

The Voice - CPDD Newsletter

December 2016

From the Editor

A Rubric Too Far

There has been a strong emphasis in recent years, particularly at the undergraduate level, to be more thoughtful and explicit regarding student learning. We've adopted terms like "course redesign," "backward design," and "student learning outcomes." To my mind this has been a very positive development because it provides clarity for students and when implemented properly results in alignment among content, learning activities (think homework) and assessments.

This emphasis has come about largely because of the increasing number of instructional design professionals who are part of our programs. Instructional designers bring knowledge and experiences in pedagogy and use of instructional technology that most engineering faculty just do not have, particularly faculty at research-focused institutions.

Working together, faculty and instructional designers can help create better learning experiences for students than most faculty can create on their own. Faculty focus on content and knowledge; instructional designers focus on process and alignment among all the things that make up a learning environment.

Traditional classroom teaching is in a way just catching up to what has been prevalent in distance learning for some time. Quality Matters and similar efforts to ensure that online learning is of the highest quality are prominent examples of this focus.

One element of instructional design that has been adopted to a significant level by those using Quality Matters and other tools is the

use of rubrics to help meet a requirement that "specific and descriptive criteria are provided for the evaluation of students' work and participation." Rubrics can help make it clear to students exactly how a written assignment will be graded for instance, including content, grammar, originality, citations, etc.

Clarity in expectations is good but (don't tell the QM police) I refuse to use rubrics. I am not suggesting that no one should use rubrics or they are not appropriate but I am suggesting that they are overused.

Our graduates will go into the engineering workforce and our role is to provide knowledge and experiences that will enable them to be successful in that setting. The nature of engineering is that we are required to produce excellent results with incomplete information, constraints on time and resources, while seeking input from a diverse set of stakeholders. College assignments and expectations should not be recipes that students simply need to follow. They should help students build the capacity to deal with the uncertainties in the work environment.

The overuse of rubrics can minimize the critical thinking students need to develop and lead to the inability to deal with ambiguity – skills students desperately need.

Perhaps I'm just turning into an old curmudgeon but sometimes struggling is a good thing. In working through those uncertain and difficult assignments students gain experience necessary for the work world. So no rubrics in my classes.

Eugene Rutz, Editor
(email comments / rebuttals / kudos to
eugene.rutz@uc.edu)

Chair's Corner

Have you ever had a moment when you wondered what is next? What am I going to be or do in the next phase of my life? Am I prepared, and if so for what?



These are questions so many of our students routinely ask us. I remember when I was nearing graduation with my Bachelor's degree. I didn't know what I was going to do or where I was going to end up; I only knew I was doing the right thing, that whatever happens, what I was pursuing at the moment was the right thing. That right thing was an education. An education, at increasingly higher levels, Bachelor's, Master's or Doctorate, provides opportunities that might not otherwise have been available. Education is the differentiator, if you will, that provides that which we can only hope for; that being opportunities. What we do when those opportunities appear is up to us.

The membership of CPDD represents over 200 colleges, universities and corporate partners. With one email, I can reach out and ask questions on program availability, design, development or delivery. With one email, I can reach out to our many members to ascertain their interest or needs. With one email, our division can become better and more applicable to those we serve.

The Continuing Professional Development Division (CPDD) of the American Society for Engineering Education (ASEE) is dedicated to providing continuing professional development for practicing engineers and technical professionals worldwide. Your membership in CPDD and participation in CPDD is critical to the very core of our purpose and mission.

If you are already an active participant in our division, thank you. If you want to be a part of our division in a more meaningful way, please let us know. In the final analysis, we are here for you...the membership.

Thank you for being part of our great division of such an amazing organization as ASEE.

You do make a difference!

With warmest regards.

Mitch

Conference for Industry & Education Collaboration (CIEC) -2017

The Conference for Industry and Education Collaboration (CIEC) is being held this year in Jacksonville, FL, February 8-10, 2017. The four sponsoring divisions are Cooperative and Experiential Education Division (CEED), College-Industry Partnerships Division (CIPD), Continuing Professional Development Division (CPDD) and the Engineering Technology Division (ETD). The theme of the conference is **Experiential Education: Engaging Tomorrow's Engineers.**

The CPDD program provides attendees a number of sessions and activities that will allow opportunity to network with, and learn from, fellow providers of continuing engineering education. The conference opens with a Continuing Professional Development Director's Workshop which will be delivered by three experienced directors who will share best practices and experiences in running both credit and non-credit programs. This interactive workshop will provide a venue in which participants can pose questions, discuss solutions, and share successes. Sessions begin at 11:00 am on Wednesday, February 8, and run through Friday, February 10, 12:30 pm. Presenters will share pertinent and current information

from successful programs across the country. The International Association for Continuing Engineering Education (IACEE) will present a panel discussion on the recently adopted Porto Declaration, acknowledged the scale and complexity of the gap between existing solutions and the mounting challenges facing humanity. Attendees may also feature information relative to their programs via the Poster Session, which will be featured at the conference hospitality event on Wednesday evening.

Please join CPDD, CIPD, and IACEE for the joint hospitality event which the three divisions will host on Thursday evening. Activities begin early for CPDD on Friday morning, 7:30 am, with the Special Interests Group (SIG) breakfast planning meeting in which members will outline and discuss potential topics for CIEC 2108. Breakfast is provided by the conference, so join us once you have procured your food.

Information about CIEC 2017 is available at <https://www.asee.org/conferences-and-events/conferences/ciec/2017/program>

We look forward to seeing you in Jacksonville!

Rita A. Burrell
CPDD CIEC 2017 Conference Chair

2017 ASEE Annual Conference & Exhibition

The 124th Annual event will be held June 25 – 28, 2017 in Columbus, Ohio. CPDD will have three technical sessions focusing on:

- Pedagogies and learner support for continuing professional development
- Business aspects of continuing professional development
- Faculty development programs and outcomes

The **Division Business Luncheon** meeting on Monday, June 26, from 11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. provides an excellent opportunity to connect with CPD professionals and help set direction for the division and upcoming conferences.

We will also sponsor a **Faculty Breakfast** on Tuesday morning, June 27, from 8:00 – 9:30 a.m. to listen to faculty concerns and input regarding continuing professional development efforts and to attract greater participation in the Division. This is another great networking opportunity and it's free.

This year the Division is again sponsoring a “birds of a feather” session focused on advancing the conversation around faculty development within the engineering community. A panel of faculty development professionals will facilitate a participatory discussion designed to provide a forum for sharing of ideas, best practices and challenges in providing faculty professional development. A key goal of the session is to generate ideas for further engagement and collaboration around these issues. This session is for both professional faculty developers and anyone with an interest in faculty development.

Douglas Ernie
CPDD Program Chair

