

Introduction and Acknowledgements

Volume 3 - Talking about Teaching

"Different Strokes for Different Folks" — Lyrics from *Everyday People* by Sly and the Family Stone (1968)

As I read the draft of each essay for this third volume of *Talking about Teaching*, I was struck by the extraordinary diversity and depth of wisdom and insights provided by contributors. It may seem inconsistent and perhaps contradictory after employing the adjective "extraordinary" in the first sentence, but the essays kept reminding me of "Everyday People", a 1960's era song fusing elements of funk, soul and rock by Sly and the Family Stone. I too was puzzled at first - what would prompt me to think of a song from over a generation ago, when the peace symbol, bell bottoms and long hair reigned? I realized the psychological, albeit quirky, association my mind had made was that each of the essays is deeply grounded in the everyday teaching experiences of contributors. Each describes, either implicitly or explicitly, various concepts, paradigms, and strategies for teaching as a type of public performance meant to help learners acquire knowledge, grow in wisdom and think differently about themselves and the subject that forms the focus of a course. And, each essay displays the kind of passion and love of teaching required for contributors to achieve a certain crystallization of thought, and to be able to express these insights in ways that other aspiring teachers, regardless of rank and time in service, can themselves learn what great teaching means.

Everyday people doing extraordinary things - that is what made these essays so remarkable! They were written by members of the Ohio State Academy of Teaching and specially selected "guest essayists" who have built on their day-to-day storehouse of experiential learning to create wondrous contributions to excellence in teaching and the scholarship of teaching and learning. Indeed, different strokes for different folks, but with a common ground of love and devotion to their fellow students (read "students" to include those who are paid to teach and those who pay the tuition). Oh, by the way: one contributor, Laura Deeter (Horticulture), won the Alumni Association Award for Distinguished

Teaching in 2006. Her father, Stephen Summerhill (Spanish and Portuguese) won the same award in 2004, confirming a piece of folk wisdom which affirms "the apple never falls far from the tree."

Like the previous edition of *Talking about Teaching*, this third volume will be released on the day of the second annual Ohio State Academy of Teaching sponsored one-day "mini conference" on great teaching (held on April 25, 2008). Both the mini-conference and this third volume are not possible without the support of the Office of Academic Affairs and the Ohio State Alumni Association, whose financial and moral support of the Academy is so fundamental to everything we do. As well, we welcome back Dr. Gordon Gee, the man who founded the Academy in 1992 and is himself a contributor to this third volume.

Finally, the Academy and all that it accomplishes is the product of the faculty who have won the Ohio State Alumni Award for Distinguished Teaching and who actively volunteer their time. The Executive Council of the Academy includes Richard Blatti (Music), Gary Kinzel (Mechanical Engineering), Blaine Lilley (Industrial, Welding and Systems Engineering), Milap Nahata (Pharmacy), Jim Phelan (English), Joy Reilly (Theatre), and Mohamed Yousef (Mathematics). And, let's not forget the counsel of Martha Garland from the Office of Academic Affairs and Virginia Tretheway from the Ohio State Alumni Association, and Alan Kalish from Faculty & TA Development, *ex-officio* members of the Executive Council.

The Executive Council of the Ohio State Academy of Teaching itself "looks good" because of the wonderful back-up we receive from the Office of Faculty & TA Development, especially from the leadership of its Director, Dr. Alan Kalish and the incredible organizational skills of Heather Mitchell, Program Coordinator.

This third volume would not have been possible without the editorial assistance of Gary Kinzel (Mechanical Engineering) and John Lott (Pathology). Thanks to both.

Enjoy the reading!

Joseph F. Donnermeyer
Chair, Executive Council, and
Editor, *Talking about Teaching*
Ohio State Academy of Teaching