

Making a Difference

At the end of each semester, faculty often muse over whether the short 16 weeks spent with our students will make a difference in their lives. One author figured out that if a student lives to be 80, she will enjoy 4160 weeks of life and if a student is in your class for 16 of these weeks, that time amounts to .38 of one percent of her time breathing earth's oxygen. Given this, it is hard to imagine how our short time with any student can influence his/her life.

Of course, there are those students we remember who frustrated us. In my case that was Dave, who during the first few weeks of class told me his name was Chris. When I discovered his deception, I was so embarrassed. He played me like a fool. Then there was Jenna, who told me that I was her "squeegee"/role model. She is currently completing course work for her doctorate in Sociology (my discipline) and she writes me almost monthly. She was and is a total joy. And there are thousands more with whom I have had the privilege to teach who I don't remember. Like this student, who wrote me last year:

Hi. My name is Liz and I took a class with you at Mott Community College in the fall of 2002. You were an awesome instructor and your class that semester really changed me. I am currently reading a book (called "Raising Girls") and my mind keeps coming back to you as I read it. So what does one do this day and age when you start wondering about a certain person from the past? You Facebook them or Google them or something of the sort....so I'm not even sure if this is a current e-mail for you, but here goes nothing. I think I went by Elizabeth Smith at the time. I hope all is well and that this is the correct "Ann Coburn-Collins" LOL. Just let me know. Thanks! Liz

Did that make me smile! The lesson here is that we do reach some of our students and the outcome is that we do create change and we do make a difference.

The adjunct faculty at SVSU are important to this University and to our students. Please don't ever doubt this fact and the fact that there are students out there in the universe carrying your footprint.

Fall 2012 Orientation

Planning for the Fall 2012 Orientation has begun. The Orientation will be held on Wednesday, August 16th from 5:00 to 9:00 P.M. As in years past, the evening will begin with a dinner. Deans and Department Chairs will be in attendance. After dinner, the experienced faculty will be able to attend three different breakout sessions while the new faculty will be acquainted with the University's support services and basic information for negotiating SVSU. It is important that every adjunct faculty member attend this important event. You can register for the Orientation by calling us at 989-964-4050 or going to www.svsu.edu/workshops and registering. All adjunct faculty are compensated \$50 for attending.

New Fall Hours for SE201

In order to effectively conserve our resources, it has been decided that beginning in the Fall 2012 semester, The Office of Adjunct Faculty Support Programs located in SE201 will close at 7:30 PM. If you are teaching in the evening please keep this in mind.

What Should I Teach When There Isn't Enough Time To Teach?

Faculty are often concerned with not having enough time to cover all of their course material. Ruth Rodgers, a faculty developer from Durham College, has developed three questions that can assist faculty in deciding which material to cover. These questions are:

- What aspects of my subject **MUST** my students learn in **THIS** course?
- What attitudes/approaches/processes are **CRITICAL** for success in this field?
- What lifelong learning habits must students develop to be successful in this field?

By considering these questions, faculty can prioritize course content rather than focusing only on delivering information. These questions can also assist faculty in focusing on learning strategies to improve student success.

Bart, Mary. (2010, August 19). The Three Big Questions Faculty Need to Ask. Faculty Focus. Retrieved from www.facultyfocus.com/articles/curriculum-development

Helping Students Become Autonomous Learners

Autonomous learners are defined as those, “*who take responsibility for their own learning, are motivated to learn, gain enjoyment from their learning, are open-minded, manage their time well, plan effectively, meet deadlines and are low in procrastination when it comes to their work*” (Macaskill & Taylor, 2010, p. 357). We all know that some students can be perfectly described by this definition. We also know there are other students who don't understand what autonomous learning is or recognize how to do it. But awareness is one way to inform those who are unaware of these skills. This awareness can be facilitated through a student self-assessment tool. Macaskill and Taylor created an easy self-assessment tool that allows students to evaluate whether they practice the skills necessary to be autonomous learners and the degree to which they practice these skills. The following is one example of a student self-assessment which was designed to be given to students to affect this assessment.

Such assessments may take a few minutes of class time but they are worth the effort. One of our goals, as faculty, is to help our students of have the necessary tools to become lifelong learners. The ability to be a lifelong learner is dependent upon being able to apply autonomous learning skills. So, not only can such an assessment reinforce the idea to our students the extent and quality of work that is required in your class, it can also be a guide in helping our students become more skillful autonomous learners.

Please rate how each statement describes you. “1” represents a statement that is “very like me” and 5 is “not at all like me.”	1	2	3	4	5
I enjoy new learning experiences					
I am open to new ways of doing familiar things					
I enjoy a challenge					
I enjoy finding information about new topics on my own					
Even when tasks are difficult I try to stick with them					
I tend to be motivated to work by assessment deadlines					
I take responsibility for my learning experiences					
My time management is good					
I am good at meeting deadlines					
I plan my time for study effectively					
I frequently find excuses for not getting down to work					
I am happy working on my own					