

PAIDEIA

TEACHING & LEARNING AT MOUNT ALLISON UNIVERSITY
THE NEWSLETTER OF THE PURDY CRAWFORD TEACHING CENTRE

“Why do you teach, Pete?”

This seemingly simple question inspired Peter Beidler[§], an award-winning English professor from Pennsylvania, to write a personal and poignant response that has in turn inspired teachers for two decades. Beidler’s delightful answer ends,

“I teach because being around people who are beginning to breathe, I occasionally find myself, quite magically, catching my breath with them.”

September sees university campuses across Canada populated by breathless people! And while some may be hyperventilating at the thought of all that has to be done, most of us—like Beidler—are simply awed by the sense of possibility that each new academic year brings.

I am grateful to the many Mount Allison colleagues who share their excitement about teaching in this newsletter, especially Andrew Grant from Chemistry who writes this issue’s featured article, exploring the power of the question in both planning courses and in captivating student excitement. I am delighted, too, that our list of regular columns is growing. Joining “Dear Counsellor,” contributed by Kris Trotter and Christiana MacDougall-Fleming from Student Life, are two new regulars: Toni Roberts on educational technology and Shelley Gullikson on information literacy.

By the way, Why do you teach ?

[§] Beidler, Peter G. (2002). *Why I Teach*. Hong Kong: Andrews McMeel Publishing

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Asking the Right Questions

Andrew Grant, Chemistry

What follows is a condensed version of a talk I gave at the Atlantic Canada Association of Science Educators (ACASE) Conference held at Mount Allison in July 2004, and organized by Bob Hawkes and Cathy Pettipas in Physics. As I prepared my talk, I had just read "The End of Education" by Neil Postman,[§] and that book helped crystallize my thoughts.

My concern in teaching undergraduate chemistry has always been how to present all of the basic material that has to be covered, and at the same time expose students to the exciting process of how scientific discoveries are made. Put another way, how can I keep those keen, curious students interested in chemistry, and put a solid foundation under them at the same time? For me, the "right" questions fall into two categories. There are actual chemical questions, or problems, that I feel would captivate students' interest: How do we 'see' molecules in the first place? Where does cholesterol come from? How is it biosynthesized in our bodies, and how did we find this out? How does penicillin work? How did we determine its structure? How do bacteria become resistant to it?

Also, there are questions I ask myself as September classes approach.

Questions for myself

In preparing my courses for September, I have three main objectives in mind.

[§] Postman, N. (1996). *The End of Education: Redefining the Value of School*. New York: Vintage.

1. Practical I'm going to set a final exam that will test comprehensive knowledge and the ability to problem solve. The exam will be of sufficient difficulty and breadth that I feel confident the top 50% of the students would be able to sit in on an equivalent course anywhere in Canada and do well. At the very least, the students must be able to go into my colleagues' courses and know the requisite material.

2. Research: I want to make sure that those students in the class interested in further scientific enquiry are exposed to how research in chemistry is conducted, even in first year. This can be accomplished by going through simple examples relevant to the course in question. How was the information I'm currently teaching obtained? In answer to what question(s)? What questions are currently being asked by chemists working at the frontier? Where do you find scientific information, scientific journals? What happens in graduate school, etc.?

Many problems face the world, and the solutions will come from the present generation of students. One of the most important functions professors perform is simply to expose students to as wide a range of problems as possible, hoping that the right student is matched with the right problem to solve.

3. Philosophical: I want all students to come away from the course thinking their lives are richer, appreciating more of the foundations of chemistry, knowing what science is and how it is conducted. I have to talk about science in general several times during the course, and deal with fundamental



issues such as measurement, and the difference between knowing facts and the creative process of finding answers to unsolved problems.

Therefore, what do I think about as I prepare my class notes for September?

Who is in the class?

Students who know what they want (35%)
Students who don't know what they want (50%)
Students who don't want to be there (15%)

What learning styles are in the class?

Note takers – and re-writers
Listeners
Visual learners, 3-D thinkers (or not...)
Good or poor scientific background

What are students thinking? What are their expectations of the course?

Is this going to be interesting? Relevant?
Will I be able to learn the material?
How do I learn? How do my classmates learn?
How does the professor learn?

What are the important (vital) parts of the curriculum that I want students to learn?

What are the key take-home messages for Science majors and non-majors alike?
Three dimensionality of molecular structures
Chirality
Mechanism of chemical reactions
An appreciation for the static/dynamic nature of chemistry
Spectroscopy
The organic chemistry of biology and biochemistry

How will I present the material and motivate students to learn it?

Blackboard, overhead, WebCT, weekly assignments, computer, humor, internet resources, 'rhythm' during the class and the

course in general.

What questions will I pose to the class?

Short answer or long answer?



Means vs Ends: Questions influenced by Postman

So far, these questions have focused mainly on *means* or, how am I arranging to teach the course so that information is transferred. However, I'm also conscious of *ends*, and it is this "End" that Postman alludes to in the title of his book, *The End of Education*.

Why are students here at Mount Allison University in the broadest sense? There has to be a reason students sign up for a class, and it is important that the lectures tap into that reason. As a chemist, I can teach chemistry. But education, or 'schooling,' as pointed out by Postman, "can be about how to make a life, which is quite different from how to make a living." Acquiring information is one thing, but "to become a different person because of something you have learned – to appropriate an insight, a concept, a vision, so that your world is altered – that is a different matter." Postman says, "For that to happen, you need a reason. A reason ... is different than a motivation. Students have to have a reason to get out of bed, for sitting through a lecture, even if they're not motivated."

We tend to ask students "What do you want to do?" expecting an economic answer: doctor, lawyer, teacher, etc. We



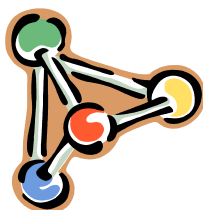
seldom ask them what they want to *experience* or *express* while at University. Is their University experience helping them on their life journey? Is it helping them *find* a life journey?

I am conscious of trying to help students realize the value in becoming a little more knowledgeable, a little wiser; to help them reach inside themselves and express themselves; to help them come to the realization that learning has its own emotional rewards, its own sense of satisfaction, so that they will continue to find reasons to educate themselves in the future; to help them become men and women of independent mind.

When I go into the classroom, I have to remember that we are not just covering the curriculum and teaching facts. We're trying to foster an attitude that will allow students to live in the world with confidence, respecting nature and their fellow citizens.

Some Chemistry Questions

Concepts like the 3-dimensional structure of molecules, chirality, the quantum nature of matter and energy, and spectroscopy are important chemical concepts that should be more widely known. The shape of molecules, for example, is very important, especially in biology.



1) 3-Dimensional structure of molecules

Molecules are particles made up of two or more atoms; they have 3-dimensional structure; they occupy space. Students from high school can balance acid/base equations with H_2SO_4 , but what is the 3-dimensional

structure of sulfuric acid? What atoms are bonded to what other atoms, and how did we determine the structure in the first place?

The concept of **chirality** comes in here. A molecule (or any object for that matter) is chiral if it is non-superimposable on its mirror image. Your left and right hands are the classic example of chiral objects.

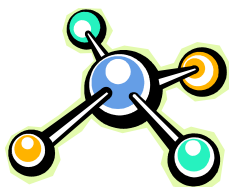
To explain this concept and its importance, I usually give this example:

Thalidomide, prescribed as an anti-anxiety drug in the late 1950's, is the classic chemical example of a chiral molecule. When women in the first trimester of pregnancy were prescribed thalidomide for morning sickness, they gave birth to babies with missing arms and legs, and the drug was quickly withdrawn from the market. It turned out that the right-hand form of the drug interacted with a receptor in the brain that had a sedating, beneficial, effect on the central nervous system. The left hand form of the drug interacted with, and shut down, an enzyme critical for the development of new blood vessels, a process known as angiogenesis. New limbs develop in the fetus during the first trimester, and when this process is interfered with, limb development is retarded. Thalidomide is an anti-angiogenesis drug

The story has come full circle, as thalidomide is currently used in chemotherapy. Growing tumors need a blood supply, and thalidomide is effective in shutting the blood supply down for some tumors.



This discussion can open the door to those interested in Ethics, and the business of drug trials, whom to test drugs on, etc.



2) Spectroscopy

Organic chemists love to draw pictures of molecules on the black board: zig-zag lines, hexagons and pentagons, etc. A student once asked me at the end of class, “If molecules are so small that we can’t see them, how do we know what their structure is?” In other words, how do we know what we’re talking about? What makes organic chemistry different from geometry or art class?

A good question. The answer is **spectroscopy**.

Spectroscopy is the study (the measurement) of the quantized interaction of light energy with matter. Spectroscopy allows us to “see” molecules, or as I prefer, it allows us to recognize certain characteristics of molecules that help us infer their structure. The problem is that we rely too much on the sense of sight in our own world, and expect it to translate into the microscopic world of atoms and molecules. If you were blind-folded, could you tell the difference between a male face and a female face just by feeling it? What clues or additional information would you need to make a positive identification?

Spectroscopy introduces students to two other subjects vitally important to understanding the modern world: 1) the electromagnetic spectrum, or light waves of different wave lengths from short wave length/high energy gamma rays through

visible light to long wave length/low energy radio waves, and 2) the quantized nature of matter and energy. There are only discrete energy levels or values available to a molecule, as opposed to a continuum of energy values available to a macroscopic system. A description of how a microwave oven works is appropriate at this point in the class.

Measurement

Spectroscopy and the business of “seeing molecules” allows me to talk about probably the single most important concept in science: **measurement**. For something to be a subject of scientific enquiry, it must be measurable. We teach school children to use rulers, measure angles, count objects, time races, etc., at an early age. It is important to remind chemistry students that most of science is just measuring things, and then making inferences from those measurements. Today we infer chemical structure from energy measurements we make in a Nuclear Magnetic Resonance (NMR) Spectrometer, just as Galileo argued for a sun-centered solar system as a result of his telescope measurements.

I describe for my students how I see science unfolding in laboratories around the world. Scientists choose to examine a particular problem, and become stuck! How will they solve the problem? Recalling what is known won’t do, what is required is something new. I often give a brief description of the train of knowledge from “Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance”. In my 3rd year class, I stress that all the knowledge that we will ever have comes from asking the right questions. For research



to be productive, asking the right question is crucial.

Epilogue

As a chemist, I can teach chemistry. Postman says as an educator it may be too grandiose to think I can “educate” someone, make someone smarter, or more intelligent; I **can** help them to avoid being “stupid”. In my opinion, this is becoming increasingly relevant, as the Internet, information literacy, and life-long learning become more important.

I have a vision of myself knitting. In preparing for class, I have many threads all converging at the same time to the point where the knitting needles meet. Who are the students? What are their needs? What am I trying to teach? How can I alter a student’s life in a positive way? How can I help uplift the general understanding of chemistry to non-science majors? Can I guide students to appreciate information literacy and life-long learning? Can I help students avoid being stupid?

What garment falls off of the needles varies every year, with every class. It’s a multidimensional problem, very challenging, but very rewarding when it all comes together and works.



Teaching News

Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (STLHE)

Mount Allison was well represented at the recent STLHE conference in Prince Edward Island, with 18 presenters:

Judith Doyle (sociology); Alex Fancy (drama and modern languages); Nauman Farooqi (commerce); Robert Hawkes (physics); Eileen Herteis (PCTC); Cordula Quint (drama); Anthony Roberts (educational technology consultant, computing services); Peter Sianchuk (commerce); Erin Steuter (sociology); Pravin Varma (physics); Elizabeth Wells (music), and Deborah Wills (English). Student presenters were Laura Archibald, Laura KarisAllen, Matthew Lane, Allison MacDuff, Sylvie Nadeau, and Alana Poirier. Visit the PCTC web site to see the entire Mount A team at UPEI!

Making a Difference: Toute la différence

Congratulations to Alex Fancy, Chair of the Council of 3M Teaching Fellows, for this splendid book, celebrating 20 years of 3M Teaching Fellowships. With thoughtful, provocative and poignant reflections from almost fifty 3M Fellows, it is a remarkable achievement and essential reading. PCTC has two copies for loan.

Upcoming AAU Conference

The 2005 Association of Atlantic Universities Conference will take place at the Nova Scotia Agricultural College in Truro, on Saturday, October 22nd. This year’s theme is “Back to the Future: Traditions, Trends and Travesties.” As we have done in past years, Purdy Crawford Teaching Centre will reimburse the registration fees of all Mount Allison participants. For more details go to <http://nsac.ca/aau/>

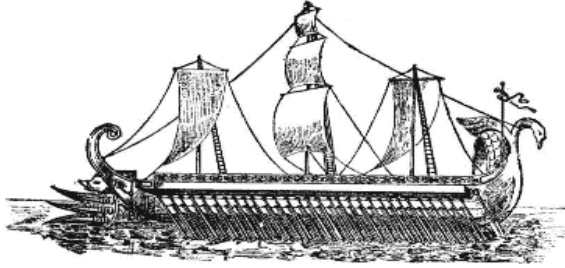


Mentoring New Faculty at Mount

Allison

Eileen M. Herteis

Book One of Homer's *Odyssey* tells us that, when Odysseus went off to fight in the Trojan Wars, he chose a guide and tutor for his son, Telemachus. That guide's name was Mentor. Now, the term "mentor" means a trusted counsellor, coach, or role model.



Why a Mentoring Programme?

At Mount Allison, like so many universities, recruitment and retention of faculty is becoming increasingly important. We must attract and keep the best people and address not just their career development but their sense of belonging, too, giving our new people the support they need to succeed.

The literature and reports from other universities suggest the following:

New faculty, *especially women and minority faculty*, often feel isolated and disconnected during the first few years of their work and may leave before receiving tenure. While most are certainly not treated badly, they feel as if they do not belong, and endure a kind of "benign neglect" (Johnsrud, 1994; Luna & Cullen, 1995; University of Wisconsin).

While new faculty undoubtedly have the education they need to succeed, they may not have the "institutional smarts" to help them thrive in their new campus home (Kerka, 1998).

A mentoring programme can help new faculty to develop social relationships and to access the informal communication channels (University of Texas at Houston).

A 1991 study of large universities in the United States found how important social networks are. The study discovered that no more than 10-15% of new faculty are quickly successful; the majority of these are males who know where to seek advice and support and do so. The quickly unsuccessful—mostly minority faculty—were confused about expectations and didn't know whom or where to ask. Nor were they proactive in building social networks (Boice, 1992).

What Does Mentoring Entail?

Simply put, newer faculty (associates) are matched with tenured faculty (mentors) who support them through a variety of means: regular meetings, discussion, and feedback (Kerka, 1998).

Mentors provide informal, but not casual, support. There is unanimity in the literature that the mentoring relationship should not be modeled on the graduate student/supervisor model, which is too constraining and hierarchical.

For their part, the associates must be open, willing and prepared to embark on an enduring relationship with their mentors.

PCTC's Mentorship Programme

Mentorship builds on our successful Peer Consultation programme that focuses on successful teaching. The following proposal is modeled after Dalhousie University's successful Faculty Mentoring programme (Barton, 2001; Holmes, 2002).

Invitations will be sent to potential mentors: tenured professors who are recent teaching award winners, or who have been nominated by their peers, chairs, or deans.



Newer faculty will receive information about mentoring.

Early in September, there will be an information session for prospective mentors.

Around the same time, PCTC will invite all new faculty (untentured or hired within the last few years) to attend an information session.

(N.B. Limited-term faculty are warmly invited to participate)

Soon after these two individual meetings, there will be joint sessions for mentors and associates to create dialogue and discussion.

Pairings will not be based on discipline. Associates will be able to choose their own mentors based on their approach. The literature shows no significant impact of gender, race or discipline, except perhaps as they relate to the comfort of the two participants (Boice, 1992). As Kay Herr says, what mentors do is much more important than who they are (1994).

Pairs will establish a written, but flexible, agreement of expectations. There is unanimity in the literature on the importance of this.

Pairs will meet regularly throughout the semester.

The programme will be reviewed at the end of the first year, using a participant survey.

Benefits

Mentoring provides an opportunity for experienced faculty to contribute back to teaching and to build alliances with new, junior colleagues. Many of them find this invigorating and a boost to their teaching and research productivity and enthusiasm (Luna & Cullen, 1995).

According to the University of Texas at Houston, mentoring reflects an institutional philosophy that new people matter and that the administration—from President to department chair—is concerned with their success; mentoring helps with the retention of faculty; and it can result in increased teaching and research quality and enhanced job satisfaction, especially for women and minorities.

Closer to home, the Faculty of Arts & Science at the University of Toronto provides a comprehensive list of the benefits of mentoring that include access to information, reduced stress and increased satisfaction.

Finally, mentoring is valuable, and mentors must be valued. Their on-going contribution should be recognized in promotion decisions as service to teaching or to the university.

If you are interested in becoming a mentor, please contact me at 364-2652 (eherteis@mta.ca)

Benefits of Mentoring (University of Toronto, Faculty of Arts & Science)

For the new faculty member

1. Individual recognition and encouragement
2. Constructive criticism and informal feedback
3. Advice on balancing teaching, research, committee work and other duties
4. Training and inside information on the Department/University
5. Knowledge of the informal and formal rules for advancement
6. Knowledge of the procedures of the University
7. Advice on scholarship/teaching

(contd)



Benefits (contd)

8. Reduction of stress (psychosocial support)

For the mentor

- 9. Satisfaction in assisting in the development of a colleague
- 10. Ideas for and feedback about the mentor's own teaching/ scholarship
- 11. Network of colleagues who have passed through the programme

For the institution

- 12. Increased commitment, productivity and satisfaction of new faculty
 - 13. Prevention of attrition of new faculty
 - 14. Encouragement of cooperation and cohesiveness for those involved in the programme
- <www.artsandscience.utoronto.ca/info4faculty/mentoring.html>

If you are interested in becoming a mentor, there will be a brief orientation session on Thursday, September 15th, at 12 noon.

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New & Junior Faculty: Stress and Success

Life for all academics is demanding; however, for new and untenured faculty especially, job stress levels can be high. Research by Boice (1991), Gmelch (1987), and Sorcinelli (1992) points to five aspects of academic life that elicit stress.

1. *Insufficient Time*

“Not enough time to do my work” ranks as the number one stressor for most new and junior faculty. In many, this anxiety is accompanied by deterioration in health.

2. *Inadequate Feedback & Recognition*

Several studies on academic stress have found that faculty experience tension about unclear criteria for evaluating teaching, research, and service; inadequate institutional recognition for their contributions; and insufficient reward for their achievements.

3. *Unrealistic Expectations*

New faculty feel a great deal of self-imposed pressure to perform well and succeed in all their endeavours. They are also concerned about colleagues' evaluations of their work and about fulfilling the standards set both inside and outside their institution.

4. *Lack of Collegiality*

Studies such as Melendez & de Guzman (1983) and Seldin (1987) indicate that new teachers are often disappointed in relations with their colleagues, citing a lack of respect and rapport, which may result from politics or professional rivalry within the department.

5. *Balancing Work & Life*

For many new faculty, the stresses of establishing their reputation through teaching, writing, research, learning new technologies,

securing grants, advising students, and serving on committees are coincident with stressors in their private lives: a new marriage or relationship, children, moving to a new city (or country).



Coping With These Stressors

What strategies can new teachers use to cope with and manage these stresses? Sorcinelli (1992) has several suggestions, including:

- Find ways to set priorities
- Set realistic goals that can be achieved incrementally
- Organize time wisely to accommodate both long- and short-term goals
- Make time for yourself
- Seek personal and professional support both off- and on-campus
- Reward yourself for success

The university can also do much to create a supportive, encouraging, and balanced environment for new faculty.

Source:

Sorcinelli, M (1992). *New & Junior Faculty Stress: Research and Responses* in Sorcinelli M & Austin A (Eds.) *Developing New & Junior Faculty*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

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Parsing Paideia

Andrew Faulkner

(Editor's note: Our newsletter's name has awakened the slumbering inner classicist in many readers! Andrew Faulkner, last year's Crake Fellow in Classics, who suggested the name, explains the rich nuances of "paideia.")

What exactly is meant by the term 'education' at Mount Allison? President Ozmon sums it up nicely in his welcoming message on the University's website: "In 1839, our founder, Charles Frederick Allison, committed this institution to the pursuit of educating the 'whole person.' Today, this is still the foundation of everything we do as we strive to foster personal, academic, athletic, and creative engagement." Indeed, the word 'education' can, and should, be understood to cover this diverse range of goals, and more. In English of the 16th and 17th centuries, the term could even carry the now obsolete meaning of "to rear or nourish a child"; if the university wants to be truly inclusive in its education of the whole person, it should perhaps (the union might agree) even consider extending parental leave for faculty.

In Greek, the most common word for education '*paideia*', (paideiα) the new name of the teaching newsletter at Mount Allison, carries a similarly broad range of meaning. It can be translated not only as 'education', but also learning, training or teaching, of both the body and the mind, of academic endeavour and the fine arts. It can even, as the English 'education', mean 'the rearing of a child'. Plato, in his *Republic* (376 e), defines the term explicitly as both education of the body and the mind, before going on to stress the importance of the latter for the moral training of children in his ideal state.

Mount Allison is hardly as dogmatic as Plato about what is morally correct, but the instilling

of moral fibre in the students who come here is surely also part of what the university stands for. The Greek word can even cater for most degrees of moral education; in the New Testament and the writings of the Church Fathers, '*paideia*' can be used to mean 'chastisement', or, as G.W.H. Lampe sagely puts it in his *Patristic Lexicon*, 'corrective training'. There are, thankfully, never many cases at Mount Allison where one would wish to use the term 'chastisement' (although most recent exertions on the football field are good candidates), but 'corrective training' is perhaps aptly applied to a broad range of educational encounters within the university. Another English rendering of the word in the Christian era is 'discipline', or 'a disciplined mode of life'.

As academics, we are both benefiting from and providing '*paideia*' in its broadest sense. Through our own research, we strive to understand our subject areas, and ultimately ourselves, in a more complete way; we teach each other. Through our teaching we try to pass on what we have learned to our students. But nothing is static about the process; we change, our students change, and education changes. If not then because it encompasses the many different aspects of what a Mount Allison education is, the very flexibility and changeability of the word '*paideia*' makes it an appropriate name for the university's teaching newsletter. The word has existed for at least some 2500 years, but has been constantly changing and evolving, right up to the present day, when it is still being used in modern Greek.

'*Paideia*' is not just a symbol of what Mount Allison is as an educational institution, but also a reminder of what it might be.

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Dear Counsellor

I had a student in my class last semester who had some serious health issues. I didn't want to inquire too much, but I wanted to be supportive and helpful. I'm not sure I handled it well. How should we respond to students who have health problems?

Dear Professor:

Let's consider a university student with significant health problems, whether chronic or new. The four-month semester has her trying to cope with five courses, six hours of sleep a night, seven midterm tests, three major papers, eight medical appointments, two class presentations, and one new medication complete with disruptive side-effects.

When you inquire, she admits: "I don't know what more I can do. My health has been very bad lately." You respond (choose one)

- 1. Sorry to hear that. I'll help you make up what you missed/extend the deadline/set a new test.
- 2. Sorry to hear that. I will need to see medical documentation. Then, I'll help you make up what you missed/extend the deadline/set a new test.
- 3. Sorry to hear that. Have you sought help from the Student Life staff? Let's call there now and get you an appointment with the appropriate person. We'll talk again after I hear from someone there.
- 4. Sorry to hear that. I recommend you drop the course. I'll call a Dean for you right now - you tell her you want to drop this course using a 'late withdrawal for medical reasons.'

other (Describe)

Now rate your response

1. The first option is a good one. This professor is being an empathic, flexible and hard-working educator. The downside of this approach is that it is not systematic - the ill student still has four other professors to negotiate with, which she may or may not do, depending on her energy and her perception of their probable responses.

2. The second option is a good one. Many instructors are wary (or weary!) of accepting every story of woe. This student may be malingering; she may be telling the truth. It is the role of other professionals, not the professor, to be a diagnostician and a truth-detector. Asking a student to provide documentation is thorough, systematic, and fulfills Mount Allison's Policy on Students with Disabilities.

The 'downside' of this option is that providing useful documentation may take the ill student weeks or months, as well as requiring energy and perhaps money. Conversely, a medical note obtained quickly may be too superficial and vague to be valuable. As well, some students feel that showing their medical documentation to their professors is an invasion of their privacy. (Imagine if your employer required you to show your medical documentation to five different administrators.)

3. This option, should the student agree to it, is caring, thorough and systematic. Mount Allison has a Registered Nurse, two Personal Counsellors and an Academic Counsellor to address students' health and well-being. Initial assessments, review of options, advocacy, referral to specialists, and coordinated care are just some of the duties we perform. However, the aforementioned staff often have waiting lists. It may



reasonably take at least two weeks before a student can be seen, assessed and assisted, with verification and recommendations sent to professors.

4. The fourth option has concerned me lately. Certainly a professor may recommend that students *consider* seeking a 'late-withdrawal for medical reasons' (Academic regulation 6.2.3) from their Academic Dean. However, no student, particularly one who is feeling overwhelmed and desperate, should be advised (directed) to drop a course prior to consultation with the Academic Counsellor. This Student Life counsellor will help the ill student consider the implications of withdrawal. Regrettable loss of time, energy, money and academic credits could result if a student decides to drop a course before other options, such as working out "reasonable academic accommodations", are duly considered.

Regarding the fifth option, "Other": if you have a different response to students who approach you with issues of illness, particularly if you find it works well, please share it via this newsletter!

While there is no single "best" response to the ill student seeking academic support from a professor, the Student Life team has a valuable role to play in this oft-occurring scenario. We hope that this year you will call us if you have questions or concerns about our capacity and role in assisting both professors and students, or if you have a particular student of concern. We in turn will write, call or visit you to discuss academic options for individual students who have permitted us to share their information with you.

Students' personal and academic lives intersect and co-exist on many levels. Dear Counsellor is a regular feature in our newsletter, written by Mount Allison's personal counsellors Kris Trotter and Christiana McDougall-Fleming. If you have a question you'd like to see addressed in this column, please e-mail it to Eileen at pctc@mta.ca. To contact Kris or Christiana directly, please call 364-2255.



Kris and Christiana

Announcing the new PCTC listserv!

Thanks to the great folks at Computing Services, especially Mark Standring and Toni Roberts, PCTC now has its own listserv. The list will alert you to coming events and provide links to interesting articles.

Signing up is easy. Just go to <http://lists.mta.ca/mailman/listinfo/pctc-list>

Or easier still, go to the PCTC web site and follow the links from there: www.mta.ca/pctc

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Technology Meets Pedagogy Toni Roberts, Educational Technology Consultant

Although it seems straightforward, defining educational technology may in fact be a more complex. Generally, people tend to think of “high” technology as the very technology involved in education. Most recently associated predominantly with online learning, the relationship between education and technology has a much longer history than is often assumed. The use of writing instruments (pens, pencils, chalk, etc.), the mass production of paper and chalk boards and the printing press are all examples of technology used in education. Obviously, educational technology has had very broad and lasting implications and applications.

Even though technology and education have a long joint history, over-emphasis on technology alone (without considering its impact on learning) is antithetical to the very purpose of education. For example, recent efforts in the area of computers in education tended to concentrate on technological hurdles such as increasing bandwidth rather than exploring sound pedagogical theory. In fact, early efforts in the field tried to replicate the face-to-face (f-2-f) classroom by streaming video and audio and did not adequately address the larger issue of pedagogy.

If educational technology is concerned with thinking carefully about teaching and learning, then a computer has a contribution to make irrespective of its use.

However, it became obvious to educators and others that there may be better ways to address the needs of the learner while

recognizing that computers can be a powerful tool for learning.

As O’Shea and Self suggest, “If educational technology is concerned with thinking carefully about teaching and learning, then a computer has a contribution to make irrespective of its use as a means of implementation, for the design of computer-based learning environments gives us a new perspective on the nature of teaching and learning and indeed on general educational objectives.” (O’Shea and Self, p. 59).[§] This growth in computer-based learning has effected an increased interest in course design and instructional design. The push for streaming video is all but absent now, although it is occasionally used in the field, and instructivism is being replaced with discussions of constructivism, collaboration, and learning outcomes.

The exploration of computer-based learning environments has been a catalyst in this pedagogical shift, but it is also the result of studies in pedagogy in general. Technology and, more specifically, computers coupled with sound pedagogy can have positive and progressive results. Hybrid courses, f-2-f courses with an online component, can take advantage of both pedagogical and technological advances. The result is better teaching, better learning and a better educational experience.

[§] O’Shea, T. and Self, J. (1983). *Learning and Teaching with Computers*, Harvester Press, Brighton.

Editor’s note: Toni will be contributing a regular educational technology column to the newsletter. If you would like him to address a specific topic, please send your suggestions to me at pctc@mta.ca.

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**Information Literacy: The
Ongoing Saga**
**Shelley Gullikson, Information
Literacy Coordinator**

In preparation for classes this fall, I was trying to get back up to speed on blog searching and felt a bit overwhelmed as I tried to discern the relative merits of Technorati and Waypath. During a year's maternity leave, there was an explosion of blog and RSS feed search sites. The fast pace of technology isn't news, and I think librarians are especially used to learning new skills to keep up with the technology. So why was I filled with increasing unease?

The answer likely lies in my job title. How could the Information Literacy Coordinator feel so overwhelmed by new information? I should be on top of all this. It's right there in the *Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education* (the bible for IL librarians) – “the information literate student accesses needed information effectively and efficiently.” I didn't feel either effective or efficient. So my secret comes out...

I don't think I am information literate. (Yikes!) And I don't think you are either. Information literacy is a moving target. The information skills we need are always changing, partly due to technology (card catalogues become online catalogues, print journals move to online databases), but also due to the depth of experience we bring to the tasks at hand. The idea that “the information literate student accesses needed information effectively and efficiently” may well be possible for students in their discipline of focus, but would Anthropology majors be able to access SEC filings effectively and efficiently? Would Physics majors be able to access literary criticism effectively and efficiently? Would

History majors be able to access clinical research findings on a new cancer treatment? Would *you* be able to find all of these things?

Our disciplinary experience doesn't just help us find information, it helps us evaluate it appropriately. Undergraduate students working on a research paper may be happy enough to find an article on topic. A faculty member will ask more probing questions: Is the article in a reputable journal? Is the research method appropriate? Are the authors ignoring recent developments or thinking in the discipline? You feel comfortable evaluating the literature in your own field, but would you be confident analyzing articles from other disciplines?

Information literacy is an ongoing process. The overarching goals will stay the same – to determine what information you need, to access that information, to evaluate the information critically, to use it effectively and ethically. But the skills underlying those goals will continue to evolve. You need different information literacy skills as a faculty member than you did when you were a student. You needed different IL skills as a first year student than students entering Mount A this fall. Our information needs change and the technology to store, disseminate, and search for that information changes; how could there be a point when we deem ourselves to be information literate?

Now I have a favourite blog search engine (Clusty) and have subscribed to a couple of RSS feeds, but haven't even started looking at podcasts...

If you want to help your students with information literacy this fall, get in touch with your library liaison. See http://www.mta.ca/library/services_facilities.html#instruction for contact information. To learn more about blogs, RSS feeds, or anything else IL-related, contact sgullikson@mta.ca or call 364-2572.



**Fall for Teaching--Again!
Fêtons la Rentrée!
THE PCTC'S TEACHING DAY**

**Wednesday, August 31st
Location: Avard Dixon, G12 and G10**

Labour Day is like New Year's Eve for university teachers, so get a head start on your celebration by attending this year's Teaching Day, Wednesday, August 31st.

Organized by the Purdy Crawford Teaching Centre, the programme is for all Mount Allison teachers, librarians, and counsellors, and new colleagues are especially welcome to attend.

This will be a lively, productive, and engaging day! Sessions will feature excellent teachers, accomplished students, and noteworthy guests. Before lunch, the Second Annual "Bright Ideas" Exchange will showcase some of the innovative teaching taking place at Mount Allison; during the noon-hour "Lunch and Learn," participants will see some of the excellent initiatives supported by the PCTC's Scholarship of Teaching and Learning grants. Faculty and student recipients will display posters, give demonstrations, and show multi-media exhibits of their projects.

After lunch, the programme will comprise two special sessions featuring outstanding presenters. First, Shannon Murray, UPEI, and Russ Hunt, Saint Thomas, as guests of the university's First Year Experience Committee, will describe the first year programmes in place at their institutions.

Then, to close the afternoon, Dr. Ivan Cohen, Classics, the 2004 recipient of the university's prestigious Herbert and Leota

Tucker Distinguished Teaching Award, will present the annual "Tucker Talk."

Come celebrate a new teaching year with PCTC! Bonne année!

For more detailed information, check the full programme on the PCTC web site www.mta.ca/pctc or consult the bright yellow flyer sent to you earlier this week.

**YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO ATTEND
THIS YEAR'S TUCKER PRESENTATION**

***MAKING IT RELEVANT:
ANCIENT STUDIES IN THE MODERN
CURRICULUM***

DR. IVAN COHEN, CLASSICS



**2004 RECIPIENT OF MOUNT ALLISON'S
PRESTIGIOUS HERBERT AND LEOTA TUCKER
TEACHING AWARD**

**WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 31ST
3 PM, AVARD DIXON G12
(CLOSING THE PCTC TEACHING DAY)**

***President Kenneth Ozmon and his wife
Elizabeth invite attendees to a reception at
Cranewood after the presentation.***

