Teaching For Success

Volume 17, Number 8

Dealing with Slumps, Bumps, and Lumps

Contents: (*Click to Go*!)

- You've Made a Error? Now You're Learning p. 1
- Rebounding Is Fundamental in More Than Basketball, p. 2
- The Geography of Success, p. 2
- Outcome Fixation and Dealing with Slumps, p. 2
- How to Build a Supportive Learning Environment, pp. 3–4
- An Easy System for Student Recognition, p. 4
- Five Star Instructor Interview: Kathy Evans, p. 5
- Of Questions, Struggles, and Connections p. 6
- What You Should Know About Constructivism and Technology, p. 7
- Give Back to Your Community and Learn, p. 8

You Made a Error? Now You're Learning!

Jack H. Shrawder
TFS Publisher
jack@teachingforsuccess.com

What if you could control human performance to the nth degree and eliminate all error, mistakes, and blunders? Would you finally have reached teaching nirvana at the University of Shangri-La?

The practicality of living an errorless existence has been explored in many novels, short stories, and films. No matter the details, the results always seem the same: progress comes to a halt. The idyllic existence becomes a prison and the main character chooses to return to an imperfect world where he or she can live a more exciting—even though chancy and error-filled—life.

If error is a certainty and a constant companion throughout our lives, then one definition of success is learning how to transform errors and mistakes into allies instead of enemies. To do this, you need a personal philosophy that keeps you in control of your thoughts and feelings instead of letting failure push you off a cliff into a downward spiral of depression and despair. An anti-downward-spiral philosophy might state: "Win or lose, correct or in error, I'm still me." Or, "I strive to minimize error, but upon encountering a situation that produces a result different from my plan, hunch, or wish, I'll use it as springboard to greater understanding and insight."

When I taught aviation technology, I told students who were afraid of making errors that the classroom and laboratory is where I wanted them to make mistakes, not out on the flight line where people might die or be injured.

Error teaches lessons to a depth that always getting it right cannot. I'd much rather have my plane repaired or piloted by a student who struggled for a B rather than one who breezed through with an A.

As a teacher, I learned that the cruelest mistake was thinking that making a class easy was doing students a favor.

Classes must be challenging enough to give every student a chance to learn from error. This does not mean building tricky test questions or testing on untaught material. It does mean expecting high performance and demonstrating how to deal with complex, confusing, or incomplete data. Then, you really are teaching for success.

Quick Tip

Rebounding Is Fundamental in More Than Basketball

Jack H. Shrawder
TFS Publisher

I became hooked on watching basketball when I taught at the University of Illinois. Champaign-Urbana residents talk of little else during basketball season, especially if the Illini are having a good run at the Conference title.

Teaching in this high-visability basketball environment, I found it hard to resist delving into sports metaphors or telling a game story to explain an instructional point.

I hadn't thought of this in years, but the concept of rebounding is central to a success-oriented game plan in life as well as in basketball.

Neither a basketball team nor an individual is going to win without being able to rebound consistently. The team that can rebound gives itself many more chances to score. A good rebounding team can compensate for a game plagued by poor shooting. Of course, the point is that when we encounter slumps, bumps, and lumps in teaching or any other part of our lives, we are much better off with a high proficiency and tendency to rebound quickly and energetically.

Are there some characteristics of top performers that we may use to reinforce our own ability to bounce back? Dr. John Eliot, in his lecture "Maverick Mindset," shares some of the personal characteristics that I found very useful and relevant to teaching and learning. First, he explains what he learned from his to work with Tiger Woods, the premier golfer of our time.

According to Dr. Eliot, Tiger Woods has a very positive rebound philosophy in place to guide his play. Tiger's philosophy is summed up this way, "Expect performance, don't expect success.In other words, Tiger knows that he should put his focus on his own level of performance during a tournament.That's what he can control. He can't control who ultimately wins.

Top rebounders often have similar philosophies that stress forgetting about an outcome that you cannot control. Instead, intend to be totally into every aspect of your attitude and level of performance. Then, let the winning take care of itself.

Stated another way, don't demand success; demand that you play the game as well as possible, says Dr. Eliot. In addition to a positive performance philosophy, rebounders insist on maintaining a balance in their lives that ensures ample time for rest, relaxation, and fun.

Are you a top rebounder? If not, why not? Further, how can you help your students learn this valuable lesson?

Quick Tip

The Geography of Success

Jack H. Shrawder
TFS Publisher

Like many of you, I live in a valley, the Lake Tahoe Basin. The only way out, except for the highway that follows the Truckee River, is up and over one of a half a dozen mountain passes.

Leaving the Basin in the winter can be a challenge. Meeting the challenge successfully means adopting a mountain-driving mindset to safely cope with slippery, snow-packed roads. Journeying out is a fearful event for some, but for others it's merely a test of the preparedness of vehicle and driver to cope with whatever nature throws at them.

Similarly, top performers in all fields perceive their life journey as one of continually ascending one performance peak, followed by a descent to a lower altitude to seek and practice new knowledge and skills, resulting in another tough climb to a new and higher summit.

Furthermore, top performers don't fear competition. No, indeed, they thrive on the opportunity to test themselves against the best and the brightest. In teaching and learning we can test ourselves by adopting new instructional strategies. We can challenge students to wrestle with the toughest problems and tackle the toughest classes. Why? So that student and teacher can honestly say, "We saw the view from the highest summit."

Quick Tip

Outcome Fixation and Dumping a Slump

Jack H. Shrawder
TFS Publisher

Listening to a recent talk by John Eliot, PhD, "The Maverick Mindset," I discovered something very important that I hadn't realized about outcomes. Outcomes or goals are necessary for establishing clarity of direction and defining the boundaries of the intended results. But they can also be the cause of slumps and poor performance when your focus remains on outcomes instead of process.

Dr. Eliot works with many high-performance sports figures and reports case after case in which keeping the focus of training and playing solely on the winning of a medal, a title, or a championship degrades performance and causes slumps. When these competitors identified the reason they were playing a particular sport and focused on the enjoyable aspects of playing, their performance levels almost always increased, and they would reach the goals they had set.

This concept seems to apply equally well to teaching and learning. The more the focus remains solely on outcomes or grades instead of the teaching and learning process, the more likely it its that student or instructor performance will decline. Therefore, enjoying the process is an important key to dumping a slump no matter what your endeavor.

In-depth Instructional Design

How to Build a Supportive Learning Environment

Brian R. Shmaefsky, PhD, *TFS* Science and Technology Partner Editor
Biology & Environmental Sciences
Kingwood College, Texas
brian.shmaefsky@nhmccd.edu


Brian R. Shmaefsky

Being a university department chair was a seemingly never-ending series of learning experiences. The most valuable element of that administrative role was the deep insight I gained into learning environments.

Learning environment is best defined as all the factors that influence learning and teaching.

Teaching does not necessarily mean that there is learning going on. Even the most dynamic and effective presentations are useless if directed to a sleeping or inattentive class.

I did not gain this insight into student learning through the classroom observations I carried out as part of my chair's duties; rather, it was provided by candid faculty evaluations and complaints from students. Student perceptions of faculty performance offer debatable feedback about teaching quality.

However, they definitely supply information about the classroom factors that detract from learning.

The best teaching strategies can be thwarted by factors external and internal to the learning environment. External factors include every variable that drains a student's ability to perform in the classroom. Demanding jobs, family issues, financial troubles, and a poor academic background diminish the impacts of effective teaching strategies.

Unfortunately, there is little you can do to overcome these barriers to learning. The best you can do is to recognize that those factors are present. Sometimes you can direct students to campus or community resources that deal with the particular issues the student faces.

It is the internal factors over which you have full control for improving classroom learning. These factors can be divided into four categories: physical environment, psychosocial environment, behavioral environment, and organizational environment.

Set up a physical environment that fosters optimal conditions for students to pay attention and stay on task. Students distracted by rooms being uncomfortably hot or cold cannot focus on instruction or class activities. Hallway noises and the humming sounds of AV equipment can take away from a student's concentration. Everything must be done to ensure that all students can clearly hear each other and you.

Appropriate décor that accentuates the curriculum is somewhat conducive to learning as long as it is not so entertaining that it steals away student attention. Distracting situations are common in science classrooms replete with noisy animals, dripping plants, and walls adorned with colorful posters.

The focus of the attention should be the lecture area, board, or audiovisual screen. A good way to assess the physical environment is to sit in the room with students while a lecture or presentation is taking place.

Special attention to the physical must be paid to avoid excluding students with handicaps.

The psychosocial atmosphere must be nonjudgmental and nonthreatening to the students. Unless it is essential for class instruction, you should refrain from comments that alienate students based on handicap, national origin, political views, race, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status.

You should also request that students abide by the same principle. Any comments should be prefaced with a statement that the content is intended for stimulating conversation or debate.

A student's perception of an instructor's personality is also part of the psychosocial environment. Students who feel safe communicating in class are more likely to express to you the need for help with any external factors. They are less likely to communicate their concerns if you appear aloof, uninterested, or overbearing.

Enthusiasm is infectious. Students are motivated to pay attention when you show that you enjoy the students and have a desire to teach. Being enthusiastic does not mean having a magic-show presentation style or outgoing personality. It merely means being concerned, honest, and sincere when interacting with students in and out of class.

This strategy even overcomes the indifference of students in elective classes that have nothing to do with their disciplines of study. You need to balance showing content authority and facilitating student inquiry. Students focus better in class when they know they will be in charge of learning particular aspects of the content.

To achieve this, you should incorporate inquiry and problem-based activities into each lecture. In addition, student attention is more likely to wander in authority-centered lectures than in tasks that ask them to seek out and apply information.

The behavioral environment is the set of acceptable and expected attitudes, behaviors, habits, and personal interactions modeled by faculty and permitted of students in class. Student evaluations indicate that students are more attentive in structured classrooms having prescribed rules.

However, the rules are only effective and nondistracting if they are reasonable and developed with some student input. Expected behaviors must be discussed at the beginning of the semester and should be accessible in electronic or written formats.

continued on page 4

Classroom Management

An Easy System for Student Recognition

Ric Alviso
Assistant Professor of Music
California State University Northridge
Adjunct Professor of Music
Santa Monica College,
Santa Monica, California

Each semester you are faced with the daunting task of getting to know a new group of students. If you teach large lecture courses, this can be a particularly difficult and time-consuming task.

Over the years, I have experimented with various methods for getting to know my students, and the most effective tool I have come up with is the Student Information Card. Try this tip and see if it doesn't take your classroom management to a higher level.

At the beginning of the second day of class I ask students to lend me a picture ID, preferably one with a photo that bears the strongest resemblance to their current appearance.

In the ten minutes it takes me to go to the department copying machine and copy their picture, I ask students to fill out a 4 x 6 inch card. On the front of the card I ask them to write the number of the course at the top, followed by their name (last name first), phone number, and email address. On the back I ask for information in the following categories:

- Major and career goal
- Previous experience with the subject matter
- Hobbies and special interests
- Challenges in their life that might affect their work in my class

At the end of class I collect all of the 4 x 6 cards and return the picture IDs to the students; then I cut out the pictures of the students and staple the photos to their cards.

After putting the pictures together with the cards, I enjoy reading about my new students while being able to see an image of their face. I study the cards over the weekend and try to name the student by just looking at the picture while I cover up their name.

By the second week of class, I have usually memorized most students' names and I arrive early to greet them by name as they walk in. If I have trouble remembering any of the students' names, I find their card, put it aside and study it before the next class.

By the next class meeting, during discussion I am able to call on nearly all my students by name. They are amazed that I have already learned their names. This helps us to develop a rapport more quickly and it sends the message to my students that each one of them is important to me.

Years later, because an image of a face on a card is so powerful, when I see students on the street, I can often picture their card in my mind and immediately remember their name!

Building a Supportive Learning Environment

continued from page 3

The behaviors should be consistently enforced and practiced by the instructor. Students who are serious about their studies want learning environments free of the distractions of disruptive, rude, and unruly behaviors. It is important to remember that students carry the behaviors permitted in class to their communities and future workplace.

Students learn better when the lecture material is known ahead of time and when you give organized presentations. Most students want information relevant to the content and pertinent to any type of assessment. Taking a lecture off topic is often frustrating to students.

Even open-ended activities involving problem-based learning should be structured to keep confusion from detracting from learning engagement. Public communication research shows that people trust information providers who are organized and well prepared. Television news takes full advantage of this fact when reporting about controversial people and issues. All of the factors discussed above were registered as student comments or complaints about what directed their attention away from learning.

Most of these can be remedied so that effective teaching provides more favorable results for students. A positive and supportive learning environment is one secret to teaching success. It improves learning and reduces your frustration. Plus, keeping students engaged in a structured environment reduces the boredom that steals effectiveness from instruction.

References:

Fraser, B. J. 1998. Classroom environment instruments: Development, validity and applications. Learning Environments Research. 1(1): 7–34.

Clavner, J. 2005. Fifteen minutes before class. NISOD Innovations Abstracts. 27(17): 1.

Schwebel, A. I., & Cherlin, D. L. 1972. Physical and social distancing in teacher-pupil relationships. Journal of Educational Psychology, 63, 543–550.

(FRONT OF CARD)
Course: Music Appreciation
Name: Martinez, Allegra
Phone: (818) 555-1234
Email: allegra@zenith.com

(BACK OF CARD)
- Bus. major. Would like job in radio.
- Played piano 4 years.
- Like hiking.
- Have a cat named "Chopin"
- Visual learner. Carpool with friends—may occasionally be running five minutes late.

Five-Star Instructor Interview

FSII

Name: Kathy Evans
College: Reading Area Community College, Pennsylvania
Years teaching: 29
Teaches: Biology for majors–Allied Health Majors, non-majors environment, anatomy.

What is your teaching and learning success philosophy?

No one can be successful in learning biology unless they want to succeed. Experience teaching a subject is invaluable; I know where students are going, and I intimately know what comes next in each course sequence. However, time is the most critical factor, especially at the community college level. Working, family, and college all compete for student time. Learning at fundamental levels is repetition, reputation, repetition. Technology helps. Publishers faithfully provided new ways to provide repetitive practice through CDs, textbook, websites, etc. To me, it's what you spend the minutes on that counts. At the beginning of class, I discuss the different ways that students can review and the amount of learning time required on a daily basis to be successful in my classes.

What are the toughest teaching and learning challenges you face?

It's time: classroom contact time. The learning time needed to acquire, master, review, and look at applications in the laboratory. At RACC, I'm lucky to teach small sections, but even in small sections time becomes the limiting factor. Learning and learning how to learn quickly is the key for students.

What are some of the solutions you have found to meet these challenges?

I stay on task by publishing class notes; I project them on a screen. I have laid out the entire course day-by-day, and I create for myself a time schedule for each class session. Times are estimated and flexible, but my plan functions as a guideline. I also do recaps and outline where we are going next. I don't use formal CATS to verify learning, but I do quick checks when there is time a the end of class.

How do you use technology to enhance your teaching and student learning?

Technology is an important tool. I teach in a laboratory with a computer system that enables me to provide materials to students desktops. For example, I can distribute CD-ROM video clips when they portray a concept or structure to a higher level than I can draw. However, I encourage students to draw and put everything they learn in a graphic format. I also use many analogies to help students picture and relate to things in their everyday life.

What was the most helpful teaching advice you have received?

Being organized! There is no replacement for it; student recognize lack of organization immediately. And I make sure I'm dependable and consistent. I'm developing an online course for non-majors on the environment, and I know how organized I have to be. You need to be good at developing concepts and placing them in an organized sequence. Fortunately, publishers have really made this process very simple today.

How do you keep grading fair and and accurate?

I grade on a total-point basis such as 500 or 600 points. Lecture exams are assigned 2/3 of the grade, and labs are worth less than 1/3. Points earned correspond to an A, B, C, etc. range. In my class, if you have the points you earn the grade. Also, I give students 110 questions on a 100-question test and they can pick the 100 they wish to answer.

In addition, I give ten-question quizzes that are worked on collaboratively and handed out at the start of each lab session. I'm very consistent with the difficulty of my exams—students tend to get around the same grades test after test. I include laboratory experience questions and test-bank items. I also use fill-in-the-blank, name-the-structure, or what-happened-here queries.

What are some of the best assignments you have given in terms of student interest, participation, and achievement of learning outcomes?

Model building!! Students love it. They have to provide a key as to what each item used in the model represents. As a check, I build something myself to experience the project time and frustration level. Sensory and hands-on teaching assignments promote in-depth learning. Of course, build time is an issue, along with fitting the project into the course sequence of topics.

Do you create a list of learning outcomes for each course?

I teach competency-based courses, so there is a list of topics that everyone must cover. Textbooks have objectives for every chapter. Part-time faculty have the same syllabi, the textbook, and sequence of laboratory exercises that they are to follow. I provide the necessary handouts. It's very important to maintain outcome equality among class sections.

Enhance Your Job Portfolio

Would you like to be published and boost your full-time or tenure track chances, or have your ideas noticed by thousands of faculty? Why not share your best teaching improvement ideas? Contact TFS and let us review it today. Appearing in TFS means new opportunities.

Of Questions, Struggles, and Connections

Prof. Carl Meinhart
Physics
University of California Santa Barbara

There are many different styles and techniques that allow one to teach effectively. Personally, I like to supplement traditional classroom blackboard notes with multimedia computer presentations and the Internet to give life to the presentations. These are options that demonstrate the vast amount of information available at our fingertips.

However, regardless of the mode of information delivery, all effective teaching techniques can be reduced to a few simple, straightforward principles. When mastered, they allow even the most difficult concepts to be understood by nearly every student. I developed this method of teaching while in graduate school.

I came to the realization that **all learning is simply a result of asking the right question, struggling for an answer, and then forming a mental connection between a well-understood concept and a poorly-understood concept.**

Subsequently, the main challenge in my own learning or in teaching others is to regularly ask high-quality questions, search for the answers, and then find effective analogies that make the desired link between the known and the unknown. Even though this principle is easy to understand, it is not easy to implement.

My approach is the following: (1) I regularly assess the students' level of knowledge of the current subject and related subjects. I do this by asking questions throughout the class period. These questions are designed to: (a) engage students in the thinking process and stimulate them to ask questions in their own minds and in the classroom; (b) enhance their interest in the subject; and (c) allow me to understand their level of knowledge and their interests inside and outside the classroom.

(2) Once I understand their knowledge and interests, I can develop key analogies that specifically relate something they understand and enjoy to the concept they are currently trying to learn.

(3) Depending upon the difficulty of subject matter, it may be necessary to develop several key analogies, thereby relating the course material with a variety of interests. Depending upon the interest of the students, the analogies can range from everyday observations, sports, real-life engineering experiences, or imaginative ideas of things that have not yet been developed.

A specific example of this teaching philosophy came recently from my junior-level fluid mechanics class. We were discussing aerodynamic forces on objects, such as drag and lift. I started by asking if anyone in the class was a pilot. A few hands were raised.

Then I asked if anyone had ever played baseball or volleyball. Now, nearly everyone raised their hand—many raised their hand enthusiastically. Bingo! I found an interest I could use. Then I knew how to ask more effective questions, and I had a basis for making analogies that the students would like.

The next question I asked was, "If I were to throw a softball, and put a back spin on it, what would happen?" They thought a minute, then someone said, "It would curve." I asked, "In what direction would it go and why would it curve?" After some thought, a student gave me the answer about direction. Based upon playing baseball, he knew what the ball would do, but not why.

So now that I had their fully engaged attention, we began relating the Magnus force to engineering concepts they already understood. Within fifteen minutes, the students understood the Magnus force, how it worked, and how to use it in calculations.

The students now understood an important engineering principle, had fun learning the concept, and were likely to retain their knowledge over a long period of time. (Some of the ball players in class had literally spent years trying to perfect their curve ball and now they understood the physics behind the action.)

The next step was to ask the students how they would design a ball that would produce the maximum or minimum amount of curve. Should the ball be light or heavy, small or large, have a smooth or rough surface, be nonuniform? This is an important step in the learning process, because it uses the engineering principle they just learned to find an unknown answer, and it engages their creativity.

I often use examples and experiences from various research groups, including my own. This allows the students to appreciate how the concepts they are learning can be applied to advance the current state of knowledge.

For example, a micro/nanotechnology-based pump is being developed currently in my research group. In class we discuss how traditional fluid pumps relate to the developing nanotechnology-based pumps.

The students are exposed to numerical simulation and experimental research tools, and how these tools are used during the discovery, analysis, and design phases. Based upon these lectures, usually two or three students out of every class pursue undergraduate research in my laboratory. Many then go on to graduate school research at UCSB or another top school.

During the past three years, I have developed a senior/graduate-level course on micro/nanotechnology-based fluid mechanics. It is the third of a three-course sequence on micro/nanotechnology. The class is continually updated with the latest research advancements.

This class is one of the most popular departmental electives, and is taken by students in engineering, physics, computer science, and chemistry. This class is closely coupled with my research program, and provides a strong background for conducting research in micro/nano fluid mechanics.

What You Should Know about Constructivism and Technology

Barbara J. Weiner, MT(ASCP, FL BCLP), CLS(NCA)
TFS Editor for DL and Web Evaluation
barbjweiner@AOL.com

How we know what we know and why is the basic principle of constructivist learning theory. Our primary goals as facilitators and instructors in a technology-driven learning environment should be clear and concise.

If we successfully increase our students' awareness of their own understanding within the technology-based learning environment, then interpretation and problem-solving skills will naturally follow.

But, the practical dilemma is how we should educate today's college students, who cut their teeth on a menu of interactive technologies and then went to a kindergarten program that has basically not changed in decades.

They are members of the Content Generation, or Generation C, and they are very focused on what they want to know and exactly where they want to learn it.

Developing a sharper picture of our roles as educators in a technology-based constructivist classroom will help us relate at much higher levels.

Basic Characteristics

Here are the top five:

- Learning is social.
- Learning is a mental process that is individually unique.
- Present learning must be connected to past knowledge and personal experiences.
- Learning is an active process that takes time.
- Learning is fueled by motivation.

What Technology Brings to Constructivist Learning

In any technology-based classroom, you are too easily thrust into the role of a knowledge-delivery agent. You might tend to make your biggest responsibilities data, information, and technology updating.

But, to keep learning authentic and relevant, just designing clever uses for the technology in a traditional course is not enough.

The Internet itself provides a spontaneous research environment, so you should also be focusing on how the implementation of technology is affecting your students' performance level, the subject matter, and their own expertise.

Taking on the roles of inspirer, encourager, and cheerleader will awaken your students to their own knowledge filters, and self-empowerment will follow as an end result of active learning.

Constructivist success demands a constant message from you, the motivator, in the classroom. Students should feel like they can learn, think, and do in addition to using technology.

They need to feel welcome and an important part of the online or technology-based classroom, not just a faceless participant.

What Constructivism Brings to Computer Learning

Designing a constructivist multimedia curriculum should be a well-thought-out and frequently customized and renewed process. Set smart goals by brainstorming often, so that you have a constant bank of new ideas under consideration. Adopt strategies to promote active learning and questioning. Learn with the computer, not only from it. Make the technology center stage and part of the learning process, not in a secondary or back-up position.

The primary relationship of the classroom student should be with the information. In the virtual environment, it is easy to implement problem-based lessons and activities using constructivist strategies.

Students need to actively construct knowledge over time, linking and integrating new knowledge with previous knowledge and beliefs.

Applying constructivist principles to assessment of learning includes properly incorporating such tools as rubrics, journals, portfolios, research scenarios, team projects, and formal assessments. The possibilities are endless, for if you keep in mind the tenets of constructivist theory, it makes your students aware of and responsible for their own knowledge processing.

For Further Reading

http://carbon.cudenver.edu/~mryder/itc_data/constructivism.html
http://www.funderstanding.com/constructivism.cfm
http://www.towson.edu/csme/mctp/Essays.html
http://www.cdli.ca/~elmurphy/emurphy/cle.html

TFS Welcomes First Advisory Board Member

Teaching For Success welcomes Vicki Brooks, Instructor, Columbia College, as the first *TFS* Advisory Board member. She teaches business and computer classes and consistently receives high evaluations from her students and high regard from administration.

Vicki teaches online and traditional courses and has experience with home schooling and public school teaching. Her expertise in education will be a great help to guiding *TFS*.

If you would like to help out too, contact TFS. (See contact info bottom of page 8.).

Give Back to Your Community and Learn

Cathy Alsman
Associate Professor & Program Chair,
Human Services Ivy Tech State College
Terre Haute, Indiana

As educators, we are charged with both training our students and nurturing their ethical responsibility for altruism.

How do we achieve this? Human service students approach their college education with varied backgrounds and differing levels of experience in providing assistance to others.

Classroom activities are important, of course. But by taking the students into the community you can encourage a spirit of volunteerism that is even more beneficial to the aspiring human service provider.

The Introduction to Human Services class requires students with little or no training as professional helpers to volunteer their services for a minimum of ten hours in the community.

More advanced students are required to complete two 160-hour internship placements.

Community Partners

How do we establish the community relationships that make this aspect of our students' education possible? First, target potential community agencies, organizations, and businesses to understand their needs. Then incorporate the richest opportunities into the community service plan for students.

An outside service requirement encourages students to question their areas of interest while experiencing what a particular field is really like. Students sometimes find the area that they thought was appealing to them is not. Often times, this opportunity confirms their desire to pursue education in that field.

By participating, organizations will learn they can count on the college as a source of help for special projects or events. In return, the community receives valuable man-hour assistance at no cost.

Value in Real Dollars

Records show that from December 2002 through December 2003, the students in the Human Service program at Ivy Tech State College volunteered 7,570 service hours.

Calculated at the current minimum wage of $5.15 per hour, this example alone represents $38,985 donated—a substantial impact indeed.

Armed with these statistics, it is usually simple to market student volunteer/internship programs to local entities. Give examples of what has been gained by prior sponsors and ask how prospective sponsors could specifically benefit by participating.

Importantly, establishing relationships with internship sites highlights your specific program, and also promotes the image of the college as a good neighbor to the community.

Remember interns are students first, volunteers second.

Students will be supervised by the assigned on-site professional. The instructor should regularly visit the site to ensure that the quality of the student/sponsor experience is maintained to expected academic standards.

Short Term Volunteering

Helping out at community functions serves several purposes:

- Organizations that benefit from student volunteer time may be more willing to expand their future involvement for longer term service/internship site placement.
- It provides an opportunity for institutions of higher learning to become more active members of the community.
- Representatives of the college become more accessible and visible to the community.

All Students Welcome

Students in programs other than human services may not have the opportunity to volunteer through their curriculum. All students are encouraged to join the ranks of volunteers.

Many community activities require little to no training for students to be valuable participants.

When given the chance to donate time, most students report being pleasantly surprised upon experiencing the satisfaction that comes with volunteering.

Perhaps most important of all is the intrinsic reward students receive from their overall experience sharing their time and talents with others.

At the bottom line, the exchange of volunteer effort for hands-on experience is mutually beneficial for everyone involved.

Why not involve your classes in your schools' volunteer program?

No current program? No problem. Here's an opportunity for you and your colleagues to start one!

The Value of a Problem

The same thrill, the same awe and mystery, come again and again when we look at any problem deeply enough.

—Richard P. Feynman

Teaching For Success® *ISSN 1084-0427*
Eight issues per year, August through April (except December) by Pentronics Publishing, PO Box 8379, South Lake Tahoe, CA 96158-1379. Sold as annual subscriptions only; eight issues. Editions: Electronic or Black and White Master with Site License. Go to teachingforsuccess.com for the latest rate information. Pentronics Publishing E-mail: jack@teachingforsuccess.com; Phone: 800-757-1183. Publisher, Jack H. Shrawder. Note: Photos unless specifically identified are of models. Penny Shrawder graciously allows TFS to use her original oil painting image "Full Expression" to portray the ultimate goal of teaching and learning.