

IMBES Service Award to David B. Daniel

The Editors for IMBES



The International Mind, Brain, and Education Society (IMBES) honors David B. Daniel for his important contributions to the founding and growth of IMBES, the creation of this journal *Mind, Brain, and Education*, and the meaningful and practical uses of research to inform the science of learning, especially as it applies in college classrooms.

Because of David's achievements, we have to start with his contributions to teaching and learning beyond IMBES. First, he is an outstanding teacher, having won teaching awards year after year at several universities. He has deep knowledge about the effective practice of teaching, and he leads efforts to connect that knowledge to research about teaching and learning (Daniel, 2005a, 2005b; Daniel & Broida, 2004). David also has a knack for connecting with people around complex and personal issues like beliefs about teaching and learning. Having made a living for several years as a standup comedian, he knows how to use humor to keep students focused and to facilitate their learning. Humor also helps him communicate about mistakes that teachers make, as evidenced by titles of his articles such as "Evil technology" and "How to ruin a perfectly good lecture."

Ultimately David knows that a fundamental core for long-term learning is the clear explication of key concepts and

prototypic examples, and he is a master at getting them across to his students. That contrasts with testing gimmicks that are supposed to improve teaching without connecting meaningfully to student learning, such as quizzes that foster student contrivances instead of testing deep concepts (Daniel & Broida, 2004).

In recent years, David has taken on the broader task of building knowledge and institutions that support good teaching, based on his experience as a teacher and his work with textbooks and technology for learning (e.g., Daniel, 2002). He has led the Institute on the Teaching of Developmental Science of the Society for Research in Child Development, and he has chaired the Task Force on Pedagogical Innovations of the Society for the Teaching of Psychology. Especially important is his framing of "an ecological approach to pedagogical research," which he calls "Learning for Life" (Daniel & Poole, 2009). The ecological approach specifies the limits of cognitive laboratory environments, which often simplify learning situations far beyond what is realistic for schools and colleges. He embodies the IMBES ideal of integrating practice with research, especially for cognitive science, where he has contributed to the research literature throughout his career (Daniel & Broida, 2004; Daniel & Klaczynski, 2006).

Along with all these efforts to create better teaching and learning in educational institutions, David has been hard at work behind the scenes at IMBES, facilitating the building of sound organizational structures and effective communication processes. We thank him for working tirelessly to recruit effective Board members and committee chairs and to make sure that key meetings focus on important agenda items rather than trivial matters. Especially important was his contribution to the second biennial IMBES conference in Philadelphia last May, where David played a critical role in organizing the talks, sessions, and posters so that the conference would realize the IMBES mission of facilitating high-quality dialogue between researchers and educational practitioners. From his role in negotiating the costs of the conference to his role in shaping and advising presenters' talks, David was indispensable.

A second major service to IMBES has been David's work as Managing Editor of our journal *Mind, Brain, and Education*. This issue marks the third year of publication for the journal—12 issues of high-quality articles that represent all three parts of

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the trio of mind, brain, and education. Besides strong research and theoretical articles, David has helped recruit excellent papers on the ways that educators can shape research to create knowledge that is truly usable in learning environments. Especially notable has been his work with younger authors to help them make optimal contributions to the field and simultaneously further their own career goals. These efforts build on his ecological approach to pedagogical research, combining consideration of the many factors that affect student learning, including, in this case, learning to write for publication.

Outside of IMBES, David's work has an important message for research-based educational practice. In a recent article in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, "3 Paths to Better Teaching, and When to Stray from Them," journalist David Glenn portrays David's framework for connecting cognitive science with classroom education (Glenn, 2009). Avoid "cookie-cutter approaches that ignore the unique context of each classroom." Instead of studying learning in highly controlled laboratory conditions, observe what happens in real classrooms "in all their complexity." Recognize that students learn in many different ways, and that a technique or tool that helps one student will often interfere with learning in another. Daniel and Poole (2009) lay out a systematic ecological approach to classroom teaching that includes broad principles and processes for considering learning differences as well as the specific ecology of each particular classroom and learning institution. This work contributes important ideas and methods to the effort in MBE to create an effective infrastructure for educational research that truly informs classroom practice.

In his classroom David Daniel attracts students in droves, because of his outstanding teaching and his obvious concern for each student. In contrast, at IMBES and *Mind, Brain, and*

Education, he works quietly behind the scenes, often invisibly. He looks for ways to make the Society and the journal function effectively and move forward on the mutual agenda of connecting research with practice reciprocally in order to create a groundwork for education in the 21st century. As David quietly makes things work, the world of education benefits from his talent and his ecological approach to pedagogical research—promoting "Learning for Life."

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