

“BY SMALL AND SIMPLE THINGS...”

Anita Weston—Editor

At our fall faculty meeting, President Bednar indicated that we at Brigham Young University–Idaho must be anxiously engaged in the scholarship of learning and teaching. He stated that we will play a pioneering role in understanding learning and teaching processes; and because we will become good at it, scholars from around the world will look to us for help and information.

I have been told that many who teach languages have visited the Missionary Training Center because of results the teachers there achieve in teaching the young missionaries languages. They are able to accomplish much in a very short time. According to our President, a similar thing will happen here.

Going on, President Bednar said, “We ought to have, we will have, ways to more effectively share and distribute and disseminate our own inspired innovation on this campus.” He stated that scholarship works with three related characteristics: information must be public, it is susceptible to critical review and evaluation, and it should be accessible for exchange and use by other members of one’s scholarly community. As I heard these words, *Perspective* came into my mind. What a good way we have, already on the campus, to publish our progress for others to review, evaluate, and emulate.

After the fall faculty meeting, we on the *Perspective* editorial board met to plan this issue. We felt the decision concerning the theme had already been made: it could be none other than The Scholarship of Learning and Teaching.

As you read this issue, look for new ideas, for ways of improving and doing better. For as each of us tries to improve and as we force ourselves to stretch, we find better and easier ways to learn as well as to teach our students. We come up with short cuts, new ideas, unique ways of putting things together. These develop as a result of our own personalities, talents, and abilities.

We have each spent years trying to gain all the knowledge we can in our major area of study, chosen because of our special interest in and love of the topic. In our scholarly roles here, we daily experiment in the classroom, trying to find better and better ways to share what we know with those who are attempting to learn. It is not easy.

As you dip into Anne Hendricks’ article, you will say to yourself, “I’ve been there, I’ve done that.” Some bells may go off that will spur you to try different things or perhaps cause you to ponder your current classroom procedures.

Kip Hartvigsen's quotations from President Hinckley are sobering and thought provoking. Kip includes excellent ideas and suggestions to help us with our own studies as well as our teaching responsibilities.

I have cited only a couple of examples in this issue. As you read, you will determine which is your favorite or which contains the most useful information for your situation, and you will find materials that are just fun to read. I truly loved reading about Alyn and Gloria Andrus and their Nauvoo adventures. What a wonderful work they are doing in their retirement and what a wonderful experience they are having!

In Alma 37:6 there is a phrase that says, "by small and simple things are great things brought to pass...." This is exactly what is happening at Brigham Young University–Idaho. It is happening one person and one class at a time.

It always surprises me when one of these small and simple things—some little incident—occurs that sparks a "teaching moment" in a classroom. I have learned to take advantage of these magic periods of time. Such small things can actually become the highlight of an entire semester for both the teacher and the students. This is when the light turns on and suddenly the students begin to gain understanding. One of these occasions makes all the other days of plodding worthwhile.

These precious times are easily overlooked when we try too hard to stay on schedule or feel a need to cover all the material. As a new teacher, I was more inflexible and sometimes unaware of them. I'm sure in the past I missed many of these opportunities. Perhaps it's the experience of years spent in the classroom, or perhaps I now have a greater openness to students' needs, but I actually look for and try to set up situations for these small and simple things.

It is our hope that, as you read in this issue, some small and simple thing will spark a response in you that will help in your teaching and scholarly efforts.

We hope you will enjoy what has been written just for you. ☺



We express special thanks to our President Bednar and to President Bowen of Idaho State University. Both graciously responded when asked to contribute to this first issue of Perspective to be published by Brigham Young University-Idaho.