

CAMPUS/PROJECT SUMMARIES FOR THE OPID SPRING MEETING

From Jim Robinson, UW-Parkside:

I'm sharing with you one of the efforts this year in my new role as the Teaching and Learning Center Director that was very successful in terms of participation, interest and the quality of the discussion. It was a Brown Bag session called How Does Race Enter the Classroom. The idea for the event emerged at a Center for Ethnic Studies (CES) Steering Committee meeting. They were discussing the master's thesis of a UW-Parkside alum entitled "The experience of African American male students at a predominantly white institution."

I was contacted by the CES Director, Fay Akindes, to see if the Teaching and Learning Center would like to co-sponsor a brown-bag discussion that: addresses classroom dynamics between faculty & students, specifically white faculty and students of color and faculty of color and white students. We would like to have a discussion about the assumptions both faculty and students have about race and academic performance.

This idea led to three events and additional co-sponsorship by the Office of Equity and Diversity. The first How Does Race Enter the Classroom Brown Bag during the fall 2006 semester featured a faculty panel discussion their perspective. The second Brown Bag this spring semester consisted of a student panel sharing their thoughts on the same topic. The third event features an outside speaker and is designed to reflect on and consolidate this year's discussions. It will occur on May 4.

I think key factors that led to the success were the combined effort of different constituencies, individual efforts to personally organize and invite colleagues, advertising (web, e-mail, hardcopy fliers and personal invitations for the last event), and having a topic that struck a chord with the campus. It was also different from typical brown bag events in that it was held in our best conference room, it ran 1-1/2 hours rather than the usual noon to 1 pm session (time for more in-depth discussion), there was more quantity and variety of food served (possible budget sharing across areas), and it was a thematic event offered multiple times in one academic year.

From Theresa R. Castor, UW-Parkside:

In addition to the teaching and learning work at UW-Parkside that Jim Robinson highlighted with the Teaching and Learning Center and Ethnic Studies, I want to add information regarding a project that the Committee on Teaching and Learning (CoTL) has been working on this year.

At the start of the year, the CoTL decided to focus on course evaluations given that many people on campus (both instructors and, as we later found out, students) had skeptical views regarding the usefulness of course evaluations in improving teaching and understanding student learning. The CoTL planned a series of sessions this academic year

to begin a campus discussion on course evaluations and to share ideas regarding 'new possibilities' for the design and use of course evaluations.

Our first event was a presentation in the Fall by former UW-Parkside faculty member and dean, Lana Rakow (now director of community engagement at the University of North Dakota). She shared information regarding changes her campus recently undertook to revise course evaluations. Some interesting outcomes on her campus: the campus uses multiple forms of evidence for assessing teaching that include course evaluations, peer observations, and teaching portfolios, among other forms; there are a set of standard questions on course evaluations now that explicitly have students self-assess their learning related to the campus general education learning goals.

Our second event was a brown bag last month (March) in which chairs from various departments described their course evaluations. Some (i.e., Art, Business) used forms that provided program assessment related questions; others had different forms depending on the format of the class (i.e., in Music, studio classes use different forms than lecture classes); and some had information to get at student 'contextual' information such as how much time a student was able to dedicate to a class.

The final event was a mini-conference earlier this month, for more sharing, but also for more discussion among faculty and staff. From this, we asked for conference participants to generate a list of follow-up steps for the CoTL and the Teaching and Learning Center to pursue.

If anyone else has done work on your campus related to course evaluations that addresses student learning, or if you have other suggestions to share regarding teaching assessment, please let me know so that I can share this information on my campus! Also, if you would like more information from any of the events I mentioned, please let me know.

From Linda Carpenter, UW-Eau Claire:

This has been a busy year for professional development at Eau Claire, but the program I'd like to highlight is our SoTL Writers' Community. This is an OPID-funded project that was designed to engage faculty who had participated previously in a faculty learning community and help them write their SoTL work for publication. Approximately 22 faculty were eligible by virtue of their prior participation in the NET Teaching Scholars, TIE Fellows, Learner Centered Teaching Community, or Diversity Fellows; 15 expressed interest and 14 joined the Writers' Community. We divided the group into three smaller communities and engaged the services of two English faculty to facilitate two of the three groups; I facilitated the third group (and also wrote a piece for community discussion, too). The entire group met in a full-day retreat early in the fall semester; each group then met monthly to explore publication venues, analyze writings published in those venues, and "workshop" each others' drafts. Now, close to the end of the academic year, all 14 have participated actively in the community. We will be meeting during finals week in May for an evaluative session, but it appears that all of us will finish drafts and likely will submit for publication in the near future.

From Regan Gurung, UW-Green Bay:

Here at UWGB we have seen the continual success of some long standing practices (e.g., a Teaching Scholars Program for pre- and post-tenured faculty, yearly faculty development conferences) and the less than stellar showing of some new initiatives. I will briefly touch on the successes. I hope we have time to also discuss failures (so we can get some tips on how to do better).

THE SUCCESSES

1. 2006-2007 SUPER SUCCESS STORY: Increasing Student Engagement and Freshman Seminar Pilot. In Fall 2006 we took six general education courses normally capped at between 65-120 and capped them to 25 and restricted them to Freshman. The six faculty teaching this course met once every two weeks from the middle of the Spring 2006 and through most of the summer and worked on course development. The courses were all essentially reworked to engage students. Assessment of participation in the courses showed significant changes in student engagement. This initiative dovetailed with a major campus faculty development effort geared at increasing student engagement. The instructional development council with funds from the Provost office also organized a two-session mini-conference on engagement. Faculty from around campus (each unit sent a representative and each major committee with ties to students such as general education, etc., also sent members) met in October for a half day meeting kicked off by Jillian Kinze of NSSE fame and followed by brainstorming. Each faculty member took information back to his or her unit, discussed the issues and then returned two weeks later for another half day meeting to create an action plan to increase engagement. These efforts have motivated many faculty to modify their practices.

2. Scholars: We had a cohort of 7 scholars this year each of whom embarked on some fascinating SoTL projects. This program seeded by OPID and funded by OPID for the first few years of its inception is now funded by the Provost's office. Details here: <http://www.uwgb.edu/uwgbSoTL/>

3. January Fac Dev conference: A full day (8:30 to 3:00) conference featuring both local talent and folks from across the system. Great exchanges.

From Bill Cerbin, UW-La Crosse:

An emerging success at UW-La Crosse. . .

The UW-La Crosse Teaching Portfolio Project helps instructors prepare teaching portfolios through a process in which they document and reflect on examples of good teaching practices, organize the material in a format compatible with promotion guidelines, and then peer review and revise the portfolio materials.

How the Teaching Portfolio Project got started.

In May 2005 we held a campus workshop with Peter Seldin on evaluating teaching. We started the portfolio project to turn workshop ideas into action. Two fortuitous events have helped to create interest: 1) the university promotion committee has adopted new criteria for documenting teaching effectiveness and student learning, and 2) the university has adopted an e-portfolio system in which all instructors are required to create an electronic portfolio.

Project goals:

- 1) Help instructors reflect on their teaching and document their teaching performance.
- 2) Help instructors prepare portfolios in a format consistent with promotion guidelines.
- 3) Introduce new instructors to a variety of teaching and assessment methods so that they can begin to collect information.
- 4) Create examples in multiple disciplines for other instructors to follow.

How it works.

Four faculty members are project leaders who recruit participants, conduct a portfolio workshop, lead peer review sessions, and collect finished teaching portfolios. Each participant drafts a portfolio, engages in peer review with colleagues, revises and completes a final portfolio.

Why instructors participate in the Teaching Portfolio Project. (Killing more than two birds with one stone)

- 1) The project is tailored to promotion criteria (e.g., a teaching philosophy, document teaching effectiveness, evidence of student learning).
- 2) Instructors are required to create teaching portfolios as part of a new e-portfolio system.
- 3) Instructors value the opportunity to get feedback and revise their material.

Participation.

Forty (40) instructors participated in 2005-06. A cohort of 19 instructors started in January 2007 and another cohort will begin in May 2007.

To see information about the project and examples of Final Teaching Portfolios go to the UWL Center for Advancing Teaching & Learning Blog at http://catl.typepad.com/blog/teaching_portfolio_project/index.html

Also from Bill: Lesson Study Project Update (2006-2007)

1. The Project funded 34 new lesson study teams involving about 135 instructors. The grants of \$1500 support teams to engage in a year long lesson study starting in spring 2007. See <http://www.uwlax.edu/sotl/lsp/>.
2. In January Bill Cerbin held Lesson Study Training Workshops at Stout, Whitewater, Madison, La Crosse, and Milwaukee. More than 100 instructors attended these.
3. In March OPID's Teaching Forum published a special issue on lesson study with articles by UW instructors, see <http://www.uwlax.edu/teachingforum/>

4. Conducted two audio podcast interviews with lesson study researchers Catherine Lewis and Makoto Yoshida. Posted on the Lesson Study Blog, <http://lessonstudy.blogs.com/>
5. Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching featured a case study about the Lesson Study Project on their Knowledge Media Laboratory site, http://gallery.carnegiefoundation.org/gallery_of_tl/college_lesson_study_project.html
6. The Association of American Colleges & Universities (AAC&U) featured an article about the lesson study project in their electronic newsletter, http://www.aacu.org/aacu_news/AACUNews06/september06/feature.cfm

From Jane Henderson, UW-Stout:

UW-Stout has a number of faculty development activities happening and share two highlights:

Engagement Study follow-up

During February, a randomly selected sample of UW-Stout undergraduate students received an online survey asking them to describe the experience of engagement in learning. This survey follows up on a small study from last spring involving 1:1 interviews during which students described what is happening when they are fully participating (“engaging”) in the learning process. Survey results will provide valuable information about engagement for future curriculum development and faculty development programming.

Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SOTL) Conference

“Teaching, Learning and Technology: What Does SoTL Reveal” will be hosted on May 23, 2007 at UW-Stout. Our 12 project scholars, 2 invested scholars, teaching scholar and fellow are among the Wisconsin educators convening to share active learning strategies in relation to technology. Conference information:

<http://www.uwstout.edu/tlc/2007SoTLConference.htm>

Conference brochure is attached. This event is for all SoTL participants across the state. We look forward to sharing practices and discussing our shared passion of teaching and learning.

From Molly Immendorf, UW-Extension:

I have a short update for you on Extension's SoTL activities:

- 1) Save the date - June 6th from 11-noon, we will be offering a professional development activity, "How SotL is being done in Extension." This webconference will highlight the various SoTL projects being done in Extension, including presentations from former Fellows and Scholars as well as Lesson Study team members.

- 2) Our OPID Planning Team has been working with Extension Governance groups to help faculty and staff understand the connection between SoTL and tenure/promotion.
- 3) The OPID Planning Team has been recruiting new blood - we had dwindled down to a core group and now have expanded to include three new team members.
- 4) Look for another announcement about a "Doing SoTL" professional development opportunity later this summer. This is an event that was postponed due to illness this past March. Details will be coming soon.

From Tom LoGuidice, UW-Platteville:

The Teaching Excellence Center at UW-Platteville has offered a series of Improving Instructional Effectiveness workshops for new and other interested faculty this past year. The series complements the Faculty Basics links on our website at <http://www.uwplatt.edu/tec/links.html#u> (See links and go to faculty basics.) George Smith will be present Friday in Madison to talk about his good work. We also invite faculty developers to use our website to keep up with a variety of resources. We, along with our good friends at Stout, are excellent resources for faculty development for professional studies. Have a good day and enjoy my more outgoing peer George Smith.

The University of Wisconsin-Platteville continues to be interested in working with other universities for a system wide writing workshop. We are pleased with the continuing success of our SoTL scholars. For example, just recently we gave permission to University of Manitoba to use Matt Roberts, Ph.D. (engineering) project in a handbook for use on the Manitoba campus.

From Wava Haney, UW Colleges Update:

Teaching and Learning Projects, 2006-2007

Overview

As a multi-campus, statewide institution, teaching and learning oriented faculty development in the UW Colleges largely takes place in the 17 **academic departments** (statewide, vary in size from 70 to 10 and meet face-to-face twice a year) and on the 13 **campuses**. However, interdisciplinary programs (currently three) and annual colloquium and a first-year initiative provide **institution-wide** structures that advance teaching and learning.

Many **academic departments** devote a portion of their spring meetings to a teaching-oriented workshop and/or activity. In some, this has been part of the meeting for a decade or two; in others, such workshops have been initiated recently largely around department assessment efforts and a variety of OPID funded projects. Whether

longstanding or recent, the focus varies from sharing resources and best practices to systematic study of teaching disciplinary-concepts, discussion of results and designing of the next step. Departments engaged in systematic study of teaching and learning around a particular concept/approach/activity often began these activities with OPID funding – our grant to examine the potential nexus between SoTL and assessment that involved all academic departments, a variety of OPID conference development grants (e.g., computer science, geography/geology) or discipline-based SoTL grants such as those in the biological sciences and chemistry discussed below.

Most **campuses** have a program of teaching-oriented faculty development that varies from year to year. At some campus, such as UW-Barron County, many faculty have been involved in OPID Lesson Study projects and OPID grants, and have been Wisconsin Teaching Fellows or Scholars. Several of these projects were part of the OPID Spring Conference program. The UW-Fox Valley campus has focused on issue-oriented interdisciplinary courses involving community partners (inspired by a national program and funded by a combination of national grant monies and their local campus foundation) and undergraduate research projects; many of the latter were featured at Posters in the Rotunda and the undergraduate research symposium held last week.

In addition, an institution-wide program, “**engaging students in the first year**”(ESFY), began approximately five years ago on a few campuses with a common reading capped off with an address by the author. **In 2006-2007**, it included freshman seminars on all campuses (over 100 sections total) and featured activities such as a campus theme (with discipline-specific thematic readings, theater production, art exhibits and student research projects) or a year-long focus on a common reading with associated activities. The ESFY program has its own coordinator and an annual conference.

2006-2007 OPID Grants

While more could be featured, two institution-specific OPID grants could be considered as a highlight of the current year. In 2006-2007, the Department of Biological Sciences continues its systematic study of how to increase student understanding of the nature of scientific inquiry by exploring how to move students to a deeper understanding of the cumulative and tentative nature of scientific explanations. Members of the grant team have presented at a variety of state, national and international meetings. But for the institution it would seem that the important impact is the involvement of a large department in a dialogue on teaching and learning on a critical topic, focused data collection and analysis and changes in course approaches to improved learning. Given that the members of the department come out of a wide range of specializations and are predominantly early and mid-career faculty, there are long-term implications as well.

“The Numeracy Project” led by two early career faculty in the Department of Chemistry focuses on a math-based weakness discovered by that department in its assessment program. The team has worked collaboratively with the math department to develop interdisciplinary strategies for teaching and learning numeracy in three introductory level chemistry courses. In a few weeks, they will hold a “best practices in science, math and engineering teaching conference” for members of five academic departments in the UW

Colleges. They have also presented their work nationally and are working on an NSF grant to further the project. Since math weakness is an issue at universities across the nation, this also is a project that should have important impacts on student learning in the Colleges and elsewhere. The interdisciplinary of the project has the potential to have a major long-term impact on the teaching of math concepts in the UW Colleges.

From Nan Jordahl, UW-River Falls:

The focus of the UW-River Falls Faculty Development initiatives for the current academic year have emanated from the very successful OPID Regional conference held in February, 2006. Our campus hosted Dr. Walvoord twice during the past academic year, once in August of 2006 and again in April 2007 in preparation for our campus's upcoming NCA re-accreditation evaluation and site visit. The attendance for the two sessions numbered over one hundred faculty including chairs, program directors and departmental members. Not only has this sustained endeavor better prepared our campus for the NCA process but has also played a very important role in our currently underway Strategic Planning Process. We look forward to the continuation of strong faculty development opportunities as the Strategic Plan unfolds and our campus moves forward with energy and enthusiasm.

From UW-Whitewater:

UW-Whitewater LEARN Center Summary for 2006-07

- 1) Fifteen campus wide workshops were offered, focusing primarily on the theme of effective pedagogical application of instructional technology. Two hundred seventy-three contacts with faculty and instructional staff were made at these sessions.
- 2) Five Department Chair Council Workshops were held, focusing on the development of a job description for department chairs. Collectively, these workshops drew 96 attendees.
- 3) Eight workshops were offered for first year tenure-track faculty through the First Year Program. One hundred sixty contacts were made with faculty at these events.
- 4) Four faculty and instructional staff worked with Peer Coaches during fall 2006 and spring 2007 terms.
- 5) Ten faculty from across the campus met twice monthly with Greg Valde, as part of the UW-Whitewater Teaching Scholars Program, to explore ways of more effectively addressing issues of diversity and inclusion in the classroom. The group is currently completing its first of two years, preparing to begin the SoTL phase of the program.
- 6) Five reading/discussion groups were held, with topics such as scholarly and grant writing, on-line teaching strategies, student success in college, and learning and motivation in the classroom. Collectively, fifty faculty members participated in these groups.

From Susie Sandrin, UW-Oshkosh:

This was written by one of our SoTL coordinators on campus, Dr. Marianne Johnson. Thank you Marianne! Here it is:

While UW Oshkosh has supported a large number of events related to teaching and learning and faculty development, a new and successful program is our Blender Group. This spring, the Center for Scholarly Teaching, in conjunction with the Ideas Lab at UW Oshkosh, hosted a semester-long workshop on blended and on-line learning. The Blender work group met 6 times during the semester to discuss pedagogy of on-line learning, to develop course objectives, to research new web-based learning tools, and to learn how to design SoTL Research projects based on on-line course innovations. To complement the epistemological focus of the work group, the Ideas Lab offered several “how to” tutorials for web-based learning tools, including D2L. While different members of the group had very different technological expertise, we felt the Blender group was successful because it offered faculty and academic staff the opportunity to design an on-line or blended-learning course grounded in a well-thought out pedagogy; the group went well beyond just learning technical tools to teach on-line. Participants have commented that they felt they had really been forced to think about the design of the course and what the course was to accomplish, as well as which technological tools would meet their needs. Given the demand to put more courses on-line and for more departments to participate in such ventures, we anticipate offering the Blender one a year for faculty and staff getting started with on-line learning. We hope to encourage faculty and staff involved in new blended-learning ventures to think about how to assess and evaluate learning in this format using the research approach of SoTL.

I look forward to seeing y'all tomorrow.