

PAES Instructional Enhancement Initiative

College of Education, The Ohio State University

Autumn Workshop: Preparing Students for Doctoral Exams & Dissertations

Announcing the PAES Winter Quarter Book Club

Mondays in February from 9-11

This year, we'll read:

Bransford, J. (2000). *How People Learn*.

From one of the reviews:
"How People Learn is both a summary of some recent research in the cognitive sciences and an argument for how teaching should be done."

There will be an opportunity to sign up for the Book Club during January—for now, reserve Monday mornings in February to discuss the philosophy of teaching with your colleagues.

- How do we prepare students for their doctoral examinations?
- What is the philosophy behind the exams...to review what has been learned? To set a course for future learning? To prepare for the dissertation?
- What strategies can we share with students for taking the oral examinations?
- How can we (or should we) ensure equity in the examinations?
- How do we know when students are ready for the generals and the oral exam?

All of these questions and more were raised in a recent PAES Instructional Enhancement Committee meeting. As we discussed the purpose, format, and philosophy behind the general exams and dissertation defense, it became clear that having a discussion about these ideas on a broader level, with all PAES faculty, would be useful and productive.

The Autumn Quarter PAES workshop will be a discussion format on the general examination and dissertation oral defense. It's an opportunity to take some time out and really reflect on the process. What are we trying to do? What's the goal? Are we just "always doing what we've always done" without taking time to think about whether the process meets our philosophy?



Autumn Workshop

**Monday, Dec. 8
11:30-1:00
Room 274 Arps
Lunch will be provided**

Please come and share your ideas and learn from others. The goal is to learn some tips from other colleagues and reflect on our own beliefs (implicit or explicit) about the process. Maybe you'll want to make some changes after the discussion, and maybe you'll just have your current process validated—whatever the result, the discussion is sure to stimulate some thinking!

Reminder:

If you have material that you would like to have included in the Departmental Teaching Award submission, please be sure to forward it to Darcy. We want to make sure that the award submission includes all information about individual or group efforts to enhance the quality of instruction.

A list of instructional activities was passed out at the first meeting and is on TELSTAR.

PAES Sends Five to the Lilly Conference on Teaching & Learning

The 23rd Annual Lilly Conference of College Teaching is a national forum to improve instruction at the university level. The conference will feature more than 50 teacher-scholars presenting on topics ranging from using technology to cooperative learning. PAES will be extremely well-represented. Three faculty will attend because of their involvement in FTAD learning communities, and two faculty will be funded through PAES. That means we should have five faculty who can serve as resources and share information learned through the conference. PAES Attendees are:

Tim Barrett, member of the FTAD OSTEP Community
Darcy Haag Granello, member of the FTAD OSTEP Community
Wendy Naumann, funded through PAES
Donna Pastore, member of the FTAD OSTEP Community
Stephanie Peterson, funded through PAES

Talking the Talk: Using SAFMEDS to Shape Student's Verbal Repertoire

By Tim Barrett

In the school of PAES, we share a rich diversity of programs, interests, and strategies of effective instruction. In fact, we represent a cornucopia (sorry, I couldn't help the seasonal analogy) of programs, with unique objectives, processes and outcomes of our graduates. While variability may be a good thing, we do share a commonality across programs in that we each have a professional language in our various academic disciplines. I can't speak for all faculty in PAES, but I can speak for my fellow colleagues in Sport and Exercise Education (SEE), that we share a common goal for our students who are preparing to become professional physical educators to learn a particular professional language that physical educators speak in schools.

Speaking the language or, "talking the talk" as it were, is an important function of learning about effective practices in content, teaching strategies, and contextual variables regarding the students they teach, and the environment they will teach in once they are in schools. I would argue that "talking the talk", or fluency in the professional language of our associated disciplines, is an important and necessary skill for the students of our programs. How then, does one teach fluency of a verbal repertoire, and how does one know (measure) that students can "talk the talk"?

One strategy is measuring the rate of student responses. Rate of response can be defined as behavioral events or products per unit time (e.g., number per minute) (Lindsley, 1991). Rate of behavior is a convenient unit of measurement because "rate is a universal datum" (Skinner, 1938). In other words, rate can be applied to virtually any behavior across any species capable of being observed. While successful in the laboratory with various species, response rate is probably best known with humans in Precision Teaching (PT). Precision Teaching adjusts the curricula for each individual learner, often used in conjunction with Direct Instruction (DI), though PT can be used with any teaching approach. An essential element of PT is fluency, to which we now turn.

Fluency is essentially accuracy added to speed. This can be represented as True Mastery (i.e., Fluency) = Accuracy + Speed. Literally thousands of records have been obtained studying the fluency of behavior (see Ferster & Skinner, 1957; Lindsley, 1956, 1960, 1962, for example). As a result of this volume of data, behavior analysts have come to recognize rate (speed) as not merely a measure of behavior but actually a dimension of behavior. One could interpret this as a paradigm shift, one in which researchers measured learning as a change in accuracy, whereas in the new paradigm, learning is being understood as a change in performance over time.

In most academic disciplines, fluency is not well accepted, with the exception of foreign languages and

sports. The goal in foreign language instruction is to speak fluently without having to interrupt the flow to translate a word from one's native tongue to the foreign language. Likewise, a good professional tennis player can hit 15 volleys across the net in a minute. Many faculty members believe students need time to think about issues and to work out problem solutions. However, as a prerequisite skill, PT suggests that students can only think about the issues and solve the problems when their vocabulary in the discipline is fluent, when they know the terms, concepts, formulas, events, people, thoroughly (Lindsley, 1991).

Similar to learning a foreign language or rushing over 100 yards per game in football is learning the vocabulary and structure of an academic discipline. Fluency in language does not occur until one can think in the language. Yet, one cannot think in the language until he or she is fluent in the vocabulary.

So how does one increase the fluency (accuracy + speed) of student's vocabulary in an academic discipline? One strategy shown to be effective is "SAFMEDS". **Say All Fast a Minute Every Day Shuffled** has been shown to be effective in shaping the verbal repertoire of graduate students in courses in applied behavior analysis (ABA). Recently, I introduced SAFMEDS to students in PAES 601, one of the first courses in our professional sequence in the physical education teacher education program.

The nature of the course, its goals, and text used is such that students are introduced to the professional language of the academic discipline known as teaching physical education. Briefly, students are required to take a 20 item (15 new terms, 5 from the previous chapter) chapter test on terms and concepts pertinent to each chapter. The following steps were planned and implemented using SAFMEDS in the classroom. These guidelines and tips for successful use of SAFMEDS in your own classes will help you shape the verbal repertoire of your students to "talk the professional talk" of your academic discipline.

The steps in planning SAFMEDS included:

- Identifying all the terms and concepts pertinent to the discipline for each chapter of the text, along with their associated definitions
- Creating flashcards with the term/concept on one side, and the definition on the backside of the card
- Printing a set of cards for each student (can be included in course packets, of course) on thick paper

The steps in implementing SAFMEDS included:

- Providing each student with a set of 20 SAFMED (i.e., flashcards) for each chapter (N = 16) of the text.

Talking the Talk, Continued.

- Prior to the next class meeting, students were required to take a 1-minute timed test in which they had to accurately (100% mastery) discriminate the 20 terms by looking at the definition side and stating the term while the instructor observed. If any errors occurred, the instructor pointed them out, discussed the correct response, clarified any misunderstanding, and asked the student to go study for a short time before returning to test again
- Students were not allowed to take the chapter test until they had mastered the set of 20 cards pertaining to that chapter.
- **S** -- say -- the learner should say the responses out loud. Not "think" the responses silently.
- **A** -- all -- one works with the entire deck of cards as a unit. Versus peeling off the first 10 cards only.
- **F** -- fast -- in the timed sessions, work through the cards as quickly as possible. Not slowly like flashcards.
- **M** -- minute -- the brief, timed sessions are just that, brief! Either a minute, a half-minute, quarter minute, etc.

Results

The results from my initial study last spring included a class average of 66% (46-89%) during baseline (students were left to their own traditional study techniques – though they were provided with the terms). Incidentally, students had created their own flashcards on day three of baseline in which they scored (89%) on the chapter test. If one were to exclude those data, baseline would be 54.5 (46-63%). Following intervention, the average increase in number correct was 89.6% (81-95%).

The nature of the research design, an A-B-A-B single-subject design, required a withdrawal from the intervention, which meant students no longer had the flashcards to study for the following chapter test. Anecdotal evidence suggests many students were very concerned about their grades and in fact, several students came to see me individually with their concerns. At this point they were “hooked” on the SAFMEDS and didn’t want to give them up. I asked them to follow the procedures of the study and “just do your best”, though this wasn’t easy for them or the instructor. The class average on chapter tests during the second “A” condition (without SAFMEDS) was 60.6% (57-66%). Upon reintroduction of SAFMEDS for the final four chapters of the text, the class average was 95% (87-100%).

Guidelines for using SAFMEDS

The success of students using SAFMEDS can be increased with some strategies or guidelines in the procedures. With SAFMEDS one sees what is on the front of a card, says what's on the back, then quickly moves on to the next card. Students should do brief, timed sessions, often no more than 30 seconds or 1 minute. I also recommend "sprints" in shorter 15-second timings. Regardless of the timing length, the main objective is building both one's speed and accuracy (i.e., fluency). The SAFMEDS acronym can be represented as:

- **E** -- every --
- **D** -- day -- do the brief, timed sessions every day, at least once a day.
- **S** -- shuffle the cards before doing a timing. Just like you shuffle a deck of Bicycle playing cards.

(adopted from Eshleman, <http://members.aol.com/standardcharter/safmeds.html>).

Our PAES students enroll in courses that introduce them to a whole new language reflecting a professional academic discipline. Strategies exist that facilitate the shaping of this verbal repertoire of our students. One strategy, SAFMEDS, has been used extensively in ABA and was recently successful in building fluency with undergraduate physical education majors allowing them to “talk the talk”. Anecdotal evidence from my students suggests they “liked using SAFMEDS as a strategy or tool to change their physical education vocabulary”. Originally a component of PT, SAFMEDS is an effective, easy and efficient strategy to improve the professional “talk” of our students.

DON'T FORGET TO RECEIVE PERIODIC EVALUATIONS FROM YOUR STUDENTS!

The easiest way to accomplish this is through the use of the “FEEDBACK ON YOUR INSTRUCTION” website.

Go to the website to create a mid-quarter formative evaluation form that you can use to enhance your instruction.

www.ureg.ohio-state.edu/fyi

To become more involved in the initiative,
contact:

Darcy Haag Granello
356 Arps Hall

Phone: 688-4605

Email: granello.1@osu.edu

PAES TEACHING INITIATIVE WEBSITE:
WWW.COE.OHIO-STATE.EDU/PAES
THEN, LOOK UNDER “INFORMATION FOR FACULTY”

Diversity Update: Creating a Supportive Environment for GLBT Students in the Classroom

Aubrey Durbin, School Psychology Master’s Student & **Wendy Naumann**, PAES Diversity Coordinator

The second year (2002-2003) of the College of Education’s Five-Year Diversity Plan targeted issues significant to GLBT populations. By not educating students about GLBT issues, myths, stereotypes, and homophobia, we fail to make them aware of what’s out there in the world leaving them unprepared for life and for the workforce. Students are almost sure to come into contact with gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered individuals as approximately 10% of the population falls into one of these categories.

Things educators can do to make a difference:

- Establish a nondiscriminatory, inclusive classroom environment by including a diversity statement on your syllabus and discussing it the first day of class. Set rules up front to students about what is acceptable in the form of behavior and comments and what

will not be tolerated. You can use policies from the university and ethical guidelines and position papers from your professional organizations if applicable. Display posters, stickers, and other written materials acknowledging the presence of GLBT persons and issues in your office and classrooms

- When talking about GLBT issues, be relaxed—students sense tension and discomfort and may perceive the teacher as not comfortable and supportive of the subject matter. Be sure to comfortably say the words, “gay”, “lesbian”, “bisexual”, and “transgendered”.
- Do not allow biased or stereotypical comments go unchallenged. Ask other students to respond to the comment, then go on to discuss other myths and stereotypes students can think of or have seen in books or in the media. Discourage offensive humor about gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered persons by not embarrassing the student, but encouraging him or her to rethink their comments and

and other stereotypes they may have.

- Encourage GLBT topics, when relevant, even if not in the syllabus. When GLBT events and figures are left out of lessons, students mistakenly assume all historical figures are heterosexual. Also, when using any type of case studies or scenarios, incorporate GLBT issues or characters. And finally, sexual orientations should be included in all discussions of sexuality including dating, relationships, and parenting.
- Become aware of all the resources available for GLBT youths and adults in your area, including youth groups, community centers, telephone hotlines, and organizations. At The Ohio State University you can go to the Multicultural Center website to get this information.

If you would like more information or have specific questions regarding how to create a GLBT-friendly climate in your classroom, please feel free to email Wendy Naumann at naumann.12@osu.edu