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VVINSIDER

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The faculty and students of the MAR 17 1987
DENTAL HYGIENE PROGRAM

of Vancouver Community College, Dental Department
extend an invitation to attend their

"PHARMACOLOGY TABLE CLINICS"

to be presented by the 2nd year Dental Hygiene students.

Wednesday, April 8, 1987
6:00 pm - 8:00 pm
Assembly Hall - Room 240
Vancouver Vocational Institute

At this time everyone is welcome to tour our dental facility.
Light refreshments will be served.

R.S.V.P. BY MARCH 25, 1987. (681-8111, LOCAL 320)

INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

Faculty exchange position for September 1, 1987 at the
University of East Asia Junior College in Macau

The College has an opening for a V.C.C. faculty member to teach both Sociology and Psychology for one term starting in September 1987. There may also be the opportunity to become involved in the development of a teacher training programme at the University. If you are interested in the position, and want more details, please contact Dave Greenall at 875-1131, Local 350 or 875-8233, Local 484 as soon as possible.

DG

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

This summer one-third of the nation will be
ill-housed, ill-nourished and ill-clad.

Only they call it a vacation.



CONSIDERING RETIRING??

For those few who may consider leaving the VVI and retiring, there are a couple of wrinkles that may only be of interest to some, but which may affect early retirees specifically:

1. The calculation of the best five year salary average is done on the last 60 months of salary earnings with the College. Pre-retirement leaves and other leaves without pay are bridged so that the 60 months can extend further back in an employee's employment period than 60 consecutive months.
2. On early retirement an employee may now collect the Canada Pension as early as age 60. However, a retiree's Canada Pension is reduced by 0.5% per month of early retirement for a maximum of 30% at age 60. This reduction remains in effect for the duration of the pension.

On early retirement the College Pension plan provides an annuity to offset the Canada Pension plan and the Old Age Security prior to age 60. This annuity is not changed by the early collection of the Canada Pension.

HWR

PROGRAM FOR SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS

Small business owners tend to avoid formal education programs. "In fact, many seem to consider too much education may be dangerous to their wealth", according to Don Nucich and Don Gemmell of Vancouver Community College.

Don Nucich believes it is not education that is the problem, but that it is usually not relevant to the specific needs of the individual small business owner. That is, classes tend to be too slow and too general for the average small business operator who is pressed for time and feels all their problems are unique.

That's why a new program called OWNER DEVELOPMENT is being launched - it takes a unique approach in helping small business owners upgrade their business skills. The program aims to improve the performance of those in small business, lower the failure rate among small businesses and accelerate the rate at which independent business owners mature as entrepreneurs.

The design of the one year program involves 10 four hour seminars held monthly, followed by a half-day on-site visit to each participant's business by the program advisor/coach.

Don Gemmell notes that there is no prescribed curriculum, but that participants choose which topic areas they wish to explore and the College brings in the resource people who are experts in that topic area to lead the seminar. Seminars generally cover such topic areas as financial analysis, record keeping, marketing and sales skills, stress and time management, and personnel skills.

The program costs \$2500 per firm, however, much of the enrolment fee can be reimbursed through government subsidies. The balance is tax deductible. Recruiting is now in process for 30 non-competing firms for each of two groups and the program should be in full operation by March 15. For more information contact Don Nucich or Don Gemmell at the V.V.I. Campus.



INNOVATION ABSTRACTS

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THE COMMUNITY/COLLEGE CONNECTION: HELPING STUDENTS WRITE FOR THE REAL WORLD

Research argues convincingly that language learning occurs most successfully and efficiently in real social contexts. In a college/community interactive project, our college tried to provide such a context for our students' learning—the real life context of our local business community.

Too many of our students' writing tasks displayed an unacceptable tolerance of errors and deficiencies in argument and content. Students were not inclined to develop convincing and useful content in their assignments. Their writing didn't sound right; it was often stiff and awkward—even pompous—as they tried to imitate the "voice" of a business community they knew nothing about, and as they simultaneously repressed and devalued their own voices in response to years of error-centered English teaching.

Like many career writing instructors, we had exhausted alternative teaching approaches. We knew the futility of haranguing our students about how effective writing enhances one's chances of career success and personal growth. We had also come to realize the serious limitations of emphasizing composing strategies. The case-study approach (e.g., the student is asked to role-play an accountant faced with a specified, problematic writing task—like a collection letter) was only another decontextualized "fiction." And we had long given up curricula that amounted to merely a list of writing genres—good-news letters, bad-news letters, sales letters, memo reports, and so on—that were unconnected to each other and to a real world.

Realizing the need for a context-specific learning environment, we moved the classroom into the community and initiated two community-based assignments: a formal report written for business clients and an article for publication. We introduced both during the first week of classes and assigned students to groups so that they would complete these writing tasks as "teams."

Before classes began, we invited members of the business community to participate as "real-life" clients for our students' formal report assignment. (The Chamber of Commerce was particularly helpful in identifying potential clients for us.) In their first meeting with these clients (to whom we had in effect contracted them), our teams of students negotiated suitable topics. Tasks ranged from gathering information for an industrial saw company on the nature of the lumber industry in the southeastern U.S. to helping the owner of a gym evaluate all available means of advertising. The reporting assignment automatically generated other communication tasks such as the information-gathering interview, confirmation letter and memo, and interim progress report. This assignment culminated with a wine and cheese party (a conventional occasion in the business community) where clients and students celebrated a job well done.

The second assignment invited the community-at-large to be "real-life" readers of our students' journal, *Community Focus*. We asked the students to develop article topics which had both major, global significance and immediate, local relevance. A variety of suitable subjects was suggested: e.g., barriers to inter-provincial trade, mega-market merchandising, rent controls, airline deregulation, de-institutionalization of the care of the handicapped, and the high cost of liability insurance.

The results have been encouraging—students have become engaged in these interactive, real-world situations; have developed a sense of themselves as members of the business community; have behaved responsibly about their commitments and deadlines; and have not needed us to remind them of the purpose of their writing tasks, the importance of drafts and revisions, and the necessity of writing in standard English. The classroom has developed into a busy, dynamic workplace.

Diana Wegner
Douglas College

Janet Giltrow
Douglas College

- For further information, contact the authors in the Communications Department, Douglas College, P.O. Box 2503, New Westminster, B.C. V3L 5B2.



A DAILY DOSE OF REALITY

During the fall semester of 1985, Bakersfield College hosted a conference featuring Dr. Tom Peters, co-author of *In Search of Excellence* and *A Passion for Excellence*.

After Dr. Peters' presentation, the Kern district administrators met to discuss ways to implement some of the practices described in Peters' remarks. Our discussion group talked about implementing the idea currently in successful practice at Castle, Inc., a hospital supply company cited in *A Passion for Excellence*.

Three mornings a week each executive at Castle finds a 5x7 yellow sheet of paper on his/her desk titled "Daily Dose of Reality." Listed on that sheet is (1) the name and phone number of a customer who bought a new piece of equipment and (2) the name and phone number of the person who uses the equipment.

The objective is threefold:

1. to let their customers know they are important to them,
2. to uncover problems before they become major irritants,
3. to give management a daily reminder of where the real world is—with the customer and field representatives.

The following is our modification of this idea.

Once a month, District Data Processing provides Bakersfield College with a randomly selected list of ten (10) names of students, with phone numbers and class schedules. The Administrative Council has agreed to call each of these students and share the results with appropriate personnel on campus.

Bakersfield College adopted Castle's goals. They became:

1. to let the students know they are important to us,
2. to uncover problems before they become major irritants,
3. to give administrators a "daily" reminder of where the real world is—with our students and faculty.

Many administrative jobs do not provide many opportunities for student contact. The "Daily Dose of Reality" provides administrators with opportunities to increase their contact with students. As well, administrators have the opportunity to get information firsthand from students and pass it along to the appropriate faculty members, counselors and staff. Of the more than 300 students contacted thus far, 99% of the responses are about positive experiences at Bakersfield College. In some cases, the opportunity to speak directly to a student about a specific problem has hastened its solution—as administrators can and do directly intervene.

Most students are very surprised by the call, but appreciate the gesture. The "Daily Dose of Reality" has provided us with an effective staff development activity and student retention strategy in one!

Frank Gornick
Dean of Students

For further information, contact the author at Bakersfield College, 1801 Panorama Drive, Bakersfield, CA 93305, (805) 395-4204.

Suanne D. Roueche, Editor
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