

Reflections

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

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Navigating Supervision Across Cultures

BY NANDA DIMITROV, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, TEACHING SUPPORT CENTRE

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http://www.universityaffairs.ca/_careers/developing/faculty.php

Nanda Dimitrov received her Ph.D. in intercultural communication at the University of Minnesota. Her research explores cultural adaptation and cross-cultural marriage; as an intercultural trainer she has facilitated the cross-cultural transitions of students from over fifty countries and helped faculty prepare for teaching in a culturally diverse classroom.

The supervision of graduate students is a challenging exercise in effective interpersonal communication even when the faculty member and student share the same cultural background. Differing expectations about workload, progress and a considerable power gap often create the perfect conditions for misunderstanding in this curiously symbiotic relationship. Throw a few cultural differences in communication styles and ways of resolving disagreement into the mix, and we certainly face a communication conundrum. The challenges, however, can be overcome and cross-cultural supervisory relationships can be productive and rewarding, if both the faculty member and the student learn about each other's assumptions, expectations and communication strategies.

The most frequently occurring challenges in supervising graduate students across cultures revolve around five themes:

1. Assumptions about the nature of research and knowledge production
2. Cultural differences in power and status
3. Differing needs for saving face
4. Cultural differences in communication styles
5. Expectations about rule following

Let's examine each of these in turn.

Assumptions about the nature of research and knowledge production

Many of the assumptions of conducting research in North American academic settings are unspoken and not necessarily shared by scholars from overseas. Nick Knight, a professor of Asian studies at Griffith University in Australia, has shown through his research that the expectation to be original in one's research and be able to critique others' work is contrary to prevailing norms in some cultures in South and East Asia. These cultures emphasize maintaining harmony in the community, which creates expectations for scholars to reiterate widely accepted truths rather than challenge existing knowledge.

As a result, graduate students from Confucian educational cultures arrive at Canadian universities without any experience in designing original research or pointing out the shortcomings of the existing literature. In an article on supervising students from Confucian educational cultures, Douglas C. Smith, Graduate Centre coordinator and professor emeritus at West Virginia University, explains that in these cultures "the role of reading was to (re)discover what the sage was saying, while the role of writing was to reveal the truth held in the text for a larger audience, rather than to argue with it." When asked to critique a particular account of history, a student cited in the study responded: "How can I challenge history? History happened."

Similarly, students from East and South Asia may not realize that they are expected to take initiative in designing their own research paths and frequently wait for their supervisor to assign the question they will

Continued on page 2

research. Studies on the adaptation of international doctoral students find, however, that most students are able to and willing to adapt to the expectation to take initiative in research once this expectation is made explicit for them.

Power and status

The power imbalance between a supervisor and an international student in their home country is often much greater than between Canadian faculty and Canadian students. Dutch scholar Geert Hofstede's research on cultural differences in workplace values, conducted using data collected by IBM in over 70 countries, suggests that in the high power-distance cultures of Africa, South America or East Asia, where the difference between the social status of the student and the professor is much greater than in Canada, deference to authority prevents students from openly disagreeing with the professor. In these cultures, it is considered disrespectful for students to say "no" to a request from the supervisor, even if the request is unrealistic (overtime work, deadlines they cannot meet.) One strategy to avoid student compliance with unrealistic deadlines is to ask open ended rather than yes/no questions. "When do you think you could complete the next chapter?" is much more likely to elicit a realistic answer than "So, can you finish the chapter by next week?"

Heightened need for saving face

Complicating the supervisor's ability to address the challenges posed by higher power-distance is students' heightened need for saving face. Japanese or Korean graduate students have a much higher need to save face than Canadians, and are extremely careful to also save face for others, so they may go to great lengths to avoid situations that may cause their supervisor to lose face. For example, they may not ask clarification questions during meetings because doing so may indicate that the professor did not explain the issues thoroughly. They would rather try to figure out the answer on their own or ask a third party for help before asking for clarification from the supervisor. A Chinese faculty member working with Russian students at a Canadian university would face the opposite challenge, as in this case his need for saving face would be frequently challenged by students' direct questions.

Communication styles: directness and indirectness

In a number of Asian and Eastern European cultures the responsibility to understand the intended meaning of a verbal message rests on the listener as opposed to the speaker (whereas the opposite is more common in Northern Europe and North America). Graduate students from these cultures may be quite indirect, because they depend on previous knowledge about the situation when speaking and assume that the listener shares all of this knowledge with them, and is therefore able to figure out part of what they want to convey.

For example, a Japanese student may speak to a faculty member about applying for jobs and hint at, but never

actually say, that she actually came to ask for a letter of recommendation. She assumes that if the faculty member is able to write one, he or she will offer to do so, and by not asking directly she does not put the professor in the uncomfortable position of having to say no. Canadian and Northern European faculty find indirectness frustrating, because in their cultures speakers are expected to spell out exactly what they mean. When faced with this situation, one of the strategies supervisors have found useful is to offer support in general terms but ask the student for clarification. Asking "So how could I support you in the job application process?" would meet the needs of the student for indirectness and the needs of the supervisor for clarity.

Rule following

Completing a graduate degree involves deciphering a myriad of rules and regulations. The prevailing assumption in Canadian culture is that rules are reasonable and should be followed. By contrast, students from post-communist societies and countries with totalitarian regimes will rarely take program regulations at face value. They are more likely to challenge rules because they came from an environment where unreasonable rules controlled every aspect of life and they could only survive by breaking the rules at least some of the time. These students are likely to regard rules as guidelines to be followed when necessary, but ignored when possible.

Similarly, in Middle Eastern cultures the rules are often negotiable, and exceptions to rules are frequently made based on consideration of individual cases. So declaring that "the class is full" basically opens the door for students to negotiate getting into the class, because in their culture "no" is rarely absolute and there is often room for bargaining.

Supporting the transition of international graduate students to Canadian academia

In addition to learning about the culture of their discipline, international students are learning about appropriate ways of communicating in Canadian culture in general. Being able to communicate in ways that are appropriate in the academic/professional context is a crucial factor in their success, and faculty supervisors play a very important role in supporting their learning.

In their role as mentors, supervisors can clarify expectations, explain the norms of the discipline and give feedback on students' behaviour during everyday interaction. Many international students wish that more colleagues around them would help them understand Canadian cultural norms and expectations. "I used to interrupt people all the time. In my culture it is a sign of being interested. I kept making the same mistake, because people were too polite to correct me," explained an engineering student from Egypt. At the same time, it is also important to acknowledge students' prior educational and professional experience by encouraging them to share

the different approaches to scholarship and communication they bring with them from their home cultures.

Learning a new culture takes time. Graduate students born and raised in Canada take at least six months to adapt to the context of a new graduate program. Research on cross-cultural adaptation suggests that given the multiple challenges faced by international graduate students, their transition may take up to two years.

Professional development programs that include components on cross-cultural communication competence and that clarify Canadian academic norms speed up the process of culture learning significantly. The University of Western Ontario, for example, offers a non-credit course on Communication in the Canadian Classroom, and is creating a guide for faculty who supervise across cultures. Similar courses are offered for teaching assistants at Queen's University, as well as at a number of American universities, including Cornell University and the University of Minnesota.

Faculty will find useful advice on the TSC webpage at <http://www.uwo.ca/tsc/gradsupervision.html>, and on the website of the University of Canberra's Centre for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning at <http://tinyurl.com/4wtvqv>.

References:

Eland, A. J. (2001). *Intersection of academics and culture: The academic experience of international graduate students*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Minnesota.

Ryan, Y., & Zuber-Skerritt, O. (1999). *Supervising postgraduates from non-English speaking backgrounds*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Watkins, D. A., & Biggs, J. B. (2001). *Teaching the Chinese Learner: Psychological and Pedagogical Perspectives*. Hong Kong: Comparative Education Research Centre.

Coming
Soon!

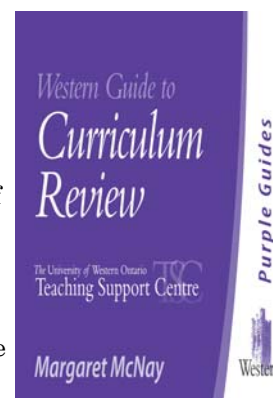
NEW TSC PURPLE GUIDE

Curriculum Review

by Margaret McNay, PhD
Associate Dean, Faculty of Education

The need to review a curriculum may arise for any of a number of reasons and may involve an extended, in-depth examination of an entire program or a more limited, focused examination of a single aspect of a program or even a single course.

Curriculum Review offers ideas about how to get started on the review process—questions to ask at the beginning of and during the process, suggestions about information to be gathered and how, issues to think about as you decide what to include in the curriculum, and ideas about how to teach the curriculum involving new and alternative pedagogies. Curriculum is not a simple matter; this guide is written to reflect some of the complexities of curriculum and, I hope, to be thought-provoking and challenging. I hope, as well of course, that it provides just enough of a step-by-step guideline to be helpful with just about any curriculum review project.



This third publication of the TSC Purple Guide series will be available soon. For information on the Purple Guide series and/or to obtain copies of *Mentorship in Academia* and *Graduate Supervision* (in pdf format), visit the TSC website at: <http://www.uwo.ca/tsc/purpleguides.html>

The University of Western Ontario
Teaching Support Centre

Co-sponsored with Faculty Development,
Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry



Multiple-choice tests are the most widely used form of objective assessment in college and university settings, but using them effectively is not always a simple matter. Because writing structurally sound, high-quality items requires some expertise, we will begin by considering guidelines that can make the task much easier. In addition, we will consider how to write multiple-choice items that assess students' higher-level thinking rather than their ability to remember facts. This session is designed to provide instructors with practical tips that they can start using immediately in their everyday teaching.

David DiBattista received his doctorate from the University of Waterloo and is now a Professor of Psychology at Brock University in St. Catharines, Ontario. After many years of doing research on eating and drinking behavior, he now focuses his efforts on issues relating to teaching and learning. David has been invited to make presentations on multiple-choice testing at numerous colleges and universities across Canada. He has won several teaching awards, and in the spring of 2007, he was named a 3M National Teaching Fellow.

Designing Effective Multiple-Choice Questions

Friday, November 28, 2008

10:30 a.m.—12:30 p.m. ~ Room 85, University College

Dr. David DiBattista, Brock University ~ Register at: <http://www.uwo.ca/tsc>

Information Literacy Update

BY TOM ADAM, INFORMATION LITERACY LIBRARIAN, WESTERN LIBRARIES



New Western Libraries Website

After consultation with our various user communities and about 18 months of development, Western Libraries' new website launched on August 18th, in time for the fall term. A new tabbed architecture reduces the number of clicks necessary to retrieve important information about our collections, services and resources. Of particular interest to teaching faculty is the new Teaching tab which brings Information Literacy sources both at Western and around the world together with specific information about how Western Libraries can partner with you in the classroom. Included are links to the Association of College and Research Libraries' rich collection of Information Literacy materials as well as to the recent Ontario Council of Academic Vice-Presidents' guidelines for university degree level expectations. Point your students to the new Browse by Program area which provides information and direct access to the most important resources for each program area, selected by Western Libraries' subject specialists. Program pages also include course specific tools created to assist students in locating and using resources necessary for individual assignments or courses. Talk to your Instruction Librarian who would be happy to work with you to create topical resources for your students.

Teaching and Research Assistance

Western Libraries' dedicated group of Instruction Librarians is available to partner with you to create effective learning environments which enhance the best student experience at Western. Information Literacy skills are foundational to academic success as well as to setting a solid foundation for lifelong learning. Western's librarians are eager to work with you to embed these all-important information access, evaluation and application skills into the fabric of your assignment or course or program. Over the summer there have been changes in areas of responsibility and several new librarians have joined Western Libraries, so please visit the contacts section under the new Teaching tab, (<http://www.lib.uwo.ca/contact/instruction>) to determine the Instruction 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.

The Impact of Cultural Differences on Graduate Student-Faculty Relationships

BY NANDA DIMITROV, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, TEACHING SUPPORT CENTRE

Visiting speaker Lionel Laroche, Ph.D., P.Eng. gave a thought-provoking presentation about the impact of cultural differences on graduate student-faculty advisor relationships during the first session of our Graduate Education Workshop Series on September 26th. He talked about differences in giving feedback across cultures and explained that students from Western Europe, the Middle East or Australia may not realize that slightly negative feedback on a paper sandwiched between two positive comments calls for them to fix whatever was negative, because in their home cultures negative feedback is usually given much more directly. (As in "The paper is interesting, but that needs to improve, overall you did fine"). As the "feedback sandwich pattern" does not exist in their native languages, they often assume that two positives outweigh the one negative comment and do not pay much attention to the key component of the feedback in the middle. Dr. Laroche also discussed how differences in the social status of Ph.D.s may influence the ways in which international students communicate with staff at the university. In addition, he explained the impact of risk tolerance on multicultural teams and emphasized the importance of developing soft skills in addition to technical skills for the career success of international graduate students. Dr. Laroche's two books contain many of the examples cited in his presentation and are available in the Teaching Support Centre Library:

Laroche, L., & Rutherford (2007). *Recruiting, Retaining and Promoting Culturally Different Employees*
Boston: Butterworth - Heinemann. (Call number: TSCSTK HF 5549 .5 .M5 L375 2007)

Laroche, L. (2003). *Managing Cultural Diversity in the Technical Professions*
Boston: Butterworth - Heinemann. (Call number: TSCSTK HF 5549 .5 .M5 L37 2003)

TSC Welcomes New Faculty Associates

ALLEN PEARSON, FACULTY OF EDUCATION

Allen has joined the Teaching Support Centre as a Faculty Associate. In his time at the TSC he will be working in the area of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL). SoTL is an area of scholarship that has grown rapidly in the last decade. It was initiated by an influential report by Ernest Boyer, then President of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. In this report, Boyer argued that teaching is as much a scholarly activity of the professoriate as is research. And like research, the results of scholarly activity in teaching should be made publicly available to the community of scholars. Allen's goal in this position is to "raise the profile" of scholarly activities in teaching at Western. There are many exciting and innovative teaching practices at Western that should receive greater prominence both here and in the academic community in general. Allen will work, along with other members of the Teaching Support Centre, in particular Dr. Ken Meadows, to help faculty members engage in scholarly work on their teaching and to bring the results of that work to presentation and/or publication. He will continue his own work in SoTL, and with Joyce Garnett, the University Librarian, and colleagues across Canada, will serve on the editorial board of the *Canadian Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, a new publication of the Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education. Allen came to Western in 1995 to serve as the Dean of Education. After a 12-year tenure in that position and a year's leave, he is very excited about working on the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning with faculty members across campus.



MADELINE LENNON, FACULTY OF ARTS & HUMANITIES



Madeline has joined the Teaching Support Centre as the Coordinator of the Faculty Mentor Program. Throughout her career, she has worked to have teaching excellence valued at Western. Recipient of Western's Pleva Award for Excellence in Teaching, the national 3M Fellowship for Excellence in Teaching, and the London YMCA/YWCA Distinguished Woman of the Year award for her work as a mentor of young women, she also served for a decade as a Peer Consultant for members of faculty. Recently retired from the Department of Visual Arts, she notes the increasing responsibilities and demands that challenge both new and experienced colleagues in their lives on and off campus. This year she hopes to increase awareness across the university of the need for positive mentoring of new faculty. In addition to coordinating a series of roundtable sessions on topics of relevance and concern to new faculty, she also plans special initiatives including a program of Mutual Mentoring in Faculties.



The ITRC has moved to the new Support Services Building. Come and see us in our new location Room 4320!

<http://www.itrc.uwo.ca>



The Classroom Management Group

519 661-2111 ext.82222

cmg@uwo.ca

<http://www.ipb.uwo.ca/cmg>

For assistance with audio visual technologies in General University classrooms including: ceiling projectors; video switchers; DVD and VCR players; classroom computers, peripherals and software; overhead transparency projectors and bulbs; wireless microphones; remote controls and batteries.

CMG has moved to the new Support Services Building, Room 1301

Supporting Success: The Research on Teaching Grants Program

BY KEN N. MEADOWS, EDUCATIONAL RESEARCHER, TEACHING AND LEARNING SERVICES

Last year, the Teaching Support Centre introduced a number of initiatives to support Research on Teaching (RT) at Western. We were very pleased with how these initiatives were embraced by members of the Western community. This positive reaction has inspired us to expand our RT initiatives in the upcoming year. Providing leadership on these new initiatives is Dr. Allen Pearson who has joined the TSC team as the Faculty Associate in the area of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (see page 5 to learn more about Allen's new role). These new RT initiatives will be unveiled on the TSC web site as the year unfolds.

One of the most successful RT initiatives from last year was the Research on Teaching Small Grants Program. The RT Small Grants Program is designed to provide grants of up to \$2500 to support faculty members, librarians, and archivists who are interested in performing research on a teaching technique, a teaching technology, or some other aspect of their teaching or their students' learning. We were very pleased to be able to provide a second year of grants this year. As with last year's applications, we received excellent proposals from a variety of disciplines which addressed a range of teaching and learning innovations. We are delighted to announce the recipients of the 2008 RT Grants:

Kevin Fung (Otolaryngology): Introduction of a novel teaching paradigm for head and neck anatomy. Dr. Fung and his colleagues are evaluating the efficacy of a newly developed teaching paradigm for head and neck anatomy which is multidisciplinary (i.e., including basic science and clinical faculty) and multi-modal (involving computer, classroom, text, small-group, and lab-based learning modules). Dr. Fung's co-investigators on the project are Drs. Tim Wilson, Peter Haase, and Marjorie Johnson (Anatomy and Cell Biology).

Carol E. Jones (Physics and Astronomy): Exams as a learning experience: Evaluating the Immediate Feedback Assessment Technique for Physics education. Dr. Jones and her colleagues, Drs. Margaret Campbell-Brown, and Jeff Hutter, are investigating the possible impact of a multiple-choice examination format (i.e., the Immediate Feedback Assessment Technique) on student learning.

Barbara Sinclair (Arthur Labatt Family School of Nursing): Simulated clinical practice: A new approach to clinical education. Barbara Sinclair and her colleagues are comparing the learning efficacy of first-year nursing students participating in a clinical placement in a long-term care facility with working in a simulated hospital environment with standardized patients. Professor Sinclair's co-investigators on the project are David Reid, Mary Bawden, Nancy Platt, Chris Sanders and Michele Hancock.

Marg Sloan (Western Libraries): Informed instruction: Graduate students' information seeking behaviours. Marg Sloan and Kim McPhee are examining graduate students' information seeking behaviours to develop more targeted instruction that addresses the challenges these students face when doing research.

Kim Solga (English): Exploring student responses to collaborative models in an undergraduate drama classroom. Dr. Solga and her colleagues are investigating the potential impact of performance-based course work and a team-teaching instructional model on students' attitudes towards collaborative learning in a Canadian Drama course. Dr. Solga's co-investigators on the project are Dr. Jennifer Boman (Psychology, King's University College), Elan Paulson (Ph.D. student in English), and Allison Hargreaves (Ph.D. student in English).

Tim Wilson (Anatomy and Cell Biology): Virtual anatomy lab in student hands: Is it the same as the gross lab? Dr. Wilson and Robin Hopkins (Masters student) are comparing student learning of the anatomy of chewing across three teaching modalities: a typical observational lab experience using head dissections of the relevant anatomy, a digitally created stereoscopic model which allows students to interact with and manipulate the anatomical images, and a hybrid lab which includes both the dissections and digital stereoscopic images.

Congratulations to all of this year's grant recipients. Their commitment to excellence in teaching, learning, and research is commendable.

The staff at the TSC looks forward to continuing to support this year's grant recipients as well as other faculty members, librarians, and archivists interested in research on teaching through our various programs and services. We are also very excited to be able to offer new programs to support not only RT at Western but hopefully spread the word about RT and get even more people involved. Please keep an eye on the TSC web site <http://www.uwo.ca/tsc> for more information.

Learning Development Projects in Science

BY TOM HAFFIE, FACULTY ASSOCIATE, TEACHING SUPPORT CENTRE AND LEARNING DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR, FACULTY OF SCIENCE

The recent expansion of my position to a 60% secondment has allowed me to broaden my general activities in providing a liaison between the TSC and the Faculty of Science in addition to overseeing several initiatives as summarized below:

- The New Faculty Network is an ongoing program of community-building social events and workshops supporting faculty in their early years in Science. Over the summer, an NSERC Success Workshop and the annual Dean's Meet and Eat event at Aroma Cooking Studio kicked off programming for this term that will include workshops about Academic Rhythm and Rules, Graduate Supervision, Research Funding Sources, Using WebCT Effectively, etc.
- The First Year BioLiteracy Project is one component of a province-wide, Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario (HEQCO)-funded initiative to study the effect of various interventions on student engagement. The local intervention, a Writing-to-Learn tutorial curriculum for 2000 first year Biology students, is being launched as I write. This project uses a series of short writing exercises to enrich biological literacy through deepening understanding of course concepts and connections, fostering critical thinking, developing information literacy skills as well as providing constructive feedback on fundamental communication skills. Effects of this intervention will be monitored through in-class student surveys, on-line student skills assessments, faculty surveys and the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE).
- In its Academic Plan, the Faculty of Science declares an intention to be recognized as a "learning-intensive" Faculty. Under joint facilitation by me, Natasha Patrino (TSC), Fred Wu and Melanie Tinney (both from the Science Student Council), the Faculty will be undertaking a widely collaborative Appreciative Inquiry to: i) better understand the local characteristics of learning intensity; ii) discover where learning is already intensive; and iii) develop concrete projects to extend these strengths. This Inquiry will begin with the assembly of a core group of student, faculty, staff, alumni and emeriti representatives who will design and conduct peer interviews. Interview data will then be distilled down into Provocative Propositions that specify the future we would like to see. A town hall style meeting will then invite the community at large to generate ideas and momentum for programs that will promote learning intensity in the Faculty.
- The PRESSWestern project continues to support new and not-so-new users of clicker technology across campus in such areas as biology, physics, astronomy, economics, nursing, and engineering.

Teaching with Technology Workshop Series 2008-09

Using WebCT OWL to Connect With Your Students

Presenter: Jeff Longland, ITS

Monday, October 20, 2008, 12:30 – 2:00 p.m.

Wimba Collaborative Tools

Presenter: Jane Winkler, ITS

Tuesday, November 11, 2008, 12:30 – 2:00 p.m.

The ITRC: An instructional resource for instructors

Presenters: Merran Neville and ITRC students, ITS

Thursday, November 27, 2008, 12:30 – 2:00 p.m.

Virtual Education: Teaching and Learning in Second Life

Presenters: Mike Atkinson, Psychology and Kim Hoffman, ITS

Friday, January 16, 2009, 12:30 – 2:00 p.m.

Instructional tales from the CRIPT (Corps for Research of Instructional and Perceptual Technologies)

Presenter: Tim Wilson, Anatomy & Cell Biology

Wednesday, February 4, 2009, 12:30 – 2:00 p.m.

Using Wikis in the Classroom

Presenters: Wendy Pearson, Film Studies and Paul Lukasewych, ITS

Tuesday, February 24, 2009, 12:30 – 2:00 p.m.

What would a history class be doing with microcontrollers, analog sensors, and desktop fabrication?

Presenter: Bill Turkel, History

Friday, March 6, 2009, 12:30 – 2:00 p.m.

For registration and program details, see 'Calendar' under *Upcoming Events for Faculty* on the TSC web site: <http://www.uwo.ca/tsc>

Greening the Classroom ... it's a Start

BY MIKE ATKINSON, FACULTY ASSOCIATE, TEACHING SUPPORT CENTRE & ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, PSYCHOLOGY

Whether you believe that global warming is one of the most serious challenges we face in the 21st century or that it is wildly exaggerated, the fact remains that dumping endless tons of CO₂ into the atmosphere is not good. Sure there are natural processes that absorb some of the greenhouse gasses, but the net increase to our atmosphere is on the order of 4 billion metric tons per year (U.S. Department of Energy, 2008). The biggest culprit is CO₂ emissions related to the burning of fossil fuels. Over the next 20 years, world CO₂ emissions are expected to increase at the rate of almost 2 percent per year. The impact of this buildup on the Earth's climate is potentially catastrophic, and most climate scientists warn that the average temperature of the planet will continue to increase (we are currently one degree Celsius short of the highest planet temperature in the last million years).

We must try to do something before it is too late. Individually, we should all recycle, use less energy in our homes, and reduce the amount of fossil fuels we burn. But what can we do in the classroom? It is difficult to centrally control the physical infrastructure of any classroom—turning down the heat or AC, shutting down the fans, etc. affects more than just one classroom and may affect an entire block of buildings. In addition, the startup of equipment may actually consume more energy than we save by turning it down. So, we need to examine other options.

First of all, we should implement the same strategies in the classroom that we can use at home. There are recycling bins in most classrooms—use them and encourage your students to recycle as well. If the bins are full, ask to have them emptied. If there are no bins in your classroom, find out where they are.

Consider replacing any disposable containers you use with reusable ones. Turn off any unnecessary lights, particularly those that are less energy efficient. To the extent you can, go paperless. Post all announcements, assignments, etc. on your course website. You can post your course syllabus online as well—it is not required to actually give students a print copy. Note: students should use these electronic documents and not print them off themselves.

But all of this will not make much of an impact on the carbon footprint of my first-year psychology class (800 people in North Campus Building 101). I estimate that this class consumes about 93,600 kwh per school year (based on ballpark figures from Physical Plant). This is the energy required to run the lights, fans, equipment, etc., and translates into dumping approximately 215,280 pounds (107.6 tons) of CO₂ into the atmosphere. The single largest factor I can identify that is under my control is diet. By switching to a vegetarian or vegan diet, the average person can offset up to 1.5 tons of CO₂ per year—more offset savings than switching to a hybrid car (Eshel & Martin, 2006). The offset works primarily by reducing transportation and processing costs associated with meat production (not to mention those flatulent methane-producing cows). I do not consider myself a vegetarian, but if I eat vegetarian on Tuesdays and Thursdays (class days), this will create a savings of approximately 16.44 pounds of CO₂ per week—427.44 pounds over the school year for me alone. If I can persuade 100 students in the class to join me in this pledge, we save 42,744 pounds. If 400 join, we save 170,976 pounds. We break even with a little over 500 students. Thus, by this method alone, we can run the class on a zero carbon footprint.

I realize that the idea of “offsetting” only works through a trickle-down effect—it will take time for this initiative to have any impact at all. In addition, my numbers are ballpark estimates at best. Maybe it takes 800 or 1200 students to break even. I also realize that there are consequences to such action (e.g., if many people did this, the price of beef would soar), and we need to consider such outcomes. But the potential consequences of doing nothing are far more serious. Even if, in the end, all we save is a few hundred pounds, well at least we've done that. It's a start.

References:

Greenhouse gasses, climate change, and energy. U.S. department of Energy, brochure # DOE/EIA-X012, May, 2008.

Eshel, G., & Martin, J.J. (2006). Diet, energy, and global warming. *Earth Interactions*, 10, 1-17.

P.S. If you want to join us in discussing issues related to greening the classroom, please join our Facebook site: The Official Psychology 1000 Facebook Group.

DID YOU KNOW?

A recent enhancement to the Western Libraries Shared Library Catalogue allows you to limit your search to materials housed in the TSC Library.

Simply select “Teaching Support Centre” from the drop down “Limit by Library or Collection” menu before you execute your search.

So Just What is Wimba?

BY KIM HOLLAND, INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGNER, TEACHING SUPPORT CENTRE



You may have heard the name “Wimba” being mentioned in the halls recently. Just what is Wimba? Why would I want to use it? Why is it important to me?

The Wimba Collaboration Suite offers a rich array of collaborative tools that works seamlessly within WebCT to allow faculty to retain the highly personal and interactive nature of traditional classroom instruction and apply it within WebCT's learning environment. The Wimba tools are Wimba Classroom, Wimba Voice and Wimba Create - providing online video, voice, chat, application sharing and white boarding. It is commonly observed and the research suggests that when students are engaged with course material, fewer students drop out, and student learning improves. Wimba tools are designed to increase student engagement.

For example, if you were teaching an online class and wanted students to interact with you and their fellow students just as in a ‘normal’ face-to-face class, then Wimba can do this for you and your students. These collaborative tools are not just confined to the classroom. If you wanted to present a paper at two conferences on the same day in two separate cities, Wimba could help do that as well. If you wanted to collaborate with a colleague in another city to work on a paper, Wimba could do this as well.

These are only some of the possibilities, as I wanted to ‘whet your appetite’ to this most promising technology. If you would like to explore further these sets of collaborative tools, please contact Jane Winkler jwinkler@uwo.ca in ITS or plan to attend the TSC workshop on “Wimba Collaborative Tools” on Tuesday, November 11, 2008, 12:30—2:00 p.m.

Teaching Awards and Grants

WESTERN TEACHING AWARDS

Edward G. Pleva Award for Excellence in Teaching
Angela Armitt Award for Excellence in Teaching by Part-Time Faculty
Marilyn Robinson Award for Excellence in Teaching
 Deadline for receipt of dossiers: **December 15, 2008**
 Information and guidelines can be found at:
<http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/senate/sutaregs.pdf>

USC Award of Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching
 Deadline for nominations: **November 3, 2008**
 Details at: http://www.usc.uwo.ca/teaching_awards

EXTERNAL TEACHING AWARDS

3M Teaching Fellowships
 Deadline for nominations:
October 31, 2008 (internal); November 14, 2008 (external)
 Details at: <http://www.mcmaster.ca/3Mteachingfellowships>

OCUFA Teaching Awards
 Deadline for nominations: **mid-February, 2009**
 Details at: <http://www.ocufa.on.ca>

WESTERN FUNDING INITIATIVES

Fellowship in Teaching Innovation
 Application Deadline: **March 2, 2009**
 Details at: <http://www.uwo.ca/tsc/awards.html>

International Curriculum Fund
 Application Deadline: **January 30, 2009 (RD&S)**
 Details at: <http://www.uwo.ca/research>

Research on Teaching Learning Community (RTLCL)

Friday, November 14, 2008
1:30 p.m.—3:00 p.m.
Room 121, Weldon Library

Are you currently conducting research on your teaching or your students' learning or are you just generally interested in research on teaching? If so, the Research on Teaching Learning Community (RTLCL) is for you. The RTLCL meets each term and provides an opportunity for members to discuss issues related to research on teaching including the successes and challenges they face with their own research on teaching projects.

The next RTLCL meeting will be on Friday, November 14, 2008, 1:30 p.m.—3:00 p.m.

If you would like to be added to the RTLCL mailing list, please contact Dr. Ken Meadows, at kmeadow2@uwo.ca.

New course offering at the Teaching Support Centre

Instructional Skills Workshop for Faculty

TEACHING TO LEARN

- **Intensive three-day teaching workshop December 5, 8, 9, 2008**
- **Open to all Western faculty**
- **Designed for both new and experienced faculty**
- **Required to attend the full three days (9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. each day)**
- **Limited enrollment**

Recall a learning experience that was particularly powerful for you. What facilitated that learning? Was it what someone did? Was it something you did? Was it something about the time or place? The Instructional Skills Workshop (ISW) offers you the opportunity to explore, in very practical and hands-on ways, the conditions that give rise to powerful learning experiences among your students.

The ISW is offered within a small group setting and is designed to enhance the teaching effectiveness of both new and experienced instructors. These sessions provide new instructors with an introduction to designing and facilitating effective learning activities. The ISW also serves as a laboratory for experienced instructors who wish to refine and expand their teaching practice, to explore new ideas or to revisit the fundamentals.

During the three-day workshop (December, 5, 8, 9, 2008) participants design and deliver three "mini-lessons" and receive verbal, written and video feedback from their peers. Using an experiential approach, participants are provided with information on the theory and practice of teaching adult learners, the selection and writing of useful learning objectives with accompanying lesson plans, techniques for eliciting learner participation, and suggestions for evaluating learning. Participation in ISW creates an opportunity for new faculty to learn about Western's unique learning culture and can also be a renewing and revitalizing activity for more seasoned members. Added benefits are a sense of collegiality, team building and self-discovery.

Core features of an ISW:

- A small group of peers (five or six participants)
- One or two facilitators
- 24 hours in class (three eight-hour days)
- A respectful, supportive, and confidential learning environment
- Each participant delivers three 10-minute mini-lessons
- Peers, as learners, provide feedback on what helped them learn

ISW offers participants the opportunity to:

- Work closely with peers to improve each other's teaching
- Practice a variety of instructional strategies and techniques
- Increase awareness of participatory learning concepts
- Connect with colleagues from a range of disciplines
- Experience the diversity of a contemporary classroom and consider the variable needs of learners
- Recognize the importance of establishing a positive learning environment
- Increase knowledge of self as teacher

How to Enroll?

Go to <http://www.uwo.ca/tsc> and register online. A \$50.00 deposit is required to complete your registration. (The deposit will be returned to all those who complete the three days of the workshop).

More Information:

For more information about the ISW, please contact Natasha Patrito at: npatrit@uwo.ca or call ext. 84651.

Graduate Education Series

This series of workshops and informal discussion groups is designed for any faculty member involved in graduate supervision who may be in a position to mediate a conflict situation with students. It would be particularly useful for graduate chairs. The series begins with a workshop to introduce strategies and skills for handling difficult conversations. Two monthly informal lunchtime discussions follow for faculty interested in further exploring strategies for conflict resolution. It is not necessary to attend every session in the series; however, attending the workshop is recommended prior to participating in the lunchtime discussions.

Having Difficult Conversations with Graduate Students December 17, 2008 10:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Presenters: Betsy Skarakis-Doyle, Ph.D. Faculty Associate, TSC and Adrienne Clarke, University Ombudsperson

The relationship between supervisor and graduate student can be one of the most rewarding aspects of a faculty member's academic career. However, as with any type of relationship, problems inevitably arise that can be uncomfortable and difficult to address. This session is designed to provide faculty with problem-solving strategies for approaching difficult conversations with their graduate students and to resolve conflict at the earliest stages. Through the use of case examples small groups practice the application of conflict resolution techniques.

Informal Discussions on Graduate Supervision I January 28, 2009, 12:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Betsy Skarakis-Doyle, Ph.D. Faculty Associate, TSC

Are you interested in ways to approach the conflicts that arise in the course of supervising a graduate student? Join colleagues for an informal discussion prompted by video clips of typical problems that arise and ways to resolve them.

Informal Discussions on Graduate Supervision II February 27, 2009, 12:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Betsy Skarakis-Doyle, Ph.D. Faculty Associate, TSC

Are you interested in ways to approach the conflicts that arise in the course of supervising a graduate student? Join colleagues for an informal discussion prompted by video clips of typical problems that arise and ways to resolve them. This discussion will build on the previous month's by exploring different problems and their potential resolutions.

Having Difficult Conversations with Graduate Students March 27, 2009. 10:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Presenters: Betsy Skarakis-Doyle, Ph.D. Faculty Associate, TSC, Adrienne Clarke, University Ombudsperson

This is a second presentation of the topic for those who could not attend the December 17, 2008 workshop.

To register, see *Upcoming Events for Faculty* at:

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

SOTL ACADEMY 2009: TAKING A CLOSER LOOK

**Eastern Michigan University,
Ypsilanti, MI**

May 18-19, 2009

**Call for Proposals Due Date:
December 1, 2008**

The SOTL Academy 2009 invites proposals for presentations of work in the area of the scholarship of teaching and learning. This conference seeks to bring together all members of the academy engaging in the scholarship of teaching and learning (SOTL).

Applications are encouraged from experts and novices in this field at all career stages. This national conference will provide a forum for presenting new SOTL work, for sharing reflections on SOTL and its role within the academy, and for networking with others engaged in this enterprise.

For more information or to submit a proposal, please go to:

<http://www.emich.edu/sotlacademy>



FREE ACCESS to *The Teaching Professor*

The Teaching Support Centre has a group online subscription allowing the Western community free access to *The Teaching Professor*, a higher education newsletter produced by Magna Publications.

You can access this publication from a campus computer by going to the TSC website at: <http://www.uwo.ca/tsc>.

To access this publication from your home computer, you will need to subscribe at <http://www.magnapubs.com/licenses/subscribe.html>. (Contact the Teaching Support Centre at tsc@uwo.ca for the Voucher Code and PIN number).

Here is a small sampling of articles from recent issues:

- Successful Classroom Management
- How Blended Learning Works
- What Do Students Think about Active Learning
- Introduction Ideas to Foster Participation
- Student Engagement: Trade-offs and Payoffs
- Large Classes: Approaches Taken in One Discipline
- More Discussion, Less Lecture
- Making Cell Phones in Class a Community Builder

The Teaching Professor—Annual Index can be found at:
<http://www.magnapubs.com/images/TP07index.pdf>

Mark Your Calendar!

For program details and registration, see 'Calendar' under *Upcoming Events for Faculty* at:
<http://www.uwo.ca/tsc>

Flipping Problem Solving on its Head — Problem sets that enhance learning and motivation among science, math, & engineering students

Thursday, October 16, 2008, 9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

The Development of Graduate Students & Teaching Assistants: The Faculty's Role

Friday, October 17, 2008, 1:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Effective Presentation in the Classroom

Wednesday, October 22, 2008, 1:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Keeping Academia from Taking Control of Your Life: Strategies for Successful Juggling

Thursday, October 30, 2008, 1:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Effective Learning Outcomes

Tuesday, November 4, 2008, 10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Managing Cultural Diversity in the Classroom

Wednesday, November 12, 2008, 2:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Academic Integrity: Preventing Cheating and Plagiarism

Tuesday, November 18, 2008, 10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Getting Ready for Tenure and Promotion Under the Collective Agreement

Friday, November 21, 2008, 1:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Designing Effective Multiple-Choice Questions

(co-sponsored with Faculty Development, Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry)

Friday, November 28, 2008, 10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Tenure and Promotion Under the Collective Agreement, How the Process Works

Thursday, December 4, 2008, 1:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Instructional Skills Workshop (intensive three-day teaching workshop)

December 5, 8, 9, 2008, 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. each day

How to Write Effective Essay and Short Answer Questions

Wednesday, December 10, 2008, 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

How to Motivate Students

Wednesday, January 14, 2009, 10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Interactive Teaching Strategies

Monday, January 19, 2009, 1:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

The Real Question Is ... Inquiry-Based Learning in the Sciences and Engineering

Thursday, February 5, 2009, 1:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Development of a Teaching Dossier and a Teaching Philosophy

Friday, February 6, 2009, 1:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Understanding Student Learning Styles

Tuesday, February 10, 2009, 10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Innovation in Graduate Teaching

Tuesday, March 3, 2009, 1:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Other Ways to Assess Student Performance

Friday, March 13, 2009, 10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

SESSIONS WILL BE HELD IN THE TEACHING SUPPORT CENTRE, ROOM 122, WELDON LIBRARY