

# TEACHING CONCERNS

## *Little Things Matter in Large Course Instruction*

Michael Palmer, TRC Faculty Consultant, Chemistry

As the first day of class rolls around, many of us find ourselves face to face with 100 or more students. Whether you've "been there, done that" or are experiencing large course instruction for the first time, the challenges associated with teaching a large enrollment course can be daunting. The often heard advice—to teach such a course as you might a smaller one—sounds easy enough to follow. Unfortunately, the added level of complexity that accompanies the addition of a score or more people cannot be easily ignored. To teach a large enrollment course well, you must carefully consider every feature of the course, from the method of teaching and the means of assessment to the day-to-day administration. Before your stress levels shoot up, here are three points to consider which will help get you off to a great start and carry through the semester.

**Organization.** Recent research on teaching large enrollment courses is scant—such research is complicated to conduct and even more difficult to interpret—but one thing is clear: students asked to rate their best classroom experience report that organization effects the quality of large enrollment courses more than smaller courses (Stanley, 2002). Whether or not you consider yourself organized, early planning and preparation as well as a close attention to detail are necessary to help the course run smoothly. If, for example, you plan to use multimedia during your lectures, be sure to reserve equipment well in advance, test the equipment and media in your classroom a day or so early, and have a back-up plan. If you incorporate group activities into the lesson plan, consider early on how you will form the groups, how you will monitor them, and how you will assess learning goals. Of course, you would consider these details in a smaller course as well. But, the frustration and headache that can result when a seemingly insignificant component is ignored or forgotten is magnified for a large course, particularly when you have over 200 eyes staring at you. In the end you will find the time you spend planning and preparing to teach a large enrollment course well worth the investment.

**Communication.** Student-instructor communication can be the single most time- and energy-consuming aspect of teaching a large enrollment course. The problem is exacerbated by today's techno-reliant students who communicate almost exclusively by email. In a 300-student course, you might receive an average of three email messages per student over the course of the semester. If you take three minutes reading and responding to each of the 900 emails you receive, you'll spend 45 hours—a full work week—just handling email! While most instructors feel an "open door" policy is important, clear parameters are a necessity. In order to help manage student-teacher communication, consider the following:

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TEACHING RESOURCE CENTER

*Promoting excellence in teaching*

<http://trc.virginia.edu>  
[trc-uva@virginia.edu](mailto:trc-uva@virginia.edu)  
434-982-2815

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Natalie B. Milman

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- Use the Instructional Toolkit or a course website to make announcements and post answers to frequently asked questions. Be sure to update the FAQ page from semester to semester.
- Create and save email templates for use throughout the semester, and more importantly, in future years. If, for example, you always send your students an email about a particular assignment, save the email so that you can simply edit dates, assignments, or point allocations before resending.
- Establish email guidelines, such as naming conventions for subject lines, formats for attachments, and your likely response time (e.g., within 24 hours).
- Utilize a chain-of-command approach, asking students to contact their discussion or laboratory section teaching assistant before turning to you for help.

**Connection.** Research indicates that the single biggest complaint by students and faculty about large enrollment courses is the impersonal nature of the teacher-learner interaction (Stanley, 2002; Weimer, 1987). The scene is this: anonymous students hide in a sea of faces, hoping to absorb all of the day's material; the exposed professor stands before the students hoping they will learn the day's material. Allowing the scene to play out as scripted leaves both parties unsatisfied; however, taking time to connect with your students in and out of class can turn the sea of faces into individual students and, ultimately, everyone's hopes of learning into actuality. Why? Research has shown that students who make personal connections with the instructor are more likely to take an interest in the material, become actively engaged in discussions, and take greater responsibility for their own learning (Weimer, 1987). Here are a few suggestions for fostering meaningful connections with your students:

- Learn as many student names as possible and use their names every chance you get. A number of suggestions for name-learning strategies can be found on the TRC website at [http://trc.virginia.edu/Publications/Teaching\\_Concerns/Misc\\_Tips/Learn\\_Names.htm](http://trc.virginia.edu/Publications/Teaching_Concerns/Misc_Tips/Learn_Names.htm).
- Come to class a few minutes early and talk to your students—about the weather, baseball, or the assignments. Be sure to linger a few minutes after class as well.
- Invite students to meet with you one-on-one to talk about how the course is unfolding from their perspective and how you can help them better learn the subject matter. Your invitations may go unanswered but they won't go unnoticed.
- Encourage attendance during your office hours and review sessions and consider accommodating special requests for extra help. Make appointments with those students who are struggling with the material to identify reasons for their difficulties and devise a strategy to rectify the situation. Point out additional resources which may be of value, such as tutoring options and University centers (e.g., the Writing Center) that help students with a variety of learning skills.
- Become a participant in small-group activities. Spend a few minutes with each group, not as a teacher but as an active learner.
- Listen to the class, not just with your ears but with your eyes and with that little feeling in your stomach which says something isn't quite right. In most cases, you can easily adjust to correct a misunderstanding or clear up confusing material. If you can't put your finger on the problem, though, ask a few students. You might be surprised at the candid, precise feedback you get. Just as important, the students will appreciate your concern for their learning.

Careful planning, prudent communication management, and meaningful student-instructor connections can go a long way toward lowering your stress levels and toward helping the students learn what you are teaching.

#### References

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- McKeachie, Wilbert J. *Teaching Tips: Strategies, Research, and Theory for College and University Teachers*, 11<sup>th</sup> Ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2002.
- Stanley, Christina A. and M. Erin Porter. *Engaging Large Classes: Strategies and Techniques for College Faculty*. Boston: Anker Publishing, 2002.
- Weimer, Maryellen Gleason. *Teaching Large Classes Well*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1987.

## How I Read Student Evaluations

Cedar Riener, TRC Graduate Student Associate, Department of Psychology

Student evaluations are a curious metric for assessing one's teaching effectiveness. They can contain valuable insight into the successes and failures of a course and the strengths and weaknesses of the instructor. However, as with any information, its value depends upon appropriate interpretation. Because student learning (and by proxy teacher performance) can often seem hard to quantify, it is tempting to evaluate one's own progress by simply tracking the cold hard numbers of students' evaluations without carefully interpreting the context in which they take place. Doing so would ignore the subtle dimensions that inform students' responses on evaluations. The students' state of mind, their assessment of their own learning, and the emotional power of evaluations all contribute to make the process of interpretation a difficult one for any instructor. Despite these complications, student evaluations can be a powerful tool for improving teaching.

As any psychologist knows, placing any answer on a simple 1-5 scale often simplifies complex processes. In addition, students' assessments of their own learning are not always perfect, and they may know that something impeded their learning without being able to describe exactly what it was. Furthermore, the students' state of mind will surely influence how they feel about the course. For example, if the course began well but has languished towards the end of the semester, the most recent experience can unduly decrease evaluation responses. On the other hand, students can be happy that the course (and the semester) is over and responses can be inaccurately inflated. Each of these factors combines to make student evaluations a noisy instrument to measure classroom effectiveness. In order to filter the noise out, I use a process consisting of several discrete steps. I find that this structures my interpretation of student evaluation by making concrete several useful strategies.

First, I read through the evaluations carefully and let them sink in. At this point, any negative comments or below-average ratings stand out in stark relief and hurt my feelings. I am defensive and dismissive. This is natural. I remind myself that this same thing happens with many of my students who try hard for a particular assignment and are disappointed with their grade and my comments. Then, I put down the evaluations for one week.

Second, at least one week later, I read through the evaluations again. I am more able to take the negative comments objectively now, without being defensive. I seek to determine first whether they are concerned with the planning of the course, with the execution of the course, or with my teaching style in general (rather than focusing on what personal defect led that student to make such a criticism of my teaching). This step allows me to classify each comment without responding to it.

Third, after addressing particular comments, I try to identify main themes—in areas of success, as well as areas where there is room for improvement. The goal of this step is to distinguish between representative attitudes and particular concerns or the preferences of a single student. Returning to individual comments, I can now see if they are instances of a larger concern or instances of individual learning styles. Comments not attached to a main theme can now present interesting case studies. In the past I have found that they can represent how the pace or the difficulty of the course does not satisfy all the levels of student in the course.

Ideally, after one has completed such a process, patterns of comments and main themes would become readily apparent. However, if you are like me, you

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## Programs & Services

To schedule any of the services described below, please contact the TRC a minimum of one week ahead of time. More information about each service can be found on the TRC website (<http://trc.virginia.edu>).

### INDIVIDUAL CONSULTATION

Trained TRC staff members can consult with you individually about any aspect of your teaching. Typical activities include observing your classroom teaching, analyzing student evaluations, discussing new course design or existing course redesign, and considering new teaching techniques. All consultations are confidential and tailored to your needs.

### TEACHING ANALYSIS POLL (TAP)

Find out what the majority of your students think helps them learn in your course. Time commitment: 25-30 minutes of class time, 30 minutes consultation time. Except in special circumstances, the TRC conducts TAPs only between the fourth and tenth weeks of the semester.

### VIDEOTAPING

Videotape usually makes it easier to analyze your own teaching since you can see your class from an objective point of view. During the 60-minute discussion about the class videotape, a TRC consultant will help you see what works and how to make desired improvements.

### TEACHING TIPS ON-LINE

Explore the TRC's collection of teaching essays and teaching tips contributed by U.Va faculty and TAs via our easy-to-browse Teaching Tips page. If you are interested in strategies to engage your students, want to learn about assessment techniques, need some advice to spruce up your lecturing, or simply seek new teaching ideas, you can find pertinent information by clicking "Teaching Tips" on the TRC website.

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may have been disappointed in the past with a lack of coherence or a lack of useful comments on your student evaluations. The interpretation strategies outlined above are obviously of little use in structuring the data if there are actually no patterns in students' responses. In order to provide effective end-of semester feedback, students' need to have some practice reflecting upon their own learning before the end of the semester, either with quick learning checks, midterm evaluations, or a Teaching Analysis Poll. Like any skill we teach them, students need practice in evaluating their own learning. When it comes time for the end-of-course evaluations, students experienced with evaluating their learning will therefore provide more insightful and useful responses (both positive and negative) on their evaluations.

In addition to giving students practice earlier in the semester, I also seek to structure students' comments immediately before they complete the course evaluations. Rather than simply urging students to complete the evaluations, I send them along with particular instructions. First, I tell them that both I and my department take these evaluations very seriously. Teaching is a vital part of my career, and evaluations can influence this career. I often interject a bit of humor here by letting them know

that my career is in their hands and pleading with them to please be kind. After the uncomfortable chuckles subside, I tell them that in all seriousness, it would ultimately be detrimental to my teaching if I only got positive feedback. My teaching would never improve, and part of the reason I enjoy teaching is the never-ending challenges it presents. I know that neither that particular class, nor my teaching ability, is perfect; and if I thought it could be so, I wouldn't find teaching as exciting. I then urge them to be honest and reflective about their learning experience. They may even find their reflection leads them to suggestions for improving their own learning in their next course, independent of the instructor. I finally remind them that what I find most helpful are specific written comments in their own words about what most helped or impeded their learning.

Examining teaching evaluations can be a humbling experience. Negative comments sting every hard-working teacher and threaten to discount the countless other potentially valuable responses and comments. I have found it useful to adopt the process described above in my attempts to structure students' comments and dull their emotional power. In doing so, I have been led to honestly confront shortcomings and limitations in my courses and my teaching in general. Now, armed with these strategies, when I improve my teaching, I actually know it.

### ***Position Announcement: Graduate Student Associate***

The Teaching Resource Center employs several Graduate Student Associates (GSAs) to help promote excellence in teaching at the University of Virginia. The GSAs help develop and manage various programs, including the August and January Teaching Workshops, departmental and interdisciplinary workshops and discussion groups, and the ITA Training Program. Chief among the GSAs' responsibilities are individual consultations with other TAs. Routinely, Associates observe or videotape the classrooms of TAs at their request and then discuss with them ways to enhance their teaching strengths and to improve any weak areas.

Associates work between six and eight hours per week from mid-August through May at an hourly wage of approximately \$12 to \$13. Strong candidates for the position typically have teaching experience at U.Va., excellent teaching skills, an interest in teaching, personal initiative, and effective interpersonal communication skills. GSAs may be specialists in any discipline, and we attempt to employ staff members from a variety of departments and schools.

Applications may be submitted at any time for future consideration; the deadline for the coming academic year is April 14, 2006. Applicants should submit a letter of application, CV, and recommendation letter from a departmental chair, graduate advisor, or dissertation director. To read two former Graduate Student Associates' descriptions of their experiences, click "Staff," then "Graduate Student Associates" on the TRC website.

# Workshops!

Refreshments are served at all TRC workshops, which are free and open to the University community. For more detail on these and to find more recently scheduled workshops, see "Workshops" on the TRC website, (<http://trc.virginia.edu>) or contact the TRC at 982-2815 or [trc-uva@virginia.edu](mailto:trc-uva@virginia.edu).

## MAKING THE MOST OF DIVERSITY

**Moderator: Milton Adams**, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs; Professor of Biomedical Engineering

Wednesday, January 25, 1:30-3:00 p.m.  
Newcomb Hall, South Meeting Room

We argue that having a diverse student body enriches education. And we have at U.Va. a group of students who are increasingly diverse in many ways. So how can we go beyond simply accommodating the diversity of our students in our classrooms and courses to making that diversity an enriching experience and to improving their learning? Vice Provost Milton Adams will kick off the discussion, and we look to participants for both tried-and-true and innovative strategies for engaging all students, as well as for questions and directions we might pursue in the future. This session will be structured so that colleagues may join the discussion at any point.

## GRADING WITH RUBRICS

**Deandra Little**, TRC Faculty Consultant, English

Friday, February 10, 2006, 1:30-3:30 p.m.  
Monroe Hall, Room 116

Students and faculty often perceive the meaning and function of grades differently. Grading rubrics offer one way for faculty to communicate their grading standards and criteria clearly, objectively and effectively. Rubrics can also help students understand how their work is evaluated and what range of criteria contribute to excellent, average, or substandard work. In this interactive workshop, participants will discuss the whys and hows of grading rubrics, consider the utility of such a tool for their grading needs, and create a sample rubric for a course assignment of their choice.

## TIPS ON WRITING PROPOSALS TO NSF (for Faculty)

**Anne-Marie Schmoltner**, National Science Foundation (NSF) Program Director, Atmospheric Chemistry Program

Friday, February 24, 2006, 2:00-3:30 p.m., with reception to follow  
Newcomb Hall, Commonwealth Room

The presentation will discuss the dynamics of research funding within the National Science Foundation (NSF), including proposal preparation, the review process, proposal revisions, and management of funded projects. A broad overview of funding opportunities at the NSF will be given, and participants will have the opportunity to ask specific questions.

## MANAGE TIME AND GET IT WRITTEN (for Faculty)

**Mary McKinney**, Clinical Psychologist and Academic Career Coach

Monday, February 27, 2006, 1:00-3:00 p.m.  
Newcomb Hall, Commonwealth Room

The most difficult challenge for most junior and many tenured faculty is teaching well while moving forward with their own scholarship. Do you have trouble carving out time for research and writing? Are you publishing less than you wish? This workshop, sponsored by the Professors as Writers Program, provides tips for structuring your schedule, developing productive work habits, writing with greater ease, and overcoming procrastination. You'll learn new ways to craft a balanced life while flourishing on the tenure track.

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# Deadlines!

Please note that several deadlines occur early in the spring semester. Unless otherwise noted, for more information, see the TRC website (<http://trc.virginia.edu>) or contact the TRC at 982-2815 or [trc-uva@virginia.edu](mailto:trc-uva@virginia.edu).

## TEACHING + TECHNOLOGY INITIATIVE (TTI)

Deadline: Friday, February 10, 2006.  
This program, funded by the Provost and ITC, will sponsor up to four faculty fellows with innovative projects integrating teaching and technology. Program guidelines and RFP at <http://nmc.itc.virginia.edu/tti/>.

## OUTSTANDING FACULTY AND GTA TEACHING AWARDS and CAVALIERS' DISTINGUISHED TEACHING PROFESSORSHIP

Deadline: Monday, February 13, 2006. The Provost's Office and the Teaching Resource Center are proud to administer this program of a dozen faculty teaching awards, 28 school/departement-wide Graduate Teaching Assistant awards, and four All-University GTA teaching awards.

## TEACHING + TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT PARTNERS (TTSP)

Deadline: Friday, February 24, 2006.  
The TTSP Program, funded by the Provost and ITC, trains a graduate student to provide faculty within a department or school with support in using new technologies for teaching innovation. The program will select four departments to join in 2006. Schools and departments with a substantial undergraduate population are eligible. Program description at <http://nmc.itc.virginia.edu/tti/>.

## U.Va. FACULTY SENATE DISSERTATION-YEAR FELLOWSHIPS 2006-2007

Deadline: Friday, February 3, 2006.  
To find out more about the Faculty Senate Dissertation-Year Fellowships, awarded to select graduate students for their final year of doctoral work, see the Faculty Senate website at [www.virginia.edu/facultysenate](http://www.virginia.edu/facultysenate). Questions about the application process should be directed to Elizabeth A. Meyer, Department of History, at [eam2n@virginia.edu](mailto:eam2n@virginia.edu).

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## VIDEOTAPES AND HANDOUTS AVAILABLE

Did you miss the January Teaching Workshop or find yourself wanting to attend two sessions at the same time? At the TRC you can check out a videotape of nearly any workshop and get a copy of the handouts that went with it.

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### SECRETS OF SUCCESSFUL ACADEMICS (for Graduate Students)

**Mary McKinney**, *Clinical Psychologist and Academic Career Coach*

Tuesday, February 28, 2006, 10:00 a.m.- noon

Newcomb Hall, Commonwealth Room

This workshop offers graduate students practical tips for managing graduate school, getting your dissertation done, and finding an academic job. In answer to the commonly asked questions—How can you combine an academic career with a balanced, happy life? Or, how can you learn to conduct stellar research and teach well?—Mary McKinney will share the unwritten rules for success that help you not just survive, but thrive in academe.

### LEARNING TO SEE COMPLEXITY:

#### TEACHING WITH VISUALS IN TEXT-BASED DISCIPLINES

**Peter Felten**, *Associate Professor and Director of the Center for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning, Elon University*

Friday, March 17, 2006, 1:30-3:30 p.m.

Newcomb Hall, Room 168

Cultural theorists and undergraduates agree: We live in a highly visual world. However, being surrounded by images does not mean students understand how to look critically at visuals. And many instructors from text-based disciplines have little expertise with visual sources, complicating the task of teaching with images. This workshop, facilitated by a historian who has moved from text-heavy toward image-intensive teaching, will explore the theory and the practice of helping students learn to see complexity. We will consider both instructor-constructed visual exercises and more ambitious assignments that require students to compose multimedia projects.

### REFRAMING DIVERSITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION: AN EXPLORATION OF THEORETICAL PARADIGMS

**Robert Ibarra**, *Special Assistant to the President for Diversity Initiatives, University of New Mexico and Senior Consultant at IBIS Consulting Group*

Wednesday, March 29, 2006, 4:00 p.m.

Harrison Auditorium

Robert Ibarra will review his theory and research regarding context diversity and multicontextuality and discuss his experiences of implementing it at UNM and the Southwest Consortium, including the successes and pitfalls. During this presentation, Ibarra will convey his findings and recommendations on what to do in order to transform institutions towards diversity, to effect organizational changes to make academe more embracing of students from diverse backgrounds, how multicontextuality can enhance faculty interaction in the classroom and curriculum design, and the like. Sponsored by the office of the Vice Provost for Faculty Advancement and the University Library.

### CAN WE TALK?

#### METHODS AND PRINCIPLES FOR INTERACTION IN A LECTURE SETTING

**Kirk Martini**, *Associate Professor of Architecture*

Friday, April 7, 2006, 1:30-3:30 p.m.

Monroe Hall, Room 118

During this workshop, Kirk Martini will demonstrate and discuss specific methods and general guiding principles to generate student participation and group discussion in a lecture setting. With these methods, which have been used successfully with up to 90 students, teachers can create an environment where students feel safe venturing a possibly incorrect answer. In groups, students formulate reasonable hypotheses and then use critical thinking methods to evaluate them. Participants will see these methods in action, discuss them, and have opportunities to share their experiences.

**BOOK REVIEW:*****The Digital Teaching Portfolio Handbook:  
A How-To Guide for Educators***

by Clare R. Kilbane and Natalie B. Milman. Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 2003.  
Reviewed by Mandy Hege, *TRC Graduate Student Associate, Psychology*

Teaching portfolios are often used by individuals who are new to the job market, those who are candidates for tenure or promotion, and others who wish to document their professional accomplishments. Typically, a teaching portfolio contains a reflective statement on teaching, samples of teaching style such as syllabi and exams, and evidence of teaching effectiveness such as student evaluations. The magic of the teaching portfolio is that it allows for the accurate substantiation of the complex process of teaching. In *The Digital Teaching Portfolio Handbook: A How-To Guide for Educators*, Kilbane and Milman present the digital format as an alternative method of creating and maintaining this useful archive.

In the first four chapters, the authors make a case for digital teaching portfolios (DTPs). They describe advantages of DTPs such as portability, demonstration of technological skill and creativity. In addition, Kilbane and Milman consider the benefits of DTPs for instructors and administrators at different levels of experience. They provide a well-balanced discussion, even examining disadvantages of the digital format such as knowledge and skill requirements, expensive equipment, and professional support. In this section, a list of online resources containing samples of DTPs is provided.

In Part Two, Kilbane and Milman outline the process of creating the DTP and provide the following stages of development:

- Planning
  - Identifying the purpose for and intended audience of the portfolio
  - Establishing a framework for the presentation of information, which can be around standards, around a theme, or around a question
- Considering Contents
  - Collecting, selecting, and reflecting on contents
  - Choosing “professional artifacts” that may be effective ingredients in a DTP
- Designing
  - Organizing contents
  - Selecting a design tool (e.g., Netscape Composer or PowerPoint) and creating files
- Evaluating
  - Appraising the formative development of the DTP
  - Assessing the cumulative effectiveness of the DTP after the development stage
- Publishing
  - Choosing a publishing method such as World Wide Web using File Transfer Protocol (FTP), CD or DVD, or Zip or Floppy Disk

Part Three describes guidelines to be considered *before* designing a DTP. The authors introduce the Digital Teaching Portfolio Commandments, which include, “If it is nice, save it thrice” and “Protect the privacy of your students and colleagues.” In this section, several design tools are reviewed,

**UNIVERSITY TEACHING  
FELLOWSHIPS**

Deadline: Monday, March 13, 2006. With summer grants of \$7,000 and ongoing, interdisciplinary discussions, the University Teaching Fellows Program aims to help our most intellectually sound and successful junior faculty members develop into exceptionally fine teachers.

**GRADUATE STUDENT  
ASSOCIATES**

Deadline: April 14, 2006. Graduate Student Associates are essential to the operation of the TRC. See the position announcement on page 4.

**TOMORROW'S PROFESSOR  
TODAY**

Applications considered beginning May 12, 2006. Co-sponsored by the Office of the Vice President for Research and Graduate Studies and the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, Tomorrow's Professor Today is a certificate-bearing program open to a limited number of graduate and postdoctoral students considering an academic career. Program description at <http://trc.virginia.edu/Programs/TPT>

**EXCELLENCE IN DIVERSITY  
FELLOWSHIPS**

Deadline: early June 2006. Now permanently funded by the University, the Excellence in Diversity Fellowship Program supports first-year tenure track faculty in developing productive long-term careers at U.Va. The program fosters ongoing interdisciplinary discussions between Fellows and senior colleagues and offers each Fellow a \$1000 grant for professional development.

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**Teaching  
Resource Center**  
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**Deandra Little**  
Faculty Consultant  
(*English*)

**Michael Palmer**  
Faculty Consultant  
(*Chemistry*)

**Elizabeth Wittner**  
ITA Program  
Coordinator (*ESOL*)

**Freda Fretwell**  
Administrative Assistant

**Pat Fuller**  
Coordinator

including HyperStudio, Acrobat, and e-Portfolio. Also included is a discussion of factors that influence the selection of a design tool, such as availability of tool and difficulty of use, and an elaboration on hardware and other production tools, such as multimedia computers, scanners, digital cameras, and mass storage devices (e.g., SCSI drives, CD-RW, and DVD-R). This chapter resembles a short computer lesson and may be redundant for those who are already computer savvy. The book's final chapter presents principles of graphic design such as contrast, repetition, alignment, and proximity.

Overall, this handbook is well-structured, well-written, and highly organized. Readers can locate topics of interest with ease, thanks, in part, to the chapter summaries that have been provided. Some readers may dislike the way in which the book resembles a textbook: each chapter contains a "Check Your Understanding" section with review questions, which adds to the coherence of the book but does not seem appropriate for a reference book. Instead of being studied cover-to-cover, the book should be perused for its many relevant tips, resources, and activities. Not only is it a terrific reference book, it is a workbook of sorts as well. There are several Activity sections that provide the reader with the opportunity to practice using the information s/he has just learned. This "hands-on" approach is effective and applicable to individuals at all levels of teaching experience, regardless of discipline.



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