
TLCExchange

The Newsletter of the Teaching and Learning Center of Wake Forest University ▲ Volume 9, Number 1 ▲ Fall 2005

Letter from the Director

Fall 2005

Dear Colleagues,

As the new Director of the Teaching and Learning Center, I invite you to participate in our brownbag discussions, programs, and workshops this year and to propose others. The TLC has scheduled a diverse range of topics for the fall 2005 semester, including discussions on reconstructing the core curriculum ("Getting to the Core," led by George Graham), on "Encouraging Discussion in the Classroom" (led by Dee Oseroff-Varnell), on "Just-in-Time Teaching" (led by Fred Salsbury), and on "Including Diversity in our Courses: Suggestions on Why and How" (led by Charles Richman). Two of our programs this year deal with First Year Seminars: one is an open forum on First Year Seminars led by Angela King and the other is a special event, led by Bill Conner, that focuses on incorporating entrepreneurship in First Year Seminars and exploring the opportunities offered to Wake Forest faculty through the Ewing Marion Kauffman Center for Entrepreneurship in the Liberal Arts. There will also be discussion of problem-based learning, teaching team-based, interdisciplinary courses, and other topics.

Our door is always "open" (even though we keep it closed under orders from the fire marshal). Our hours are 8:00-4:00 Monday through Thursday and 8:00-10:00 Friday. Please come in, look around, and make the TLC your resource center. We have a revised copy of the First-Year Seminar Resource Guide as well as several books and journals on teaching methods in the Center. You may also consult the "Resources" portion

of this newsletter as well as the "Additional Resources" link on our website (<http://www.wfu.edu/organizations/tlc/>) and materials on our Blackboard site. This year, the TLC will again offer the Teaching Innovation Award. Information about this award is included in the following section of this newsletter. If you have additional questions about the Teaching Innovation Award, or if you need access to the Blackboard site, please contact Deborah Snyder, Coordinator of the Teaching and Learning Center, at snyderw@wfu.edu or at x4587. My email address is kem@wfu.edu, or please feel free to call me at x4559 or x5349. My office hours at the TLC this semester are 2:00-4:00 Mondays and Wednesdays, but I am available at other times as well. Deborah and I would welcome the opportunity to meet you and to receive your suggestions for programs you would like to see organized through the Center.

With best regards,
Judy Kem

Innovative Teaching Award

The second Teaching Innovation Award, sponsored by the Teaching and Learning Center, will be given this spring. The purpose of this award is to reward the significant faculty effort that goes into reworking traditional courses using new methods, or of finding ways to apply recent theories of learning to the practice of teaching. The award will carry a stipend of \$500.

All faculty teaching undergraduate courses in the College are invited to apply for this award by submitting a two page description of the approach used in a particular class, along with a short vita and a syllabus. Supporting materials, such as student evaluations, and "live documentation" of your approach, may also be included. This can

best be done by videotaping your class, but classroom visits or other types of presentations can be arranged. Courses taught in the 2004-5 or 2005-6 academic years are eligible for consideration. The deadline is February 1, 2006. Since you will need to document how your innovative method is used in the classroom, you may want to begin this process now. Please contact Deborah Snyder to arrange for use of the TLC's video camera, or to set up a class visit with a member of the committee.

Materials should be submitted to the Teaching and Learning Center. The award recipient will be decided by members of the TLC Advisory Committee. Since the Teaching and Learning Center depends upon the shared experience of faculty at Wake Forest, we expect that the winner of this award will be willing to share his/her innovative approach with other faculty through a program at the TLC.

Opportunities for Classroom Visits and Mentoring

If you would like to get feedback on your teaching from one of your peers, there are now several ways to do so.

▲ Peer Classroom Visits

Inspired by a suggestion from Alyssa Lonner in the Department of German and Russian, the Teaching and Learning Center will be coordinating voluntary faculty classroom visits in the upcoming semester. These are friendly visits, meant to help newer faculty members without pressure; generally the observer will be a colleague of similar rank, but from a different department. Unlike the classroom visits that your department may require as part of your yearly review, feedback will be very informal, as agreed upon by the participants.

If you would like to have a faculty member from another department visit your class, or if you would like to visit someone else's class, please send an e-mail to Deborah Snyder. (snyderdw@wfu.edu). Let her know which departments you're most interested in, and what your own teaching schedule is.

▲ Mid-Term Evaluations and Videotaping

If you prefer a more structured evaluation of a particular class, the TLC can arrange a mid-term evaluation. A faculty member visits your class during the semester and interviews students about their expectations and experiences, without the instructor present. Afterward the course instructor and colleague meet to discuss the students' responses.

The TLC can also help you videotape your classes. You may either borrow our camera to do it yourself, or have Deborah Snyder assist you in the process.

If you would like more information about either of these options, please see our web-page <http://www.wfu.edu/organizations/tlc>, and click on Evaluation Services. Contact Deborah Snyder for appointments (allow two weeks for mid-term evaluations).

Evaluating Oral Presentations

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I have spoken to many faculty about how they grade presentations and they often confess, "I can't tell you what makes an "A" presentation, I just know it when I see one." This sort of guess-what-I'm-thinking mentality is unfair to your students and stressful for you. The clearer you can be about your expectations for an oral assignment BEFORE the performance, the less stressful it will be for you and for your students. Here are some important aspects of oral presentations that you should consider when designing oral assignments to use in your classes:

1. Examine the goals of the assignment. If the goal is to relay information, be sure that you have defined what you mean by information. How much? From what era or time period? What/how many sources do you expect the student to use? Is this information that the other students need to know, and if so, what if the student presenting does a poor job of giving the information?

2. Identify the parameters of the assignment. How long should each presentation last? Will you allow the use of power point? If so, how many slides are permitted? How many points will be taken off for what penalties?

3. Decide on a grading type and scale. Are you using norm or criterion based grading? If it is criterion based, is it acceptable to you if (a) none of your students earns an "A" or (b) all of your students earn "A's"?

4. Provide students with the evaluation criteria when you assign the presentation. This way your students know what is expected of them, and you have articulated what is required for the assignment.

5. Determine a format and time frame for giving feedback. Are you allowing class time for feedback on the presentation? Are you using a numerical grading rubric or narrative comments (or a combination of both)? When will you determine grades and return evaluations?

6. Are the presentations being video taped? If at all possible, record the presentations. Your students will learn a lot from watching themselves present. It will also help you be able to fairly resolve any grading questions that may arise.

Assigning oral presentations does not have to be a nightmare for the students or the instructor. The clearer you are with your expectations and your criteria when you assign the speech, the less latitude there is for potential misunderstandings on the part of the speaker.

TLC EVENTS

Fall 2005

If you do not already receive e-mail reminders about TLC programs and would like to, please e-mail your request to snyderdw@wfu.edu.

All programs take place in the TLC (Room 330, ZSR Library) unless otherwise indicated.

GETTING TO THE CORE

Date: Thursday, September 8, 3:00 p.m.

Location: Room 204, ZSR Library

Host: George Graham (Philosophy)

CORE CURRICULUM DESIGN is not easily done. Should Wake merely abbreviate its current core curriculum or reconstruct the core in novel ways? The aim of this discussion will be to examine the case for reconstruction. It will be led by George Graham, A. C. Reid Professor of Philosophy, a faculty member with experience in collaborative multi-disciplinary curriculum design, and author of 'Getting to the Core'.

Light refreshments will be offered. Please RSVP by Monday, September 5, to snyderdw@wfu.edu or extension 4587. Drop-ins are always welcome. You will receive a copy of "Getting to the Core" (via email attachment) to review prior to the discussion.

ENCOURAGING DISCUSSION IN THE CLASSROOM

Date: Thursday, September 15, 11:00 a.m.

Location: The Teaching and Learning Center, Room 330, ZSR Library

Host: Dee Oseroff-Varnell (Communication)

ENGAGING your students in a discussion can be one of the most challenging yet rewarding aspects of teaching. It is challenging to draw students out and get them to make thoughtful contributions to the topic. It is challenging to not know what direction the discussion may take, and to be able to bring your students back on topic if they stray too far. It is challenging to get students to

talk to one another and not “through” you, asking for your permission before they speak and looking for your approval after they comment. Yet it is rewarding when, on occasion, the discussion you initiated takes on a life of its own and your students get involved and passionate about something in your discipline. How do we effectively encourage discussion in the classroom? Let’s meet for a brown bag lunch and discuss.

Please RSVP by Monday, September 12, to snyderdw@wfu.edu or extension 4587, if you would like a lunch provided by the TLC, and be sure to include your sandwich selection of chicken salad, Deacon Club, or vegetarian. Drop-ins are always welcome.

JUST-IN-TIME TEACHING

Date: Thursday, September 22, 11:00 a.m.
Location: The Teaching and Learning Center, Room 330, ZSR Library
Host: Fred Salisbury (Physics)

JUST-IN-TIME TEACHING (JiTT) is a teaching strategy used in physics education to maximize the efficacy of in-class time, and to structure the students’ out-of-class time lecture preparation. The method centers around using web-based reading quizzes, with primarily qualitative and essay questions, due shortly before class. These quizzes encourage students to engage the material prior to class, and allow the instructor to gauge the students understanding of the material. The lecture and discussion portions of the class are then modified so that areas of specific difficulties are addressed in class. Aspects of how JiTT is being implemented in Physics 114 (General Physics II) will be presented and discussed.

Please RSVP by Monday, September 19, to snyderdw@wfu.edu or extension 4587, if you would like a lunch provided by the TLC, and be sure to include your sandwich selection of chicken, beef, or vegetarian. Drop-ins are always welcome.

OPEN FORUM ON FIRST-YEAR SEMINARS

Date: Tuesday, September 27, 11:00 a.m.
Location: The Teaching and Learning Center, Room 330, ZSR Library
Host: Angela King (Chemistry)

The FYS discussions have become one of the most popular programs offered by the TLC. Join us for an opportunity to obtain advice from experienced FYS faculty, offer suggestions for improving students’ FYS experience, and express concerns about your current and future FYS classes. You do not have to be currently teaching, or scheduled to teach, a First-Year Seminar to attend!

Please RSVP by Thursday, September 22, to snyderdw@wfu.edu or extension 4587, if you would like a lunch provided by the TLC, and be sure to include your sandwich selection of chicken, beef, or vegetarian. Drop-ins are always welcome.

FIRST-YEAR SEMINARS FOCUSED ON ENTREPRENEURSHIP: OPPORTUNITIES FOR WAKE FOREST FACULTY OFFERED THROUGH THE KAUFFMAN CENTER FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN THE LIBERAL ARTS

Date: Monday, October 3, 12:00 p.m.
Location: The Teaching and Learning Center, Room 330, ZSR Library
Host: Bill Conner (Biology)

IN DECEMBER, 2003, the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation agreed to fund a five-year program to instill a culture of entrepreneurship at Wake Forest. The proposal for the program was developed by a committee largely composed of faculty from the arts, sciences and humanities. Though ordinarily associated with business pursuits, a broader definition of entrepreneurship resonates closely with the goals of liberal arts education. The approved program provides significant funding for curriculum development efforts across departments in the college, encouraging faculty and

students to think innovatively about their fields of study. This session will provide general information about how to incorporate entrepreneurship in the first-year seminar format.

Please RSVP by Wednesday, September 28, to snyderdw@wfu.edu or extension 4587, if you would like a lunch provided by the TLC, and be sure to include your sandwich selection of chicken, beef, or vegetarian. Drop-ins are always welcome.

INCLUDING DIVERSITY IN OUR COURSES: SUGGESTIONS ON WHY AND HOW

Date: Wednesday, October 26, 3:00 p.m.
Location: The Teaching and Learning Center, Room 330, ZSR Library
Host: Charles Richman (Psychology)

Humankind has been blessed with diverse peoples, yet this blessing often turns to a curse where dominant cultures oppress/exploit less empowered ones. Overcoming the ‘isms’ is a major task that requires individuals knowing they are prejudiced and that at times they discriminate based on race, sex, sexual orientation, religion, etc. How can we encourage our students to better know themselves and to recognize the positive contributions of all groups of people? This mini-exposure will generate more questions than answers.

Light refreshments will be offered. Please RSVP by Friday, October 21, to snyderdw@wfu.edu or extension 4587. Drop-ins are always welcome.

WAKE FOREST UNIVERSITY TEACHING AND LEARNING CENTER

The Teaching and Learning Center was established in 1997 with a dual purpose: meeting faculty-identified needs for teaching support and promoting dialogue about teaching. Faculty are encouraged to fill out a Faculty Information Form available from the Center designed to help us target specific needs and concerns which are then the topics for brown bag lunch discussions and workshops throughout the academic year.

The Teaching and Learning Center also offers a number of voluntary and confidential evaluation services outside the traditional departmental evaluation process. These have included mid-term evaluations, videotaping, and peer class visitations, and a faculty-mentoring program.

To learn more about the Teaching and Learning Center, and/or to discuss the programs and services the TLC offers, please contact TLC Director, Judy Kem, at Ext. 4559 (kem@wfu.edu) or TLC Coordinator, Deborah Snyder, at Ext. 4587 (snyderdw@wfu.edu). The Teaching and Learning Center is open Monday through Thursday from 8 A.M. until 4:00 P.M., and Friday until 10:00 A.M., and is located in 330 Z. Smith Reynolds Library.

The TLC faculty advisory committee is elected annually. Active committee members for the fall semester are: Sharon Andrews (Theatre), Patricia Cunningham (Education), John Duchac (Calloway), Angela King (Chemistry), Teresa Sanhueza (Romance Languages), and Peter Siavelis (Political Science).

Resources

THE TLC has many resources available to the campus community, including books and journals promoting teaching excellence. These items are available for use in the Center and/or can be checked out at the circulation desk of the Z. Smith Reynolds Library. If you need to consult or check out TLC resources when the center is closed, you may obtain a key at the circulation desk by showing your faculty ID card.

The Teaching and Learning Center also maintains a vertical file and notebooks of teaching-related articles. Subjects include, but are not limited to:

- Active learning
- Assessment
- Collaborative learning
- Critical thinking
- Generating discussion
- Interdisciplinary teaching
- Syllabus construction
- Teaching portfolios
- Testing and grading
- Writing across disciplines

We are pleased to offer several excellent articles within the "Course Documents" section of the TLC Blackboard site (<http://blackboard.wfu.edu/>) that may enhance your classroom teaching experience. Contact the Coordinator at snyderdw@wfu.edu to receive access. Information on WFU grants for faculty is also included on this site.

The Teaching and Learning Center is available for departmental and committee meetings. Please call extension 4587 or e-mail snyderdw@wfu.edu to reserve the space.

For information about other TLC services and upcoming events, see the TLC web site. In addition, information about First-Year Seminars, and FYS proposals from several faculty members, is now available. FYS materials as well as other web-based information are accessible by going to the TLC homepage and clicking on "Teaching Resources." EVENTS AT A GLANCE