

CREATIVE TEACHING

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"HOME-GROWN" TALENT

A childhood playmate of mine who lived behind me, too many years ago for me to want to recall, was particularly rude to me as I lunched and played with him at his house one day—upon his invitation. I remember declaring, "You shouldn't be mean to company." Unmoved by my plea for better treatment, he retorted: "Company always comes in a car!"

I've never forgotten that line. The idea that I was somehow less worthy of his respect simply because I didn't come from further away (in a car) just didn't seem right. But it's occurred to me on numerous occasions over the years how often we make similar judgments of people in the professional realm. We—or someone above us—will spend thousands of dollars bringing in outside consultants for advice or training that could actually be provided, at little or no cost, by our own people. Moreover, the "home-grown" talent might be at least as good as, if not better than, the fancy high-priced talent that might be brought in. (Part of why they're so fancy, by the way, has to do with how well they tend to get paid!)

Don't get me wrong: outside consultants sometimes have a very valuable contribution to make to organizations. I'd better say that; I used to be one (though I somehow missed the "fancy, high-priced" part)! But especially at a time of "fiscal belt-tightening," it becomes incumbent upon organizations to find and nurture their own native talent, drawing from it in ways that help the organization to develop and reach its goals.

In this regard, I am particularly proud of our native talent when it comes to modeling and disseminating the knowledge, skills, and abilities of excellent teaching. This was brought home this past year, as colleagues of ours led workshops on topics as diverse as student portfolio development and evaluation, using popular culture to teach subjects, using both ancient and "cutting-edge" technologies in the classroom, and incorporating writing assignments into non-writing courses on the one hand, and using yoga to reduce stress, successful gardening, and grieving life's inevitable losses on the other.

Andrew D. Zimmerman, editor

FOCUS ON...

GEORGE SCHLIFKIN

Someone meeting George Schlifkin for the first time is apt to have the impression that he is a retiring sort of person. In fact, some of his colleagues here at Delaware Tech who have seen him in the halls or classrooms, but never had much opportunity to interact with him, may regard him this way.



And while this is one perception, there is definitely "another George Schlifkin"—the one that his colleagues who know him best get to experience. This George Schlifkin is both passionate about teaching and fun-loving, with a sense of



George Schlifkin

humor that gushes forth at unexpected times. The only possibly "retiring" thing about this George Schlifkin is the retirement—in its usual meaning—that he has contemplated, but so far postponed. As he recently explained to some newly made acquaintances at a show, "I could have retired three years ago, but why quit when you're having fun?"

George began his college education in engineering. Like so many college students, he had been guided there by parental wisdom: his dad had said, "That's where you make a lot of money!" Although he did "ok," he knew this was not for him.

What was for him was teaching; ever since he was a kid he would rearrange the furniture at home and pretend he was teaching. As a young student, after class he would go to the board and recreate the lectures about mathematical

continued on back

theorems, or whatever happened to have been taught that day. In twelfth grade, as a student of Latin, he actually taught a class for the teacher.

So it was perhaps inevitable that he was to get out of engineering and into education. He reports having experienced a tremendous feeling of relief. He was, however, clear on one thing: he had no interest in working with young children.

After getting his bachelor's degree, George taught math from 1967 until 1980 at Seaford High School, earning his M.Ed. along the way in 1975. After Seaford, he did a brief (one year) stint at Glasgow High, which he describes as a "very challenging experience...blackboard jungle"[-like]. The first thing he would hear in the morning was a put-down, profanity, or threat.

After that year, George went to Cecil County, teaching sixth and seventh grades. That year, he also got a job teaching here in the evenings, in the math lab. The following summer, while on a tour out west, the department chair (Pat Hirschy) tracked him down and offered him a full-time position.

George sees his greatest asset to be his desire to be a good teacher. He abidingly believes that "just about anyone can learn math—if they're willing." But in his characteristically self-deprecating way, in saying it like this he omits the very ingredient which is his greatest asset: the commitment of a good teacher. He has a deep "appreciation of being a part of a community college environment," and the opportunity it affords him to "take people that may have been [otherwise] written off, and do a good job."

Like most of us, George feels most able to do that job when he is left alone and given the professional regard—and latitude—to do it. Hopefully, he will continue to have that feeling, and he will stay with us for a few more years.

WELCOME, NEW COLLEAGUES!

It is inevitable that people will leave our lives and other people will enter; it's as true in the professional part of our lives as it is in the private part. Some of these changes are joyous—as when a colleague moves on to something they'd rather do at this point in their lives; others are painful—as when a colleague passes on from this life. In both cases, though, we have the opportunity to allow new people into our lives, or to work with those we have known, but in new capacities.

Laurel Ferris-Ratcliffe is our new Library Specialist. A Delawarean, she was in retail management for many years. A mid-life change of goals and field of interest brought her to library science. Her love of books led her to employment with the New Castle County Department of Libraries, serving at both the Elsmere and Bear libraries. She also attended Drexel University during this time, completing a Masters in Library Science. She was drawn to Delaware Tech. by the diversity of our students.

Mark Handley joined the Business Administration department with the beginning of the current academic year. Mark has an MBA from Ball State University, and is a Certified Computing Professional (CCP). He comes to us

from Wesley College, where he was Associate Professor of Business Administration from 1999 until this year and Program Director of Business Administration from 2000 until this year. Prior to that, Mark taught at three other higher education institutions—Green Mountain College, Frostburg State University, and Central College—between 1986 and 1999. He was also an instructor of management information systems for the ITT Business Institute, and has held various positions in banking, insurance, consumer finance, and computer operations. Mark has been recognized in USA Today for the AT&T/USA Today Collegiate Investment Challenge educator division, 1991-1993. He's been as busy at home as he has at work: married for 25 years, he and his wife have 8 children..

Wilford Oney, our new evening counselor, joins us by way of Owens campus, where he was both an evening counselor and an English instructor. Another lifelong Delawarean, Wilford has a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration and a Master's degree. Prior to coming to Delaware Tech, he worked in business and industry for eleven years. One day, he decided he wanted to become a teacher and, earning his Master's degree in special education, taught developmental English for two years in Delaware schools.

Changing places are several of our other colleagues: **Barbara Sheppard** recently took over as chair of the Early Childhood Education department, following Angela Shreve's retirement. **Patricia Williams**, formerly the director of the Child Development Center, has moved into Barbara's previous position as instructor of Early Childhood Education. And **Joe Schubert** has been named Coordinator of the Business Administration department, filling a vacuum left by Don Thomas' untimely death last year.