**SPIRE Post-Doctoral Seminar on College Teaching**

**Ed Neal, Ph.D., Seminar Leader**

**Course Description**

The goal of this Seminar on College Teaching is to prepare post-doctoral fellows for teaching careers in higher education and to help them understand the roles and responsibilities of faculty members in an academic environment. The seminar consists of ten two-hour sessions and will include homework in the form of readings, Web assignments, and preparatory exercises for each session. You will also be required to prepare a syllabus, develop a sample exam, and write a teaching statement.

**Course Goals**

Participants in the seminar will learn how to:

* design and teach courses that emphasize critical thinking and higher-order learning;
* evaluate student learning using methods that are valid and reliable;
* develop course grading schemes that reflect meaningful learning;
* gather and use information from students and peers to improve teaching;
* create a teaching portfolio and prepare for an academic job search;
* balance the competing responsibilities of an academic career to successfully achieve tenure.

**Course Format**

The seminar is designed as a hands-on experience for the participants and the format will include short lectures, small group work, and large group discussion. In order to make our class meetings maximally productive, it is very important for you to complete the preparatory assignments prior to the class meetings. The following course schedule includes short descriptions of each session, beginning with a question that serves as the objective of the session.

**Seminar Schedule**

(9 am – 11 am, Thursdays)

**1. Getting to Know Your Students 9/06/12**

***Who are our students and what are they like?***

The more instructors know about their students--how they learn, their knowledge (and misconceptions), intellectual competencies, motivation, and study skills--the better they can design learning experiences that will promote effective learning.

**Preparatory assignment for the next meeting:**

1. Examine the sample syllabus on pages 3 & 4 and answer the questions on page 5.

2. Complete the exercise on page 9, “Identifying Outcomes.”

3. Examine the sample syllabus on pages 17 through 22 and answer the questions on page 23.

***4. Read Instructions for the Syllabus Assignment, attached. (Due date to be determined)***

**2. Conceptualizing Learning Outcomes 9/13/12**

***What should be the result of instruction?***

The first step in systematizing one’s approach to course planning is to see the process from the perspective of the **learner** instead of the **teacher**. Instructors need to master a special vocabulary and a taxonomy of learning in order to practice this new process effectively.

**Preparatory assignment for the next meeting:**

1. Read the definitions of critical thinking on page 3 and compare them to the definition on p.4.

2. Read the material on metacognition on pages 5 and 6.

3. Read “The Perry Scheme” on pages 9 & 10 and examine the chart on page 10.

**3. Teaching Critical Thinking 9/20/12**

***What is “critical thinking” and how can we teach it?***

Teaching students to think critically is probably the most important goal of teaching, since our educational system seems perversely designed to eradicate that skill. Without critical thinking, students will never achieve a deep understanding of the discipline you teach.

**Preparatory assignment for the next meeting:**

1. Read the sample interactive lecture plans, pages 3, 5, & 6.

2. Read “Classroom Assessment Techniques” on page 18, examine the matrix examples on page

19, and construct a sample matrix on the worksheet (page 20).

**4. Read Instructions for the Test/Rubric Assignment, below. (Due Oct 4)**

**4. Active Learning 9/27/12**

***How can we engage students in ways that promote learning?***

Active engagement is a prerequisite for deep learning, but most of these strategies require careful planning to be successful.

**Preparatory assignment for the next meeting:**

1. Take the “Tauroskatology” quiz on page 5

2. Read the “Rules for Constructing Essay Questions” on page 14, then complete the exercise on

pages 15 and 16.

3. Read the case study (“Sally Brown”) on page 17 and complete the exercise on page 18.

**5. Evaluating Learning Outcomes 10/04/12**

***How will you know if students have achieved the learning outcomes you set for them?***

Conventional testing methods are useful for assessing all levels of learning outcomes, provided that they are designed for validity and reliability.

**Preparatory assignment for the next meeting:**

1. Read “Guidelines for Course Grades” on page 8 of the chapter and examine each of the grading schemes that follow on pages 9 through 14: How well do each of these schemes satisfy the guidelines?

2. ***Please send copies of your test questions and grading rubric to everyone prior to the next class meeting. (Note: “prior” means 24 hours before the meeting time.)***

**6. Grading Schemes 10/11/12**

***How can you insure that the course grades you assign reflect meaningful learning?***

Among faculty members in higher education there is probably no topic that is more controversial than grading practices and there is probably no aspect of teaching that is as little understood as the assignment of course grades.

**Preparatory assignment for the next meeting:**

1. Read “The Changing Adolescent Brain” on page 2.

2. Read “Conflict Management” on pages 7 & 8.

3. Complete the case-analysis exercise on pages 10 – 12.

**7. Managing Student Behavior 10/18/12**

***How do you handle the problems that arise as a result of student attitudes or behaviors in your courses?*** Although these incidents are mercifully rare, when they occur they can be very difficult to deal with unless you have a firm grasp on some basic principles of course management.

**Preparatory assignment for the next meeting:**

1. Complete the exercise on page 3, “Evaluating Teaching: Criteria and Standards”

2. Take the quiz on page 7, “Student Evaluation of Teaching.”

3. Read “Getting the Most Out of Your Student Ratings” on pages 8 through 11.

4. Read “Peer Review of Teaching” on page 15.

5. ***Read Instructions for Teaching Statement Assignment, below. (Due Nov 15)***

**8. Evaluating Teaching 10/25/12**

***How can we use evaluation to improve our teaching and satisfy the institution’s need for accountability?*** Every institution of higher education uses some form of student evaluation of teaching. To protect yourself, you need to know the basic principles of good practice for teaching evaluation and how to use these assessments to improve your teaching.

**Preparatory assignment for the next meeting:**

1. Read “Developing a Teaching Statement” on pages 5 – 7. On the basis of this article,

critique the teaching statement on pages 8 - 10.

**9. Marketing Your Teaching Credentials 11/01/12**

***How can you best market your teaching credentials?***  Your teaching statement summarizes your conceptualization of teaching, learning, and your pedagogical practices and is therefore a critical part of your job application dossier. Teaching portfolios expand upon your teaching statement by providing documentary evidence of your teaching practice.

**Preparatory assignment for the next meeting**

1. Complete the exercise on page 7, “Percentage of Time Spent in Professional Activities.”

2. Complete the “Time Management Questionnaire” questionnaire on page 8.

3. ***Complete the “Job Search” assignment (see instructions below) and be prepared to***

***share your findings***.

**10. Balancing Teaching With Other Academic Responsibilities 11/08/12**

***How can we invest the time needed to teach well while continuing to make progress on our own academic work and other responsibilities?***  The criteria for tenure differ across academic disciplines and institutions and are often very difficult to ascertain. We will discuss ways to discover a department’s expectations, develop mentoring networks, and navigate departmental politics. We will also explore strategies for managing time, setting priorities, and managing stress.

***Assignment for next week: Write a draft of your teaching statement and mail it to***

***everyone in the class by November 15.***

**Appendix: Writing for Publication**

***In a world of “publish or perish,” how can you avoid the latter outcome? What are the keys to developing a successful publishing record?*** To be successful one must understand the process of academic writing and develop strategies to overcome the problems that inevitably arise. Publishing in “Scholarship of Teaching and Learning” journals also provides a way to enhance your teaching credentials.

**Major Course Assignments**

**Syllabus**

(Due Date TBD)

Develop a sample syllabus for the course you will teach in the spring. This project requires that you develop course goals, unit objectives, student assignments (papers, projects, etc.) and a grading scheme. It does **not** require that you specify page numbers for readings or similar fine details. If you cannot find the course calendar for the institution in which you will teach, you can use the UNC calendar instead (since all UNC system schools use the semester system).

**Test/Rubric Samples**

(Due October 11)

1. Select a unit or section of the course you will be teaching and develop a set of test questions based on the principles in Chapter Five.

2. Develop an analytical rubric for a paper, project, or other assignment you might give your students (following the principles in Chapter Five).

**Job Search**

(Due November 8)

To prepare for the last session of this seminar you will need to select a college or university at which you would like to teach and try to find the answers to the following questions on the institution’s Web site **(make sure to write your answers or download the Web pages and make notes on them so you can bring them to class to share)**:

1. What are the criteria for achieving tenure? (Institutional and/or departmental)\*

2. How many tenured faculty, untenured faculty, and adjunct/lecturer faculty does your department have?

3. What kinds of research facilities does the department have?

4. What kind of teaching support is available? (Is there a teaching center? Are there grants for course development or teaching improvement? Etc.)

5. How is teaching evaluated? (Student surveys, peer observations, portfolios?)

6. Is there a mentoring program for new faculty? (Formal or informal?)

7. What is the cost of tuition, fees, and living expenses for undergraduates?

8. What are the SAT (or ACT) scores for incoming first-year students?

9. If the student newspaper is accessible on line, scan recent editions to see the kinds of important issues the institution is facing.

**Note:** **You will not be able to find answers to all of these questions**, but do the best you can. Using the “search” function can turn up articles in the school paper about rising tuition, falling salaries, recent scandals, and all kinds of interesting information.

\*A good place to look for tenure/promotion criteria is the "faculty handbook" (if it is available as a Web document). Many departments post profiles of their entire faculty, so you can count tenured vs. non-tenured (you can assume, in most cases, that associate and full professors are tenured, unless they are listed as "adjunct associate," "clinical professor," or "research professor"). Use the "search" function as well, since that strategy can turn up facts that are otherwise hidden. The following Web site has links to all US colleges and universities:

<http://www.utexas.edu/world/univ/state/>

**Teaching Statement**

(Due November 15)

Based on our discussion of teaching statements in Chapter 8, write a teaching statement (approximately 3 pages) and send it to the entire class.