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Texas Real Estate Teachers Association Newsletter

From the President..... It is hard to realize that summer is nearly over. I certainly hope that you were able to enjoy some rest and relaxation with friends and family. Plans are well underway for the 39th Annual Educators Conference in Corpus Christie. In case you haven't seen previous announcements, the dates for the 2015 conference are April 16-18. I want to thank Directors Ken Combs and Judy McKee who are working tirelessly to ensure a successful and productive conference. For more information and the latest details, please click [2015 TRETA Conference updates](#).

On July, 8, 2014, The Education Standards Advisory Committee met at TREC Headquarters. For more in depth information on the July meeting, please click [meeting minutes](#).

I also want to remind you that the Broker Responsibility Training schedule is posted on the Real Estate Center's Conferences and Courses web page. As you know, this course fulfills the instructor training mandated by the Texas Real Estate Commission (TREC) for those instructor desiring to teach Broker Responsibility. Be sure to [register early](#) to take advantage of the reduced course fees.

A special thank you goes to Bart Stockton for all of his efforts in updating the membership data base. If you have not updated your contact information, please update your personal information on the TRETA website or contact Bart with the appropriate information.

Did you know that TRETA is on Facebook? Joining the [TRETA Facebook group](#) is another way and stay in touch with our members.

Finally I have heard from several members and other board members regarding "What more can I do to do to help TRETA?" The answer is real simple. Talk about TRETA! Take every opportunity to tell your friends and colleagues about TRETA and the Annual Educators Conference. Many of our members are not only teachers, but also brokers, managers, title professionals, attorneys, and lenders. Be sure to introduce a friend or two to TRETA at every opportunity! An enthusiastic, energetic, and active member is the by far the best asset for our association.

Billy Parker CREI, CMC, CRMS, GRI
MCE Providers of North Texas (TREC #0551)



**TEXAS REAL ESTATE COMMISSION
EDUCATION STANDARDS ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

On Monday, August 18, 2014, the Commission heard recommendations proposed by the ESAC which would reorganize and update the education rules located in Subchapters F and G of 22 TAC Chapter 535. This revision was initiated in conjunction with TREC's quadrennial rule review. Although this was primarily a reorganization of the rules, there are a few notable changes that have sparked significant interest. After reviewing comments and listening to testimony, the Commission voted to move forward with the proposed amendments to the Commission Rules as they were presented.

The reorganization included the separation of information as it relates to qualifying education and continuing education. It is the hope of TREC staff, the ESAC and the Commission that this will result in greater clarity and understanding on the part of the reader. Information pertaining to qualifying education as it relates to providers, instructors and courses are located in the amended Subchapter F. Subchapter G covers similar information as it relates to continuing education.

Section 535.62 of the proposed rules redefines or clarifies delivery methods. Classroom delivery is any method of course delivery where the instructor and students interact face to face in real time either in the same physical location or through the use of technology. Alternative delivery is clarified to include any method of course delivery other than classroom delivery where the course has been certified by a distance learning certification center acceptable to the Commission. It is the correspondence course that has taken center stage at two recent meetings of the ESAC as well as Monday's Commission meeting. The proposed rules define correspondence delivery as a method of course delivery other than classroom delivery where the course has not been certified by a distance learning certification center. The proposed rules include an effective date of January 1, 2016 at which time correspondence courses would no longer be an acceptable method of delivery for real estate courses. This would not impact the acceptance of real estate inspection courses delivered via correspondence for inspectors.

Clarification has also been included to address what many providers and educators refer to as the "hybrid" course or delivery method. In this scenario approval would require that a minimum of 50% of the course be offered via classroom delivery and allow for the remaining portion of the course to be offered through alternative delivery, provided the portion of the course offered via alternative delivery is taken from a full course that has been certified by a distance learning certification center. The rule would allow for this remaining portion to be delivered via correspondence until January 1, 2016.

Section 535.63 of the proposed rules addresses approval of instructors of qualifying and non-elective continuing education. These changes would require that instructors approved to teach these courses be required to complete an adult education instructor training course. This course would need to be acceptable to the Commission, a minimum of 8 hours in length, and be completed within five years of the date of application. The ESAC will continue to research existing instructor training programs and is considering a recommendation that this course be acceptable as continuing education credit for license holders.

If you are interested in reviewing all of the proposed rule revisions to Subchapter F and G of TAC Chapter 535, they are located in the August 18, 2014 Commission Meeting Materials available on the TREC website. These proposed rules will be open for public comment until the November meeting of the Commission. Comments can be directed to general.counsel@trec.texas.gov.

The Education Standards Advisory Committee is scheduled to meet again on Tuesday, September 30, 2014 at 10:00 a.m. at TREC headquarters in Austin.

Provided by Jennifer Wheeler, TREC Education Specialist and Staff Assistant to the ESAC

Note from the editor:

In this issue there are three articles that were submitted by Dr. Johnnie Rosenauer. Two of the articles were written by Dr. Maryellen Weimer and the third is the creation of Dr. Sydney Fulbright. These three articles, in my opinion are some of the most thoughtful I have seen. Do yourself, and your students, a favor and read these in detail. I am making changes to my classroom presentation based on some of the concepts presented.

What's the Story on Learning Styles?

By Maryellen Weimer, PhD

We have this tendency in higher education to throw babies out with bath water. It derives from dualistic thinking. Either something is right or wrong, it's in or out, up or down. As mature thinkers, we disavow these dichotomous perspectives, but then find their simplicity hard to resist. They make complicated things easy.

Case in point: learning styles. Since they first arrived with their proposition that students take distinctly different approaches to learning and whose "styles" can be detected with easily administered instruments, they have generated great interest. Learning styles appear to explain something we've experienced as teachers and learners in terms of the different ways people learn. Learning style instruments proliferated, supported by a large research enterprise. One review references 63 different instruments.

Then several years ago, we started seeing articles that challenged the validity of learning styles (see Pashler, et.al for an example). The Pashler et.al literature review did not find empirically valid evidence connecting learning styles with instructional methods and better learning outcomes for students with that style when compared to students with other styles. And so, challenged empirically and questioned in several widely referenced articles, learning styles are now out.

Any number of us have had our doubts about learning styles. The instruments that detect, name, and classify these various approaches to learning just seemed too straightforward. How can there be only two or even four styles? And how can every learner fit neatly into one of those boxes? We also worried about how students responded to them. "I'm a visual learner," one told me, "I don't do textbooks." A certain learning style then excuses one from other learning modalities?

However, what's left standing is one unarguable fact: People do not all learn in the same way. Some of us always read the instructions first and others of us just start putting it together. Richard Felder, widely known for his work in engineering education and a teaching and learning scholar I hold in the highest esteem, shared "Are Learning Styles Invalid? (Hint: No)," a piece that carves a space between the extreme positions on learning styles.

He begins with a definition. "A learning style model specifies a small number of dimensions that collectively provide a good basis for designing effective instruction." In other words, a designated learning style is not a complete portrait of a learner, but something closer to an outline with main points and few supporting details. He continues: "They are neither infallible guides to student behavior nor made-up constructs with no basis in reality but simply useful descriptions of common behavior patterns."

"Learning styles are not mutually exclusive categories but preferences that may be mild, moderate or

strong." This explains the wide variation among learners with the same learning styles. In fact, there's not two, four, or six learning styles, but numberless individual variations when prior knowledge, experience, and skill level are factored into the learning style equation.

Can a teacher design instruction that addresses all these individual differences? Of course not. "The point is not to match teaching style to learning styles but rather to achieve *balance*, making sure that each style preference is addressed to a reasonable extent during instruction." The most powerful message of the learning styles movement is that content must be delivered in different ways. Moreover, variation in instructional methods develops a broad range of learning skills. "... learning styles provide no indication of what the students are and are not capable of, nor are they legitimate excuses for poor academic performance." Students may have a learning preference, but that is not the only way they can learn, nor should it be the only way they are taught.

There's one last enduring message to be taken from the debate about learning styles. Addressing the learning needs of students is way more complicated than most of us assumed. "The ideal balance among learning style categories depends on the subject, level, and learning objectives of the course and the backgrounds and skills of students." That's a problem we should be working to solve but without expecting one "right" answer.

References: Felder's piece can be found on his [website](#), which offers a treasure trove of excellent materials on teaching and learning.

Pashler, H., et. al. (2009). Learning styles: Concepts and evidence. *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*, 9 (3), 105-119.

Three Active Learning Strategies That Push Students Beyond Memorization

By Sydney Fulbright, PhD

Those who teach in the health disciplines expect their students to retain and apply every iota of learned material. However, many students come to us having achieved academic success by memorizing the content, regurgitating that information onto an exam, and promptly forgetting a good portion of it. In health, as well as other disciplines where new material builds upon the material from the previous semesters, it is critical for students to retain what they learn throughout their coursework and as they begin their careers as a nurse, engineer, elementary teacher, etc. So, how do we get students to retain this knowledge? Here are three active learning strategies for pushing students beyond simple memorization.

1. Case Studies and Simulations – Forsgren, Christensen, and Hedemalm (2014) found that case studies stimulate the student's own thinking and reflection, both individually and in groups. Through reflection, the student gains a broader view, increased understanding, knowledge, and deeper learning. Case studies are a form of problem-based learning that encourage the student to think critically and apply "book knowledge" to everyday practice and problems that will occur in the workplace. A literature review reveals very little research on using case studies in fields other than health, law, and business. However, case studies could certainly be written for any field of study. Many other methods of assisting with knowledge retention come from healthcare fields but can easily be adapted to other majors. Simulation—whether high-tech as in mannequins or low-tech as in role play—is a good method to help the student apply knowledge to real world scenarios.

2. Concept Maps – Concept maps are graphical tools for organizing and representing knowledge and can be used to help students visualize connections between words and concepts. The first step is defining a focus question or problem which the student then internalizes a strategy for defining and clarifying (Eberly Center for Teaching Excellence, 2014). Concept maps using real world situations can help reinforce key ideas by encouraging students to think both creatively and analytically about previously learned information and apply it to new scenarios.

3. One-Minute Papers – A classic among active learning techniques, the one-minute paper remains a simple yet effective way to gauge student learning. I use these papers as an assessment of my own teaching efficacy but more importantly to get students to reflect on what went on in the classroom that day. My questions are all open-ended so as to encourage reflection and feedback on the subject matter. Possible prompts for a one-minute paper, include:

- The clearest point of today's class was:
- The muddiest point of today's class (or something that confused me or I want clarified) was:
- How I prepared for class today:
- What I liked best that helped me learn:
- What I wish had been discussed during today's class:

In summary, we all know that lecturing is not the most effective manner of teaching, any more than cramming is an effective form of learning. Active learning strategies such as these move students from passive to active participation in their learning; boosting retention in the process. As an added bonus, these methods fit well in the flipped learning environment that many instructors are using today.

References:

Eberly Center for Teaching Excellence. *Whys and hows of assessment*. Carnegie Mellon. Retrieved May 14, 2014, from

<http://www.cmu.edu/teaching/assessment/howto/assesslearning/conceptmaps.html>

Forsgren, S., Christensen, T., & Hedemalm, A. (2014). Evaluation of the case method in nursing education. *Nurse Education in Practice*. 14, 164-169.

Sydney Fulbright, PhD, MSN, RN, CNOR, is an associate professor in the College of Health Sciences at the University of Arkansas – Fort Smith.

The Art of Asking Questions

By Maryellen Weimer, PhD

At one time or another, most of us have been disappointed by the caliber of the questions students ask in class, online, or in the office. Many of them are such mundane questions: “Will material from the book be on the exam?” “How long should the paper be?” “Can we use Google to find references?” “Would you repeat what you just said? I didn’t get it all down in my notes.” Rarely do they ask thoughtful questions that probe the content and stir the interest of the teacher and other students.

So, how do we get them to ask better questions? What if we start by asking them the kinds of questions we hope they will ask us? Here are some suggestions that might help us model what good questions are and demonstrate how instrumental they can be in promoting thinking, understanding,

and learning.

Prepare questions—Too often we ask questions as they come to us. Allen and Tanner write in an excellent article on questioning, “Although many teachers carefully plan test questions used as final assessments, ... much less time is invested in oral questions that are interwoven in our teaching.” (p. 63). How many questions of the kind that generate discussion and lead to other questions come to us as we are teaching? Would more of those thought-provoking questions come to us if we thought about questions as we prepare and contemplate the content for class?

Play with the questions—Questions promote thinking before they are answered. It is in the interstices between the question and the answer that minds turn. In that time before answers, questions can be emphasized by having them on a PowerPoint or on the board and by encouraging students to write the question in their notes. Maybe it’s a question that opens class and doesn’t get answered until the end of class. Maybe it’s a question that gets asked repeatedly across several class sessions with any number of possible answers entertained before a “good” or “right” answer is designated.

Preserve good questions—If a question does generate interest, thoughtful responses, and good discussion, that’s a question to keep in some more permanent way than simply trying to remember it. Good questions can be preserved along with the course materials for that day. Finding them there next semester enables us a revisit and possibly improve them. Do we need to be reminded that probing questions about the content, not only encourage students to think, they are good grist for the mill of our own thinking?

Ask questions that you don’t know the answer to—Students tend to think that teachers have all the answers. Could that be because we answer all their questions? Marshall makes a point worth remembering. Typically we ask students questions that we already know the answer to and if any of you are like me, while the student is answering, I’m quietly thinking how much better my answer is and how I will quickly deal with the student’s answer so I can then give my answer. Asking a question you don’t know the answer to lets students know that you still have things to learn. Asking students those questions and then thoughtfully attending to their answers also indicates that you just might be able to learn something from a student. Could this be a way to motivate them to ask better questions?

Ask questions you can’t answer—These questions are different from those you don’t know the answer to. It’s possible to find answers to those questions. These are the questions currently being confronted within the field or area of study that haven’t yet been answered. As of this moment, the answers are unknown. A question that can’t be answered is inherently more interesting than one that can be answered. Are there theories or research findings that suggest answers? Are some of those more likely than others? Could the answer be something totally unexpected? What if a student thinks she might have an idea about a possible answer?

Don’t ask open-ended questions when you know the answer you’re looking for—Sometimes students offer answers but they aren’t the ones the teacher wanted to hear. If you aren’t getting the answer you want, don’t play the “try to guess the answer I have in mind” game. It reinforces the idea that the question has one answer that the teacher thinks is the right or best answer. If the teacher has the answer, students are quick to conclude it’s the definitive right answer, and that makes it an answer that they won’t spend any time thinking about.

We ask questions to get students interested, to help them understand, and to see if they do. We’d like for our questions to promote lively discussions during which thoughtful perspectives are exchanged,

different views presented and new ideas are born. To accomplish that goal we need to plan and use question in more purposeful ways. If questions start playing a more prominent role in our teaching, the reward may be students asking questions we'd find interesting to answer and they'd find more interesting to discuss.

Shouldn't an article on questioning end with one? It should, and Allen and Tanner have a great one: "What would you predict would happen in your classroom if you changed the kinds of questions that you ask?" (p. 63)

References

Allen, D. and Tanner, K. (2002). Approaches to cell biology teaching: Questions about questions. *Cell Biology Education*, 1, 63-67.

Marshall, G. (2006). From Shakespeare on the page to Shakespeare on the stage: What I learned about teaching in acting class." *Pedagogy*, 6 (2), 309-325.

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THINK CORPUS CHRISTI IN 2015!



Let's Grow TRETA Membership!

We will soon be overhauling our Membership Roster! You will be contacted to confirm that the information we have on file is still correct. If you already know we have outdated information for you, or would like to help in the canvass, please email me at stocktonbart@gmail.com.

We are also embarking on a membership drive! Rack your brains for potential members and send us their names! Think about your fellow instructors and industry professionals - all walks of real estate are welcome to help us achieve our goal of being the premier education resource for Texas real estate teachers.

Bart Stockton, CREI

Membership Director 2014-2015

Broker Responsibility Instructor Training | 2015 - 2016

This course fulfills the instructor training mandated by the Texas Real Estate Commission (TREC) for those instructors desiring to teach Broker Responsibility. Instructors must be approved by TREC before attending instructor training.

Register: www.recenter.tamu.edu/register

Time: 9:00 AM–5:00 PM, lunch provided

Cost: \$150; \$190 after September 22, 2014

Thursday September 25, 2014	Permian Basin Board of Realtors 1001 W. Wall Street, Midland , TX 79701 432-682-9725
Monday September 29, 2014	Greater Fort Worth Association of Realtors 2650 Parkview Drive, Fort Worth , TX 76102 817-336-5165
Tuesday October 14, 2014	Norris Conference Center 9990 Richmond Ave., South Bldg., Ste. 102, Houston , TX 77042 713-780-9300
Tuesday October 21, 2014	Metrotex Association of Realtors 8201 N. Stemmons Freeway, Dallas , TX 75247 214-637-6660
Thursday October 30, 2014	San Antonio Board of Realtors 9110 W. IH-10, San Antonio , TX 78230 210-593-1200
Wednesday November 12, 2014	Austin Board of Realtors, Quarry Oaks Atrium Bldg. 10900 Stonelake Blvd., Suite 100, Austin , TX 78759 512-454-7636

Cancellation: Email dwhisenant@tamu.edu to request a full refund by September 22, 2014. Refunds requested after September 22, 2014, will incur a \$40 cancellation fee

Contact

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Final Thoughts

We welcome our members input! Please email any suggestions you may have about TRETA to the officer responsible for that function.

We also want your contributions to TRETA Talk. Whether you are a new instructor or a long-time educator your view, knowledge, and voice is essential to our organization. Please send any articles, ideas, or thoughts that you would like to appear in TRETA Talk, as well as a short bio, to Lloyd@LloydHamptonMCE.com.

Exhibitors for the annual TRETA Conference are encouraged to sign up early. We look forward to seeing you there!

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