



Center for Teaching Excellence Hampton University Teaching Matters

April 2006

Volume 1, Number 2

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An Interview with the Edward L. Hamm, Sr. Distinguished Teaching Award Recipients

by **Zina T. McGee**

Each year, Hampton University honors and recognizes outstanding faculty who serve as models of excellence for their profession and exemplary mentors for their students. This month, I had the pleasure of interviewing the recent recipients of the Edward L. Hamm, Sr. Distinguished Teaching Award: Mrs. Cheryl Freeman, Department of Communicative Sciences and Disorders, and Atty. Gloria Whittico, Department of Political Science and History.

Briefly describe your teaching philosophy. What strategies do you use to create a student-focused learning environment?

Learning is work. For some students it is hard work. I do not think a teacher's job is to make learning easy or fun, but to try to provide an environment in which the student sees or receives a benefit from the knowledge in order to be motivated to do the work. In both the classroom and the clinical situation, creating this type of environment may only require answering questions or being available. Often observing how students learn and modifying lectures and assignments to a format more conducive to student retention can be beneficial to the student without modifying your standards.-*Cheryl Freeman*

My teaching philosophy is based upon the concept of student empowerment. I stress the importance of preparation for and participation in class discussions. Because I employ a modified version of the classical Socratic dialogue, it is of paramount importance that each student is engaged during the dialogue, whether or not he or she is actually speaking. I stress the notion that "knowledge is power" and thereby hope to give each student the incentive to prepare for each class lecture and discussion.-*Gloria Whittico*

How do you recognize creativity and innovation both within and outside of the classroom setting?

In the classroom, students are given the parameters of each assignment and whether it is appropriate to expand or be creative on a particular project. I find that this encourages resourcefulness when it can or will be positively rewarded. The nature of our profession encourages and rewards innovation especially in the clinical setting. There are ample opportunities to be original and or creative in personal interactions, clinical methods, and materials.

Students are frequently rewarded for their clinical innovation by client attention and cooperation and by recognition and praise from peers and supervisors.-*Cheryl Freeman*

I strive to recognize creativity and innovation both within and outside of the classroom. I attempt to do so by working closely with my students, especially with my pre-law advisees, to determine their primary learning style. Based upon our mutual assessment of the learning style, I am better able to provide the student with meaningful performance feedback.-*Gloria Whittico*

In what ways do you stimulate self-growth and professional development among your students?

I attempt to stimulate self-growth by fostering independence on academic and clinical assignments. Giving good instructions (from the student's perspective) for assignments decreases the number of out-of-class inquiries and excuses for not completing assignments. Making sure students understand their options during advisement and assisting them in making the adjustment from high school to college also encourages mature decision-making. Helping students organize and prioritize their coursework, study time and sometimes even their personal lives often assists them in maximizing their potential not just in their academic performance but also in their professional choices.-*Cheryl Freeman*

I attempt to stimulate student self-growth and professional development among all of my students, but especially among my pre-law advisees. I make sure that they recognize that critical thinking, attention to detail, and ethical considerations are all critical to the study of and practice of law. These important attributes must be cultivated by the student as early as possible in their undergraduate career. I take care to model these attributes in all of my interactions with the students in my capacity as an instructor and advisor.
-*Gloria Whittico*

What strategies do you use to facilitate reflection, professional learning and enhanced student accomplishment?

Encouraging students to determine what is necessary to do their best work often starts a chain reaction that results in personal insight. Determining what a student may need from an instructor, to decrease the amount of effort necessary to learn a particular concept or skill, and helping them to negotiate how to obtain what they need, often improves student performance. In addition, asking students 'why' and to explain not just classroom or clinic performance, but their interactions and opinions, often leads to introspection that they are surprisingly willing to share.-*Cheryl Freeman*

I urge my students to visualize the end result of what they want to accomplish and to develop an action plan to ensure their success. Critical thinking and student empowerment are fundamental when attempting to ensure high levels of enhanced student accomplishment and to the development of student-based attitudes regarding professional learning.-*Gloria Whittico*