

THE TEACHING EXCHANGE

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Faculty Forum: Teaching at Brown

*Brown faculty have much to share with colleagues about the innovations they have introduced into their pedagogy. This forum addresses questions about faculty innovation in teaching in higher education. Such innovations are an important part of how faculty document their teaching in annual reviews, but do not have a chance to share with colleagues beyond the department. Many thanks to Masako Fidler (Slavic Languages), David Meyer (Sociology), and Peter Scharf (Classics) for their contributions to this issue. The "Faculty Forum" is a regular feature of *The Teaching Exchange* and we hope that YOU will be inspired by these ideas to share yours in the next *Teaching Exchange*.*

Masako Ueda Fidler (Slavic Languages) *Language Instruction Innovation*

Syllabus revision: Every semester, depending on the student dynamics and levels (and availability of translated Czech literature), I change the materials and the syllabi, especially in second and third-year level Czech.

Films: I have organized my second and third-year level Czech courses [CZ 30, 40, 50, and 60] around films. In the absence of adequate textbook materials, a film becomes the backbone of these courses. We discuss cultural implications of selected scenes and dialogs, incorporate expressions and grammar-syntax, modify dialogs to make them more relevant to students' lives. The Brown Czech Literary Anthology is added for additional reading. Next year I am converting second and third-year Czech into film/culture courses taught in Czech (CZ41 AND CZ61). Films used for each semester will vary and will focus on a different part of Czech history, allowing students to take each course twice; this will enable them to take Czech up to three years to fulfill the concentration if they wish.) Materials based on Czech films have a list of tasks that are adequate for students of various levels and backgrounds.

Large Classes: I also had more students than I expected in CZ105 (Czech literature and society, taught in English). As a result, I organized it as part presentation and part lecture to enhance student discussion. To handle students coming in with diverse levels of preparation, I separated students who wished to discuss Czech literature in Czech (one extra meeting time in addition to the regular hours) and adjusted the requirements for both the English-discussion group and the Czech-discussion group.

Ed. note: Prof. Fidler recently received the Best Teaching Award on the Post-Secondary Level by the Slavic and East European Language Association, rarely awarded to faculty who teach a non-Russian Slavic language. Bravo!

David Meyer (*Sociology*) *Teaching Graduate and Undergraduate Students in the Same Course*

In my graduate course, Sociology 220: *Social Capital and Social Networks*, I admit a small number of top undergraduates and I expect them to function at the same level as the graduate students. These undergraduates respond to that challenge, and an outside observer would not be able to tell from listening to the discussion who are the graduate students and who are the undergraduates. By treating all the students in the seminar equally, they develop respect for each other, and, thus, I avoid a two-tiered system. I think the graduate students appreciate this approach also. The written work of the undergraduates and the graduate students are at similar high levels.

Peter Scharf (*Classics*) *Web-based Language Instruction*

For SA 0010, SA 0020 (Elementary Sanskrit), I'm in the process of preparing automated web-based exercises under a grant from the Scholarly Technology Group (STG/CIS). The exercises will provide increased and immediate feedback to students compared to what they currently get by handing in paper exercises and waiting a few days to get them back.