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Here We Go Again—and Again, and Again, and Again: Thoughts on Starting Yet Another Semester

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The Weekly Reader

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

UpComing Sessions

Hour of Code
1/18, 1/27
Speros, Ollies,
and BB8 1/19,
1/23
Using Ozobots to
Enhance Critical
Thinking 1/20,
1/25
FERPA Training
1/14, 126
Learning About
Dacus Online
Catalog 2/7
Deeper Learning
Through Critical
Thinking 2/7
Blackboard
Training,
various topics
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Here We Go Again—and Again, and Again, and Again: Thoughts on Starting Yet Another Semester

Here we go again!

I was thinking about writing a column on starting over, but I got that déjà vu feeling--I have written that column before. What more could I possibly say?

I realized the other day that I first stepped into a classroom as a teacher 40 years ago this month. Jimmy Carter was about to be inaugurated as president. I was in my last semester of college, starting my student teaching at East Mecklenburg High School in Charlotte. I was 22 years old, barely older than my students, and I had almost no idea what I was getting into.

Forty years! How many times have I said, "Here we go again?" Since I taught summer school for seven years and since my previous college had three terms, the number is well over 80. No wonder I feel so tired!

As I have written before, one of the benefits of working as a teacher is

that we have clear beginnings and endings. Many jobs do not give you those fresh starts, the chance to start all over.

But this is over and over and over! It never stops!

My first full-time teaching job was at Mooresville High School in Mooresville, NC. Mooresville then was not the upscale bedroom community to Charlotte that it is now; it was a sleepy mill town, seemingly a million miles from "the big city."

That first year, 1977-1978, Jackson Browne released his live album, *Running On Empty*. The second to last song, "The Load-out," is one of the best songs ever written about life on the road for a touring musician. It starts out with just Jackson on piano and the great sideman David Lindley on lap steel, wistfully describing the aftermath of a show:

Now the seats are all empty
Let the roadies take the

stage
Pack it up and tear it down
They're the first to come
and last to leave
Working for that minimum wage
They'll set it up in another town.

He continues, thinking about how the show had been:

Tonight the people were so fine
They waited there in line
And when they got up on their feet they made the show
And that was sweet,
But I can hear the sound
Of slamming doors and folding chairs
And that's a sound they'll never know.

He thinks about what lies ahead:

But the band's on the bus
And they're waiting to go
We've got to drive all night
and do a show in Chicago
Or Detroit, I don't know
We do so many shows in a row
And these towns all look the same.

That is the feeling I have

“And that is what happens when I walk into my class, again. It happened last week. It was magic. Again. All over again. Again and again!”

Bring on the new semester! And won't you stay, just a little bit longer? Here we go again, and ain't it great?”



Continued from page 1

as I start all over again.
And again. And again. But
the emptiness gives way
to another feeling:

We just pass the time in
our hotel rooms
And wander 'round
backstage
Till those lights come up
and we hear that crowd
And we remember why we
came.

The song, of course,
becomes a rousing
anthem about the joy of
performing, for both the
artist and the audience.
And then it morphs into
“Stay,” a cover of the
beach music song by
Maurice Williams and the
Zodiacs. What had been
weary resignation is
magically transformed into
joy and wonder. That
ending is a call to the
audience to join in:

People you've got the
power over what we do
You can sit there and wait
Or you can pull us through
Come along, sing the
song
You know you can't go
wrong.

'Cause when that morning
sun comes beating down
You're going to wake up
in your town
But we'll be scheduled to
appear
A thousand miles away
from here

And that is what happens

when I walk into my class,
again. It happened last
week. It was magic.
Again. All over again.
Again and again!

Bring on the new
semester! And won't you
stay, just a little bit longer?
Here we go again, and
ain't it great?

Here is a link to a
YouTube video of Jackson
Browne performing his
song at the Greek Theatre
in Los Angeles, August
15, 2015. How many
times has he sung this
song in the past 40 years?
But he still finds joy,
despite doing it over and
over again.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ESFe7MNnyRk>

The Fourth Annual
Winthrop Conference on
Teaching and Learning
will be held Friday, March
24, 2017.

This year, the conference
will be held on that Friday
afternoon, from 1:00 pm to
5:30 pm. The conference
fee will be only \$15.00,
enough to cover the
conference costs and to
let us have a concluding
cocktail session and
keynote speaker.

The conference has built
every year, with fuller
attendance from
colleagues at area

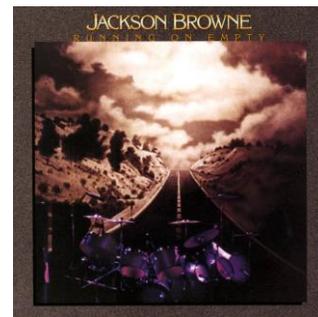
colleges and universities.
But the heart of the
conference remains the
presentations by Winthrop
faculty and staff.

The deadline for
proposals is February 15,
just under a month away.
Here is the link, with the
call for proposals and the
submission form:

<http://digitalcommons.wintrop.edu/tlcconference/>

You can also look at last
year's conference to give
you some ideas about
presentations.

I hope you will make your
proposal for an individual
presentation, a full
session with several
presenters, or a
workshop. We look
forward to another great
day of thinking about
teaching and learning.



Thanks For Helping Make the Teaching and Learning Center Work!

Winthrop's Teaching and Learning Center offers a wide variety of sessions each year for faculty and staff, on teaching, technology, professional development, and personal development. From leading class discussion to mastering the Smart podium to tenure and promotion to cooking soufflés, the TLC tries to make sure that all faculty and staff receive

the kinds of professional and personal development that will make them better teachers, administrators, and employees.

To offer this programming, the TLC depends on the talent, expertise, and generosity of our faculty and staff. We do not have a big budget to bring in outside speakers and experts. Even so, we are able to offer engaging,

timely, and valuable sessions every year on a variety of topics. We thank those who have offered their time and talent in past years.

If you have a request for a session you would like to see, please email me and I will try to arrange it. And if you have a session you would like to present, please email me. We will set something up as soon as we can!

A Service From the TLC: Teaching Consultation

The TLC for several years has been offering a 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 (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 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!

Register for a TLC Session
At

www.winthrop.edu/tlc

The 4th Annual Winthrop Conference on Teaching and Learning 3/24/17

The 4th Annual Winthrop Conference on Teaching and Learning will be held Friday, March 24, 2017. Registration is only \$15.00. Proposals are due February 15. You can find the call for proposals and the submission form here: <http://digitalcommons.winthrop.edu/tlcconference/>

Thought For the Week

"New Year's Day--Now is the accepted time to make your regular annual good resolutions. Next week you can begin paving hell with them as usual."
--Mark Twain