



## Deborah Roiger

*Instructor of Biology*

*St. Cloud Technical College*

Deborah Roiger has been at the forefront of biological sciences at St. Cloud Technical College since the day she was recruited from St. Cloud State University to teach the college's university-level anatomy and physiology classes. "What teacher wouldn't jump at the opportunity to write curriculum, design a lab, and order everything new to stock it!" And so she set forth to design, develop, and create an environment in which anatomy and physiology are not just memorized, but in which students learn "how structures in the human body function in times of health and disease."

Roiger had started out wanting to be a doctor, but an undergraduate education in behavioral science took her in a different direction. She worked as a therapist at the Children's Home, and while supervising a cottage of 13 boys, learned the value of "clear expectations with specific objectives and high standards." She also learned the value of "treating others as individuals, each deserving of respect." These lessons have gone on to be essential in her career as a teacher. When she decided to teach, it was with the specific goal of teaching human biology, and once back in the natural sciences, she began to show what a dedicated teacher can do.

Learning begins the moment a student enters her highly visual lab: 10 42" by 60" system charts and photos of microscopic slides line the walls, glass door cabinets reveal models of human structures, and free-standing human models can be wheeled around the room. Human anatomy confronts a student everywhere he or she looks. Nevertheless, the time for students to utilize such a lab is limited, and so to create greater access, Roiger developed an online laboratory. In exploring new technologies and delivery methods, she never allows a course to stagnate and refuses to put her name on anything mediocre.

Recognized at her college, and active throughout the system, Roiger is also a member of the Human Anatomy and Physiology Society and the National Science Teacher's Association. She is a faculty mentor and serves on the advisory committee for dental hygiene and paramedicine programs. She also works with professionals in industry to help guide these health care programs at St. Cloud Technical College.

Roiger uses both formative and summative assessment in guiding her students' learning. Her experience at St. Cloud State University made clear that she must set the performance level at the technical college in her anatomy and physiology classes on a par with universities. She expects much from her students, but she provides the environment in which students can rise to meet

those expectations and standards. As one of her students writes, "I have had approximately 60 educators. Two were excellent, one outstanding. What separates excellent from outstanding? The ability to inspire students. Deborah Roiger is that outstanding educator."

## REVIEWER COMMENTS

**Roiger's teaching methods** are student-centered and reflect her awareness of diverse student needs. She engages students through the Socratic method and by creating authentic "real-world" situations. She wrote the curriculum for a two-semester traditional anatomy and physiology class and then expanded it to make it fully online. In conjunction with this effort, she created an online laboratory, available 24/7, that contains two digital atlases, each of which has hundreds of digital photos, charts, models, and slides; a "living textbook" with color animations; and mini-lectures and short video clips to clarify complex concepts.

**Roiger's content expertise and professional development** are evident in her extensive participation in making conference and workshop presentations. She is the recipient of five College Faculty Awards for Excellence. She has also been honored with the 2007 Instructor of the Year at St. Cloud Technical College. She is a member of the Human Anatomy and Physiology Society and the National Science Teacher's Association.

**Roiger serves her students** through her passion for her teaching profession and through a commitment to high standards. To her faculty colleagues, she serves as a mentor both in the biological sciences and in online education. She is also engaged in co-authoring a textbook for nursing and allied health career education. Her online laboratory is only one example of the kinds of access Roiger provides to her students; she ensures that they know they can call her every day and hosts pre-finals study sessions at her own home. She brings to them recurring examples of the kinds of work they will do when they enter the health professions and relates the course to that work.

**Roiger's careful assessment and commitment** to student learning and success is clear: she requires students to demonstrate knowledge and proficiency in learning activities before they are permitted to take exams. Skills proficiency is gained through repeated attempts when necessary to build students' skills, knowledge, and confidence with each attempt. In class, she uses clicker technology to assess students' understanding. Her standards at St. Cloud Technical College mirror those at the university level. She employs a range of learning styles to complement the diversity of her students and developed her own problem-solving case studies.