

Getting Past the ‘Dis’ in Disabilities

By STEVEN R. KNOWLTON

Once built, the bricks-and-mortar parts of a campus tend to stay built, in contrast with the electronic side of a university, which needs rebuilding whenever ones and zeroes start whizzing along in ever-faster and fancier packages. Also unlike bricks and mortar, electronic scaffolding doesn't always grab attention right away when its chunks don't quite fit together as they should.

That's often the case when it comes to providing the electronic accessibility services needed by students and faculty members with disabilities, especially those with limited or no vision.

Dr. Frank G. Bowe, a longtime Hofstra leader in providing access to campus facilities and services for students with disabilities, says it is time for the University to put some serious effort into electronic aids and other technology enhancements that help those who cannot see well enough to read ordinary computer screens. And, he says, it is time for the University to get organized and put somebody in charge of such assistance programs. Dr. Bowe, the Dr. Mervin Livingston Schloss Distinguished



Dr. Frank Bowe, the Schloss Distinguished Professor for the Study of Disabilities, told his audience at the annual Schloss lecture that the University should do more to provide electronic document access to students and faculty with disabilities. Still, he praised the administration for the work it has done, and predicted, "I think we're going to get where we need to go."

Professor for the Study of Disabilities, made that point on March 1 before a packed house at the annual Schloss lecture, given on the 10th floor of the Axinn Library.

"The different administrative units that assist students with disabilities should be strengthened, better coordinated and

formally charged with faculty as well as graduate student support," Dr. Bowe told his audience. "At this stage of the University's development, we should no longer rely upon informal networks and part-time personnel for such vital functions."

In the area of electronic accessibility, which includes providing devices that magnify computer screens or that read screen text aloud, "we are ahead of most other universities," Dr. Bowe said after the presentation. Hofstra, he said, has "a large contingent of knowledgeable people in key positions around the University who care about e-access, want to do the right thing. That being said, however, we haven't given

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This and other issues of the CTSE Newsletter are available on the Web at www.hofstra.edu/Faculty/CTSE/cte_programs.cfm.

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Hofstra at Home and Abroad: A World to Explore

By JAMES E. HICKEY JR.

Issues of international law are both fascinating and relevant. And Hofstra School of Law is in the forefront of training people to take on these issues, offering an international curriculum, an international law faculty, transnational student exchange opportunities, study abroad, transnational graduate legal education and student publications.

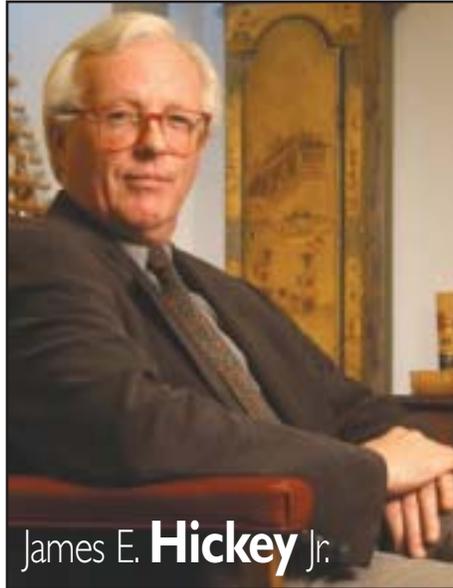
The body of transnational law is expanding, growing, and hardening at an explosive rate. Much of that transnational law is being domesticated, and it is reaching deep into the American legal system. Areas of domestic law that in the past would have been handled strictly by a domestic lawyer knowing only domestic law are now increasingly being affected by foreign law, by new international law, and by new international organizations.

International and comparative law now pervades virtually every area of legal study, including family law, bankruptcy and constitutional law. The rise of the multinational corporation and the global economy in recent years has made transnational issues more common and far more significant. International treaties now number in the thousands and have expanded in such areas as criminal law, contracts, the environment, trade, human rights, labor law, banking law, product labeling, and taxes. Domestic law increasingly has to conform to the obligations created by those treaties.

To prepare students for this new reality, Hofstra has established a broad range of programs and course offerings that expose students to the body of transnational law and

With this issue, the CTSE Newsletter begins a regular feature on the programs that take Hofstra faculty and students into our newly globalized world and bring scholars and students from around the world to Hofstra. In this article, Professor of Law James E. Hickey Jr., director of International and Comparative Law Programs, describes the activities of some of the University's best-known international programs, those of the Law School.

other legal cultures and provide opportunities to interact with foreign law students both on campus and abroad. It also has the interdisciplinary "Journal of International Business and Law," a new publication edited by students from the School of Law and the Frank G. Zarb School of Business.



The International Law Curriculum

Hofstra was one of the first law schools in the country to require all first-year law students to take a course in Transnational Law. We offer nearly 30 upper-level courses in international and comparative law, covering international issues like European Union law, human rights, business transactions, energy and environmental issues, the global economy, and criminal law. Students can acquire international law skills by participating in the Political Asylum Law Clinic and our International Moot Arbitration Team, which competes each year in Vienna.

The International Law Faculty

Hofstra Law School has one of the strongest and intellectually diverse international and comparative law faculties in the country, men and women who are both dedicated scholars and gifted teachers. They include:

James Hickey Jr.: Director of International and Comparative Law Programs and Professor of Law; J.D., University of

Georgia; Ph.D., University of Cambridge (Jesus College). Professor Hickey has practiced law with two Washington, D.C., law firms in the areas of international law, law of the sea, federal energy and natural resources law, antitrust law and administrative law, and he has published extensively.

Nora V. Demleitner: Professor of Law; J.D., Yale University; LL.M., Georgetown University. Professor Demleitner teaches and has written widely in the areas of criminal, comparative and immigration law. She is a managing editor of the "Federal Sentencing Reporter," and serves on the executive editorial board of the "American Journal of Comparative Law."

Linda Galler: Professor of Law; J.D., Boston University; LL.M., New York University. Professor Galler teaches courses in individual income taxation, corporate taxation, international taxation, and ethics in federal tax practice. She has published in the areas of international taxation, corporate taxation, administrative law, court procedure, and tax lawyers' ethics. She is chair of the ABA Section of Taxation Standards of the Tax Practice Committee.

Julian Ku: Associate Professor of Law; J.D., Yale Law School. Professor Ku teaches corporate and international law. His main research interest is the intersection of international and domestic law. Professor Ku practiced as an associate at the New York City law firm of Debevoise & Plimpton, specializing in litigation and arbitration arising out of international disputes.

Mark L. Movsesian: Professor of Law; J.D., Harvard University. Professor Movsesian writes in international trade and contracts. He served as a law clerk to Justice David H. Souter of the Supreme Court of the United States and as an attorney-adviser in the Office of Legal Counsel at the U.S. Department of Justice. In 2002 he was the School of Law's Professor of the Year.

Barbara J. Stark: Professor of Law; J.D., New York University; LL.M., Columbia University. Professor Stark recently completed "International Family Law: An

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Ronald A. Chalmers, senior instructional technologist, and Judith L. Tabron, director of faculty computing support, share a pleasant moment during the first of a pair of presentations to faculty and administrators on online teaching, high-technology classrooms and other computer-based enhancements.

The first session, titled "Distance Learning: What's Right for Hofstra?" was held on Dec. 7. The second, titled "Are We Too Late for the Revolution in Teaching with Technology?" was held February 8.

A detailed account of the sessions can be found by logging on to Blackboard from the Hofstra Portal home page, then under "Courses in which you are enrolled," click on Hofstra Faculty, then, from the menu on the left, select CTSE.

The sessions were co-sponsored by the CTSE.

Having a Word with CAROL PORR

Throwing the Book at Your Language Conundrums

I often tell the students in my grammar classes that if they were very disciplined and read the textbook cover to cover, doing all the exercises faithfully, they would learn the material with very little help from me. I add, of course, that they would miss my engaging personality and witty banter! The same, of course, holds true for you. So for those readers who would like to dangle their feet in the language pool on their own, this column will take a look at some of the books on grammar and usage that are out there. Some of them are tried and true (if a bit stodgy), while others are more recently published and, well, more fun to read than those oldies but goodies.

I'll start with those books that provide instruction in basic grammar. Pearson Longman publishes a handy text, "Reviewing Basic Grammar," edited by Mary Laine Yarber and Robert E. Yarber. It's published in soft cover, not terribly long (about 350 pages), and covers all the basics: parts of speech, punctuation, and mechanics. If you're interested in

"the facts, ma'am, just the facts," this is a good start.

A comprehensive and practical reference guide to the English language, and one that gives more than just "the facts," is "The Grammar Bible," edited by Michael Stumpf and Auriel Douglas. This very informative and easy-to-read book addresses the system of rules that are used to create language out of our thoughts and ideas. For 25 years, Michael Stumpf headed the National Grammar Hot Line at Moorpark College in Moorpark, Calif., where he fielded questions from students, editors, lawyers, doctors, and even the White House!

"The Grammar Bible" presents a scholarly discussion of grammar along with answers to some very interesting queries from professionals from all walks of life. The authors begin with the parts of speech, move on to sentence structure, and finish with spelling, punctuation, and vocabulary. Each chapter begins with an analysis of the particular topic followed by



Hot Line questions and answers provided by Mr. Stumpf. "The Grammar Bible" is a valuable reference book, written with style and humor. Here's an example of one of the items in Mr. Stumpf's files:

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In Statistics, All Errors Are Not Created Equal

By MICHAEL J. BARNES

Say a manufacturer insists that its latest light bulb “yields longer life!” Would you step up to buy it? Is there any way you could use statistics to make that decision?

The answer is yes, but to do that, we need to go beyond what I wrote about statistics in the last issue of the CTSE Newsletter. I explained then that statistics are characteristics of samples. They are the tools used to summarize and describe data, and the tools used to make predictions. In this installment, I will describe how statistics are used in another very important way: Just as sample statistics are used to make predictions or inferences about the populations from which the samples are drawn, they enable us to make decisions regarding the population as well.

The manufacturer is making a claim when it says its “new and improved” light bulb will last longer. This claim is a **prediction** of the manufacturer. Typically, manufacturers have their own research and design departments study such a product before a claim is made. But buyers who make bulk purchases, such as Home Depot and Lowe’s, also employ teams of researchers to test these claims. Since the complaint and refund departments of the buyers must deal directly with consumers, the buyers want to protect their profits and reputations by making independent decisions about product quality.

The claim, or prediction, made by the manufacturer is a **hypothesis**, or what most people call “an educated guess.” This guess is made on the basis of previous research that substantiates the claim. The opposite hypothesis – that the bulb will not last longer – is called the **null hypothesis**. The **research hypothesis**, made by the manufacturer and running counter to the null hypothesis, is referred to as the **alternative hypothesis**. The job of a buyer’s research team is to test the claim of the manufacturer (and, thereby,

the null hypothesis as well) and determine whether the data that it obtains support the research hypothesis (or support the null hypothesis).

Clearly, one way to determine the veracity of the manufacturer’s claim is to buy all of the bulbs made by the manufacturer, use them and find out whether the bulbs actually do yield longer life. Such a process would be silly, however, because all the bulbs made during this production run would be destroyed in the process. So if these bulbs turned out to indeed be better,



Michael J. Barnes

there would be none available for sale! So this procedure (i.e., the testing of the hypotheses) demands that the researchers sample some of the bulbs instead of testing all of them.

How many bulbs should be sampled? One thing is certain: the larger the sample, the surer we are of the results. But the cost of buying the bulbs for the sample, as well as the cost of the research, can be prohibitive. So the size of the sample is a consideration of these factors, among others, and usually represents a compromise between the desire to be sure of the results and the need to be practical.

What researchers are trying to do is to decide whether to retain or reject the null

hypothesis. If researchers decide, on the basis of the findings from the sample, that the newer bulbs actually represent no improvement over the older ones, the researchers retain the null hypothesis. On the other hand, the researchers may decide, on the basis of the sample, to reject the null hypothesis because they decide that the new bulbs represent an improvement over the older ones. Since there is no way of knowing what is really the case, the decision is made in the face of uncertainty.

Let us say that the old bulbs had a mean lifetime of 990 hours of continuous usage. The buyer randomly selects a sample of 100 new bulbs and tests these to see how many hours of continuous use they provide. The buyer’s team ascertains that the new bulbs have a mean lifetime of 995 hours of continuous usage, with a sample standard deviation of 10. Comparing the mean of the old bulbs and the new bulbs, clearly the new bulb lasts longer. While many lay people would see this and readily conclude that the new bulbs outlast the old bulbs, a statistician would be interested in determining whether this difference represented a **statistically significant** increase.

When statisticians make a decision, they are extremely concerned with the **error** that may be associated with that decision, especially when there is no way of ascertaining the results for the population of bulbs as a whole.

For example, if researchers measure the lifetime of the new bulbs and determine that the null hypothesis is false (i.e., that the bulbs are superior to the old ones), they will be making an error if they retain the null hypothesis. By doing that, the researchers would be saying that the new bulbs are not better, when they are in fact better than before. The recommendation coming from the researchers would be against buying the bulbs. A buyer that took such advice would be missing out on a good thing. This error is referred to as a **Type II Error** (retaining the null hypothesis when the null is false).

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The other type of error is a **Type I Error** – the researchers reject the null hypothesis, but the null hypothesis is true. In this case, the researchers, on the basis of the findings of their sample, believe that the new bulbs are indeed better, when they are not. Since the researchers believe that the bulbs are better, they would recommend buying them, and that would be a waste of money. While the first error (Type II Error – a k a missing out on a good thing) is a bad one, the second one (Type I Error – a k a wasting money) is far worse. If buyers follow the advice of researchers making a Type II Error, the buyers still have their money in their pockets.

So the researchers, before collecting data, decide to limit the amount of error they are willing to make. Understandably, the

researchers are most concerned about committing a Type I Error, and thereby set a limit for this error. The limit varies with the application. For example, researchers in the social sciences are willing to restrict themselves to a one-in-20 error rate (or 5 percent), while in the natural sciences, medicine, pharmaceuticals, and the like, much smaller acceptable rates are set.

Using a Type I Error rate of 5 percent, the critical cutoff for the mean lifetime of the new bulbs would be 991.661 hours of continuous use. Therefore, since the sample of new bulbs tested has a mean of 995 hours of continuous usage, the researchers are content to reject the null hypothesis and conclude that the bulbs sampled do yield longer life. The researchers draw this conclusion with the knowledge that the chance of committing a

Type I Error is less than 5 percent. On the basis of this sample of 100 bulbs, the researchers are willing to recommend the bulk purchase of the manufacturer's new bulbs because the researchers believe that they last longer than the previously manufactured bulbs.

It is important to note, however, that had the new bulbs generated a mean life of 991 hours of continuous use, the researchers would not have found that result satisfactory. For supporting the manufacturer's claim, a mean of 991.661 was the minimum requirement for the mean lifetime of the new bulbs because the researchers had limited the Type I Error to 5 percent.

Michael Barnes is a professor of psychology and the quantitative analysis consultant to the CTSE.

From the Director

Come to Lunch, and Stay to Learn

Dear Colleagues,

One of the wonderful things about working at a university is getting to know and collaborate with people who do such interesting work in fields that you may know little about, but would like to know much better. Unfortunately, as a practical matter, it may be difficult to take advantage of many of these opportunities. We all have different teaching, research, service, and personal schedules. Our ironclad commitments may limit the time we have available for participating in optional, but intriguing, activities. While working to promote faculty excellence, we at the CTSE recognize the realities of academic life and provide a variety of activities, so there is something for everyone.

One of the most informal CTSE programs is the Brown-Bag Lunch discussion. Its purpose is to provide a casual forum for faculty conversation in a small group on subjects of mutual interest. Think of it as a faculty lunchroom where all are welcome. All faculty are invited to suggest

topics for BBLs and to lead discussions at times that suit their schedules. The CTSE provides the room, the cookies, and the beverages. This semester we have already had one BBL: On March 22, Dr. Mark McEvoy and interested faculty talked about NEH Fellowships. Another is scheduled for May 4, when Dr. Debra Comer and Dr. Joanne Willey will lead a discussion about pedagogical research. The number of BBLs is limited only by the number of people suggesting topics and volunteering to get the conversation started.

Starting next semester, the CTSE will have a small conference room in Weller Hall. Perhaps the BBL will become an everyday occurrence once the center has its own space. If you have a topic you would like to discuss, pick a date in the fall and let me know. We've never had a book discussion, a fine arts discussion, a travel discussion, or a software discussion. If you are interested, you probably have colleagues who are, too. We can be our own best resources for information.



Best wishes for a healthy, happy, and productive summer.

Susan

Susan Lorde Martin is the director of the CTSE and the Cypres Family Distinguished Professor of Legal Studies in Business.

Polishing Your Act, Off-Off-Off Broadway

By CAROL T. FLETCHER

A law professor, accustomed to teaching seminars, was worried about making the transition to a theater-style lecture hall, where she would have to compete with computer monitors for the students' attention.

A social sciences professor from the Far East was about to chair an important conference, and was concerned about projecting herself confidently in a Western context.

A science professor was trying a new teaching strategy in class and wanted some feedback on how well it worked.

A humanities professor who is rather short felt overwhelmed in her large classroom.

These are some of the first Hofstra professors to take advantage of a new CTSE service called Public Speaking Consultation.

The consultation is provided by Cindy Rosenthal, a professor in the School for University Studies. Professor Rosenthal is no stranger to audiences – she studied theater at Tufts and performance studies at New York University, and she has almost two decades of experience as an actor and director in off-Broadway productions, classical regional theater, and performances at the Bread Loaf School of English in Middlebury and at New College.

"I'm trained not as a public speaking consultant, but as a director and performer," Professor Rosenthal says. "Communication skills is what I'm all about. More and more I have come to see how crucial it is to build community in a classroom environment as one does in performance."

Actors use many techniques to forge connections with their audience. They make eye contact, maintain a strong and consistent energy level, use physical demonstrations to make a point, and "work the room," hearing from and addressing people in different parts of the



Cindy Rosenthal can help faculty members improve their classroom speaking and presentation skills.

room. All these techniques can be helpful to the professor trying to hold students' attention in a large classroom. Professor Rosenthal also suggests "breaking the fourth wall" between the performer and the audience; just as actors in a play may enter the audience, teachers can walk into the rows of students or invite students to come up to the front of the room.

Professor Rosenthal began helping the law professor by observing her in action and asking a lot of questions about her goals.

"A basic acting tenet is that you have to have intentionality," she says. "In other words, What is your character's goal? In the classroom, you also need to know what you want to achieve. What is the big issue you want to communicate?" This becomes the through-line; you keep coming back to this point, using it to connect the dots.

"Focusing on intention – on being clear from the forefront on the one simple point you want to communicate that day – can be liberating," Professor Rosenthal says.

She can also help professors become more aware of voice, gestures, and breathing. "Accessing breath properly is so important," she says.

Professor Rosenthal encourages faculty members to contact her with public speaking concerns in or out of the classroom. "I am available to work on a particular presentation at a conference or to brainstorm about a particular issue someone is having with teaching," she says. By asking questions, she will try to help the faculty member find a solution that fits his or her own performance style.

Performance anxiety is common, Professor Rosenthal says, as is anxiety about having your teaching assessed. But she is there to help.

"I'm a people person," she says. "I'm not scary."

To contact Cindy Rosenthal:
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(516) 463-4966

Carol Fletcher is an assistant professor of journalism and a member of the CTSE.

A Survey Gives Adjuncts a Voice

Last year, the CTSE conducted an e-mail survey of all adjunct teaching faculty at Hofstra, giving adjunct instructors the opportunity to describe their experiences in working at the University. Here are some of the results: Of those who responded (N = 124), approximately 52 percent were male and 48 percent were female. The median age of an adjunct professor was 50 years old (SD = 12.21). The median number of years of teaching experience for these instructors was 12 years (SD = 11.93). The mean number of semesters of teaching at Hofstra was almost 14 semesters, but the median number of semesters was eight. This suggests that half of the adjunct faculty participating in the survey have been associated with Hofstra for about four years or less. On the other hand, some faculty have been at Hofstra for a significant amount of time. About 26 percent of respondents have taught here for at least 20 semesters.

When asked to rate the quality of their relationship with the department chairperson, an overwhelming majority of instructors rated it as being of high quality (73.05 percent). When asked to rate the degree of integration in the department, slightly less than half (47.37 percent) felt as though they were highly integrated in the department. The remaining instructors were split between feeling a low degree of integration in the department (27.19 percent) and having no opinion on the matter. Most instructors (67.83 percent) felt that the chairperson and their colleagues offered constructive help when needed. Interestingly, male instructors (67.83 percent) felt this way (71.67 percent) than their female counterparts (63.64 percent).

For Maxi Results in Class, Think Mini

With a title like “Alternatives to Lecture,” this series sounds likely to play down the idea of having professors talk to students. That’s not exactly the case. Sharing the benefit of your education and experience is part of your job as a professor. Even if you are avoiding lectures as your standard format, you have to talk to get discussions going and organize classroom activities. But there are ways to make your verbal contribution more effective.

Don’t read to your students: The halls of our institution reverberate with tales of professors who read from prepared texts, sometimes from their own works. This gives you little chance of fostering meaningful learning, unless you are a thespian on the order of Jack Nicholson. Most of us aren’t. Of course, the text is well thought-out and articulate, and extemporaneous remarks often are not. But what you lose in articulate discourse you more than compensate for by working off the cuff, using talking points or an outline. Extemporaneous speech is far more accessible, especially for students who are newcomers to the discipline you teach. Dangerous as it is to use the word “never” when discussing teaching strategies, it’s worth the risk here: never read any text that takes more than a half-minute to quote.

Make connections with students’ experiences: Your class becomes more engaging and less arcane when you allude to the music students prefer, the movies they’ve been seeing, or anything else that’s part of the world they live in. If, for example, you use the pitched battle for parking spaces on campus as your example of the exigencies of market competition, you’re on the right track. Such a thing shows you care enough about students to concern yourself with who they are, which makes them more willing to deal with the material you want them to learn.

Lighten up: Seriousness is “stupidity sent to college” and “the only refuge of the shallow,” in the words of P. J. O’Rourke and Oscar Wilde. You don’t need to be Robin Williams to liven up the proceedings. Students rarely if ever dislike a professor for being too goofy, but many find ultraserious professors tedious and grating.

Provide stimulating visuals: Why do the characters on talky TV shows like “Law & Order” always seem to be walking or eating? If they just stood there yapping, viewers

would check out. It’s better to have something interesting to look at. I recently visited the classroom of Professor Julie Heath, a biologist, who animated her discussion of the cost-benefit calculation inherent in evolution by showing a Madonna picture that had been doctored to give her six arms. Why, Dr. Heath asked, haven’t soccer moms evolved six arms, since the extra limbs would certainly come in handy? Needless to say, the entertaining picture elicited guffaws, motivated discussion, and drove home the point. But few visuals are this compelling. Many PowerPoint presentations are just gussied-up lectures that fail to tap the power of the stimulating visual. How can Madonna’s six arms enliven your class?

Keep it short: This is probably the most effective strategy of all. There’s a reason why TV shows break for commercials as often as they do (beyond raking in the advertising dough). Market research shows that people lose interest and reach for their remotes if a segment goes on too long. Research also shows that people remember less and less as a lecture drones on.

So three cheers for the mini-lecture, a one-to-three-minute contribution from you that allows students to drink of your knowledge without drowning. Mini-lectures teach the content you want to cover, and are just the right size to fit the students.

That means you’ll need to punctuate your remarks with questions, activities, or anything else that breaks things up. Questions do the trick nicely. Prepare 15 or 20 questions to put on the floor as the class proceeds. Try to avoid questions that have short, pat answers, especially yes-or-no questions. Go for open-ended questions that make students reason and argue (e.g., “Why was or wasn’t dropping the bomb in 1945 a war crime?”). After students have dealt with the question as best they can, follow up with a mini-lecture, and then trot out another question. With questions and mini-lectures interspersed, students will be more attentive and more likely to remember what they are supposed to.

Prime the pump: You should activate students’ thinking skills and prior knowledge before you lecture: If students have a chance to think for themselves *before* the professor presents new information, odds are that they will remember a lot more of the new stuff. So



questions that make students think about the topic (and search their memories for knowledge they may already have about it) ought to precede, not follow, your mini-lecture.

Say, for example, your art history class is devoted to helping students grasp the significance of the advent of Impressionism. If you write “Impressionism” on the board and start lecturing, much of what you say will go in one ear and out the other. That’s the nature of human learning, not evidence of stupidity or indolence. Instead, start by encouraging students to describe an Impressionist painting you are displaying, then compare it to a non-Impressionist work. Now students are looking at art, thinking and talking about art, and rummaging their minds for relevant information. When it appears that students have done all they can, you step in with a mini-lecture that introduces the concept and states its significance. Even if students don’t seem to have a lot of prior knowledge, asking the right questions first can make them ready to learn from the mini-lecture that follows.

In future installments in this series I’ll discuss some techniques for posing effective questions and stimulating discussion. These techniques make your lectures more effective, as it turns out.

Bruce Torff is an associate professor of curriculum and teaching in the School of Education and Allied Human Services and a member of the CTSE.

Getting Past the ‘Dis’ in Disabilities

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this the organizational and managerial attention it requires. Education is delivered today so much more via e-documents of all kinds that this has become a problem for Hofstra.”

Some of the problems are frustratingly easy to solve. A major hurdle for electronic access, he said, is that machine readers cannot work with many popular file types, chief among them the PPT format of PowerPoint and the PDF format of Acrobat. So a PowerPoint presentation is utterly useless to a person who needs a machine reader to translate visual information into audible text. But with two mouse clicks, a PowerPoint presentation can be saved as an RTF file (for Rich Text Format), which *can* be handled by screen readers. Many faculty members now post PowerPoint presentations on their course Web sites, but they neglect to save them as RTF files as well. By saving the presentations as RTF files, teachers give students who use machine readers access to the information. The graphics are lost in RTF files, but the text remains.

Similarly, the popular Acrobat software saves materials as PDF files – as essentially a picture of the document. This provides security for forms and other documents that should not be altered, but those pictures are meaningless to the screen readers used by the blind and visually impaired. Converting the PDF file into text, which several software packages can do, makes the file useful to those who have to rely on screen readers.

There are grounds to believe that progress is coming. Francis A. Rizzo III, the University’s director of interactive media, said that the University will be installing a new “backbone” for its Web pages that is based on software called Cascade Server. Cascade enables something called “repurposing,” which lets users, on the fly, switch Web pages from one format to another with a single click. Blind or low-vision users will be able to turn a PDF file on a Web page, which screen readers cannot read, into a text file, which the machines can handle.

Other enhancements in the works will allow images to have captions that can be deciphered by screen readers, Mr. Rizzo said. Those changes for the University’s Web pages should be installed and working by the beginning of the fall term.

Dr. Nancy Kaplan, chair of the Audio/Video/Film Department, wrote her doctoral dissertation on how universities

incorporated into the lives of students who are blind or visually impaired, she said.

Dr. Craig Rustici, an associate professor of English who is himself legally blind, pointed out that the delivery of services to those with disabilities could be erratic. Dr. Rustici, who joined Dr. Kaplan and Dean of University Advisement Dr. Karin Spencer on a panel after Dr. Bowe’s talk, said that



Dr. Craig Rustici, right, part of a panel discussion at the Schloss lecture, said the big problem “is that we lack a systematic approach to the challenge of accessibility,” leading to unevenness in the delivery of services. Also on the panel were Dr. Nancy Kaplan, left, chair of the Audio/Video/Film Department, whose doctoral dissertation was on the topic, and Dr. Karin Spencer, dean of university advisement and director of Hofstra’s Program for the Higher Education of the Disabled (PHED).

provide services to students who need assistance to read texts. She said that at Hofstra in 1963, “when its Program for the Higher Education of the Disabled (PHED) began, it was the only private university in the United States to embark on such an immense and wide-ranging commitment.” But now, more than 40 years later, her conclusions parallel Dr. Bowe’s: “Through the narratives of the students, faculty, and administrators, it was apparent that communication was poor when it came to who was responsible for ensuring that the computer needs for students who are blind or visually impaired were met.” PHED needs to be reassessed, with a focus on new technologies and how they can be better

the primary problem “is that we lack a systematic approach to the challenge of accessibility.” Since computer technology changes so fast, he said, “the absence of a systematic approach almost guarantees that our approach will be uneven.”

For example, Dr. Rustici said, “the library reference area has a computer station dedicated to physically challenged patrons, but when I checked a few months ago, it didn’t have the screen-magnification and screen-reading software for which the University has a site license. When I brought this to (Dean of Library Services) Dan Rubey’s attention, he addressed it promptly. And it turned out that

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when those computers were updated and re-imaged, someone neglected to reinstall the accessibility software. They did correct things promptly, but the problem arose because we don't have a systematic way of looking for such problems."

According to Melissa Kane Connolly, the University's vice president for university relations, a campuswide committee to address such issues will soon be convened

by Provost Herman A. Berliner, who introduced Dr. Bowe at the Schloss lecture. There will be plenty for the committee to talk about. "We're shooting at a moving target," she said. "We do more, but there's always more that needs doing."

Dr. Bowe ended the Schloss lecture on an optimistic note, but also with a call for vigilance. "I think we're going to get where we need to go," he said. "The nature of it, though, is that it is a continuous battle: e-education

changes so rapidly, unlike the buildings themselves, that we have to stay on top of it."

The text of Dr. Bowe's talk, which contains links to many Web sites on various aspects of electronic accessibility, can be found at http://people.hofstra.edu/faculty/frank_g_bowe. Halfway down the page, click on "eAccess at Hofstra."

Steven R. Knowlton is a professor of journalism and the CTSE's associate director.

Hofstra at Home and Abroad: A World to Explore

(continued from page 2)

Introduction." She has served on the Executive Council of the American Society of International Law, and she currently serves on the Executive Committee of the AALS Section of International Law. She is chair of the AALS Family Law Section.

Vern R. Walker: Professor of Law; M.A., Ph.D., University of Notre Dame; J.D., Yale University. Professor Walker was a partner in the Washington, D.C., law firm of Swidler Berlin. His practice included representation before state and federal administrative agencies. His courses include scientific evidence, health and safety regulation, and comparative law of product regulation and liability, and he is president-elect of the Risk Assessment and Policy Association.

Lauris Wren: Associate Clinical Professor and Attorney-in-Charge of the Political Asylum Clinic; J.D., Columbia University. Professor Wren started the Political Asylum Clinic. Previously, she was the director of the Refugee Assistance Program at the New York City bar. Professor Wren has worked with human rights organizations in Mexico and Central America, and has helped immigrants affected by the terrorist attacks in New York.

International Student Exchanges

Hofstra aggressively seeks to offer opportunities for foreign law students to study at Hofstra and for Hofstra students to study at foreign law schools.

EACLE Exchanges: Under the European American Consortium for Legal Education program, Hofstra law students may visit abroad for a semester in their third year of law school, and European students may visit Hofstra. Our European law school

partners are in the Netherlands, Belgium, Finland and Poland.



Kwansei Guikun Law School (Japan): Second-year Hofstra law students may spend six weeks in a Japanese law program near Osaka, Japan, and Kwansei Guikun law students enroll in Hofstra's LL.M. programs.

Hofstra Law School also has begun a formal arrangement with the American Bar Association's Central European and Eurasian Law Initiative (CEELI) (25 countries) under which Hofstra Law School provides legal skills and training to lawyers from those countries and sends Hofstra Law students to internships at CEELI offices in those countries to help in legal development projects.

Tuition Scholarship Programs: Hofstra offers several tuition scholarships so foreign law students from France, Holland, and Italy can participate in Hofstra programs.

Study Abroad

Curaçao, the Netherlands Antilles: Hofstra offers the only winter study abroad program (December/January) in the country. This program, in the Caribbean near the Venezuela coast, lasts three weeks and offers students a four-credit/two-course opportunity.

Sydney, Australia: This program is a four-week/six-credit summer opportunity for students to study abroad in a common law country in the Pacific Rim. The program is held at prestigious Sydney University.

Sorrento, Italy: Hofstra offers a very

popular two-week/two-credit international and comparative law program in Sorrento, Italy, located on the Bay of Naples across from Mount Vesuvius. U.S. Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia will teach in the Sorrento program in the summer of 2006.

Nice, France: Hofstra also offers a four-credit/four-week opportunity at Nice University Law School on the French Riviera.

Transnational LL.M. Programs

Hofstra offers two transnational Master of Laws programs:

The American Legal Studies Program is open to foreign law graduates seeking to learn American law, either to take the New York or other bar examinations or to add an American law dimension to their practice in their home countries. This program also brings foreign-trained lawyers into all Hofstra courses because the entire Hofstra curriculum is open to American Legal Studies LL.M. students.

Hofstra's International Law LL.M. Program is open to both foreign and domestic law graduates and requires that international law courses dominate their study. It urges students to undertake a yearlong project, culminating in a publishable thesis.

In addition to the above opportunities, there are also a number of international student organizations. All of this gives Hofstra an extraordinary international law profile, which reflects a fundamental reality of law practice in the 21st century: In a world where people, nations and transactions have become increasingly interconnected, legal problems are less and less likely to be purely domestic matters.

Throwing the Book at Your Language Conundrums (continued from page 3)

From My Files: Political Grammar

A political ad a few years ago showed photographs of six potential candidates. It asked the reader, “Between these, whom would you choose?” Grammatically, **between** can involve only two entities. The writer implied that only two of the individuals were worthy of being considered. If he had wanted the readers to consider all six of them, he should have written, “Among these, whom would you choose?” Or perhaps some clever spin doctor knew exactly what was being said. Did the two front-runners also know? If so, what a devious use of grammar this was to eliminate the competition!

I must thank Professor Charles Anderson, a colleague of mine in the English Department, for showing me this great volume. It’s been a fixture on my desk since he first brought it to my attention.

If you want a good laugh while you learn about grammar, take a look at “The Deluxe Transitive Vampire,” by Karen Elizabeth Gordon. She subtitles it “The Ultimate Handbook of Grammar for the Innocent, the Eager, and the Doomed.” This whimsical book is written in delightfully ghoulish prose as an eccentric cast of characters find their way through the labyrinthine maze of grammar. Here’s Ms. Gordon on transitive verbs:

Transitive verbs are those that cannot complete their meaning without the help of a direct object.

We **bounced** the **idea** around the saloon.
He **yanked her** out of her tedium.
Alyosha **patted** Jean-Pierre’s **muzzle**.
Daedalus **mourned** his sunburnt **son**.
Do you take this **chimera** be your lawfully espoused pal?

By including devilishly clever Edwardian illustrations (a la Charles Addams) with the text, Ms. Gordon manages to make the sometimes dry recitation of grammatical rules quite lively – one could almost say a real scream.

If you have questions about punctuation but find the topic dry and confusing, Karen Gordon has published a great companion piece to “The Deluxe Transitive Vampire.” She calls it “The New Well-Tempered Sentence,” with the subtitle “A Punctuation Handbook for the Innocent, the Eager, and the Doomed.” Her examples are as eerily delightful and as much fun to read as those she uses in “The Deluxe Transitive Vampire.” According to Deborah Tannen, a professor of linguistics at Georgetown University, Ms. Gordon’s book is “part grammar, part poetry – all wit and delight.”

Now, I couldn’t mention punctuation without acknowledging Lynne Truss’s enormously popular “Eats, Shoots & Leaves.” (No, this is not a book about a recent quail-hunting trip.) It’s a neat little book that offers a lively history of punctuation as it explores the various ways that those necessary little marks are used and abused (or ignored) in the English language. It’s a quick read and thoroughly engaging. Like Karen Gordon, Ms. Truss has a sense of humor about a potentially dull topic.

Unlike Ms. Gordon, however, Ms. Truss considers her book “The Zero Tolerance Approach to Punctuation.” Ah, that’s where she made her big mistake. A number of book reviewers examined “Eats, Shoots & Leaves” with a fine-toothed comb and found – oh, no – errors! Most of these have to do with commas and restrictive versus nonrestrictive phrases and clauses (a topic I covered in my first article for the CTSE newsletter). In fact, the review in “The New Yorker” was titled “Bad Comma.” Still, warts and all, Ms. Truss’s book is very entertaining, and

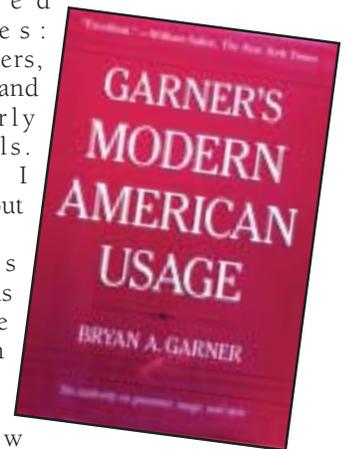
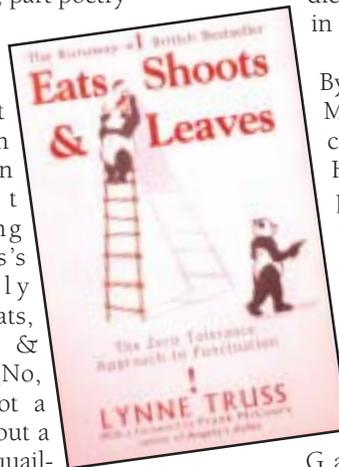
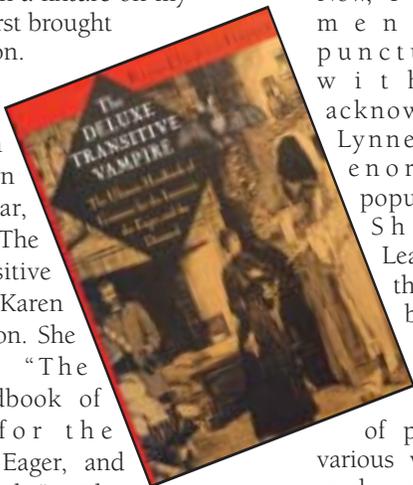
there’s no denying its popularity. It spent about a year on “The New York Times” best-seller list! This fact is amazing, especially since the author is British and some of the rules of punctuation are different across the pond.

Knowing the rules of grammar and mechanics is just part of good writing. Anyone who is interested in well-written prose needs to step beyond rules and look at handbooks that devote attention to usage and style. Let me begin by addressing the curmudgeons among us. If you want a no-nonsense guide to the rules of Standard American English, you’ll want to peruse “Garner’s Modern American Usage,” edited by Bryan A. Garner and published by Oxford University Press. This is a thorough reference book, written in dictionary style, that traces developments in American English usage and style.

By combining his expertise with wit, Mr. Garner explores syntax, word choice, punctuation, usage, and style. His examples are drawn from various printed sources: newspapers, books, and scholarly journals. What I like about Mr.

Garner’s examples is that they are drawn from real-life situations and show how language is used in our time. To use this book, simply look up a word or a construction that is giving you pause, and you’ll find a comprehensive explanation of its use and misuse. I find “Garner’s” to be a serious, concise, and important resource.

One simply cannot discuss usage and style without mentioning Strunk and White’s “The Elements of Style.” This timeless little book (105 pages) has been a fixture in composition and creative writing classrooms for more than 40 years. If your time is limited and your budget is small, the \$7.95 for this book is well worth it. Incidentally, the publisher has just come out with a “deluxe” hardcover version of



“The Elements of Style.” What does “deluxe” mean? Illustrations. Why the editors felt that illustrations would be useful in a serious style manual is a mystery to me. The Edwardian sketches do a lot to illustrate Karen Gordon’s text in “The Deluxe Transitive Vampire,” but the scenes in this hardcover edition don’t even seem relevant. Strunk and White deserve better than this, in my humble opinion.

In a lighthearted vein, “Woe Is I” by Patricia T. O’Connor is subtitled “The Grammarphobe’s Guide to Better English in Plain English.” Ms. O’Connor does for usage what Ms. Gordon does for grammar: she makes it interesting. This handy little volume is funny and authoritative at the same time. “Woe Is I” covers such topics as pronoun anxiety, which she calls “The Which Trials” and “Who’s (or Whose) on First?” She has a great chapter that she calls “Verbal Abuse,” in which she explores commonly misused or confused words and phrases. Here’s what she has to say about the word “irony”:

A wonderful word for a wonderful idea, *irony* refers to a sly form of expression in which you say one thing and mean another. (“*You’re wearing the green checked suit again, Richie! How fashionable of you,*” said Mrs. Cunningham, her voice full of *irony*.) A situation is *ironic* if the result is the opposite – or pretty much so – of what was intended. It isn’t merely coincidental or surprising, as when the



newscaster thoughtlessly reports, “Ironically, the jewelry store was burglarized on the same date last year.” If the burglars take great pains to steal what turns out to contain a homing device that leads the police to them, that’s *ironic*.

Another entertaining and informative book is “The Elephants of Style” by Bill Walsh. Aside from his witty homage to Strunk and

White’s classic, Mr. Walsh considers the “Elephants” of the title to be those “major usage points that educated people sometimes disagree about.” In the chapter entitled “Lies Your English Teacher Told You,” Mr. Walsh sets the record straight on beginning sentences with conjunctions:

Starting a sentence with a conjunction is a literary device that can be overused. And it can be annoying. But there’s nothing inherently evil about it.

“Elephants” is a nifty little book that tackles the usage questions that other style books don’t. There’s a great chapter here on the rules of capitalization, for instance, and it’s quite thorough.

Keeping in mind that writing is a craft, something that doesn’t just spring up at will, I find that another book is an indispensable aid in my teaching and in my own writing. It’s “Style: Ten Lessons in Clarity and Grace” by Joseph M. Williams, a guidebook for anyone interested in good writing.

Mr. Williams maintains that it is important to write clearly and that anyone can do so. With this philosophy in mind, he guides the reader through 10 lessons that he considers to be essential for clear and uncluttered writing. The lessons offer strategies for correcting writing problems. For instance, in the chapter titled “Actions,” Mr. Williams instructs the writer to match important actions in sentences to the verbs and make the characters of the action their subjects. Here’s an example he gives of “nominalization,” the act of using nouns to denote the action in our sentences:

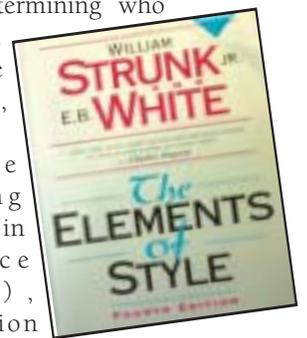
The Federalists’ **argument** in regard to the **destabilization** of government by popular

democracy was based on their **belief** in the **tendency** of factions to further their self-interest at the expense of the common good.

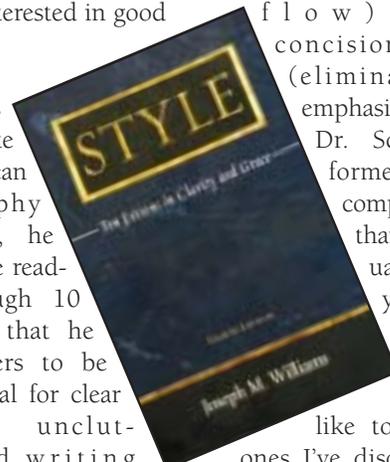
Here’s his corrected version, with the important action of the sentence expressed in the verbs:

The Federalists **argued** that popular democracy **destabilized** government, because they **believed** that factions **tended** to further their self-interest at the expense of the common good.

Mr. Williams devotes chapters to characters (determining who or what is the appropriate subject), cohesion and coherence (eliminating choppiness in sentence flow), concision



(eliminating redundancy), emphasis, and elegance. I have Dr. Scott Harshbarger, the former director of the composition program, to thank for giving me this valuable little book a few years ago. I refer to it all the time.



There are other books I like to keep handy, but the ones I’ve discussed here are among the most interesting. If, however, you are more inclined to look at the Internet for information about grammar, Purdue University has an excellent Web site at the following address: [owl.english/purdue.edu/handouts/grammar/index.html](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/grammar/index.html).

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