

Reflections

NUMBER 71, AUTUMN 2014



WALS (Western Active Learning Space): *A PaSsPorT to Active Learning*

BY WENDY A. CROCKER AND STEPHANIE OLIVER, TEACHING SUPPORT CENTRE

Amid the usual excitement and expectations that a return to school brings, Western students can look forward to learning in a new classroom environment this year. Imagine a classroom where space, technology, and active learning pedagogy come together seamlessly to support the best possible teaching and learning experience. That classroom is here at Western in UCC 66, and it is a new iteration of the traditional General Use (GU) classroom space.

What is WALS?

While the construction of an active learning classroom had been discussed for several years, the plan became a reality in 2013 when a Productivity Innovation Grant from the Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities was realized and matched by funds from Western. Since November 2013, a committee comprised of representatives from Information Technology Services and the Instructional Technology Resource Centre, Institutional Planning and Budgeting and the Classroom Management Group, Facilities Management, as well as the



Figure One: WALS in UCC 66 featuring seating for group work, interactive white boards, wheeled "huddle boards", and an observation room for conducting research

Teaching Support Centre have collaborated to create Western's first GU active learning space. WALS is the first classroom of its kind at Western that enables teachers and learners to choose from a range of features to promote interaction for deeper learning. For example, WALS has comfortable swivel chairs grouped around D-shaped tables, whiteboards surrounding the room, interactive whiteboard capabilities at each table, and the ability for students to connect

wirelessly to the technology in the space using their own Mac or PC laptops, tablets, and smartphones. In WALS, technology becomes another tool for deep learning. In the words of Chickering and Gamson (1987):

"Learning is not a spectator sport. Students do not learn much just by sitting in class and listening to

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Reflections is the newsletter of the Teaching Support Centre at Western University
Available online at www.uwo.ca/tsc

teachers, memorizing pre-packaged assignments, and spitting out answers. They must talk about what they are learning, write about it, relate it to past experiences, apply it to their daily lives. They must make what they learn part of themselves" (p.3)

This kind of interactive, collaborative learning is a cornerstone of the design of the WALs space, and is evidenced by the layout of the room, the choice of furniture, and the plethora of materials and methods for recording and sharing ideas.

One of the most unique elements of the WALs classroom is the Observation Room. In accordance with appropriate ethics for both students and instructors, we anticipate using this room to conduct Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) research in the space. Further, we look forward to hosting "viewings" for those instructors who would like to teach in WALs but who are uncertain of what active learning "looks like." Led and narrated by members of the Teaching Support Centre staff, focused observations of experienced teachers will assist in supporting active learning principles for instructors and will help frame technology as a teaching tool across disciplines and programs at Western. Further, research conducted using the Observation Room will add to the growing body of knowledge related to active learning and technology-enhanced teaching in higher education through SoTL.

How was it conceived?

WALS was conceived using Shirley Reushle's PaSsPorT model (2009), a theoretical

framework that signifies the importance of synergy between People, Space, Pedagogy, and Technology in active learning spaces. Members of the Teaching Support Centre staff also participated in several collaboratories with other large research and teaching institutions across Canada and the United States to learn from those who had designed and built active learning classrooms. In creating WALs, careful attention was paid to the layout of space, the choice of furniture, the integrated nature of the technology, and opportunities to include high-impact pedagogical approaches to teaching.

Further, WALs was created using principles of universal design that require planners to think intentionally and inclusively about the way in which the space will be used. Inherent in the design are wide aisles to accommodate flexible groupings of students, whiteboards that can be accessed at a number of levels, and lighting designed for four "scenes" (from full overhead lights, to dimmed classroom and task lighting, to a setting for working on the interactive whiteboards).

Who is using WALs?

The response to Western's Active Learning Space has been overwhelming! Two graduate courses – one in Statistics and one in Library Science – already held their class in the temporary WALs lab during Intersession, and the word cloud below represents the faculties who have been teaching in the space up to the time of writing.



Figure Three: Word Cloud representation of the disciplines and faculties teaching in WALs



Figure Two: Graduate students discussing the responses to a question projected using the Air Media app

As a GU classroom, the booking is done centrally and any faculty or unit can schedule their program to use the space. However, because of the uniqueness of WALs, there is a need to meet with the personnel at the Teaching Support Centre before working in the classroom so instructors can be introduced to the special technological features and active learning considerations of the space. Further information about Western's Active Learning Space, including the booking calendar and form, can be found on the web site at www.uwo.ca/WALS. Follow us on Twitter @WALS_Western.

REFERENCES

- Chickering, A.W. & Gamson, Z.F. (1987). Seven principles for good practice. *AAHE Bulletin*, 39 (7), 3-7.
- Rueshle, S. (2013). PaSsPorT model presented at the University of Canberra's SAFFIRE Festival. Retrieved from <http://adfi.usq.edu.au/blog/?tag=learning-spaces>
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Please join us for the

eLearning Lunch and Learn Series for Faculty 2014-15

Hosted by Dr. John Doerksen, Vice-Provost (Academic Programs) and the Teaching Support Centre (TSC), the **eLearning Lunch and Learn Series** focuses on the nexus between best practices in teaching and learning and innovative uses of new and emerging technologies. These sessions (**lunch will be provided**) are intended to foster campus-wide collaboration, communication, and resource sharing about varied topics related to technology embedded teaching.

These lively forums will feature eLearning Team staff from the Teaching Support Centre and the Instructional Teaching Resource Centre, as well as faculty from across the disciplines sharing how they are successfully integrating technology into their classroom practices, are as follows:

Teaching Beyond PowerPoint

Thursday, November 20, 2014, 12:30 - 1:30 p.m.

PowerPoint has emerged as the “go to” tool for organizing and presenting lecture content in the higher education classroom. In this session, participants will be introduced to successful practices in developing lecture slides and to Prezi, a cloud-based presentation software tool. Instructors will share their experience in designing and delivering materials using Prezi.

Teaching with Tablets

Thursday, December 11, 2014, 12:30 - 1:30 p.m.

Tablet computers have taken over as the computing device of choice for most new computer purchases. Smaller than typical laptops with arguably longer battery life, ease of mobility and specially designed operating systems, faculty uses of tablets for instruction bring a different dimension to teaching and assessment.

Teaching Beyond Clickers

Thursday, January 15, 2015, 12:30 - 1:30 p.m.

Classroom response systems (e.g. “Clickers”) offer instructors of large classes a tool for engaging students on an individual basis. Clickers have been shown to improve student learning and have progressed beyond the hand-held device. Learn how to use classroom response systems in a class of any size to promote student learning.

Teaching with Social Media

Thursday, February 12, 2015, 12:30 - 1:30 p.m.

Like us on Facebook. Send us a Tweet. Connect with us on LinkedIn. Social Media permeates the contemporary online experience. Likewise social media often permeates the student classroom experience (whether we are aware of it or not). Learn how to harness the power of social media to enhance student-learning opportunities in your class.

All sessions will be held in University Community Centre, Room 147A/B

Register

For more information, please contact Gavan Watson, Associate Director, eLearning, in the Teaching Support Centre at: gavan.watson@uwo.ca



We are on 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
- ✓ Community News
- ✓ Campus News
- ✓ Teaching Resources



Western  Teaching Support Centre

Experimenting with the Western Active Learning Space (WALS)

BY BETHANY WHITE, STATISTICAL AND ACTUARIAL SCIENCES

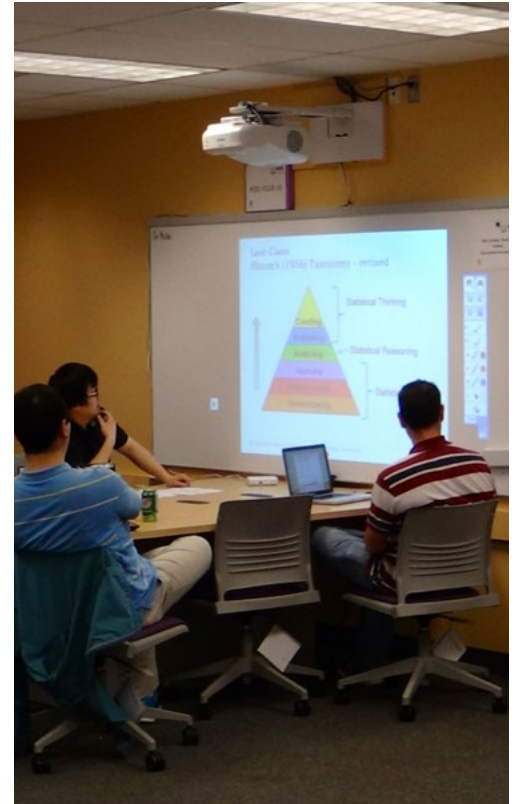
Interaction, whether it between students, between students and the instructor or TA, or even between students and content, is a priority for me and the Western Active Learning Space (WALS) helps make this happen.

I had the pleasure of teaching a graduate course (STAT 9045 – Teaching Statistics) in WALS this past spring. I was eager to embrace the collaborative environment of WALS, but went into the first class a little unsure about the capabilities of the room and planning to take things slowly. I thought that we would take advantage of the space for group work and discussions but would build in use of the technology during the term only as we needed it or felt adventurous enough to try it out. However, students arrived at our first WALS class ready to experiment with the technology – some had connected their computers to the projector and were doodling on the projected displays with the digital pens within minutes of arriving as they waited for class to start. During the course we continued to experiment with the technology both as a class and within groups. The WALS technology wasn't the focus of the course, but we certainly had fun experimenting with how it could be used creatively to support the objectives of the course.

WALS seamlessly integrates collaborative learning and technology. The room itself sets an expectation for active learning, collaboration and group work. It would be

difficult to be passive in this class! It offers flexibility to go high tech or low tech. Even with the computer and projector off, WALS offers an ideal configuration for group work, problem solving and discussions. Each “pod” consists of moveable chairs arranged around a table. There are white boards at each pod so students can work through problems, share their ideas or summarize their work to present to the class. Turn on the classroom computer if you would like to project a graph or image for each of the groups so the students can interact with it or mark it up with the digital pen. Students' work can then be projected to each pod so students can share their work to the class and you can save the complete files to capture each group's efforts. Students are able to connect their devices (laptops, tablets and even phones) to their projector. There's also a dedicated laptop at each pod if the group would prefer to work with that. The multimedia possibilities are essentially endless in WALS.

If your classes or labs involve activities and interaction at all, I highly recommend trying out WALS. No need to work around the space to do what you want to do in the classroom – the space just works. Now, we



just need to figure out how to scale it up to accommodate 200+ students!

A big thank you to Wendy Crocker and Stephanie Oliver from the Teaching Support Centre for all their hard work and outstanding support and encouragement for WALS instructors.

WALS FAST FACTS

- 7 D-shaped tables with task chairs to seat 42 learners – more with additional seating
- Small, portable “buddy boards,” larger wheeled “huddle boards,” and whiteboards around the perimeter provide ample space for recording ideas and promoting collaboration
- Wireless support for Mac and PC devices – laptops, smartphones, and tablets
- Designated computer for each pod to ensure equity of access by all students
- Technology uniquely designed to support interactive whiteboards, ceiling camera, student device hook-ups to the Internet (using a special Air Media app), and video conferences
- Created and constructed as a collaboration among ITS, ITRC, FM, CMG, IPB, and TSC at Western

Course Design & Renovation Workshop

December 8 & 10, 2014
9:30 am - 4:00 pm
Room 121, Weldon Library

The purpose of this two-day workshop (December 8 & 10) is to facilitate the design or re-design of a course that you will be teaching in the upcoming year.

By the end of the workshop you will have completed the necessary steps to:

- 1) Create a course structure
- 2) Identify learning outcomes
- 3) Design learning activities to achieve those outcomes
- 4) Match the outcomes to methods of assessment

Topics may include:

- Aligning course, instructional, and assessment goals
- Writing effective learning outcomes
- Elements of a great course syllabus
- Setting course policies
- Selecting and incorporating learning activities
- Embedding technology to enhance face-to-face instruction
- Forms of assessment

Enrollment will be limited to 12 faculty members so that the course goals and topics can be tailored to the needs of the participants.

Click **HERE** to register for this workshop.

MyGradSkills.ca



Build your professional skills!

Choose from 18 self-paced modules that take graduate students beyond labs, libraries, and lectures.

MyGradSkills.ca

A new online professional development training for graduate students

Western graduate students now have access to 18 self-paced professional development modules created by seven Ontario universities. Topics include Entrepreneurship, Research Management, Community Engagement, Career Development and many others. Western's Student Success Centre Team contributed a module on **Converting a CV to a Resume**, while the Teaching Support Centre team developed two modules - **Academic and Professional Communication** and **Teaching Online - Advanced Strategies for TAs**. The modules feature the work of the ITRC student consultants, and include interviews with Western staff and faculty. The project was funded by a Productivity and Innovation Fund grant from MTCU.

To view the modules, go to MyGradSkills.ca and set up a new account with your Western e-mail address.

Leading in Learning: Following Our Teaching Fellows

BY KARYN OLSEN, EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPER, TEACHING SUPPORT CENTRE

"All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given us."

— JRR Tolkien

Several of Western's outstanding educators have been appointed as Teaching Fellows to promote excellence and innovation in teaching and learning at the university level. They are: Dan Belliveau, Peter Ferguson, George Gadanidis, Sarah McLean, and Bethany White. They are the first cohort in the Teaching Fellows Program which was introduced to enhance pedagogical research and promote effective teaching practices across campus. This group, or "fellowship" if you will, was formed in partnership with the Office of the Provost and Vice-President (Academic) and the Teaching Support Centre, and will carry out projects related to technology-enabled learning over the next three years. Each Fellow will develop, conduct, and assess the impact of a unique teaching innovation related to technology. They will also provide support by coordinating workshops, learning communities, and other instructor development opportunities within their own Faculties.

I sat down (virtually) with the Teaching Fellows to learn more about their project proposals and to listen to their plans to support teaching and learning in their home Faculties. I asked them to describe the essence of a great teacher in 140 characters or less (yes, that's tweet length) and to share their favourite teaching strategies or an aspect of higher education that they find particularly intriguing. And so the tale begins...

DR. DAN BELLIVEAU

Faculty of Health Sciences



Dan is an Associate Professor in the School of Health Studies and is a neuroscientist and gross anatomist by training. His research interests focus on the science of learning and investigating the impact of technology in the classroom.

DAN'S TWEET ABOUT
TEACHING:

**'To teach is to learn again'. Engaged!
Innovative! Enthusiastic! These comprise the
fabric of a great teacher and, in turn, great
learners.**

Could you describe your project plans to date?

Our project, "MOOCing a Difference", will be launched in the Spring of 2015 to Health Sciences students who accept the offer of admission. The program will provide an introduction to the discipline as well as exposure to transitional issues from secondary to post-secondary education. We are currently setting the groundwork for the development of the MOOC modules. We have scheduled meetings with key stakeholders including faculty members and administrative staff. We are recruiting "MOOC Testers" to explore the most innovative aspects of online learning. Lastly we are experimenting with unique online tools to create a vibrant interactive environment within the MOOC.

How will you be supporting teaching and learning among faculty in your discipline?

I am hoping to offer regularly scheduled workshops on classroom tools. The Faculty of Health Sciences utilizes a wide array of instructional media, and I look forward to having our experts share their experience with other engaged faculty who are interested in changing and enhancing their teaching and learning skill sets.

Is there an aspect of higher education that especially intrigues or excites you?

The 'mobility' of learning intrigues me greatly. The concept of the physical university as a destination for learning is changing and that must be met with pedagogically sound practices of teaching and learning in a technology driven educational environment.

DR. PETER FERGUSON

Faculty of Social Science



Peter specializes in comparative politics, international relations, and public policy as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Political Science. His research examines democratic transitions, democratic stability in the developing world, public opinion polling during elections, image building and tourism policy, and political risk assessment.

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PETER'S TWEET ABOUT TEACHING:

A great teacher makes learning fun and informative; listens as well as speaks; and most of all, is a person who cares about their students.

Could you describe your project plans to date?

Students operate in an information-driven world but universities do not always provide them with the skills necessary to succeed in the research process, writ large. My project lays the foundation for Western to be a leader in information literacy instruction by creating a series of online learning modules capable of providing these skills to students across a variety of faculties. Not only would this fill an instructional gap but it could free up instructional resources within library systems that can be redeployed to provide more targeted, higher level information literacy instruction.

How will you be supporting teaching and learning among faculty in your discipline?

This year, the project is organizing a working group symposium examining the challenges of delivering information literacy instruction (the research process, writ large) in a large university setting. Experts from across North America will discuss the challenges they face in providing such instruction. Instructors from Western will have an opportunity to interact with people heavily engaged in information literacy instruction, hopefully

laying the foundation for improving our approach to these critical skills.

Is there an aspect of higher education that especially intrigues or excites you?

I am excited when I walk into a classroom because I know that I will learn something new each and every time. I believe students really are interested in their classes and I am intrigued by the search for that something which triggers their interest and pulls them into the interactive educational process.

Could you share a teaching strategy or tip?

I am a true believer in participation, regardless of class size. I think students learn as much from hearing each other as they do from listening to me. I am willing to use any tools that may facilitate participation. I use everything from discussion boards, to clickers, to an old-fashioned paper participation slip.

DR. GEORGE GADANIDIS

Faculty of Education



George is an Associate Professor in Mathematics Education. He spends much of his time collaborating with elementary school teachers to research and develop enriching and rewarding math experiences for students and their parents.

GEORGE'S TWEET ON TEACHING:

A great teacher helps students experience surprise, conceptual insight, and emotional engagement around big ideas of the subject they study.

Could you describe your project plans to date?

I am working on developing an online math-for-teachers textbook for our K-8 teacher candidates, which will also be freely available to the wider education community. The textbook is based on several years of classroom-based research (see www.researchideas.ca) and will contain classroom documentaries, animations, and interactive content. Its implementation will be researched to improve the design and to study how teacher candidates' knowledge and perceptions of mathematics evolve.

How will you be supporting teaching and learning among faculty in your discipline?

My plans include supporting our STEM and other interested faculty by organizing and hosting a symposium on math + coding, and engaging them with other curricular couplings with coding.

Leading the Way: Successful Lead TA Program Enters its Second Year

The Lead TA Program at Western facilitates the professional development of TAs at a discipline-specific level. The program, which is in its second year now, will position Lead TAs in **10 departments** across campus where they will **facilitate workshops, develop teaching resources, and offer peer feedback** to colleagues through classroom observations. Look for Lead TAs this year in **Education, Engineering, English, Health Sciences, Hispanic Studies, Philosophy, Psychology, Science, Schulich Medicine and Dentistry, and Women's Studies.**

Last year, Lead TAs developed a rich bank of practical resources that your TAs may find useful, including handouts, online modules, websites, and TA handbooks. Encourage your TAs to check out these resources on our **website**.

If you would like to learn more about the program, visit the TSC website or contact Aisha Haque: ahaque23@uwo.ca

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Is there an aspect of higher education that especially intrigues or excites you?

I enjoy all aspects of academic life: research, teaching, and outreach/community service. The latter is becoming a more central role in my work and I take a lot of pleasure in trying to solve the puzzle of how to use my research in ways that make a difference for students, teachers, and the wider education community. The free online grade 3 textbook I'm authoring is one such example: www.researchideas.ca/wmt3.

Could you share a teaching strategy or tip?

We are starting to explore the coupling of coding and mathematics for young children by developing digital simulations and games that help them explore math relationships as they manipulate computer code: www.mathNcode.com.

DR. SARAH MCLEAN

Schulich School of Medicine and Dentistry



Sarah is an Assistant Professor in the Bachelor of Medical Sciences Program, and the Basic Medical Science Undergraduate Education Educator/e-Learning Coordinator. Her research interests include developing blended classrooms and laboratories by incorporating both online learning and traditional face-to-face learning environments.

SARAH'S TWEET ABOUT TEACHING:

A great teacher is a great mentor: they lead by example, genuinely care for their students, and are passionate.

Could you describe your project plans to date?

My project is all about using technology, simulation, and re-purposing class time to allow more critical thinking and practice. To do this, my colleague, Dr. Michelle Belton, and I will be creating online laboratory simulations to allow students to try out some common laboratory experiments prior to completing the "real lab" in class. We are currently working with a computer programmer to develop a virtual rat dissection. We are also developing a new third year lab where students can access a virtual toolbox of common laboratory techniques to troubleshoot online before completing the actual experiment in class. We anticipate that allowing students to test-drive experiments prior to the laboratory session will help them assess their knowledge, increase their confidence, and ultimately result in better laboratory performance.

How will you be supporting teaching and learning among faculty in your discipline?

I am currently hosting a Schulich Educators group, which meets monthly to discuss new innovations in teaching and share

knowledge. Any Schulich faculty members/graduate students with a passion for teaching are welcome to attend! I have also hosted a flipped classroom "Lunch and Learn" along with Drs. Tim Wilson and Derek McLachlin during which we shared our experiences using the flipped classroom approach. In the future, I would like to develop workshops which may be used towards the Schulich Faculty Development Teaching Certificate, with a focus on offerings that appeal to Basic Medical Science faculty.

Could you share a teaching strategy or tip?

I have recently used Zaption, a video-editing tool where users can edit online videos (such as YouTube videos, TED Talks) to make them interactive. Users are able to include a variety of question formats (e.g., multiple choice, calculations, etc.) for the students to answer. It is a really simple tool that makes videos a lot more interesting and I plan on using it again in the upcoming school year.

DR. BETHANY WHITE

Faculty of Science



As an Assistant Professor in the Department of Statistical and Actuarial Sciences, Bethany teaches statistics courses at different levels in online, face-to-face, and in blended formats. Her research investigates the impact of structured technology-enabled activities and course formats on students' learning and attitudes.

BETHANY'S TWEET ON TEACHING:

Great teachers are attentive to students, adaptive to change, and familiar with recommended teaching practices - they never stop learning!

Could you describe your project plans to date?

Many students need to take introductory statistics courses for their programs but differ widely in terms of background, comfort level, and preparedness. Another complication is that there are a number of key concepts in introductory statistics that are particularly challenging and students can find themselves stuck at one of these points and have difficulty keeping up. This fall, my project will involve developing, implementing, and evaluating adaptive online modules that will help each individual student master learning outcomes for these troublesome, yet important, topics when they need them so that they are set up for success in the course.

How will you be supporting teaching and learning among faculty in your discipline?

I am looking forward to offering workshops and other programming on blended and online learning to colleagues in the Faculty of Science as well as supporting the Faculty of Science Technology-enhanced Learning Innovation Award program to

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facilitate e-Learning development in Science. In particular, I am interested in how we can leverage the power of technology to provide adaptive, personalized instruction for students to augment what happens in our classrooms and really deepen their learning.

Could you share a teaching strategy or tip?

Many of the teaching strategies I've tried recently relate to my fascination with the potential of technology to enhance teaching and learning. I am a huge fan of Personal Response Systems (clickers) and the use of clicker questions to motivate and target discussions, and for simulation activities in large classes. Interactive classroom spaces are also important to me. I find the flipped classroom format appealing because students have the flexibility to work through the material on their own time and at their own pace, leaving class-time reserved for activities that will deepen their learning. I have also used the Western Active Learning Space (WALS, www.uwo.ca/wals) to facilitate active learning. The room design and available technology supports student access, collaboration, and sharing.

FINAL THOUGHTS

I want to thank the Teaching Fellows for taking the time to share their projects and ideas with *Reflections* readers. We look forward to hearing more from them as their adventures continue. If you are interested in following the journeys of the Teaching Fellows, please visit the Teaching Support Centre website for their contact information: www.uwo.ca/tsc/about/teaching_fellows.html



the Assessment Series

In the Teaching Support Centre, we recognize that assessing student learning is a critical part of an instructor's role. To support effective assessment, we offer the Assessment Series – a collection of workshops that address a range of assessment issues. This year we have five sessions planned including:

An Introduction to Constructing Rubrics

Thursday, November 13, 2014, 1:30 - 3:30 pm

Writing Multiple-Choice Questions

Wednesday, January 21, 2015, 1:30 - 3:30 pm

Assessing Learning Online

Tuesday, March 10, 2015, 10:30 am - 12:00 pm

As well as sessions on **designing assessments which align with your learning outcomes** and **assessing your students' learning authentically** (dates and times to be announced).

Click here to register for these sessions.

FACULTY MENTOR PROGRAM

Supervising Graduate Students

November 21, 2014, 1:30-3:30

Best practices to establish successful supervisor-student interactions.

The Promotion and Tenure Process

December 4, 2014, 3:15-5:00 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.

Development of a Teaching Dossier and a Teaching Philosophy

February 6, 2015, 1:30 – 3:30 p.m.

Get a head start on this part of the P&T process with tips from the experts.

Click **HERE** for details and registration.

5 STRATEGIES

for Creating Community in the Online Classroom

BY NANDA DIMITROV, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, TEACHING SUPPORT CENTRE

Students who take courses online are often independent, self-directed learners, but they still look for engagement with other students, instructor presence, as well as opportunities to connect with others in the online classroom (Kelly, 2014). This spring, I taught a fully online, master's level course in the Faculty of Education. My students were located all over the world, so I wanted to spend time creating a community of practice in the course that would allow my students to share their diverse teaching and learning experiences with each other. I reviewed the literature on online learning and tried out several of the strategies recommended. Within a couple of weeks my students were so engaged with the material and with each other that I could barely keep up with their forum posts. They asked great questions, gave each other feedback and shared examples of the theoretical models we learned in class. Here are a few of the strategies that worked. Try these in a fully online class, or add them as an online component to a face-to-face course.

1) Start class with a creative activity

Ask students to post a multimedia introduction of themselves in the course discussion forum, such as a 30 second video, one animated PowerPoint slide, a collage of images, or a one minute animation created using Sparkol. In the introduction, consider asking students to talk about what they hope to learn in the course or what their most memorable university level learning experiences have been. In addition to creating community, this activity helps students practice how to present themselves in a professional or academic environment and see a variety of examples from others. In my course, students posted their *teaching philosophy for the intercultural classroom* as a way of introducing themselves to the group. I was amazed by their creativity – one student created a narrated video, another a narrated powerpoint, and we had several beautiful wordle word clouds that captured different aspects of intercultural learning. I also asked students to post pictures of their location during the course, so the class can visualize the context in which they are teaching. Very thought provoking side conversations resulted about these images that allowed students to discuss cultural differences between various educational systems around the world.

2) Add social space to the course website

Create a forum discussion titled “coffee room” or “open discussion forum” where students can raise any questions related to the course, discuss current events on campus and around the world, or have a conversation about topics other than the readings. In my face-to-face graduate course on university teaching, for example,

students have used the online forum to discuss the role of parents in university education, post interesting articles from the *Chronicle of Higher Education* or share cartoons related to the readings. The posts were relevant, and inspired by the discussion in class, and helped continue the conversation beyond the classroom. The coffee room can be the place, for example, where pre-service teachers post pictures of their school; science students share images of their internship site or the site of their field course (be sure to ask permission).

3) Encourage students to communicate with each other

Build interaction into assignments. For example, after posting their own reflection on the readings, ask students to respond to the posts of two others and post questions. Build peer feedback into assignments. In my graduate course, students wrote case studies, then worked in groups of four to discuss the case and give each other feedback on the first draft before handing in the final version. They received a grade for their feedback, and we discussed the characteristics of effective, constructive feedback before they began the assignment. After the course, several students commented that the small group case discussion was the component of the course that they learned the most from. It helped them create better questions for case discussions, and helped refine the learning outcomes they wanted to achieve with their case study. Other strategies for encouraging student interaction include asking students to create exam questions, then asking them to exchange and solve each other's questions; or to send students on a “virtual field trip” and asking them to compare their observations.

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4) Build student contributions into the design of the course

In addition to posting reading reflections, encourage students to post web-links or photos that illustrate concepts learned in class or share the results of their research on course topics. In a physics class, for example, students were invited to create a set of laws for physics cartoons – such as “gravity only works when you look down” and to find examples of the way cartoons violate principles in physics. In an anthropology course, students were asked to conduct a mini-ethnography of North American culture in their local grocery store and to post how key values of the culture were represented by products, advertising and interactions in the store. The examples that students post become part of the learning material for the course and enrich learning for everyone else in the class.

5) Share laughter

Shared laughter is one of the best ways to create community among students. In an online environment, where facial expressions do not clarify the intentions of the communicator, we have to be a bit cautious about using humour and be aware of the risk of misunderstanding. Humour needs to be relevant to learning in the course and it should encourage critical thinking among

students. Cartoons, videos, or quotes can add humour related to the course material or about learning skills. One instructor helped prepare students for a major paper by **sharing Lev Yilmaz's one minute video on procrastination** with the class, and then encouraged students to share their own strategies for overcoming procrastination.

RESOURCES

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eLearning Conversations 2014-15

Participants in the eLearning Conversation Series will work to build a community of scholars interested in developing their practice in topics related to eLearning. Participation in these conversations will address, in part, the requirements for the Faculty Certificate in Teaching Excellence, however membership is open to faculty and instructors in the wider university community.

Participants will:

- Learn with/from colleagues who have a shared interest in technology enhanced learning;
- Share resources and successful practices;
- Offer questions, resources, or “food for thought” to discuss with the group; and
- Gain confidence in using web-conferencing technologies.

Time:

10:30-11:30 am

Dates:

November 12, 2014

December 17, 2014

January 20, 2015

February 24, 2015

March 24, 2015

April 21, 2015

Location:

All conversations will be held using web-conferencing technologies and may include Blackboard Collaborate, Skype, and/or Google Hang-outs.

A link to an OWL project site will be provided to registered participants, a week prior to the scheduled conversation.

Register HERE

Welcome Gavan Watson

Gavan Watson joins us from the University of Guelph where he was an Educational Developer in Open Learning and Educational Support. At Western, he has taken on the role of **Associate Director for eLearning**. He possesses a keen professional interest in supporting the continuous improvement of academic practices at Western while supporting the growth of eLearning at the institution. Gavan sees himself, above all, as an educator whose responsive approach aims to build relevance for the individuals and groups he works with.

Gavan has taught graduate and undergraduate courses in University Teaching, Environmental Education, and Natural History in both face-to-face and online learning environments. A trained outdoor educator, Gavan draws on over fifteen years of team-building and facilitation experience in the development and delivery of workshops and facilitating classroom experiences. Gavan has published widely on topics such as: the role of

technology in non-formal environmental learning; teaching critical reflection to graduate students; and using social media in the university classroom. He is active in the educational developer professional community and currently serves as the Chair (elect) of the Council of Ontario Educational Developers.

You can reach Gavan at extension #84612, or by e-mail at gavan.watson@uwo.ca

To read more about Gavan's philosophy of educational development and his approaches to teaching, view his academic homepage: www.gavan.ca He is also active on Twitter @gavatron



Welcome Karyn Olsen

Karyn Olsen recently accepted the permanent position as **Educational Developer** with the Teaching Support Centre. She first came to the TSC in 2010 as a part-time graduate student instructor for the Teaching Assistant Training Program. Since then she has taken on a number of roles, assisting with Centre-led research on teaching and learning, and supporting the growth of graduate students, post-doctoral scholars, and faculty members through our suite of programs and workshops.

Karyn holds a Bachelor of Science from the University of Guelph, Master of Arts and Doctor of Philosophy in Anthropology from Western University. Her doctoral research focused on medieval European health and diet and involved analysis of >500 year old skeletal material at the Laboratory for Stable Isotope Science in Western's Earth Sciences Department. The inter-disciplinary nature of her educational background has provided insight into teaching-related needs and concerns from multiple perspectives, making her an asset when supporting current graduate students and faculty from across disciplines.

Karyn also has experience as a course instructor with the Department of Anthropology. This semester she is teaching a

special topics course titled, The Anthropology of Music. She is passionate about teaching and no matter the subject, her goals are to provide positive learning spaces, actively engage people with the topic, and motivate them beyond the classroom.

As an Educational Developer, Karyn's main objective is to introduce others to the culture of teaching, or the shared beliefs, practices, and goals that foster teaching excellence. She is sensitive to the professional development needs of individuals at the graduate and post-doctoral levels, and of faculty at different stages in their careers.

You can reach Karyn at extension #84651, or by e-mail at kolsen5@uwo.ca.



Kim Holland Retires

In May, the TSC held a Retirement Reception for Kim Holland, Instructional Designer. Congratulations Kim and thank you for your many years of dedicated service.

Teaching Inclusively: Helping Students Overcome Academic Culture Shock

BY AISHA HAQUE, LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION INSTRUCTOR, TEACHING SUPPORT CENTRE

Imagine being invited to play a new game where you believe you are familiar with the rules and what the expectations of the other players are. Now imagine that the rules of the game have changed, but no one has let you know. When you try to apply the 'old' rules, you find yourself being penalized. Leask (2004) uses this metaphor of "same game, new rules" to describe the challenges that many international students face when they first arrive on campus and begin their studies.

While many of us are familiar with the fact that travelers face various social and cultural adjustments in their host countries (indeed, think of the last time that you travelled and encountered cultural differences in whether or not it is appropriate to tip at a restaurant or haggle over the price of your produce at the market), we might not be as familiar with the specific *pedagogical adaptations* that might impact the learning experiences of international students in the Canadian classroom. Carroll refers to this process of cross-cultural academic adjustment as a type of "academic culture shock" (2007, p. 72).

Although we must be careful not to stereotype the international students in our classes, a knowledge of cultural differences is important in establishing a safe classroom environment that fosters the success of all students. More specifically, it is helpful to know what challenges international students may face in their academic adjustment to the Canadian classroom.

WHAT DOES ACADEMIC CULTURE SHOCK INVOLVE?

Academic culture shock involves potential difficulty with some of the following aspects of the teaching and learning experience in Canada:

1. Participating in class

International students experience three to four times more difficulties participating in class discussions than their peers (Mullins et al. 1995). In fact, a recent study conducted in the UK which compares the pre-departure and post-arrival anxieties of international students reveals that the greatest challenge faced by international students was "feeling embarrassed if unable to answer questions in class" (Gu et al., 2009). Only 7% expressed this as a concern prior to arriving in the UK, but this number jumped to a staggering 44% after their arrival. The percentage of students who were worried about "speaking up in class discussions" similarly jumped from 18% (before arrival) to 36% (after arrival) (Gu et al., 2009). See Figure 1 for more details.

2. Understanding lectures

In addition to classroom participation, several scholars identify the difficulties

associated with lecture content and delivery as a source of anxiety for many international students (Mullins et al., 1995 & Ryan, 2005). These difficulties are exacerbated when lectures present large amounts of information and assume that all students share the same level of background knowledge or language proficiency (Ryan, 2005).

3. Understanding course and instructor expectations

When asked for feedback on teaching evaluations, international students often ask for clarity on course objectives and expectations (McLean and Ransom, 2005). Gu, Schweisfurth and Day further identify that international students experience unexpected difficulties in establishing relationships with instructors and understanding their expectations (2009). See Figure 1 below.

continued on page 14

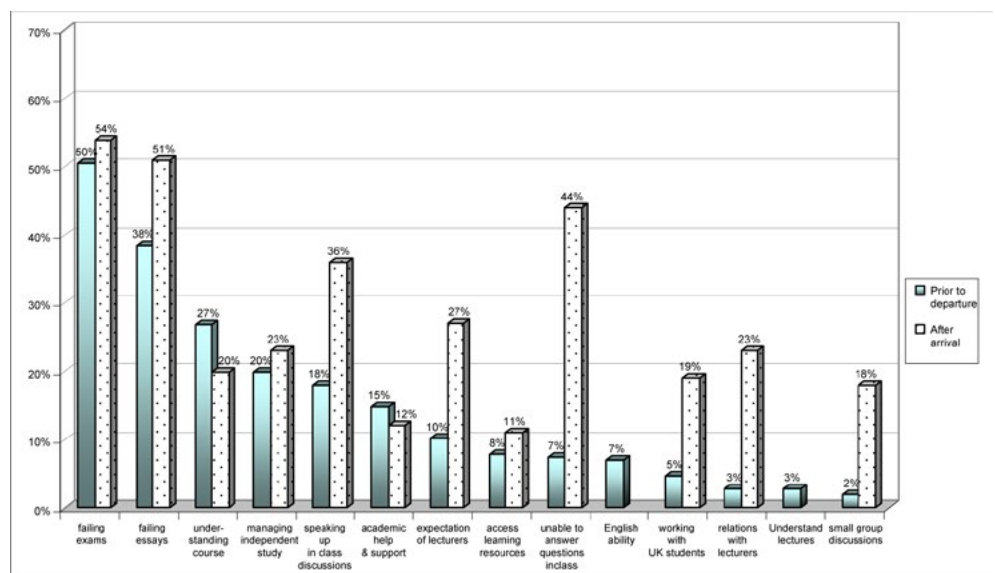


Figure 1. Comparison of the academic anxieties international students experience before and after their arrival in the UK (Taken from Gu et al., 2009, p. 15)

STRATEGIES TO CREATE INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS

Given these challenges, how can we create inclusive learning experiences for our international students? In other words, how can we better design our lessons with cultural differences in mind?

Below are some strategies you can use to help alleviate the academic culture shock of your students. It is important to note that these strategies are considered good practice because they will benefit *all* learners in your class, both international and local.

Classroom Participation

Our last issue of *Reflections* contains an article with five strategies you can use in your classroom to help reduce the anxieties students feel when participating in discussions: www.uwo.ca/tsc/resources/publications/newsletter/current_issue/five_strategies_to_increase_student_participation.html

Additionally, Stephen Brookfield offers a list of “Discussion Moves” that provides students with concrete ways to participate in classroom discussions. These strategies, which are available on his website, include techniques for students on how to summarize and build on the contributions of their peers: www.stephenbrookfield.com/Dr._Stephen_D._Brookfield/Workshop_Materials_files/Class_Participation_Grading_Rubric.pdf

Lecture Design and Delivery

Reinforce the key concepts presented in your lectures by incorporating some of the tips below into your repertoire:

- ▶ Provide a framework for your lectures by letting students know what topics will be covered that day and how the lecture relates to information presented in previous lectures (Ryan, 2005).
- ▶ Paraphrase, summarize and repeat difficult or key concepts so that students have multiple opportunities to grasp main ideas (McLean & Ransom, 2005).
- ▶ Avoid slang and explain/contextualize pop culture references.
- ▶ Pre-teach discipline-specific vocabulary

or jargon (by posting lists and terms on OWL).

- ▶ Post lecture notes either before or after class (Ryan, 2005).
- ▶ Use verbal signposts such as “this is an essential point” to underscore important information (Ryan, 2005).

Clarifying Expectations

Make processes and outcomes explicit for students. This involves the following:

- ▶ Providing students with ground rules for discussion, participation and group work so that they not only understand *why* it is important, but *how* to be successful;
- ▶ Modelling how to ask good questions, think critically, write good essays or reports, or read analytically by demonstrating these skills in class or by providing examples for students (McLean and Ransom, 2005); and
- ▶ Explaining the assessment criteria to students so that they know how they will be evaluated. You can do this by providing examples of completed assignments from previous years (with the permission of students) or by using rubrics that outline the criteria for success.

Conclusion

Thinking back to our earlier metaphor of “same game, new rules” (Leask, 2007), using a combination of these strategies in our course design and delivery will ensure that all of our students know the “rules” of Canadian academia. We must keep in mind that a truly inclusive approach to teaching involves recognizing, valuing, and accommodating cultural differences – including some of the above tips and techniques in your teaching toolkit will

help you to better design your lessons for today’s multicultural classrooms.

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Are you teaching online or considering teaching online in the near future?

If you are, the TSC offers the Instructional Skills Workshop Online (ISWO). The next workshop will be offered in the spring of 2015.

For more details, check out the TSC website www.uwo.ca/tsc or contact Gavan Watson in the Teaching Support Centre at: gavan.watson@uwo.ca

Where Does the Comma Go?

Or, Citation Management Support at Western Libraries

KIM MCPHEE, TEACHING & LEARNING LIBRARIAN, WESTERN LIBRARIES

How do I keep track of all the papers I've been reading? Should I use APA or MLA style for my paper? Why do you keep talking about plagiarism? These are just some of the citation management-related questions that you likely hear from your students each term. How do you answer them? Western Libraries is ready to help.

Citation Management Systems

There are many citation management software options available to you and your students. Some of these are freely available while others require a paid subscription. Check out this [handy comparison chart](#). Western Libraries has had a RefWorks subscription for the past ten years; however, **Western will no longer have access to RefWorks after August 2015** when the Canadian server is scheduled to be shutdown. If you are an active RefWorks user, do not despair. You will be contacted with information about selecting an alternative system and migrating your data

before August 2015. Also, library staff will be discouraging students from creating new RefWorks accounts and instead teaching about the various available citation management systems.

Which Style?

Depending on your discipline, the answer to the above question is either simple or vague. If you are in a discipline that relies on a sole citation style, your students are in luck. You can easily point them to the [relevant style guide](#) and they are ready to cite all of their research resources. If, on the other hand, you tend to ask students to "pick a style and stick with it" your students might find themselves struggling. If you are part of this latter group, I recommend choosing a particular style and asking students to use it for your course. In this way, they can avoid floundering and it makes your marking easier as all papers are consistently formatted.

Plagiarism

Western Libraries staff are prepared and happy to teach your students about the importance and mechanics of academic integrity. Students know, or at least we think they know, about the requirements to cite their sources. However, they often do not know the fine details of academic integrity such as appropriate paraphrasing. We can work with you and your students to ensure that no one commits inadvertent plagiarism and potentially suffer the consequences many years after graduating.

As you head into the fall term and start your students on their research paths, please be sure to include Western Libraries in your toolkit of citation management resources.

Kim McPhee is Acting Teaching & Learning Librarian until Tom Adam returns in 2015 from his role as Copyright Advisor to the Provost.



Western Certificate *in* Academic & Professional Communication for International Graduate Students

- ✓ practice your public speaking skills
- ✓ communicate effectively with undergraduate students
- ✓ develop strategies for networking and collaborating with international research teams



Visit www.uwo.ca/tsc
for more details

AWARDS & GRANTS

WESTERN TEACHING AWARDS	Edward G. Pleva Award for Excellence in Teaching	Deadline for receipt of dossiers: January 15, 2015
	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	
WESTERN FUNDING INITIATIVES	Fellowship in Teaching Innovation	Application Deadline: March 2, 2015
	Western Mentoring Micro Grant (for full-time tenure-track faculty)	Application Deadline: December 1, 2014
	International Curriculum Fund	Application Deadline: April 30, 2015
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 17, 2015 (internal) August 31, 2015 (external)
	Alan Blizzard Award (rewards collaboration in teaching)	Deadline for nominations: mid-March 2015
	Desire2Learn Innovation Award (recognizes innovative approaches to post-secondary teaching)	Deadline for applications: February 2015
	3M National Student Fellowship (for students who demonstrate outstanding leadership)	Deadline for applications: January 12, 2015
	Christopher Knapper Lifetime Achievement Award (contributions to teaching learning and educational development)	Deadline for nominations: next call for proposals will be in 2015
	OCUFA's Award Programs ocufo.on.ca	
	Teaching Award Academic Librarianship Award	Deadline for nominations: May 2015

Information and guidelines for all these awards and grants can be found on the [TSC website](#).

Western MENTORING Micro Grant

The Western Mentoring Micro Grant (up to \$2,500) is designed to maximize mentoring experiences for full-time tenure-track faculty.

Application deadline
December 1, 2014.

Contact person: Madeline Lennon
Coordinator, Faculty Mentor Program
Teaching Support Centre

E-mail: mlennon@uwo.ca

Drop in Information Session

**Wednesday, November 5th, 2014
12:00 - 1:30 pm**

Teaching Support Centre, Room 121,
The D.B. Weldon Library.

[Click here](#) for more information and registration.

Introducing the Faculty Certificate in Teaching Excellence

BY: KARYN OLSEN, EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPER, TEACHING SUPPORT CENTRE

The Teaching Support Centre is pleased to announce the launch of the Certificate in Teaching Excellence for Western faculty. The Certificate is for faculty members interested in opportunities to share ideas and practices related to teaching and learning on campus. The suite of programs offered as part of the Certificate allows participants to explore and implement a variety of teaching strategies, engage with scholarly literature, and reflect on their own approaches to teaching.

Faculty members who participate in the Certificate will have the opportunity to connect with interdisciplinary groups of peers to build networks of support for teaching, exchange resources, and expand teaching practices beyond disciplinary boundaries. They will relate key theories about teaching and learning in higher education to personal teaching practices and reflect critically on those practices. They will design course components that effectively align learning outcomes, teaching strategies, and assessments, and try-out relevant teaching technologies that promote student engagement.

Finishing the Certificate may take up to one year or longer but participants may complete the program components in any order. The five components include:

1. The Instructional Skills Workshop:

The ISW is a face-to-face instructor development workshop designed to enhance the effectiveness of both new and experienced instructors. Participants design and conduct mini-lessons and receive peer feedback. The program also introduces techniques for designing learning outcomes, eliciting student participation, and assessing student

learning. An Online ISW (ISWO) will also soon be available to faculty in the upcoming year.

2. Teaching Squares

The Teaching Squares Program is a unique opportunity to gain insight into one's own teaching through the observation of colleagues. A square is comprised of four faculty members from across campus who invite one another into their classrooms. The group then meets over complimentary lunch to discuss what they have learned about their own teaching practice through the observational process.



3. Faculty Learning Communities (FLCs):

FLCs bring colleagues together around an area of common interest in the realm of teaching and learning. The goal is to create a supportive community wherein participants can informally share best practices and engage in friendly inquiry and discovery. This fall, the TSC will facilitate

two FLCs, one on eLearning, and another on graduate student supervision. Additional FLCs will be introduced in 2015.

4. Course Design and Delivery:

Through the participation in the Course Design and Renovation Workshop, or the Teaching with Technology Institute, participants will develop lesson and course plans that effectively promote student engagement and learning. Faculty will have the opportunity to examine teaching theories, strategies, and technologies, and relate these to their personal teaching contexts.

5. Independent Project:

To complete this component, participants can choose to prepare a cohesive teaching dossier that reflects their personal teaching philosophy, teaching experiences, and teaching innovations. Or, they may explore one of two specialized areas in higher education. Those interested in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) will prepare a research proposal, and those interested in Educational Leadership, will design a discipline-specific project that addresses a particular need within the faculty member's home department.

For more details and to register in the Certificate program, please visit our website at the following link: www.uwo.ca/tsc/faculty_programs/faculty_certificate/index.html

Questions? Please e-mail tsc@uwo.ca

Spring

PERSPECTIVES ON TEACHING



Wednesday, May 13, 2015

Keynote Speaker:

Dr. Mathew L. Ouellett

Associate Provost and Director of the Office for Teaching and Learning, Wayne State University

Editor of “**Teaching Inclusively**: Resources for Course, Departmental and Institutional Change in Higher Education”

More details coming soon. Stay tuned for sessions related to teaching with technology at Spring Perspectives.



Professional and Academic Skills for
Teaching, Research and Getting Hired

g r a d p a t h . u w o . c a

GradPath is your portal to graduate student professional development programs at Western. It highlights information and resources for succeeding at each stage of

the graduate journey, and will lead you to the programs on campus that will help you develop the competencies necessary to succeed in teaching, research and professional practice.

Western  **Teaching Support Centre**

Supervision Conversations 2014/15

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.

12:00 noon - 1:00 pm
Teaching Support Centre
Room 122 Weldon Library

Register to receive reminders.

Wednesday, November 12

Mentoring International Graduate Students

Thursday, December 11

Procrastinators and Perfectionists — Helping Students who are Stuck

Tuesday, January 20

Supporting ESL speakers in the Thesis Writing Process

Tuesday, February 24

Helping Grad Students Manage Stress and Anxiety

Tuesday, March 24

Recruiting Grad Students

Tuesday, April 21

Keeping Your Students on Track During the Summer

Graduate Program Practices at Western – Expanded 2014 Edition

Dr. Gloria Leckie, Professor Emerita, FIMS
Teaching Fellow for Graduate Education, Teaching Support Centre

Based on interviews with graduate chairs and faculty, the guide catalogues practices in graduate education, from recruitment through coursework, comprehensive exams, thesis proposals, to placement and tracking. Graduate Program Practices is **available HERE 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.

The guide is available at: www.uwo.ca/tsc/resources/pdf/Leckie-GradPractices-2014.pdf

