This month’s spotlight faculty member is Dr. Shirley Mixon from the Department of Interdisciplinary Studies. Dr. Mixon has a background in business education and higher education administration. She has been a faculty member at ECU for a number of years.

Q: Why did you become a teacher?

A: I wanted to help students succeed in the real world by understanding the significance of hard work and education.

Q: Growing up, what did you want to be?

A: I initially wanted to be a medical professional but soon realized that I didn’t have what was required to become a medical professional. I couldn’t even dissect a frog without crying and messing up.

Q: Going back to research, what are your research interests?

A: My area of interest has changed a lot over the years. Currently, I am interested in diversity and equality.

Q: Let’s talk about some other aspects of your job. What do you find to be the most rewarding part of being a professor?

A: Helping the students develop a plan for graduation and seeing the looks on their faces when they realize that they are graduating. Often students don’t have an appreciation for the rigor of the required work while they are doing it, but later express how the rigor has caused them to succeed in their profession.

Q: What is the most challenging aspect?

A: Dealing with and communicating with difficult people are the most challenging of all. Getting students to like you in the classroom environment while maintaining rigor and enforcing guidelines is next.

Q: What is the most helpful advice you’ve received on your journey?
A: Though you always want your students to like you, you should not try to be their best friend. In other words, maintain professional distance. Many things have changed over the years, but this is the best advice that I could have ever received from my own academic advisor.

Q: What type of class do you prefer—face-to-face, blended, or fully online?

A: I am very comfortable with all of these modalities. If I had to choose, I would say blended. I choose blended because I get the best of both worlds. I really like getting to meet with my students to put a face to a name.

Q: What’s your favorite lesson or activity to teach?

A: I love teaching about individual learning styles and about employment search documents, such as letters and resumes.

Q: How do you motivate your students?

A: I give students an opportunity to obtain bonus points and encourage frequent communication with me to assure that assignments are understood.

Q: Any tricks or tips to share with your fellow educators?

A: Encourage students to become critical thinkers. Ensure that students get in the habit of writing and analyzing, and not just listing information.

Q: CETL is starting a reading initiative, so I’m asking everyone, “What was the last book you read?”

A: Calling Me Home by Julie Kibler.

READING RECAP: CETL BOOK CLUB

By Haley Vickers

This semester, CETL kicked off our book club by reading The Spark of Learning: Energizing the College Classroom with the Science of Emotion by Sarah Rose Cavanagh. We were fortunate to have 8 faculty and staff members from all over campus join us for our reading initiative.

Marla Lobley, from the Linscheid Library said, “It was fun to get to know people from different departments that I wouldn’t have otherwise met with. The book and our discussions inspired and challenged me to be a better teacher!”

Calantha Tillotson, also from the Linscheid Library added, “I had a blast in CETL book club! I particularly enjoyed the opportunity to get to know faculty from across the ECU campus, who I might not have met otherwise.”

Dr. Jason Prather, chair of the Kinesiology Department, added, “The CETL Book Club is an excellent opportunity to network with ECU colleagues, read an informative book, and learn from each other. I enjoyed the initial book club and look forward to future book clubs. I would encourage all ECU employees to attend.”
The Spark of Learning centers on bringing emotion into the classroom. Emotion can take many forms—not just the touchy, feely stuff. Emotion is anything that can tie an experience to memory. For instance, practically every American living at the time can recall where they were and what they were doing on September 11th, 2001, but few of us recall what we were doing on September 1st of that same year. Cavanagh seeks to propel instructors to create memorable lessons that students will remember long after the test has been taken. By giving detailed descriptions of how emotions work in the brain in the first two chapters, she then delves into practical actions for professors to take in the remaining four chapters.

If you are looking to expand the soft skills of your classroom teaching, The Spark of Learning is definitely for you!

Please join us for our next Book Club endeavor, occurring Fall Semester 2019. We will be reading iGen: Why Today's Super-Connected Kids Are Growing Up Less Rebellious, More Tolerant, Less Happy--and Completely Unprepared for Adulthood--and What That Means for the Rest of Us by Jean Twenge. We hope to see you there!

SERVING STUDENTS THROUGH THE SEVEN PRINCIPLES: PART V

By Haley Vickers

In past issues, we (re)introduced you to Chickering and Gamson’s 1987 article, “Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education” and to Principles #1–#4. This month, we will be looking at Principle #5

Principle #5 of Good Practice: Emphasizes Time on Task

Time. No one has enough of it. Students need time, and many students need help managing their time. For some, college is the first time they have been away from home, and the first time they get to experience freedom. Sometimes, we need to teach students how to manage their time. True, this is not in most of our curricula, but it may be the missing link students need to pass your class.

Face-to-face and blending learning environments lend themselves to “time-on-task.” As the professor, you give your students deadlines and assignments. If a student does not complete these assignments, you can visit with this person in the physical classroom and find out what is going on. Do they understand the assignment? Do they have a copy of the syllabus? Are life pressures getting in the way? Are they having too much fun on the weekends?

It is a little more difficult to help students with time management in an online class. Other than email or a few Zoom meetings, you might not directly interact with this student. Here are a few ways to help your students with their deadlines:

1. **Make a plan.** As part of one of your first assignments, you might ask students to create a
study plan for your class. In the plan, ask them to detail when they will work on the class, how much time they plan to devote to it, and how they plan to front-load for big projects. Encourage students to start using Outlook or Google calendars and task lists to organize their time.

2. **Encourage team building.** Create a group in Blackboard and suggest that the members “meet” once a week or once every two weeks to discuss the course. They could do this via Zoom, Skype, or good old Discussion Board. If students have a friend in the class, they are more likely to stay engaged in that class.

3. **Make all content available.** Instead of doing adaptive release in Blackboard, make all content available to students at the very beginning of the course. Encourage them to work ahead if they know they have a deadline in another class or some other obligation coming up. Be clear that you might not grade early work until the entire class gets to that point in the semester, per your syllabus.

4. **Encourage apps.** There are a host of apps available for students to download on their smartphone or tablet that block distractions like Instagram, Facebook, Snap Chat, etc. Apps like Freedom and Stay Focused – App Block can help, though most do cost a fee.

5. **Encourage communication.** Over-communicate with your students and encourage them to over-communicate with you! Be clear about your expectations. Ask them to share when they do not understand the material. Be open and available to answering their questions.

These time tips will help you and your students stay focused and on task.

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**BLACKBOARD TIP OF THE MONTH:**

By Wendy McKibben

**Creating Groups**

There has been an increased interest in **Groups** inside the BB Environment. You can organize students into groups so they can interact with each other and demonstrate their content knowledge while they learn to appreciate the perspectives of their peers.

**How to Access Course Groups:**

Go to the Course Management>Course Users and Groups>Groups.

On the Groups Page you can view, edit, and create new groups and group sets.
How to Enroll Groups:
There are a few options to enroll groups.

1. Manual Enroll—allows you to assign each student to a group.
2. Random Enroll—automatically distributes students into groups on your settings for maximum members per group.
3. Self-Enroll—allows students to add themselves to a group with a sign-up sheet.

How to Give Students Access to their Groups:
1. Create a Groups Link on the Left Course Menu Bar.
2. Or ask students to go to Tools>Groups.

TIP: The best practice is to create a Groups Link on the Course Menu Bar:

A: Each student’s groups appear by default in My Groups.

After you create groups and add users, the groups are available to enroll members in My Groups where users can expand each group name for quick access to its tools.

B: Course Menu Link

Because My Groups does not list sign-up sheets, create a link to the Groups listing page. Use the Course Menu’s Add Menu Item list and create a tool link or course link.
How to Provide Links in the Course Content Area:
A link to the Groups, a Groups Homepage, or a sign-up sheet can appear in the content area, folder, learning module, or lesson plan in close proximity to related content.

Create groups with the groups tools>Go to the Content Area>Access Tools>Select Groups>Make your selection on the Create Link: Group page.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

By Haley Vickers

ABLE Tech is hosting the TechAccessOK Conference in Downtown Oklahoma City June 6 – 7 this year. This conference focuses on making technology accessible for all. Key presenters include Luis Garcia (eBay), Karen Hawkins (SapientRazorfish), Robert Jolley (Knowbility), Christa Miller (Virginia Tech), Korey Singleton (George Mason U), Jonathan Whiting (WebAIM), and more. Proposals are now being accepted and should be sent to Robb Carr. More details can be found here.

The Educators’ Leadership Academy (ELA) in conjunction with the University of Central Oklahoma (UCO) is hosting a Higher Ed Department Chair Academy from May 14, 2019 through March 11, 2020. The final day to register is April 19th. Details can be found here. ELA and UCO are also hosting the Educational Administrators’ Academy from June 24, 2019 to March 11, 2020. Registration is open until April 19th. Details can be found here.

Quality Matters

All Stars:
QM Internal Reviews MET:
- Dr. Robin Roberson - EDUC 5083/5983
- Dr. Nicolas Stowers - KIN 5313
- Prof. Jillian McCarty - KIN 2122

CONGRATULATIONS ON A JOB WELL DONE!