

CGTS

A Great Teacher Is....

*Observations and feelings of
the participants at the
Great Teachers Seminar
August 1982*

Preface

Each summer forty-five California Community College teachers from throughout the state, representing a wide variety of subject matter areas, gather together in a retreat setting near Santa Barbara for a week of intensive learning, teaching and reflecting at the California Great Teachers Seminar. Among the purposes of the Seminar, patterned on similar events in the Mid-West and East, are these: to solve instructional problems, to stimulate the exchange of information, to celebrate good teaching, and to define "the great teacher." The Seminar is organized by the statewide Academic Senate and the California Association of Community Colleges.

Ventura College was represented at the 1982 Great Teachers Seminar by Dr. Joyce M. Evans and Dr. Tom Hughes. Chosen by the Academic Senate and sponsored by Ventura College President Dr. Richard Glenn and the Board of Trustees, Joyce and Tom, along with Mrs Edith Conn who has served as a Seminar group leader, participated with others in composing a series of statements completing the sentence: "A Great Teacher Is....." These comments, put in calligraphic form by Dr. Evans, are presented to you now as a reflection not only of the work of the Seminar, but also as a measure of appreciation for your support of this most worthwhile staff development event,

The Great Teachers Seminar

*I drink from the moving stream
rather than a stagnant pool.
Use a teaspoon or a bucket,
but drink I am
The Moving Stream.....*

A Great Teacher:

*Quests for excellence
Has an insatiable desire to know more, to be more
Deeply values the subject in a uniquely personal way
Is self-consistent, having worked out his own viewpoint
of the field....
But stays fresh, and is secure enough to change.*

A Great Teacher:

Has drive and discipline and is willing to put time and effort into preparation.

Is prepared but can set that preparation aside, when the student says: "The geranium on the windowsill just died, teacher, but you went right on talking."

A Great Teacher:

Has great expectations of his students, but is aware that some students use a teaspoon, while others use a bucket.

Gives access to complex topics through simple means. And recognizes that the constant treadmill of growth takes one farther upstream than it sometimes seems.

A Great Teacher:

***Knows he can't be a great teacher for everyone
Is open, having both a capacity for self-revelation and a basic trust that students won't exploit new freedoms.
But can, when the chaos comes, orchestrate noise into music.***

A Great Teacher drinks from the moving stream.....

***Edith Conn, John Ford, Pat Gardner, Trish Geddes,
Tony Gordon, Tom McMillan, Chuck Rohr***

A Great Teacher:

Recognizes strengths and weaknesses of students and self.

Yet freely rewards more than criticizes.

Is able to convert a perceived defeat into a success.

Has the ability to share power.

Encourages creativity and individuality by providing opportunities for them.

Inspires learning rather than demands it.

Is willing to help students develop personal potential.

Treats students as individuals and recognizes their private dignities.

Is generously available to students from the fullness of a complete personhood.

Jim Webster, Donna Frieberthausen, Willhemina

Hathaway, Grace Heringer, Eloise Martinson, John

Matsui, Lee Nicholson

A Great Teacher:

Has a sense of the ridiculous and the sublime, and is capable of being both.

A Great Teacher:

Sometimes dances with the feet, sometimes with the mind.

Has humor: can call an aerobic respiration "the biochemistry of a fart."

Includes the dramatic and unpredictable.

Has classroom management: knows how to find the heart of the matter; has skills that lead the student to a clear focus.

Is "captain of the ship"-- has a sense of the overall plan--is the leader while appearing to be the follower.

Knows own limits and takes care of self.

Trusts the material itself to do some of the work.

Can live with ambiguity, not having to take 100% responsibility for controlling all aspects of the class.

Has a soft side, a little mercy, being there to motivate success and growth, not failure.

Can play different roles: parent, counselor, student.

Is straight with students about expectations.

Recognizes one's own power and bias.

Has favorites, because it's natural, but doesn't let it affect grades or influence the welfare of the group.

Cares for students as students, not as mere extensions of one's personal needs.

Listens to students to meet their needs and to learn from them.

Cares, but does not always have to please.

And to protect all this, is active in school and supports it, is politically savvy and involved.

A Great Teacher: has a sense of the ridiculous and the sublime, and is capable of being both.

Ed Dornan, Midori Berger, Tina Feiger, Cindy Katona, Norm Ladd, Muthena Naseri, Carol Seger, Sharon Steeber

A Great Teacher:

Should be on time: has a sense of responsibility to his students, department and college, and is professional.

Knows his lines: is competent and up-to-date in his subject matter.

Doesn't trip over the furniture: has personal style with a sense of ease and confidence.

Loves the subject, his students and self.

Shows enthusiasm and a sense of humor.

Is positive and encouraging to students and is tolerant of frailties in the human condition.

Accepts criticism and is fair.

Balances structure and flexibility, and intuitively knows how to manage interpersonal relationships.

Takes care of self, physical and mental needs.

Has a sense of integrity and listens to the guidance of the inner voice.

Improves with time and experience and is never satisfied.

Rises above the frustrations of the environment.

Does not allow chronic malcontents to drain him.

To reiterate:

***Be on Time,
Know your Lines,
And don ' t trip over the
furniture.
Lee Dryden, Dorothy Apel, Sara Essa, Drake Hawkins,
Bill Heckman, Marsha Hoagland, Tom Hughes, Anna
Leeds, Domenico Sottile, Robbie Youngs***

A Great Teacher:

***Appreciates the uniqueness of individuals.
Presses the student to his own potential rather
than the lowest common denominator.
Withholds judgment of students until they ' ve
finished.
Is willing to parent without martyrdom or
Messianics.
Has an authentic recognition of student
personhood as well as his own.***

Finds fulfillment in the classroom, but has a complete sense of self-development outside the class recognizing that teacherhood is also related to personhood.

Creates diversity and continued growth, pressing personal thresholds and defining one's own needs.

Has the courage to be open and honest, willing to share one's inner-self and emotions when appropriate.

Has the ability to transcend the subject matter, the sign of a complete person.

Sees the wholeness of the human experience and by unifying his field with others makes it a part of the whole.

Creates regenerative energy which affects the students as well as self.

Is aware of the responsibility of serving as a role model.

Generates a love for life through the process by which the content is taught.

Links the known, especially through humor and analogy.

Has fun teaching and recognizes the absurdity of the situation.

A Great Teacher:

Is proud of being a teacher:

*Janet Kelly, John Baker, Joyce Evans,
Dianne Eyer, Michael Leigh, Mark Levine,
Darlean McClure, Barbara Outland, Pat
Spencer, Irv Tennenbaum.*

*On the conference chalkboard, after the reading of these
last thoughts and many a tearful parting, someone had
written a final anonymous thought:*

A Great Teacher is secure enough to cry.

*I drink from the moving stream
rather than a stagnant pool.*

*Use a teaspoon or a bucket,
but drink. I am*

The Moving Stream.....

The Great Teachers Seminar, Santa Barbara, 1982