

# CTE Notebook

Newsletter of the Reinert Center for Teaching Excellence

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## Ethics in Teaching: Teachers as Exemplars

Donna Werner, Program Coordinator  
Ethics Across the Curriculum Program

When I was invited to share my thoughts on “ethics in teaching” for this newsletter, my first inclination was to go back and look at the Statement on Professional Ethics adopted by the American Association of University Professors (AAUP). This statement, originally adopted in 1966 and revised in 1987, identifies the following responsibilities for university professors in their role as teachers:

As teachers, professors en-

courage the free pursuit of learning in their students. They hold before them the best scholarly and ethical standards of their discipline. Professors demonstrate respect for students as individuals and adhere to their proper roles as intellectual guides and counselors. Professors make every reasonable effort to foster honest academic conduct and to ensure that their evaluations of students reflect each student’s true merit. They respect the confidential nature of the relationship between professor and student. They avoid any exploitation, harassment, or discriminatory treatment of students. They acknowledge significant academic or scholarly assistance from them. They protect their academic freedom.

I want to focus my discussion on the responsibility to “hold before them the best scholarly

and **ethical**

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## **When Student Assessment Becomes Research**

by Dr. James DuBois, Associate Professor, Center for Health Care Ethics

As teachers we have a responsibility to ensure that we are effective in promoting learning and development. Well-crafted assessment studies can provide data that is useful in evaluating effectiveness and improving important aspects of the educational enterprise. Nevertheless, educational assessment also poses a number of ethical challenges. Among other things, assessment raises many of the same issues that arise in human subjects re-

example, the teacher-researcher plays a *dual role* with possibly conflicting aims, namely, to educate and to generate new knowledge. Further, even exempt research may involve minor risks or fail to offer benefit to students, making it hard to justify mandatory participation in an educational setting. Thus, some form of ethical review of educational or assessment research may be appropriate, even when the Common Rule treats it as exempt.

#### *When Is Informed Consent Appropriate in Educational Research Studies?*

Obtaining informed consent is the norm in research. It is one way of showing respect to participants and it enables them to protect themselves from research harms by opting out.

Yet informed consent has rarely been obtained in traditional educational assessment settings both because risks are minimal and because allowing students to opt out of assessment would interfere with maintaining the integrity of the educational process. Because the Common Rule and professional codes do not clearly resolve the tension between these two norms of practice, we need criteria to guide our evaluation of when informed consent is appropriate in educational assessment/research studies. In what follows, I propose five questions to guide this process. The process will be illustrated using a case. I have intention-

ally used a case with “gray areas” to emphasize the need for discussion and discretion.

*Case: Bob teaches US History to about 200 undergraduates per year. He believes that his preference for a political party is deeply influenced by his understanding of US History. He wonders whether his students’ preferences for a political party is influenced by his course. And if so, he wonders whether it is the “facts of history” or rather his interpretation (offered wittingly or unwittingly) that affects changes in their views. He re-*

honest and motivated students, he might even benefit from enlisting their consent at some level.

3. *Do students qua students benefit from the research?* There are different ways in which students may benefit educationally from research. They may benefit from living in a culture of assessment that allows them to learn using tools that have been proven effective. Sometimes the assessment process itself is educational (in offering practice on material or stimulating reflection).

Case comment: Bob needs to consider whether the students, as history students, really benefit from participation. If they do, he should make an effort to explain the value of participation. If not, he might ask them to participate voluntarily on their own time.

4. *How significant are the burdens and risks, and have steps been taken to minimize risks?*

All exempt research is assumed to be of minimal risk. Nevertheless, burdens may include distress, embarrassment or lost time. Efforts should be made to minimize risks, e.g., to ensure that data is recorded anonymously or that confidentiality is protected. Risks may also arise from study design. For example, when there is good reason to believe that a randomized study will yield an inferior education for some, either an alternative design should be used or steps should be taken to follow

up with students who did not receive the optimal intervention.

Case comment: Students may feel uneasy about revealing their political preferences to a faculty member who has strong political feelings and who will be grading their per-

I was recently the victim of computer crime when someone gained access to my credit card information and used that information to make unauthorized online purchases. What struck me as I worked to resolve the problem was the dual role technology played in all this and the ethical issues involved as tech-

nology increasingly impacts our personal lives and the society in which we live. While technology provided the convenience of being able to shop whenever, wherever I want, it also made it easy for someone to represent themselves as me and to use my information to make purchases without physically possessing my card.

This issue of our newsletter focuses on ethics. The inclusion of technology into the teaching and learning process raises a myriad of ethical issues, including information privacy, intellectual property questions, social justice issues, computer abuse (e.g. viruses, spamming, denial of service, electronic theft), and social impact. The basic issues are not unique to technology use, but the capabilities offered to us by technologies often seem to compound traditional ethical issues. Some users forget that the ethical norms they live by offline also apply to their online activities and interactions. In addition, technologies that allow new or enhanced human actions, e.g. cloning, production of nuclear weapons, have given rise to new ethical questions. The following online resources help raise awareness of issues related to the ethical use of computers.

**Ten Commandments of Computer Ethics, created by the Computer Ethics Institute:** <http://www.cpsr.org/program/ethics/cei.html>

**The Tavani Bibliography of Computing, Ethics and Social Responsibility:**  
<http://cyberethics.cbi.msstate.edu/biblio/>

**Ethics in Computing (North Carolina State University):** [http://www.eos.ncsu.edu/eos/info/computer\\_ethics/](http://www.eos.ncsu.edu/eos/info/computer_ethics/)

**Computer Ethics and Social Implications of Computing:**  
[www.cs.wcupa.edu/~epstein/social.html](http://www.cs.wcupa.edu/~epstein/social.html)

**Realities of Teaching Social and Ethical Issues in Computing:** <http://www.southernct.edu/organizations/rccs/resourc>



*Fr. Vincent Hevern, S.J., Marchetti Visiting Jesuit Lecturer presenting "Academic Editing on the Web" in the CTE lab.*

**International Reading Association--The Gertrude Whipple Professional Development Grant.** This grant is awarded from time to time to assist a member with the planning and creation of professional development projects, with the production of high quality materials, with the marketing and scheduling of meetings and workshops, and with the logistic support for conducting them. The grant carries a monetary prize of up to US\$5,000. Award decisions, based on the quality of proposals and on the timeliness of the topic, are made as soon as the appropriate designated committee reviews proposals and recommends funding to the Association Board of Directors. For guidelines and application forms for the Gertrude Whipple Professional Development Grant, contact Gerald Casey, Professional Development Division, International Reading Association, 800 Barksdale Road, PO Box 8139, Newark, DE 19714-8139, USA. Phone: 302-731-1600, ext. 281; Fax: 302-731-1057. Web Site: <http://www.reading.org/awards/gertrude.html>.

**(NCIIA)—Course and Program Grants.** Through June of 2002, the NCIIA will award approximately \$2 million in grants to faculty and students of member institutions. The NCIIA will provide financial support for the creation and establishment of programs and courses that promote inven-

**National Collegiate Inventors and Innovators Alliance**







**Website Alert!**  
**The Power of POD**  
**Chris Crain, CTE Web Coordinator**

Do you lay awake at night worrying over classroom conflict management? Does it incense you that students don't properly evaluate and validate their sources from the web? Do your teaching strategies seem as dry as a well in the Sahara Desert? Do your students believe critical thinking is being unfavorable towards you?

Although most of us fall somewhere in between, CTE has some help for those with pedagogical woes and intellectual stimulation for those with pedagogical wisdom. CTE has added a new feature to the "resources" section of our website—informative and innovative articles from the Professional and Organizational Development Network in Higher Education (POD). These articles are categorized under core pedagogical topics (e.g., assessing student learning, teaching philosophy, critical thinking, teaching portfolio, student-faculty relationships, and technology in teaching). Every semester CTE will receive new articles and add these to our growing database.

The articles are written by teachers in higher education for teachers in higher education. One of my favorites is "The Why of Teacher/2(avocation.)-6.6in hierfessi8lhererereres, and15 Tc0(souTD0hr



## Engaging Students in Learning: Techniques and Impact SLU Conference on Monday, May 20, 2002

How can you turn your students into active learners?  
How can you get students excited about your discipline?  
How can you help students see the connections between your discipline and the world around them?

SLU2000 inquiry course faculty will offer answers to these questions at the May 20 conference, *Engaging Students in Learning: Techniques and Impact*.


Topics on the conference agenda include the following:

- Connecting Academic Ideas with the Real World
- Creating Community in the Classroom Through Collaborative Learning
- Fostering Student Ownership of Learning
- Writing Across the Disciplines

In addition, faculty will discuss the qualities of a SLU2000 course and the impact of the courses on faculty and students.

Faculty, academic advisors, and all others interested in improving teaching, learning, and service to students are invited to attend the conference from 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on Monday, May 20 in the Anheuser Busch Auditorium located in John and Lucy Cook Hall.

Registration on-line at <http://slu2000conference.slu.edu>. For further information contact Julie Weissman, Assistant Provost, at 977-2193 or at [weissman@slu.edu](mailto:weissman@slu.edu)



## CTE EVENTS CALENDAR

**May Friday, May 3rd**  
Reinert CTE Certificate Ceremony  
3:30-5 p.m., Verhaegen 119  
RSVP required

**Monday, May 20th**  
Engaging Students in Learning—One-day Conference  
Sponsored by Reinert CTE and the Provost Office and supported  
by the Hewlett Foundation Grant (see announcement on page 11 of this issue).

**June & July June 6, 13, 20, and 27; 1:00-2:30 p.m.**  
**July 2, 9, 23, and 30; 10:00-11:30 a.m.**  
Technology and Collaboration—two four-week sessions  
Sponsored by Reinert CTE and Academic Information Technology Services  
Program & Registration @ <http://www.slu.edu/collaboration>

## MERLOT

If you are looking for a site with high quality online resources for teaching and learning in higher education, check out [www.merlot.org](http://www.merlot.org). The Multimedia Educational Resource for Learning and Online Teaching (MERLOT) provides links to thousands of learning materials, sample assignments that show how the materials could be used in the classroom, peer evaluations of the materials, and links to people with common interests in a discipline and teaching and learning. MERLOT is a free and open resource designed primarily for faculty and students in higher education.

Materials published on the MERLOT website must pass a rigorous peer review process modeled after peer review of scholarship and performed by members of the subject area editorial board. Peer reviewers rate materials on three different aspects: quality of content, potential effectiveness as a teaching-learning tool, and ease of use. Among the resources you will find on the site is material on Riemann Sums created by Mike May, S.J., chair of the department of Mathematics and Mathematical Computer Science. The Riemann Sum material is designed to help first year calculus students visualize key concepts in calculus. The Riemann Sum material can be accessed at [www.slu.edu/classes/maymk/Riemann/Riemann.html](http://www.slu.edu/classes/maymk/Riemann/Riemann.html) and the peer reviews which gave this material the highest ratings can be found on the MERLOT website.

Most materials found on the MERLOT website are modular and intended to be integrated within the context of a larger course. For an overview of MERLOT, click on the “tasting room” on the opening page. The Jesuit Distance Education Network (JesuitNET) is an organizational member and active participant in MERLOT.

*Dr. Mary Stephen*

## **Nine Ethical Principles for College and University Teaching**

### **1. CONTENT COMPETENCE.**

A university teacher maintains a high level of subject matter knowledge and ensures that course content is current, accurate, representative, and appropriate to the position of the course within the student's program of studies.

### **2. PEDAGOGICAL COMPETENCE.**

A pedagogically competent teacher communicates the objectives of the course to students, is aware of alternative instructional methods or strategies, and selects methods of instruction that, according to research evidence (including personal or self-reflective research), are effective in helping students to achieve the course objectives.

### **3. DEALING WITH SENSITIVE TOPICS.**

Topics that students are likely to find sensitive or discomfiting are dealt with in an open, honest, and positive way.

### **4. STUDENT DEVELOPMENT.**

The overriding responsibility of the teacher is to contribute to the intellectual development of the student, at least in the context of the teacher's own area of expertise, and to avoid actions such as exploitation and discrimination that detract from student development.

### **5. DUAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH STUDENTS.**

To avoid conflict of interest, a teacher does not enter into dual-role relationships with students that are likely to detract from student development or lead to actual or perceived favoritism on the part of the teacher.

### **6. CONFIDENTIALITY.**

Student grades, attendance records, and private communications are treated as confidential materials and are released only with student consent, for legitimate academic purposes, or if there are reasonable grounds for believing that releasing such information will be beneficial to the student or will prevent harm to others.

### **7. RESPECT FOR COLLEAGUES.**

A university teacher respects the dignity of her or his colleagues and works cooperatively in the interest of fostering student development.

### **8. VALID ASSESSMENT OF STUDENTS.**

Given the importance of assessment of student performance in university teaching and in students' lives and careers, instructors are responsible for taking adequate steps to ensure that assessment of students is valid, open, fair, and congruent with course objectives.

### **9. RESPECT FOR INSTITUTION.**

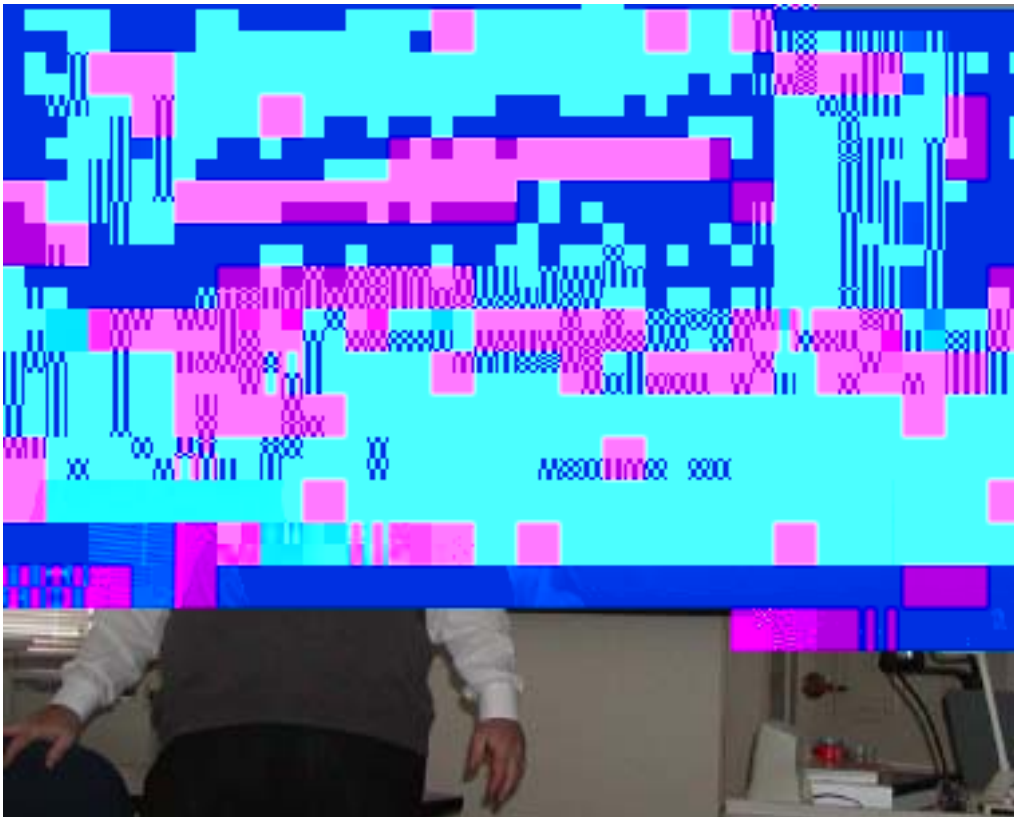
In the interests of student development, a university teacher is aware of and respects the educational goals, policies, and standards of the institution in which he or she teaches.

Source: "Ethical Principles for College and University Teaching," by Harry Murray, Eileen Gillese, Madeline Lennon, Paul Mercer, and Marilyn Robinson, Chapter Eight (pp. 57-63) in *Ethical Dimensions of College and University Teaching*, Edited by Linc. Fisch (NDTL No. 66, Summer 1996, Jossey-Bass Publishers, San Francisco).

# Scenes from the Reinert Center for Teaching Excellence Advisory Board Retreat



# Fr. Vincent Hevern, S.J. Marchetti Visiting Jesuit Lecturer



**The Reinert Center for  
Teaching Excellence**  
*Ellen Harshman, Director*

*Steering Committee*  
*James Korn,*