

Reflections

Newsletter of the Teaching Support Centre, The University of Western Ontario

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Reflections is the newsletter of the Teaching Support Centre at The University of Western Ontario.

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Enhancing Graduate Education at Western

The *Draft Strategic Planning Task Force Report* of June 2006 places a strong emphasis on enhancing graduate education at Western. With a goal of doubling the number of PhD students and significantly increasing the Masters population, it is imperative that Western ensures that all graduate students are offered the best experience by providing adequate services and support as well as allowing opportunities for these students to prepare for the professional life that will follow graduation. The Faculty of Graduate Studies (FGS) and the Teaching Support Centre (TSC) have developed a set of programs entitled the **360° Graduate Student Development Initiative** in order to address issues and challenges faced by our graduate students. This initiative, unique among

Canadian universities, presents programming in six key areas to support the success of graduate students. These include:

1. enhanced orientation programs;
2. improved support for international graduate students;
3. increased opportunities for mentoring of graduate supervisors;
4. more intensive preparation of graduate students for employment in both the academic and non-academic arenas;
5. facilitation of teacher education; and
6. greater support for graduate student transitions.

In addition to our current offerings, a number of new programs will be developed and implemented between now and 2009. Expansion of graduate student development in these areas will significantly enhance the quality of both the graduate and undergraduate experience and, by complementing already well-respected programs of study, will give Western a substantial advantage in recruiting and retaining graduate students. The six program areas are detailed below.

ORIENTATION PROGRAMMING



Graduate Students participating in the TA Training Program.

Orientation programming helps support students as they make the transition from undergraduate to graduate studies. Currently we offer a one-day Graduate Student Conference on Teaching (TA Day) and a half-day International

Graduate Teaching Assistant Conference (International TA Day). The intention of these orientation programs is to equip the participants with knowledge and strategies that will promote a positive graduate student experience as well as the successful completion of their degrees.

The FGS will expand its Graduate Student Orientation program to include sessions in January and May for graduate students beginning their studies in those terms.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

International graduate students offer valuable cross-cultural insight and global perspectives to every discipline, contributing to the university's efforts to internationalize the curriculum and create a diverse scholarly community on campus. The TSC now offers two courses to help our international students

adjust to the Canadian classroom: Communication in the Canadian Classroom and Advanced Communication in the Canadian Classroom.

Future programming for international graduate students will include workshops on cultural transitions and culture shock as well as a Handbook of Communication in the Canadian Classroom. The current level of support will be expanded to include the spouses and families of international graduate students as well as the faculty who work with them.

GRADUATE SUPERVISION

Our initiatives on graduate supervision are designed for both faculty and graduate students with two goals in mind: 1) to increase awareness of the competencies in both teaching and research that graduate students require in order to progress through their programs and 2) to facilitate the successful transition of graduate students to professional life.

TSC Faculty Associate Betsy Skarakis-Doyle will be developing programs related to graduate supervision, including a conference for graduate students and faculty, workshops for graduate students, and best practice sharing initiatives for faculty supervisors. For more information, please read the article on Graduate Student Supervision (pg. 7).

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

To ensure that Western is effectively preparing graduate students to succeed after graduation, we are developing programs with campus partners in order to support the transition from graduate education to employment. In the last year, a number of academic and non-academic career workshops for graduate students have been offered, including Future Professor Series sessions on preparing for an academic interview, assembling a teaching dossier, and writing a CV, and an FGS workshop on non-academic careers for graduate students in the Faculty of Arts.

More workshops and resources will be created for graduate students to address career-related issues such as job search strategies, networking, identifying transferable skills, developing an effective resume, non-academic interview preparation, and job negotiation skills.

*Further opportunities for professional development will be available with the introduction of the **Western Certificate in Academic and Professional Communication** (projected for 2008). This certificate will enhance the communication skills necessary for success in research, teaching, and professional life while providing graduate students with the opportunity for practice through individual and small group coaching. Certificate components will include effective interpersonal and small group communication; presentation skills; conflict management, negotiation and networking; cross-cultural communication; and writing for grants, proposals, and research.*

TEACHER EDUCATION

The TSC currently offers a number of teaching training programs designed to enhance the teaching competence of both new and experienced graduate students by providing them with teaching experience, knowledge of the theory of university teaching as well as effective teaching strategies and training in essential classroom communication skills. These programs include the Teaching Assistant Training Program (TATP), Graduate Studies 500: Theory and Practice of University Teaching, the Teaching Assistant Mentor Program, and selected workshops in the Future Professor Series.

*The **Western Certificate in University Teaching and Learning** has been introduced this year to recognize advanced training in the theory and practice of university teaching. The newly developed certificate program will enhance the quality of teaching by graduate students and help prepare them for a future career, whether in the academy, industry, or business. For more information on the requirements of the certificate please see: www.uwo.ca/tsc/teaching_assistant_cert.html*

SUPPORTING GRADUATE STUDENT TRANSITIONS

Graduate students must successfully navigate a number of key transitions in the course of their education, including the adjustment from undergraduate to graduate studies, movement away from coursework to thesis/dissertation writing, the transition from teaching assistant to instructor, cross-cultural transitions, coping with transition-related stress and, ultimately, the shift from graduate studies to employment.

In collaboration with service providers across the campus (Student Development Services, Student Health Services), we are extending programs to support graduate students in these critical transitions.

Innovative and forward-looking, the **360° Graduate Student Development Initiative** uniquely positions The University of Western Ontario among other Canadian universities by providing a comprehensive support and developmental program for its graduate students. As these programs are introduced over the next four years, they will enhance the quality of the graduate student experience at Western as well as prepare graduate students for their post-graduate careers.

As a result of this initiative, Western will enjoy a substantial advantage in the recruitment and retention of exceptional graduate students.

More information about our current graduate student programming can be found at:

www.uwo.ca/tsc/teaching_assistant.html

Use of Essay Exam Questions: A Conversation with Allan Gedalof

MIKE ATKINSON, FACULTY ASSOCIATE, TEACHING SUPPORT CENTRE

Allan Gedalof, winner of numerous teaching awards, is a professor in the Department of Film Studies here at Western. Over the years, Allan has given numerous workshops and courses for the Teaching Support Centre and is an expert on the use of essay exam questions. We caught up with him at the Grad Club on his way to Africa.

Mike Atkinson: Why would I want to set an essay exam?

Allan Gedalof: First of all, you would have to make the decision that the content or concepts in question were appropriately tested by essay. Remember that essays are a very labour intensive means of evaluation for both you and your students. So unless this really is the best type of evaluation for the course, you shouldn't use essays. Having said this, it may well be the case that you want to use an essay because it does examine at the higher levels of Bloom's taxonomy (e.g., evaluation and synthesis), not merely at the knowledge level.

Atkinson: Couldn't you get this with a multiple-choice exam?

Gedalof: I have seen some multiple-choice tests that do examine at higher levels, but they are few and far between. In addition, a multiple-choice item simply cannot test at the highest levels of cognitive ability, e.g., detailed evaluation of the relative importance of a narrative style or film technique compared to others. While you could choose an evaluative response from a number of alternatives on a multiple-choice item, you can't provide the reasons for your own individual choice.

Atkinson: Okay, so I've decided that I need to get at some of these complex evaluations in my exams, therefore, I will use essays. How do I set an essay exam?

Gedalof: The first thing you should do is examine your course outline and

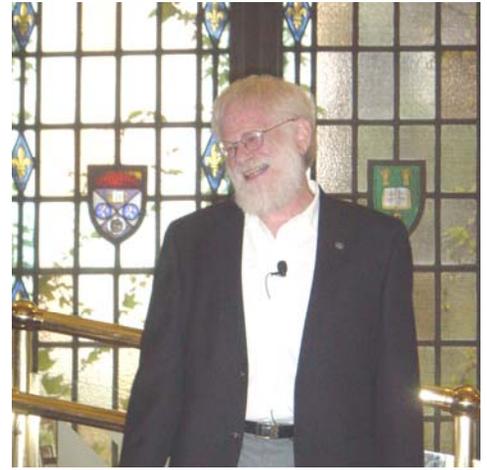
your learning objectives. This is your guide to what you hoped to achieve in the course and what you wanted the students to learn. Ideally, this should include a combination of skills and knowledge sets. The essay is well-suited to bringing these two outcomes together. The student should be able to apply the skills they have learned to a particular knowledge set or, indeed, to a new one. Both skills and knowledge would have been taught in the course.

Atkinson: Can you give some examples?

Gedalof: Let's say that I'm teaching about the films of Robert Altman. I want the students to know those films—I want them to have in their minds some detailed representation of that body of work and the characteristics that make an Altman film an Altman film. How was the film made? How does colour operate in the film? What difference does the editing style make, and so on. These are mostly issues of content. The skill comes in when you compare Altman's style to that of other directors. How does a particular editing style affect the viewer? What if the film were edited differently? Why would you as a director want to frame a shot in a particular manner? Asking a "why" question is particularly important because you must draw on theory and make a decision about this application.

Atkinson: What else does your course outline do for you at this stage?

Gedalof: It can help you decide the distribution of questions. For example, let's say you spent two weeks on technique, two weeks on theory, two weeks on Film A, and one week on Film B. Your exam should mirror these weightings. In this case, theory and technique took almost 60%



Allan Gedalof

of your class time, so one would expect that roughly 60% of the exam should deal with theory and technique. Your evaluation in a course should reflect your course outline. You should ask yourself, "Am I asking appropriate questions for this course, reflecting the appropriate coverage and at a level that tests the requisite skills?" One should not ask the same questions in a first-year course that you ask in a fourth-year seminar.

Atkinson: So how do you ask the question in a way that addresses these issues?

Gedalof: Most of the exams in my undergraduate career centered around the word, "discuss." For example, "Milton has a very distinct view of women's place in society in *Paradise Lost*. Discuss." Or, "Freud's work on the unconscious has much to say about literature. Discuss." These are not very clearly defined questions. The instructor has set no particular task for the student other than to tell me what you know about a particular topic. You must be more specific. For example, in a higher-level course I would expect much more sophistication. I might ask, "In light of Smith's recent work on Feminist theory, how would you interpret Milton's treatment of Eve in Book 9 of *Paradise Lost*?" Alternatively you might ask the student to compare Milton's representation with traditional 17th century works. Both questions involve bringing in a larger knowledge set to address a specific question.

Atkinson: How do you address the “spoon feeding” criticism of asking such specific questions?

Gedalof: While the question itself should be very clear and unambiguous, good questions always allow for more than one correct answer. There are many ways for the student to address the question and each of these should be considered as valid—even if the answer is not the one the instructor had in mind. As long as the argument is rational and cogent, all answers should be entertained. And remember when you mark the essay, do not penalize the student for not writing the answer you would have given—there should not be an ideal answer. One of the ways to test yourself here is to ask a colleague to look over your questions and offer an outline of an answer. Do the questions make sense? Can the colleague provide a take on the question that perhaps you did not think of? Good, challenging questions result in innovative answers.

Atkinson: So how many questions would you recommend using on an exam?

Gedalof: That’s a question that you need to think about. On a typical three-hour exam, I’d set one question on theory or technique, followed by two questions on specific texts. For each of the three questions, I’d allow one hour.

Atkinson: Would you give some choice in the question set?

Gedalof: Absolutely. I always give choice. In part, this allows different students to play to their different strengths, to choose their own level of challenge. For each portion of the exam, I would set two or three different questions, one of which would be a rather challenging question. Also, it keeps the exam “fresh” for me the marker. I really like to read a variety of answers, not simply different versions of the same answer.

Atkinson: What about a term paper... would you use similar guidelines?

Gedalof: I would give much broader

choice for a term paper. I set this up in one of two ways. I might give students a sheet with about 35 general ideas sketched out. None of the ideas by itself is an essay topic. The student must choose a general idea and compose the topic in two or three sentences. This would include the general line of argument they would take, specific texts to review, etc. This would be submitted to me for approval. In the second method, I provide students with 10 to 12 detailed essay topics and the student must choose one. In a full year course, I’d probably use both styles, one per term.

Atkinson: Do you have a preference?

Gedalof: Not really, but if I had to true to my pedagogical roots, I’d choose the 35 general ideas. It brings the student closer to developing the whole argument for a question on their own. I should note that I always allow the student to argue for a question or option of their own.

Atkinson: Is there an appropriate length for the paper?

Gedalof: I typically ask for 2500 words, plus or minus ten percent. I’m pretty strict about this. If a student writes more than 2750 words, I’ll draw a line across the paper and stop reading. My comments would include that their essay lacked a conclusion. You must do this in order to be fair to all students. The analogous situation is giving one student more time on an essay exam than the others. If you have 2500 words for an essay, choose them wisely—give me your best 2500 words.

Atkinson: Okay, what about grading essays? Do you have a method?

Gedalof: I’m not a fan of marking schemes, although many departments are moving to this. I prefer to use a series of descriptors for each letter grade. What defines an “A” or a “B”? What level of skills would I expect to see in a top answer? How many errors can you make, etc.? This kind of rubric

provides maximum flexibility and a more holistic type of marking.

Atkinson: Do you tend to mark all the number one questions at the same time, or do you mark an entire student’s paper before moving to the next one?

Gedalof: If I have a common “Section A” on theory for example, I’ll mark all of this section first. But when I turn to the separate text questions, I tend to read all of a particular student’s answers at the same time. This keeps me fresh and gives the students the most benefit. I can look more holistically at each student’s answers and see how they’ve developed. Did they try some of the more challenging questions? Did they choose the safer route? How has this affected their answers and its relation to the whole course?

Atkinson: Do you review questions?

Gedalof: Yes. I often find myself going through a series of papers and realizing that a particular idea was really better than I initially thought. I need to go back and make sure that I’m being consistent. Sometimes, I’ll read three or four papers before assigning any marks at all just to get a feel for the answers. I should note that I always mark in pencil. The idea is that mistakes are forgivable and can be corrected. Pencil says this better than red pen.

Atkinson: Do you always correct for grammar and spelling?

Gedalof: Yes and no. The first time a student makes a mistake, I’ll note it but typically not deduct points. I’m not really sure that anyone has ever pointed this out to the student before and they deserve the chance to learn from this mistake. But if they make it again in a second set of essays, I will deduct points—they should have learned from the first time.

Atkinson: You’ve mentioned to me before that we often spend more time on the “C” and “D” papers by correcting them, but fail to give the superior paper equal time.

Gedalof: I try to give every paper about the same amount of time, roughly 45 minutes. It used to be the case that I would give poor papers about 90 minutes while the really good papers only got 15 minutes. But I realized that I wasn't really helping the good students to get even better. So I had to control the amount of time spent on the poorer papers by only talking about three or four mechanical errors, and a few content issues. I might write less on the "A+" paper, but I've taken the time to consider how to help this student improve his or her skills.

Atkinson: What are your thoughts on having TAs mark papers?

Gedalof: I believe that we should teach TAs how to mark papers. This is part of my job and part of mentoring. I work closely with my TAs on the grading of papers. We sit down over coffee and all read a particular answer. I then ask each TA to give a mark to the essay and explain why. At the end,

I'll give my suggested mark and rationale. Then we'll go on to the next question until we're all marking within a few points of each other. This is the only way to ensure consistency across markers and with my own standards. After the TAs mark a set of essays, I will pull three or four and see how close they are to my own judgement.

Atkinson: Finally, what are your thoughts on altering a distribution of grades after you've finished marking? Should they be adjusted up or down?

Gedalof: Never. There is no perfect distribution, no perfect sample. Some years, the highest mark I give is an 83 percent; in other years, I'll have three grades of A+. You'll even see differences among sections with the same instructor, same texts, etc. It's really not fair to change the grades after the fact. It's like saying to the student, "you know that question you answered on the exam, well that's really not the question I had in mind."

TSC Welcomes New Faculty Associates

MARGARET MCNAY FACULTY OF EDUCATION

MARGARET'S professional career reflects her long-standing interests in teaching, science, and educational studies. After a period as an elementary school teacher, an occupation she loved, Margaret went on to explore other interests. These led her to doctoral studies in cell biology, a masters degree in science education, and faculty positions in education at St. Thomas University in Fredericton, at the University of Alberta, and, eventually, at the Faculty of Education here at Western where she teaches pre-service courses in science education and graduate courses in curriculum studies and teacher education. Margaret's research, and that of her graduate students, ranges over topics in all these areas, and she has twice led evaluations of the practicum program in her Faculty. Her particular responsibilities in the Teaching Support Centre will be to support groups of faculty members who are undertaking curriculum review and development.



TOM HAFFIE FACULTY OF SCIENCE

TOM has devoted his 20-year career at Western to teaching large biology classes in lecture, laboratory and tutorial settings. He led the development of the innovative core laboratory course in the Biology program, was an early adopter of computer animation in lectures and, most recently, has coordinated PRESSWestern the implementation of clicker technology across campus. He holds a UWO Pleva Award for Excellence in Teaching, a UWO Fellowship in Teaching Innovation, a Faculty of Science Award for Excellence in Outreach and a national 3M Fellowship for Excellence in Teaching. As a Faculty Associate from the Faculty of Science, Tom's primary responsibilities will be in support of new faculty, programming for first-year science students and ongoing coordination of PRESSWestern.



BETSY SKARAKIS-DOYLE FACULTY OF HEALTH SCIENCES

BETSY has joined the Teaching Support Centre as the Faculty Associate from the Faculty of Graduate Studies. She is here to lead the initiative in graduate supervision, as part of the Centre's focus on Western's graduate student experience. She brings 25 years of supervision experience with graduate students at a variety of levels and types of programs, both research and professional. Her goal this year is to raise the profile and interest in this very important activity across campus. In addition, she will be building the resources necessary to support supervision endeavors in order to enhance this experience for both faculty members and graduate students. During the year, she will be providing workshops on graduate supervision and mentorship, and importantly initiating campus-wide discussions with both faculty and students about the expectations, challenges and rewards inherent to the graduate supervision experience in order to develop Western's *best practices*.



Place-Based Computing and Learning

WILLIAM J. TURKEL, DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

In 2005, I received the UWO Fellowship in Teaching Innovation for a project to introduce place-based computing into the Western curriculum. Place-based computing allows any place to be annotated with layers of digital information like historical photographs, maps, sound files, newspaper articles, numerical data and so on. This new technology has the potential to radically change the ways that we experience places and understand the past. Because place-based computing takes students out into the place where they live, it also supports learning that is done in conjunction with community members and directed toward socially useful goals.

Place-based computing depends on the integration of three technologies: a small handheld computer like a PDA, a tablet or a cell phone, a global positioning system (GPS) receiver and geographical information system (GIS) software. As the user explores their environment, the system keeps track of where they are (to within a few metres) and presents relevant information to them. Standing in front of an old house, for example, the user might be presented with photographs of the way that the building used to look or with information or stories about the people who once lived there. It is also possible to see

one's position constantly updated on a historical map or to use the system to explore the outlines of landscape features that no longer exist, like former streetcar lines or the reaches of floodwater during the great London Flood of 1937.

With support from the Fellowship in Teaching Innovation, my colleagues and I used place-based computing in our Public History MA program in 2005-06. We were able to purchase six handheld computers and GPS receivers for 12 students, so they could use the units in pairs. Working with curators at Museum London, the MA students helped to mount a museum exhibit on the Old East, created a website and designed and led a technologically-enhanced walking tour. They gave the tour both to residents of London's Old East, and to grade 5 and 6 students who were participating in Museum London's summer museum school program. As a result of the experience, the public history students who experimented with place-based computing were both more enthusiastic about technology and better able to evaluate its pros and cons. At the conclusion of the program, they were well-positioned to enter a sector that stresses inno-

vation in public engagement, and a number of them are already putting their technical skills to good use in museums, publishing and other settings. Some of the students also did further work in summer internships to extend the technology in new directions, integrating it with online mapping (e.g., Google Maps and Google Earth) and working towards the development of place-based audio tours.

Although we used place-based computing for a historical application, the system would work as well for any course that included a field component: geography, geology, archaeology, environmental studies, epidemiology, and many others. It is

also possible to use GPS-enabled handhelds to collect spatial information, including geocoded photographs. For more information about the technology and ideas for other projects see <http://digitalhistory.uwo.ca/pbc/> or e-mail wturkel@uwo.ca.



Photo by Steve Mavers of Museum London

Fellowship in Teaching Innovation

Deadline for receipt of applications:

March 1, 2007

Application procedures for the \$10,000

Fellowship are available at:

www.uwo.ca/tsc/awards.html

The author presented his Fellowship in Teaching Innovation project at the Spring Perspectives on Teaching Conference in May 2006. A video podcast of the session can be found on the TSC Blogs at:

<http://tsc.blogs.uwo.ca>

Teaching with Technology — Fall 2006 Workshops

How to Save Time with RefWorks and RefShare

Walter Zimmerman, *Western Libraries*
Thursday, October 19, 12:00—1:30 p.m.

PowerPoint: Inserting Graphics and Video

Mike Atkinson, *Teaching Support Centre*
Friday, November 10, 12:00—1:30 p.m.

Sessions will be held in the Teaching Support Centre, Room 121, Weldon Library. Additional workshops will be offered in the winter term. To register, or for more information, go to the TSC Website at www.uwo.ca/tsc

Supervising Graduate Students: The Foundations for Best Practices

BETSY SKARAKIS-DOYLE, FACULTY ASSOCIATE, TEACHING SUPPORT CENTRE

Although graduate student supervision has been part of postgraduate education for centuries, it has primarily been something we in the academy “do” but not an activity that we reflect upon or study. As Erica McWilliams (2002) points out “The actual practices of postgraduate pedagogy have been, traditionally, somewhat mysterious and intimate phenomena ... Traditionally conducted behind closed doors ... relatively unexamined.” (p.2) With increasing interest in postgraduate education by the public and government agencies in particular, this situation is changing. Graduate student attrition rates of as high as 50% in some disciplines and the recognition that graduate supervision is a unique and multifaceted form of pedagogy have brought the supervision process out from behind office and lab doors into a position of prominence worldwide. Here at Western, the graduate supervision portion of the **360° Graduate Student Development Initiative** reflects Western’s response to this changing environment and the university’s commitment to the graduate student experience as well as to the support of faculty members during a time of expansion in graduate studies. During this year, we are working to raise the profile and importance of the supervision process campus-wide through multiple avenues including workshops, presentations such as that at Fall Perspectives, through formal and informal discussions with both faculty members and students, and finally in pieces like this for *Reflections*.

As a form of pedagogy, graduate supervision is unique. The student is being transformed from a consumer of knowledge to a creator of knowledge. As Grant (2002) observes this transition can be fraught with challenges for both the student and supervisor. In large part, this is due to the essential role that the nature of the relationship between the two parties plays. Unlike other pedagogical endeavors, in graduate research supervision, the relationship between student and supervisor is long-term and personal. The imbalance of power among the parties adds complexity as does the differences in what is at stake for each. The student’s future rests largely in the hands of the supervisor. Finally, more than in any other type of pedagogy, supervisee and supervisor personalities figure prominently in the process. Thus, good supervision requires much more than disciplinary expertise to navigate these interpersonal complexities.

In addition, supervision models vary dramatically across disciplines. In the Sciences, supervision is embedded in the research process itself and hence, students’ research is necessarily linked closely to that of the supervisor and his or her scholarly productivity. Conversely, in the Arts and Humanities, an individual apprenticeship model prevails with students’ research most often independent from that of the supervisor, and thus not related to his or her productivity. Despite these very critical differences, the literature suggests that several fundamental practices tran-

scend discipline including: regular and effective communication, well matched expectations and mutual respect. The most prevalent reason for problems in the supervisory relationship is mismatched expectations. Fortunately, this is one that can be prevented! Reflecting on your own expectations is the first step. Can you articulate what you expect of your graduate students? Exploring your students’ expectations is the next and finally, negotiating mutually acceptable expectations and revisiting as necessary culminates this preventative process. Tools for accomplishing this are available such as the Role Perception Rating Scale (Moses, 1985) or other mentoring worksheets from the University of Washington “How to Mentor Graduate Students” Faculty and Student Guides (www.grad.washington.edu/mentoring/GradStudentMentor.pdf).

During the upcoming year, the Graduate Supervision Initiative will be addressing these complex aspects of the supervisory process in order to enhance support for both students and faculty members and to articulate Western’s *best practices*. Raising the profile and importance of the initiative is our prime objective this year. At the TSC, we have already begun to compile and develop print and web resources for both students and faculty. Examples of some excellent resources for faculty members and students from across the globe are available on the TSC website (www.uwo.ca/tsc). We also have begun presentations on graduate supervision and mentorship, and workshops are planned for the spring for students in the Future Professor series and another in conjunction with Ombudsperson’s office. Importantly, a series of campus-wide discussions is underway with both faculty and students about the expectations and challenges inherent to the graduate supervision experience. In both formal and informal avenues, we will work to identify what we do well at Western, that is, our *best practices* in supervision, as well as what we could be doing better, and what we need to do to accomplish that.

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Information Literacy Update

TOM ADAM, INFORMATION LITERACY COORDINATOR, WESTERN LIBRARIES

WESTERN LIBRARIES WEBSITE

When you go to the Western Libraries Website, you'll notice some changes and enhancements have happened over the summer. Perhaps the most notable has been our move to a more natural language interface in the online catalogue; no longer will you need to translate your search into *library-ese*. None of the functionality you have come to expect has been lost. In fact you are now able to more finely tune your search with the addition of several focusing features such as an International Standard Book Number (ISBN) search or placing a search limit to electronic books or journals available to you right from the main searching page. Check out the new features at www.lib.uwo.ca.

TEACHING AND RESEARCH ASSISTANCE

As always Western Libraries' dedicated group of teaching librarians is available to work with you to embed the all-important information access, evaluation and application skills into the fabric of your course or program. There have been some personnel changes, so please visit the contacts pages (www.lib.uwo.ca/Librarians-Subjects.shtml) to determine the Subject Librarian for your particular area.

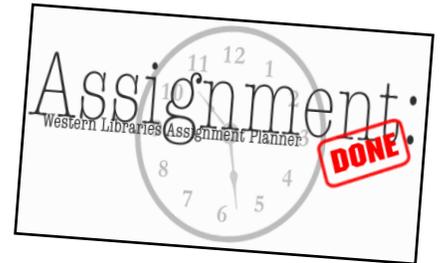
In addition to assisting you with the creation of student-centred learning opportunities specific to your assignment, or that directly relate to the particular needs of your course, these librarians are also eager to help with your research needs.

ASSIGNMENT PLANNER

Remember that Western Libraries' Assignment Planner is also avail-

able to you and your students. Your Subject Librarian can work with you to customize Planner content to the specific needs of your course or assignment.

If you have any questions about any of the many resources and services available to you through Western Libraries, please give me a shout in the Teaching Support Centre.



Degree Recognition Across Canada: Towards a National University Accreditation System?

November 10, 2006

Grand Hotel, Toronto

For information, contact:

Centre for Higher Education Research
and Development

The University of Manitoba

www.umanitoba.ca/cherd



The Teaching Support Centre has a site license allowing the Western community free access to *The Teaching Professor*, a higher education newsletter produced by Magna Publications. Edited by respected scholar and expert Dr. Maryellen Weimer of Penn State Berks Lehigh, *The Teaching Professor* is a forum for discussion of the best strategies supported by the latest research for effective teaching in the college classroom. From tips for class discussion to mentoring fellow faculty, *The Teaching Professor* stretches from the theoretical to the highly specific. Typical topics include assessment and evaluation, engagement of student interest, faculty time management, and the learner-centered classroom.

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Teaching Awards and Grants

UWO TEACHING AWARDS

The Edward G. Pleva Award for Excellence in Teaching

Up to four awards may be made annually to recognize full-time members of faculty at Western and its Affiliated University Colleges.

The Angela Armitt Award for Excellence in Teaching by Part-Time Faculty

Up to one award may be made annually to recognize a part-time faculty member at Western or its Affiliated University Colleges.

The Marilyn Robinson Award for Excellence in Teaching

Up to one award may be made annually to recognize a continuing member of full-time faculty at Western or its Affiliated University Colleges who is normally not tenured and who usually has seven years or less of university teaching experience at the time of the nomination.

Deadline for receipt of dossiers: January 15, 2007

Information and guidelines can be found at: <http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/sutaregs.pdf>

EXTERNAL TEACHING AWARDS

3M Teaching Fellowships

Deadline for nominations: November 3, 2006 (Provost's Office); November 17, 2006 (STLHE)

The 3M Teaching Fellowship Program was established in 1986 by 3M Canada and the Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (STLHE) to recognize teaching excellence and educational leadership at Canadian universities. Up to ten fellowships are awarded each year. Guidelines can be found at:

<http://www.mcmaster.ca/3Mteachingfellowships>

The Alan Blizzard Award

Deadline for applications: January 12, 2007

Sponsored by the Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education, The Alan Blizzard Award is for collaborative projects that improve student learning. Guidelines and information can be found at:

<http://www.mcmaster.ca/stlhe/awards/alan.blizzard.award.html>

OCUFA Teaching Awards

Deadline for nominations: February 23, 2007

Each year, the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations recognizes outstanding teachers and academic librarians in Ontario universities through its Teaching and Academic Librarianship Awards.

Approximately seven awards are presented. Details regarding nomination process and award eligibility can be found at: <http://www.ocufa.on.ca/awards>

UWO FUNDING INITIATIVES

Fellowship in Teaching Innovation

Application Deadline: March 1, 2007

The purpose of the Fellowship in Teaching Innovation is to encourage full-time members of faculty to pursue teaching innovations at Western. Teaching innovation projects may take many forms, such as initiatives involving the incorporation of educational technology into classroom settings or developing new directions for large group learning. Application procedures can be found at: <http://www.uwo.ca/tsc/awards.html>

International Curriculum Fund

Application Deadline: January 16, 2007 (Dean); January 30, 2007 (Research Development & Services)

Funded by the Office of the Vice-President (Research), International Curriculum Fund awards are designed to promote initiatives that support the internationalization of academic programs and/or course curricula at Western. Check <http://www.uwo.ca/research> in mid-October for changes in program guidelines.

SMART Board — What is it?

KIM HOLLAND, INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGNER, TEACHING SUPPORT CENTRE

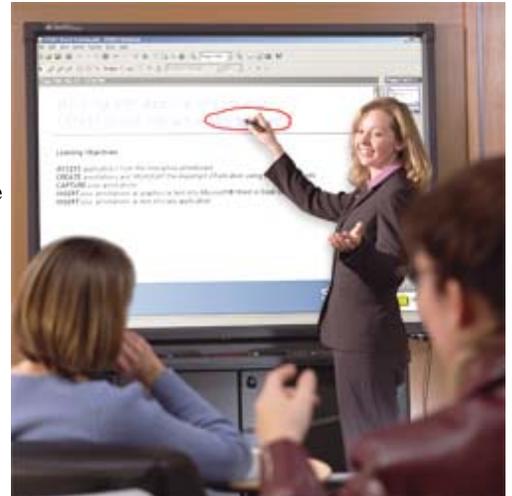
SMART Board is an interactive whiteboard or projection technology developed in Canada that allows one to interact with the projected images. The touch-sensitive display connects to your computer and projector allowing you to manipulate objects or buttons on the projected image. At the most elementary level the SMART Board is a very large touch-sensitive table; but this technology goes much further as the software provides a rich set of tools to encourage interaction. The first time you touch the screen and the image responds is one of those moments that you say to yourself—"cool, I think I could use that."

The software allows you to write in digital ink in multiple colours on the screen. If you want to erase some of what you have written, there is an eraser. The metaphor of a blackboard comes quickly to mind but with no messy chalk. Have you ever wanted to add something to that PowerPoint slide and no amount of hand waving in front of a class seems to get your point across? The SMART Board software can come to your rescue allowing you to draw on that PowerPoint slide or any software that you may use.

One of the pieces of software that comes with the interactive whiteboard is the 'Notebook.' This software has a set of drawing/painting tools that you use to draw on your digital paper. This software also enables you to insert multimedia elements such as images and 'Flash' objects into your Notebook file. One of the very pleasant features of Notebook is its ability to import and export images with many file elements such as clip art, graphic files, Flash files, sound files and hyperlinks. To begin your exploration of Notebook software, you can download the software (for FREE) from SMART Technologies (www.smarttech.com/support/software/index.asp).

Just select the software for your computer's OS (Mac, Unix/Linux or Windows) under "SMART Board Software" and follow the directions on the above link. Be sure to install the 'Essentials for Educators: Gallery Collection' for Notebook software as this gives you hundreds of clip art images and flash elements. You can use this software as a drawing tool, but to have the projection interactivity, you will need to purchase the hardware from SMART Board. If you want additional information, visit SMART Board web site at (www.smarttech.com).

If you are interested in seeing a board in action, please drop by the Teaching Support Centre in The D.B. Weldon Library, and I would be happy to show you this technology.



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The TSC Has a Vocabulary Wiki of University Terms

NADINE LE GROS, LANGUAGE & COMMUNICATION INSTRUCTOR, TEACHING SUPPORT CENTRE

When the Oxford English Dictionary was first published in 1928, it had over 400,000 entries in it. Unfortunately for Sir James Murray, the primary editor of the volume, wikis did not exist at that time ... or perhaps, considering it was his life's work, fortunately for him. Fortunately for us, wikis *do* now exist, because nobody at the Teaching Support Centre has time to spend a lifetime compiling a comprehensive list of university vocabulary. We do, however, have a good beginning at just under 200 words and hope that you will be able to help

incoming students by contributing to this growing list of terms related to academic and student life at Western.

A wiki is a Hawaiian word that means "a type of website that allows users to easily add, remove, or otherwise edit and change some available content ..." (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wiki>). The most popular wiki is WIKIPEDIA, which is a free online encyclopedia.

As wikis allow for collaborative authoring, the Teaching Support Centre would like to invite the Western com-

munity to assist in the compilation of this mini dictionary, which will be useful for all students, and especially for international students. If you would like to participate, e-mail Nadine Le Gros at nlegros2@uwo.ca for the password. You can access our wiki on the front page of the Teaching Support Centre's website under Quick Links.

We ask that all entries be relevant to the university and the student experience at Western and that they be entered in language appropriate for our diverse student population.

Getting to Know SDS' Learning Skills Staff & Services

"Learning how to learn is life's most important skill."~ Tony Buzan

We help a Wide Range of Students

SDS' Learning Skills Services help undergraduate, graduate, and professional school students to achieve academic success. We work with students wanting to maintain strong academic performance, as well as those experiencing academic difficulties. You may be surprised to know that last year Western's Learning Skills counsellors saw more than 1,800 students in individual appointments; almost 1,000 students sought help in our drop-in centre; and more than 2,200 students attended presentations.



Our staff are trained counsellors and teachers with a variety of backgrounds; all counsellors have a special interest in student learning. We help students think about how to learn and study efficiently and effectively. To achieve this we encourage students to bring course materials when they see us, as learning skills and strategies are often best demonstrated in the context of "real" content.

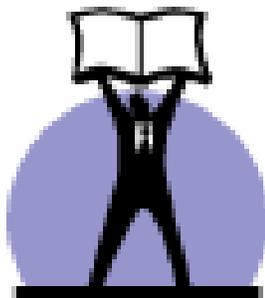
We Offer a Variety of Specialized Services to Enhance Student Success

- In-person services include drop-in help in the Learning Help Centre (room 270, UCC), confidential individual appointments (room 210, UCC), and presentations (see schedule online).
- On-line services include printable handouts of learning tips (www.sds.uwo.ca/learning), subscriptions to bi-weekly emailouts, and an e-mail address for questions (learning@sdc.uwo.ca).

Timely Referrals from Faculty are Important

We all know how quickly the academic term progresses. Faculty are often the first point of contact for students who experience difficulties with their learning; knowing about Learning Skills Services can help ensure students know about these services before it's too late. Some referrals are made by providing our contact information to students; other times, faculty call or e-mail us on behalf of a student or to inquire about how we can help. All services are confidential; we cannot provide any information about a student to faculty without the student's written permission.

How would you identify students who could benefit from a referral to Learning Skills Services? Some examples include students who:



- indicate they study hard yet achieve poor test results
- continually seek extensions for papers or assignments
- have difficulty identifying main ideas in a text, seeming to get "bogged down" by every detail
- have trouble keeping up with lectures or with course work in general
- achieve satisfactory grades but feel they are insufficient for graduate or professional school

Staying Informed is Easy!

In the fall and winter terms we send a newsletter, copies of our presentation schedule and other handouts to faculty and staff. The handouts make great posters for office doors or bulletin boards and provide a quick reference tool when referral information is needed. E-mail: learning@sdc.uwo.ca to be added to our mailing list.

Join other faculty and include a link to our site www.sds.uwo.ca/learning from your course web site.

Questions? Contact us: learning@sdc.uwo.ca or 519-661-3559.

Best wishes for a productive and successful fall term,

SDS' Learning Skills Counsellors



Coming Events in the TSC

Research Funding and Support Within Western, and the
Research Mentor Network
October 13, 2006 ~ 1:30 – 3:30 p.m.

Effective Presentation in the Classroom
October 18, 2006 ~ 9:30 – 11:30 a.m.

How to Save Time with RefWorks and RefShare
October 19, 2006 ~ 12:00 – 1:30 p.m.

Assessment: Writing Multiple-Choice Questions
October 25, 2006 ~ 9:30 – 11:30 a.m.

Developing Instructional Objectives
November 1, 2006, 9:30 – 11:30 a.m.

Getting Ready for Tenure and Promotion Under the
Collective Agreement
November 3, 2006 ~ 1:30 – 3:30 p.m.

Academic Integrity: Preventing Cheating and Plagiarism
November 8, 2006 ~ 9:30 – 11:30 a.m.

PowerPoint: Inserting Graphics and Video
November 10, 2006 ~ 12:00 – 1:30 p.m.

Science Explanations & Effective Demonstrations
November 22, 2006 ~ 9:30 – 11:30 a.m.

Effective Techniques to Facilitate Student Learning
December 6, 2006 ~ 9:30 – 11:30 a.m.

Tenure and Promotion Under the Collective Agreement,
How the Process Works
December 7, 2006 ~ 1:30—3:30 p.m.

Interactive Teaching Strategies
January 10, 2007 ~ 9:30 – 11:30 a.m.

Teaching in the Intercultural Classroom
January 31, 2007 ~ 9:30 – 11:30 a.m.

Facilitating Discussion
February 7, 2007 ~ 9:30 – 11:30 a.m.

Tenure and Promotion: Development of the
Teaching Dossier and a Teaching Philosophy
February 9, 2007 ~ 1:30 – 3:30 p.m.

Leadership: An Art of Possibility
(Video Presentation and Discussion)
February 14, 2007 ~ 9:30 – 11:30 a.m.

Assessment: Evaluating Multiple-Choice Items
March 14, 2007 ~ 9:30 – 11:30 a.m.

Alternative Methods of Assessment
March 21, 2007 ~ 9:30 – 11:30 a.m.

The Proper Care and Feeding of Graduate Students
and Teaching Assistants: The Role of the Faculty
March 2007 (Date TBA)

Best Practices in Graduate Supervision
April 4, 2007 ~ 9:30 – 11:30 a.m.

Career Management: The Development of an
Academic Career Perspective
and
Teaching Awards for Full and Part-time Faculty
April 13, 2007 ~ 12:00 – 2:00 p.m.

Sessions will be held in the Teaching Support Centre, Room 122, The D.B. Weldon Library

To register, or for more information, contact the Teaching Support Centre,
ext. 84622, e-mail: tsc@uwo.ca; website: www.uwo.ca/tsc