How well are your students learning?

Over the past couple of years, we have seen a lot of change—among other things, to the calendar, to the Integrative Studies core curriculum, and to the curricula of departmental majors and interdisciplinary programs, some new, some reimagined. As we shift from re-envisioning and revising to assessing how the new is working, we should pause and critically reflect on whether our students are learning what we most want them to learn through the curriculum and co-curriculum. Are they deeply engaged with the material of the courses? Are they actively making connections across courses and between courses and experiences related to the curriculum? Are they curious and driven to learn more? Are the experiences we have designed for the new curriculum inviting the kind of learning we value most for them? And if we don’t know the answers to these and other critical questions, how can we find out? While it would be nice to be “done” with rethinking, revising, and reimagining for a while, faculty members know that the work of effective teaching will always be a work-in-progress.

Research on learning (emerging, for example, from the extensive longitudinal NSSE study—National Survey on Student Engagement—which Otterbein participates in) suggests that students learn best when they experience a high level of academic challenge combined with appropriate support, encouragement and feedback; when they are actively and frequently involved in their learning and encouraged by our requirements and structures to apply it in multiple contexts, often collaboratively with one another; when there is significant faculty-student interaction around the content of the course or learning experiences; and when classroom learning is meaningfully tied to learning outside the classroom, for example, through high-impact practices such as internships, service-learning /community service, leadership opportunities, undergraduate research, and study away/study abroad, particularly when these approaches require students to make connections to the curriculum and to critically reflect and concretely document.

At Otterbein, many faculty members have, in fact, been experimenting with new ways to design courses and assignments for deep, significant, lasting learning. Over the past couple of years, some have been using Team-Based Learning to “flip the classroom,” requiring extensive student preparation and content coverage outside of class to allow time for meaningful high-level interaction and application activities in class (talk with Miranda Hallett or Shelley Payne or Judy Carey Nevin or other colleagues for more) some faculty are exploring what Web 2.0 technologies can offer as a way to engage students and deepen their understandings connection with course content (talk with Bruce Mandeville or John Tansey or Shannon Lakanen or Jeff Smith or Jean Kelly or Carrie Scheckelhoff or Jenny Merkowitz or countless others); some are

-Continued on page two-
working closely with the Center for Community Engagement and the Bringing Theory to Practice grant to harness community opportunities for active and engaged learning (talk with Melissa Gilbert or Sarah Fatherly to learn more about this work). And there’s much more. Our own 5 Cardinal Experiences, POGIL (process-oriented guided inquiry learning) work in the digital humanities, writing intensive approaches, ePortfolio initiatives . . . There are countless possibilities.

What are you doing to challenge students to engage deeply in their learning? How are your students responding? What else is going on at Otterbein? Let us know so we can grow a sense of what Lee Shulman has called a “Teaching Commons” —

“a conceptual space in which communities of educators committed to inquiry and innovation come together to exchange ideas about teaching and learning and use them to meet the challenges of educating students” (Hutchings and Huber, n.d.)

We at the CTL encourage you to critically reflect on your students’ learning experiences in this first year of semesters, and we invite you to contact us—or any of the colleagues mentioned above—to learn more about how you might informally assess student engagement with learning and what options you might have as you (re)design for next year.

For an excellent overview of some of the research on learning and student engagement, see Karl A. Smith (2005), “Pedagogies of Engagement: Classroom-Based Practices” http://www.ce.umn.edu/~smith/docs/Smith-Pedagogies_of_Engagement.pdf


Best wishes,

Leslie

Cont. How are your students learning?

Upcoming events:

_______________

Tuesday, April 17
(un)Common Hour
iPad Professional Learning Community
-Roush Hall
Fisher Gallery 1st Floor
4:00 pm
(refreshments and drawing)

Spring Semester Workshops-

Save the Dates...
more details soon

Thursday, May 24
ePortfolios at Otterbein
-Library 200, 8:30 am

Friday, May 25
Course Design and Enhancement
-Quest Business Center
8:30 am– 4:00 pm
(lunch included)

Wednesday, May 30

Guest speaker, Dr. Chris Anson, Univ. of North Carolina– (special request for a return visit)

AM: Writing and Engagement
PM: By Design: Enhancing the Role of Discipline-Based Writing in All Courses
-Roush Hall 114
8:30 am –4:00 pm
(lunch included)

(un)Common Hour:
Tuesday, April 17
Roush Hall 1st Fl. Fisher Gallery— 4:00 pm

CTL iPad2® Professional Learning Community presents . . .
The Uncommon Hour: We Have an App for That

Otterbein faculty, staff, and students!
Come participate in an interactive session to explore the iPad . . .
* as a catalyst and a tool for thinking in new ways
* for working, playing, and interacting
* as a way to go paperless

Refreshments will be served
Win a gift certificate for iTunes

*, Bring your own iPad, iPod, or iPhone, if you have one

iPad2® PLC members: Michele Acker, David Hagler, Jean Salky, Shannon Lezanne, Leslie Ottersahl-Arians, Carrie Schachteleff, Bradley Shearnow, Jeff Smith, Margie Vogt, Tom Wilcox, and Fatti Wilson
For some time now I have been mulling the idea of designing and teaching an all-digital textbook-free class. This idea was based on several observations. First, I believe that paper books are dead. Paper technology, as means of storing, transferring and presenting information, is being replaced by the newer and far superior digital technology. Sentimental romance aside, paper books are messy, wasteful, cumbersome and inelegant. Second, over the years I have been losing my taste for using textbooks. Textbooks are way too expensive for a student’s budget and don’t deliver much added value; the information is often watered down and dated. With the new digital technology and our unprecedented access to knowledge, teachers and students no longer have to rely on the bulky, clumsy faux-authority of textbooks.

Last year I happened to mention my vague discontent to Leslie, who then cunningly pointed out that there may be money available to support innovative pilot classes. The availability of money, as it often does, had a clarifying, motivating effect on my thinking. Later last year, when—in a move attesting to my diminishing common sense—I volunteered to teach J-term, the class I proposed: The Skills: Keys to Mental Resilience seemed ideal for piloting a textbook-free, all-digital experience.

First, I designed four teaching modules to be completed over the 15 days of instruction (classes started on a Wednesday and thus stretched over four calendar weeks). Using Blackboard’s Course Reading module, I compiled a reading list for each week, involving a combination of scholarly journal materials, source writings of various theorists, popular media depictions of the concepts, and pertinent video segments. For example, the first week’s reading on the physiology of stress included: ‘Stress, Portrait of a killer,’ a 2008 documentary on Robert Sapolsky’s work; a recent NYT piece on the work of Robert Ader, the father of psychoneuroimmunology who has just died; an article from Brain Connection, a science web site, on the pioneering work of Hans Selye; a recent CDC report on the effects of childhood stress across the lifespan; and an online test of ‘stress smarts’ taken from the APA website.

In addition to the reading list, I used the Discussion module on Blackboard to create a forum where students had to post their thoughts on a daily question I posed. They received points for each timely post (I find that online class discussions are often better than actual class discussions). In addition, I had the students keep a digital Wellness Journal, in which they were to document their experiences with various assigned exercises and reflect on class-related topics, all with the goal of facilitating the application of class materials to the students’ daily lives. Another feature of the class was allowing the students to participate in the process of test creation. Specifically, at the end of each class, I had the students work in small groups to create and submit multiple choice test questions, with the promise that if the questions were good, they will find their way onto the weekly quiz. Finally, I made heavy use of clickers in this class, both to track students’ comprehension in real time and to solicit their opinions on course-related issues.

Student evaluations of the class were very good. Additionally, my own sense is that the experiment was successful. Students, I believe, appreciated the savings, as well as the immediacy and diversity of the reading materials. Several issues remain. First, it remains to be seen how well this digital format can be applied to full length semester and/or low-level introductory classes, where the breadth of material to be covered and the level of coverage may complicate the work of creating a suitable digital reading list. Also, the use of paper in the class could be further decreased. For example, a class like this could make use of e-portfolios, letting students construct their Wellness Journals on e-portfolio, which could then be graded directly, without the need for paper printouts. In addition, I had several traditional in-class paper and pencil quizzes in this class. In the future, as all students begin to bring laptops or tablets to class, I think the use of paper for these tests can be eliminated through the use of a digital platform-- for example, Survey Gizmo – to administer and score the tests.

Overall, my sense is that the classroom of the future is bound to be paperless and that the textbook-- like the lecture-- is a dated structural element of our educational approach that needs to be re-thought. Given the choice to be early or late to this game of the future, I think Otterbein University would do well to choose (for once) the former option.
Greetings! Now that we’re past the half-way mark in the spring semester, I wanted to share some feedback from faculty members that are using ePortfolio in their classrooms. I interviewed two faculty members, **Victoria Frisch, Modern Languages** and **Carrie Scheckelhoff, Education**. Victoria is using ePortfolio in two of her ASL courses and Carrie has incorporated ePortfolio into her Early Literacy Methods in Inclusive Settings course.

Both faculty members were quite excited about their use of ePortfolio, which is evident in their answers below.

**How are you using ePortfolio in the course?**

**Victoria:** ASL students videotape themselves signing in ASL three times a semester, and post the videos to ePortfolio. Following each video midterm and the final, they post their self-critique to their own ePortfolio, and a peer review to a peer’s ePortfolio for me to read/grade.

**Carrie:** Students post daily reflections about what they are attempting, wondering, observing and learning in their field experiences in inclusive early elementary classrooms. Arlene, my supervising partner, and I read and respond to the students’ responses weekly.

**Are there any specific activities/projects/assignments that you feel have worked exceptionally well with ePortfolio? If so, what are they? Why?**

**Victoria:** The videos and critiques have both worked well as far as not taking away from class time. However, not every student was successful in getting their videos posted to ePortfolio. When I first taught here, I had 2 students meet me in the library, where I would have 2 VHS cameras and tripods on reserve. They would help me lug the equipment to class. I would spend class time videotaping each student. The time I wasted just inserting the VHS tapes and ejecting them when done, amounted to the time I took to videotape everyone! This process has freed up three class times, and viewing something posted online (versus manually inserting tapes), has sped up the grading process considerably. A good thing, since ASL is now considered a modern language here, and enrollment is higher than ever.

**Carrie:** I am systematically collecting data on how ePortfolio communications are influencing our class and student learning. At this point the effects are many. In ePortfolio reflections students are posting questions and observations that Arlene and I can respond to individually through the comment feature. Students who are often quiet in class have a place to voice concerns, questions, or showcase impressive teaching attempts that can be elevated to class discussion by the professor (with permission). The ePortfolio also allows me to see patterns across students’ thinking and address them with curricular class modules in a timely manner. ePortfolios provide a unique palette of communication tools. Students have posted pictures and audio files of classroom materials, practices, and resources that can be shared across course participants. The ePortfolios are becoming a repository of resources.

**How are you adjusting to using ePortfolio? Do you feel supported?**

**Victoria:** I feel supported. I figured out on my own, how to search for students’ ePortfolios. The CTL’s summer faculty orientation provided a model (in terms of content and presentation format) for orienting my own students. We have had few technical difficulties and these have been addressed quickly and effectively by ePortfolio staff.

-Continued on page five-
Do you feel ePortfolio has made a difference in your class? If so, how? If not, why?

Victoria: ePortfolio has made sharing information so very easy! For example, I can now ask two students (one per section) who earned a score of 100 on their paper, to post them to ePortfolio for others to read; getting a good example of "A" work. The same was done for an excellent self-critique and peer review. Since more writing and more reviewing is required later in the semester, students can see what I am looking for, how I grade, and get a peer's example (versus me lecturing them). ePortfolio, as I have already mentioned, has sped up the video midterm process, my grading of the videos, as well as the return time on my getting comments to students (they no longer have to wait for the next class for my feedback).

Carrie: The ePortfolio serves a unique role in our class, providing a vehicle for in process thinking to be communicated in real time to necessary participants. During Digication orientation I saw potential in this tool....but seeing how the utility is being constructed within this learning community by the participants is inspiring! This is repeated from above!

Would you like some additional professional development on using ePortfolio? If so, is there any particular format that appeals to you?

Victoria: A special class on helping my students with videos and ePortfolio. (But let me survey them, first!)

Carrie: At this point I would love to see how other folks are using this tool in their courses. As with all tools, the utility is not completely within the device but a function of the hand that wields it. How are others leveraging the communicative, aesthetic, storage, etc. capacities of this tool? That utility is not completely apparent by looking at the artifacts (the actual portfolios). As with my experience the exciting bit is in the story of learning surrounding tool use - I’d love to hear about my colleagues experimentations with Digication.

Sheri: I’d like to thank both Victoria and Carrie again for their thoughts and suggestions. The ePortfolio staff and the CTL welcome continuous feedback and are actively developing resources in order to continue to help meet the needs of all involved with the ePortfolio project. If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact us at eportfolio@otterbein.edu

Upcoming ePortfolio events

ePortfolio Workshop
Thursday, May 24, 2012
Library 200 – 8:30 am – 4:00 pm

Presented by Faculty colleagues and the CTL Instructional Technology Team of Tom Wilcox and Colin Saunders

Join colleagues as we introduce the basics of ePortfolios and then in the afternoon expand the uses and impacts of ePortfolios with your classes.

More details soon...
Professional Learning Communities

New Faculty PLC

Tiffany Pempek, Psychology, facilitator
Leslie Ortquist-Ahrens, CLT, facilitator
Jennifer Bennett, Biology and Earth Science
Mayra Bonet, Modern Languages
John Chovan, Nursing
Miranda Hallett, Sociology and Anthropology
Shelley Payne, Health and Sport Sciences
Deborah Solomon, History and Political Science
Ann-Catherine Sullivan, Health and Sport Sciences
David Todd, English

All faculty members in their first three years at Otterbein are strongly encouraged to apply for membership in this special professional learning opportunity that is designed to deepen and develop each participant as an educator. Learning community participants meet off campus for two hours once or twice a month throughout the academic year to discuss their teaching experiences and their observations about student learning in their courses; to explore together more about Otterbein students and effective approaches for helping them learn; and to discuss books chosen by participants and provided by the CTL; as well as to develop collegial relationships and a support network in an informal context.

Faculty members shared their reflections when asked if they would recommend participating in a PLC to their colleagues:

“Yes, absolutely. Is there a problem in your teaching practice you’re wrestling with? Chances are you are not alone. PLCs are a place where faculty can work together to explore teaching/learning issues across disciplines in a systematic, supportive, and provocative manner. Why wait, wonder, and worry, when you can engage, explore, and invigorate your teaching practice?!”

—anonymous new faculty member

“The PLC helped me get started on the right foot. I was new to Ohio and the liberal arts environment. It was a relaxed way to get to know your fellow colleagues and what it takes to succeed and grow as an educator.”

—anonymous new faculty member

“I cannot say enough positive about my experiences. I have grown personally and professionally. I also feel like I have a better sense of how to improve my teaching and where I can find resources to assist me.”

—anonymous new faculty member

Absolutely! The learning community provides an ongoing dialogue that keeps me fired up about teaching and gives me more people to share ideas with. I also like the fact that it’s an interdisciplinary sharing that occurs. We seldom talk to people in other departments about our teaching unless we have this kind of encouragement.

—anonymous new faculty member
iPad2 PLC Professional Learning Communities

In this year-long professional development opportunity, participants have gained facility in using the iPad2 in ways that can support teaching and learning. We have also considered larger questions about possible futures for learning in higher education in the digital age. We have explored the affordances and limitations of the iPad2, and we have read about and debated the degree to which we (and our students) may go about teaching and learning in qualitatively different ways because of new technologies.

The nine members and two co-facilitators of the iPad2 PLC meet late Friday afternoons to learn new ways of using the device and possible apps, to exchange ideas and experiences gained between meetings, and to imagine how the tools can reshape our work. We’ve made extensive use of a cloud dropbox feature, learned to annotate pdfs, explored extracting comments and annotations for research purposes, considered and tried out classroom applications, and downloaded and explored book readers, as well as debated the future of the book as we have known it.

To give you a small sense of how the experience “feels” so far to participants, we wanted to share reactions in their own words. Five of the nine community members responded to our last minute request to render their experience thus far (in 10 words or fewer in less than 24 hours.) Here’s what they had to say.

Response 1: “Mobile technology is changing how I work. I carry around a 4 drawer filing cabinet, a film production studio, a drafting table, and a bookcase, all in a 9 oz. 7x10 inch square.”

Response 2: “An awesome device to assist with on-site field observations”

Response 3: “My participation in the iPad PLC is valuable because I can share my joys, frustrations, and triumphs with like-minded colleagues as I try new classroom technologies. Not only am I braver about experimenting in the classroom thanks to such support, I have the opportunity to generate scholarship of teaching research in collaboration with others in the group. I also like that our discussions range from childlike wonderment at new apps to deeper consideration of the implications of the technology, something so rare today.”

Response 4: {Here is my iPad2 Haiku (note: 10 words, 5 syllables-7 syllables-5 syllables)}

Communicating Values
Assessing process
Helping to make visible
The math mind alive

Response 5: “Thought it was a toy, but actually unbelievable work tool” or “Has become an extension of my arm, can’t imagine doing scholarly research without it” or “It will be the thing that will finally clean my office—no more paper”

As you can see, the 10 word requirement—meant to be merciful—proved challenging to most. There is exuberance around the learning in this group, and we look forward to making more of our findings public to campus during spring semester. Join us Tuesday, April 17, for our (un)Common Hour, Roush Hall Fisher Gallery 4:00 pm.
Team-Based Learning in the Library?

When I posted on the TBL Listserv looking for librarians using TBL in instruction, I was surprised to receive only one response—from Trudi Jacobson at my hometown university, SUNY Albany. Trudi has been teaching information literacy classes (for credit) at SUNYA for years, and has recently started incorporating TBL methods in her classes. My interest in TBL began just last year when I attended Michael Sweet’s workshop offered by the CTL. That session inspired me to try just one part of TBL in a one-hour session with a business class. I have since been approved to teach a one-credit class during J-term, and plan on using TBL for the whole class. Trudi and I have spent a good deal of time collaborating on my course and on an article she has written about her experiences using TBL to rejuvenate her enthusiasm for instruction. We recently presented a workshop at the upcoming TBL conference (St. Petersburg, FL, March 1-3, 2012). Our presentation covered ways in which anyone, librarian, or teaching faculty, can use TBL in condensed-format courses—one-session guest lectures, J-term classes, or half-semester classes. We proposed using TBL strategies in the workshop to demonstrate how application exercises work; the content of the exercises will relate to the differences we see in using TBL for shorter classes compared to full-term classes.

Team-Based Learning LibGuide:
http://otterbein.libguides.com/content.php?
pid=154076&sid=1306247
[Created by Judy Carey Nevin, Reference Services Coordinator, Library]

Faculty Scholar Development Committee

Jeff Smith, Associate Professor, Mathematical Sciences, FSDC Chair

The Faculty Scholar Development Committee and the CTL are co-sponsoring a new initiative focusing on the scholarship of teaching & learning. Faculty involved in the scholarship of teaching and learning treat their classrooms and programs as a source of interesting questions about learning; finding ways to explore and shed light on these questions; use this evidence in designing and refining new activities, assignments, and assessments; and share what they’ve found with colleagues who can comment, critique, and build on new insights.

A group of faculty colleagues is currently participating in a discussion of The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Reconsidered: Institutional Integration and Impact written by Pat Hutchings, Mary Taylor Huber, and Anthony Ciccone, Jossey-Bass, 2011.
Our Newest Team member: Colin Saunders, Instructional Technologist

Born and raised in Toronto, Ontario, Colin moved to the U.S. in 1997 to pursue a Master’s degree in higher education. He graduated from Lehigh University where he obtained a Masters of Science in Educational Technology, focused mainly on adult learning theories and online learning.

Post graduation, Colin worked for SAP America where he worked on a team that brought a live Virtual Classroom solution to life for the entire company. The success of the Virtual Classroom model led him to become the Manger of Global Operations (live and recorded).

Post 2001, Colin moved to higher education at the iSchool at Drexel University in Philadelphia, where as an Multimedia Instructional Designer, Colin led the charge towards blended and online learning models with an emphasis on faculty development. His professional interests include UX (user experience), IA (information architecture), instructional technology, design, pedagogy, multimedia and game-based learning.

In his spare time, Colin enjoys fishing for smallmouth bass, biking and working the grill throughout the year.

CTL faculty focus:
- enhancing courses | blended learning
- ePortfolio guidance/training

Education
- The University of Western Ontario – Bachelor of Arts (English and Theatre)
- Lehigh University – Master’s of Science (Educational Technology)

Professional Affiliations
- Otterbein’s Institutional Representative for Quality Matters
- QM Certified (rubric and peer review)
- EduCause member

Spring Semester Training Opportunities

Introduction to Blackboard
Learn how to login and access, design, and turn on your course shell. You will upload content, manage your student rosters, and create assignments and discussion boards.

- Wednesday, April 11, 3pm - 5pm - Library 200
- Friday, April 13, 10am - noon - Library 201

Creating Tests and Surveys in Blackboard 9.1
Learn how to create and grade quizzes, tests, and exams using Blackboard. Survey design and deployment will also be covered.

- Wednesday, April 18, 3pm - 5pm - Library 201
- Friday, April 20, 10am - noon - Library 201

Using the Blackboard 9.1 Grade Center
Learn how to create and manage an online gradebook in Blackboard and use it to allow students to check their grades. You will also create a weighted gradebook in Excel.

- Wednesday, April 25, 3pm - 5pm - Library 201
- Friday, April 27, 10am - noon - Library 201
New Faculty Group and Individual Mentoring Program

Group mentoring provides an extended orientation and helps connect new faculty with more senior colleagues. All new full-time faculty members meet twice during fall semester and twice during the first half of spring semester with rotating panels of more senior colleagues to learn about expectations for teaching, scholarship, and service at Otterbein. Individuals then request (from the panelists) a mentor to work with during the second half of the spring semester and through interim tenure review the following year. The Center for Teaching and Learning extends thanks to all of those faculty members who have helped make this program successful.

2012 New Faculty Mentoring Program participants:

- Kay Ball, Nursing
- Mayra Bonet, Modern Languages
- Rob Braun, Health and Sport Sciences
- John Chovan, Nursing
- Jeremy Moore, Mathematical Sciences
- Joy Shoemaker, Nursing
- Beth Sorensen, Nursing
- Ann-Catherine Sullivan, Health and Sport Sciences
- David Todd, English

For additional CTL programming details please go to:

http://www.otterbein.edu/CTL

or Ozone—Faculty tab