

From *WKU Talks...* p. 1

curriculum. **Third**, there is not enough time allotted for sustained silent reading time in school. When books are taught, they are overanalyzed and deconstructed. Student readers don't have the organic experience of reading a book, without chopping it into bits that can be expressed as questions on a standardized test. They do not have the opportunity to experience joy in reading. The result is students who can read at the comprehension level, but not at the critical level. While these students may achieve the "mechanics" of reading, they are poor readers with respect to evaluating information, relating content and context, and appreciating the overall meaning in an author's work.

Critical reading is key to critical thinking at the college level. Without deep reading skills, students cannot evaluate, select, analyze and organize information—building blocks for academic discourse in every discipline. Our book group discussed strategies that would encourage deep reading in college classrooms. Such strategies included helping set the stage for difficult material, incorporating more student involvement (i.e. role-playing characters in novels), and modeling good reading techniques. Reading Apprenticeship (RA) is one example of modeling deep reading skills (Lesmeister, 2010). The basic idea of RA is for the professor to be a reading expert, modeling skills that good readers use. Students have the opportunity to practice these skills in small groups, and to reinforce these skills with class discussion. Students who participate in RA are better able to read more actively and more deeply.

We also discussed the importance of recreational reading to building writing skills, vocabulary and general world knowledge. Gallagher points out that readicide discourages reading for pleasure. One way to encourage reading for fun is to bring faculty and students together for informal reading experiences. In response to declining recreational reading by University of Dayton (OH) students, librarians at the Roesch Library partnered with the Residence Education program to offer a recreational reading program on campus (Gauder, Giglierano, & Schramm, 2007). Their pilot program, "Porch Reads," targeted sophomore students. Students met with faculty

facilitators to discuss a selected book each term. The overall goals of the program were to promote reading for fun and build community. The coordinators hoped that students would build relationships with faculty, and become more comfortable interacting with their professors. Students who participated in the program felt that the discussions were worthwhile, and that the book groups supported their formal academic activities. Many students participated more than once.

Our group left with much to address regarding reading and how to improve college students' reading skills, so the discussion continues. We met again on May 3rd at Greener Groundz and will again in the future.

For more information, *Readicide* is available at WKU's Educational Resources Center and at FaCET for checkout, or visit Kelly Gallagher's web site <http://www.kellygallagher.org/>.



From *Discussing...* p. 1

FaCET has purchased the CD/Transcript of the webinar for those wanting to hear the authors. It will soon be made available for check out.

What are the implications of this study's findings for WKU's faculty and students? If you are interested in learning more about this study and discussing what we can do to improve critical thinking at WKU, join our first ever FaCET Summer Book Club to discuss *Academically Adrift*.

We'll hold the initial meeting at the FaCET Summer Conference on June 9th. Then, the following Thursday, we will have a potluck lunch to wrap up our discussion of the book.

The first 12 faculty to sign up will receive a complimentary copy of *Academically Adrift*. Register at www.wku.edu/teaching/events.

Reference

Gokhale, A. A. (1995). Collaborative learning enhances critical thinking. *Journal of Technology Education* 7(1). Viewed April 2011 via <http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/ejournals/JTE/v7n1/gokhale.jte-v7n1.html>



FaCET's Summer Conference



Soak Up the Sun

Thursday, June 9, 2011

10:30am - 2:45pm

Tate Page Hall, Room 420

After a long, cold winter, FaCET invites you to look toward the sunny day of its annual Summer Conference. Registration is now open!

Presentations will showcase bright ideas from across campus to improve your teaching and your students learning, among others.

Lunch will be provided; please let us know if you will require a vegetarian meal. Bring a blanket if it's a nice day and you'd like to enjoy your meal on South Lawn!

Registration deadline: Friday, June 3, 2011. Visit www.wku.edu/teaching and log-in to register!

Come and share and learn in the warmth of WKU collegiality with us!



Two Ways to Connect with FaCET

Did you know that FaCET has a listserv that shares teaching ideas gathered from schools around the country? Or are you a member of our Facebook group?

If you're interested in receiving a weekly Teaching Message e-mail during the semester (and a chance to peruse the archives), simply send Wren an e-mail, and she'll get you signed up right away!

You can also join our Facebook group-- WKU FaCET-- to be sure to receive updates on all of our events as soon as they are scheduled!

Thanks from FaCET!

As the academic year winds down, all of us at FaCET would like to thank everyone who attended our seminars, participated in our book clubs over *Sentipensante* and *Readicide*, contributed articles for our newsletters, read our newsletters, and presented seminars for us.

Thanks also go to those who donated items to and shopped at our yard sale last September, helping us to raise funds that go toward FaCET programming.

We hope everyone has a wonderful summer break! We look forward to seeing you at our Summer Conference on June 9th!



Teaching Spirit

The *Teaching Spirit* is published by the Faculty Center for Excellence in Teaching (FaCET). The Center's mission is to provide activities and opportunities that support and enhance individual excellence in classroom instruction. Its programs are available to all WKU instructors and GTAs.

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Links to FaCET's Web Site?

by Sally Kuhlenschmidt

Have you bookmarked or made a favorite link to any item on FaCET's Web site?

With the conversion to a new system for Web pages, the link names may be changing as of July 1. We are trying to minimize the changes as much as possible. We do have to reorganize the section with resources and newsletters to adapt to the new system, and we have converted all of our booklets to PDFs.

A number of our interactive pages, such as the quotations site, may take much longer to make functional as they involve more complex coding. Because we have almost 20 years worth of pages, such as newsletters and booklets, we cannot recreate our site in its entirety by July 1. It will likely take a year or longer as it must be done while we update our print publications' links to other WKU offices and engage in our usual work.

For the period until July 1 and for the portions we judge most important to the fall (e.g., Basic Skills for College Teaching and booklets), we are making redirects to the new URLs. Some of these temporary pages won't look very nice, but they will only exist until July 1. The URLs of the target pages (usually ending in .php) will last past July 1 and send you to the newest version.

What you can do:

1. If there is a page that is important to you, let us know as soon as possible, and we'll move it up in priority.
2. Also, you can shift over old URLs to the new format. Our old core URL was <http://www.wku.edu/Dept/Support/AcadAffairs/CTL/>
- On all new URLs, that portion is now <http://www.wku.edu/teaching/>

We have been using this newer form for several years, but occasionally the old one crops up. Most of the time you can simply highlight and replace the old with the new part and leave the remaining text the same.

3. After July 1, if the URL ends in .htm or .html, try replacing the final .htm with .php. Or contact us for the

new URL.

If you want to see our work in progress, and don't mind incompleteness of links and few images, visit <http://www3.wku.edu/teaching/> This is a temporary URL. On July 1 it will become <http://www.wku.edu/teaching/>

We are interested in your comments! Please don't hesitate to contact us as we go through this update!

Interested in Online Teaching?

The 2011 Preparatory Camp
for Online Instructors
is just around the corner!

Join us **August 3-9** to learn more about

- Communication Tools
- Basic and Advanced features of Blackboard
- How your role changes when you teach online
- How you can build relationships with your online students
- How experienced online instructors engage students in their online classroom
- Creating and Managing Images, Audio and Video

Exchange ideas with other faculty members and much more!

The Registration Application must be filled out by **June 1** to be considered for the 2011 Camp!

Space is limited!!

Register today online at:

www.wku.edu/reachu/OTSC/online_summer_camp.htm

The 2011 Preparatory Camp for Online instructors is brought to you by Academic Technology, FaCET, & Distance Learning.



wku Teaching Spirit

The Newsletter of the Faculty Center for Excellence in Teaching (FaCET) "Ideas not Absolutes" May 2011 Vol. 22 No. 8

WKU Talks About Readicide

by Tamera Race and Barbara Kacer

Readicide: noun, the systematic killing of the love of reading, often exacerbated by the inane, mind-numbing practices found in schools

Gallagher, K. (2009). *Readicide: How schools are killing reading and what you can do about it*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse Publishers.

On two Wednesday afternoons during spring semester, a group of WKU educators gathered to discuss *Readicide: How Schools are Killing Reading and What You Can Do About It* (2009) by Kelly Gallagher. We represented different colleges and departments: University College, English, History, Interdisciplinary Studies, the Libraries, Public Health, and the School of Teacher Education. Dr. Barbara Kacer facilitated our discussion, and FaCET provided us with books, snacks and comfy chairs. Dedicated readers ourselves, **we shared our concerns: how does declining student reading impact our teaching effectiveness; what can we do to support critical reading skills among reluctant readers; what steps can we take to encourage reading as a lifelong habit, a key to lifelong learning?**

Author Kelly Gallagher is a high school English teacher and literacy consultant in Anaheim, CA. His other books include *Teaching Adolescent Writers* (2006), *Deeper Reading: Comprehending Challenging Text, 4-12* (2004) and *Reading Reasons: Motivational Mini-Lessons for Middle and High School* (2003). In *Readicide*, Gallagher proposes that in the quest to meet required testing benchmarks, teachers are killing the desire to read. **He identifies three factors that create readicide. First**, high interest reading material is not available to students at their schools. **Second**, in an attempt to maximize study time for standardized tests, complex works are no longer included as part of the

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Discussing Academically Adrift:

FaCET's 1st Summer Book Club

by Jeremy M. Thompson and Barbara Kacer

Are undergraduates learning anything once they get to college? According to research presented by Richard Arum and Josipa Roksa in *Academically Adrift*, after two years of college, students showed no noticeable increase in critical thinking, complex reasoning, or writing skills. In their recent study, of the 2,300 college students surveyed:

- 50% had not taken a college-level course requiring 20 pages of writing per semester.
- 33% had no classes that required at least 40 pages of reading per week.

In the study, Arum and Roksa used the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA), which measures achievement on only critical thinking, complex reasoning, and writing skills. The CLA is a performance/writing examination, written in the format of case studies. They concluded that "gains in critical thinking, complex reasoning, and writing skills (i.e., general collegiate skills) are either exceedingly small or empirically non-existent for a large proportion of students." In their book, they share the antidote for improving these general collegiate skills: have students write more than 20 pages per semester and read more than 40 pages per week.

In a March webinar (Magna Publications, Inc., 2011), Arum and Roska shared that their findings show collaborative learning is not effective unless instructors set parameters for the collaboration. However, it is interesting to note that collaborative learning has been found (Gokhale, 1995) to be most effective with the type of learning that the CLA measures: critical thinking and complex reasoning.

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