my lab. The first time I set a particular assignment three years ago, I left a big gap between the instructions and the desired product. I did this intentionally so that students would really have to think about the material and wrestle with it in order to reach a solution. Over the semesters, however, my instructions have gradually gotten smoother, and the gap has been filled in ever so slightly. Accordingly, the assignment has become easier to complete: easier for the students as they go through the motions on a better-posted path; easier for the professor to give factual answers in place of Socratic dialogues.

This is an unfortunate development. Heath & Heath (1) discuss the "Gap Theory" of Curiosity proposed by Loewenstein: "It is surprisingly simple. Curiosity happens when we feel a gap in our knowledge." (2) Computer game designers always keep the gamer wondering what will happen in the next 5 seconds. I sometimes worry that I could stop talking mid-sentence and not a single student in the class would be wondering what is coming next. Cialdini gives great examples of using mystery stories in teaching to stimulate the curiosity gap. (3)

Watch out, though. Too much of a good thing and you'll lose your audience. When you get to King's Cross station, there's a big gap between the first 8 platforms and platforms 9-11 tucked way back to the left. If you miss the midnight train to Cambridge that always leaves from platform 10c, you won't end up in Hogwarts; you'll end up spending a lousy night on a public bench.

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1. "Made to Stick, Why Some Ideas Survive and Others Die", Chip Heath and Dan Heath, Random House, 2007. Though not specifically about teaching, this is a great resource. Check out their website for an 11 page summary: "Teaching that sticks".

2. "The Psychology of Curiosity: A Review and Reinterpretation", George Loewenstein, Psychological Bulletin, Vol. 116, No. 1, pp. 75-98, 1994.

3. "What's the best secret device for engaging student interest? The answer is in the title", Robert B. Cialdini, Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology, Vol. 24, No. 1, pp. 22-29, 2005.

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### **What Will You Read This Summer?**

Kim Levenhagen (Physical Therapy)

As the temperatures rise, it is time for me to gather my reading materials for the dog-days of summer. Some of my summer reading will be fiction novels, but the bulk of my reading will be in preparation for a new academic year to enhance my teaching and scholarship. Like many faculty, I am overwhelmed with the number of journals I receive each week. So how do I keep my summer reading manageable? I review suggested reading on the Reinert Center of Teaching Excellence website, and I have weekly article "elerts" set up through the library, but most importantly, I enlist the help of my students.

The "Millennial Student" can multitask, loathes "busy work," and can use technology with great ease. Therefore, instead of fighting these traits, I utilize them to assist me in becoming a better educator. When I construct an assignment, I explain how the assignment relates to students' future as health care professionals. The students are required to search the library databases for current articles that pertain to course content and objectives. The end result is wonderful. The students discover articles in the area they plan to pursue after graduation. I receive useful articles that I can incorporate into future lectures. I place "selected" articles I receive from students throughout the year in a folder marked "summer reading." I write a note to the student thanking them for their involvement in my future lectures to illustrate concrete learning experiences. This action motivates students to be a part of the learning process and models "collegial sharing" of information for them. Consider the words of author, James Ray, "Knowledge is an intellectual process; Knowing is a spiritual/emotional process. Knowledge comes from acquiring information; knowing comes from ownership." (1) We must motivate our students to take ownership in their learning, making it meaningful for their future as well as the future of other students.

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(1) James Ray, "The Truth Shall Set You ..." public message; online: <http://finsecurity.com/finsecurity/quotes/mm0198.html>; accessed on April 26, 2011.

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### **Review of Ken Bain, *What the Best College Teachers Do***

Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, (2004).

Daniel Chornet-Roses (Communication – Madrid)

During this time when Saint Louis University is preparing for the 2012 accreditation, pouring over Bain's book can be very helpful to ground us in the basic premises that boost *effective learning and enhance effective teaching*. This book is the result of a carefully designed study that identified teaching

excellence as evidenced in “remarkable feats of student learning” (15). The book is organized around six questions for which Bain furnishes detailed answers from his research. Sprinkled with compelling narratives from some of the most outstanding educators and their students, the six questions flesh out the following areas: (1) that the best teachers understand that knowledge is constructed, and that a developmental approach to student learning is necessary; (2) that they conceptualize teaching as a serious intellectual activity that should foster learning; (3) that such learning does not only come from certain practices, but it comes from teachers’ attitudes, their faith in their students, and their willingness to let and encourage them to take responsibility over their own learning; (4) that conducting class is a craft that demands effective communication (or conversation for some) that triggers deep thought and simultaneously motivates students to talk and commit to learning inside and outside the classroom; (5) that openness, trust, and humility are effective attributes that contribute to student learning; and finally, (6) that learning-based assessments (vs. performance-based) are crucial to come full circle and continue the process of fostering student learning effectively.

In sum, from the very first page, this book exhibits a transparent student-centered philosophy of teaching founded on genuine dialogue, flexible roles and relationships, and a deep-rooted culture of assessment and self-assessment. Bain’s investigation leaves us with some pearls of knowledge about teaching and learning that, while taken for granted for some, may prove a breath of fresh air that will revitalize how they go about teaching.

-- OTHER REVIEWS --

***The Teaching Professor Newsletter***

Review by Susan Tebb (Social Work)

(Available online by subscription at: <http://www.teachingprofessor.com/newsletter>, or in hardcopy in the CTE reading room.)

I used to enjoy looking in my school mailbox and seeing the printed version of the *Teaching Professor* newsletter in it. I would read it from cover to cover and mark the teaching ideas that were of interest. Then, as I was working on my next courses, I would once more wander through the pages and imagine how I might incorporate an exercise or a suggestion to get more student involvement in the course. Several of the techniques that I still use today are from the pages of the newsletter.

In social work, our time with the people we serve is often short, and students need to learn how to get fairly intimate data in a very short time. In order to help them learn how to do this, and also to know what it feels like to share such personal information with a stranger, I found an exercise in the August/September 2005 issue, in an article, “Need to Get Your Students Talking? *Try Speed Dating!*” by Berni Murphy. On the first day the class meets together, we form an inner and an outer circle facing each other, and I give a few guidelines and topic suggestions (such as students’ major, or their hometown), but then I have them share the type of relationships they have with their parents and siblings. We have a minute and a half for the outer circle to talk, and then the students in the outer circle move to the right, while students in the inner group stay in place and just listen. We go around once, and then, when students in the outer group are back to the listeners they started with, the inner circle becomes the circle to share and move, and the outer circle becomes the listeners. This activity has

helped later in the semester when we talk about empathy and what it feels like to share personal information. It also helps the students begin to realize the skill it takes to really listen.

Another tip that I picked up came from William Chaney's article, "Top-of-Hour Break Renews Attention Span," in the June/July 2005 issue. This strategy has helped me as I have moved into teaching longer class periods, four to eight hours at a time. Chaney suggests stopping at the top of the hour (whatever you are doing) and doing something completely unpredictable. Show a YouTube video that you find of interest, share a story about yourself, bring to light a real life human interest story, talk about a play, movie or art show; these breaks solicit discussion, debate and help to show that we can differ. It is not meant to be more of the same information being covered that day, but rather something that really does allow the mind to take a break and think differently with others before focusing back on the day's topic.

*The Teaching Professor* is now online and I can subscribe, but I miss seeing the newsletter in my mailbox!

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**Doni Tamblyn. *Laugh and Learn: 95 Ways to use Humor for more Effective Teaching and Training.***  
American Management Association, 2002.  
Review by Eduardo Jauregui (Psychology – Madrid)

Laugh and Learn is a book aimed at providing teachers and trainers with a number of practical exercises and tools to make their classes more fun and engaging for students, as well as some of the theory for why this matters. As we all know, information does not flow automatically from our PowerPoints into students' brains, and psychologists nowadays know a good deal about what is actually needed for learning to take place. According to Tamblyn, a judicious use of humor can motivate both students and teachers, stimulate creativity and memory, and in general generate a fun and safe environment in which students feel free to interact with the material presented. Though I don't use all of the activities and ideas presented in the book, it has definitely enriched the classroom experience, both for me and for my students.

### **Most Popular Books Recommended by Saint Louis University Faculty**

Ken Bain. *What the Best College Teachers Do.* Harvard University Press, 2004.

Recommended by: Lynda Morrison (Molecular Microbiology and Immunology); Paul G Schmitz (Internal Medicine); Elizabeth Pendo (Law); Megan Hart (Civil Engineering); Cristina Matute (Languages & Literature – Madrid); Peter Martens (Theological Studies)

Wilbert McKeachie. *McKeachie's Teaching Tips: Strategies, Research, and Theory for College and University Teachers*, 13<sup>th</sup> edition. Wadsworth Publishing, rpt. 2010.

Recommended by: Terry Tomazic (Sociology and Criminal Justice); Stephanie Mooshegian (Organizational Studies); Gerard Fowler (Education); Katie Place (Communication)

Parker Palmer. *The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher's Life*, 10<sup>th</sup> edition. Jossey-Bass, 2007.

Recommended by: Nathan John Moser (Theological Studies); Kristin Vogel (Pius XII Memorial Library); Kathleen Keusenkothen (Education Leadership and Higher Ed); Hal Bush (English); Kara McBride (Modern & Classical Languages); Dan Finucane (Theological Studies); Kenneth L. Parker (Theological Studies)

Parker Palmer, *To Know As We Are Known: Education as a Spiritual Journey*. HarperOne, 1993.

Recommended by: Mark Reinking (Physical Therapy & Athletic Training); Darina Sargeant (Physical Therapy & Athletic Training)

Paulo Freire. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, new edition. Continuum, 2001.

Recommended by: Kevin Scannell (Math and Computer Science); Bryan Sokol (Psychology)

### **Other Books on Teaching**

John Bean. *Engaging Ideas: The Professor's Guide to Integrating Writing, Critical Thinking, and Active Learning in the Classroom*. Jossey-Bass, 1996.

Recommended by: Rachel Schwartz (Environmental Health)

Theodore Brown, H. Eugene LeMay, Bruce Bursten, Catherine Murphy and Patrick Woodard. *Chemistry: The Central Science*, 11<sup>th</sup> edition. Prentice Hall, 2008.

Recommended by: Tania de la Fuente (Chemistry - Madrid)

John Darley, Mark Zanna and Henry Roediger. *The Compleat Academic: A Career Guide*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. American Psychological Association, 2003.

Recommended by: Jana Hackathorn (Psychology)

John Dewey. *Experience and Education*. Free Press, rpt. 1997.

Recommended by: Anthony Breitbach (Athletic Training)

John Dewey. *Human Nature and Conduct: An Introduction to Social Psychology*. FQ Legacy Books, rpt. 2010.

Recommended by: James O'Leary (Theological Studies)

Dana S. Dunn and Stephen L. Chew. *Best Practices for Teaching Introduction to Psychology*. Wiley-Blackwell, 2008.

Recommended by: Eddie Clark (Psychology)

L. Dee Fink. *Creating Significant Learning Experiences: An Integrated Approach to Designing College Courses*. Jossey-Bass, 2003.

Recommended by: Jonathan D Jacobs (Philosophy)

Nathan Gage. *The Scientific Basis of the Art of Teaching*. Teachers College, 1979.

Recommended by: Miguel Paniagua (Internal Medicine)

bell hooks. *Teaching Community: A Pedagogy of Hope*. Routledge, 2003.

Recommended by: Annie Rues (English)

- Bruce Joyce, Marsha Weil and Beverly Showers. *Models of Teaching*. Allyn and Bacon, 1992.  
Recommended by: Jo Wood (Educational Leadership)
- David Kern. *Curriculum Development for Medical Education: A Six-step Approach*. John Hopkins University Press, 2009.  
Recommended by: Milta Little (Internal Medicine)
- Malcolm Knowles, Richard Swanson and Elwood Holton. *The Adult Learner: The Definitive Classic in Adult Education and Human Resource Development*, 7<sup>th</sup> edition. Butterworth-Heinemann, 2011.  
Recommended by: Linda Hoechst (Clinical Laboratory Science)
- Jim Korn and Jason Sikorski. *A Guide for Beginning Teachers of Psychology*. Society for the Teaching of Psychology. Ebook online: <http://teachpsych.org/resources/e-books/guide2010/index.php>, 2010.  
Recommended by: Eddie Clark (Psychology)
- Jiddu Krishnamurti. *Think On These Things*. HarperOne, 1989.  
Recommended by: John R. Reigstad (Philosophy/Theological Studies)
- Doug Lemov and Norman Atkins. *Teach Like a Champion: 49 Techniques that Put Students on the Path to College*. Jossey-Bass, 2010.  
Recommended by: Elizabeth Watson (Education)
- Joseph Lowman. *Mastering the Techniques of Teaching*. Jossey-Bass, 1995.  
Recommended by: Dan Kozlowski (Communication)
- Maria Montessori. *Niño: el secreto de la infancia*. Editorial Diana Sa, rpt. 2004.  
Recommended by: Julio Lasarte Fernández (Languages and Literature)
- Denise Nessel. *Awakening Young Minds: Perspectives on Education*. Malor Books, 1997.  
Recommended by: Ivan A. Sanchez (Sci & Tech)
- Parker Palmer. *Let Your Life Speak: Listening for the Voice of Vocation*. Jossey-Bass, 1999.  
Recommended by: Fred Rottnek (Family and Community Medicine)
- Seymore Papert. *Mindstorms: Children, Computers and Powerful Ideas*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Basic Books, 1993.  
Recommended by: Cynthia Graville (Communication)
- Vito Perrone. *A Letter to Teachers: Reflections on Schooling and the Art of Teaching*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1991.  
Recommended by: Susan Toft Everson (Educational Leadership and Higher Education)
- Parker Palmer. *The Company of Strangers: Christians & the Renewal of America's Public Life*. Crosswood Publishing Co., 1983.  
Recommended by: Mary Domahidy (Public Policy Studies)
- Randy Pausch and Jeffery Zaslow. *The Last Lecture*. Hyperion, 2008.  
Recommended by: Patrick J. Welch (Economics)

Neil Postman and Charles Weingartner. *Teaching As a Subversive Activity*. Delta, 1971.  
Recommended by: David A. Jackson (Mathematics and Computer Science)

Viola Spolin. *Theater Games for the Classroom: a Teacher's Handbook*. Northwestern University Press, 1986.  
Recommended by: Lee Patton Chiles (Fine and Performing Arts)

Jane Tompkins. *A Life in School: What The Teacher Learned*. Perseus Books, 1996.  
Recommended by: Chad Flanders (Law)

Hector Julia Vila. *Life-Affirming Acts: Education as Transformation in the Writing Classroom*.  
Recommended by: Anne McCabe (Languages & Literature – Madrid)

Sam Wineburg. *Historical Thinking and Other Unnatural Acts: Charting the Future of Teaching the Past. Critical Perspectives On The Past*. Temple University Press, 2001.  
Recommended by: Flannery Burke (History)

### **Other Favorites**

Mitch Albom. *Tuesdays with Morrie: An Old Man, a Young Man, and Life's Greatest Lesson*. Broadway, 2002.  
Recommended by: Avis Meyer (Communication)

Augustine of Hippo. *De doctrina christiana*. Translated by R.P.H. Green, *On Christ Teaching*. Oxford World's Classics. Oxford University Press, rpt. 2008.  
Recommended by: Grant Kaplan (Theological Studies)

Dale Carnegie. *How to Win Friends and Influence People*. Simon and Schuster, 1952.  
Recommended by: Jim O'Donnell (Finance)

Diane F. Halpern. *Thought & Knowledge: An Introduction to Critical Thinking*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition. Psychology Press, 2002.  
Recommended by: Richard D. Harvey (Psychology)

Frank McCourt. *'Tis: A Memoir*. Scribner, 2000.  
Recommended by: Dr. Carolyn Sur (Mathematics/ Campus Ministry/Law)