

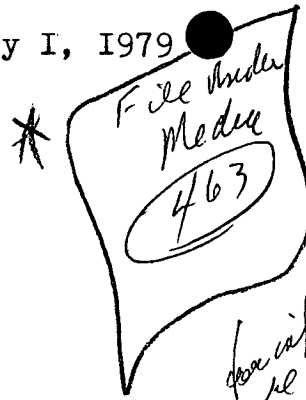


McGill
University

Department of English
Arts Building, Room 155

Dr. Marvin F. Wideen
Director, Undergraduate Programs
Faculty of Education
SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
Burnaby, B.C. V5A 1S6

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for info re course review

letter Concerning Ed 463 from Bakker Circulate to

*Winnie ✓
Danson ✓
Koppal ✓
Martini ✓
Wider ✓*

Dear Marvin,

At long last here is the promised note about the Educational Media course I taught last Summer. Please forgive the delay. It has been a very busy term.

The first point I would make is that it is absolutely essential to have a lecture theatre with good projection and media facilities as close as possible - preferably adjacent - to the resources of the Learning Resources Laboratory. Delays occasioned by distance in coping with equipment malfunctions and other contingencies interrupt the attention and rhythm of the class and create a very bad impression.

As to the ideology of the course, I feel that students need most help in articulation of a rationale for selection of particular media together with development of evaluation procedures. I feel that assignment of a mid-term paper covering these subjects would be helpful.

Because establishing connections between theory and practice is so essential to the course and because many students are slow to respond to this aspect, the selection of a well qualified T.A. is essential. Choosing someone at the academic level of Bob Mountain or Greg Batt (as you suggested) is important. While LRL people were helpful in providing equipment, supplies and a sometimes fleeting instruction in operation, they do not possess the orientating background in communications and learning theory that is an essential amalgam of the course.

An effective class format can be an orientating lecture leading to the students forming groups for hands on experience with the particular media equipment being discussed. This instruction, particularly with classes of 30 or 40, works best if it is modular, i.e. half the students working with still cameras and half working with video. The choice of a well qualified T.A. and adjacency to LRL are vital here.

The students have had 6 media exercises and 1 final project. Ideally, the instructor should be able to view and assess all students' work in toto. Allowing a half hour for each student project and exercise in a class of 40, this would work out to

140 hours. Assessment of the media exercises could perhaps be shared with a properly qualified T.A. Feedback and leading the students to learn from their mistakes is important here. The final projects and the mid-terms should be assessed by the instructor. In general, I feel there is a need for more methodical and in depth instruction in equipment operation. The integrity of assessment exercise or rather, exercise assessment, is vital to a bona fide evaluation.

The time required to book cameras and to get film to and from the lab (often needing to re-shoot and repeat the process) as an example of one logistic in one of six exercises, together with a mid-term and a final project, all within six weeks, militates against offering a course like Educational Media in the Intersession. This is a conclusion expressed by many of the Intersession students themselves. As many as could, transferred to the Summer Trimester.

These logistical problems were exacerbated for the Intersession students last Summer because most of them worked during the day and LRL was not open on Saturdays or during the evenings. When it was open during class, a great deal of the T.A.'s time was taken away from his teaching support function to book equipment and supplies. This latter is LRL's responsibility and, ideally, should be kept distinct from the teaching function.

Film is a valuable resource for the course because not only is it a significant Educational Media form itself but also, creating its own time and space, it can an effective vehicle to help illuminate and explain the intrinsic pedagogical characteristics of other Educational Media, such as still photography, graphics, sound, television, animation, etc. Max Fleischer's 1925 silent film, made under the personal direction of Einstein (in Fleischer's "POPEYE" cartoon studios), EINSTEIN'S THEORY OF RELATIVITY is a case in point. By showing abstract concepts in concrete drawings in contexts of real life experiences everyone can understand (i.e. a weight dropped from a plane in flight) the film helps illuminate and explain a rather complex theory by a shared experience. In addition to helping one to understand and to learn, the film is beautiful and entertaining. It bears out Marshall McLuhan's observation that generally what pleases teaches more effectively (in CLASSROOM WITHOUT WALLS). /

It requires creative force to lead the students to discover these intangibles in a comprehensive teaching concept. As hard headed classroom teachers they tend to over-emphasize the pragmatics and to regard Educational Media as a lab. They tend to submerge the thinking component of the course in the doing. But it is an interesting challenge to meet and I don't think that the pertinence and value of the Educational Media course to the curriculum can be overemphasized.

There are two other observations I would make. One is that the teaching effectiveness of an instructor in Educational Media increases (as in a shakedown cruise) after the first time around. The other is lead time required: at least a month, if teaching both Intersession and Summer Semester concurrently (a theoretical construct) or at least 2 weeks, if teaching Summer Trimester only.

Peter Norman seemed to have organized the logistics of the course very well when he taught it. It might be worthwhile to have his observations, particularly in regard to hours required for a T.A. If you do talk to him, please give him my regards as would you also to Karen Goodman, David Hopkins and Ellis Paul.

If there is any other information that might be useful, I would be happy to provide it.

I hope 1979 is a very good year for you and yours.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Edward Bakony".

Edward Bakony

EB/gj