

# ENHANCING THE PRACTICE OF LEARNING AND TEACHING

DECEMBER

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### Note from the Editor:

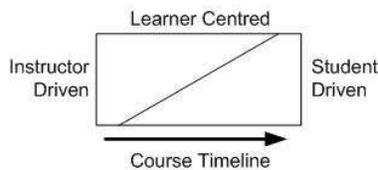
The Institute for Leadership in Learning and Teaching is pleased to present this new monthly newsletter aimed at enhancing our learning and teaching experience at Okanagan College. Each month a new Fellow will be the main writer and share some information about their department. We hope you find it useful and share it with your students and colleagues.

Sincerely,  
Rob Kjarsgaard

## HOW TO PRACTICE BEING LEARNER CENTRED

BY JIM GAMBLE

We are all aware that Okanagan College is a learner centred institution, but how does that transcend to the classroom? Below is a graphic to illustrate how learner centred knowledge is created.



When a course begins, knowledge is delivered by the instructor and received by the student. As the course progresses the instructor role shifts to be that of a facilitator, and the student role shifts to that of the constructor of their learning.

When you, as the instructor, are developing curricula towards a specific learning task you will need to reflect on the experience that taught you the task and recreate that experience for your students. As a facilitator the instructor needs to make the student aware of all the resources available to them, and to coach the students through their discoveries.

Group projects simulate workplace teams. Coaching the students into creating their own peer network as a source of knowledge will prepare them to apply the same concepts when they join the workforce.

When our students graduate

they will already have an understanding of the benefits of building a peer network. They are prepared to draw knowledge from their more experienced peers in the workplace. Peer networks are a benefit to every contributor.

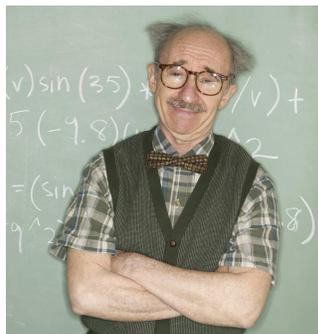
We are all learners and teachers



Jim Gamble is the "Fellow" for Trades and Apprenticeship. This is his first foray into writing a newsletter article.

## CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT THROUGH COLLABORATION

BY JIM GAMBLE



When the student is ready, the instructor will appear.

Too often instructors take on the uncomfortable role of classroom management alone. Good classroom management is very important to learning and should be the duty of all learners. Developing a peer community makes each participant accountable to their peers.

A disruptive student has pushed their personal agenda ahead of the community goals. This student has become disconnected from the community. As facilitator we need to ensure the

community is inclusive. Be aware of any developing cliques.

Assigning group projects with different classmates and engaging in peer assessment goes a long way towards creating a culture in the classroom community that is collaborative and supportive. In the workplace they will have peers they like and dislike, yet they need to recognize that all are valued members of the community.

## THREE TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE TEACHING

BY JIM GAMBLE

**Support collegiality:**

Create a positive, supportive culture where students feel their contributions will be respected and valued. As a facilitator your greatest influence is in the classroom culture, students need to feel safe before taking the risk of making a contribution. Humour is an important way of easing classroom tension, but be wary of anyone being a victim. Avoid any undertones that question a student's value, and maintain an environment of inclusion.

**Communicate clear objectives:**

Design your lesson plan and assignments based on the course syllabus; give exams on those topics and move on. Be cognizant of the verbs used in the objectives; explain, define, calculate, solve, model, critique and design are clear, observable actions. Be clear about your expectations from the objectives, especially high-level ones that involve deep analysis, conceptual understanding and critical thinking.

**Keep it fresh:** Some instructors teach a course two or three times, feel satisfied with their lesson plans and don't change a thing for the rest of their careers. The course becomes mechanical for the instructor, boring for the students and hopelessly antiquated. Stay open to new resources that will enhance the presentation of your material. Commit to making one or two changes to the course each time you teach it, note your results and share them with your peers.



## THREE TIPS TO ENHANCE LEARNING

BY JIM GAMBLE

**Partner learning with doing:**

There really is no learning without doing. There may be an appearance of learning by answering a question correctly on a test through memorization, but adults understand that competency is measured by their actions. Regardless of your test scores, how far you go in your career will be totally dependant on your ability to perform the learned tasks.

**Take ownership of your learning:**

This will bring you benefits for your entire career. Come to each class ready to learn, engage in class dialogue, ask questions to clarify a point because you are not the only one that needs that clarification. Your peers may need you to know this material in the future, they all may be future partners and customers. Avoid shortcuts that cheat you out of the learning experience.

**Appreciate unique teaching and learning methods:**

What a dull world it would be if all courses were taught the same way. All schools may have the same syllabus but the vision employed to create curricula is thankfully unique. Listen to your instructors' and mentors' stories that apply to the lesson; they are the best lessons to illustrate the relevance of the lesson material. It will also reflect how they learned the material.

**"The Human ability to learn and remember is virtually limitless"**

S. Ostrander & L. Schroeder

## NOVEMBERS FEATURED LINKS

The Institute For Leadership in Learning and Teaching would like to link you up with some great learning and teaching resources.

Top ten worst teaching mistakes:

[www.oncourseworkshop.com/Getting%20On%20Course023.htm](http://www.oncourseworkshop.com/Getting%20On%20Course023.htm)

The ILLT website:  
[www.okanagan.bc.ca/about/ILLT](http://www.okanagan.bc.ca/about/ILLT)

BC Campus sharable repository of online learning

Objects:

<http://www.bccampus.ca/Educators/educator-services/find-share-learning-resources.htm>



Check out these links!

## ARE OKANGAN COLLEGE STUDENTS STUDYING ENOUGH?

BY DERRICK DOIGE

The million dollar question, but how much is enough? This obviously depends on the program, but the general rule of thumb is that for every hour in class a student should be spending approximately 2 hours outside of class doing readings, studying and working on assignments. In other words, if the student is taking five three hour courses per week, then they should be spending 30 hours per week on top of their time in class doing their studies. Going to school full time is equivalent to a full time job and then some.

The 2007 National Survey of Student Engagement <http://nsse.iub.edu/index.cfm> reported

that:

*from 2001 to 2007 full time students spend on average only 13-14 hours per week studying and preparing for class – approximately half the amount of recommended time.*

**What do Okanagan College students say?** Since our students don't take part in the NSSE annual survey, I decided to do a little informal survey with one of our Introductory Arts courses at our Vernon campus. The class was comprised mostly of students in the Arts program, but there were five Science and four BUAD students. In addition to asking students to estimate the amount of time they spent studying,

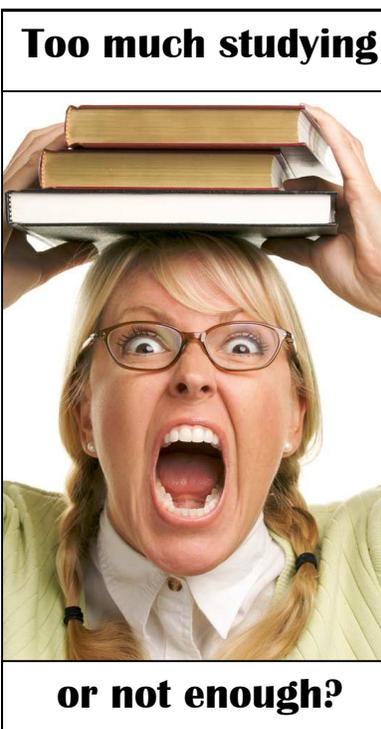
I also asked them whether they thought they were studying enough, do they think they know how to study effectively, and on average how many hours per week do they work at paid employment. In this class of 34, only four students were studying the recommended amount of time of two hours for every hour in class. Students averaged 13.5 hours of class time per week (4.5 courses) and only 16 hours of study time per week. These results are slightly better, but consistent with the NSSE. There was also a wide range in study time amongst students, going from one student who spent zero hours outside of class to one who spent 33 hours.

### As for student's perceptions,

In this class of 34, 25 students reported that they didn't think they were studying enough and only nine answered "yes" to the question "Do you think you know how to study effectively"? Two students answered "somewhat". Surprisingly 27 of these students work at paid employment averaging 17.5 hours per week.

### What do the professors think?

I also decided to interview a handful of Okanagan College professors to get their perspectives about whether their students were studying enough. The general consensus was that probably only one third to one half of their students were putting in enough time, and had a good to very good grasp of the material being taught. Their concern was less that the students weren't putting in enough time and more that many of the students didn't seem know how to study effectively, or make the jump from being able to retain information to applying the information and connecting concepts.



### What next?

While it would appear that our students are studying about as much as other students across North America, the more important questions seem to be whether our students know how to study effectively and do they have enough time to study.

Are our students learning effective study habits and critical thinking in High School? Do they understand the expectations that their professors will have of them? How can we do a better job helping our students make the transition from High School to College? Do we know who our students are and what demands they face outside of the classroom?

A few days after I did my informal survey, a student dropped by my office and commented that the survey got her thinking not only about how much time she spent studying, but whether she's studying effectively. She then proceeded to book an appointment with me to discuss this further. This leads me to the question; how can we engage more students to reevaluate their study habits and learn how to study more effectively?

## INSTITUTE UPDATE

BY ROB KJARSGAARD

The Institute for Leadership in Learning and Teaching has been busy over the fall. Some of the activities are as follows:

The ILLT now has several Blogs, a Facebook page, a website, and is on Linked In. All channels are aimed at encouraging reflection, dialogue and exploration of learning and teaching.

A monthly newsletter has been created and is full of informative articles on learning and teaching.

Engaging professional development opportunities are being facilitated by Institute Fellows at the CS Instructor Retreat, Connections, and guest speakers events.

The Institute is developing a program of instruction for new and existing instructors and professors to support and enhance their teaching skills.

An Institute Lunch and Learn series is starting in January featuring a number of great presentations covering everything from teaching tips, to happiness.

One powerful way of enhancing learning and teaching is through peer observation. The institute has sponsored a number of initiatives that support and encourage this activity like the Observe, Share, and be Nourished program.



Pictured above are just two of the many creative and carefully crafted examples of the fine woodworking skills of our 4th year apprentice Joinery students. These projects belong to Davis McNasto (chest) and Cody Bellows (cabinet).

## FINE WOODWORKING PROJECTS

BY OC JOINERY STUDENTS



## OC IS THE FASTEST GROWING TRADES TRAINER IN BC!

BY JIM GAMBLE

### So what does it mean to be an instructor of trades training at Okanagan College?

Well, it means that I am a member of the second largest trades training facility in BC, a ranking earned by being the fastest growing trades trainer in BC. In 2003 the department trained 700 apprentices. This year that number has grown to 2800 apprentices, a 300% increase in six years. As well as apprenticeship training the department also offers pre-apprenticeship or "Foundation" training. Over the same 2003 to 2009 timeline foundation enrolment has grown from 356 to 638 students. All "Red Seal" trades challenge an Inter-Provincial (IP) exam at the end of their trades training. At OC trades

grads enjoy an IP pass rate consistently higher than national and provincial averages. All of these stats point to the dedication and commitment that the entire trades training staff have to their students. I am proud of the efforts all of my peers put towards student success.

**There are seven departments in trades.** The KLO campus has Construction Trades, Culinary Arts, Automotive Collision Repair, Welding and Motor Vehicle Trades. Electro Mechanical Building Trades is centered out of their Penno Road campus while Aircraft Maintenance Engineer operates out of a location near the Vernon airport.

**Other programs** being offered by Trades and Apprenticeship include a

new "Women in Trades" initiative, the Trades and Technology Teacher Education program, and other industry upgrading and general interest programs. The length of these trades programs varies from six weeks to two year diploma programs. The registration and accommodation of all these students requires the dedication of an outstanding support staff, all working together with faculty to ensure a positive student experience.

**Leadership from Trades and Apprenticeship Faculty and Administrators** is evident in all areas of OC, at both the provincial and national levels. The department has strong influence within their trade articulation groups as well as Skills competitions. Let's all join in celebrating the positive influence the trades department has on the success of Okanagan College.