

'TEEC'HING

Teaching Effectiveness and Enhancement Newsletter

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How About Some Philosophy?

The famous comedian Jerry Seinfeld and I have something in common: we both graduated from Queens College in 1976. I just threw that in for the sake of triviality. Upon graduation I journeyed to the Midwest to commence on pursuing my doctorate

at The Ohio State University. I received a graduate teaching assistantship which meant that I would have to teach undergraduate students, and this occurred within the Department of Academic Faculty of Educational Foundations and Research where I was responsible to teach two sections of History of Education to students who were in the teacher education program. It was the beginning of my journey in teaching undergraduate courses, an experience that was accompanied with a sense of credulity, i.e., how difficult could this be? After all, I had a number of years of experience as a college student, and I was inspired by the Marx Brothers in their mockery of academe in their film entitled *Horse Feathers*. I prepared my course syllabus and assigned a textbook, Robert Ulich, *Three Thousand Years of Educational Wisdom*. I appealed to the students that we are in this together: we are all learners. Furthermore, I expressed that my mission as the facilitator was to create an environment that would communicate the enthusiasm that I have for the subject matter to the students, i.e., to think historically from the perspective of great thinkers on the purpose of

education. In essence, to delve into the philosophy of education and examine how the personal meaning that these students have on education would be similar to the visions of human freedom and the possibility that there is greater potential in the creation of a more emancipated school community. The two entities of education and philosophy in a context of history provided us, the learners, an opportunity to create meaningful landscapes of learning, and this is summarized in Maxine Greene's *Variations on a blue guitar: The Lincoln Center Institute lectures on aesthetic education*: "To do educational philosophy is to become critically conscious of what is involved in the complex business of teaching and learning...to clarify the meanings (p.7)". What I learned during my primordial stage of teaching was the importance of philosophical meaning and the connection that it provides to personal meaning for learners. A main objective of this pursuit is for learners to apply the intrinsic nature that inspires students to pursue learning. My personal criticism regarding teaching and learning, especially in our contemporary academic environment, is that there seems to be a disproportionate emphasis on reductionist and positivistic approaches to teaching and learning. The predictive uses of ACT scores and the belief that we should make our classes challenging. Maybe these are important variable but perhaps what we really need is to establish a meaningful philosophy pertaining to the methods that we employ for our learners. As Maxine Greene writes in *Releasing the Imagination*: "To help learners shape their identity, we've got to awaken them to their own questions and encourage them to shape their identity, we've got to awaken them to their own questions and encourage them to create their own projects. They don't really learn unless they ask (p.22)".



Dr. Alar Lipping received his Ph.D. degree in Physical Education from The Ohio State University in 1980. He joined the Department of Kinesiology and Health at NKU in 1988 and is the department chair since 2013. Alar received numerous awards for his teaching and service excellence which include the NKU Frank Sinton Milburn Outstanding Professor Award in 2013, The Greater Cincinnati Consortium of Colleges and Universities Excellence in Teaching Award in 2013 and the NKU Faculty Senate Distinguished Service Award in 2013.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



My name is Lauren Gabbard and I'm graduating this May with a Bachelor of Arts In Political Science and Economics with an Honors minor. I am currently an intern at Intercommunity Justice and Peace Center (IJPC), a non-profit, social justice organization in Cincinnati. I've been involved on campus as a Voter Empowerment Campus Organizer with Kentuckians for the Commonwealth (KFTC) and as the Organizational Leader for the Environmentally Concerned Organization of Students (ECOS). I am also a member of the Kentucky Zeta chapter of Alpha Chi and the Golden Key International Honor Society.

I've had amazing and challenging experiences at NKU and I am excited to face the next chapter of my life. I chose NKU because it was close to home and offered small class sizes, and I couldn't be more happy with my decision. During my first few years at NKU I really enjoyed being able to take classes from fields like anthropology, women and gender studies, calculus, and geology due to the general education requirements. My honors classes were some of my favorites, and I really loved the small, discussion-based classes. So many of my political science, economics, and honors classes have given me invaluable insight and inspired me to grow. My Honors Capstone offered the opportunity for research in both economics and political science and allowed me to attend the Midwest Political Science Association conference in Chicago.

The past five years have given me the confidence and opportunity for success that I will carry with me throughout my life. I worked really hard and was able to obtain a 3.99 cumulative GPA. My involvement with IJPC, KFTC, and ECOS has given me the opportunity to channel my passion for justice into action and education. Learning about the political and economic systems has prepared me to advocate for social change as I look to the future. I will always be grateful for my time at NKU and wouldn't trade it for the world.

TECHNOLOGY TIPS

How is teaching different from watching a video? The answer, according to the folks at eduCanon, is “participation.” The program, available at www.educanon.com, enables instructors to transform the relatively passive process of watching videos into a dynamic, engaging, and energizing learning experience. A simple interface allows educators to overlay questions on videos featured on YouTube, Vimeo and the like, adding an interactive element (ideal for flipped classrooms) that can enrich learning. One of the site's most impressive features is its ability to incorporate assessments into the videos (multiple-choice questions are available in free version of the program, free-response answers require the paid/premium version). Lessons may be imbedded in Blackboard or sent out to students via e-mail or social networking sites. EduCanon's monitor feature enables instructors to track student performance.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



My name is Duong Do; though, many of you might know me as Donna. I am a senior with at NKU with chemistry major and biology minor. I came to U.S. from Vietnam eight years ago with only one goal of gaining a doctorate degree. With a minimal amount of English, every day, school was like a battlefield, and I was a lost soldier without a comrade or weapon. I felt alienated in this new world. I wanted to quit, but I did not have enough courage to abandon my dream. If it was not for my high school teachers, who always patiently helped and supported me, I would not have survived the culture shock, nor regained my strength and motivation to pursue my ultimate dream. With a fear of falling behind, I was further driven to learn and thrive throughout my classes. Having

a high grade point average of 4.0 and being ranked 10th/365 in my high school class, college became readily available option for me to pursue my ultimate dream.

Besides the academic aspects, NKU also provided many opportunities for me to develop my social and leadership skills. Two years ago, I became a tutor at the university math center and a STEM Ambassador, where I help students to solve math and chemistry problems, respectively, as well as improving their study habits. Also as STEM ambassador, I had many opportunities to work with other fellow ambassadors and professors from various STEM disciplines to foster a vibrant STEM community for students. In addition, as a member of Health Profession Club (HPC) and Student Affiliates American Chemical Society (SAACS) I had a honor to participated in various inspiring volunteer events.

NKU is not just a school anymore to me; it gradually turned into my second home. I strongly believed that NKU has pushed me to my utmost potential and has prepared me well for my future career path. With five more weeks left of my undergraduate journey, I plan to reach my personal finish line with a 4.0 GPA.

TEACHING TIPS

Pretesting is often associated with assessment as a way to gather ‘before’ and ‘after’ data to evaluate a course or project. Research in learning-science suggests that pretests have more to offer than just serving as a baseline to measure student learning. In Benedict Carey’s “[Why Flunking Exams Is Actually a Good Thing](#),” he offers evidence that a comprehensive exam at the start of the semester may baffle students with new terms and concepts, but it will also expose them to the course material, thus priming them to consciously or unconsciously pay closer attention when they encounter the concepts for class. Multiple-choice questions are the most common way to prime students, as fill in the blank questions might not offer enough exposure to new information. This prior exposure to the material might prompt the ability to recall information in a way that studying alone cannot achieve, thus potentially improving student learning.