*This issue of Core focuses on assignments and assessing student learning. The lead article by Robert Runté, who was the keynote speaker at our recent Active Learning Symposium, sets out the ways in which assessment can encourage students' active engagement with the course material. Other articles in this issue highlight effective practices for marking written work, and suggest innovative assignment approaches we hope will spark new ideas that you might use in your own assignments.*

# Designing Assessment for Active Learning

*Robert Runté*, Faculty of Education, University of Lethbridge

A mid-career colleague had become increasingly dissatisfied with his traditional chalk-and-talk teaching and decided to experiment with a more active case-based approach. Initially, he waxed enthusiastic about the difference it was making: Students, he said, were more directly engaged with the material; were mastering key concepts sooner and at a deeper level; were going well beyond rote memorization to critically analyze cases; and even class attendance had dramatically improved, because students wanted to hear and participate in the - now lively - class discussion.

Two months later, however, he pronounced the experiment a complete failure. He told me that his students had lost interest and stopped reading the cases, if they bothered to show up at all; discussions had turned into long torturous silences, punctuated by antagonistic sniping; worst of all, students were now performing well below previous classes. He now regretted ever having changed.

Puzzled by this, I asked if he was perhaps now holding students to too high a standard. He assured me that this was not the case, because he had used the exact same test as in previous years. Typical on his tests, was this question: "In the second case study, the home office of company X was located in which city? (a) Toronto, (b) Montreal, (c) New York, (d) San Francisco. When I challenged my colleague as to what possible significance such a question could have, he answered, somewhat defensively, that in order to discuss the case studies, students needed to have read them thoroughly, and by asking this very specific question about a minor

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**Upcoming events:**

**Course Design Institute**
**May 3rd & 4th**

**TEL Workshop Days**
**May 5th - York campus**
**May 6th - Glendon campus**

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## *In this issue*

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### Eight Essential Characteristics of Effective Assessment *

*T. A. Angelo*, University of Akron

Effective assessment:

1. Assesses what is actually taught

2. Provides information for improving student learning

3. Focuses on the process as well as on the products of instruction

4. Actively involves both teachers and students

5. Uses multiple and varied measures

6. Is carried out at various points during the term of instruction

7. Provides useful, timely feedback to those being assessed and those most affected – the students and teachers

8. Is an intrinsically educational activity – one that reinforces and furthers the teaching and learning goals it focuses on

\* Reproduced with the author's permission from a handout from a Workshop on Classroom Research and Classroom Assessment, University of California, Berkeley, August, 1991.

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*(Designing Assessment from page 1)* detail that had only turned up in a footnote on the final page, he could determine which students had read the case all the way through.

Unfortunately, his is an all too common misconception. A better way of checking whether students have read and understood a case is by examining whether they obtained the knowledge and skills necessary to apply the concepts to a new case; but the problem here goes much deeper than simply a failure to assess higher level thinking. In my view, it was this question, and the other rote memorization multiple-choice questions on the test, that had killed his course. It was not that the novelty had worn off, but that students had been ambushed by the first mid-term. Having come prepared to discuss all the exciting concepts from their case studies, they were confronted instead with a test that asked them for rote memorization of arbitrary and trivial details. No wonder the students who had actually mastered the key concepts had nevertheless scored poorly.

Students quickly learn that what ultimately counts is what is on the test, and so had subsequently abandoned the class, refusing to be drawn into class discussions now recognized to be redundant, and no longer bothering to read cases they had no hope of memorizing verbatim. One can attempt all the exciting, novel and engaging activities in class one can imagine, but if the test only rewards rote memorization, then true learning will be sabotaged. Indeed, the rising expectations generated by improved instruction will lead to greater resentment and more negative comments on course evaluations than if one had simply lectured.

***We therefore need to modify our approaches to evaluation if we truly want to move towards more active learning. Active learning cannot occur without "active evaluation".***

## The Need for Active Evaluation

Partly, this means a move away from an over-reliance on tests and the traditional essay towards other assessment techniques. Testing often encourages passive learning, particularly when tests are drawn from publishers' test-banks (often of questionable quality) or written by faculty who lack the training necessary to develop questions that can assess higher thinking skills. Unless properly written, tests and essay assignments can promote memorization and regurgitation without understanding, and predispose students to passively accept whatever instructors or texts tell them, rather than critically engaging with the materials.

If we want active learning, we must find ways to evaluate and reward active engagement with the material: for better or worse, assessment always drives our classes; so, if we want particular behaviours, if we want to promote particular types of knowledge or skills or attitudes, we must start by designing the evaluations that will elicit those behaviours, skills and attitudes. There are many contexts in which tests and term papers are appropriate, but these are only two of many assessment tools, and should only be used when they make pedagogical sense. We need to broaden our assessment repertoire to ensure that our evaluation promotes active learning.

***More fundamentally, however, "active evaluation" requires a change in our approach to assessment.***

First, we have to stop viewing assessment as something separate from instruction. Assessment and learning interpenetrate and need to be interconnected: Doing the case study is the assessment in a case-based course; doing the inquiry is the assessment in an inquiry-based course. Once we stop scheduling evaluation as a separate activity (e.g., examination week), everything changes: For example, it is unthinkable to tell a student the answer to a test question during a test, but it is completely appropriate to answer students' questions during a case study, or to help students with their inquiry. Whereas instructors are now sometimes curiously reluctant to help students lest it "give them an unfair advantage" on an assessment, without the artificial barrier between assessment and learning, we are free to coach students to be more successful.

Second, we need to emphasize assessment as a means of promoting learning, rather than primarily as a means of ranking students for employers or further education. We must therefore reject the "talent hunt" model of assessment, in which the purpose of evaluation is to identify that tiny elite capable of becoming future scientists or scholars. The talent hunt model of assessment certifies ability that is already there, and ranks students, but does not take a very active role in helping students improve, except in the crudest "sink or swim" approach to motivation. In my view, our purpose is not simply to identify five out of five hundred who can make it, and to discard the rest as chaff, but rather to bring all five hundred up to their fullest possible potential - the higher the achievement of the lowest common denominator, the higher the overall achievement of the field.

In contrast to the talent hunt model, active evaluation means helping students become active learners - and that means an approach focused on helping students improve. Such improvement depends upon detailed and frequent (often continual) feedback, and a greater emphasis on formative rather than summative evaluation. Formative evaluation allows for greater risk-taking because it encourages an attitude where mistakes are seen as opportunities to be embraced, rather than as something shameful.

Equally important is an emphasis on helping students become self-monitoring. Students should not have to wait until they are told by an instructor to know how they are doing. If we truly want active learners, we need to move from an external locus of control to student self-assessment. This means helping students learn how to evaluate themselves, perhaps through peer or self-grading, but more fundamentally, by teaching them about the standards of the discipline or profession. This in turn implies that our assignments must have clear criteria and be designed to engage students in activities to develop the knowledge and skills they will require in their professional lives or specific discipline.

## Principles for Achieving Active Evaluation

First, if we want active learners, we need to design assessments that create conditions for, and reward, active engagement. We therefore need clear objectives: if we want researchers, then we should introduce activities that get students researching, not answering multiple choice

# Evaluation using a Marking Matrix

## *The Pedagogy of Assessment*

*James Sheptycki*, Division of Social Science, Faculty of Arts

The woes of the double cohort and the burden of mass marking have become a familiar refrain among faculty in Ontario Universities. It is well known, however, that Universities across the world are having to adapt to increasing numbers of students. One of the central problems, especially as the end of the academic year draws ever closer, is how to mark student work and provide useful feedback to large numbers of students. In social science and humanities disciplines that emphasize research and writing skills, the student essay can present particular challenges to assessors, especially when there are large numbers of papers to read and evaluate.

Some of us have been around long enough that we can remember a time when it was possible to take a pile of student essays home for the weekend, and treat each one as an exercise in marking 'the whole paper'. How much more difficult is that to do when the 'whole essay' being marked is the seventy-third in a pile of 250? Once one has read over a dozen undergraduate essays on the topic of 'the effects of the industrial revolution on politics of class consciousness' it becomes difficult to treat each as a unique expression. All the essays begin to blur into each other. Under such conditions it is quite easy, especially for those of us who are long practiced at it, to organized the pile of papers according to an ordinal measure (ie. rank the papers from best to worst). Such a measure may be quite reliable, but how valid is it, and how do we show the validity of the measure? Ranking student papers on the basis of where they are in comparison to the competition does not help us to provide good, relevant, structured and systematic feedback. One way to structure the process of marking student essays is by

making use of a 'marking grid' or 'matrix'. Below is an example of such a marking matrix that I am currently using in marking 2nd year and 4th year take-home essays.

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**Essay Evaluation**

**Substance**

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Originality of approach | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Relevance to question | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Coherence of argument | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Depth of analysis | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Range of relevant literature covered | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Use of evidence | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

**Presentation**

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Literacy | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Accuracy | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| References and bibliography | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

(1 = excellent    2 = Good    3 = Satisfactory
4 = Poor    5 = Unsatisfactory)

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This matrix is a form of structured subjectivity. The criteria on which I base my marking falls under two basic headings: presentation and substance. I place a high regard on well presented papers with good scholarly style and proper referencing. My students know this ahead of time. This matrix measures presentation using three criteria: literacy (ie. grammar, use of metaphor, alliteration, and other elements of writing style); accuracy (ie. spelling mistakes and other proof-reading issues); and references and bibliography. But, while most of us would probably agree that presentational issues are important, we are all relatively more concerned with matters of substance.

Considering this, we would probably want to weigh criteria relating to substance differently from those relating to presentation. In this marking matrix substance is considered using six criteria, the first of which is 'originality of approach'. That ought to be balanced against 'relevance to the question'; a student can, theoretically at least, be highly original and totally irrelevant. I use the criteria 'coherence of argument' as a measure of how well structured the paper is; very poor ranking would be for a 'stream of consciousness', or a 'one damn thing after another' essay written in haste the night before. The criteria 'depth of analysis', at least the way I employ it, is concerned with how well students marshal their theoretical vocabulary in explanation. 'Range of relevant literature' can be used as a measure of the student's efforts in the library; what I look for here is evidence of extra

# 2004 UNIVERSITY-WIDE TEACHING AWARD WINNERS

The Senate Committee on Teaching and Learning is pleased to announce the recipients of this year's University-Wide Teaching Awards for teaching excellence. These awards honour those who have significantly enhanced learning at York.

The Committee received 24 strong files representing teachers across the campus who have clearly made an impact on their students and colleagues. The Committee recognizes the work involved in putting the nomination files together, and thanks the students, faculty and staff who took the time to put forward the nominees.

This year's winners are:

*Senior Full-time*:
**Tom Cohen**
Arts/History

*Full-time*:
**Sarah Parsons**
Fine Arts/Visual Arts

*Part-Time/Contract*:
**Saeed Rahnema**
Atkinson/Social Science

*Teaching Assistant*:
**Tanya Taylor**
Arts/Humanities & English

Recipients will each be honoured with a cash award from the Parents Association, a plate on the University Teaching Award plaque in Vari Hall, a desk plaque and a citation presented at convocation.

SCOTL is planning to honour the nominees as well as the award recipients as part of a general effort to promote teaching excellence and to share more broadly the practices of these outstanding teachers.

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*(Using a Marking Matrix from page 3)*

reading beyond the course text books and recommended reading list. I use the last criteria 'use of evidence' as a way of getting at how well the student links theoretical ideas to empirical data.

Other criteria can be substituted for those used in the above matrix. The point is that, prior to marking the papers, indeed prior to giving the students the essay questions, the criteria should be set out. Structured criteria can then form the basis of a dialogue, or series of dialogues. First of all, using a marking matrix such as this one provides a basis for dialogue between markers. This can be particularly important to those of us managing Teaching Assistants. The advantage should be obvious: how many of us have had to field questions or complaints arising from perceptions of differing marking standards brought to bear by different TAs? Using marking matrices can also provide a tool for structured dialogue between faculty teaching on different courses which can be useful in a variety of ways. A marking matrix usefully structures dialogue between teachers and individual students. Students wanting to know where they went wrong or what they can do to improve can see clearly what the issues are and advice can be tailored to those specific issues. Using a marking matrix is not a substitute for giving written feedback, but it can help us in structuring what feedback we give. The use of a five point scale automatically gives a summary of both the positive and negative aspects of the paper, but written feedback can help by saying precisely what the student did right or wrong, what is worth keeping and what is worth trying to improve.

Students can be heard to remark that assessment is not an objective process, and they are right. But subjectivity need not be capricious, which is usually what students imply when they lay the charge of 'subjectivity'. Using a marking matrix is a way of structuring subjectivity so that it is uniformly applied to all of the essays in that great big pile you have to take home. It is one way of structuring the subjectivity of your TAs, so that all members of the marking team are using the same set of criteria. Lastly, providing the student with a feedback sheet which includes not only the marking matrix but also some written feedback can be pedagogically sound providing, that is, that the criteria are themselves pedagogically relevant and clear from the outset. The marking system will be biased, but it will be biased in terms of factors relevant to the assignment.

The main reason I have for advocating the use of a marking grid and structured feedback is that it makes assessment part of an active learning process. Students learn not just that they got a 78%, or that they were in the top 20 percentile of the group. They also learn the reasons for their individual mark. There is another, less good, reason for adopting this technique as a marking strategy, and that is that it is a coping mechanism for handling large numbers of students. There are efficiency gains that can be made in terms of how much time we devote to marking 'the whole essay'. By structuring our approach to student assessment and feedback we can make better, more efficient use of our time and still work to ensure that our students are getting the benefit of constructive evaluation.

# Library Assignments in the Humanities & Social Sciences*

*Jody Warner and Kalina Grewal*, Scott Reference Library

*Effective library assignments enable students to develop analytical skills, contextualize their research and engage meaningfully with the scholarship in their discipline. Below are some suggestions for creative library assignments offered to serve as jumping off points that you might adapt to your own course.*

## Exploring the Research Process

Content isn't all that counts - students also need to familiarize themselves with the process of doing research. In fact, learning how a particular discipline organizes itself, what the major themes are and who the main players are, is a critical academic lesson. Reflecting on how best to find information for a particular need, or on a particular topic, is skill that will be useful for a lifetime. The following assignments should help your students to appreciate the intuitive, evaluative and time-consuming (!) aspects of conducting research. Examples are listed from easier assignments to ones that are more advanced.

- Browse the shelves at call number range X and pick out three books that catch your eye. Summarize the main themes of the titles and come up with a thesis statement for further inquiry into this area of interest.

- Create a birthday card for a family member or friend using a mix of headlines in newspapers and magazines from the day you were born (to teach searching for primary source material).

- Choose four journals from a particular field. Analyze the format, editorial policy, content, audience and style of the different periodicals.

- Choose a topic and evaluate six web sites which cover that topic. At least one personal, one government, one non-profit and one commercial site must be included. Evaluate based on accuracy, comprehensiveness, currency, authority, style, bias and comment on the different kind of sites.

- Select a topic and compare how that topic is treated in two to five different sources (e.g., an encyclopedia, a book, an article, a web site, a bibliography, etc.).

- Compile a pathfinder or research guide that outlines the major resources (e.g., encyclopedias, keywords to use, periodical indices) for finding material on a particular topic.

## Sharpening Critical Thinking

Critical thinking these days is....well, critical. Libraries go beyond their four walls and are truly gateways to the whole universe of information. Students need to be able to make sound judgments about the content and value, as well as the biases, inherent in the information sources they choose to use. The following assignments should help your students to sharpen those analytical skills! Once again, the examples are ordered from easier to more difficult.

- Choose a topic and find three articles from scholarly journals and three from popular magazines and/or newspapers. Compare the differences in style, format, content and bias.

- Compile a bibliography of 10-12 sources. Choose 5-6 sources and write an evaluative annotation that explains why you think this would be a key source to use.

- Pick a topic and research it with a resulting bibliography of 8-12 sources. Given the reading you have done, write three exam questions that you think would test a person's knowledge of this topic.

- Read an editorial from a newspaper on a topic of interest to you. Find facts to either support and/or refute statements which are made in the editorial. Alternatively, find 3 political cartoons and do the same.

- Create a course description for a topic of your choice. Compile a course kit of 8-10 readings which you think would help students taking your course. Write an introduction to the subject being covered in the course kit.

- Pick a topic and research it in the literature of the 1960's and 70's, for the same topic look at the literature in the 80's and 90's. Summarize the findings and comment on the changes in perspective that have occurred over time.

## Progressive Skills Building

There have been lively discussions about the pros and cons of using the research essay as an assignment. Its defenders affirm that such an essay is a rite of passage and the mark of a true academic. The nay sayers point out that the average first and second year student doesn't have the skills to properly handle such an assignment, leading to poor outcomes and frustration all round. As a way to mediate between these two extremes consider breaking the research essay into a number of different steps, with time built in for feedback along the way.

> **Step 1**: Choose a topic and compile an annotated bibliography of relevant material
> **Step 2**: Compose a thesis statement and write an outline
> **Step 3**: Write a draft of your essay
> **Step 4**: Edit and write the final version of the essay

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In addition to these suggested assignments, you might consider bringing your class in for a library workshop. To arrange an assignment-based library workshop and/or course specific instruction, please contact the subject librarian in your discipline. Alternatively, if you would like some quick feedback on a library assignment you've designed, please contact the CST Library Associate, Patti Ryan (pryan@yorku.ca).

*(Designing Assessment from page 2)*

questions about how to research. Students can generally hit any target they can see and that holds still for them. We need to identify through explicit rubrics or criteria exactly what we are looking for. This is a difficult, time consuming activity that may evolve over several iterations of a course, but it is absolutely necessary if we are to create the necessary conditions for students to take responsibility for their own achievement.

This clarity goes against the grain for many instructors. Colleagues often complain to me that if they told the students the criteria for assignments, they would all get 'A's. At one level, I have to question what would be wrong with students all mastering the course content, but the more fundamental problem here is that if the instructors really believe that, then what they are actually saying is that they have to resort to trickery to cheat the majority of students out of their 'A' to maintain a talent hunt distribution. In contrast, in one of the courses in which I still use an essay examination, I print the exam question right in the course outline. This helps focus student learning, and I spend a lot less time dealing with off topic or vacuous answers. Students still generally spread themselves over a normal curve, but with the difference that the bar can be considerably raised.

***Thus, active evaluation implies and requires higher standards, because objectives are clear.***

Second, active evaluation requires that assessments be authentic. In part, that means assignments that match real world tasks and provide transferability of learning beyond the context of the current course. Wherever possible, this should include a product that is itself useful to the student or others. The major problem with student plagiarism, for example, is that students have trouble seeing the relevancy of assignments to their own lives or learning. "This guy wants a paper on Macbeth - I'll see if I can find him one on the Internet…" Term papers started out as authentic assessments when the purpose of university was the production of scholars and the research paper was a practice piece for a future career in academic publishing, but now make little sense when universities are mass institutions involved in the

production of forest workers, teachers, social workers, etc., none of whom will likely ever publish. Although term papers remain a useful assessment of literacy, style, logic, etc, these same abilities may be assessed in other assignments more suitable to the immediate needs and interests of our professional schools.

In part, authentic assessment means providing students with a real audience: classroom peers or the public. When the instructor is the only reader, students leave out documentation because they expect the instructor to "already know that"; they write about process rather than providing the final product ("I went to the library, but the book was out, so then I…"); they dismiss the need for correct spelling and grammar as the idiosyncratic hobbyhorse of "unreasonable" instructors, rather than as inherent in the writing task; and worst of all, they write what they believe the professor wants to hear rather than writing from the heart. Given a real audience (e.g., the production of a web site or poster), they are more likely to understand the need for correct grammar and full documentation, and less willing to cater up to the instructor's views when they know they will be held publicly accountable for whatever they write.

In part, authentic assessment means allowing greater student ownership of the topic. Growing concerns about student plagiarism have driven many instructors to specify ever more narrowly defined topics in hopes that they may be too

esoteric to show up on the internet, but in doing so they are dictating ever more alienating assignments with little connection to either the real world or tostudents own interests or needs. Instead, students should be encouraged to tackle questions of personal or professional interest, where the desire to answer the question is itself sufficient motivation for completing the assignment.

This in turn implies that active evaluation requires real questions. Tests can only test students on material for which there are clear right and wrong answers, or at least, right and wrong ways of supporting answers. In these types of assessment, we cannot ask questions for which we do not know the answers. But in active learning we often do exactly that. We allow and encourage students to pursue an inquiry for which no one yet knows the answer.

Finally, active evaluation implies sustained engagement with some assignment, rather than a series of fragmented tasks. Such assignments may be broken down into phases, stages, or steps to facilitate the pacing of work, and the frequency and timeliness of feedback, but active evaluation requires students to become deeply involved with a particular project over a significant period.

When students take personal ownership of a real question for a real audience over the course of a term, they are more likely to present us with their best work.

## Experiencing the Richness of the University Mosaic
### From Diversity to Individuality
### University of Ottawa, June 16 - 19, 2004

The annual STLHE conference has a reputation for providing a relaxed, yet stimulating, forum for discussing teaching and learning issues with a wide cross-section of colleagues. The conference includes keynote sessions but generally centres around smaller discussion sessions, workshops, round-tables, panels, demonstrations, and other participative presentations.

For further information, see: www.uottawa.ca/services/tlss/stlhe2004/

**STLHE SAPES**

**Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education**

**La société pour l'avancement de la pédagogie dans l'enseignement supérieur**

# Contrafactual History Assignment

*Tom Cohen,* Department of History, Faculty of Arts

*In this article, Professor Cohen describes a playful assignment from History 2220: Medieval and Renaissance Europe. Rather than just learn what happened, or explain it, students have to rerun the past, trying to change it. They form teams, assume personages, redirect their fleets and armies, and try to fight a famous war, this time differently. The goals are several: emotional engagement, attention to the power of details, a grasp of the complexity of the global, and a sense of the tensile strength of argument and of the stability or fragility both of events and of our explanations for them. Creativity meets serious discipline.*

Students in *Contrafactual Politics: History 2220* read Mattingly's classic, *The Defeat of the Spanish Armada*, now dated, but wonderfully told. We have more modern materials too, to set the record right; there is a recent Spanish revision of the tale and a version by a military historian good on gunnery. Students have catalogues of every ship in either navy, with guns and tonnage, and even see lists of provisions, with estimates of vitamins and calories on hand to feed a sailor: wine and sardines and rice for Spaniards; beer and salt beef and biscuit for the English. Some tutorials then play Spain, with orders to refight the war with the same soldiers, sailors, ships, cannons, biscuit, wine, and oil, and this time win. Other tutorials are England, or play the strategic Dutch. Each tutorial subdivides into various soldiers, spies, diplomats and monarchs, and, in groups, huddles in the library over sixteenth-century maps in facsimile and modern charts of winds and tides.

> *A larger lesson of contrafactual history is that it tests the robustness of both the past and of our explanations ... we learn that both the tale itself and the historians' explanations are more flimsy.*

Finally comes "War Day", a bit chaotic, but often heated: I once used a big map and assorted lego bits to move around but as the course has grown too big we have had to have committees offer schemes, scenarios, and devices, often diabolical. (This year one tutorial calculated carefully, on good medical grounds, that seven kilograms of white arsenic would have sufficed to poison the stewpots of an entire army of 32,000 Spaniards and devised a plan to spike the entire mess). I sometimes bring in a neutral prof as "God" but this year, lacking a tutorial of my own and thus neutral, I played the tactful Deity and ruled on victory. Goaded by ancient rivalries and the imagined smell of blood and powder, the students learn vast amounts about the policies, nature, and resources of the early modern state.

A larger lesson of contrafactual history is that it tests the robustness of both the past and of our explanations. If it proves hard to conquer England, then the victory was already in the cards. If, on the other hand, a heavy cold, a seasick admiral, or a moment's panic destroys a kingdom, then we learn that both the tale itself and the historians' explanations are more flimsy. The project has group work's usual problems of discipline and fairness, but the rivalries spark zeal and passion and the contest cements a tutorial's communal sense. Many of the papers are well researched, well written, and often ingeniously illustrated and presented. At the "war" itself, students often turn up in lace ruffs or gowns and, this year, one burst out in sixteenth-century song.

## Pedagogical use:

While the groups research, I hinge my lectures on related issues of religion, culture, statecraft, warfare and diplomacy. I also comment on the evolving historiography of the conflict and on the ways in which new techniques such as marine archeology have changed our understanding since 1959, when Mattingly's famous book emerged. I aim to inculcate a sense of scholarship as debate and of the simple hunt for facts as a device to bolster larger theories and interpretations.

## Grading:

The students submit joint projects, three or four partners compiling work together, as "King Philip," "The Duke of Parma," or whoever. They have to describe the share of each and all sign the statement. The paper receives a single, shared mark, worth 15% of the course grade. Moreover, on the final exam, conducted with open books, one question, handed out in advance, asks students to reflect on the serious lessons of their experience as participants in a contrafactual exercise. What does such a stretch of mind teach us about the nature of the past that really happened?

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### For Further Resources on Assignments and Assessing Student Learning:

Angelo, T and Cross, P. C**lassroom Assessment Techniques: A Handbook for College Teachers** (2nd Ed.). San Francisco CA: Jossey Bass Publishers, 1993.

**Assignment Design**, University of Kansas Writing Center <http://www.writing.ku.edu/instructors/docs/assignment_design.shtml>

**Discouraging Plagiarism in Assignment Design**, York University <http://www.yorku.ca/academicintegrity/assignments.htm>

**Faculty Resource on Grading,** University of Washington <http://depts.washington.edu/grading/>

**Forty-One Interesting Ways of Getting to the End,** York University <http://www.yorku.ca/cst/ideas/resources/41ways.html>

**Giving Interesting Assignments,** Suggestions for Teaching with Excellence, University of California - Berkeley <http://teaching.berkeley.edu/compendium/sectionlists/sect21.html>

Runte, Robert, **How to Write Tests,** University of Lethbridge <http://www.edu.uleth.ca/runte/tests/>

# IDEAS about teaching

## *Check out the CST's new web site....*

We are pleased to announce the publication of a redesigned CST web site at <www.yorku.ca/cst>. The development team, led by Cheryl Dickie, and assisted by Nen Shieh and Stephanie Marston, have achieved a total redesign of the site to make it easy to use, both for learning about our programs and for finding useful resources to help you with teaching issues and concerns.

### Accessibility

We're especially excited because this site represents our first efforts to comply with the World Wide Web Consortium's web accessibility standards. Many of the changes, such as more HTML and fewer PDF files, clear, non-repetitive link text, and consistent use of heading markup, should make the site easier to use for everyone, especially those with visual disabilities. We've learned a lot and already see room for improvement, so we will be continuing this work over the summer months.

Some of the changes and additions to the new CST web site include:

### IDEAS about teaching

This section is designed to provide new ideas and inspiration for advancing your teaching. It offers resources in such topic areas as "Active Learning", "Academic Integrity, " "Critical Skills," and many others. Online materials that were formerly available in the *Webliography* on the CST site can now be found here, along with recommended readings available at our Resource Centre, and relevant articles from *Core, York's newsletter on university teaching*. If you are unable to find something you need, please let us know.

### Professional Growth

In this section, we have gathered together resources to assist in ongoing professional development in the area of teaching. Here you will find links to teaching and learning journals, as well as information about conferences and discussion groups, grants and awards. New to our site is "Research Strategies" with links to resources for conducting classroom and library research.

### About the CST

Here we offer more information about the Centre for the Support of Teaching - who we are and what we do. The mission of the Centre, our goals and policies can be found here, along with reports and information that inform and guide our operation.

### News & Events

We now have one page for listing upcoming CST events and other teaching related events. As well, news items of interest to the York community will be posted here.

### Core Issues Online

We have posted the two most recent issues of Core in HTML format, with more back issues coming soon. PDF versions are available, too.

### Faculty Programs and TA Programs

These sections have been reorganized to highlight the different components of our programs for faculty and TAs. Additional material specific to the programs, such as the "Guide for the University Teaching Practicum," and the "New Faculty Resource Kit," is now available online.

### Join Our Listserv

If you would like to receive regular announcements about our upcoming events and information, you can subscribe to our listserv, CST-announce.

Simply send an email to cst@yorku.ca to let us know you wish to be added.