

Solidifying Jello Knowledge

By Joe Ben Hoyle

This essay is one of a series of essays, gathered as a book, on teaching in college by Joe Ben Hoyle, the David Meade White Distinguished Teaching Fellow at the University of Richmond. The essay is reprinted by permission of the author. Other essays about teaching by Joe Hoyle can found at <http://oncampus.richmond.edu/~jhoyle/> Copyright 2006

There are many pieces to this puzzle referred to as an education. Some fit in nicely whereas others take more manipulation. However, to me, one critical step in the process has always seemed to be almost universally under-appreciated by teacher and student.

Assume, on Wednesday, the class is scheduled to discuss Freud and then, for Friday, it will move on to analyze the work of Jung. The students arrive on Wednesday extremely well prepared. Coverage is excellent, very interactive. The students do half of the talking and the teacher does the other half. During class, numerous details about the work of Freud are described and discussed. Theories are put forth and eventually accepted or dismissed after vigorous debate. This is education at its best. The students leave with the beginning of a true appreciation for the importance of Sigmund Freud.

For how long will this clarity about Freud stay with the students? If there is no follow-up to sort through and organize the material, understanding will seep away, starting almost immediately. I tell my students that class merely provides them with "jello knowledge;" it looks solid but is rather shaky. Only the work that takes place soon after class can convert this jello knowledge into a relatively permanent level of understanding. To me, the importance of that step within the educational process cannot

be overvalued.

So, following class on Wednesday, what is likely to be the students' next action? Every teacher already knows the answer to this question. They will now focus on preparing for Friday's class on Jung. In fact, most students will ignore Freud completely until time for the test. By that point, the wonderful foundation begun in class will have turned into a fuzzy, disorganized mass that seems more like a pile of trivia than a basic understanding.

I push my students to spend 1/3 of all study time on previous material and 2/3 on future topics. Unfortunately, this is a step in their learning where students are often clueless. Other than recopying notes, most have no idea what to do after coverage in class. From my vantage point, this is truly a weak link in education. This is one point in the process that usually requires leadership from the teacher. Here are some suggestions:

- At the conclusion of each session, have students write for five minutes on the topics covered in class. Organizing their thoughts at this critical juncture is quite helpful.
- Immediately after class send them an e-mail where you literally walk back through the highlights of the class coverage: "Here are 14 key points that I heard today."
- Immediately after class send them an e-mail posing one or more questions or puzzles about the material. (I often post my answers on my door but only for 48 hours.)
- At the end of class, assign them to write 3 to 6 sentences describing the most important aspects of the class with this short paragraph to be turned in at the following session.
- Require completion of a quiz on the

Spring Semester Dates

Classes begin	Jan. 7
Saturday Oncourse Essentials Training (p.4)	Jan. 12
Martin Luther King Jr. Day (no classes)	Jan. 21
Mid-term Due	Mar. 10
Spring Recess (no classes)	Mar. 9-15
Classes End	Apr. 26
Final Examinations	Apr. 28-May 2
Final Grades Due at Noon	May 5

coverage at the beginning of the subsequent class.

Helping students turn jello knowledge into solid understanding is a true challenge for any professor. Following class, how can you guide this part of the learning process?

Reference:

<http://oncampus.richmond.edu/~jhoyle/documents/Book-Teaching-X.doc.pdf>

The Advocate

Send information or inquiries to:
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Stuart Green 765-455-9227



TECH TIPS

Chérie Dodd

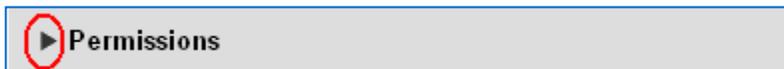
How do I restrict my Oncourse Discussion Forums to a Specific Group of Students?

1. Create your group

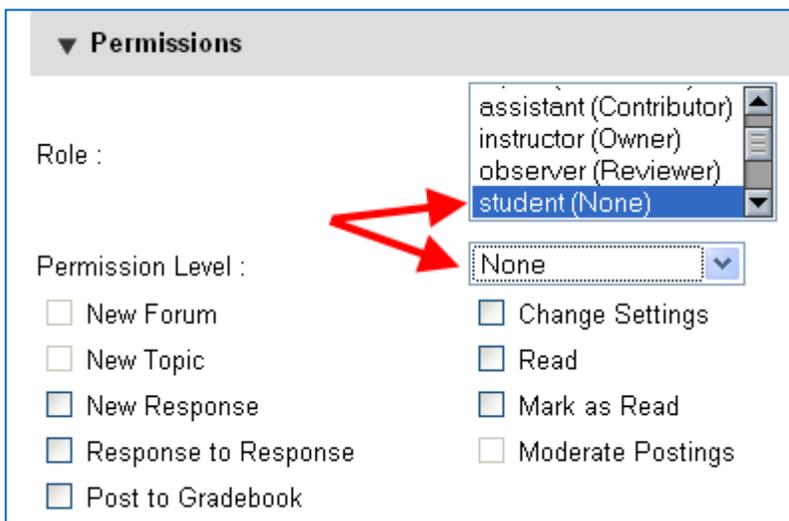
- a. Select **Site Setup**
- b. Select **Manage Groups**
- c. Select **New**
- d. Enter your group **title** e.g. '**Green**'
- e. In the '**Site Member List**' on the left, hold down **Ctrl** and **click** on the **names** of the students to place in the group
- f. Click the '**Add to group**' button and the names are moved to the '**Group Member List**' on the right
- g. Select the '**Update**' button and your group is created

2. Restrict your Discussion Topic to that Group

- a. Select '**Forums**' and then select '**New Topic**'
- b. Enter the '**Topic Title**' e.g. '**Green group discussion**'
- c. Enter an optional description
- d. Select the **arrow** to expand 'Permissions'



- e. In the '**Role**' section click on '**student(Contributor)**' role
- f. Set the Permission level to **None**
- g. The student role will change to **student(None)**



- h. In the '**Role**' section **scroll down** until you find your **group name** e.g. Green
- i. From the **Permission Level** section check
 - New Response
 - Response to Response
 - Read
 - Mark as Read

j. The **Permission Level** will change to **Green (Custom)**

▼ Permissions

Role :
observer (Reviewer)
student (None)
visitor (Contributor)
Green (Custom)

Permission Level :
Custom

New Forum
 New Topic
 New Response
 Response to Response
 Post to Gradebook

Change Settings
 Read
 Mark as Read
 Moderate Postings

k. Select the **'Save Settings'** button

NOTE

If the student is not a member of the 'Green' group they will not see the forum topic listed. Only members of the group with permissions set will see the topic and the instructor.



HERI Faculty Survey Coming in January

By Sharon Calhoon

IU Kokomo is participating in the triennial Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) Faculty Survey. HERI, a national organization based at UCLA, has conducted research on the college and university faculty experience since 1989. This will be the first year that IU Kokomo has participated in this research project.

This online survey is for all IU Kokomo faculty members, including part-time faculty. In January, you will receive an email invitation from the Higher Education Research Institute at UCLA. Although there is no requirement for you to complete the survey, we do value your opinions and hope that you will agree to complete it. Your responses will be anonymous—HERI takes steps to ensure that your identity will not be disclosed to anyone. We will receive a report of our faculty's responses, but all identifying information will be removed. For instance, the survey will ask where you received your undergraduate and graduate degrees, but that information will not be given to us. HERI does request names and email addresses, in case UCLA researchers want to follow-up

with you. At the end of the questionnaire, you will be asked for permission to use this information. You may decline to do so without any penalty. Even if you do give permission, this information would not be disclosed to IU Kokomo.

Your responses will be combined with those of faculty from all across the country to give a picture of faculty concerns, attitudes, and trends. In addition, we hope to use some of the information we gather in our self-study for re-accreditation by North Central Association.

We do hope you will take the time to complete the online survey. Look for the email invitation to come in January. If you have questions about this, please contact Sharon Calhoon, Director of the Center for Teaching, Learning, and Assessment, at scalhoon@iuk.edu or 765-455-9401.



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Saturday Oncourse Essentials Training—January 12th

Come learn the essentials of using Oncourse, IU's online course management system. Use it to:

- stay in touch with students between class meetings
- supply students course information
- provide feedback about the progress students are making

In this class you will learn to set up your course site, announcements, resources, messages, syllabus, and gradebook. Students especially appreciate a course syllabus and access to their grades online.

We welcome beginners, as well as those wanting to use Oncourse more and those just curious about it.

The workshop is Saturday, January 12th from 9 a.m. to noon in the Main Building room 068.

Reservations are required to make sure we have the equipment and materials ready. Reserve your spot online at

<http://www.iuk.edu/ctla/technology/Schedule.shtml>

Look for the link under the list of courses and click to reserve a place in the workshop.

Bring along your syllabus as a file. You can post it online for your class.

