

A Collection of gifts



Issue 14 Fall 2014

Great Ideas For Teaching

14.1 In This Issue...

Denise Stephenson

Last year GIFTs focused on math and science. This fall we are excited to feature articles by Career and Technical Educators. They've generated so many articles several will appear in the spring as well.

In "Low Stakes Writing Assignments Work!" **Julie Vignato** explains the development of short, focused writing activities which nursing students do in her class. The benefits are numerous including students' ability to critically think through nursing scenarios. And Julie explains how little time they take to grade.

Also from nursing, **Susan T. Roberts** offers "Time for Jeopardy" in which she demonstrates how she uses competition to reinforce learning, and keeps engagement high.

"Divide and Conquer" by **Nery Chapeton-Lamas** explains how breaking a big project into teams provides a real world experience for computer programming students. (By the way, congratulate Nery on his new status as full-time faculty!)

In "Using Archives as a Means to Enhance Lectures," **Rick Cassoni** explains the many benefits provided by recording lectures for students to watch outside class. While he feared it could reduce attendance, he found that it actually led to more student engagement. (Rick also just landed a full-time position at Mesa College.)

As this issue hits the press, the Writing Center begins its celebration of 10 years of supporting writers at MiraCosta. We love the work we do with students, but we're also proud of our engagement with faculty. For nearly eight of those years, we've been coaxing you into sharing your outstanding teaching practices with one another. Let's keep that going! 🎁

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Submissions

Submissions are always welcome. There is rolling on-line publication and print distribution during FLEX week.

Please submit work to M/S 9 or dstephenson@miracosta.edu



Teaching
Academy

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www.miracosta.edu/StudentServices/WritingCenter

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14.2 Low Stakes Writing Assignments Work!

Julie Vignato, Nursing

How do you get a 19-year-old male ESL student from Japan who misses his family, a grandmother on her third career who lost her retirement in the stock market crash, and a young female student who rarely participates in class excited and prepared for a class in maternal child nursing? After a wonderful discussion with Denise Stephenson at the Writing Center, I implemented low stakes writing assignments.

These assignments are 1-2 pages. They are not meant to be term papers; rather, they engage students in thinking about applications of what they are learning, which makes them fun! While these writing assignments do not take much time, they meet the following objectives:

- Enable students to put medical terminology into basic language, so they are able to effectively teach their patients in the clinical setting
- Improve critical thinking
- Give students practice writing
- Promote reading to ensure students are prepared for class.

What do these activities look like? Here's one example:

Writing Assignment #3

You are admitting a newly diagnosed 11-month-old with Sickle Cell Anemia to your pediatric unit. The parents appear very anxious. What would you say and do to prepare the parents and the infant for hospitalization? Please include at least 5 specific examples of admission teaching as well as some brief information on pain management. (Additional examples and a rubric can be seen on the GIFTs website.)

The end result? Students read and understand the material. They are able to provide understandable and appropriate patient teaching related to a patient's level of comprehension. Students are able to apply information and critically think through situations. Even grammar improves, as I utilize a John Bean approach (students are able to resubmit in one week, correcting their errors for additional, but not full points). Improvements are really noted with ESL students. I found students enjoyed writing these assignments. I am also thankful that I enjoyed reading them—I learned a lot about my students' current views, as well as the knowledge they possess. 🎁

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14.3 Time for Jeopardy!

Susan T. Roberts, Nursing

Nursing students have enormous amounts of material to learn and retain during their two years at MiraCosta College. What sets their learning apart from some of the other disciplines is the need not only to pass each test, but retain the information so that they can pass the cumulative state exams after graduation.

Discovering a method that gets students motivated and engaged in the classroom while fostering knowledge of content is a challenge. A jeopardy game I have discovered is a very successful tool that enhances involvement and leads to the competitive spirit that makes the game fun for everyone. Fellow faculty member Sue Simpson shared the template with

me a few years ago, and I have used it ever since.

The basic principle is to divide the students into groups of 4 teams. The teams alternate selecting a category and deciding on a monetary amount, then are presented with a statement of facts (the “answer”) and have to guess what the

“question” is to win that amount of money. Just as in the TV show *Jeopardy*, there are 5 categories with about 5 answer/questions each. I prepare the template ahead, choosing answer/questions that we have covered in class, films, assignments or textbooks. The game focuses on current subject matter for the week’s lesson, or material that has been covered for a period of time prior to an exam. All team members must participate. If a team wants to pass on a question they can, and the next team can answer, win that amount of money, and be awarded an additional question. One student keeps score of the “winnings.” (The running joke is that I am “good” for the money at the end of the semester.) The instructor imposes

Move It	Let's Get Physical	Breathing Easy	Have a Heart	I'm a Pain
\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100
\$200	\$200	\$200	\$200	\$200
\$300	\$300	\$300	\$300	\$300
\$400	\$400	\$400	\$400	\$400
\$500	\$500	\$500	\$500	\$500

Sample Jeopardy board Susan uses with Nursing students.

a time limit on the answer period, and often students who become impatient with a team begin singing the *Jeopardy* theme song to move them along. Small prizes can be awarded for the winning team.

The game comes as a PowerPoint

template and is easy to develop. It even plays

the *Jeopardy* theme song as it opens. Just click the category amount, view the “answer” slide and click again. The correct “question” slide appears and includes a small home icon in the corner that returns to the home page. It can be

used in any discipline, and I am happy to share the template. The categories for nursing classes are health related, and I try to generate funny or quirky headings. Students select a category as a team, and they have to post their answer as a question and address the moderator as “Alex.” For example, categories I have used include: “You’re bugging me” for infection control, “You’re kidneying me” for renal health, “GI Blues”

for gastrointestinal disorders, and “Sugar Sugar” for diabetes. Questions range from \$100 to \$500. Sometimes partial awards are given if teams give part of the correct “answer.” For example if the “answer” was “Signs of hypoxia” and the correct “question” was “What are anxiety, restlessness, fatigue, dyspnea & cyanosis?” partial credit may be given for 3 of the 5 items. Sometimes a \$500 question is easier than a \$100 question. The class moans and groans about fairness, but we have a “get over it” point of view, since it’s all in fun.

binds easily
with O₂ and
releases it to
body tissues

I have found that this kind of instant recall reinforces current concepts and is different from the active studying that takes place outside the classroom. Nursing students become more competitive as they compete for entry into programs, for scholarships and, ultimately, for jobs. Students coming to the program with a bachelor’s degree in another field are very well prepared for the rigorous program. With *Jeopardy*, students come alive with the competitive spirit and in the process learn and retain information. In many instances I

What is
hemoglobin?



have to rein them in because their enthusiasm and exuberance can get a bit wild, but it is one of the funnest tools I have used. 🏠

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14.4 Divide and Conquer: A Class Project

Nery Chapeton-Lamas, Computer Science

As an in-class activity, I came up with a "big project" and pretended that the class was a company. I split up everyone into groups of 3, where each group was one of the teams in the company. I told them I was the project manager, and that our client was arriving in 2 hours (part of lecture period). If we tried to do all work on the project as a single team, we definitely couldn't get it done in 2 hours. So I broke up the problem, as a project manager usually does, into 8 modules, and assigned one to each group.

Each group needed to write a stand-alone function. To get there, I asked them to write their algorithms and flow charts first and confirm with me before writing code. This was important to ensure they didn't waste time and had the correct logic. Once I'd approved their logic, they could start writing code (all on paper, no computers

up to this point). Once each group finished their part, I typed up each program piece-by-piece and tested it along the way. This allowed us as a class to locate any errors and review any decisions the group made that might have caused the errors.

The objective was to give students a "real world" scenario. It's rarely one person working on a project alone, rather it's usually multiple people and sometimes even multiple teams. If each team completed their part and stuck to the manager's guidelines, then essentially all we had to do was plug all of the modules of code in together, and it'd work like magic! But it's not magic, it's really good organization and communication from the management, with every individual and team carrying their respective weight. It also allowed us to see who wasn't pulling their weight which keeps everyone accountable.

It was a fun exercise and worked quite well. Next time I'm going to give them less time and make the project a bit smaller, because I only had enough time to go over 4 of the 8 parts. Even in its first iteration, it was enough to get the idea across, but it would definitely be better for them to see the whole thing come together. ❏

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14.5 Using Archives as a Means to Enhance Lectures

Rick Cassoni, Computer Studies & Information Technology

Background

Recalling my Organizational Behavior course in my Master's program, I now understand the Hawthorne Effect, also referred to as the observer effect. From 1924–1932 Hawthorne Works in Chicago commissioned a study to see if their workers would be more productive in higher or lower levels of light. The workers' productivity seemed to improve when changes were made, but slumped when the study ended. The "Hawthorne Effect" was coined in 1950 by Henry A. Landsberger when his analysis of that earlier study suggested that a productivity gain occurred as a result of the motivational effect on the workers because of interest being shown in them (Hawthorne effect).

My Experiment

With the same curiosity as Henry Landsberger, I wondered what would happen if I started recording my lectures for a face-to-face classroom? Would students experience this as increased attention? Would they still come to class? Would they pay attention? Would they sleep or go on break and never come back the rest of the class period? I discovered, with great delight, that students not only paid more attention in class, but also seemed to be more engaged with the lectures that they knew were being recorded.

So, for this experiment, the stage was set (pun intended). I knew that I wanted to record my lectures in my face-to-face class, but I just

had to figure out the tools to do it. My goal was to provide a recording of my lecture inside the classroom that could be easy to review at a student's leisure outside the classroom.¹ To do so effectively meant ensuring that I was using various tools which would record fully what was happening and provide material that could be used for hybrid and online classes.

Tools

After researching the various tools available, I decided to use Blackboard (Bb) Collaborate on the CCC website (<http://www.cccconfer.org>) vs. Bb Collaborate natively because the CCC Confer shell provides the ability to see who watched the sessions. Criteria for selection include:

- the best functionality for a low-cost
- the ability to archive recordings as mp4 or similar formats for uploading
- permission to use copyrighted material.

For those interested in learning about the specific tools, I would be more than happy to provide tips and instructions on what I found to be the most useful combination. Please feel free to contact me at my new position at Mesa College rcassoni@sdccd.edu or 760-492-8009.

Results

I was pleasantly surprised with the results which mimicked the Hawthorne Effect experiments. While I was concerned that students would stop coming to class, the opposite happened. Students perked up in class, participated more, and seemed genuinely engaged in the lecture. Even though students make a good effort to come to class, it is inevitable that students occasionally miss class. On days students missed, they were able to review the lesson, which was an added benefit.

In addition to creating the archives, I also started doing popcorn questions, going from person-to-person. While students were initially lukewarm to popcorn questions, they had to pay attention since they would eventually be asked a question. This also drove engagement in the lecture. As a former scientist, I realize that I used multiple variables in this experiment to drive engagement. However, as a current teacher, I

realize the value of engagement, and that trumps a perfectly executed experiment.

Possibly the most significant success was for English as a Second Language (ESL) students. Java programming is tough. Several foreign and ESL students thanked me throughout the semester and told me how they appreciated the archives, which allowed them to review and study. 🎁

Notes

1. [One of Cassoni's CSIT 120 online sessions.](http://www.3cm mediasolutions.org/privid/4156?key=be1cc199dcf12f67dd4832503802d035048ed327) <<http://www.3cm mediasolutions.org/privid/4156?key=be1cc199dcf12f67dd4832503802d035048ed327>>

Works Cited

- "[Hawthorne effect.](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hawthorne_effect)" Wikipedia. 2 June 2014 <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hawthorne_effect>.