FACULTY SPOTLIGHT
By Haley Vickers

This month's spotlight faculty member is Dr. Jason Prather from the Department of Kinesiology. He is a QM Certified Peer Reviewer and a newly tenured faculty member. Originally an Oregon native, Dr. Prather received his master's degree from OU in 2001 and his doctoral degree from OSU in 2016. He and his wife are the proud parents of 3 precocious boys, ages 11, 7, and 4.

Q: Why did you become a teacher?
A: It was never the plan. It just sort-of happened. The original plan was to go back to Division I and be an athletic trainer. I took the position here at ECU expecting it to be for a short period of time, but over time, my position kept moving more and more to a full-time educational position. I have grown to love education and have no desire to go back to athletic training.

Q: Growing up, what did you want to be?
A: Thanks to Miami Vice, it was a vice cop, then a professional drummer, and finally a gym owner. I fell into athletic training by accident, and found out I was good at it, so the goal was to work at the Division I level.

Q: Going back to research, what are your research interests?
A: My dissertation focused on Learning Strategies. I have always been interested in how and why people learn.

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: Seeing former students employed and successful in their field.

Q: What is the most challenging aspect?
A: Wearing numerous hats and trying to successfully time-manage for all of those hats.

Q: What is the most helpful advice you’ve received on your journey?
A: Dr Payne (now Willis) told me that “if you teach difficult subjects, and actually grade fairly, students
will most likely give you low evaluation scores. Don’t take it personally; that’s just part of the business.” I have numerous students tell me they disliked me when they took my course(s), but now that they are working in the real world, they appreciate what I tried to accomplish with them.

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

A: Blended because you get to interact with students face-to-face, but you also have the opportunity to send them off to learn materials on their own.

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

A: Anything related to strength and conditioning or athletic training.

Q: What’s your favorite tech tool for teaching? What do students think of it?

A: I really like using our Blackboard shells because they allow me to use all of my favorite tools to teach my courses.

Q: How do you motivate your students?

A: If you can make learning enjoyable and relevant, you have a chance of keeping their attention. Once I have their attention, I work on getting them to investigate the subject more deeply, so hopefully they will become lifelong learners.

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

A: Embrace the QM process and utilize Wendy and Haley, as they have a huge amount of useful information.

Q: For the record, I want our readers to know that I did not ask you to say that. 😊 Anyhow, final question, CETL is starting a reading initiative, so I’m asking everyone, “What was the last book you read?”

A: The Spark of Learning: Energizing the College Classroom with the Science of Emotion by Sarah Rose Cavanagh.

SERVING STUDENTS THROUGH THE SEVEN PRINCIPLES: PART VI

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-#5. This month, we will tackle two principles as we come to the close of the 2018-2019 academic year.

Principle #6 of Good Practice: Communicates High Expectations

The higher we hold standards for students, the higher they will venture to meet those standards. One way of helping students reach higher standards is to make them aware of all of the services offered on campus to help them with their individual needs. Just on the 2nd floor of the Administration
Building, students have access to the Academic Success Center (ASC) in room 262, the Tutoring Zone in 259, and the Writing Center in 260. While visiting ASC, students can get help enrolling for classes, be advised, and learn about campus events. Additionally, on the other side of the hall, students can find Student Support Services (SSS) in room 250. SSS offers assistance with academic coaching, mentoring, leadership development, and more. There are a plethora of departments on the ECU campus designed to help students not only meet, but excel high above the standard. For more information on other student services, visit the CETL Pages for Students.

Principle #7 of Good Practice: Respects Diverse Talents and Ways of Learning

There are many and various ways of learning. One way to help all students in your class is to appeal to all types of learners. Adult students need a purpose and a reason for learning. Theory does not always provide this purpose for them because they might not be very interested in the subject matter of their gen ed courses. For instance, some students cannot solve an algebra equation to save their life, but if you present that same problem as a financial one, students might be more likely to understand the purpose behind it, which, in turn, helps them solve the algebra equation. When teaching students how grammar is useful, it might be a worthwhile kinesthetic activity to have students “be” different parts of the sentence so that they can see the connections between the words. In a history class, acting out the Constitutional Convention could help visual learners “see” what occurred instead of just hearing the same old story over and over again. What are some other ways we can help our students put their learning into action? Email us at cetlstu@ecok.edu. We’d love to hear your ideas and publish them in the first fall newsletter of 2019!

BLACKBOARD TIP OF THE MONTH:

By Wendy McKibben

Tests: Best Practices

There have been some issues during final exams this semester in the Blackboard(Bb) Environment. I would like to give some tips and tricks that may help with some concerns we have seen.

Creating/Taking a Test

- Browser: Use the latest versions of Firefox and/or Chrome to create and configure the test and options inside Bb
  - Instruct students to use the above browsers while working within the Bb Environment
  - Internet Explorer is unsupported and should NOT be used by faculty or students
  - When in doubt, one should use the check browser link configurations to see that they are appropriate
  - Having Bb open in more than one window or tab will cause issues

- Setting Test Options: Test Presentation
  - Displaying questions ALL AT ONCE is the default setting; however, it has been problematic. This setting has been
known to lose students’ test answer data and time-out issues.

- Tip: Use display questions ONE AT A TIME
  - This option should save students’ answers automatically
- If you want students to be able to revise previous answers, do not choose “Prohibit Backtracking”

- Timing
  - A best practice is to keep the exam under 1 hour
    - The Bb server will time out after 20 minutes if it detects inactivity
    - This will kick the student off the Exam
  - If you must have a longer Exam, consider breaking the exam into smaller parts:
    - Final Exam Part I
    - Final Exam Part II
- Remind students to SAVE the Test every 15 minutes in order to prevent the loss of their work
- CETL strongly recommends that you do not select FORCE COMPLETION
  - All of the following will kick students out of the Exam with FORCE COMPLETION enabled:
    - Closing the browser
    - Leaving the test
    - Losing power
    - Losing internet connection

- Bb time out after 20 minutes
  - Faculty will then need to reset the tests for students

- Multiple Attempts: Test Options
  - Faculty can allow for one or more (unlimited even) attempts
  - Also, there are options for which grade to score using the drop down menu
    - First
    - Last
    - Highest
    - Lowest
    - Average
- Clearing an attempt: Faculty can clear a student’s test attempt if they experience technical difficulties.
  - Go to the GRADE CENTER>FULL GRADE CENTER>locate the grade needing to be cleared>click the down arrow next to the grade and choose>View Grade Details>Clear Grade Attempt

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PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

By Haley Vickers

OSU’s Institute for Teaching & Learning Excellence is hosting the 2019 Teaching with Technology Conference on Wednesday, July 17th from 9:00 am
– 2:30 pm at OSU-Tulsa, 700 N. Greenwood Ave., Tulsa, OK 74106. Proposals for the conference are currently being accepted until May 31. Early-bird registration is $15 until June 30th. Standard rates begin July 1st through the 17th. For more information, visit itle.okstate.edu.

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.