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Filene, Peter. (2005). *The Joy of Teaching: A Practical Guide for New College Instructors*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press.

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Faculty members, neophyte and veteran, should rightly concern themselves with assessment of how to best design and deliver their courses. In *The Joy of Teaching: A Practical Guide for New College Instructors*, Peter Filene has provided a platform to aid in that assessment for both new faculty members as well as seasoned professors. The book provides insight not only into the rudiments of college teaching, such as construction of a syllabus and facilitation of class discussion, but also into arenas of import outside of the process of teaching, such as relating to students and balancing teaching with other university commitments. (For an overview of legal issues associated with course syllabi, *see* Terrence Leas, The Course Syllabus: Legal Status and Implications for Practitioners, 177 *Ed.Law.Rep*. 711 (2003). *See also* Donna R. Euben and Barbara A. Lee, Faculty Discipline: Legal and Policy Issues in Dealing With Faculty Misconduct, 32 *J.C.&U.L.* 241 (2006).) While new faculty members will find this concise treatise to be of particular use, the book includes thoughtful points and arguments that will also encourage experienced faculty to revisit their classroom procedures.

The author makes clear that the corpus of the book focuses on those issues requiring the most time of new instructors: developing, preparing for, and teaching courses. At only 176 pages, including notes, an annotated bibliography, and indices, the book is not an exhaustive treatment of the topic; however, the author did not intend for it to be so. Rather, he referred to it as "a short guidebook--suggestive rather than exhaustive" (p. 1). Despite its brevity, the book recognizes variance in teaching styles and in course composition "...from 300 person courses to ten person seminars and from research universities to community colleges," (p. 1) and examples culled from interviews with both seasoned and beginning faculty are peppered throughout the text. For a more comprehensive and detailed treatment of the subject of collegiate instruction and extant research, readers can refer to McKeachie and Svinicki's *McKeachie's Teaching Tips: Strategies, Research, and Theory for College and University Teachers* (2006).

The Joy of Teaching will serve new faculty as a valuable resource for development and delivery of their courses, and will challenge experienced faculty to reassess their skills. This review surveys the book's contents and provides suggestions for further reading to supplement salient topics.

The book is divided into four parts, the first three addressing a grouping of issues related to postsecondary instruction and the fourth providing an annotated bibliography of sources germane to research regarding college teaching. The first section of the book focuses upon basic philosophical points of the craft of college teaching, such as developing an understanding of personal teaching perspective, gaining an understanding of the students who will participate in the process, and thinking toward the development of course outcomes.

In the initial chapter, Filene addressed the internalization of the process of teaching in the college setting, through which he posed a number of thoughtful questions: Why do you want to teach? Who are you as a college teacher? Who are your students and how do you connect with them? What are your goals in terms of how you support the class and what they learn? He suggested that, according to research, good college teachers possess five characteristics that turn less on expertise than on personal skill: enthusiasm for the subject, which he asserts is the polestar inquiry--that is to say, devotion to the subject attaches meaning for its transition to the student; clarity, which is characterized as transmission to students in an easily understood verbiage; organization, required to achieve clarity; stimulation of the desire to pursue the subject; and care for students within the realm of their ability to succeed and support for them toward that end. He encouraged reflection with regard to what affected "you", as the new instructor, the most as a college student: the dramatic professor, the erudite scholar who uses no notes, the discussor, or the Socratic, who embraces the idea of question and answer as means to effect learning.

He argued, however, that while emulation of instructors who bore meaning from a personal perspective is a sound starting point, new faculty must move beyond imitation into the development of an internal framework, arguing that identity is a function of process over formula: "Whether consciously or unconsciously, each of us works with some notions of what we think is good (and bad) pedagogy. So the more you can put those notions out in front of yourself, the more likely you will design a course that fits you rather than a teacher you admire" (p. 11). He concluded by noting that no good college teacher ever closes this chapter in personal development.

The book offers suggestions for assessing student preconceptions and suggests also developing an awareness of student stage of cognitive development. Filene referred here to William G. Perry's theory of college student intellectual development, which posits that students cycle through four stages of cognitive development: dualism, in which a student views the world from the distinct perspective of right or wrong; relativism, in which dualism has eroded, but knowledge is viewed as simply a matter of interpretation; multiplicity, in which complexity is recognized and ambiguity can be tolerated; and commitment, an internalization of knowledge and ability to apply beyond the classroom setting. Filene cautioned, however, that other variables are also at play within the framework of student intellectual development, such as gender, economic class, and ethnicity.

Finally, Part One treats the process of course construction by defining "aims and outcomes" (p. 23) noting that beginning professors often experience difficulty focusing upon outcomes. Filene proposed that a faculty member can assess aims and outcomes by asking two questions: "Which ideas or themes do you want to teach?" and "What kinds of skills will your course help them develop in order to answer those questions?"

A seasoned faculty member will experience much less difficulty in this regard. For example, Filene noted that "[a]fter traveling twenty-some times through her course, my colleague knows the route. She has rehearsed and refined her goals. Before you jump in for the first time, on the other hand, you'll do better if you define where you're heading and why" (p. 25). Beginning professors should define learning outcomes and expectations, as well as how he or she will teach so that the

students can meet these goals. Part One concludes the chapter with a checklist for brainstorming aims and outcomes.

The second section of the book focuses upon the mechanics of basics such as construction of syllabi, formation of lecture, fomenting and coordination of discussion, providing a broad learning experience, and the process of evaluating student progress and grading accordingly.

Filene began this section by detailing how to develop a class calendar that includes such basics as lectures, discussions, and assignments, cautioning that covering (or attempting to cover) too much ground leads only to surface learning. He further explored related concerns about amount of material and time constraints. For example, in the section entitled "Covering," Filene described the disconnect inherent between material and time, while in the section entitled "Uncovering" he analyzed the decision process under-girding material that should be included or excised.

The author argued that a professor needs to "calibrate the overall rhythm and sequence" (p. 41) of a course, noting that subject matter must obviously be considered in the process. Unlike courses in the sciences or accounting, some humanities courses may not require linear or cumulative learning, and must be structured to reflect disciplinary concerns. For a comprehensive historical of the American college curriculum, readers should refer to Frederick Rudolph's *Curriculum: A History of the American Undergraduate Course of Study Since 1636* (1977). The period from 1977 forward is ripe for scholarly inquiry.

Part Two then shifts its focus to the lecture, and is framed by statistics indicating that the lecture, for all of its limitations and criticisms, remains the predominant methodology of college instruction. Filene argued that "[o]n the positive side, lectures work as effectively as other methods to deliver information and ideas. On the negative side, they work less effectively than discussion for promoting independent thought or developing cognitive skills" (p. 47).

Five keys to lecture success are forwarded: Pose a question at the beginning of or partially through the class; state the significance of the question of the day; go beyond "remember this": compare two schools of thought and provide a hook; offer your own answer, buttressed by evidence; and leave students with another question. Reading lectures directly from notes is discouraged, as ideas lose their vim when read from the page, and the instructor loses both eye contact with the audience and valuable attention span. Course organization is next addressed, providing a suggested lecture timeframe for the fifty-minute class, noting that undergraduates can typically absorb no more than two or three new ideas in a single session: "That eloquent, riveting professor whom you wish to emulate was once a shaky-voiced novice clutching his or her notes. If you concentrate first on organization and clarity, your students will learn effectively. The rest will come with practice" (p. 55).

Part Two then outlines suggestions for initiating and maintaining robust class discussions surrounding assigned materials. The new professor should define "where you want to go and why you want to go there" (p. 56). This is advice germane, however, to all faculty when developing discussion questions. Perhaps of most interest to new faculty, Filene offered guidance in terms of resurrecting a discussion that has begun to falter or has devolved completely. Such steps involve a candid diagnostic with a class to assess at what point the discussion began to fade in importance.

Part Two also explores assignments and activities that extend beyond the traditional pedagogies. Open-ended writing assignments, in which students craft a document from various perspectives, are suggested as an alternative to traditional writing assignments. Activities such as panel discussions involving class members or guest speakers, as well as debates or role-playing activities in which students are asked to embrace a position, analyze it critically, and defend it against opposing arguments, are also proposed.

Other methods espoused include case studies, which are growing in popularity, particularly within business and law schools, interviews and surveys, and public displays of student research in which they are asked to defend their findings. Arguably, these methods are sound and will work well in smaller seminar courses, but some of them could be difficult to manufacture in large lecture classes.

New faculty members will also appreciate that the author navigates the murky depths of assessment of student performance. Filene addressed the subject from a pragmatic perspective, emphasizing the importance of recognizing the disparity between "knowing and understanding" on the part of the student. He opined that written feedback presents only half of the necessary information loop, suggesting a more personal approach that engages students directly. Again, however, such an approach would be difficult to mount outside of smaller classes, but his overarching thesis is that students require more feedback that merely a letter grade and sparse related comments.

The book then focuses upon grading concerns, addressing the decision point regarding assessment values, noting that new faculty must decide whether to grade on a curve or by a standard and whether examinations will be cumulative or non-cumulative. Each system embodies its own relative merit, and the decision should be left to the individual faculty member or instructor and made within the context of the particular field of study and attendant expectations. Here, Filene offered examples from current faculty who embrace varying methodologies to illustrate the positive and negative aspects of each method. Various examples of grading rubrics are provided, as well as suggestions for commenting on student submissions.

With regard to student teaching evaluations, Filene argued that beyond the tenure and promotion committee, student evaluations can be useful from the personal perspective by providing a window into student assessment and allowing for personal reflection into arenas in which a new faculty member is functioning well, and other areas that perhaps may require improvement. New faculty are further assured that while evaluations can evoke a stressed response, they can and should be used as a tool for continuous improvement.

The third Part of the book reflects upon important concepts that fall outside the realm of traditional pedagogical concerns: relating to students on their own terms, and addressing self-preservation from the perspective of the new faculty member.

Filene noted that "[t]he epiphany that teachers hope to ignite is not the proverbial light bulb. It is more like a candle that they struggle to light--and then keep lit--amid the breezy yawns in classrooms and the gusts of campus life" (p. 105).

The variety of challenges presented by becoming familiar with students outside of the classroom, including the student who visits to lobby for a good grade, simply seeks friendship, or requests personal guidance, are discussed. Each of these scenarios presents a reality that attaches to all faculty, whether new to the field or long in the tooth. The author noted the potential pitfalls of extracurricular student relations, but balanced this against the benefits of conversation in the world at large. While Filene argued that some of his most effective student interaction has taken place outside of the classroom (indeed, the impact of out-of-class experiences on college student learning is well documented by scholars such as Astin (1997) and Pascarella & Terenzini (2005)), it is important for faculty, both new and entrenched, to understand the underpinnings of student-faculty relationships, strictures for which are often rooted in university policy, state law, or both. Obviously, this relationship is of import, but should not be allowed to flourish beyond the bounds of acceptable institutional expectations. (See generally Neal Hutchens, The Legal Effect of College and University Policies Prohibiting Romantic Relationships Between Students and Professors, 32 *J.L.&Educ*. 411 (2003). *Cf.* Paul Secunda, Getting to the Nexus of the Matter: A

Sliding Scale Approach to Faculty-Student Consensual Relationship Policies in Higher Education, 55 *Syracuse L.Rev*. 55 (2004).)

The author also addressed the traditional dilemma presented to faculty who teach at research-oriented institutions: Publish or Perish. There are various perspectives relative to the issue that depend upon the constitution of a particular institution: obviously, some institutions concentrate on undergraduate teaching, while others may balance teaching against research requirements. Filene argued that, across institutional types and disciplines, new faculty should embrace a balanced perspective, noting that most institutions "fall somewhere between these two poles, giving weight to both teaching and publishing" (p. 123).

Filene posited that in all too many institutions, the line is a nebulous one at best, which is an argument of some legitimacy. Academics, he contended, must juggle not two, but three weights: teaching, research, and public service. It is the third prong on which he suggests that new faculty be aware of the potential time constraints. While institutional service is of paramount importance, Filene argues that new faculty should be aware of the possibility of over-commitment to activities outside the realm of their research and teaching, suggesting an assessment of the delicate balance involved in stretching finite resources too thin.

Part Four of the book presents an annotated bibliography, in which the author outlines many resources that can be used to refine and further develop his ideas and suggestions. Included here is a summary of Ken Bain's book exploring highly successful faculty, *What the Best College Teachers Do* (2004), which has enjoyed great popularity. Bain also penned the Foreword to Filene's book.

Filene concluded this brief book with the argument that there is no cessation to a discussion of effective college teaching, reasoning that "[t]eaching and learning should not 'finish' or 'terminate' at the end of a course or a year or a book about pedagogy" (p. 132). Indeed, this is a statement that should resonate among all faculty, whether novice or old hat: continuous reflection is the key to effective instruction, and Filene's concluding suggestions for practice emphasize the point.

This book is a brief but excellent guidepost for new faculty members entering the constellation of academia, as well as for those who have been immersed in academic life for some time. All faculty members can benefit from a period of reflection and re-examination as a function of determining which methods and philosophies best serve the learning needs of our students. Peter Filene has penned a book that provides general guidance applicable across disciplines and institutions and, while of particular benefit to new faculty, can also stoke the imagination of the seasoned veteran.

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