

# FACULTY DEVELOPMENT NEWSLETTER

**OCTOBER 2011**

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## **The State of Diversified Mentoring at Ball State University**

Marcy Meyer (Communication Studies) shares her findings from a research project conducted in 2009-10 to study how mentoring relationships can better promote the retention of minority faculty members.

## **Faculty Spotlight**

*Use of Pre-Lecture Capture Software (Panopto) in Conjunction with Audience Response Devices (i>clicker)* – Six Ball State Faculty members are currently involved in a research project this fall to investigate best-practice methods for an integration of pre-lecture capture software and audience response devices in the classroom environment.

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*From Brain to Mind: Using Neuroscience to Guide Change in Education*

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*Alpha Brown Bags* – Drop-in discussions exploring a variety of topics related to teaching, scholarship, university service, settling into a new university community, etc.

## **Services Spotlight**

*Midterm Feedback Service* – one of the most valuable ways to improve your teaching is with feedback from students. Increase feedback effectiveness by collecting information midway through the semester.

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**Office of Educational Excellence**

[www.bsu.edu/educationalexcellence](http://www.bsu.edu/educationalexcellence)

# The State of Diversified Mentoring Relationships at Ball State University

Marcy Meyer

Associate Professor of Communication Studies

Currently, Ball State University (BSU) is engaged in a strategic planning process that has four goals related to learning, scholarship, engagement, and community. According to the university website, one of the community-related objectives is to “increase the diversity of student, staff, and faculty populations and enhance the climate supporting diversity.” Toward this end, the university has a stated goal to increase faculty diversity to 15 percent and staff diversity to 9.5 percent by 2012. Recently, the university’s diversity committee has identified mentoring as one means by which the university can retain underrepresented minority faculty members.



In 2009-2010, I conducted a research project about diversified mentoring relationships at BSU. My goal was to understand how mentoring relationships can better promote the retention of minority faculty members. A content analysis of 21 semi-structured interviews with minority faculty members and professional personnel revealed a number of important findings about the quality of diversified mentoring relationships at BSU.

Roughly half of the respondents had participated in formal mentoring relationships, in which they were paired with a senior colleague or supervisor. One third of those who were formally mentored characterized the quality of the mentoring that they received as good or excellent; the other two thirds described their mentoring experiences as marginal or dysfunctional. Good mentors were those who helped their mentees by providing them with social, informational, and career-related support. Marginal mentors were those who met with their mentees only once or twice and did not actively seek them out or help them in any meaningful way. Dysfunctional mentors were those who gave poor advice or failed to offer support to their mentees when it was needed.

Respondents generated some helpful recommendations for mentors in order to improve the quality of diversified mentoring relationships at Ball State. In general, respondents' advice to mentors fell into three general categories: advice about mentoring relationships; advice about work-related issues; and advice about socialization issues. First, mentors were urged not to make assumptions about what mentees needed. Instead, they were encouraged to ask mentees what they needed, listen to their needs, validate their experiences, let mentees know that they were available, and take the time to really get to know their mentees. Second, mentors were advised to clarify departmental expectations related to promotion and tenure, give mentees honest feedback about their progress, and serve as advocates for their mentees. Third, mentors were encouraged to understand their mentees' need to connect with similar others and to offer to introduce their mentees to diverse others in the community.

View a [recording](#) of the April 2011 presentation in which research findings were discussed followed by a panel discussion in which diversified mentoring dyads reflected on issues raised.

Presenter: Marcy Meyer (Communication Studies)

Panelists: Bryan Byers (Criminal Justice and Criminology), Joseph Misiewicz (Telecommunications), Kiesha Warren-Gordon (Criminal Justice and Criminology), Maria Williams-Hawkins (Telecommunications)

Moderator: Chin-Sook Pak (Modern Languages and Classics)

## **EVENT SPOTLIGHT**

### **Alpha Brown Bags**

Alpha Brown Bags provide new faculty members ("Alphas") with a comfortable environment within which to explore a variety of topics related to teaching, scholarship, university service, settling into a new community, etc. These discussions are facilitated by OEE staff as well as experienced faculty members who can help you understand these issues within the context of Ball State University and point you to other resources as needed. All new faculty are encouraged to attend.

Sessions will meet semi-monthly throughout the fall semester rotating between breakfast and lunch timeframes. The locations provide the opportunity for participants to either purchase a meal or bring something from home.

Schedule for Fall 2011:

Brown Bag Sessions will be held in **AJ Studio room** (located on the northeast end of the Atrium area of the Art and Journalism Building).

**Breakfast: 7:30-9:00 am, 1st Wednesday of each month**

Sept 7th, Oct 5th, Nov 2nd, Dec 7th

**Lunch: 1:00-2:30 pm, 3rd Tuesday of each month**

Sept 20th, Oct 18th, Nov 15th

## **FACULTY SPOTLIGHT**

### **Use of Pre-Lecture Capture Software (Panopto) in Conjunction with Audience Response Devices (i>clicker)**

Joshua Gruver, Assistant Professor  
Natural Resources and Environmental Management

Jerome Kotecki  
Physiology and Health Science

David Largent, Instructor  
Computer Science

Angela Nickoli, Assistant Professor  
Criminal Justice and Criminology

Tyler Smith, Assistant Professor  
Theatre and Dance

Jennifer Young, Instructor  
Family and Consumer Sciences

With the support of the Office of Educational Excellence (OEE) and the Office of Academic Assessment and Institutional Research (AAIR), six faculty members from three colleges are participating in a study this fall with the purpose to discover and develop best-practice methods for an integration of pre-lecture capture software and audience response devices (clickers) in the classroom environment.

The faculty members pre-record class content via a webcam that, in semesters past, has been part of the typical lecture format and students are instructed to view the video prior to attending class. At the beginning of the next class, clicker quiz questions are given to assess the comprehension of the material covered in the pre-recorded lecture.

This study focuses on several issues regarding the instructional possibilities as a result of using these tools.

1. What methodologies are best-practice for pre-lecture capture recordings? The device allows for the recording of PowerPoint presentations, live video and audio, and screen capture video. What combination or balance of these elements yields the most positive impact on student learning?
2. In what way will the clicker quizzes best reinforce and assess that learning? What types of questions are most useful to ask students about the recorded lectures they watch before class?
3. On what specific areas of classroom performance might this combination have the greatest impact—objective questions, abstract topics, in-class discussion, writing?

It is the opinion of the investigators that the combination of the audience response devices and pre-lecture capture system offers the potential to vastly improve teaching methods, student participation, and assessment of student learning. Preliminary results will be available in early spring 2012 with a formal white paper following in late spring/early summer 2012.

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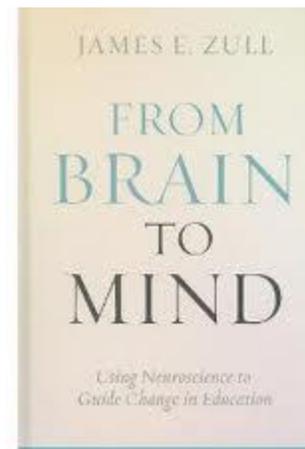
# THE BOOKSHELF

## ***From Brain to Mind: Using Neuroscience to Guide Change in Education***

Zull, James E. *From Brain to Mind: Using Neuroscience to Guide Change in Education*. Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing, 2011.

**“It is the capacity of the brain to organize and change itself through experience that leads to development of the mind. By sensing, recording, and reproducing our experiences, the brain gains the capacity to think, decide, and act. It makes itself into a mind.” (p. 10)**

With his knack for making science intelligible for the layman, and his ability to illuminate scientific concepts through analogy and reference to personal experience, James Zull offers the reader an engrossing and coherent introduction to what neuroscience can tell us about cognitive development through experience, and its implications for education.



Stating that educational change is underway and that the time is ripe to recognize that “the primary objective of education is to understand human learning” and that “all other objectives depend on achieving this understanding”, James Zull challenges the reader to focus on this purpose, first for her or himself, and then for those for whose learning they are responsible.

The book is addressed to all learners and educators – to the reader as self-educator embarked on the journey of lifelong learning, to the reader as parent, and to readers who are educators in schools or university settings, as well as mentors and trainers in the workplace.

In this work, James Zull presents cognitive development as a journey taken by the brain, from an organ of organized cells, blood vessels, and chemicals at birth, through its shaping by experience and environment into potentially to the most powerful and exquisite force in the

universe, the human mind.

Zull begins his journey with sensory-motor learning, and how that leads to discovery, and discovery to emotion. He then describes how deeper learning develops, how symbolic systems such as language and numbers emerge as tools for thought, how memory builds a knowledge base, and how memory is then used to create ideas and solve problems. Along the way he prompts us to think of new ways to shape educational experiences from early in life through adulthood, informed by the insight that metacognition lies at the root of all learning.

At a time when we can expect to change jobs and careers frequently during our lifetime, when technology is changing society at break-neck speed, and we have instant access to almost infinite information and opinion, he argues that self-knowledge, awareness of how and why we think as we do, and the ability to adapt and learn, are critical to our survival as individuals; and that the transformation of education, in the light of all this and what neuroscience can tell us, is a key element in future development of healthy and productive societies.

[from styluspub.com](http://styluspub.com)

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## SERVICES SPOTLIGHT

### Midterm Feedback

One of the most valuable ways to improve our teaching is with feedback from our students, but waiting until the end of the semester reduces its effectiveness. The Office of Educational Excellence (OEE) is available to help you collect timely and valuable information from your students midway through the semester. This service is offered in two formats—facilitated or as an online survey through inQsit or Blackboard.

#### Facilitated

In this format, an OEE staff member acts as a facilitator and leads a structured discussion in your class to gather feedback from your students. While you have to give up a class period (at least 45 minutes), you will gain valuable feedback on your teaching while there is plenty of time in the semester to make adjustments to the course. This process is meant to help you improve your teaching, not to serve as an evaluation tool, so the results are confidential—we don't

report them to anyone but you.

Students respond well to this model since it allows them to openly discuss how the class is going, feeling comfortable with the anonymity of the process and the prospect for positive change in the class. Because the discussion is structured and facilitated, it turns complaints into constructive recommendations. What it takes from you is an openness to student suggestions, as well as a willingness to discuss the results with them afterwards.

Here's how it works:

### **Initial Meeting**

You'll meet with a facilitator (typically an OEE staff member) to discuss what kind of feedback you want from your students—certain aspects of your teaching, specific assignments, personal concerns, etc. We'll discuss the procedure and set up a date for the in-class discussion.

### **In-Class Discussion**

On the day of the discussion, you'll briefly introduce the activity and the facilitator, and then you'll leave the room. The facilitator will break the class into small groups of 4-5 students and ask them to write individually for a few moments on the questions below. Then the groups will discuss their comments and decide on their top 2-3 answers for each question. Finally, each group will report out to the larger class and the facilitator will help the class decide on the top 3-5 answers to each question. The questions can vary, depending on the initial meeting, but typically follow this pattern:

- What about the class best helps you learn?
- What changes could the instructor make to improve your learning?
- What could you as a student do to improve the class?
- Other questions as determined in the initial meeting.

### **Report Writing and Results Meeting**

After the facilitator gathers written and oral comments, he or she will prepare a short written report for you that highlights the results of the discussion, the student recommendations, and any other issues that arose during the class session (e.g. significant points of disagreement, etc.). You will then meet with the facilitator to discuss the report and possible actions or changes you might consider.

## Follow-Up Class Discussion

After you have time to digest the report and consider changes—hopefully within a few days—you should discuss the results with your class. Most teachers will go through the list and talk about what changes they are willing to make, and what changes they cannot or will not make... and why. That honest discussion is key to keeping the process open and productive.

Please note the following guidelines:

- We will offer this service during weeks six through ten of each semester; moving it any later makes meaningful changes more difficult.
- We expect that you will be able to meet with your facilitator within a week of the in-class session.
- We ask that you gather feedback on only one class per semester; our resources are limited, and so is your ability to adjust your teaching mid-semester without feeling overwhelmed.

If you are interested in having us help you with this type of midterm feedback, please contact us ([email](#) or call 5-1763) to schedule an initial meeting. If your department wishes to facilitate these sorts of activities on your own, we are happy to meet with you to discuss the procedure in more depth, and to share the materials we use.

## Online Survey through inQsit or Blackboard

You can create a survey for your class to complete online through inQsit or Blackboard. While this format does not allow for a facilitator to assist students in thinking constructively, nor does it allow students to discuss the topic and hear what peers have to say, it does allow you to obtain feedback without taking class time to do so.

Information for creating your own online midterm feedback survey is available through our office:

- Midterm Feedback Online Survey – Timeframe, Sample Questions, & Follow-Up
- Directions for creating a Midterm Feedback Survey through Blackboard
- Directions for creating a Midterm Feedback Survey through inQsit
- An example of a Midterm Feedback Survey through inQsit

Contact [Kathleen Jacobi-Karna](#) if you are interested in information to create your own Midterm Feedback Survey online.

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**Office of Educational Excellence**

Teachers College (TC), Room 402  
Ball State University  
Muncie IN 47306

Hours: Monday – Friday 8:00 am – 5:00 pm

Phone: 765-285-1763

Fax: 765-285-2669

E-mail: [oee@bsu.edu](mailto:oee@bsu.edu)

[www.bsu.edu/educationalexcellence](http://www.bsu.edu/educationalexcellence)