

# The Evening Weekend News

## A Newsletter for Montgomery College Part-Time Faculty

Produced by the Rockville Campus Evening Weekend Office

Charlotte Jacobsen, Editor

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Katie Torkashvan, Layout

### *How to Thrive in College*

Melvina Noel – Rockville, ESL

By Charlotte Jacobsen

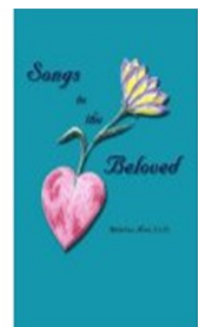


Writing is something that Melvina Noel was “born to do”. She started writing as a child and writes at least an hour every day. That no doubt has something to do with why Melvina decided to write, *How to Thrive in College*. She observed her own students struggling with college courses

and felt she could offer practical tips on getting through with her own practical experience gained from earning five degrees. *How to Thrive in College* provides detailed steps on how to handle the pressures of college life in a productive and non-stressful manner. It is a motivational book of practical advice, humorous anecdotes, chapter-related activities, and references to valuable sources. The book has the unique feature of looking at the student holistically and maximizing the educational experience both in and out of the classroom.

Melvina taught junior high school English for 7 years after earning a degree in Speech and Drama with a minor in English. Later she started a drama club and earned a Master’s Degree in Secondary Education. Wishing to expand her horizons, she earned an Associate Degree in Computer Programming. Later while working as a programmer, she earned Associate Degrees in Spanish and French. Afterwards, she earned an Ed. D. in Higher Education Administration from The George

Washington University in Washington, D.C. She is the former Director of the Virginia Recruitment and Retention Program. Melvina has been honored as Speech Teacher of the Year by the Virginia Speech Communication Association.



This is not Melvina’s first book. A few years ago, she published, *Songs to the Beloved*. She has had many educational articles published including, “Motivating Positive Movements,” “The Keys to Successful Learning,” and “Five Survival Laws for First Year Adult College Students.” Melvina is the owner of Write4U LLC, and the Director and founder of Noel Rochelle Hugging Buddies, a nonprofit organization that provides stuffed animals to cancer patients in Northern Virginia. Melvina starts each day with a Yoga session and may practice later in the day for a quick relaxation.

*How to Thrive in College* is available online at Amazon and Barnes and Noble among other bookstores. Obviously successful as when I ordered my copy from Barnes and Noble, only 3 copies remained. A copy of *How to Thrive in College* is in the office of the Rockville Evening Weekend Office. Take a look, you may wish to recommend it to some of your students.

Beyond the Classroom  
Sally Zimmerman  
Mathematics - Germantown

I know many of my students are busy with jobs and families, but I like to encourage them that their time at Montgomery College should be more than just checking off graduation requirements. Their MC experience will be what they make of it, and they should try new things. Before class starts I send them a welcome e-mail about my expectations for my math class. The e-mail also encourages them to learn from each other and try out a lecture or two or a club at the college. Usually during the semester there will be a few lectures or movies that I want to especially encourage, and I'll offer bonus points to those who attend.

Since I want my students to be involved outside the classroom, I try to be as well. I shared my passion for gardening and the local food movement as part of the adjunct faculty lecture series on February 23rd in the Goldenrod building on the

Germantown campus. The audience was a mix from both the Germantown and Rockville campuses. About half were students and half were faculty and staff - a unique and friendly situation. I discussed what to look for in local, sustainable food, its benefits, and seven ways to obtain it. I included some stories from my personal experiences. Together, we shared our thoughts on local food and brainstormed ideas for MC. A student suggested a local food club, which I agreed would be a great idea. Some of the other popular ideas were local food in our cafeteria and a community garden and weekly farmers' market, both on campus. The market could be run by students who were paid with "food credits." For all of the ideas, it was clear that each campus wanted their own. If you are interested in the details of my talk, how to find local, sustainable food, or don't know the benefits of a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) share, you are welcome to view my PowerPoint presentation on my website: [www.montgomerycollege.edu/~szimmerman](http://www.montgomerycollege.edu/~szimmerman)

In summary, I'd like my students to think a broad educational experience is important because you never know where life will take you. I look at myself and my friends and see how our paths have often changed from what we expected at college graduation. In my own case, I've been a computer programmer for IBM, a stay-at-home mom with various volunteer jobs, a substitute teacher for Montgomery County Public Schools, and an adjunct math professor at the Germantown campus for five years. About three years ago, I teamed up with some friends to start Nourishing Connections Food Club. The club aims to support local families and farmers with direct farm-to-consumer sales. It is constantly growing and now has over 100 families in three chapters from Frederick to Silver Spring. My food club experiences have taught me the importance of local, sustainable food. They have also led to some interesting math problems and tasty treats for my students.



Sally Zimmerman

## Being an Adjunct: Why I Enjoy It, What I have Learnt

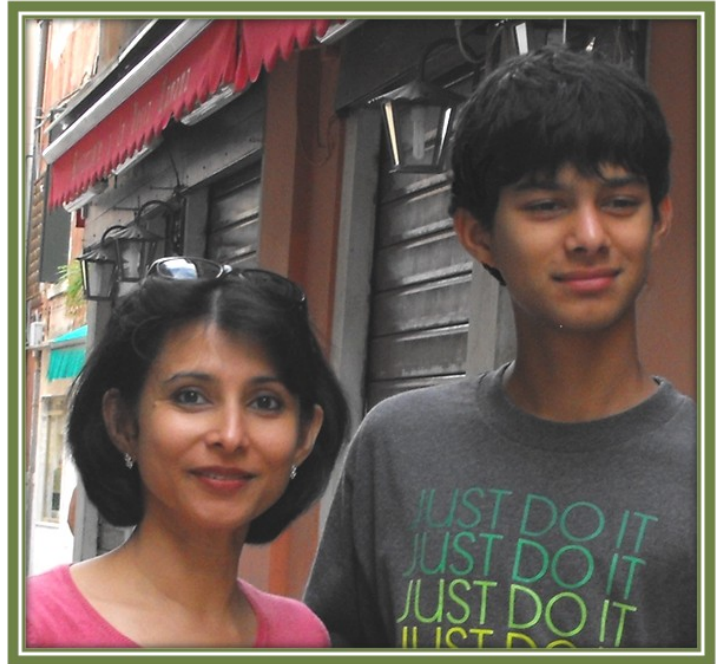
### Vidya Vijayasek

#### Art - Rockville

When I first started teaching way back in 1994 I assumed it was going to be a short term project while parenting an infant, but before I knew it, one course had become three and I liked it so much that I would have taught more if I could. Looking back on my 17 years of teaching at Montgomery College I have come to the realization that I have enjoyed every semester, and have learnt something new from each class that I have taught. So when I was asked to write an article for the adjunct newsletter I thought that my personal experience might help some of the newer adjuncts who wonder if it is right role for them.

There are many for whom the adjunct position is a stepping stone towards a permanent job but when I started teaching, I was only thinking of how to spend a couple of hours each week talking about art since I was trained to be a museum professional. Soon after my first class I became aware of the vast diversity of the student population - the social, cultural, economic and intellectual diversity made my first year of teaching an eye opening experience. Many of my students had not visited a museum even though we have several excellent ones in the area. After my first semester, the positive student response and their enthusiasm at learning more about the visual arts compelled me to continue teaching. I now recognize the relevance and significance of the adjuncts at our college and the valuable service we provide. Montgomery College is a better place when the adjuncts perform successfully in the classroom while saving costs to the institution which is a very important factor in higher education in our current economy. I'm fortunate to work in a department with very supportive group of colleagues, and lately I've enjoyed the participation in meetings on college policies and decisions.

Despite making far less money and with no benefits there are still many advantages to being an adjunct. I get to enjoy the pure pleasure of teaching without the institutional responsibilities of serving on committees and advising. The greatest satisfaction comes from knowing that my contribution makes a



Vidya and son

positive difference to the education of the students. I learn something new from my students each year which I include in my lesson plan for the next term. I try to figure out how the students learn and what keeps them motivated. During the first week of class, I listen to what the students have to say and I try to tailor my lectures to that particular group. Since art is a product of culture my goal is not just to teach them Art History but to get them to appreciate the global diversity and direct them to learn to think and write eloquently about it. Whether it is the arts, sciences or engineering, it is the intellectual curiosity of the student that leads them to learning about the larger world around them and I encourage them to ask questions that go beyond what they read in their text books.

*Academically Adrift* by Richard Arum and Josipa Roksa is an interesting book which shows that nearly 50% of undergraduates don't learn much about reasoning or writing skills during their first two years of college. While the authors based their conclusions on extensive data analysis, I find that to be true in every class that I teach where more than half the class has difficulty in writing

## Being an Adjunct: Why I Enjoy It, What I have Learnt

a coherent paragraph, let alone a lengthy essay. To make the writing assignment enjoyable, I try to think of topics that would be of interest to the students but I am also mindful of the services and accommodations that are needed for the growing population of special-needs students in my class. Over the years I have learnt that students are more motivated and perform better when they feel comfortable in the classroom setting and are not intimidated to ask questions. I've learnt that setting high expectations and acknowledging student accomplishments motivates them to excel.

Notwithstanding the enthusiasm I have for the subject matter, teaching the same course year after year can get tedious so I modify my curriculum and assignments slightly each semester and spend my down time learning new things which keeps the course content fresh each term for me as well. While I never took any formal training in pedagogy or teaching strategies I am a far better teacher today than I was when I started because I have incorporated things I have learnt from others through the years: my mother who taught me power of associative memory when I disliked *Geometry* in middle school by telling me to remember *quod erat demonstrandum* as "Quite Easily Done," my French teacher who stressed the cognitive benefits of memorization, and the many excellent teachers who encouraged me to challenge assumptions and do independent research.

I now understand the importance of technology in

teaching and have incorporated it into my classroom - though I have to admit that when talking to the younger generation it appears that I have a long way to go before I catch up! Taking advantage of the courses and workshops offered at MC has been very useful in my classroom. I pursue the paperless route by uploading the syllabi and all course assignments, lectures etc. online, but I am not yet confident enough to get the students to upload their term papers online - perhaps next year! The improved performance from the classes overall is probably an indication of their comfort level with computer technology so I have learnt to be friend technology and use it to manage my time: with emails and *MyCourses*. While I am still not as savvy as one of my colleagues, who brandishes his iPad for everything from taking attendance to grading studio critiques, I still manage to reap the benefits of digital technology along with face-to-face interaction. It took me a while, but I also learned the importance of departmental association, professional development and institutional participation.

These are just some of the things that I have realized over the years which has made my job much easier and progressively more fulfilling. However, my guiding principle when it comes to teaching is to make the material as enjoyable and accessible for the students as possible; as the great Jazz composer Charles Mingus said: Making the simple complicated is commonplace; making the complicated simple, awesomely simple, that's creativity.

### IMPORTANT DATES

April 27	Faculty Appreciation Reception
May 9-15	Exam Week/Final Week of Classes
May 20	Official end of spring semester
May 30	Memorial Day/College closed
May 31	Summer Session I begins
June 20	Midsummer session classes begin
July 4	Independence Day observed
July 11	Summer session II classes begin
August 19	Official end of summer sessions





# We Can Make The Difference

Michael D'Andrea

## Sociology-Germantown

When we think back at what we learned in high school or college we automatically think of particular teachers and professors we liked and who motivated us to become actively interested in learning. The primary reason given for dropping out of college is becoming disengaged with professors and the college community. Sociological research has consistently shown a high correlation between stimulating social interaction and intelligence. Quite frankly, I think humans need a stimulating social interaction throughout the life cycle in order to reach our potential. This appears to be true for students and teachers. I tasked my students with completing the following voluntary survey: "How important do you think your academic success is related to having a comfortable friendly relationship with your professors?" I received 21 responses from a universe of 108 students in my sociology classes. Below are some of the most common and not so common responses from my students.



Michael D'Andrea

*When a teacher goes out of his/her way to smile and greet you outside of class it simply makes you feel good. It personally makes me feel like that teacher believes I have the potential to succeed.*

*I think having a close relationship with a professor is extremely important. I have had a couple of teachers in the past who I have felt very uncomfortable going to for help. Having these teachers made me less willing to go in and get the help I needed to be successful in their class.*

*There are two sides that I would look at. I would look at how a student should be interested in the classes that they are taking and even if they didn't have a relationship with the professor, the studies should still interest them. The other side is the more intriguing a professor it seems the more intriguing the material in the class. Enjoyable professors make the class fun to go to; whereas with less enjoyable professors the class seems endless.*

*I think that having a friendly relationship with your professor is important to your academic success because when students are comfortable with their professors they are able to go to them with any questions and concerns they have. If students do not have a good relationship with their teacher it is harder to be able to go to them when they need help.*

*I believe having a relationship with your professors will help you become more motivated and therefore successful. If you do not establish a relationship with your professor, it is going to be hard for you to become successful. Having a good relationship with them makes you more comfortable discussing different matters with them.*

*It would be interesting to find out how many students dropped out because they didn't have the ambition or discipline to stick with it. " Do students want their teachers actively engaged in their education? Sure, but I'm not sure that it's the only reason students decide to stay or drop out of school. A teacher who is excited and is actively engaged with the subject at hand may influence students but it is not their teachers' responsibility to ensure motivation and drive. The students should have that.*

*When I think back to elementary, middle, and high school, I can think of four teachers who have impacted my educational career. The reason they impacted my life is because I developed a friendly relationship with each teacher. These teachers supported me in my academics. Having a friendly relationship with a professor makes the student*

## We Can Make The Difference

*want to learn more. It also makes the student more inclined to attend every class and participate. If your professor likes you, you will want to impress them.*

*I believe people do learn better from people they love/ respect. I feel that when you love or respect someone you tend to pay more attention to what they are saying. I have found the teachers who make an attempt to get to know all the students and have more class discussions are able to make students more comfortable, and therefore will have their attention and respect.*

*I think I learn more when I have a friendly relationship with my professors. Having a relationship with your professor is important but at the same time you have a responsibility to yourself to pass the course.*

*As a student gets to know a professor better personally, lectures begin to feel more like a conversation; the professor is speaking with you, not at you. The class becomes engaging and holds the students' attention.*

*Even a quick "Hi, how are you?" between a professor and student in the hallway has a positive effect. Outgoingness from a professor, outside of class encourages students to visit during office hours. It makes a professor seem friendly and approachable. Discussing the material after class, whether a student thinks they need to or not usually leads to a deeper understanding of the information and makes it easier to retain.*

*Feeling like a student rather than just a name or number in a classroom encourages a student to attend classes because they know their absence would be noticed. I feel that being comfortable with ones' professor makes learning more interesting and easier to learn.*

There does appear to be a positive correlation between students learning and a professional friendly relationship with a teacher. This connection appears to motivate students to attend class, learn more, and encourage students to graduate from college. I never thought just saying hello to a student outside of a classroom could be a difference maker!

If you enjoy reading the EWO News and would like to read past issues, visit:

<http://www.montgomerycollege.edu/ctl/Resources/newsletters.html>

Contact the editor, Charlotte Jacobsen, with any corrections, complaints or ideas for the next edition!

[Charlotte.jacobsen@montgomerycollege.edu](mailto:Charlotte.jacobsen@montgomerycollege.edu)

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# INTERFAITH DIALOGUE

April 12, 2011 High Tech Building Globe Hall  
Germantown Campus 11 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

## HOW DOES YOUR FAITH INFLUENCE AND IMPACT YOUR LIFE?

The Peace and Justice Studies Community of Montgomery College is hosting an Interfaith Dialogue. There will be a panel of clergy, leaders, and a panel of students who will discuss various aspects of their faith. Faith leaders will describe the identity of their faith. Students will share what they love about their faith. Both panels will tackle current event issues, social media, and outreach to the community and the world.



### Participants

Moderator-Reverend Donald L. Marbury, Adjunct Professor of Reading and English, Montgomery College, also Senior Pastor of Ebenezer AME (African Methodist Episcopal) Church of Brunswick. Jack Sallie, Ordained Minister and Montgomery College Counselor.

Dr. Hebbar, Professorial Lecturer of Eastern Religions at George Washington University, a Hindu leader. Rev. Cindy Baskin, Priest, St. James Episcopal Church.

Father Jacek Orzechowski, Roman Catholic Priest, Franciscan Friar, St. Camillus Parish.

Rabbi Jacob Blumenthal serves as Rabbi at Shaare Torah congregation.

Rabbi Gerald Serotta is the Rabbi of Congregation Shirat HaNefesh.

Haytham Younis, Interfaith Committee Chair of the Islamic Center and Co-Founder of the Jewish Islamic Dialogue Society.

Daisaku Leslie, Leader, Men's Division Soka Gakkai International - Buddhism.

Student panelists are being sought to represent various faiths. Please bring and share information about the religious items of your faith. If you would like to volunteer to represent your faith, please contact Sally McClean at [Sally.McCclean@montgomerycollege.edu](mailto:Sally.McCclean@montgomerycollege.edu).



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**6th Annual**

***Rockville Part-time Faculty  
Appreciation Reception***

**Save The  
Date**



***6th Annual***

***Rockville Part-Time Faculty  
Appreciation Reception***

***Wednesday, April 27th***

***4:30-6:00***

***Lobby, Robert E. Parilla  
Performing Arts Center***

***Contact: 240-567-5242***