SVSU Saginaw Valley State University

In the Loop

February, 2015

The Office of Adjunct Faculty Support Programs

Adjunct Faculty
Academic Calendar

February:

6 Last Day to Withdraw with a 25% refund, "W" grade

Workshops
(Register at: *svsu.edu/workshops*)

February:

4 iPad: Getting Started
Curtiss 150 10:00-11:00

5 Creating Graphics to Help Your Students Learn
Curtiss 150 10:00-11:00

6 QPR: Question, Persuade, Refer- Identifying Suicide Warning Signs
Alumni Lounge 10:00-11:00 or 1:30-2:30

10 Vet-Friendly Classrooms
Curtiss 116 10:00-11:00

11 Lecture Capture: Echo 360
Curtiss 150 10:00-11:00

12 Suggestions for Evaluating Students' Writing
Zahnow 303 4:00-5:00

20 Using Google Scholar to Locate Zahnow Library Resources
Zahnow 111 11:00-Noon

27 Brain Based Learning
12:30-1:30 Science East 201

Brain Based Learning

The last two decades have witnessed/uncovered many techniques that can deepen learning although these techniques have remained largely unknown outside certain scientific circles. In the past few years, many articles and books have been written on the subject and there has been much media surrounding the findings (for example, Carey, 2014, Doyle & Zakrajsek, 2013 and Oakley, 2014). Findings that might help you help your students become better learners.

- Learning is now known to cause a physical change in the brain. To effect this change, the more a student engages in the learning, through listening, talking, writing, thinking, etc., the deeper the learning will be. Such involves practice which means that the more a student practices, the stronger the area of knowledge will be.
- For learning to occur, students need to understand that they must "prep" their brain. The human brain uses 25 to 30% of the body's energy and a brain that is starving will work less efficiently. Brains that are well fed with proteins and lots of water, function better than those which are starved.
- Research has also shown that sleep is essential to learning. Everyone needs at least 7.5-9 hours of sleep nightly. While sleeping, memories are made and unwanted information is pruned. So it is best to review all valuable new learning right before sleep so that the memories become stable.
- Even though all exercise is good, thirty minutes of daily aerobic exercise is the best thing anyone can do to improve learning. BDNF, a protein that is released during exercise makes it easier for the brain to learn. As well, neurochemicals like serotonin, dopamine, and norepinephrine are released in greater quantities during exercise boosting the brain's ability to focus and concentrate (Doyle and Zakrajsek, 2013).
- The more a learner employs her senses in the learning process, the better the learning. Senses like smell, vision and touch all work to develop new neural pathways, increase recall, and cement new ideas. The Amygdala is the brain's center for emotions, motivation and emotional behavior. When senses are combined with learning, these are stored in the Amygdala thereby helping with recall.
- To truly have good recall, it is essential to try to retrieve information in a variety of settings. Once your students have read their assignment, they should close the book, pause, and then recall what they have just read. To further reinforce this learning, your students should remove themselves from their current space to a different space and then pause and recall. The more your students do this, the more they will have deep learning.

These are just a few of the ideas that are found in the literature. If you are interested in learning more about brain based learning, a workshop by that name is being offered on February 27th at 12:30 in Science East 203. You can register by going to: www.svsu.edu/workhshops.

References:

Carey, B. (2014). *How We Learn, the Surprising Truth about When, Where, and Why this Happens.* New York: Random House.

Doyle, T. & R. Zakrajsek (2013*). The New Science of Learning, How to Learn in Harmony With Your Brain.* Sterling, VA.: Stylus.

Oakley, B. (2014). *A Mind for Numbers, How to Excel at Math and Science.* New York: Penguin.

CANVAS: Our New Learning Management System (LMS)

VSpace is soon to become a thing of the past at SVSU. Taking its place will be Canvas. This system was selected after being vetted by faculty and staff and it is felt to be the LMS leader in higher education. Transition to Canvas started this semester and some faculty are already using it in their courses. Programming is currently in the works to allow faculty to seamlessly migrate any VSpace class to a new Canvas class. Training is currently scheduled to formally begin in March (www.svsu.edu/workshops). Additional training opportunities are available by accessing the many training videos available on Canvas itself. Access to Canvas is available in Quicklinks on the svsu.edu webpage. As well, our office intends to develop an online tutorial for additional training. So stay tuned.

Teaching Symposium

You will soon be receiving an invitation to SVSU's first Teaching Symposium to be held on Wednesday, February 18th beginning with lunch at 11:30 a.m. Following lunch, Robert Coppola, an internationally known teacher and scholar, will deliver the keynote address. Dr. Coppola's extraordinary teaching and learning research and evidence based teaching practices have positively impacted University of Michigan's undergraduate students.

Following the keynote, some of SVSU's finest and most creative faculty will showcase their teaching practices. Below is a table indicating which faculty are involved and their showcase topics for this year's event:

2015 Teaching Symposium Showcase Schedule	
Presenters 1:30-2:40	Presenters 2:50-4:00
Using Games To Enhance Learning Rosina Hassoun and Marlena Bravender	*B.A.T.- A Service Learning Project* Mike Mosher, David Rzeszutek, John Kaczyinski and Joseph Ofori-Dankwa
Integrating Course Components Chris Nakamura	*Team-Based Learning* Elson Boles
Student Engagement Kim Lacey and James Bowers	*Medical Scribe* John Lowrey

Please carve some time out in your calendar to attend this important event!

Teaching From the Test: Exam Wraps

Mid-term exams will be here before we know it. Often students concentrate more on the grade and less on their studying practices and responsibilities. Exam Wraps are a great way for your students to do some self-reflection by identifying their areas of strength and weakness to help in guiding future studying practices. There are three questions that students can answer to help them do a better job on their next exam:

1. What did they do to prepare for the exam?
2. Where were the errors on their exam?
3. What can they do to get ready for the next exam?

To help your students accomplish this effort, have them reflect on the amount of time they studied. Have them think about whether they studied alone or with others. Have them think about the percent of their time studying was spent on reviewing the text and notes, and discussing the material with others. Find out if they had sufficient sleep the night before the exam. Ask if they ate a nutritional meal and hydrated before the exam. Finally ask them to make a list of new things they might do to better prepare for the next exam. Try this…You might find that the class results on the next exam are improved!