

**Utah Valley University**

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Fall 2004

# The Whole Student

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# The Whole Student

By Susan R. Madsen

*Academically Speaking*

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As an educator, I am interested in facilitating the learning and growth of the “whole” student. I approach my students with an optimistic outlook, assuming they have the potential to become whatever they choose and have the motivation and capacity to do so. With this in mind, I design my courses to address the content of the particular course and the competencies that are important for success in the workplace, community, and family domains. For example, in one core business course (Human Resource Management), students learn about employment law, staffing, compensation, training, retention, employee motivation, change, and more. Yet, all course assignments and experiences integrate these concepts with opportunities to develop and/or enhance various skills and competencies: critical thinking, decision-making, written and interpersonal communication, presentation, technology, diversity, teamwork, leadership, citizenship, and ethics.

I believe that students must be engaged in the learning experience to truly understand and remember the concepts taught. As an educator this is engaging in excellence. To facilitate this, I utilize many different teaching pedagogies and techniques. For example, a few years ago I discovered a new pedagogy, academic service-learning, which provides opportunities for students to learn in all of the ways I have described. I have felt immense satisfaction as I have seen the profound effects of these experiences on my students. They have emerged with deeper learning (concepts and competencies) and a desire to be more involved in the community. I have learned that the deepest and most transformational type of learning occurs through application and experience. To truly learn—a student must change. To change—there needs to be a disruption of the status quo. Hence, I like to provide experiences in which my students must work hard and stretch beyond their current state. I love to feel that I can make a difference, and teaching here at UVSC gives me that opportunity.

[309 words]