

**3. The Art of Recycling: or how I recycled myself this summer:**

- a. Avila – July - August 2005 – post-Franco Spain and Spain in the European Union;
- b. The European *Marco Común* – six levels of language teaching and learning;
- c. DELE and the *Marco Común* — changing the DELE from 3 levels to six;
- d. Observation of in class teaching (one week) levels A 1-2 and B 1-2;
- e. Two weeks workshop on changes in contemporary grammar, pragmatics, and methodology of teaching (levels C 1-2);
- f. A summer break in Spain from which I return renewed and recycled — new ideas, new pragmatics, new methodologies — my students can only benefit.

**4. Importance of LTD**

- a. Attend conferences, attend teaching seminars, talk to colleagues and the LTD.
- b. If you are in difficulties, seek help early, rather than late.
- c. Put your thoughts down on paper and share them with your colleagues.
- d. Trust the experience of the people around you who have been there before and never, never isolate yourself, when help and support are always close at hand!

**Learning and Teaching Development Committee 2006-2007**

**Ian Fraser, Officer**

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**Ashley Hotchkiss, Student**



# Teaching Perspectives

St. Thomas University

Fall 2006

Promoting Effective Learning and Teaching Strategies

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## “How do you prepare yourself, during the summer, for teaching new students in the fall?”

*Dr. Michael W. Higgings, President and Vice-Chancellor*

Since I am no longer teaching, this is not an immediate issue. That said, although I will not be in the classroom this fall, I am preparing lectures, both guest lectures and public addresses, as well as position papers on many issues. While this is not teaching, in many ways, the preparation is very similar.

I am, and have always been, a voracious reader. My reading is varied: the *New Yorker*, the *Tablet* (of London, the United Kingdom’s premier Catholic newspaper), *Maclean’s*, *The Walrus*, and *The Globe and Mail*, of course.

I try to keep abreast of political and cultural events and I am particularly interested in how the media communicates compelling issues. The many different ways in which the current Lebanon/ Israel crisis has been portrayed is fascinating. This leads me to the politics of composition and editing practice. What are people saying? How and why are they recounting events in the way they do? What, by extension, is the real news behind the news? And, above all, how is that presented?

I have three major papers in preparation right now. The first deals with script writing, especially in relation to the literary and religious sensibility. I have been invited to be the keynote speaker in Louisville, Kentucky, in 2007, and I will be delivering the keynote address on the poetry of Thomas Merton, an American who was born in the South of France, in the Pyrenees. I want to compare him to a Canadian poet, Pier Giorgio di Cicco, so I am reading in both these areas.

I am also writing on spirituality in scholarship. This concerns the work of Henry Nouwen, a Dutch psychologist and Donald Nicholl, an historian and graduate of Balliol College, Oxford, who taught in the United States. It will be published and was earlier given as a keynote at the University of Toronto.

I am working, too, as co-author on a book on religion and the media. This is a development from my book, *The Muted Voice* (published in 2000) and goes into similar themes but in much greater detail. I should mention that my CBC Ideas script – *Stalking the Holy* – has been nominated for a public broadcasting award in New York. There were apparently 58 nominations from the CBC and *Stalking the Holy* was selected from among them. Of course, it was only a nomination, and we know what can happen to nominations ... and incidentally, the Ideas series, all three parts, will be rebroadcast by CBC.

But I’m lucky, really. You see, I’m the new boy on the block and I am getting a lot of formal invitations. People want to see the new boy, they want to see what makes me tick and I am very happy to oblige by preparing and delivering lectures.

These lectures and invitations will keep me very busy. I’m happy not to be teaching. I tried both teaching and being president one year, and it just didn’t work. I missed at least six classes, and it was terribly difficult for the teaching assistant who had to fill in for me, sometimes, *force majeure*, at very short notice.

This does not mean I don’t like teaching: far from it. I would love to be invited into faculty classrooms to lecture within those areas where my specializations are recognized. I would also like to be a part of the academic and intellectual life of this institution. So, whatever happens, I want faculty out there to know that they can invite me to their classes. And, if I am free, I will be there to lecture.

## Editorial

### Notes on An Art of Self-Renewal, Roger Moore, Department of Romance Languages

*This editorial is a reprint of the address delivered at the request of the Learning and Teaching Development Committee to the group of incoming faculty on 16 August 2005, the Rotunda, Brian Mulroney Hall, St. Thomas University, Fredericton, NB.*

#### 1. The Journal of Lower Expectations

- a. You cannot do everything – limit and choose selectively.
- b. You may think that your students are not the best in the world – however, they are who and what they are; work with them and teach them. Remember the words of Molière: “*Je les prends où je les trouve.*”
- c. Teach the students not the subject – and try your best to avoid the “us [faculty] and them [students]” syndrome as teaching and learning is usually a joint endeavour.
- d. In a world of facilitation, teach specific students how to learn, so they can teach others as well as themselves.
- e. Peer pressure and peer aid is expected at the student level– don’t underestimate its power and be aware of the vital differences between group work, shared knowledge, team projects, and plagiarism.
- f. Worry less about teaching the totality of the subject matter – worry more about delivering a very specific message and intention.

#### 2. The Art of Self-Renewal

- a. University life is cyclical and each September is a new start — every year you can begin again renewed, and with new intentions.
- b. Each January is also a new start – Christmas is a time when you can revise and you can re-plan the second half of your courses.
- c. If you teach individuals, not the subject matter (not always easy in large classes), you will never be bored as each teaching and learning experience is a new one.
- d. Recycle yourself regularly: ask yourself what you are teaching and why; study the relevance of each piece of course material to these specific students in this specific place at this specific time. Think of the Bakhtinian dialogue with the chronotopos.
- e. Be open to change; be open to ideas; be open to renewal and self-renewal.
- f. Remember that renewal means abandoning pre-set ideas; this university is different as each university, each learning community is different; be prepared for that fact and be prepared to change because of it: remember too, it is better to change than to be changed!

☞ *continued on back cover*

**Teaching, Conferences, and Charitable Contributions,  
Rusty Bitterman, History Department**

In general I am no longer a conference enthusiast, particularly not conferences with numbers as part of their names – the 6<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the....They conjure up visions of simultaneous sessions during which scholars read papers to miniscule audiences who are consulting their schedules to sort out what session to attend next. Been there, done that, have the bags. And Los Angeles in June is not my idea of a good time. But I opted to go to the World History Association (WHA) Conference (yes, the 15<sup>th</sup> annual one) at California State University at Long Beach this summer because I thought there was something useful to be gained from it.

Earlier in the year I worked with colleagues at the University of Victoria, the University of Winnipeg, Queen's and McGill to put together a panel on the teaching of world history at Canadian universities. The plan was that we would each develop papers that considered the world history curriculum at our own universities in the context of curricular developments in our respective regions of Canada. The WHA does good things to promote world history scholarship and to foster effective teaching of world history at the university and the secondary school level. This includes publishing the *Journal of World History* and the *World History Bulletin*. But to date, the WHA has been dominated by U.S. teachers and scholars, and their concerns. One of our goals in creating the panel was to broaden teaching discussions within the WHA by highlighting curricular developments in Canada. Another was to foster better communication and coordination among Canadian scholars with an interest in world history.

So was it a worthwhile venture? Yes, I think so. I will make no claims about changing the U.S. centrism of the conversations within the WHA, but our unabashedly Canadian panel did attract some of the leading players in world history curricular development in North America. Certainly the work involved in developing the panel presentation helped to build ties among Canadian scholars who teach world history, as we (the panellists) exchanged information with one another and researched the development of a world history curriculum in our respective regions of Canada. Plans are now underway for further initiatives within the context of the Canadian Historical Association. And I was able to have useful conversations about how university history programmes can effectively help to support high school programmes, a matter which is of concern to me and many of my History Department colleagues.

None of this directly addresses why participating in the WHA was relevant to my teaching or why I think it was appropriate – indeed an act of wisdom — for the LTD Committee to help cover some of the costs I incurred in this initiative. On an immediate and practical level, if we wish to help STU students obtain acceptances at graduate and professional schools, we need, among other things, to highlight the faculty research and curricular development that inform students' undergraduate education. Having one of the leading scholars in the development of world history curriculum in North America publicly praise the STU world history programme and describe it as "impressive" will help to open doors for our students in the future. But this, of course, concerns a minority of those we teach. Much more importantly, my participation in the WHA gave me the occasion to reflect on the teaching of history at STU, to examine how our curriculum fits into developments elsewhere, and to learn from colleagues at other universities. It is a pity, however, that we do not have better institutional support to help faculty do these things. While I appreciate the financial assistance that LTD and the Senate Research Committee provided to defray some of the costs of my participation at the WHA, the truth is that every time I agree to participate in a distant conference I have to decide whether I am willing to donate the funds to do so out of my own pocket without even the possibility of a charitable donation receipt for tax purposes.

**Yoga, a Surgeon's Drill, and Teaching at STU  
Rosemary Clews, Assistant Vice President (Research)**

On Thursday March 16<sup>th</sup> 2006, several members of the STU community enjoyed the Student Research Fair. I did other things.

At 7am on March 16<sup>th</sup> 2006 I reported to "Admitting" at the Chalmers Hospital. By the time the Research Fair began, I was in the Operating Theatre awaiting "total knee replacement" surgery. I stared at the ceiling and experienced gradual paralysis from the stomach down as the regional anaesthetic took effect. During the following two hours I took full advantage of my yoga training. I practiced my "Buddha breathing". It was a bit difficult to meditate because the noise from the drills, the planes and the saws used during the operation was deafening. It was like being on a construction site! Also, when I began chanting my mantras (or is it mantrae) the medical staff looked worried and asked if I was OK. But yoga helped to stabilize my blood pressure and I avoided the injection of still more chemicals into my system. After the operation, my surgeon told me that it would take twelve months to gain full benefit from my bionic parts and I would need to work hard. He wasn't kidding.

During the last five months my physiotherapist and my yoga teacher have been my best friends. They have helped me to prepare physically, emotionally, spiritually, and intellectually for the coming academic year. Thank you Stephanie Bone at the Physio-Clinic. Thank you Pat Hine, my "special needs" yoga teacher.

Let me tell you more about the yoga. Drained of energy after my surgery, I could do no more than stare out of the window. Pat visited me at home to provide "whole person" yoga therapy. She listened when I moaned. She encouraged me to bend my knee a little bit more each day. She told me I was doing really well. She helped me to develop my breathing and meditation skills so I could push through the pain and gain greater flexibility and strength in the false parts of myself. My spirits improved. My humour returned. I began to read again. By the fourth week, I felt well enough to ask my surgeon for permission to drive. Permission was granted. I was able to drive to Pat's yoga studio and use her mats, cushions and belts again. My recovery accelerated. I progressed from crutches to two canes, then one cane. I learned that I no longer need to limp.

Five months on, I am able to walk unaided. It is wonderful to be free from the arthritic pain in my "worst" knee. So what has this to do with teaching at STU? In the fall I will be teaching the "social work and aging" course. During the last few months I have had experiences that provide insight into the aging process, insight I can pass on to students. The students will hear about what I learned in yoga - it will be good for their clients, and probably good for the students too. If my mobility continues to improve, soon I'll be flexible enough to run up and down the steps on campus. Maybe I won't need to send so many e-mails. I'll certainly be in better condition for the 2007 Student Research Fair. Colleen, how about including yoga on our health plan?

## Adapting an American Textbook

Kim Fenwick and Ian Fraser - Department of Psychology

During the summer, we completed the first stage of an adaptation of an introductory psychology textbook for a Canadian audience. Our primary task was to provide our students with a Canadian perspective by highlighting Canadian research and its applicability to our political and cultural context.

Although we were already aware that relevant research was being conducted in this country, we were still overwhelmed by the quality and quantity. We also noticed that much of this research was largely ignored in the textbook we were reviewing. For example, in the Biological Psychology chapter there was no reference made to the Montreal Neurological Institute, despite the fact that a number of ground-breaking discoveries have been made at this institution and several pioneers in the study of the human brain are associated with it. We also noticed that the content was heavily biased toward an American audience. For example, in the chapter on intelligence, the book contained a long section on the history of intelligence testing and its abuses. No mention was made of the fact that the historical events occurred only in the United States, leading the reader to assume universal applicability. In conducting our own research on this topic and interviewing Canadian scholars, we realized that the historical background presented in the original text was not an accurate representation of the Canadian experience, which led to a complete re-writing of the chapter to reflect a Canadian perspective.

As a result of this exercise, we have come to the conclusion that Canadian content is extremely important. Unfortunately, the availability of Canadian textbooks is, and will probably remain, limited - especially for upper level courses where the demand for textbooks is lower. As a result, the onus falls on the instructor to introduce pertinent examples.

We foresee at least two major benefits to adding Canadian content to courses wherever and whenever possible:

- 1) Canadian students will find the examples more readily applicable.
- 2) The value of Canadian research will be promoted.

While we undertook this project with the understanding that Canadian content was lacking in introductory textbooks, the degree to which it had been overlooked was surprising even to us.

## Students assessing teachers: A contradiction in terms?

Mikhail Molchanov, Department of Political Science

Evaluating teaching effectiveness is no easy task. Today, we extensively rely on machine-scored student evaluations. Students are presented with a variety of questions on issues such as class organization, preparedness and helpfulness of the instructor, effectiveness and quality of the teaching techniques, exams, textbooks and the like. In one of the questions, they are asked to evaluate the quality of a class as a whole.

Most of us perceive student evaluations as given, a relatively uncontroversial feature of modern university life. We tend to forget that asking each and every student to evaluate their professors in a prescribed, formal, and systematic way is a very recent phenomenon. It is a trend steeped in the logic of the late capitalist, consumer society. It is a ritual that could have raised eyebrows of many classic pedagogues and educators that would have no similar issues with the idea of peer evaluations. The problem with student evaluations is, some of those questions may not be confidently addressed even on the basis of systematic observation by peers. How do we know that a class in, say, business management succeeded in imbuing managerial skills until its graduates actually get a chance to try themselves as managers? How can a student claim that a class in, say, methods of counselling reached its goals without knowing whether or not these methods may be of any use for the practice of counselling? Should students take their teacher's word that the course objectives were actually met? Or should they challenge the teacher in the absence of any prior experience relevant to the question at hand, in this case, the viability and practicality of the counselling methods they learned in the course?

While the question on instructor's accessibility seems straightforward, the question on the quality of the instructional materials is not and requires more than a freshman's knowledge to be answered with any degree of seriousness. The same goes for questions querying organization of the class, clarity of class objectives and instructor's success in meeting them. Asking an eighteen-year old whether the time spent in class "was generally useful" strikes me as an example of academic pretentiousness and wishful thinking on the part of the university. My "generally useful" time at that age was spent chasing girls and copying rock albums of the season. Sitting in class was inevitable evil. Quarter of a century later, I still do not know whether my "ability to think and learn for myself" was developed in any measure in the course of my formal studies or as a result of my upbringing in the family. It could be the fact that I grew up in the ethnically and socially mixed neighborhood where twenty kids roamed freely and with little supervision from their parents. Neuropsychology says such abilities could also be genetically preprogrammed.

Self-important check-marking of whether or not "the professor communicates effectively" can only make a sense, albeit a perverted one, in the environment saturated by "edutainment" values. Communication takes four parts to be effective: the transmitter (instructor), the message, the medium and the recipient (student). Even assuming that the professor is fully responsible for the first three elements (which he is not), it can be student's fault in failing to get the message. The word "effectiveness" itself, Webster says, "stresses the actual production of or the power to produce an effect." The effect here is, presumably, having learned anything of value. Apart from the fact that students are generally poor judges of the success of their own learning (that is why they do not evaluate their own work), long-lasting effects of the learning process may take time to manifest themselves in student's personality and behaviour. What we are asking, then, is really, whether or not you *liked* how the professor communicated with *you*. Now, this is a totally different question from the one implied on the form. What we are asking, really, is how likable the professor's performance was, not how effective it was or how successful in achieving the learning objectives. What we are interested, then, is in evaluating the appearances, hence, the "edutainment" aspect of the professor's performance.

Apart from the issue of obvious immaturity of the students' judgment on matters of pedagogy, course organization, instructional objectives and instructor's success in meeting them, there is an issue of students' impartiality, or the lack thereof. Evaluations thus become a contest in popularity of the instructor, which may not necessarily reflect on professional skills or the depth of knowledge. More often than not, professor's "grades" are directly related to the grade given to a student. Excellent students tend to think highly of their teacher. Poor students tend to think poorly, and use professor's evaluations to "get even" with a harsh marker. Thus, students' evaluations directly contribute to the grades' inflation and the notorious quest or cheap popularity that transforms a good scholar into a lousy entertainer.

Course evaluations in their present form are little different from consumer satisfaction surveys. They foster wrong expectations of almost innate entitlement to immediate gratification that the professor should deliver. They "bracket out" the idea of hard labour that any diligent study inevitably is and contribute to consumer capriciousness in a society where commodification has already squeezed out most meaningful relationships between people. It would be better to abandon such evaluations altogether, or to downsize them to a small roster of (more or less) positively verifiable questions: did the professor cancel classes? was the make-up work for such cancelled classes scheduled? was professor available for individual consultations? were you invited to speak in class at least once? did the professor treat you with respect (if not, give specifics)?

An alternative to students' evaluations is informal and formal peer evaluations and mentoring. These methods are clearly not without their own problems. Nonetheless, they do make more sense if course organization, class objectives, teaching style, instructional value and other matters of both disciplinary and pedagogical nature are to be addressed.

## Integrity vs. Practicality: The Search for a Course Textbook, Mark Nyvlt, Department of Philosophy

This summer, I invested a lot of time searching for appropriate textbooks for my courses in the fall, 2006. The criticism often levelled against me by my students is that “my” course textbooks are too expensive and that we had covered an insufficient amount of material to justify spending so much money on the textbook. Clearly, to quantify knowledge and the costs of information is a parasitical disease of our society and of the larger, current educational system, especially of our liberal arts universities, where larger horizons of insight by great authors is and should always be welcomed, and should naturally invite curious minds to be inspired by brilliance in our tradition, regardless of the cost of textbooks. Ignoring such criticism by my students in light of the mandate and mission of St. Thomas University, and of any liberal arts university, is most certainly not too difficult – *except* when appropriate.

In May, 2006, while reading my course evaluations for my Logic course (winter, 2006), I identified the “exception” to this mandate. It occurred to me that students can be and perhaps have been exploited by publishing companies, who, at times, hope and depend on the professors’ indifference to the cost of textbooks because of their alleged naïve adherence to the mission of a liberal arts university. The message seems to be this: give more material, increase the cost of books, under the pretext that the students will “eventually” reach out to new horizons of insight sometime in their very long lives. The integral value of a liberal arts education can and has been subverted by publishing companies by exploiting students and the noble approach to education for their own benefit.

I wish to make it very clear that there is value in anthologies, and other texts consisting of a surplus of articles never studied in the classroom. However, Logic textbooks do *not* fit into this category. They are another *kind* of textbook, and should be perceived according to their own objectives. It was at this junction that I realized the legitimate criticism of my students, that the textbook is too expensive, and the surplus of information never studied has very little value in their undergraduate education.

How is one to by-pass such a problem? McGraw-Hill has offered a new possibility to retain their customers and to offer a new, and much more appropriate, service to professors at liberal arts universities. Once realizing that I would no longer have my students purchase a \$140 textbook in Logic, due to the surplus of information that would never be studied in my course, they “conveniently” informed me of another option: to customize my own textbook. Over the summer, as I prepared my Introduction to Logic syllabus, I selected the essential chapters of a McGraw-Hill textbook in Logic, and customized my own textbook to suit my course. For more information, see the following webpage: <http://www.mhhe.com/primis>. The cost of my Logic textbook is now \$38!

Customizing textbooks to conform to our syllabi does *not* necessarily compromise the integrity of a liberal arts education. In an indirect way, it also challenges the canon of what is to be included and excluded in a textbook. The excitement of designing one’s conceptual parameters in a course can, in fact, inspire the students’ sense of wonder and curiosity for more horizons of insight! That can only be a potent elixir to a reductionist and exploitative attitude that has infiltrated our most cherished social institution, namely, our liberal arts universities. They’re our students, and caring for their education and their personhood should now be extended to caring for their pocket books. Of course, this should not be pursued at the expense of compromising the integrity of our mission statement. Surely, there must be a mean, and I believe that I have found it in my case.

## University Life as a Journal - Alternate Metaphors Earnest Hummingbird, Office of Creative Solutions

In his welcoming address to the parents of incoming students, Dr. Michael Higgins, invited those present to find new metaphors to replace the rather *clichéd* symbol of life, and by extension, of university life, as a *journey*. The *journey* or *pilgrimage* has been used as a metaphor for life for many years and the allegorical journey on which the protagonist embarks is both a virtual life and an allegory, at some level, for life itself. Pilgrimages were such journeys, leading travellers to Jerusalem, Rome, Canterbury, or Santiago de Compostela, in search of enlightenment and forgiveness. The metaphor of the *journey*, however, is not the only one available, and Spanish literature, especially that of the Golden Age (1500-1650), is replete with metaphors for the life process. Miguel de Cervantes in *Don Quixote* uses two taken from the itinerant preachers of his day. One is life as a game of chess. During the game, each playing piece has its value (king, queen, rook, bishop, knight, pawn) but at the end of the game “they are all thrown back into the canvas bag which is the grave and all are equal.” Cervantes’s second metaphor is that of life as theatre or play. The players have their robes and characters, but at the end of the play they return to their normal clothes and are equal again. Similar metaphors are also used by Pedro Calderón de la Barca who, in various plays, examines the metaphors of life as a market (*El Gran Mercado del Mundo*), life as a stage (*El Gran Teatro del Mundo*), and, the most famous of all, life as a dream (*La Vida es Sueño*).

More modern versions of these metaphors might see life as an interactive computer game of virtual reality. Such a metaphor might seem to be applicable to university life, with its enclosed space and its development of skills which seem initially to function for the purpose of the game alone and yet which have applications to the world outside the university. All professors have been taught the rules of these games, yet each year the rules must be reinvented and readjusted slightly to accommodate new knowledge and fresh teaching perspectives so that each generation of new players, also called students, may participate. The professor’s role may be seen as that of *magister ludi*, the game director or facilitator. In these games, it is the professor’s task to make the game enjoyable and worthwhile, what Fray Luis de León called *enseñar deleitando*. It is the player’s task to actively participate in the game: rules must be followed, questions asked, and tasks completed in order for the game’s quest for knowledge to be successful.

The twin metaphors of the walled garden and the ivory tower have also been used to describe the university, the latter, *ad nauseam*, with its descent into the pejorative red-brick tower, or just red-brick. The metaphor of the walled garden, less used, comes straight from medieval times where the walled garden is described as a secret, sacred enclosure in which the marvelous may still be encountered. The scholar and teacher may be seen as the gardener who guides each visitor around the precinct. Students are eligible to fill several roles. They may be casual or serious visitors, stopping to contemplate the beauty of the flowers; or they may be sub-gardeners, learning to be craftspeople themselves. They may also take the role, rather more passive, of more or less willing plants, waiting to be nurtured, cultivated, and shaped. Student participation may vary from contemplating and sharing to actively shaping and self-shaping. As head gardener, it is the teacher’s task to determine how knowledge may be shared with each of these individuals.

St. Theresa of Ávila offers the idea of the nurturing of the garden. The gardener must bring water to the garden’s plants. Water can be drawn laboriously from a nearby stream and it can be carried to the garden by hand and by bucket. A water-wheel may be built, and water made available on a more regular basis. The stream may itself be diverted and the plants offered an abundant supply of that liquid element. Finally, the garden may be watered by rain which falls on all, the rich and poor alike, and from which all benefit. In this final metaphor, knowledge saturates the surrounding element of air. This happens when the university community creates conditions which are permanent and constant for the academic development and intellectual growth of the human minds entrusted to its care.

## Psychology, the Law and Cross-discipline Engagement, Ian Fraser and Michael Houlihan, Department of Psychology

We have recently finished the second in what we hope to be a series of articles on eyewitness testimony in the justice system. Originally, we were contacted by a lawyer from Saint John who was writing an article on eyewitness testimony for publication in a law journal and needed some advice. He asked us whether or not we would like to collaborate on the article. We were reluctant because from the perspective of our psychology training, we were well aware that for over thirty years psychological studies have repeatedly demonstrated the fallibility of eyewitness testimony. Therefore, we did not think that there was much that we could contribute.

However, we followed up the invitation with a search of the literature and came across an interesting article that impelled us to look deeper. The article was reporting on the aftermath of a series of DNA based exonerations. These individuals were convicted based mainly on eyewitness testimony (for example David Milgaard.) Janet Reno (US Attorney General) established a commission to investigate this particular problem. Dr. Gary Wells, an eminent psychologist in the field of eyewitness testimony, was asked to head the social psychologists' aspect of the commission. In an interview published in *Psychology Monitor* (K. Foxhall; Jan. 2000), he stated that although he was pleased to be invited to participate in the commission he was also a bit confused.

"... experimental literature in psychology had already made a stronger and more informative case for reform than any collection of case studies [such as the DNA exonerations] could possibly muster."

We realized that while psychologists were well aware of the fallibility of memory and eyewitness testimony in particular, there was a communication void outside of the discipline. It is understandable that lawyers would not necessarily read psychology journals just as psychologists are unlikely to read law journals.

In reflecting upon this cross-discipline void in communication, we realized that as we teach our newest students they receive simultaneous information from a variety of disciplines. During the first year of university, there is no specialization and cross discipline ideas are fertile. However, in subsequent years students are required to limit the range of disciplines. By the time that they graduate, we have skilfully tuned their educational experience down a particular path, each year making the cross-discipline connections more remote. If our students pursue higher education, this becomes more exacerbated.

While there may be little opportunity to change this system, we can within our own classes make those connections to the other disciplines whenever possible. An example of a topic that is amenable to cross-disciplinary studies is meditation. This can be studied from a religious/spiritual perspective but it can also be studied from a biological psychology perspective. These two can be linked. The inclusion of faculty that are experts from both perspectives could be very rewarding for both student and instructor. More and more of these types of collaborations should be fostered. Based on our experience described above, we will be seeking more and more of these types of collaborations.

## Ávila Plus Roger Moore, Romance Languages

This summer, while preparing myself for September's intellectual re-birth in the classroom, I did many things:

- I commenced a reading program, in contemporary Spain and Spanish literature, to update my language and my critical thinking. In fact, I read and reviewed five books in my field of specialization, the written reviews of which are being submitted and will appear, I hope, in various journals over the next year or so.
- I travelled with a group of students to Ávila, Spain. Both St. Theresa (Ávila itself) and St. John of the Cross (Fontiveros) were born in the province of Ávila and it was a joy to teach their writings in the city and province in which they once lived.
- In addition to offering a basic introduction to Spanish mysticism, I gave lectures on Spanish Golden Age poetry with selected works from Garcilaso de la Vega, Francisco de Aldana, Hernando de Acuña, San Juan de la Cruz, Luis de Góngora, Francisco de Quevedo, as well as with selected poems from more modern writers like Antonio Machado and Miguel Hernández.
- At the Instituto Español Murallas de Ávila (IEMA) I was exposed to various different methodologies and I was able to explore the European Common Framework for Foreign Language Teaching, assisting the IEMA faculty to plan and write examinations at all six levels of the European Common Framework.
- On various excursions, I visited almost the entire province of Ávila, paying particular attention to the pre-Roman Celtic monuments and fortifications which abound in the area (Castro de Las Cogotas, Castro de Mesa de Miranda, Los Toros de Guisando, Ulaca).
- On an organized trip to the Province of Salamanca, I visited an enormous farm which breeds fighting bulls and, even though I did not make a return to the bull-fighting ring, I was made an honorary member of Ávila's peña taurina.
- I was able to witness at first hand the Castillian countryside, *so sad that it possesses soul*, which Antonio Machado described so accurately in his second collection of poetry, *Campos de Castilla*.
- In addition, I regularly visited the Episcopio and the library, and attended many local and provincial celebrations, including poetry readings, musical recitals, photographic exhibits, painting exhibitions, and many other cultural events.

I write this to emphasize that knowledge, especially cultural knowledge, is not a solitary unit which, once attained, stays forever unchanged. Nor is it always a question of written work submitted to one's peers for policing and review. Rather, it is a continuing process, a lifetime commitment in which I, for one, am always deeply engaged. Each summer, I am actively involved in this ongoing reading and scholarship, without which the knowledge I possess and share with my colleagues and my students would be a dead packet, passing from my written graduate school notes to their written undergraduate school notes without ever passing through anyone's head.

This summer, however, I did more than read. I was fortunate to discover the poems of Antonio Machado, set to music and sung by some of Spain's greatest contemporary singers. This same pattern of poetry converted to music has also been extended, in Spain, to the poems of Federico García Lorca, San Juan de la Cruz, and Miguel Hernández. I was able to bring recordings of these poets back to Canada with me and they will be a part of several of my classes this year. Incidentally, I met and talked regularly with the artistic group — poets, musicians, and painters, — who run the cultural and poetry circles in Ávila. We exchanged books of poetry and explored the possibility of further cultural dialogues. I am also following with great interest the dialogue that these new friends hold with their time and space in contemporary Spain.

In my own field, again, I continue to be fascinated by Quevedo's contribution to seventeenth-century Spanish neo-stoicism and the links he created between the Stoics and Christianity. I still marvel at the way in which Quevedo used poetry and metaphor to deliver his moral stance on life. For the neo-stoics, as represented by Quevedo, the richest person in the world is the one who, wanting nothing, possesses everything. For such a person, death and time are the greatest challenges. If we can overcome the fear of ageing and death, Quevedo writes, then we can embrace our human frailty and live our lives from day to day, in the knowledge that each thought, each act, might be our last, and is therefore of prime importance and worth doing well. This message establishes a need for consciousness, care, and responsibility that I would willingly instill in myself and share with my students.