Reflections

Authentic assessment: Evaluating "real-life" applications of knowledge in higher education

WENDY A. CROCKER, E-LEARNING AND CURRICULUM SPECIALIST, TEACHING SUPPORT CENTRE

In recent years, faculty members and researchers in higher education have given considerable thought toward assessment reforms and changes to current assessment practices (Reid & Fitzgerald, 2011). An important trend in this "re-thinking" of how knowledge and learning are evaluated is the use of authentic assessment tasks. By definition, authentic assessment asks students to "demonstrate understanding by performing a more complex task that is usually representative of more meaningful application" (Meuller, *nd*). Authentic assessment has been described as, "an assessment requiring students to use the same competencies, or combination of knowledge, skills, and attitudes that they need to apply in the criterion situation in professional life" (Gulikers, Bastiaens, & Kirschner, 2004, p.69).

Traditional assessment techniques can also be effective, so the adoption of authentic assessment tools does not require that tests, quizzes, and exams be abandoned. Instead, careful thought must be given to the "why" behind a certain type of assessment. It is the *form* of the assessment not the content that is being questioned. As an example: can a student be evaluated on how well she can swim by answering a short answer quiz? Certainly! But is that form of assessment the best method by which to ascertain the student's ability to swim? In this instance, an "authentic assessment" that would require the student to swim lengths of different strokes, enter and exit the water safely, and show how she would restrict her energy use in the water if she tires would be a better choice. By selecting this *authentic assessment* of her skills as a swimmer, the teacher has a sense not only that the student can swim, but also how well, and what skills still need to be developed. Short answer and multiple choice tests as examples of traditional assessments cannot offer that same depth of evaluation of her swimming skills and ability.

What is Authentic Assessment?

Basic elements of authentic assessment include but are not limited to:
- Alignment between stated learning outcomes, classroom instruction, and assessment;
- Demonstration of higher order thinking (e.g., as described in Bloom's

In this Issue:

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Taxonomy);
* Allowance for multiple interpretations;
* The use of student work that has been collected over time;
* Clear criteria that have been shared with the students, or often created with the students;
* Encouragement of students to develop their own response as opposed to selecting from a list of possibly correct answers.

Why Use Authentic Assessment?

With the advent of outcomes-based learning in higher education, students are expected to know and demonstrate specific skills, knowledge, and values or attitudes as a result of successfully completing a single class, a course, or an entire program or degree. The regurgitation of content knowledge is not sufficient to gauge student understanding of complex skills and ideas. In creating a scenario, or context, where students must "show what they know", they are being called upon to demonstrate higher levels of skills (evaluate, apply, synthesize, design) as opposed to the lower levels that require students to know, describe, or understand. Unlike traditional tests or quizzes, authentic assessment affords groups of students opportunities to demonstrate their understanding of a topic, often within a context that is "real-world". Further, the students can create their own method of demonstrating the necessary knowledge and skills. An authentic approach to assessment highlights the constructive nature of learning and education.

The top ten features of authentic assessment tasks adapted from Jon

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An Introduction to

Authentic Assessment

November 12, 2013
1:30 - 3:00 p.m.

Click here for details and registration.

Meuller's *Authentic Assessment Toolbox (nd)* are represented by the following list:

1. **Have real-world relevance:** Activities match as nearly as possible the real-world tasks of professionals in practice rather than decontextualized or classroom-based tasks.

2. **Are loosely defined, requiring students to define the tasks and sub-tasks needed to complete the activity:** Problems inherent in the activities are ill-defined and open to multiple interpretations rather than easily solved by the application of existing algorithms. Learners must identify their own unique tasks and sub-tasks in order to complete the major task.

3. **Comprise complex tasks to be investigated by students over a sustained period of time:** Activities are completed in days, weeks, and months rather than minutes or hours. They require significant investment of time and intellectual resources.

4. **Provide the opportunity for students to examine the task from different perspectives, using a variety of resources:** The task affords learners the opportunity to examine the problem from a variety of theoretical and practical perspectives, rather than allowing a single perspective that learners must imitate to be successful. The use of a variety of resources rather than a limited number of preselected references requires students to detect relevant from irrelevant information.

5. **Provide the opportunity to collaborate:** Collaboration is integral to the task, both within the course and the real world, rather than achievable by the individual learner.

6. **Offer the opportunity to reflect:** Activities need to enable learners to make choices and reflect on their learning both individually and socially.

7. **Can be integrated and applied across different subject areas and lead beyond domain-specific outcomes:** Activities encourage interdisciplinary

perspectives and enable students to play diverse roles thus building robust expertise rather than knowledge limited to a single well-defined field or domain.

8. **Are seamlessly integrated into major tasks:** Assessment of activities is seamlessly integrated with the major task in a manner that reflects real-world assessment, rather than separate artificial assessment removed from the nature of the task.

9. **Enable the creation of polished products valuable in their own right rather than as preparation for something else:** Activities culminate in the creation of a whole product rather than an exercise or sub-step in preparation for something else.

10. **Provide for competing solutions and diversity of outcomes:** Activities allow a range and diversity of outcomes open to multiple solutions of an original nature, rather than a single correct response obtained by the application of rules and procedures.

Creating an Authentic Assessment Task

The first step to create a rich authentic assessment task is to review the student outcomes for the course. What is it that was stated that successful candidates would know and be able to do? These demonstrations of knowledge form the basis of the task. Next, consider the best method for observing those demonstrated skills. Is it through a portfolio? A simulation or a case? A poster or a presentation? Next, list the criteria that you would consider appropriate to see as an active demonstration of what the student should know and be able to do. Finally

construct a way to assess the quality of that demonstration. In some cases, it is a numeric scale from one to five accompanied by a descriptor such as limited, satisfactory, good, very good, and excellent. In other situations, it may only be a three point scale: unsatisfactory, satisfactory, and good. As the instructor, you determine the criteria and the descriptors of the demonstrations. The key to success in authentic assessment is clarity in expressing the criteria and the related performance at each level, and then sharing the assessment tool with the students *before* they begin the task so that they are well aware of your expectations.

Examples of authentic assessment tasks in the disciplines...

- In Engineering Science 1050 Introductory Engineering Design and Innovation Studio, Emphasizes the creativity, teamwork, communication and engineering skills necessary to practice in any engineering discipline. The 2009/2010 Design Concept was to design a "green" (environmentally friendly) technology, suitable for use as a classroom illustration, museum or science centre exhibit or any other type of display;

- The Ivey Business 2257 Feasibility Study Competition cultivates the entrepreneurial spirit and promotes the creation of new ventures through utilizing classroom learning to create a business plan. The Business 2257 course offers students the extraordinary opportunity to forge business development skills through applying academic knowledge to real-life experience. Several of the projects have evolved into real businesses including College Pro Painters, Eco-Shred, and Creative Copy Centre now a division of Canon.

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Welcome New E-Learning and Curriculum Specialists

YASMIEN

WENDY

The Teaching Support Centre is pleased to welcome two E-Learning and Curriculum Specialists, Yasmien Mills and Wendy Crocker. These new positions will support Western's e-learning initiative as outlined in the recent **E-Learning Task Force Report to the Provost** (May 2013). In their new role, they will focus on 1) promoting innovation in technologically enhanced learning and in both blended and online courses, 2) supporting departments and faculties in curriculum design and renewal by assisting with the development of new online or degree programs, and 3) assisting departments with periodic curriculum review and renewal, as well as helping design approaches to assess the impact of curriculum change.

Yasmien Mills has taught at Western (Continuing Studies), Brescia University College, Fanshawe College, Guelph University, and College of the North Atlantic: Doha, Qatar. She has previously worked at Western in the Faculty of Education as Educational Technology Specialist, and at Continuing Studies as Online Course Coordinator. Yasmien brings many years of experience with instructional design and welcomes your questions. E-mail: **ymills@uwo.ca**.

Wendy Crocker is an award-winning educator who completed her doctorate in Education this past summer. With 30 years in education as a teacher, program consultant, and school administrator, Wendy has experience creating learning outcomes, mapping programs, developing assessments, and teaching blended curriculum. E-mail: **wcrocker@uwo.ca**.

Yasmien and Wendy are available to provide consultation to departmental teams and individual faculty members with integrating the new technologies into courses or programs.

Watch for new e-learning workshops coming soon... check the Events Calendar on the TSC website at: **www.uwo.ca/tsc**

Online *Whiteboards*

BY TOM HAFFIE, DEPARTMENT OF BIOLOGY

At the 2013 Western Conference on Science Education this past July, we had a problem. We were planning a Round Table Panel Discussion on *Promise and Peril in Online Education*. We intended to seat over 100 people at tables of eight in the Great Hall so they could discuss provocative questions posed by each of four panelists in turn. The problem was: "How would we provide the opportunity for 15 groups to each have a turn to report out on the products of their discussion of each question?" Our solution was "We won't." Instead, we will invite all groups to report out simultaneously, in real time, as their discussions develop.

The technology that made this possible (and fun) was a collaborative online whiteboard. At the event, we ensured that one member of each group had a WiFi-enabled device (preferably laptop for ease of typing) and had them sign into an online white board from Twiddla.com. This provided the proverbial "blank slate" where groups could capture the insights, questions, summaries etc. that bubbled up during their discussions. The whiteboard was projected at the front of the room so that everyone could see the emerging patterns of ideas. Ideas from one group were expanded or countered by another. The ever-changing whiteboard gave panelists a simultaneous peek into the workings of all the various groups, enabling them to encourage, re-direct or challenge the participants in real time. As each session came to a close, the final whiteboard product served as a framework for summarization by the panelist (who could choose to highlight, or otherwise mark up various points).

This Conference session was rather messy and emergent in ways that relied heavily on cooperative participants and skillful facilitation of a large group. Although this may not be the format of your first

use of such technology in a classroom environment, an online collaborative whiteboard provides many opportunities for productive educational interaction in synchronous, asynchronous, face-to-face and online environments.

While the whiteboard can be a simple static canvas for developing and broadcasting a traditional lesson in digital form, ideally, instructors would also exploit the potential to promote a wide variety of interaction with, and among, students.

i) Student groups could collect, report out and critique products of their creativity on short-term tasks or long-term, cumulative, projects.

ii) Students could be challenged to post and defend images that illustrate an assigned point. Choices could then be evaluated in class-wide discussion.

iii) Instructors could post an image, or musical score, or text passage and challenge the class to mark it up: Put a red dot on the part you don't understand. Erase the section(s) that do not apply.

Draw the next image in the series. Move these images into the correct sequence.

iv) One group could initiate a solution to a problem and then pass their work along to be extended by the next group, and so on.

v) Several groups could respond to a challenge simultaneously, followed by a class-wide discussion of the merits of various approaches.

vi) Groups can create collaborative study notes or tutor one another.

In short, collaborative whiteboards support a wide variety of interaction among many participants, provide insight into the process of learning in real time and capture the results of a given session. There are several online collaborative whiteboards available, each with its own features and quirks. We used Twiddla.com because it is free to educators, has no software to download, and is simple to join and learn as a collaborator. Other comparable products include Google Drive, GroupBoard.com, scribblar.com, Vyew.com, skrbl.com, and webwhiteboard.com.
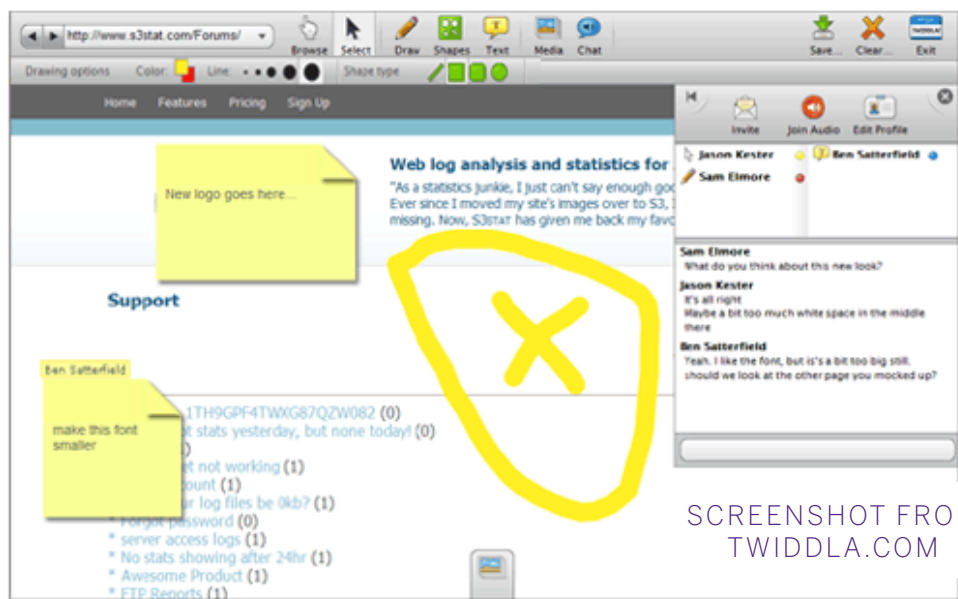
SCREENSHOT FROM
TWIDDLA.COM

TOP 10 OWL TIPS

BY KIM HOLLAND, INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGNER, TEACHING SUPPORT CENTRE

Whether you teach face-to-face or entirely online, OWL provides a set of technology tools to assist in your teaching. In addition, you as the instructor decide which tool to use and, to some degree, how it will be used. This flexibility is both a blessing and a curse. To illustrate some of this teaching flexibility, the following OWL tips were compiled from the August 27, 2013 Fall Perspectives on Teaching Conference, OWL panel session, by Deanna Grogan (Information Technology Services), Diane Mahar (Faculty of Health Sciences), Sarah McLean (Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry), Bethany White (Faculty of Science), and Kim Holland (Teaching Support Centre).

1) Whenever you explore a new place, it is useful to **have a map**! The same applies to your OWL course. Tell your students, perhaps in a 'Getting Started' lesson, where to find the course content, activities, course expectations, contact information, etc.

2) **Use your home page**. Don't leave it blank! The home page is the most important page because students see it first. Use it to introduce yourself and the course. Remember, you can use images to tell your students about the course. If you want to create a banner or group of images but don't know how, the ITRC can help make it happen.

3) If you want to see your OWL course exactly as your students do (i.e., to see what content is and is not visible), **add yourself to the course as a student**. You will need another e-mail address to do so. For example, if you have an e-mail account with Rogers, Sympatico, or Gmail, add this e-mail to the student list for your course. Now you can log into your course as an instructor with your Western e-mail account, or as a student with your secondary e-mail. Everyone should take advantage of this doppelganger experience!

4) **Use OWL to organize your lessons**. Each 'lesson' could constitute a class, week, or unit of material, and be constructed in a similar manner. For example, a lesson could be structured under the following subheadings: Lesson Overview, Learning Objectives, Key Terms, Lesson X Readings, and Expectations for Completing Lesson X Activity, etc. Consider using the same subheadings for each week or course unit.

5) Use OWL to **continue the classroom conversation**. Your classroom discussions have a definite end time. OWL allows the discussion to extend beyond your classroom and its time limits.

6) **Avoid answering the same questions over and over**. Create a 'Help' discussion forum (e.g., Lecture Help, Lab Help, Tutorial Help, etc.,) where students can post their questions. You and other students can post answers for the whole class to read.

7) **Make your course content dynamic**. Use release dates so that content appears at different times, giving you control over the flow of information. A news feed can show current events related to your course. You can also ask students to upload content (e.g., text, images, links) to Lessons, Resources, Wikis, and Forums, and in doing so, provide them with the opportunity to engage with and contribute to the course.

8) **Use OWL for student submissions**. This will eliminate lost assignments, and you can use OWL to check for plagiarism (Turnitin is integrated into OWL).

9) **Consider extending the 'Accept Until' date for assignments**. When creating an assignment in OWL, you will need to specify three dates: The *Open Date* (students can view the assignment), the *Due Date* (completed assignments are expected), and the *Accept Until Date* (the last day students can submit an assignment, although late marks will apply). It is a good idea to allow some time between the Due and Accept Until dates (the default allows no time) or students will not be able to submit late assignments. As a result, students will have to contact you in order to negotiate a late submission - and this could mean a lot more work for you!

10) **Gather feedback from your students** before the end of term. Use the 'Tests & Quizzes' assessment tool to create an anonymous survey in which you ask for feedback from your students on the course.

Where can I get help? Contact the Teaching Support Centre, e-mail **tsc@uwo.ca**, for your pedagogy questions, and the Instructional Technology Resource Centre (ITRC), e-mail **itrc@uwo.ca**, for help with using OWL. The Library's resources and the subject matter librarians can be an excellent information addition on your OWL site.

Teaching with TECHNOLOGY

eLearning Lunch and Learn Series

Hosted by Dr. John Doerksen, Office of the Vice-Provost (Academic Programs & Students) [Registrar], and the Teaching Support Centre (TSC), the **Teaching with Technology – eLearning Lunch and Learn Series** focuses on the nexus between innovative uses of new and emerging technologies, and best practices in teaching and learning. These noon hour sessions (**lunch will be provided**) are intended to foster campus-wide collaboration, communication, and resource sharing about varied technology issues.

These lively forums will feature faculty and staff from across the disciplines sharing and discussing how they are successfully integrating technology into their curriculum. The Lunch and Learn series aims to foster a venue to share and learn from each other.

These learning opportunities will occur throughout the Fall and Winter semesters. For more information, please contact Kim Holland at: kholland@uwo.ca.

Fall 2013 Sessional Dates:
November 7 and December 5,
12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Click here to register.

Faculty Mentor Program
Workshop Sessions 2013-14

The Promotion and Tenure Process
October 31, 2013, 10 a.m. - 12 p.m.
A panel of representatives from the UWO Faculty Association, the Office of Faculty Relations and the Office of the Provost will explain the procedures and respond to questions.

Funding Your Research—Finding Other Sources
November 22, 2013, 1:30 - 3:30 p.m.
Finding resources outside the three major Councils can be a challenge. Colleagues who have been successful discuss their approaches.

Interdisciplinary Research and the Academic Career
December 10, 2013, 1:30 - 3:30 p.m.
Your research and publications cross disciplines. What impact does this have on tenure and promotion? Experienced colleagues discuss their strategies.

International Research Connections
*January 24, 2014, 1:30 - 3:30 p.m.*
Your research has international ramifications. What are the possibilities for linking with colleagues in other countries? Experienced colleagues suggest strategies for success, pitfalls to avoid, and the potentials of internationalization for research and teaching.

Development of a Teaching Dossier and a Teaching Philosophy
February 2014 [date to be announced]
Get a head start on this part of the P&T process with tips from the experts.

Click here for details and registration.
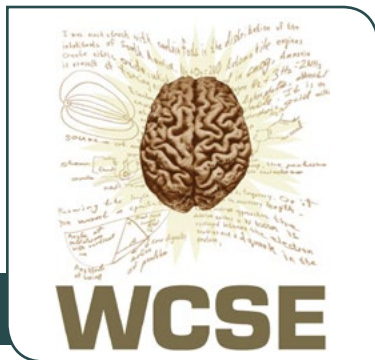
Western Conference on Science Education (WCSE) 2013

A Continuing Post-secondary Education Collaboration across Science Disciplines

BY BETHANY WHITE,
LEARNING DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR, FACULTY OF SCIENCE

A couple hundred people from across the country and beyond came together on campus to share ideas, research, and experience on teaching and learning post-secondary Science at the 2013 Western Conference on Science Education (WCSE) in July. Originally intended to be a triennial conference, the tremendous success of the first WCSE in 2011 convinced the committee to move the sequel up a year!

Technology was a hot topic at WCSE 2013 with a public lecture on "Designing University Teaching for 21st Century Learners" by Tony Bates, President of his online education consulting company and a research associate with Ontario's distance education and training network (Contact North). In his lecture, Tony spoke about the need for thoughtful integration of technology into our teaching to meet the needs of today's students. Dietmar Kennepohl, former Associate Vice President Academic, at Athabasca University and an award-winning Chemistry teacher, discussed opportunities and challenges of online learning in the context of lab-based Science courses and the changing role of instructors as emerging technologies facilitate access to information. Everyone had the opportunity to actively engage in the conversation during a round-table panel discussion on the "Promise and Peril in Online Learning". Panelists (Tony Bates, Dietmar Kennepohl, our own Vice-Provost John Doerksen and John Girash from the Derek Bok Center at Harvard) posed provocative questions about the implications and future of technology-enabled learning. Small groups generated responses and shared them on a collaborative electronic white-board to generate the emerging large group conversation.

Technology was not the only focus of the conference. Susan Rundell Singer, the Director, Division of Undergraduate Education at the National Science Foundation, defined Discipline-based Education Research (DBER) and shared details on a recent National Research Council's report on DBER. This report provides evidence-based recommendations about effective undergraduate teaching practices in Science and Engineering. Susan then offered suggestions on how to translate this research into practice.

In another plenary talk, Carolyn Eyles from McMaster University described McMaster's collaborative, interdisciplinary integrated Science (iSci) program and shared details about its success. iSci students are involved in real research early in their programs and seem to be highly motivated and engaged in their learning.

The WCSE 2013 program was rich and diverse, including sessions ranging from active learning strategies, to academic integrity, even to an organic chemistry workshop on making soap with Kool Aid! To provide more of a sense of the sessions, here is a small sampling of titles:

- Rich Learning Activities: Engaging Students in Postsecondary Classrooms
- More juggling with less struggling: Troublesome concepts ACROSS the sciences
- Educating Science Students About Education
- "Reverse journal club": Giving students less but asking for more
- Examining Exams: What Makes For a Good Question?
- Less time talking at students and more time talking with them: experiences of a neophyte classroom flipper
- Enhancing post-secondary student experience with science outreach

All WCSE 2011 materials are available on the conference website at: www. thewesternconference.ca. Some WCSE 2013 slides are posted already, and we hope to have videos of the plenary talks and slides for many WCSE sessions posted soon.

We look forward to WCSE 2015! It is truly inspirational to be a part of this growing community – a community of people who are passionate about teaching and learning science.

Teaching Fellows Program Call for Proposals 2013-14

Western

The Office of the Provost and Vice-President (Academic) is pleased to announce the new Teaching Fellows Program.

Applications are invited from full-time Western faculty for a three-year teaching fellowship, commencing January 2014.

As indicated in our *Strategic Mandate Agreement (2012),* Western affirmed its commitment to student success and student focused teaching and learning as part of the best student experience by providing funding to create the Teaching Fellows Program.

The goal of the Teaching Fellows Program is to enhance teaching innovation and teaching quality at Western. The Program will bring together a cohort of outstanding faculty (Teaching Fellows) who will provide educational leadership, perform research on teaching, and disseminate the knowledge they acquire to the larger university community and beyond.

The newly selected Teaching Fellows will provide educational leadership and initiate and coordinate Faculty-specific programming and research to promote teaching excellence and curriculum innovation. Teaching

Fellows will be outstanding educators selected competitively to work collaboratively with the Teaching Support Centre (TSC) and their Faculties.

Up to five new Teaching Fellows will be selected through this competition in 2013/14. The first theme of the Teaching Fellows Program will **focus on technology-enabled learning. Fellows will develop and complete an innovative technology project designed to enhance teaching and learning in their disciplines.** In subsequent years, Teaching Fellows may work to integrate other themes into the curriculum.

Teaching Fellows receive **up to a 40% secondment** from their Department/Faculty to the TSC for a **three-year term, starting in January 2014.** Only one Teaching Fellowship will be awarded per Faculty.

Teaching Fellows are eligible for up to **$10,000 funding per year for three years** to conduct their scholarly project related to teaching.

At the beginning of their term, Teaching Fellows will participate in a two-day **Great Teachers Seminar** to prepare for their role and build their skills for educational leadership.

Deadline for applications: November 15, 2013

For more details and application procedures, please see the *Teaching Fellows - Call for Proposals* at www.uwo.ca/tsc

Questions: contact Debra Dawson by email at dldawson@uwo.ca, or phone 519.661.2111 ext. 84621

Instructional Skills Workshop for Faculty

December 11 - 13, 2013   8:30 am - 5:00 pm

- **Intensive three-day teaching workshop**
- **Open to all Western faculty**
- **Designed for both new and experienced instructors**
- **Required to attend the full three days (8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.)**
- **Limited enrollment**

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.

Upcoming ISW Workshops: February 18-20, 2014, and May 2014

Click here for details and registration.

Tips for
ONLINE TEACHING

The following tips for online instructors were presented at the August 27, 2013 Fall Perspectives on Teaching Conference, OWL panel session, by Diane Mahar (Faculty of Health Sciences) and Kim Holland (Teaching Support Centre).

For those of you who are teaching entirely online, there are a couple of things you can do to make the course a great experience for students. Consider creating 'teacher presence' and building 'class community'. To do these important things, think about and try the following:

- OWL is a useful tool for building relationships when, otherwise, you might only have a short period of time with students. It is an excellent communication device because it allows instructors the chance to move away from the didactic environment of the classroom to an online place for discussion.

- Create teacher presence at the very start of your course through a personal introduction. Include a picture of yourself or a self-recorded audio or video file. Talk a little bit about the course and share some interesting details about yourself.

- In order to build class community, have each student introduce themselves in the first discussion posting. Ask icebreaker questions like: 'why are you interested in taking this course?' or 'what interests or talents do you have?' or 'what is the most difficult thing you have ever done?' Consider posting your own replies to these questions.

- To sustain an online community, each person needs to feel like their comments are respected, and that they can contribute safely. Improving the students' comfort level may take time. Allow students to argue but teach them how to challenge each other respectfully. Show them that conflict is acceptable, even warranted for learning! Consider developing a 'net-etiquette' policy statement for your course.

- In larger classes, consider creating smaller spaces for students. Use the group tool in OWL. Smaller groups will make community building easier.

- Give students guidelines on what you expect them to do. In an online environment, explicit instructions are necessary in order to avoid confusion. If you have graded discussion forums, provide a rubric that shows how you are going to grade their postings. Include the due date in multiple places, e.g., the syllabus, the calendar, and with the posted questions. Think like a student when you are pulling together material for the course. Ask yourself, if I were a student what questions would I have? Incorporate these hypothetical questions and answers into the learning materials for your online students.

More information: Contact Kim Holland, Instructional Designer, Teaching Support Centre, at **kholland@uwo.ca**

twitter @WesternTSC

Follow us on twitter @WesternTSC for News, Events, and Resources to enhance your instructional development. Encourage your graduate students to follow TSC's Twitter account to keep up with:

- **Announcements/Upcoming events**
- **Campus News**
- **Community News**
- **Teaching Resources**

What does the 2012 **Academic Integrity Survey** tell us about cheating at Western?

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

"I cheated once on a [course name deleted] midterm. I hid a small note with multiple formulas in my pocket...I feel I am justified in doing so as the professor was notoriously difficult... offered little help with the material and the exam was unfairly designed" (Anonymous student).

The above quote is a Western student's comment from the 2012 Academic Integrity Survey. This nation-wide survey assessed student and faculty perceptions of cheating. This was a follow up to the 2002 integrity survey which sought to determine if cheating was as prevalent in higher education in Canada as it was in the United States (Christensen Hughes & McCabe, 2006).

For the 2012 survey, all Western faculty and students, including those at the affiliated university colleges, were invited to participate in the anonymous survey. Below I address key findings from the survey.

Participants

- 1458 second, third, and fourth year undergraduate students (23% from the Affiliates)
- 272 faculty members (11% from the Affiliates)

Top Cheating Behaviours

The findings suggest that there is an issue with academic misconduct at Western, particularly with forms of cheating such as unpermitted collaboration (e.g., working together on an assignment, or take home exam). Unpermitted collaboration was the most commonly reported cheating behaviour in the 2002 and 2012 Western surveys and one of the least discussed forms of cheating by professors. It was also a controversial form of cheating as many students commented that it is an effective learning strategy and engaged in it even when they recognized it was cheating.

The results also show the gap between student and faculty perceptions of the seriousness of cheating behaviours. This gap is evident with most forms of cheating, but the size of the gap decreases as the cheating becomes more serious. Further, there is generally an inverse relationship between incidence and seriousness (i.e., fewer students engage in more serious cheating).

This seriousness gap and inverse relationship highlight the importance of educating students about Western's policies concerning cheating, including the seriousness of cheating, to reduce intentional and unintentional misconduct. A common student comment on the survey concerned their lack of understanding of the policies and the need for specific examples of proper and improper use of others' ideas and words, for example. A similar request was made by a faculty member:

"Despite repeated and regular... explanations, my colleagues (let alone students) are uncertain about definitions of varying kinds of academic dishonesty, and appropriate... responses.... The policy would...be enhanced if it were clarified with specific instances and examples rather than relying on... overall principles". (Anonymous faculty member)

Illicit Ritalin Use

The survey also addressed the use of non-prescribed Ritalin and other drugs as performance enhancers. Although the reported incidence of such use was relatively low (7% and 5% for students and faculty), it was not considered to be a particularly serious form of cheating for students (39%) or faculty (30%). Given the possible legal and health implications of the use of such non-prescribed drugs, it is surprising that it is not taken more seriously and suggests the need for further education on the issue.

Incidence and Seriousness of Top 3 Cheating Behaviours				
	Incidence		Seriousness	
	Students	Faculty	Students	Faculty
1. Unpermitted collaboration	48%	64%	33%	80%
2. Getting questions/answers from someone who has already taken the test	32%	38%	68%	94%
3. Copying a few sentences from Internet source without footnoting	27%	80%	76%	90%

Incidence = % of students who self-reported engaging in the behavior at least once in the past year; % of faculty who reported observing or becoming aware of students engaging in the beaviour at least once in the last three years.

Seriousness = % of students or faculty who rated this behaviour as "moderate" to "serious cheating"

"I would like there to be programs to say that using Ritalin or other drugs is cheating. I hear many students talk about taking Adderall, especially for studying, and I think it is an unfair advantage" (Anonymous student).

Online Cheating

Online academic misconduct such as cheating on online quizzes and tests was also assessed. The occurrence of this form of cheating was not disproportionate with other incidences of cheating; a finding which is also consistent with other online forms of cheating. McCabe, Butterfield, and Treviño (2012) suggest that online cheating is likely simply taking the place of more traditional forms of cheating (e.g., plagiarism from an online source instead of a hard copy of a document). They suggest that the number of students who cheat has not increased because of the online environment. That said they do suggest that cheating students may cheat more because of the ease of access to online information. These findings highlight the importance of education on the ethical use of technology for teaching and learning.

Conclusion

The Western community works hard to maintain its high ethical standards but the Academic Integrity Survey results suggest that there is room for improvement. Continued education about Western policies, with clear examples,

for students and faculty is crucial. As the quote below and McCabe and colleagues (2012) suggest, building a culture of integrity is best achieved by emphasizing the importance of values such as trust, respect, and fairness inside and outside of the classroom, not just punishment for misconduct. This aspirational approach helps to establish integrity as a foundational piece in an institution's identity; it becomes just "how we do things around here" (McCabe et al., 2012, p. 168).

"I'd like to see a stronger emphasis on the values and principles of higher education in general... I would like students to be encouraged by their professors to consider...their role as a student in the development, proliferation, and dissemination of knowledge...I believe that an issue of academic integrity stems from a deeper lack of consideration of and respect for the broader principles of academia" (Anonymous student)

References

Christensen Hughes, J. M., & McCabe, D. L. (2006). Academic misconduct within higher education in Canada. *Canadian Journal of Higher Education, 36*(2), 1-21.

McCabe, D.L., Butterfield, K.D. & Treviño, L.K. (2012). *Cheating in college: Why students do it and what educators can do about it*. Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press.

Occurrence of Cheating on Online Quizzes and Tests		
	Students	Faculty
Collaborated with others during online quiz/test/exam when not permitted?	40%	47%
Used notes or books on a closed book online test or exam?	27%	30%
Received unauthorized help from someone on an online test or exam?	16%	30%
Looked up information on the Internet when not permitted?	27%	36%

Questions:
Students = "If you have taken an online quiz, test, or exam at your campus, have you ever: (check all that apply)"
Faculty = "If you have given an online test or exam at your campus, have you ever suspected that students: (check all that apply)"

Instructional Skills Workshop Online (ISWO)

Are you teaching online or considering teaching online in the near future? If you are, the TSC offers the **Instructional Skills Workshop Online (ISWO)** 2 – 3 times per year. The next workshop will be held in February/March 2014 (dates to be announced). For more details, please contact Kim Holland in the Teaching Support Centre at: **kholland@uwo.ca**

This workshop was developed to address the needs of Western's faculty who teach online, and is designed to develop in practitioners increased competence, and confidence teaching in the online environment. This small enrolment, 26-30 hour workshop occurs entirely online in OWL over a 5-week period, where the participants experience the dual roles of both being an instructor and student in an online course. During the ISWO, feedback and personal refection activities provide opportunities for individuals to learn from this dual role model. The workshop involves asynchronous interactions between group members and the facilitator. The activities in this short course are intended to provide an authentic environment where faculty can learn, experiment, and practice skills related to facilitating and assessing online learning.

Past participants have said,

"I have to thank you for demonstrating how you can structure a course— since seeing the ISWO I've been able to re-organize my own course, and sub-divide modules into topics to prevent students from becoming inundated with too much confusing material on one page."

"I am so glad I was able to participate in the ISWO. I felt that it was extremely insightful being in the position of online student as this, itself, gave me ideas for what to do/not do."

Leading the Way:

A New Peer Mentorship Program for TAs

BY AISHA HAQUE, TEACHING SUPPORT CENTRE

The Lead TA Program is a new initiative on campus to facilitate the professional development of TAs at a discipline-specific level. It provides outstanding graduate students with an opportunity to apply their interest, teaching experience, and training beyond traditional TA duties.

During this pilot year, the program will position Lead TAs in eight departments across campus where they will develop discipline focused TA training activities.

By facilitating workshops, developing resources, and offering peer feedback through classroom observations, Lead TAs will serve as mentors, coaches, and liaisons for TAs in their home department.

This initiative to improve the teaching effectiveness of TAs at a departmental level complements the general, interdisciplinary TA training offered by the Teaching Support Centre. In order to support the Lead TAs in their own professional development during the year, the TSC will provide ongoing

training and resources to the group on facilitation, peer mentoring and teaching excellence. The Lead TA pilot program is a result of collaboration between the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, the Faculties, the GTA Union, and the Teaching Support Centre. If you would like to learn more about the program, please contact me at: **ahaque23@uwo.ca**.

The Lead TAs for the 2013-14 academic year are:

Melanie-Anne Atkins
Faculty of Education
Melissa Jacquart
Faculty of Arts and Humanities (Philosophy)
Jennifer Hutchinson
Faculty of Music
Leichelle Little
Faculty of Health Sciences
Leif Schenstead-Harris
Faculty of Arts and Humanities (English)
Gemma Richardson
Faculty of Information and Media Studies
Christopher Schultz
Faculty of Social Science (History)
Behnaz Saatian
Faculty of Science

The Wikipedia Education Program

BY NICOLE ASKIN

Wikipedia is the world's largest online free encyclopedia, collectively produced by millions of anonymous and pseudonymous contributors. The **Wikipedia Education Program** began in 2010 as a pilot project to train volunteers, known as Ambassadors, who facilitate Wikipedia editing by university students. The **Canadian branch** of the program has run courses at fourteen universities, including seven at Western, that were managed by Canadian **Campus Ambassadors** (students, TAs, librarians or others provided with training on Wikipedia and its use in the classroom) and **Online Ambassadors** (experienced Wikipedians who generally do not have any face-to-face contact with students). Wikipedia provides orientation materials, including tutorials, videos, and sample assignments and syllabi. The Ambassadors work with professors to adapt these resources to the needs of their class.

One of the key advantages of the Wikipedia Education Program is an opportunity for students to contribute to a widely read corpus of knowledge which has a global impact. Unlike an essay, which is read and commented on by the professor alone, student work is granted a worldwide readership, and is open to amendment and improvement by anyone. In the words of UBC professor **Tina Loo** (2012), "students [who participated] felt they were contributing to something that would live on after the class was over". As **Wadewitz, Geller and Beasley-Murray** (2012) argue, participating students have the opportunity to shape a cultural heritage through expansion of the collective knowledge base. Furthermore, according to Douglas College professor **Brenna Gray** (2011), the results are more accurate than traditional research projects. Finally, the revision process is highlighted through collaborative editing, forcing students to reflect on their own work and understand why certain changes were made. **Reilly** (2011) suggests that this reflexive and reflective aspect of Wikipedia editing is the most crucial in enhancing student growth.

Western's contributions to the Wikipedia Education Program have largely centred on article creation or expansion across multiple disciplines: biology (**Genetics in Everyday Life**), journalism/media (**News Media and Deep Democracy**), psychology (**Introduction to Child Psychology**), and an assortment of other topics (**Writing for the Web**). Another class (**Seminar in Physiology**) focused on critical review of existing articles, suggesting possible improvements or sources to include. Other potential **assignments** that could be considered include carrying out **copy-editing** requests, **translating** between different language editions of articles, or providing **photographs**, **videos** or **illustrations** for articles. Professors interested in incorporating the Wikipedia Education Program into their courses should contact Jonathan Obar (obar@msu.edu), the Canadian Education Program Advisor, or take a look at the **program website** for more details.

Nicole Askin graduated in June 2013 from the Faculty of Arts and Humanities with an Honors BA in English and Music and a Certificate in Writing. She is currently pursuing a master's degree at the University of British Columbia.

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Gray, B. (30 May 2011). Wikipedia improves students' work. Canada Newswire. Retrieved from http://www.newswire.ca/en/story/776225/wikipedia-improves-students-work.

Loo, T. (2012). Wikipedia in the Classroom. Network in Canadian History & Environment. Retrieved from http://niche-canada.org/node/10397.

Reilly, C. (2011). Teaching Wikipedia as a mirrored technology. First Monday, 16, 1-3. Retrieved from http://firstmonday.org/htbin/cgiwrap/bin/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/2824/2746.

Wadewitz, A. Geller, A. & Beasley-Murray, J. (2012). Wiki-hacking: Opening up the academy with Wikipedia. Wikipedia. Retrieved from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/User:Awadewit/TeachingEssay.

TIPS FROM

Western Libraries

## FINDING RESOURCES IN THE TEACHING SUPPORT CENTRE LIBRARY

The collection of teaching material housed in the TSC Library is all searchable using the Western Libraries website. Try your keyword search in Summon, available as the default on the Libraries homepage (**www.lib.uwo.ca**). In order to restrict your search results to the Teaching Support Centre collection, scroll to the Library Location facet on the left and Include the Teaching Support Centre. Depending on your search, you may need to select more… to open the full contents of the Library location facet. Your results now only consist of material from the TSC library.
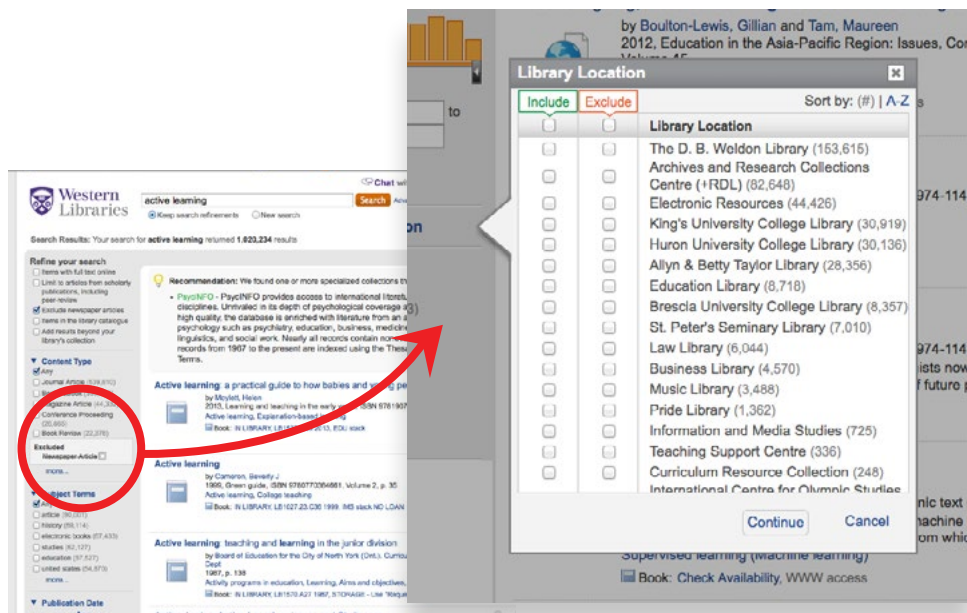
GET TO KNOW YOUR RESEARCH AND INSTRUCTIONAL SERVICES LIBRARIAN

Western Libraries' Research and Instructional Services (R&IS) Librarians are happy to meet with you to talk about embedding information management skill development sessions into your course. We can assist with assignment planning and are always willing to facilitate a class or create online learning materials for your students. Find your R&IS Librarian listed by subject under the Contact Us tab, In Person link of the library homepage.

And of course use our service to reach us with your question us using the province wide chat reference, from wherever you are.
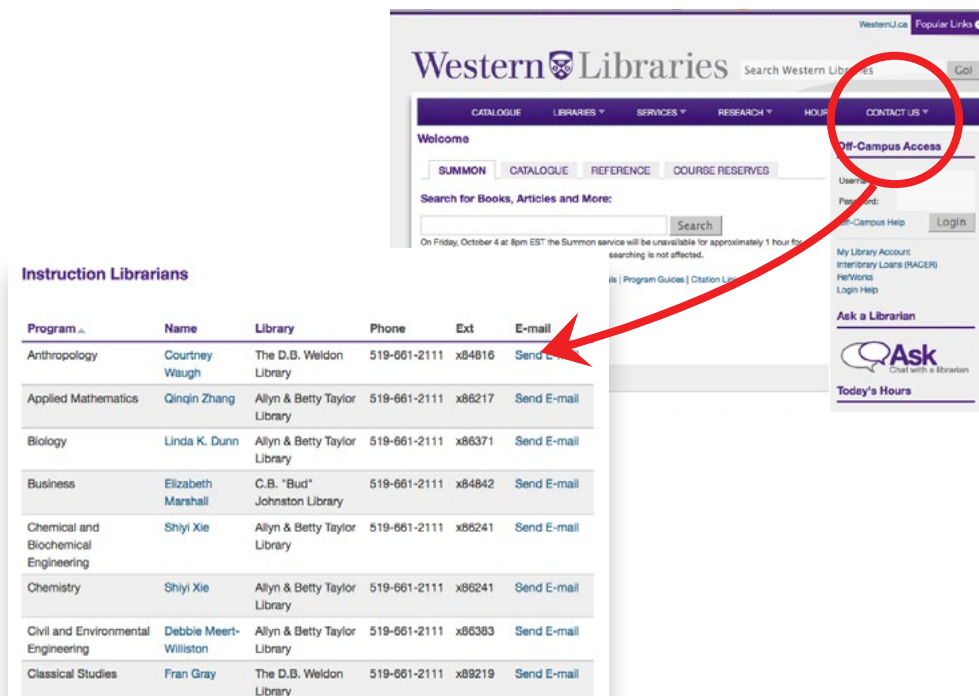
AWARDS & GRANTS

Western MENTORING Micro Grant

The Western Mentoring Micro Grant (up to $2,000) is designed to maximize mentoring experiences for full-time tenure-track faculty.

Application deadline
November 29, 2013.

Contact person: Madeline Lennon

Coordinator, Faculty Mentor Program

Teaching Support Centre

E-mail: **mlennon@uwo.ca**

Information Session:

Tuesday, November 5th, 2013, 12:30 - 1:30 pm
Teaching Support Centre, Room 121, The D.B. Weldon Library.

Click here for more information and registration.

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 www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/senate/sutaregs.pdf	Deadline for receipt of dossiers: **January 15, 2014**
WESTERN FUNDING INITIATIVES	Fellowship in Teaching Innovation	Application Deadline: **March 3, 2014**
	Western Mentoring Micro Grant (for full-time tenure-track faculty)	Application Deadline: **November 29, 2013**
	International Curriculum Fund	Application Deadline: **March 31, 2014**
EXTERNAL AWARDS	STLHE's Award Programs www.stlhe.ca/awards	
	3M National Teaching Fellowships (highest award in Canada for teaching excellence and educational leadership)	Deadline for nominations: **August 18, 2014** (internal) **August 31, 2014** (external)
	Alan Blizzard Award (rewards collaboration in teaching)	Deadline for nominations: **February 2014**
	Desire2Learn Innovation Award (recognizes innovative approaches to post-secondary teaching)	Deadline for applications: **January 2014**
	3M National Student Fellowship (for students who demonstrate outstanding leadership)	Deadline for applications: **January 13, 2014**
	Christopher Knapper Lifetime Achievement Award (contributions to teaching learning and educational development)	Deadline for nominations: **January 2014**
	OCUFA's Award Programs ocufa.on.ca	
	Teaching Award Academic Librarianship Award	Deadline for nominations: **May 23, 2014**

Information and guidelines for all these awards and grants can be found on the **TSC website**.

Join us to discuss the challenges of supervising graduate students and explore opportunities for mentoring young scholars of your discipline.

Supervision Conversations is an informal monthly brown-bag lunch series: participants will have the opportunity to ask questions and share supervision strategies during each session, and will receive resources related to the theme of the month.

Time: 12 noon - 1 pm
Location: Teaching Support Centre, Room 122 Weldon Library

Click here to register.

For more information, contact **Nanda. Dimitrov@uwo.ca**

NOVEMBER 12TH

Mentoring International Graduate Students

DECEMBER 6TH

Procrastinators and Perfectionists - Helping Students who are Stuck

JANUARY 15TH

Supporting ESL speakers in the Thesis Writing Process

FEBRUARY 12TH

Helping Grad Students Manage Stress and Anxiety

MARCH 19TH

Preparing Grad Students for the Job Search in Academia and Beyond

APRIL 15TH

Giving Feedback that Grad Students Listen To

Graduate Program Practices at Western University

Based on interviews with graduate chairs and faculty in six Faculties, Dr. Gloria Leckie has created a guide that catalogues practices in graduate education, from recruitment through coursework, comprehensive exams, thesis proposals, to placement and tracking.

Graduate Program Practices at Western University is available online as a clickable pdf that allows easy navigation of large amounts of data about graduate program practices at Western with hundreds of examples of what departments do to support their students' progress throughout their degrees.

See the executive summary for a quick overview of best practices in action; and the appendix for templates, forms, and examples of thesis completion guidelines, progression time-lines or professional development sessions in a variety of departments.

Designing and Administering Effective Interviews for Research on Teaching:
A Session for Beginners

Presenters: Nanda Dimitrov and Ken Meadows
In this interactive session, participants will discuss the basics of interviewing from a Research on Teaching (RT) perspective. Issues that will be discussed include approaches to interviewing (e.g., qualitative & quantitative frameworks), types of interviews (e.g., structured, semi-structured, focus groups), ethical concerns with interviewing as a method in RT projects, and writing and asking effective interview questions

November 7, 2013 1:30-3:30 p.m. Room 122, Weldon Library

Click here to register.

This session is intended for faculty members, librarians, and archivists.

"Communities already exist. Instead, think about how you can help that community do what it wants to do."

Mark Zuckerberg, founder and CEO of Facebook

Western University's Community of Practice for Instructional Designers

If you are an Instructional Designer at Western University, we would like you to join our community of practice! Together, we can more effectively pursue our collective aim to promote and support eLearning at Western University.

The Teaching Support Centre will host our first meeting. Lunch will be provided.

November 14th, 2013 in Rm 121 Weldon Library
from 12:30-1:30 p.m.

Please email to confirm: ymills@uwo.ca

Western Teaching Support Centre