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Pedagogical Projects? [1]

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Over the years, I have served as mentor for a number of faculty members – both in and out of the English Department – who were concerned about their low FCQs. At the moment, I am not mentoring anyone, though I have a standing agreement with the Chair for consultation with any faculty about their teaching

My ongoing specific project has been to collect videotapes of Shakespeare plays, which students and I use in class. Comparisons between the versions are often useful in stimulating discussion about differences in character, tone, etc.; and the procedure is very helpful in preparing students for intelligent viewing of Shakespeare plays in the future.

Mary Ann also asked me to describe the customary technique I use in my classes. In virtually all my courses, I provide response/worksheet questions, which the students answer and send to me on e-mail the night before. I then shape the class discussion around their answers, printed copies of which I return to them at the beginning of the period. I start the conversation by calling on several of the students, and then usually and seamlessly afterward (though I keep in my mind a number of the students' ideas, in case the participation falters). In this way, I can make sure that everyone in class participates, even the shy, and has a stake in our joint intellectual and interpretive enterprise. The sense of community that emerges is very useful and rewarding, and the ideas are often fresh and new to me (which keeps me engaged in material that I have often taught). Usually, I provide questions for almost every period during the semester, and the students are graded on the basis of how many times they respond (about 3/4 of the possible times for an A, etc.).

Groups audience:
President's Teaching Scholars Program

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