## INTRODUCTORY BLURB for the Notebook Reinert CTE Staff

For this issue, we invited faculty members to consider the central role they play in their students' learning and to share a practical example of how that role manifests itself in the classroom. Contributors describe the role of the teacher as multifaceted, and as Dr. Ben de Foy notes in his column: constantly changing.

Experienced guide; nutrition advocate; "artistic/creative facilitator"—these are just a few of the roles our contributors inhabit when stepping into the classroom. And, as Sandy Gambill explains, we may have to rethink our teaching roles when the "classroom" is a virtual one.

In our feature article, Dr. Janet Kuebli offers a tribute to her late father, a professor who shared with her his thoughts on the multiple roles teachers play, and which she now shares with new graduate instructors. This piece sets the tone for the entire issue, describing the multidimensional roles we play, and highlighting just how grounded these roles are in the *people* we are in our lives outside of the classroom. Ultimately, to have an impact on students, teachers must not merely "play parts"—they must instead tap into authentic versions of themselves.

We hope this issue of *The Notebook* stimulates new ways of thinking about your own teaching role and gives you new insight into the ways in which your students experience you in the classroom.

REGULAR COLUMNISTS "The Instructor as a the Experienced Guide" Daniel Chornet-Roses, Ph.D. Assistant Professor, Department of Communication, Madrid

Inspired by the Socratic method of question and answer, and heavily influenced by Bakhtin's framework of dialogism that strives to acknowledge diverse and competing voices, I position myself in the classroom mainly as a conductor or guide. In contrast to the traditional role of the instructor as the one who carries the weight and responsibility of the class on his/her shoulders, or what it is also known as the Atlas Complex (Finkel & Monk, 1983), the role of the instructor as a guide implicates student-centered practices. The most basic condition to be a guide in the classroom is to set up realistic outcomes and expectations. In the process of directing students towards these (be it during a class period or during the semester in general), I communicate with them in a way that motivates them to want to listen and interact with me and with each other. What triggers this kind of interaction in the classroom is a direct appeal to the position from where they speak, that is, their experiences. I usually initiate my classes with questions for students about their experiences as they relate to the specific topic for the day. Then, together we use their answers to start constructing a scaffold on the basis of which we

Finkel, D. L. & Monk, S. G. (1983). Teachers and learning groups: Dissolution of the Atlas complex. In Bouton and Garth (Eds.), *Learning in groups: New directions for teaching and learning* (pp. 83-98). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

"How frustrated can you get?" Ben DeFoy, Ph.D. Assistant Professor, Department of Earth and Atmospheric Sciences

For a science lab a couple of semesters ago, I asked students to do a spreadsheet exercise to calculate how much energy we get from the sun here in Missouri. By doing this I hoped that they would understand solar radiation, develop useful Excel skills, and work on a problem relevant to current debates about renewable energy. Three birds with one stone, the students are going to love it. And if at first they don't succeed they could come to me, the teaching assistant, or their peers for help: surely a win-win scenario. After about 20 minutes, one of the students stormed out of the lab: "I'm so frustrated I can't take this anymore."

Apparently, his mother is not a Tiger Mother, and neither is his professor<sup>1</sup>. Maybe David Brooks is right<sup>2</sup>: he will learn more important skills by playing Frisbee with his friends than by being stuck at a terminal on a sunny spring morning. Between the response to Amy Chua's article and the reports following the publication of "Academically Adrift: Limited Learning on College Campuses<sup>3</sup>," it has been a soul-

collaborative learning environment which is respectful of students' needs in and out of the classroom. I take the time to learn the students' names and their interests. If I notice a student is absent or appears confused about a concept, I will take the time to email him or her regarding

University where his starting salary was \$12,000. Subsequently, he went to Illinois State University where he served as chairperson of the Department of Speech Pathology and Audiology for more than 25 years.

Following in my father's footsteps, I too became a college professor. Memories of my father's life as a scholar now comfort me. I remember discovering traces of his work – lengthy mathematical equations dotted with mysterious symbols whose identity I later learned were statistical – on a blackboard in his study. I readily recall him grading, with some disappointment, students' handwritten papers and exams. I fondly remember my dad walking to campus each day with his leather briefcase swinging at his side. On occasion,

"CAPTAIN'S LOG: STARDATE SPRING SEMESTER 2011..." Elizabeth A. Zeibig, PhD, MLS(ASCP)<sup>CM</sup> Associate Dean for Graduate Education, Doisy College of Health Sciences Associate Professor, Department of Clinical Laboratory Science

Without a doubt my favorite role as Captain of this ship is that of what I call "Artistic/Creativity Facilitator."