



# PAIDEIA

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

## TEACHING MOUNT A's EXTRAORDINARY STUDENTS

**E**xtraordinary . . . Exceptional . . . . Diverse . . . . What do these words mean? In many ways, every Mount Allison student is exceptional; yet some are remarkably so. Many of our students are extraordinarily talented; some are returning to university later in life and trying to balance family and work responsibilities; some have left their native countries to study in Canada; others have visible—or even invisible—disabilities and differences.

In 1988, Emily Style<sup>§</sup>, a contributor to the SEED Project (Seeking Educational Equality and Diversity) at Wellesley College, wrote that the curriculum must provide both windows and mirrors for all students; in other words, the curriculum must both reflect and reveal “the varied experiences of reality which frame individual human perspectives.” Learning, Style reminds us, is always “personal” and “contextual”: through windows, students see others’ experiences, but that perspective must be tempered by seeing their own realities reflected and validated in the curriculum. Style admits that achieving this is a juggle for professors: “[S]tudents’ educational diet is not balanced if they see themselves in the mirror all the time . . . [C]urriculum must also insist upon the fresh air of windows into the experience of others.”

Warmest thanks to the many contributors to this issue of PAIDEIA who will help us meet some extraordinary students—in their own words and through the eyes of their teachers and counsellors. Best wishes for the academic year ahead!

<sup>§</sup>Style, E. (1988). *Curriculum as Window & Mirror*. < [http:// www.wcwoonline.org/seed/](http://www.wcwoonline.org/seed/)>.

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## EXCEPTIONAL GREATNESS

**Dr. Ron Marken**

Professor Emeritus, Department of  
English  
University of Saskatchewan

*This is a true story. Only the student's name  
has been changed.*

**M**y English 110 class was assigned to Physics 202. To get to that room, leave the Arts Building, cross the Bowl, walk up two steps, and enter the 'new' half of Physics through one of four doors. Go up another five steps, through a second set of four doors, aim right at a 45-degree angle, then turn left through a set of double doors, walk down a long hall to a second set of double doors. Once through them, turn right, then open a door on your right immediately. Through that door you will find a long, winding staircase. At the top of the staircase, choose the room on the right. Eureka! It took me more than a few minutes to find that room.

As I was calling the roll on that first day of class, one student came in ten minutes late, folding his white cane. Imagine finding Physics 202 for the first time in total, alien darkness. You are also a first-year student. All your classes are in the Arts Building, except for English 110.6 (29). You can't change sections because every other 110 class is full. You have ten minutes to get from Arts 101, your History class, to Physics 202.

Richard took a seat in the front row, set up a Braille note-taking apparatus, introduced himself, and smiled expectantly. I apologized to him for his having to negotiate such a maze for the sake of a few poems, however exquisite, and we got down to business. Thinking about it later, I was

amazed he was only ten minutes late. Three classmates couldn't find the room at all.

I'd never taught a blind student before and, in retrospect, I'm sure I spoke much too loudly. The "Stupid" corner of my brain wouldn't let me realize that Richard's hearing was not affected by his blindness. Conscious of his Braille-typing, I know I spoke with unnatural slowness too. When I teach, I cover the blackboard, so having Richard in the front row suddenly became a handicap for me. I wasn't used to that kind of discomfort.

We got the preliminary business of the first day of class out of the way. In the half-hour that remained, I had planned to do something worthwhile, something that would get the class off to a lively start. I knew that most would not have brought their books to class, so I had photocopied three sonnets for us to read and study that day. "The best-laid plans . . ." I had *not* planned on having a blind student. My flimsy handout was useless to Richard.

What to do?

I did the obvious thing. I read the first poem – a sonnet by Gerard Manley Hopkins – aloud:

*The world is charged with the grandeur of  
God.  
It will flame out, like shining from shook  
foil;  
It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil  
Crushed. . . .*

Richard's hand went up.

"Yes, Richard?" Naturally, I assumed I had been reading too quickly—or too softly.

"I'm sorry we didn't have a suitable copy of the poem ready for you today."

"That's not a problem," Richard answered.

"I have another kind of question."

"Please. Go ahead." (contd.)



“In the lines you just read, why do you suppose there are two more syllables in line three than there are in lines one and two?”

Imagine a moment’s silence while each of us gifted with sight counted syllables on our fingers. Richard was absolutely right. The class’s collective jaw hit the floor, mine included. I had read that poem a hundred times, never noticing this small idiosyncrasy. More important, we were all challenged to come up with answers to Richard’s question.

His extraordinary sensitivity to sound sent the rest of us into a lively discussion about syllables, poetic intention, and sonnet structure. Finally, Richard offered us an answer to his own question, and no one was surprised by its astuteness:

“The third line talks about greatness and oozing. It seems appropriate that the line should ooze a bit at the edges.” He even had a sense of humour!

Is there a moral to this story? You bet!

Never make assumptions. What appears to be “normal” could be merely ordinary, and that which appears unusual, or variously handicapped, can just as likely be astonishing.

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***“If you saw me walking in the halls, you wouldn’t know I had a disability. I do not use a wheelchair, I’m not hearing or vision impaired, nor do I have a prosthesis. The disability I deal with every day is at the core of my being—my mind. I am bipolar, or as some call it, manic depressive.”***

## MATURE LEARNERS: EXTRAORDINARY FOCUS

**Heather Patterson**  
Mature Student Advisor & Director of  
Continuous Learning

“I started my degree 20 years before I graduated. I had 17 jobs, three kids, and a dozen volunteer positions while I worked away at my degree - a course here, a course there until finally I decided to go back full-time for two years. Now I’ve completed an MA as well, and I’m working at a job I love!”

“I just decided it was time to finish that degree I started years ago. My daughter graduated from Mount A and I decided it was my turn. I’ll be 75 this year and I finished my degree!”

“The plant I worked at for 15 years is closing its doors this summer. I have two young children and though my wife has a good job, I cannot afford to stay home. I needed to look at my options and university is the one I chose.”

“I graduated from high school and completed a cosmetology course. Then I worked in several service sector jobs but I didn’t want to work at call centres anymore. I had a dream of training sea mammals or doing research in species conservation. I’ll be going into 3rd year this fall.”

These are just some of the many mature students who are attending or have graduated from Mount Allison. Each year there are approximately 120 students who would be classified as mature learners<sup>1</sup>. While they currently make up only (contd)

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<sup>1</sup>For admissions purposes, a mature student is defined as a person who has either been out of formal education for 5 years or more or who is 25 years of age or over.



slightly more than 5% of the student body, in the next five years, the largest population growth in Canada is projected to be among the 60-79 year old cohort (8,466,000), followed by those 40-59 (3,832,000). The 20-39 year olds will grow by 2,547,000. The 0-19 cohort is actually projected to shrink by 1,972,000.<sup>2</sup> The implications of this negative growth are enormous for post-secondary institutions. If universities, particularly small universities, are to continue to exist we have to attract members of the fastest growing cohorts, people aged 40-79 as well as the 20 to 40 year olds.

As a society, we also have to hope that adults will continue to attain the skills and education necessary for a productive workforce: "...[R]esearch indicates that the equivalent of an extra year of schooling can raise productivity by between 4.9% and 8.5% in the manufacturing sector and between 5.9% and 12.7% in the services sector."<sup>3</sup>

As well, the Canadian Council on Learning points out in its report, Unlocking Canada's Potential: the State of the Workplace and Adult Learning in Canada:

*The benefits of adult learning extend well beyond the economic; adult learning plays a key role in sustaining social and personal well-being. In addition to better job*

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<sup>2</sup>Statistics Canada. "Projected population by age group and sex according to a medium growth scenario for 2006, 2011, 2016, 2021, 2026 and 2031, at July 1 (2006, 2011). <http://www40.statcan.ca/101/cst01/demo23a.htm>

<sup>3</sup>Tamkin, P. "Measuring the Contribution of Skills to Business Performance" quoted in Unlocking Canada's Potential: the State of the Workplace and Adult Learning in Canada published by the Canadian Council on Learning, 2007, p. 6.

*opportunities and higher incomes, continued learning throughout life translates into better health and greater civic engagement and personal fulfillment.*

*Research has shown that individuals with higher levels of educational attainment tend to lead longer and healthier lives, be more engaged in their community and express greater personal satisfaction with their lives.<sup>4</sup>*

Mature learners face many challenges besides being members of a visible minority:

- They have extremely busy lives with enormous time-management challenges.
- Many work full- or part-time as well as attending classes.
- Child care is always a challenge; a sick child or caregiver can throw off all the careful planning.
- Many have been away from formal education for a long time and some of their study skills may be rusty.

Yet mature learners bring many strengths to the classroom:

- Determination - They know why they're here and who's paying for it, and most are **not** satisfied with merely "getting by."
- Life experience - They can add to the richness of the discussion, often bringing a unique perspective. (They know who Trudeau is and they remember what life was like before Facebook!) (contd)

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<sup>4</sup>Canadian Council on Learning. Unlocking Canada's Potential: the State of the Workplace and Adult Learning in Canada, 2007, p. 8.



Focus - Often their lives are settled and they are not distracted by their social life.

We can all help mature learners in various ways:

- Treating all students as colleagues and not saying “kids” when referring to students
- Offering evening classes
- Providing time in class for group work (mature students’ schedules don’t always mesh with those of their younger classmates)
- Putting class notes on WebCT or handing them out in class
- Understanding when employment or family responsibilities get in the way
- Including all students in discussion
- Creating a safe space in class where everyone feels welcome

For more information about mature learners at Mount Allison, please contact me ([hpatterson@mta.ca](mailto:hpatterson@mta.ca), 364-2266).

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***Don't expect international students to be different from Canadians, yet to resemble one another. International students possess the same diversity of learning styles, abilities and strengths that Canadians do. They are not a homogenous group. Respectfully recognizing and drawing upon their differences can enrich the learning experience for all.***

## ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS: LINES IN THE SAND

**Kris Trotter**  
Personal Counsellor

She was a fourth year student, due to graduate at the end of that term. I'll call her Jane. She called to book an appointment with a personal counsellor at the end of March, and was given an appointment for April 4th.

Jane's presenting issue was "feeling burnt-out mentally". She complained of "slow thinking", "difficulty focusing" and sleeping until 2 p.m. most days. She could "barely remember March," and she was concerned about failing her final term due to this complete lack of motivation.

Jane said that she had Marfan's syndrome and a congenitally defective heart, although she did not believe her current problem was related. I advised her to see a doctor as soon as possible, in case it was a thyroid problem, low iron, mono, diabetes, etc. I also showed her a list of common symptoms of clinical depression: she had 7 out of 11. She felt "too tired to think about the future", including her Convocation ceremony in May.

With Jane's permission, I wrote a letter on University letterhead to all her professors, noting that, in accordance with Academic Regulation 6.14.4, I supported her request for extensions for outstanding course work on the basis of illness. I wrote that Jane requested a new deadline of April 19 for all of her course work. As always, I included my telephone number and the invitation to contact me if I could be of further service. Despite her poor health, Jane volunteered to go in person to each of her professors to describe her situation and request extensions, handing them my documenting letter only after she had taken responsibility for stating her own case. (contd)



Having done this, Jane told me on April 5th that one professor had responded, in person, that she would think about the request. By the time Jane arrived home, there was an e-mail from that professor, which was also copied to me and to the Registrar's office. The professor had written:

*"Dear (Jane Doe), I have reviewed the letter from Kris Trotter. While I appreciate that you have been subject to additional stresses this term, I unfortunately do not feel that I am in a position to grant you an extension on your course work. Upon conducting a preliminary review of the attendance of our classes, I have a record of you attending only 2 of 20 classes I surveyed. I doubt a more thorough review will result in a radical improvement of that percentage. At this point, to grant you extensions would be unfair to the other students who have attended and participated in the class, especially your classmates who have struggled with their own health and well-being."*

On my advice, Jane saw a doctor at the Sackville Hospital Emergency Department on Saturday, April 7th. The doctor hypothesized that the beta-blockers Jane had taken since age 11 to treat her heart condition may have brought on clinical depression. Discouraged and resigned, Jane asked rhetorically, "Why now?"

The doctor Jane saw is one of many in Sackville who will not provide Mount A students with "a note." Doctors believe it is their job to treat their patients, not to be truth-detectors for third parties. However, to support Jane, he provided her with a copy of his chart notes, in which, under 'Doctor's Orders' he included the notation: "I suggest she consider deferring exams and papers."

I next saw Jane on April 10th. I urged her to appeal the professor's refusal to grant an

extension, in light of the new medical diagnosis and doctor's advice. Jane believed she had attended more classes than the professor thought. (Attendance was not a requirement on the syllabus, Jane claimed, although I did wonder then why attendance was apparently being taken). Jane was adamant that she did not want to appeal: she was too tired, and felt the professor was biased against her. She opted to seek a withdrawal for medical reasons, thus missing her graduation in May.

Why did I not advocate on Jane's behalf? Professional counsellors MUST respect their clients' wishes as to "the direction of therapeutic undertaking." Without my client's permission, I was unable to discuss with the professor the medical diagnosis, the student's dispute of the attendance record, and my belief that a solid, senior, significantly ill student was making a reasonable request for minor academic accommodations in order to demonstrate achievement of academic objectives.

Mount Allison's Policy on Students with Disabilities is excellent. It states the responsibilities of students requiring assistance from the University: "[T]o initiate contact with the appropriate office on campus as early as possible and make the nature of their disabilities and needs known."

Arguably, Jane waited until the end of March to ask for help, at which point she had to wait a week to get in to see me. After I advised it, Jane sought a prompt medical consultation from the local Emergency Department.

Mount Allison's Policy on Students with Disabilities states that another of the (contd)



responsibilities of the University is to "provide reasonable accommodations where warranted and without compromising academic standards." The professor in this case seems to have judged that the latter clause had not been satisfied.

It is possible that my citing of Mount Allison's Policy on Students with Disabilities is disingenuous; arguably, temporary physical and mental illnesses are not static, assessable, documentable disabilities. If acute/discrete illness are not disabilities for which we have a clearly written, balanced policy, we currently have only the following guidelines from the Academic Calendar:

*6.2.3 A student who wishes to withdraw after the deadline because of illness or other sufficient reason may apply to the appropriate Academic Dean for a 'W' designation.*

What are the criteria for granting a 'W'? What is the role of the university counsellors—who are not doctors or psychologists, but are accredited mental health professionals hired by the university—in assessing “sufficient reason”?

*6.15.3 The Registrar, after consultation with the instructor, may permit a student to write a deferred final examination as a result of illness or for compassionate reasons. In all cases of illness, a doctor's certificate explicitly covering inability to write the examination on the day of writing must be submitted to the registrar before the end of the examination period.*

Professors and Deans want 'professional notes', and instruct students to provide them—but where do they acquire them? Are we giving ill students a crazy-making task when we send them on a chase for a note?

Consider the following:

1. Timeliness is of the essence for academic accommodations, permission to defer an exam, and now, even for a late withdrawal. However it can take two or three weeks to see a local doctor, two weeks to see a university counsellor, and months if the doctor who treats you is out of the province. And what about the fact that most local doctors won't write 'truth' notes for third-parties, and they don't want ill students in the Emergency unit who are simply seeking notes.

2. Some professors cringe if they receive personal details, but some feel they need them. How do we note-providers know who is who? Where do the students' privacy rights come into the picture?

3. One solution to the paradox cited in #2 is to use the confidentiality-preserving university counsellors and the nurse to assess the gory details for academic-accommodation 'sufficiency'. But, again, what are the university's criteria for a 'yea' or a 'nay'? And what about professors who question the qualifications of a Student Life staff person to assess valid and reliable significance or 'sufficiency'? We are accredited mental health professionals but admittedly are not psychologists, psychiatrists or doctors. We are student services professionals with graduate training, but we are not academics. And, of course, there is the perennial waiting-list problem.

I hope this case-study and discussion have clearly framed the problems for students like Jane.

I now propose a workable solution, based on four principles:

- 1) University is supposed to prepare mature, ethical citizens for life in contemporary society.
- 2) Teachable moments are everywhere.
- 3) University students are adults.
- 4) Fraud is a serious, punishable offense.

I recently signed two legal affidavits as part of the process of qualifying for a new mortgage. I had to swear in writing that I did not have any significant medical conditions in the past year. (contd)



(I also had to swear that, to my knowledge, my septic system is in good working order!) Signing these documents, I thought to myself: "I could lie, but I'd be in big trouble if I were caught. They're treating me like a truthful, responsible adult and taking me at my (signed, legal) word." Can we not do the same with Mount Allison students, instead of creating a chase for the holy grails of the named illness, the irreproachable assessment, and the iron-clad, on-demand 'note'?

*You may teach a class that is all male or all female;  
You may teach a class that is all First Peoples or all of European ancestry;  
But you will never teach a class that is all "straight".*

*Challenging Homophobia in the Schools,  
James McNinch (University of Regina)  
Mount Allison University, March 2005*

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## LIVING WITH AN INVISIBLE DISABILITY

**Stephanie Landry**  
Mount Allison Student

**M**ost people experience some sort of setback or carry some sort of burden during their lives. As individuals, we constantly face new challenges which test us. Through these experiences, we create stories which define who we are. Everyone has a story to tell: here is mine.

Deciding to come to university can be an extremely stressful and hard decision. Beginning university is like starting a new chapter in one's life, leaving all that is familiar and entering a world full of change and insecurities. University brings double the challenges for those like me: people living with invisible disabilities. What exactly is an invisible disability? Many of us have them. Around campus, you may never be able to tell by our outer appearance the battles we are constantly fighting.

My story starts the summer after first year. Plagued with persistent headaches and stomach aches, I was hospitalized and diagnosed as being over stressed. Once the symptoms abated, I was released, and I went

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about the rest of my summer, returning to Mount Allison in the fall. Things were normal until one Sunday morning near the end of September when I was rushed to the hospital with unbearable abdominal pains. I was admitted and underwent a barrage of tests and procedures.

So began the roller coaster of appointments with doctors in both Sackville and Amherst, trial medications and day surgeries. All of this was in a seemingly unsuccessful attempt to figure out the mysterious problem that seemed to be controlling my life. It's one thing to be sick, but it's almost impossible to cope with when you don't know what is actually wrong.

All year, I did my best to balance academics with the responsibilities that came with the house executive position I held in my residence. I tried to hide the pain, stress and worry that I dealt with everyday. Recently my doctor concluded that I am likely suffering from Fibromyalgia. Most of the symptoms that I experience almost on a daily basis can be attributed to this syndrome: stomach pains, achy muscles, trouble concentrating, headaches, sleep disturbances and depressive characteristics. Fibromyalgia is a fairly new and not well understood syndrome. It has no cure, but it is not life threatening. (contd)



Currently I'm being treated to lessen the impact that some of my symptoms have on my quality of life. Even though my situation has improved somewhat, I would be lying if I said it was easy.

Striving to fit the mold of a "good student" is easier for some to accomplish than for others. For the most part, I have not really disclosed my disability to my friends or the Mount Allison University community; I try not to use my sickness as an excuse or a crutch. This can be difficult.

When it comes to my experience with professors this year, I have found some of them exceptionally understanding, while others I have found intimidating and unapproachable. One experience with a professor stands out vividly in my mind. When she found out I was sick and had been in the hospital, she was very compassionate about quizzes I had missed. From then on, she made a point to ask how I was feeling, and she could easily tell when I was having good or bad days. This professor also gave me an extension on our final paper at the end of semester, knowing how much work I had on top of dealing with health issues.

Conversely, I had other professors who were not as sympathetic. As previously mentioned, early on I made the decision not to publicize my disability, and often would just ask for extra help when needed instead of stating that I was sick. I found that some professors weren't helpful and didn't provide me with the extra help I was seeking.

The message I would like to send out is that I feel that it is essential that the Mount Allison community become more aware of

the fact that many students on campus have invisible disabilities and that we actually make up a large percentage of the students on campus. Coping with some of the issues we face every day can be very tiring and stressful; we don't always understand what is happening, and it's really helpful for us when others try to be empathetic.

*Next time you see someone who seems to be having a bad day or a hard time, offer a smile or a word of encouragement; it just may be someone with an invisible disability.*

I am just as much a member of the university community as all other students. In the past two years, I have learned to call it home, and hope that I can lean on this community and benefit from its strength, patience and understanding when I need it the most.

So, the next time you see someone who seems to be having a bad day or a hard time with something, offer a smile or a word of encouragement; it just may be someone who has an invisible disability.

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*Recent scholarship not only increasingly delineates between kinds of knowing . . . . It also returns again and again to the basic need for the whole spectrum of thinking/feeling competencies to be taught to all students, regardless of gender and other cultural variables.*

*Curriculum as Window & Mirror  
Emily Style, 1988*



## TIPS FOR TEACHING IN A MULTICULTURAL CLASSROOM

Allison Broadbent-Codjo  
International Student Advisor

**T**he number of international students and Canadian students from different ethnic backgrounds at Mount A. has been increasing over the years. (For lack of a better word, this article will refer to students from different cultural backgrounds—both Canadian and non-Canadian—as international students.) Students from diverse cultures can enrich the classroom by sharing different perspectives and experiences that enhance learning for everyone. However, the learning styles and expectations of students from other cultures may be quite different from Canadian norms, and they may face unique difficulties in adjusting to a North American classroom.

Meeting the learning needs of diverse students can be challenging. Should faculty change the way they teach in order to make it easier for just a few international students? Should students whose first language is not English be given extra time on exams? Should students coming from different education systems be expected to follow Canadian academic rules? These questions, and many others, are bound to arise as our classrooms become more and more multicultural.

The answers aren't always cut and dried. For example, at Mount Allison, each professor decides whether to grant special accommodations for ESL students. All students must abide by the academic regulations of the university, but faculty can help international students avoid pitfalls by taking a few extra minutes at the beginning of the semester to explain important rules (such as how to avoid plagiarizing). While it wouldn't be reasonable or effective for faculty to change their entire method of teaching to accommodate international students, many simple approaches and techniques can easily be incorporated into

one's teaching to foster international students' learning. I'd like to stress that all of the tips in this article are also beneficial for Canadian students because they are generally just good teaching practices.

### **BE EXPLICIT:**

**Don't imply, explain**—especially with respect to the following:

**Academic terms:** Clarify terms such as *syllabus* and *calendar*

**Time:** Clarify schedules and due dates

**Assessment:** Explain criteria, format and length of assignments. What will be assessed for marks? (Reiterate assessment criteria often.)

**Rules:** Stress what is and isn't negotiable; e.g., penalties for late papers or plagiarism. (Some students may come from bargaining cultures.)

**Interpersonal relationships:** What is appropriate with you and with other students in the class? How do you wish to be addressed? What are office hours for? How approachable are Canadian professors?

**Purpose of activities:** Explain the purpose of lectures, class discussions, tutorials, essays, group projects, research papers. (Talk about it and write it down.)

**Western academic skills:** Explain that expressing personal opinions, paraphrasing and summarizing, combining several sources, referencing rules and conventions, analysis and evaluation, structure and order for an academic argument are all important. (You can refer students to appropriate staff in Student Life, the Library or the Writing Resource Centre.)

### **LECTURING:**

**Speak at a moderate pace and use pauses** to allow students to process the content.

**Simplify some of your language:** We often don't realize how idioms, acronyms, jokes and jargon can confuse others. Simple, easy language, short sentences and frequent pauses make things easier to understand. (contd)



**Provide pre-reading material**, such as a glossary of terms related to the subject matter (encountering an unknown word during the lecture stalls students' brains.)

**Provide handouts:** Along with an outline and notes highlighting the important parts of your lecture, they help students listen instead of spending time writing (listening while writing notes in a second language is very difficult.)

**Structure your lecture:** Provide an outline of what you will be presenting and fit the content into the structure. Think of information as bricks that must be laid into a foundation. Don't only give information but talk about the information. Signal what is important and connect ideas. Aim for clear, conclusive lectures that deconstruct the subject matter.

**CLASS TIME:**

**Students need safe time for practice and feedback:** Time to exchange with others also lightens their anxiety. If several students in the class speak the same language, let them discuss their ideas in their native language during group discussion time.

**Distribute students evenly for group work according to skills and interests:** Do an exercise or activity to gather info about students so that suitable groups can be formed.

**Make it safe to ask questions:** Be available ten minutes after class to answer questions, or have students hand in questions after class, which you will answer at the beginning of the next class.

**Encourage mixing and understanding between Canadians and international students** in order to foster a respectful, inclusive environment. Plan an activity during the first class that allows students to introduce themselves and get to know each other: this gives everyone a sense of the diversity in the classroom. A good icebreaker is for students to say their name and what it means or how they got it. (Feel free to contact me for other suggestions.)

**Include world examples and different cultural perspectives in your curriculum as often as possible:** Introducing some ideas that are not purely North American will include the students and encourage them to share their experiences and perspectives.

**Avoid using stereotypes about other countries:** For example, while it is valid to say that many people have been opposed to the US-led war in Iraq, it is insensitive to use generalizations such as "Americans are . . ."

**AND FINALLY:**

Don't be afraid to ask international students about the differences between the classroom environment and teaching methods at Mount Allison and those in their home country? What do they find very different in Canada? What can you do to help them adapt better?

If you have any questions or need advice about how to address international student concerns in your class, **please feel welcome to contact me** ([abroadbent@mta.ca](mailto:abroadbent@mta.ca), 364-2112).

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*There are no universal solutions or specific rules for responding to ethnic, gender, and cultural diversity in the classroom . . . . Perhaps the overriding principle is to be thoughtful and sensitive and do what you think is best.*

*Barbara Gross Davis, Tools for Teaching  
<http://uga.berkeley.edu/sled/bgd/diversity.html>*

**Welcome, Toni!**

The Educational Technology Consultant position has moved, and I am delighted to welcome Toni Roberts –officially—to the Purdy Crawford Teaching Centre. Toni's new office is Bennett 209.



## GENDER-NEUTRAL LANGUAGE

**Melody Petlock**  
Human Rights Advisor

Mount Allison University prohibits discrimination or bias on the basis of sex. According to Mount A's *Gender Neutral Language Policy* (<http://www.mta.ca/administration/vp/policies/1002.htm>): "With its history in the education of women and men, [MountA is] especially aware of the importance of communication in a manner that does not reinforce questionable attitudes and assumptions about people and gender roles. It supports word choices which are not biased, discriminatory or demeaning." Language deeply affects the way we think, so we must be careful how we use it with respect to gender at Mount A.

The use of gender-biased language risks offending readers of both sexes. This is particularly true when the language is based on stereotypical assumptions about occupations—implying, for example, that all administrators are men or all clerical staff are women. The use of feminine suffixes such as "ette" or "ess" also creates bias and has fallen out of usage.

<b>Instead of:</b>	<b>Use:</b>
actress, poetess, authoress	actor, poet, author
chairman, chairwoman, chairperson	chair

Gender-neutral language minimizes unnecessary concern about gender in your subject matter, allowing both you and your audience to focus on what people do rather than on which sex they happen to be. For example, the practice of using the gendered pronouns "he, his or him" and gender-specific nouns like "man" as generic terms can be misleading. Research has shown that the average reader's tendency is to imagine a male when reading "he" or "man," even if the rest of the content is gender-neutral.\* Therefore, you cannot be sure that someone will see the woman on the job if you refer to every professor as "he," or that a reader will see women in "the betterment of Mankind." In some historical contexts, "man" and "mankind" do refer to males so this would not create a contemporary bias. Also, replacing every "he" with "he or she" attracts even more attention to gender and defeats your purpose. Try to drop or change the pronoun when possible.

It may often seem that avoiding sexist language can lead to awkward constructions. With practice, you can use gender-neutral language gracefully and unobtrusively. For example:

<b>Instead of:</b>	<b>Use:</b>
Each student must bring his notebook to class.	All students must bring their notebooks....
The scientist will call his subject.	The scientist will call the subject.
Early man developed simple tools.	Early humans developed simple tools.



A common communication error that creates bias is in the listing of names. Because conventional titles for women – Miss, Mrs. – are linked solely to marital status or to women’s relationship to men, the title “Ms.,” except where a woman prefers the title Miss or Mrs., is recommended for all women when the parallel Mr. is used. Ask people what title they prefer.

Instead of:	Use:
Dr. Smith, Dr. Jones, Mrs. Wright and Susan	Dr. Smith, Dr. Jones, Mrs. Wright and Ms. Davis OR Mary Smith, Tom Jones, Lisa Wright and Susan Davis
Dr. Smith wrote about Milton and Miss Austen	Dr. Smith wrote about Milton and Austen

Mount Allison’s Gender-Neutral Language Policy lists many examples of how to avoid bias in language. For more information, contact Melody Petlock ([mpetlock@mta.ca](mailto:mpetlock@mta.ca), 364-2613).

**REFERENCE:**

\* “Understanding Subtle Sexism: Detection and Use of Sexist Language.” *Sex Roles: A Journal of Research*, August, 2004 by Janet K. Swim, et al. [http://goliath.ecnext.com/coms2/gi\\_0199-800299/Understanding-subtle-sexism-detection-and.html#abstract](http://goliath.ecnext.com/coms2/gi_0199-800299/Understanding-subtle-sexism-detection-and.html#abstract)

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**You are warmly invited to attend  
this year’s Tucker Presentation  
featuring  
DR. LOUISE WASYLKIW, PSYCHOLOGY  
2007 RECIPIENT OF THE HERBERT AND LEOTA TUCKER TEACHING AWARD  
“Experiments In Teaching: Hits, Misses and False Alarms”**

The concepts of signal detection theory have been applied to numerous situations that involve decision making. Think of this theory in terms of a decision matrix in which there are four possible outcomes: hits, misses, correct rejections, and false alarms. Teaching strategies can also be categorized into four possible outcomes. *Hits* are strategies that were suitable when first tried and continue to be so today; *correct rejections* were dismissed initially and continue to be dismissed; *false alarms* were initially seized upon, but they, too, are now dismissed; *misses* were initially ignored, but they are now being revived. Teaching *hits* do not come about without the presence of the other three outcomes. . . .

**WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 29<sup>TH</sup>  
3:30 PM, AVARD DIXON G12  
(CLOSING THE RESEARCH AND TEACHING DAY)  
RECEPTION TO FOLLOW**



## iTUNES U AT MOUNT

ALLISON

**Toni Roberts**

Educational Technology Consultant

**I**t may be a slightly strange name for a site that delivers audio, video and multimedia content; however, “iTunes U” is explicitly educational. Lectures, guest speakers, lab videos, etc. can all be added to iTunes U and made accessible for public users. iTunes U isn’t a university, of course, but it is designed and intended for use by universities in the continued and continuous education of students.

The notion of widely available educational content is not entirely novel. MIT has made its course content available to the world for a few years now. The rationale is that it isn’t the content alone that makes a course or a student’s education, but rather the insights, additional perspective, and direction provided by the professor. Projects like iTunes U and MIT’s OpenCourseWare do not diminish the role of the faculty member; in fact, they prize and esteem it. Although content is undeniably a vital and important component of learning, it is the instructor’s depth, vibrancy and insights that make education complete and whole.

*[I]t isn’t the content alone that makes a course or a student’s education, but rather the insights, additional perspective, and direction provided by the professor.*

The flexibility of iTunes U is obvious. Students can access content at their discretion. However, there are many pedagogical advantages as well: the chance to review content for tests and exams; the convenience of re-playing important or complex concepts that require additional time for students to comprehend; the ability to access a class that a student may have

missed for medical reasons; the accessibility of supplemental information, etc. Further, leveraging the habits of students in terms of their online lifestyle will keep them engaged, informed and interested. Rather than a replacement for a face-to-face class, iTunes U is meant to support and shore up the teaching and instruction of faculty members and make the overall educational experience for the student richer and fuller. Ultimately, one of the major goals of a university is to make the educational experience robust and full; iTunes U is a tool that can serve in making this goal attainable.

Recording lectures for classes is really quite easy, and there are a few options. In classrooms fitted with a PC, simply use a program like Audacity and click “record.” With a Mac, you can record and even easily set up podcasts that automatically update when students connect their iPod, with iLife. Also, faculty may use an iPod directly with a microphone to record their lectures. Microphones and iPod sets are available from the Computing Services Helpdesk ([helpdesk@mta.ca](mailto:helpdesk@mta.ca) or 364-2473) where they can be signed out. Of course, any other portable digital recording device with a microphone can also be used to record audio content.

Video content in MP4 format can also be distributed via iTunes U. The pedagogical advantages of recording video should be assessed, as audio is often all that is needed. However, at times video makes a significant instructional contribution. Consider a class that uses images to great effect, such as a Fine Arts class or History class. Using video in these cases, and many other situations, can provide a superior experience over audio alone.

Support for iTunes U at Mount Allison is provided by the PCTC through the Educational Technology Consultant. For more information about iTunes U, and to see whether it would benefit your students, please contact Toni Roberts at [troberts@mta.ca](mailto:troberts@mta.ca) or dial 364-2159.

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## COMING EVENTS

### INTRODUCTION TO WEBCT

Monday, August 27<sup>th</sup>

9 am -12 noon (workshop)

1 pm – 4 pm (one-on-one)

Avard Dixon , 115

**REGISTRATION REQUIRED**

Educational Technology Consultant Toni Roberts will give this workshop intended for novice users of WebCT and anyone else who would like a refresher. Toni will also be available during the afternoon in the lab for those with more advanced or specific questions, or for those who need more personalized attention.

This workshop is open to everyone.

**Registration is required.** E-mail Toni Roberts, at [troberts@mta.ca](mailto:troberts@mta.ca).

### LEARNING IN A GLOBAL SOCIETY

The Association of Atlantic Universities

Teaching Showcase, 2007

Acadia University

Saturday, October 20<sup>th</sup>

For more information, visit the conference website at

[www.acadiau.ca/fountaincommons/aaushowcase/](http://www.acadiau.ca/fountaincommons/aaushowcase/)

### STUDENTS AT THE CENTRE: TRANSFORMING EDUCATION...AND LIVES

McGraw-Hill Ryerson National Teaching,  
Learning, & Technology Conference

Ryerson University, Toronto

November, 16-18, 2007

For more information, visit the conference website at

[www.mcgrawhill.ca/events/events/ryerson+university.php](http://www.mcgrawhill.ca/events/events/ryerson+university.php)

## PRESIDENT'S SERIES ON HUMAN RIGHTS AT MOUNT ALLISON UNIVERSITY

This issue of PAIDEIA is the fore-runner of an important series to take place this year at Mount Allison. Focusing on human rights, in the broadest, most embracing sense of the term, the **President's Series on Human Rights** will provide information, nurture sensitivity, and uncover and disseminate best practices in dealing with issues such as age, race and ethnicity, gender, ability, and faith and religious diversity.

A collaboration of the Purdy Crawford Teaching Centre, the Office of the International Student Advisor, and the Office of the Human Rights Advisor, the **Human Rights Series** will be open to all members of the university community. The proposed sessions include panel presentations, workshops, roundtable discussions, and guest speakers on topics such as religious diversity and Muslim student issues in Canada; combating homophobia in the classroom; and Black history in Canada.

All of these opportunities have a single aim: to create a positive teaching, learning, and working environment for all students and academic and non-academic staff at Mount Allison University.

The dates of these sessions will soon be confirmed.

*Watch your mailbox and the Mount Allison website for more details.*

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RESEARCH AND TEACHING AT MOUNT ALLISON:  
A DAY OF CELEBRATION

Wednesday, August 29<sup>th</sup>  
Avard Dixon G10 and G12

- 8:30           **Registration and Refreshments**
- 8:45           **Welcome**
- 9:00           **Presentations from the Faculty of Science**  
Dr. Irena Kaczmarek, Biology & Biochemistry  
Dr. Gene Ouellette, Psychology
- 9:40           **Presentations from the Faculty of Arts**  
Dr. Bruce Robertson, Classics  
Dr. Jennifer Harris, English
- 10:20          **Presentations from the Faculty of Social Science**  
Dr. Brad Walters, Geography & Environment  
Dr. Marilyn Walker, Anthropology
- 11:00          **Refreshment Break**
- 11:15          **Panel Presentation on Research and Creation in the Fine & Performing Arts**  
Dr. Mark Blagrove (Drama); Dr. Ian Crutchley (Music); Prof. Leah Garnett (Fine Arts); &  
Dr. Elizabeth Wells (Music)
- 12 noon       **Lunch (provided) and presentations from PCTC grant-holders**
- 1:00           **The Scholarship of Teaching & Learning: Weaving the Net and Sharing the Haul**  
Eileen Herteis, PCTC Director
- 1:30           **Mount Allison's New Introductory Science Course**  
Dr. Rob Ireland (Biology & Biochemistry), Dr. Andrew Grant (Chemistry), Dr. Jeff  
Ollerhead (Geography & Environment)
- 2:00           **An Innovative Use of Video in Course Planning**  
Dr. Elizabeth Wells (Music) & Toni Roberts (Educational Technology Consultant)
- 2:40           **Problem-Based Learning and Block Teaching: Is Mount Allison Ready to Break the  
12-Week Teaching Term Model?**  
Dr. Michael Fox (Geography & Environment) & Guy Allen-Hermanson (student)
- 3:20           **Break**
- 3:30           **2007 Tucker Talk**  
**Experiments In Teaching: Hits, Misses and False Alarms**  
**Dr. Louise Wasylkiw (Psychology)**  
2007 Recipient of the Herbert and Leota Tucker Teaching Award

*President Robert Campbell Invites Attendees to a Reception  
at Cranewood after the Tucker Presentation.*

