Author and educator Terry Doyle was the 2014 spring teaching conference invited speaker. The workshop occurred on Friday, March 28, and was cosponsored by the Center for the Enhancement of Learning and Teaching (CELT), the Committee for the Advancement of Scholarly Teaching (CASTLE), and Faculty Colloquium on Excellence in Teaching (FACET). Doyle stated that our students face a world in which they will be lifelong learners. This means that we cannot teach them everything. We can, however, create a thinking classroom in which we focus on the process and help students to develop the necessary skills to succeed.

**Practical Strategies for Integrating Critical Thinking Skills into Content Courses**

By Michael Bendele, Continuing Lecturer, Psychology

The 17th Annual Fort Wayne Teaching Conference was held on campus on Friday, February 28. Sponsored by the Northeast Indiana Regional Partnership, the audience included faculty from Huntington University, Indiana Tech, IPFW, Ivy Tech, Manchester University, Trine University, and the University of St. Francis. Associate Vice Chancellor for Faculty Affairs Carol Sternberger welcomed the audience to this year’s theme: “Problem-Based Learning and Engaging Students in the Classroom: Different Strategies for Reaching Today’s Learners.” Brad Yoder (Indiana Tech) introduced keynote speaker, Danielle Shockey, Deputy Superintendent of Public Instruction for the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE), who filled in for Indiana Superintendent of Public Instruction Glenda Ritz, who was ill.

Shockey summed up the overall mission of the IDOE, as it appears on their website: “Imagining the possibilities. Making them happen.” She noted the nine Indiana Education Service Centers as pivotal in the state’s Outreach Division of School Improvement program, which partners their regional coordinators with IDOE support staff. That collaboration assists each school in its School Improvement

Continued on page 2
skills of critical thinking.

For Doyle, an important component to creating a thinking classroom is “making thinking visible” for our students. He offered a number of suggestions as how to accomplish this. As educators, we can model for students our own critical thinking and how it pertains to our discipline. One technique would be to share with students our thought processes and questions as we read something out loud. Another approach is to apply the terminology of critical thinking (e.g., point out when a student is generating a hypothesis) in the classroom with every opportunity that you get. “The circle of viewpoints” technique encourages students to take various perspectives. A scenario is presented and students are assigned different perspectives (e.g., a mayor of a town, a CEO of a company). Another approach would be to show a picture and have students explore their own thinking processes. The responses to the picture allow for students to talk about “What do we know for sure?” “What is informed opinion?” and “What are they making up?”

In order to make good decisions, students need to be well informed. Doyle quoted Richard Paul to illustrate the point that acquiring knowledge about the content and the ability to critically think about the material is intertwined, not sequential. Research on college students indicates that most undergraduates are not yet ready to do high levels of critical thinking. Both these points, he suggests, influence the types of problems we select to help students develop their critical thinking skills. When developing critical thinking assignments, one should keep in mind the concepts that are important for the course and the discipline. These exercises should be designed to help students recognize their own habits of thinking. Providing a list of the cognitive skills and the grading criteria will help students realize the expectations of the assignments and level of critical thinking expected.

“Critical thinking is hard,” said Doyle. We should not be surprised if students resist. Similar to learning a new language, critical thinking is something that you have to spend time and effort on in order to get good at it. He suggested that people in general operate on the belief “The test of truth is that it makes intuitive sense or sounds right – no need to look closer.”

Overcoming this view may take some effort.

Doyle also discussed various myths and errors about learning (i.e., multitasking, learning styles, left brain or right brain thinkers). The concern was that promoting these ideas encourages students to develop bad habits. The brain is “wired” by the experiences that we have. For example, with multitasking we are constantly switching our attention from one topic to another. This switching is “training” our brain to have a short attention span.

The afternoon consisted of colleagues from IPFW sharing tips and techniques for using Blackboard to support critical thinking. Each presenter had a half hour. The presenters and topics were as follows: “Using Metacognition to Develop Critical Thinking Skills,” by Worth Weller (ENGL); “Getting Students to Do More than Parrot Information: Discussion Boards as Critical Thinking Tool,” by Jennifer Stewart (ENGL); “Assessing Critical Thinking with Blackboard,” Ben Gates (HIST); and “Transforming Cerberus into the Lone Wolf: The Use of Blackboard’s Journal Tool to Guide Students’ Research Paper Development,” by Lesa Rae Vartanian (PSY).
Plans (SIPs) and recognizes individual school strengths. Statewide trends are to be identified, commonalities among schools across the state are recognized, and grant possibilities are to be explored through this partnership.

She addressed other programs from the IDOE, such as the Hoosier Family of Readers, connecting elementary classrooms with the National Guard, linking schools to better food nutrition resources, and networking with over 270 partnerships statewide.

Shockey encouraged the audience to give feedback to the state’s outreach teams and emphasized Superintendent Ritz’s current focus. At the time of the conference, adoption of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) was on pause, and the technical review process was under way. That four-layer process has included an intense review of the standards, public hearings, an online, public review of the standards, and an evaluation team. Indiana has since opted out of the CCSS.

“Turning challenges into opportunities,” stated Shockey, will continue to be the focus for Superintendent Ritz, as several additional legislative bills come up for voting. Those included one for 11th graders taking the AccuPlacer Test to determine whether remediation is needed for preparation for college. In the past, 10th graders took the ECA (End of Course Assessment), and the PSAT was taken at the 10th grade or higher. Another Senate Bill addressed teacher preparation and accountability. Early learning programs have been on the docket and the IDOE is focusing on the quality of those programs.

Three concurrent breakout sessions followed Shockey’s address, with topics ranging from flipped classrooms, strategies for teaching problem-based learning (PBL), “talking” rocks, creating community in a virtual world, practicing learning through mindfulness, and teaching to an entitled society. Ryan Twiss, Director of the Big Goal Collaborative, gave a brief talk during lunch and described how this ten-county development group emphasizes 21st century skills that support problem-based learning.

The conference concluded with two more concurrent breakout sessions. The afternoon’s focus included topics about humor in the classroom, social justice and PBL, assessing different learning strategies, PBL in the writing classroom, and increasing student’s knowledge retention by changing classroom climate.

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### Planning to use Scantrons for your final exams?

**Be sure you have all of the facts!**

- Forms will be processed within 24 hours
- Only the form 289s can be graded by the machine in the CELT office.
- Test form letters and ID numbers are still required on each student form
- Forms will be processed on a first come, first served basis. Turnaround time will typically be by the end of the business day, but please allow 24 hours for processing.

For more information, contact Stephanie Stephenson at 481-6354 or stephens@ipfw.edu

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### The SoTL Commons Conference: A Great Reason to Go to Savannah

*By Jeong-il Cho, Assistant Professor, Professional Studies*

When I was browsing the SoTL page on the CELT website and saw the proposal announcement for the 7th Annual SoTL Commons Conference, hosted by the Centers for Teaching and Technology at Georgia Southern University and which publishes the *International Journal for Scholarship of Teaching and Learning* (IJ-SoTL), my first reaction was that “this is it.” Yes, I felt that it was something like destiny. I had a strong urge to go to this conference and, thankfully, I had a research grant that could cover my trip to Savannah, Georgia. In my SoTL career, the Annual Conference of the International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (ISSOTL) in 2011 played a significant role, as it allowed me to recognize myself as a SoTL scholar.

The 2014 SoTL Commons Conference (March 26-28) allowed me to check the status of my SoTL practice and confirmed that I was on the right track.

Keynote speaker, Dr. Peter Felton from Elon University, presented the six principles of good practice in SoTL. He identified them as: 1.) Inquiry focused on student learning; 2.) Grouped in context; 3.) Methodologically sound; 4.) Conducted in partnership with students; 5.) Appropriately public (which means within a community of peers); and 6.) Articulating the significance of the work. As he spoke, I reflected on my own SoTL practices and was assured that these principles have been applied to my work. I felt relieved and recharged with a boosted confidence as a researcher. One more time, I considered the powerful effect of continuous professional development and the value of constant self-monitoring/assessment throughout SoTL practices.

The SoTL Commons Conference provided a positive environment for both presenters and attendees with delicious breakfasts and lunches provided, friendly moderators and organizers, well-attended sessions with quality presentations. And it’s worth mentioning in light of the winter we experienced, there was refreshing early spring weather in Savannah. Keep checking our CELT website for the next SoTL conferences. You may find your destiny there, just like I did. ▼
Two IPFW faculty members will be inducted into the 2014 FACET class at the annual FACET Retreat in May.

**Kent Kauffman** is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Accounting and Finance. Kauffman received a DECCO grant to make substantive changes to an online course and subsequently received an award for his work in transforming his Business Law course. Through his participation in the One Modification, One Measure: Master Teacher Working Group, CELT, he has demonstrated a passion and commitment to his students which exemplifies the FACET mission and ideals. He has established a solid record of teaching related publications and presentations and has received several awards for his work with student organizations. Among Kauffman’s noteworthy contributions are his service on the advisory board for CELT; his mentorship of online course instructors through the Online Success Project; authorship of textbooks and teaching related publications; and numerous teaching related presentations at regional, national and international conferences. Congratulations to both of them on this well-deserved honor.

**Adam Dircksen** is a Continuing Lecturer from the Department of Communication. Dircksen has contributed to the teaching mission of IPFW in several areas through his commitment to student learning, his transformation of the curriculum to integrate service learning, and his leadership in improving online teaching. Among Dircksen’s noteworthy contributions outside of the classroom are his mentorship of faculty as a CELT Teaching Fellow; his contributions to the curriculum through teaching related grants; and his contributions to the scholarship of teaching and learning through numerous teaching related presentations locally as well as at national and international conferences.

The annual FACET retreat is scheduled for May 16-17, 2014 at the Sheraton Indianapolis City Centre Hotel in Indianapolis. The theme of the retreat is REnew, REtool, REflect, and REinvigorate. For the first time, FACET is extending an invitation to all faculty members and administrators (not just FACET members) to attend the retreat activities on Saturday, May 17th. The day will offer a variety of hands-on as well as more traditional conference sessions. There will be a track dedicated to the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning and an opportunity for faculty members within a discipline to meet during lunch for cross-campus discussions. **Lesa Vartanian**, Associate Professor of Psychology and Co-Chair of this year’s Retreat Planning Committee, had this to say: “The annual FACET retreat provides an opportunity to step outside of your teaching box and hear how colleagues at other campuses are meeting the multiple challenges of teaching and learning. In particular, tenure-track faculty who are interested in learning how to document the effectiveness of their teaching can get excellent ideas at the retreat, and network with others who are experts in this regard.” For registration and more information, visit the Retreat website http://go.iu.edu/a6R.

Searching for that lost issue from last semester? Never fear! Back issues of the CELT News are available online at www.ipfw.edu/celt.

**CELT Summer Grants Awarded**

The CELT Advisory Board is pleased to announce approval of the following Summer Instructional Development grants:

**Tanya Soule**, Assistant Professor of Biology, for “The Dynamic Microbiology Classroom,” and **Pam Reese**, Assistant Professor of Communication Sciences and Disorders, for “Integrating Critical Reflection and Service Learning into a Clinical Methods Class for Communication Sciences & Disorders Students.” Soule and Reese will attend the Summer Instructional Development Grant Institute in May prior to beginning work on their projects in order to finalize their plans for evaluating the impact of their innovations. In January 2015 both winners will share the results of their projects in a CELT Faculty Showcase.

CELT’s Summer Instructional Development Grant program began in 1999. Over 40 grants have been made since then. You will find a list of past winners, project titles, and project reports on the Past Winners of CELT Summer Instructional Development Grants page on the CELT web site.
Free Legal Advice: Is Your Syllabus a Contract?

By Kent Kauffman, Esq. and Assistant Professor, Business Law

What parent first told her or his children they couldn’t swim for a half-hour after eating? My mom adhered to that “law,” and I’m still sour over it. While there’s no harm in beginning digestion on dry land, no one has ever drowned from a full-stomach cramp and neither the American Academy of Pediatrics nor the Red Cross endorses the conviction. Such is the case with folklore; it sounds true and it gets passed down. And so it is with the belief that a syllabus is a contract.

For decades, the academic literature has stated that a syllabus is a contract. A 1994 article in College Teaching claimed that a student signature on the last page of a syllabus made it a contract; a 2002 article from the same journal has been repeatedly cited for the proposition that a syllabus is a contract. While a syllabus has some contract-like attributes, a contract is a legally enforceable agreement, not just any agreement. Included in what makes a contract legally enforceable is that the agreement involves an exchange between both parties that creates a mutual legal obligation. The fancy word for that is “consideration,” and it is lacking in a syllabus.

Another problem with the syllabus-as-contract assertion is that one’s promise to do what one is already obligated to do can’t be the consideration in a contract, and professors create syllabi at the behest of their employers—before those syllabi are given to students. Also, if syllabi were contracts, professors would be able to sue their students for breach or—even better—insert a fee schedule to be paid in the event of lateness or absenteeism, or whatever the professor thought constituted nonperformance of the terms of the “contract.”

Four times, students have asked courts to accept their allegation that a syllabus is a contract that a professor breached by deviating from it, for which the professor should be liable in monetary damages. Each of those cases was dismissed on the grounds that a syllabus isn’t a contract. In the first case (1983), a professor’s syllabus detailed how the final grades would be calculated but was silent on whether any numerical grades would be rounded up, and a student sued the professor because the student’s final grade wasn’t rounded up, while other students—whose final grades were closer to the next whole number than the disgruntled student’s—had their grades increased. In the most recent case (2012), the student sued his professor.

Continued on page 6

The New DNP Program: A Unique Collaboration

By Rebecca Jensen, Associate Professor of Nursing Director of Simulation and Research

So, you’ve heard about this Doctorate of Nursing Practice (DNP) that will have its initial courses and students in spring semester of 2015 at IPFW. The proposed program will be presented to the Indiana Commission on Higher Education in March and then the Higher Learning Commission for final approval. The program is unique in that it will be a collaborative effort among three Purdue campuses: West Lafayette, Calumet, and Fort Wayne. The three campuses have a record of sustained success of collaborative efforts for the Master of Science degrees. The DNP program developed and taught at PUWL will be offered at all three campuses. It will be delivered as a primarily online program with limited intensive face-to-face experiences on student’s home campus and supervised residency/practica experiences. The individual campuses will have unique specializations or cognates. The cognate courses have to be taken on the specific campus offering them. Students will be admitted to a campus based on their cognate specialization preference and proximity to the campus where they will complete required on-campus intensive experiences.

The collaborative approach is designed to reduce intercampus competition for students and to maximize efficient use of faculty resources across the Purdue system. This expansion of Purdue’s role in delivering DNP education fulfills a local, state, and national need for nurses prepared to transform healthcare. DNP graduates assume leadership positions in healthcare and education. The DNP program prepares nurses to lead transformative change in healthcare.

The system-wide delivery of the DNP program will provide an efficient, accessible, and cost-effective path to the professional doctorate for practicing nurses and recent master’s graduates who are interested in advancing their careers in the healthcare industry or teaching at one of the many institutions preparing undergraduate nurses for practice. With a DNP, nurses can have equal status with other practice doctorates in healthcare, such as those in medicine, pharmacy, physical therapy, and occupational therapy.

The DNP is a practice degree and, as such, requires a minimum of 1000 clinical hours post-baccalaureate. Post-master’s students with an advanced practice master’s degree (nurse practitioner, clinical nurse specialist, nurse midwifery, and nurse anesthesia) will already have at a minimum 500 clinical hours completed toward the hours required. Students work independently with an on-site preceptor selected by the student and approved by faculty to complete the additional required clinical hours for the DNP.

DNP graduates, similar to nurse practitioners with Master’s preparation, will be able to certify for prescriptive authority. Their roles, as intimated above, involve a higher level of leadership within the healthcare system. The DNP is one type of terminal degree for nurses who wish to teach in universities. Clinical assistant professor positions require new applicants have a DNP or PhD.
Upcoming Events

April

Student Success Poker
Tuesday, April 15, from 1:00-3:30 pm in NF 101
Presenter: Monieca West, Federal Programs Manager, Arkansas Department of Higher Education
RSVP: dmaservices@ipfw.edu

Acclimating Transfer and Returning Students: Using Data to Develop a Model for Student Success
Wednesday, April 16, from 9:00 am-11:30 am in KT G52
Presenter: Dr. Darrell Ray, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Student Life, Louisiana State University
RSVP: dmaservices@ipfw.edu

Expanding Your Reach: African-American Student Success in STEM
Wednesday, April 16, from 1:00 pm-3:30 pm in KT G52
Presenter: Dr. Darrell Ray, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Student Life, Louisiana State University
RSVP: dmaservices@ipfw.edu

Visit http://ipfw.edu/celt to view the most up-to-date list of events. Registration is required for all events.

Legal Advice... cont. from p. 5

because his mass plagiarism was treated more severely than other students’ minimal plagiarism, and the syllabus didn’t cover such a situation. In issuing its opinion dismissing the suit, the 2012 court looked at the prior three cases and stated the following:

“The court finds no legal support for treating a course syllabus as a contract. The few courts that have considered the issue have concluded that a syllabus does not constitute a contract…. Indeed, a valid contract requires several elements, including mutual agreement and valuable consideration.”

The Takeaway: Thinking of a syllabus as a contract is advisable to the extent that it helps one draft it consistently and with an eye to how students might interpret it. But acting like or stating that one’s syllabus is a contract is risky and here’s why: Doing so subjects a professor to the doctrine of estoppel, a theory by which courts can require a party to honor an otherwise unenforceable claim when an innocent party has detrimentally relied on it. For example, a non-lawyer who drafts a will for someone else has committed the unauthorized practice of law, but is still treated like a lawyer for malpractice purposes, due to asserting the validity of an invalid thing. As the adage goes, if it looks like a duck and talks like a duck….” And ducks never wait a half-hour to swim after eating.

The opinions expressed here are those of the author, and not IPFW.