

Writing in PME

4th Quarter, 2019



Faculty Spotlight

LTC Terje Bruøygaard, Norwegian Army, is a faculty advisor at Marine Corps University's Command and Staff College and LNO to the MCCDC. An Armor Officer, he has served as Infantry squad leader, Logistics officer, and Tank platoon commander in the Armored battalion/Brigade North; Assistant S-3, XO Mechanized infantry company, Tank squadron commander, and Commanding officer of Telemark battalion (Mechanized infantry battalion)/Brigade North; Spokesperson for the NOR Army CG and Army Staff; and Senior staff officer in the Royal Norwegian Ministry of Defense, Department of Security Policy and Operations. Holding degrees from the Norwegian Military Academy and Marine Corps University's Command and Staff College, his own education and publication experience make him a model warrior-scholar.

When asked about his approach to advising students, LTC Bruøygaard contends the key "is to establish trust and confidence" with an individualized, "tough love" approach. "I don't think my students ever are the first to leave the classroom or the ones who get the most slack," he says. "I try to motivate them to want to learn and like to struggle, to feel comfortable being uncomfortable and master the uncertainty."

LTC Bruøygaard is this quarter's faculty spotlight recipient because of his deep and selfless commitment to support his students' development as critical thinkers, innovative problem solvers, and ethical leaders through the written word. He provides individualized written feedback, makes time to give thoughtful academic and professional guidance, and coordinates with Leadership Communication Skills Center faculty on defining best practices and expectations for academic writing assignments.

The time compressed, accelerated nature of PME programs tends to introduce ideas rapid fire. Such constant introduction of new content can inhibit deep learning and deep thinking. Learning a lot in a little time is possible, but it does require faculty to deliberately scaffold lessons that encourage reflection, repetition, and revision. Writing can be a tool that increases those opportunities and provides faculty an informal assessment of student learning.

Near the beginning of a course, pose a big question about the course material to students. Ask students to answer the question in one page or less. Then, at the end of the course or periodically throughout the course, ask the students the same question or ask them to revise their original answer. The process of reengagement and revision fosters student reflection in a low stakes manner. It also provides the faculty member a window into student development and learning, helping answer important questions: Did a certain lesson resonate with students or lead to misconceptions? And, why?

Tip for Teaching Writing

Presented by the:

