



8-26-2013

Refresh, Renew, Rise - Each Day and Again and Again, and Forever Again

John Bird

Winthrop University, birdj@winthrop.edu

Teaching and Learning Center

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.winthrop.edu/weeklyreader>

Recommended Citation

Bird, John and Teaching and Learning Center, "Refresh, Renew, Rise - Each Day and Again and Again, and Forever Again" (2013). *The Weekly Reader*. 28.

<https://digitalcommons.winthrop.edu/weeklyreader/28>

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the Teaching and Learning Center (TLC) at Digital Commons @ Winthrop University. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Weekly Reader by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Winthrop University. For more information, please contact bramed@winthrop.edu.

August 26, 2013
Volume 5, Issue 2

The Weekly Reader

Teaching and Learning Center, Winthrop University, Rock Hill, SC

UpComing Sessions

Turnitin Training
9/3

FERPA Training
9/11, 9/12, 9/19

GLI Conference
9/20

Training for CMS
Authors 9/25

Blackboard
Training (various
topics and times)

Register at:
<http://www2.winthrop.edu/tlc/TrainingCalendar/default.asp>

Dr. John Bird
Professor,
Department of
English
Bancroft Hall 260
(803) 323-3679

Director, Teaching &
Learning Center
Dinkins Hall 233
(803) 323-2447

EMAIL:
birdj@winthrop.edu

Winthrop University
Rock Hill, SC

Refresh, Renew, Rise—Each Day, and Again, and Again, and Forever Again

I have been thinking about President Comstock's opening address a couple of weeks ago and her call to Winthrop to "refresh, renew, rise." Specifically, how does this call affect our teaching and our students?

One of the best things about the academic calendar is the way it gives us and our students an opportunity to refresh. Do you remember how beat we all felt last May? You can feel that sense of weariness in the air as commencement approaches, but something magical happens in the summer months, to the campus, to us. The summer certainly refreshed me, even though I was working most of the time: rewriting an article for publication, writing a paper for a conference, continuing work on a book about Mark Twain in 1884, and reading everything published about Mark Twain in 2012 for a summary chapter I now have to write (not so refreshed on that last one—the deadline is

September 1, and I am certain not to make that). Even though classes go on during the summer, the pace on campus slows down, with fewer students, more time to work on maintenance and other projects, and the general drowsiness that a southern summer brings (even if this particular summer was cooler and wetter than normal). By the time mid-August rolls around, the campus comes to life again, which even those of us who work here all summer notice. Those of us who teach feel that refreshment summer brings, and so do our students. Even though we who put on an act of not wanting summer to end and classes to start feel an eagerness to get back to it, back to this, our work and our lives. Here we go again, and ain't it great?

Another start gives us many opportunities to renew as well. We renew old friendships with colleagues and students, and we start new ones, with new colleagues, new

students. A college campus is in a constant state of renewal. New infusions of students all the time, new faculty, new staff, new members of the administration. New buildings from time to time, new classroom spaces, new equipment, new books, and above all, new ideas. The refreshment of the time off in the summer yields new ideas and new ways of thinking, new courses, new ways of approaching old courses, new discoveries, new theories, new achievements. This act of refreshment and renewal bears its most important fruit in the classroom, as we and our students encounter each other and our courses and our disciplines, an ongoing process of change and growth and development. "Renew thyself completely each day; do it again, and again, and forever again," Thoreau writes in *Walden*. He was talking about bathing, but as usual, he was also talking about something higher. Each day, each class, is

“After we are refreshed, after we are renewed, each day, again and again and forever again, how could we help but rise? The result of good teaching and deep learning is a rising, a rising of the brain, of the body, of the spirit.”



Continued from page 1

another chance for renewal. When you add each day up, what change, what revolution comes!

After we are refreshed, after we are renewed, each day, again and again and forever again, how could we help but rise?

The result of good teaching and deep learning is a rising, a rising of the brain, of the body, of the spirit. There are moments in the classroom when we and our students can feel that rising happen: somebody makes an observation that strikes us all, and an awed silence falls over the room; a lecture leaves the students wanting more; a text reveals itself, just as it reveals something hidden and exciting about us; an experiment captures and illustrates an enduring principle; a dance or a sculpture or a sonata or a play comes together, beautifully, after countless hours of work and practice; research uncovers something new, proves a bold hypothesis, debunks a treasured belief. But more often, the rising is so gradual that we are not aware of it, gradual and slow, but continual, like dough rising to form a loaf. That kind of hidden rising is just as magical and important as the more evident kind, and maybe even more so,

since it is constant, like refreshment, like renewal. Think of this campus on any day, all the rising that is going on, all over the place. It is a wonder we don't lift off and fly away. Maybe we are, in an intellectual and spiritual sense.

I know that President Comstock was talking about “refresh, renew, and rise” in a broader sense than I am talking about here. As our president, she has to think in much bigger terms than just what goes on in the classroom: the bigger mission, our physical and financial future, the sustainment of what we have and its continued growth. But all of us, no matter what our station or our job, have a part to play in that process of refresh, renew, rise. Those of us who spend our time in the classroom play a vital role in the overall mission of the university; if we can meet the challenge our president has posed to us to refresh, renew, and rise, much of the rest will take care of itself. Sometimes that is hard to realize, as our days are filled with meetings and deadlines and paperwork and reports and grading and everything else that tends to drag us down, but the rising is always there, always happening, even

when it is so gradual we cannot perceive it. Like the startling growth in a child that you see only occasionally, that rising goes on all the time, only noticed by us when we pause to see it. So on we go, into a new semester, but with faith in the refreshing and renewing and rising, each day, and again, and again, and forever again.



XXITE 2.0 ----- The Virtual Gathering Place for WU (The Reboot!)

Jo Koster and I invite you to join XXITE (Twenty-first Century Teaching Excellence)—or if you have already joined, to check it out again as it grows and develops. Maybe you have not been there in a long time—if not, you will see many changes in look and content. For example, XXITE now has groups dedicated to HMXP and CRTW, with

those of us who teach those courses sharing ideas and materials. Talk to Jo about setting up your own interest group. Jo is particularly interested in recruiting a few people to blog regularly about their teaching.

Jo set up this interactive site to give Winthrop faculty a virtual gathering space to share ideas about teaching and

technology. You'll find blogs and discussion forums on various topics—and we urge you to add your own ideas. Visit again at <http://wuxxite.ning.com/> Or email Jo Koster for an invitation to join: kosterj@winthrop.edu The TLC website also has links to navigate your way there or to join: <http://www2.winthrop.edu/tlc/>

A New Service From the TLC: Teaching Consultation

The Teaching and Learning Center is offering a new service: teaching consultation. At the instructor's request, I (or another agreed-upon person) will visit your class to observe and consult with you afterwards about your successes and challenges. This consultation has nothing to do with the tenure and

promotion process, and no reports will be made to department chairs or deans (unless you so request). The invitation to the consultant can only come from the instructor, not from a dean or chair or any other person. All conversations will be private and confidential. If you don't want me to visit your class and observe your teaching, we could

just meet and talk about your teaching. If I am not available to visit your class because of my schedule, I will find a qualified person to do the consulting. So please let me know if you would like to invite me into your class or for a consultation. Call or email me at (803) 323-3679 or birdj@winthrop.edu.

Go2Knowledge—Learning On Demand!

Go2Knowledge is a website that offers a variety of video presentations on faculty and staff professional development. You will find presentations by nationally-known experts in seven categories: At-Risk Populations, Campus Safety, Organizational Development, Student Success, Teaching and Learning, Technology,

and Open Educational Resources. Within each category, you will find a number of excellent and informative videos. The Office of Academic Affairs has provided us a one-year subscription to this service.

People often tell the TLC that they would like to go to sessions, but they don't have the time or they can't

at the times sessions are offered. With Go2Knowledge, you can attend sessions on demand, anywhere, 24/7. The TLC will also have frequent Go2Knowledge Groups, where we meet to discuss a presentation. Log in here: <http://www.go2knowledge.org/winthrop> See you there!

FACULTY CLUB MY PAGE DISCUSSION FORUM BLOGS CHAT LINKS GROUPS HMXP CR

Winthrop XXITE: Passionate Teaching

WINTHROP'S INITIATIVE FOR 21ST CENTURY TEACHING EXCELLENCE

A friendly place where Winthrop faculty & friends can share information and experiences with using social networking for teaching & research.

BLOG POSTS

- NEW POTTS ON THE RENOVATIONS**
Posted by [Mark Y. Herring](#) on June 22, 2012 at 2:05pm
- CORE VALUES**
Posted by [Mark Y. Herring](#) on June 5, 2012 at 9:41am
- PLAYING TO TYPE**
Posted by [Blair C. Herring](#) on May 25, 2012 at 10:22am
- TEACHING CRITICAL THINKING IN THE CLASSROOM**
Posted by [Amanda Hiler](#) on March 15, 2012 at 12:11pm — [LUC](#)
- GONE WITH THE WIND...**
Posted by [Jo Koster](#) on March 6, 2012 at 10:33am — [2 Comments](#)

[+ Add a Blog Post](#)

NOTES

- DO COLLEGE PROFESSORS WORK HARD ENOUGH?**
Created by [Jo Koster](#) Mar 25, 2012 at 1:34pm. Last updated by [Jo Koster](#)
- WHO OWNS YOUR COURSE?**
Created by [Jo Koster](#) Mar 19, 2012 at 12:07pm. Last updated by [Jo Koster](#)
- STUDENT OWNERSHIP OF TABLETS INCREASES, PREFERENCE FOR GROWING**
Created by [Jo Koster](#) Mar 14, 2012 at 11:24am. Last updated by [Jo Koster](#)

Join XXITE 2.0 or
Register for a TLC
Session
At
www.winthrop.edu/tlc

Thought
for
The Week

*"Kites rise highest against
the wind, not with it."
--Winston Churchill*