

The Learning Advocate

Faculty Advisory Committee

Faculty are the primary clientele of the Center for Teaching and Learning. Consequently, the Center looks to its Faculty Advisory Committee (FAC) for important feedback on CTL programs and services. Additionally, members of the FAC serve as champions for the Center's mission along with its associated activities. The Faculty Advisory Committee for the Center for Teaching and Learning is comprised of a representative from each college, the Meridian Campus, the MSU Extension Service, and one at large for a total of 12 members. Members serve a three-year term with the option to serve additional three year terms with the consent of the Director of the Center, the member, and the member's college or division. Replacements are selected based on the recommendations of the departing representative, the Dean or Director of the respective unit and the Director of the Center. On a biannual basis the FAC chooses a Chair from among its members. The Chair in consultation with the Director of the Center schedules meetings. Current members of the FAC (with the year their terms end in parentheses) are:

- Walter Taylor - School of Human Sciences (2012)
- Susan Seal - MSU Cooperative Extension Service (2012)
- Chris Monson - School of Architecture (2010)
- Michael Brown - Music Education (2010) (member-at-large)
- Melissa Moore - Marketing/Quant Analysis/Bus Law (2011)
- Kay Brocato - Curriculum & Instruction (2012)
- Donna Reese - Dean of Engineering (2011)
- Steve Grado - FWRC - Forestry (2012)
- Amanda Clay Powers - General Library (2011)
- Marian Swindell - Meridian Division of Arts & Sciences (2011)
- Bob Lindford - CVM Clinical Science Department (2010)
- Bill Henry - Chemistry (2010)



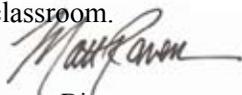
From the Director's Desk

It is hard to believe, but the Center for Teaching and Learning is entering its fourth year of existence. The Center has made progress during the past three years towards fostering a university culture where quality teaching and engaged learning are both revered and practiced. We have worked with hundreds of like-minded faculty who are dedicated to providing the best learning opportunity they can for their students. I have been very impressed with the early career faculty whom I have met and on numerous occasions have had the pleasure of watching teach. Additionally, I am in debt to the multitude of veteran faculty who have pitched in to help the Center carry out its mission.

Each year there have been new programs and services offered by the Center dedicated to improving teaching and learning at MSU. An increasing number of faculty across the campus are becoming more familiar with the services offered by the Center as well as those provided by the Library, Academic Outreach and Continuing Education, and Information Technology Services. Each of these units has been extremely cooperative in working with the Center so that each unit's services and programs dedicated to instructional faculty are coordinated and focused. A prime example of this cooperation is Boot Camp. This May the Center will offer the 4th Instructional Technology Boot Camp in coordination with the Library, ITS, AOCE and the Instructional Technology Advisory Committee. The goal of Boot Camp is to provide faculty with a strong pedagogical foundation to be able to effectively integrate instructional technology into their teaching, be it in a face-to-face classroom, a hybrid course, and/or a pure distance education situation. This type of collaboration creates a synergy that produces a comprehensive bootcamp that helps move teaching and learning forward at Mississippi State University.

Another service that a growing number of faculty are taking advantage of is the instructional technology support provided by the Center. This support, offered either by phone or via walk-in, has been a service from the first day of the Center. However, we have seen a steady increase in the number of faculty whom we have been serving. For example, this past fall we had a dramatic increase in the number of trouble tickets resolved by the Center. There was a 150% increase in the number of tickets closed this fall as compared to last fall. This corresponds to the ever growing number of faculty who are using myCourses as well as other instructional technologies such as eInstruction, Turnitin, podcasting, the technology classrooms, and interactive video. There was another increase in the number of course sections being offered in myCourses this fall semester, with nearly 45% (1,995) of all Fall 2008 course sections being in myCourses. There are already 1602 course sections in myCourses for this spring. All data indicate that the number of instructors using myCourses, as well as other instructional technologies, is going to continue to increase. The Center is committed to continue providing faculty the highest level of technical as well as pedagogical support of these technologies.

The Center for Teaching and Learning exists to serve instructional faculty in their quest to provide the best educational environment for their students. We are always interested in your ideas and feedback in order to improve our service and support to you. Each college as well as the Meridian campus and the Extension Service has a representative on our Faculty Advisory Committee. (Please see the article on the front page for more information.) Please be sure that they are representing your wants and needs. As always, you can contact me directly to let me know what we can do to help you in the classroom.



Director

Center Happenings

Seminars

The Center for Teaching and Learning is offering one hour teaching and learning workshops this Spring in 336 Etheredge Hall Conference Room. The remaining Spring 2009 seminars include:

March 11, 2009
April 2, 2009
April 15, 2009

Web 2.0 in the Classroom
Fostering an Ethical Classroom Environment
iPods and iPhones in the Classroom

Brown Bags

The Center for Teaching and Learning offers three Brown Bag sessions each semester. The Brown Bag sessions cover timely topics related to teaching and learning at MSU. Each session consists of a distinguished panel of experts on a topic. The attendees are served a light lunch (while it lasts) during the event. The sessions are scheduled from noon to 1:00, with lunch and networking beginning at 11:30. The remaining Spring 2009 Brown Bag session topics and dates include:

March 25, 2009 **Ask President Keenum about Teaching and Learning (Griffis 401)**
April 22, 2009 **Behavioral Intervention Team at MSU (McCain 150)**

Grisham Master Teacher Series

The Spring 2009 Grisham Master Teacher Series is scheduled for April 1, 2009 at 2:00 p.m. in the Grisham Room on the third floor of Mitchell Memorial Library. Funded by author John Grisham, the Grisham Master Teacher awards began in 1993 and recognize excellence in teaching. Our speaker, Dr. Robert Moore, is the 2008 Grisham Master Teacher recipient and Associate Professor of Marketing. A reception will follow his presentation.

Registration is encouraged and appreciated for all the events listed. For more information or to register, please visit ctl.msstate.edu.



SPRING 2009

First Year Experience and Learning Communities

First-Year Experience programs continue to thrive and expand at Mississippi State University. We were well represented by several of our faculty and administrators who presented at the annual National Conference on the First-Year Experience in February, and this conference is highly recommended for anyone involved in teaching or serving first-year students.

The First-Year Seminar program will again be active in the Fall 2009 semester, with approximately two dozen first-year seminars to be offered. For faculty, these seminars are “the course you have always wanted to teach”: in other words, a 1-credit hour seminar on any topic of a faculty member’s choosing, geared for students newly entering the University. Some experts refer to these as “passion” courses, in that faculty typically pick topics for which they have a particular passion. For students, it is “one for fun”: a 1-credity-hour course, not taken to fulfill any requirement, but taken for the sheer fun and interest value of it. Last year, over 450 students participated in these seminars.

Topics anticipated for Fall 2009 include returning favorites such as Cooking Basics: Iron Chef Bully; It’s All Greek to Me; Reel Music: Exploring 100 Years of Movie Music; Can $2 + 2 = 5$? The Math of an Accounting Fraud; Stepping Into the World of Fashion; and Veterinary Medicine: Beyond Shots and De-Worming, among others. Exciting new topics for next semester include Water in a Net: Construction and Engineering Law; Simpsonomics: Economic Principles and the Simpsons; A SLICE of Starkville (Service-Learning, Involvement, Culture, and Eating); How to Be a Millionaire. Really. Yes, Really; Healthcare and Medical Professionals of the Future; Guesstimation; iProgram: Programming for the iPhone and iPod; Wood is Wonderful: Why; Animal Welfare; and Yoga in Practice and Theory. There are more—this is only a selection of examples. There should be something of interest to just about any student.

Our program of Learning Communities will also continue in Fall 2009. Three have already been funded, and a fourth is being continued: the Engineering Living/Learning Community, in which entering Engineering students will live in Hull Hall together, receive special mentoring and tutoring, and take Chemistry together; the Digital Biology Learning Community, a special-interest Learning Community involving faculty from an array of specialties, aimed at graduate students learning the fundamentals of functional genomics and systems biology; the Freshman Chemistry Learning Community, in which first-year Chemistry majors will share a residence hall and take a special combined lecture/lab course designed specifically for this group, including not only traditional Chemistry content but also service-learning and outreach programs in the local

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community; and the Griffis Learning Community, in which a group of first-year students in the Shackouls Honors College will all live in Griffis Hall and co-enroll in Honors General Psychology and Honors Public Speaking together. Additional, non-residential, non-Honors Learning Communities, open to any first-year student, are anticipated, in which students will take linked courses together in either General Psychology and Public Speaking (“the PSY-COs”), or General Psychology and English Composition (“the PSYCH-Es”). Similar linked-course Learning Communities were popular and successful last year, and these offerings are slated to increase in the upcoming Fall semester. One variant in the advanced planning stages will combine Psychology, Communication, and Service-Learning, with enhanced academic and educational content.

Proposals for First-Year Seminars and Learning Communities can still be considered. If interested, contact Dr. Tom Carskadon, First-Year Experience Director.

Use This Tomorrow – Tips for Teaching

One of the most important traits of effective teaching is clarity. The instructor must have a crystal clear idea what they want to teach, and just as importantly, students must understand what they are to learn. The most effective way to accomplish this is to first develop your objective(s) for a class. Your objective(s) should be performance-oriented and measurable. Once you have developed your objective(s), then you know what and how you need to teach your lesson. Most instructors do this in some form or fashion. However, take the next step, and at the beginning of each class tell students what you expect them to learn that day. Don't make them guess, but rather simply tell them, and tell them how you are going to measure their learning. This will help clarify for your students what you expect them to learn. Use this tomorrow and increase your clarity.



myCourses Implementation

For the Fall 2008 semester, WebCT was upgraded to myCourses. During the fall 44.4% of all courses were marked to use the system. This represented 89.8% of the MSU student population and 50.7% of the MSU faculty. The upgrade provided an enhanced system and features as well as better integration with other technologies such as eInstruction and turnitin.com.

CTL currently provides seven different myCourses workshops. Additional workshops are being developed and will be announced later this spring. Information about myCourses training sessions, including the full workshop handouts, can be viewed at:

<http://www.ctl.msstate.edu/technologies/mycourses/>



EDUCAUSE Review

The Center for Teaching and Learning was well represented at the EDUCAUSE 2008 Annual Conference in Orlando, Florida. During the October conference, CTL presented a poster session and took part in a lightning round. Tina Green presented during the Enterprise Systems Lightning Round along with six colleagues from other institutions.

A poster session entitled **Technology Time Trials: A Sprint for the Alpha Class** was presented by Matt Raven and Tina Green along with Chuck Pearson and Jason Tiffin from ITS.

All sessions included discussion of CTL's involvement with the Day One Learning Community.

From the Bookshelf....

This issue's focus is John Palfrey and Urs Gasser's oft-cited work, *Born Digital: Understanding the First Generation of Digital Natives*. Published in 2008, Palfrey and Gasser provide a sociological examination of the digital native and his/her impact on society.

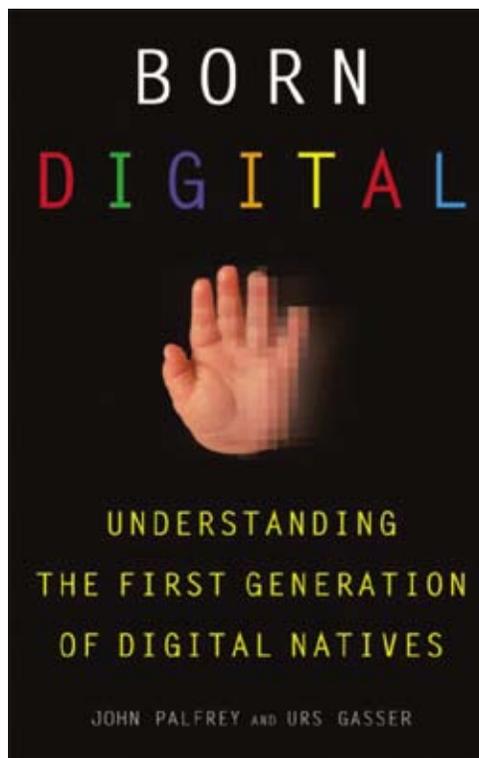
Much as been said about the digital immigrant/digital native divide. Popularized by writers such as Marc Prensky, digital natives generally refer to students born after 1980. These individuals view the world very differently than those who came before them---leading some to hypothesize that the pervasive use and expectation of digital knowledge and connections has physiologically altered this generation and its brain patterns. Digital natives are generally considered to be highly networked, interactive, and social. They prefer experiential and active learning models.

In contrast, digital immigrants are those of us who were born before the digital world began and have adapted to the new technologies. While we may become quite adept at using various aspects of the 21st century digital environment, we will always view this world differently than those who were born to it.

The digital native is socially and technologically connected, depending on a dispersed social network for both educational and entertainment needs. Consummate multi-taskers, digital natives often approach learning from a "grazing" perspective, drawing on a large number of resources (all on the Web) to meet their information needs. Their approach to learning offers serious challenges for traditional, lecture-based teaching models.

Palfrey and Gasser acknowledge that not every individual born since 1980 meets the definition of a technology-savvy, socially connected digital native. They argue that one of the core responsibilities of educational institutions may be to assist students who lack some of these skills, without which they will become increasingly isolated from their own generation and from a society that is being reformed by digital natives.

In addition to the book, the authors work with the Digital Natives Project: <http://www.digitalnative.org/>. Here you will find more information about the concept of digital natives and ways to participate in the discussion through a blog, a wiki, and a host of Web 2.0 applications.



Instructional Technology on the “Horizon”

Ever wonder what technologies will have an impact on your classroom in the near future? Then check out the Horizon Report! Produced for the past six years by a joint collaboration between the New Media Center and the EDUCAUSE Learning Initiative (ELI), the Horizon Report seeks to identify those technologies that will have an impact on learning in higher education. The advisory board examines hundreds of technologies and trends and identifies six that are projected to have the greatest impact. The time horizon for each technology ranges from “one year or less” to “four to five years”.

This year’s report identifies six technologies:

- Mobile Computing (one year or less)
- Cloud Computing (one year or less)
- Geo-everything (two – three years)
- The Personal Web (two – three years)
- Semantic-aware Applications (four – five years)
- Smart Objects (four – five years)

The report provides an overview of each technology, explicitly discusses the relevance of the technology on teaching and learning, and includes examples and additional reading sources. Some technologies, such as mobile computing, have appeared in each report. Others are new to this year’s report. The report is freely available on the web (as are the previous five reports) at: http://horizon.nmc.org/wiki/Main_Page.

Technology Classroom Updates

All 68 technology classrooms are now podcast ready with wireless receivers. In addition, 41 of these rooms received document camera upgrades to include a high quality Wolfvision VZ8. Because of additional funding from the Provost’s Office, seven new technology rooms will be online this summer and include: Allen 17, Allen 20, Allen 21, Allen 22, Allen 23, Lee 201, and Lee 208. For more information about an existing classroom, visit the technology classroom site at its.msstate.edu/Information/classroom.