

INTRODUCTION

"Cuse me, while I kiss the sky." Jimi Hendrix (1967)

What better way to think about the joys of teaching than to consider those times in a professor's' life when that gleam in the eyes of students was neither a collective facial reaction to the sound of the bell signaling the end of a class session nor anticipation of the weekend party scene. Instead, those wide open pupils were caused by what was presented and discussed during class that day. Especially for professors who are members of the baby-boom generation, the rewards of teaching can be no better expressed than by a rock icon of the 1960's and an era when the very relevance of higher education was called into question by the students themselves.

Regardless of age, however, all professors who aspire to bring a high level of scholarship to their teaching know full well that joyous emotion when one realizes what a privileged job we professors as teachers have. At those special moments, one literally wants to reach skyward, grab a piece of that deep blue canopy, and give it a big smack on its celestial lips. We are indeed the lucky ones, despite budget woes, bureaucratic bedevilmments, and office politics.

Welcome to the second edition of "Talking about Teaching." Like the first, the second edition is a collection of essays by members of the OSU Academy of Teaching, plus one guest essay by a winner of the Graduate Associate Teaching Award (i.e., a future award winning college teacher). Each essay speaks to the hard work and dedication it takes to strike up a relationship with our planet's atmosphere. Each essay also tells us something about limits, that great teachers alone do not guarantee great learning. Indeed, one cannot buss the distant blue without a helpful lift from others. Our foremost

partners are students, for as one Chinese proverb advises those who form the reason why we're here: "Teachers open the door. You enter by yourself." High quality education also requires a university like OSU, dedicated to the value of teaching and to the support of programs that provide opportunities for everyone to improve their teaching acumen. In this regard, two organizations truly stand out. One is Faculty Teaching and Development, better known as FTAD, through whose sponsorship of various faculty learning initiatives is enhanced the Academy's own ability to promote quality and scholarship in teaching. Second is the sponsor of the Alumni Award for Distinguished Teaching, namely, The Ohio State University Alumni Association, Inc. To twist into an almost unpronounceable but still recognizable acronym, they are TBDAAITL (The Best Damn Alumni Association in the Land).

Finally, the Executive Committee of the OSU Academy of Teaching dedicates this volume of "Talking about Teaching" to President Karen Holbrook. Her unerring quest to make OSU one of the best public universities in this country demonstrates how much top flight teaching and world renown research are simply two sides of the same coin of scholarship. On behalf of President Holbrook, the Alumni Association, FTAD, and all professors and students who strive toward excellence in teaching and learning, I ask you, the reader, to think of teaching the way Walt Disney thought of his work: "It's kind of fun to do the impossible."

Joseph F. Donnermeyer Chair, Executive
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