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A Note From Your Coordinator

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Greetings from your AFACCT Coordinator.

Within a few very short weeks, the fall 2007 semester activities will begin at the 16 Maryland community colleges. Maryland’s Higher Education Commission estimates that 121,350 students will be attending our state community colleges this fall, an increase of 15% over last fall 2006. They’re now registering for classes, buying their books, and doing what needs to be done to get ready for classes. And faculty, along with administrators and staff, have been diligently preparing for this influx of students. Much has happened at our campuses since the beginning of 2007, when we held our last AFACCT Conference. It’s difficult to predict what will happen in the next year, except that we will be expected to teach many more students this year.

For those who are new to Maryland community colleges and the role that AFACCT has played, let me first talk about us. During its 23 years of existence, Maryland’s Association of Faculties for Advancement of Community College Teaching (AFACCT) has provided professional development opportunities for faculty in Maryland community colleges, mainly by organizing a statewide conference held at a community college campus centrally located to enable as many as possible to participate. For faculty members throughout Maryland, the annual AFACCT conference represents an opportunity to develop their professional skills and knowledge, to share research and expertise, and to network with



Richard Sciliano

others in their teaching disciplines.

This past year’s Conference, held at Harford Community College in January 2007, focused on the theme of “Critical Thinking, Critical Teaching.” Along with peer presentations on this theme, many other presentations explored topics of equal significance and currency. I’d like to offer my sincere thanks and congratulations to those who contributed to the success of Conference 2007. I can’t say enough about how much AFACCT depends on our colleagues who give of their time to create outstanding presentations, our keynote and featured speakers, sponsors who donated door prizes, Prentice-Hall Publishing who provided a delicious breakfast, peer organizations who scheduled meetings during the conference, the member colleges who give us financial support, the Chief Academic Officers of Maryland community colleges (M4CAO), and each of you who attend the event. Lastly, I cannot overlook the AFACCT Board members. I thank them all for their work in planning and managing the conference. We are fortunate to have so many people committed to advancing professional development in our state.

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We invite you to submit articles on your classroom teaching/learning successes, current educational topics that you want to share, and your professional achievements. Send photos related to your article and one of yourself for publication. We invite articles from all disciplines.

“A Note From Your Coordinator”

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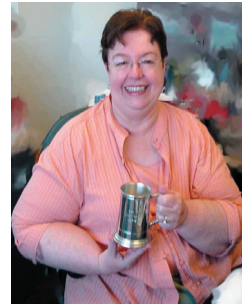
And now onto to next year’s conference scheduled for January 10 and 11, 2008, and hosted by Carroll Community College, in Westminster, Maryland. It will focus on the theme “Proving and Improving Teaching and Learning,” a topic of particular importance as faculty continue to measure and improve the effectiveness of both their teaching and their students’ learning. The keynote speaker on the first day of the conference will be Linda Suskie, Vice President of the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, and the former Director of Assessment at Towson University.

The Call for Proposals will soon be in the hands of your AFACCT Representatives or can be found on the AFACCT web site <http://www.afacct.csm.edu/> for an electronic version. While the theme focuses on how we prove and improve our teaching, we welcome presentations on any topic that advances community college teaching. Discipline groups are again welcome to hold their meetings during the Conference. The proposal deadline is September 30, 2007. So, mark your calendars for January 10 and 11, 2008. Join us at Carroll Community College for the 18th Annual AFACCT Conference.

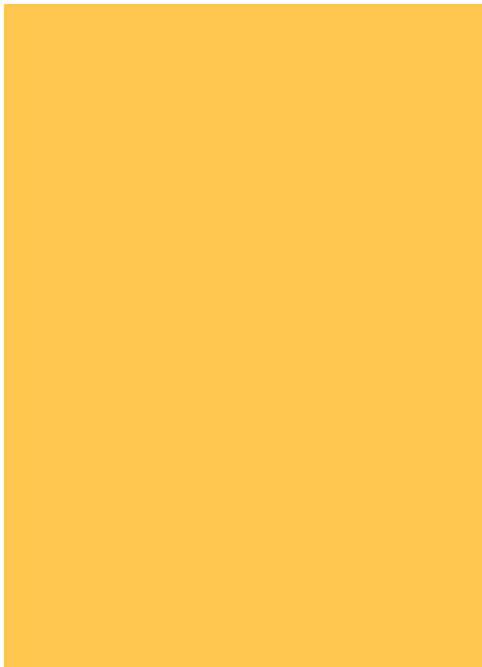
Finally, at our last AFACCT Board meeting in April 2007, the Board honored two of our esteemed members. We said good-bye to Marilyn Pugh, the Assistant Coordinator of AFACCT for many years. Marilyn worked diligently over the years on our annual conferences, was the editor of both *Communitas* and Conference Proceedings and in charge of the gifts for all the presenters. Marilyn retired in June from Prince George’s Community College after almost 40 years. Also, we honored Cathy Sewell of Chesapeake College for her dedicated service as the previous AFACCT Coordinator. We thank you both for your dedication in helping to make this organization successful.



Marilyn Pugh
Prince George’s Community College



Cathy Sewell
Chesapeake College



Mark Your Calendars

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Alan Bogage

We at Carroll Community College welcome faculty and educators from across the state to our campus for the annual AFACCT conference on January 10 and 11, 2008. This will be the first time the conference will be held on the Carroll campus. Attendees will have the opportunity to see the facilities and campus while attending a wide variety of conference sessions.

The college's president, Dr. Faye Pappalardo, places emphasis on creating an academic environment that puts students first and ensures that the college is accessible and affordable to all Carroll County citizens. "I am proud to be part of an institution of higher education which invites students of all ages to learn in an atmosphere of integrity, caring, and congeniality. I am pleased to say that Carroll Community College fully supports our students' pursuits of their dreams," said Dr. Pappalardo.

Carroll Community College has a long, rich history of remarkable growth. The college has evolved from a small rural campus to an 80-acre property marked by modern architecture, housing classrooms with state-of-the-art technology.

Responding to interest expressed by citizens of Carroll County, the Carroll County Board of Commissioners examined the need for additional educational opportunities in the county in 1973. Catonsville Community College took an interest in the idea and presented a

proposal, which was sent to a Community College Advisory Committee for its recommendations. On February 10, 1976, the Carroll County Commissioners entered into a three-year contractual agreement with Catonsville Community College to establish a branch campus in Carroll County. The green light was given for the Carroll County branch of Catonsville Community College to begin its instructional program for more than 750 students with over 1500 course registrations.

Consistent growth of the student body, program demands, and future planning resulted in several facility changes, with the college's first home in the old Robert Moton Elementary School on Center Street. The county, following the recommendation of the Advisory Board, purchased a site on Route 32. Later the East End Elementary School was briefly used for additional classroom space. Then in January, 1982, the county made the North Center Street building available to the college.

In April, 1983, the state passed legislation enabling Carroll County to request state funds for the college under guidelines that applied to all community colleges. This resulted in significant planning for a movement towards permanent facilities for the college.

In 1992, the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) directed the

Maryland Secretary of Higher Education to begin the process for the college to achieve degree-granting status as a two-year community college.

In late 1992, the college met with the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools (MSACS), to become accredited as a two-year, degree-granting institution. After visits by evaluating teams representing MHEC and MSACS, degree-granting status was offered by MHEC in 1993 and candidacy with MSACS was awarded the same year.

Carroll Community College was granted full accreditation in 2001 and MSACS acted to reaffirm the accreditation until 2010.

The physical growth of the campus continues to flourish, as well. In 1997, the Random House Library building was built. The Fine Arts, Business Training Center and Life Fitness buildings were completed in 2002. In addition, the Nursing and Allied Health building was completed in 2004. Plans are underway for additional classroom buildings to accommodate the burgeoning growth of the institution.

We are looking forward to a productive and stimulating conference this year. The staff, faculty, and students of Carroll Community College welcome conference attendees to its campus.



Carroll Community College Campus



“And Gladly Would He Learn”

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Introduction

Today’s pedagogy focuses on the teacher’s role in the learning process. In an attempt to engage students, the professor creates activities and provides an environment that are meant to spark students’ interests so that they will commit to mastering course content and skills. Yet this hard-working, earnest professor whom we teachers commend often becomes frustrated, even discouraged, when all of the effort and good will do not lead inevitably to anticipated outcomes. What else or what more, we may ask, can the professor do to motivate students? One answer is to change the question: what attitude and responsibility should we expect the students to assume for their own learning?

Students in Charge of Their Own Learning

The successful professor recognizes and respects students by not putting them in passive roles that deny them the opportunity to take charge of their learning which thereby sabotages their ability to become independent learners. In *Getting Well Again*, a book that addresses the relationship between mind and body for cancer patients, the authors believe that family members should support the patients without rescuing them: “*Rescuing* may look as if you are helping someone, when in fact you are reinforcing weakness and powerlessness” (Simonton, Matthews-Simonton, and Creighton 252).



Dr. Rebecca A. Kajs

While “the rescuer may appear to be loving and caring, [he/she] actually contributes to incapacitating the patient” (253). Rescuing is an apt description of what the professor often does in the classroom to the students. We can all recall occasions when we have rescued our students and assumed that we were being good teachers in doing so. One outcome of rescuing is rewarding the students for being weak, which can leave students feeling like victims. For example, they may assert that former teachers or their current work hours explain their failure to learn. The unsuccessful professor will accept the students’ plight as beyond their control. But just as ill persons must participate in their own health (Simonton, Matthews-Simonton, and Creighton 114-26), students must participate in their own learning. Rather than feel trapped or expect the professor to do something, *they* must search for solutions. In short, if the students want success, they must be properly disposed; that is, they must want to learn and be committed to do so, accepting the limitations caused by work, family, or weak instruction and doing the best they can in their present circumstances.

Those Who Gladly Learn

In the movie *Educating Rita*, Rita, a twenty-seven-year-old English hairdresser who has enrolled in her first Open University course, asks her teacher Dr. Frank Bryant, “Do you think I can learn?”

He asks her, “Are you serious about wanting to learn?” He then tells her that she must “discipline her mind” (Gilbert) because learning requires work, earnestness, and dedication to purpose.

These are the qualities Frederick Douglass, in his *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave*, exemplifies. As a slave in antebellum Maryland, Douglass was denied the opportunity to read or write. When the young Douglass arrived in Baltimore, Mistress Auld began to teach the boy his letters—until her husband forbade it. Smitten with the desire to learn, Douglass tells his readers that he was “compelled to resort to various stratagems” as he “had no regular teacher” (81). He also had to learn on the sly. From the poor white children in the neighborhood, he learned to read. He would “bestow [bread] upon the hungry little urchins, who, in return, would give [him] that more valuable bread of knowledge” (83). Learning to write required a more concerted effort. He would copy the letters that ship carpenters marked on the timbers (such as ‘L’ for larboard side), copy the words in Webster’s Spelling Book, and reproduce the letters in the copybook that belonged to his master’s son. As Tom Sawyer would later do, he tricked other boys. Douglass would claim that he could write better than they, and “in this way [he] got a good many lessons in writing which it is quite possible [he] should never have gotten any other way” (87). Finally, after many years and “a long, tedious effort, [he] succeeded in learning to read and write” (87).

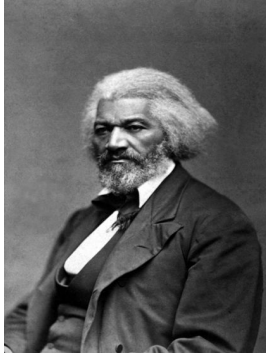
Barriers in the Process

Our students, in contrast to Douglass, are not denied the opportunity to learn.

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“And Gladly Would He Learn”

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Frederick Douglass

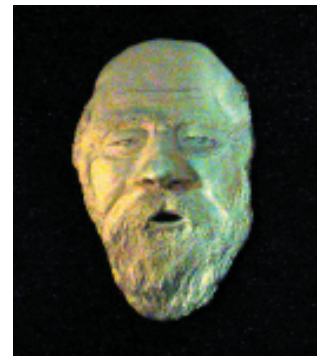
They do have a “regular teacher” as well as technological tools and up-to-date methods of instruction. We certainly do not want to deny them opportunity and means as a contrary motivation for them to copy Douglass’ efforts. What we do want to do is to identify some attitudinal barriers in the learning process and some means by which the successful professor can break those barriers.

One barrier, usually the first, is that the students already think they know. They hold what Socrates calls a false opinion. They cannot be properly disposed to learn if they think they have nothing to learn. Meno, in Plato’s dialogue *Meno*, and Sylvia, in Toni Cade Bambara’s short story “The Lesson,” think they know the meanings of key words—*virtue* and *real money*, respectively. Meno, described as “greedy for wealth and power, ambitious, [and] a treacherous friend always seeking his own advantage” (Grube 1), has come to Athens to ask Socrates how virtue can be acquired. Socrates begins the lesson by telling Meno that first they must define *virtue*. Meno replies that to define *virtue* “is not hard”: it is “being able to manage public affairs and in so doing benefit his friends and harm his enemies and to be careful that no harm comes to himself”

(Plato 71e). Miss Moore, an African–American outsider who teaches Sylvia and her friends during the summer, asks Sylvia, a poor African–American girl in New York City, if she knows what *real money* is (Bambara 153). Sylvia assures Miss Moore she knows: it is not “poker chips or monopoly papers we lay on the grocer” (153).

When Socrates and Miss Moore recognize that Meno’s and Sylvia’s knowledge is incorrect or incomplete, their job is to enlighten their students without rescuing them. Effective questioning and an experience are two methods that allow students to realize their error. Dialectic, a form of questioning that draws forth knowledge from students by pursuing a series of questions and examining the implications of their answers, is Socrates’ method. After Meno offers multiple definitions of *virtue*, Socrates asks Meno questions that should enable Meno to see why each attempt is illogical and denotatively incorrect. So that her students may understand the meaning of *real money*, Miss Moore takes them on a field trip uptown—to Fifth Avenue’s F. A. O. Schwarz toy store. Here they see a microscope for \$300, a paperweight for \$480, and a “Handcrafted sailboat of fiberglass” for “one thousand one hundred ninety-five dollars” (155). These prices for toys define *real money* as more than money used to buy groceries.

If these pedagogical methods are effective, students often put up another barrier: they resist. Certain they know, they cling to their false opinion because they do not like feeling ignorant. They do not understand that *ignorant* does not mean stupid—it means “not knowing”—and that accepting ignorance is a necessary condition if they are to move from not knowing to knowing. Their bewilderment after such certainty is part of the pain of learning. Meno describes himself as



“perplexed,” with his mind and tongue “numb” because even though he has “made many speeches about virtue before large audiences on a thousand occasions . . . [he now] cannot even say what it is” (Plato 80b). Sylvia too is bewildered. Staring at the sailboat, she hears herself say, “Unbelievable” (Bambara 155). She is “stunned” and looks again at the price “just in case the group recitation put [her] in a trance” (155). Unfortunately, it is at this point that a professor may want to rescue the students from their pain by, for example, providing answers. After his admission of ignorance, Meno insists Socrates define *virtue* so that they can discuss how virtue can be acquired. But Socrates refuses to define the word for him. Sylvia also wants answers: “‘What I want to know is’ I says to Miss Moore, ‘how much a real boat costs? I figure a thousand’d get you a yacht any day’” (156). When Miss Moore asks Sylvia to “check that out and report back to the group” (156), Sylvia thinks that “‘If you gonna ruin a perfectly good swim day least you could do is have some answers’” (156).

When the professor does not rescue the students by providing answers, the students’ puzzlement can turn into anger, especially at the teacher. Meno resorts to

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“And Gladly Would He Learn”

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***Learning is the journey,
not the destination. The
professor sets them on that
journey without necessarily
knowing who will arrive
or when.***

name-calling. In looks and acts, Socrates is likened to a torpedo fish who numbs people and who uses sorcery to bewitch and beguile. From the beginning, Sylvia hates Miss Moore, calling her a “nappy-head bitch” (Bambara 153). Sylvia compares her to the winos, who have ruined the children’s play areas. At the end of the field trip, Sylvia is the only student who will *not* give Miss Moore the satisfaction of stating what they learned that day.

At this point, the students who want to move from ignorance to knowledge ask the questions. Meno is not one of these students. A man without character, he has no desire to be virtuous, only to appear so. He quits and thereby rejects self-knowledge. In contrast is Sylvia, one of those students who want to learn. As she rides the train home, she recalls a toy clown doing somersaults that costs \$35 and realizes that “Thirty-five dollars would pay the rent and the piano bill too. Who are these people that spend that much for performing clowns and \$1,000 for toy sailboats? What kinda work they do and how they live and how come we ain’t in on it?” (Bambara 157). Her resolute and persistent enquiry gives her a chest pain and “a headache for thinkin’ so hard” (157). Back home, she separates herself from her friends so that she can “think this day through” (157). Her pain as confusion and anger is the foundations for her

arriving at true opinion. Sylvia knows something is amiss. Determined to find out what that something is, Sylvia, like Chaucer’s Oxford student, gladly would learn.

It may seem as if placing the responsibility for learning on the students leaves them and the professor wondering if either can claim success. After all, neither Meno nor Sylvia appreciates the professor whose persistence has made them feel inadequate. And the endings of each lesson seem indeterminate. When Socrates says that “the time has come for [him] to go” (Plato 100b), no one has defined *virtue*. Before the children disperse, Miss Moore looks “sorrowfully” (Bambara 157) at Sylvia who seems not to have profited from the excursion. But the professor who seeks outpourings of gratitude suitable for a Hollywood movie or measurable outcomes at the moment misses the point. Learning is the journey, not the destination. The professor sets them on that journey without necessarily knowing who will arrive or when. He or she must accept this indeterminacy while still providing the signposts and the support without rescuing them.

Resources

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[“And Gladly Would He Learn” is reprinted with permission from *The Successful Professor*, April, 2003, pp. 1-4.]



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Floral With a Japanese Teapot

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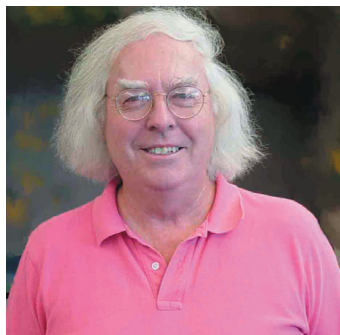


Floral with a Japanese Teapot

I began the painting *Floral with a Japanese Teapot* by working up the bouquet of flowers, painting each one carefully from life. The teapot and plant stand were added as the work progressed.

The Japanese teapot is the key to contemplating this image. This process of thoughtful examination, leading to a greater appreciation of art and nature, and our relationship to both, is an important part of oriental culture. For instance, the Taoist flower garden in China and Japan, Haiku poetry, and the Japanese tea ceremony have a transcendental aspect, a refinement, simplicity, and elegance that heightens the perception of timeless beauty.

In the Taoist garden, forms were the visible, material manifestations of a higher Reality. To the ancient agrarian societies, phenology, or the dynamic inter-relationship among plants, animals, and climate, often had a practical, as well as a philosophic function. In China, the Jing-Zhe (awakening of the insects) mark-



James Plumb

ed the beginning of the planting season. Crickets, katydids, and cicadas, valued for their singing ability, were kept in various decorated cases and cages. Because they sing in the autumn and die in the winter, they became associated with sadness, loneliness, and the fate of humankind.

The poem, "Cricket," by Xi, who lived during the Ming Dynasty, illustrates the emotion evoked by the cricket's chirp in autumn:

The singing cricket
Chirps throughout the long night,
Tolling in the cloudy autumn with its
rain,
Intent on disturbing the gloomy
sleepless soul,
The cricket moves toward the bed
Chirp by chirp.

The participants in the highly ritualized and spiritually significant Japanese tea ceremony would have appreciated the beautifully decorated teapot, a reminder of nature's beauty and the seasonal cycles that were so much a part of their own lives. The katydid was symbol of thriving prosperity due to its ability to lay hundreds of eggs. It adds an optimistic touch to this lovely design that allows the participants in the tea ceremony to contemplate the connection among themselves, the natural world, and art.



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Jim Plumb, Professor of Art at Chesapeake College, earned his M.F.A. from Brooklyn College; he has worked as a curator at the Academy in Easton, Maryland. He has won awards from directors and curators of the National Gallery of Art, the Baltimore Museum of Art, the Hirshorn Museum, and the O.K. Harris Gallery in New York City. One of his drawings was selected for a touring show of Maryland Artists, curated by Lee Leming of Art News and presented by Maryland Arts Place. From 1990 until recently, Jim showed his work at the David Adamson Gallery in Washington, D.C. He now exhibits his work at the Leslie Levy Art Gallery in Scottsdale, Arizona.