

Institute for Teaching, Learning and Academic Leadership
University at Albany

Annual Report 2008-09
(Summer-Fall 2008 & Spring 2009)

I. Mission: ITLAL is a center for faculty and leadership development, with the mission of fostering excellence in university teaching and in faculty effectiveness in their professional roles. Above all, ITLAL promotes and supports through its programs greater *engagement of students* and the development of students' *ability to think critically*. Toward this goal, the Institute provides instructional support services and programs of professional enhancement to the faculty and instructional staff, including graduate students in teaching roles. ITLAL also provides programs for professional preparation of graduate students seeking careers in academe.

II. Overview of 2008-09

In spite of working with a smaller operating budget due to the budget crisis, and in spite of conservative planning due to a pending move to a new location, year two of ITLAL's existence was characterized by expansion of offerings, increased demand for services, increased interaction with departments and programs, and a sharpened focus of ITLAL's identity. This was due in large part to broad and vocal support from faculty and administrators (see unsolicited comments in section XVI). During the year ITLAL staff made concerted efforts to strengthen communication with faculty in general, and made efforts of outreach to specific administrators, particularly at the level of chairs and deans. Year two also saw the stabilization of staff in their new roles, resulting in their increased traction and recognition in the university. While year one was filled with pilots, experimentations and the Institute's identity-formation, year two was characterized by more ambitious and sustained projects.

III. Milestones for 2008-09

- Relocation of ITLAL from SS251 to LIB69, and the creation of walk-in faculty support lab and consultation area
- Expanded offerings, with broader overall faculty and GTA participation
- Expanded presence (workshops, office hours) on Downtown Campus
- Sharp growth in faculty and TA use of Consulting and Media Services
- Completion of first "Future Faculty" Program cycle for graduate students
- Launch of "Leadership Academy" Series (on Teaching Large Classes; Team-Based Learning, Web-Enhanced Courses, Blended Courses)
- Pilot of extended New Faculty Orientation, with Tenure workshop (collaboration with Provost's office)
- Pilot of Albany Interactive Theatre Ensemble (AITE)
- Service Learning Project (collaboration with Honors Program and Social Welfare)
- Peer Observation Resource Book (on-line) in English and Spanish
- Expanded web resources (online GTA Orientation and Handbook; online searchable Library)
- Student Learning Outcomes Review initiative (collaboration with IRPE and Provost's office)
- Faculty Learning Communities initiative (Teaching Writing; International Competence)
- Mid-term student survey service—full implementation after 1-year pilot
- Inaugural Teaching Portfolio Award for TA's
- Development of iTunes University pilot in conjunction with ITS

IV. Academies

To provide more substantive opportunities for faculty to innovate in their teaching, ITLAL launched the "Academy" event format. Academies normally include a "boot camp" of 1-3 days or a series of workshops, followed by work with individual instructors throughout the semester, plus small-group discussions and project assessment. Overall, 5 academies are currently at various stages of progress in the 08-09 academic year.

- *Instructional Leadership Academy 2009: Team-Based Learning.* ITLAL undertook this project to respond to the expressed interest of 9 faculty members (Sociology, Judaic Studies, Education, Health Policy, Biomedical, Social Welfare, East Asian, Art, Political Science), and 2 GTA's (Sociology). The project provides a framework for peer mentoring, materials, resources and guidance in transforming a course from a traditional lecture-dominant format to one driven by student participation in highly cohesive teams.
- *Instructional Leadership Academy 2009: Teaching Large Classes.* ITLAL recruited 5 faculty members from Arts and Sciences to form a cohort (along with two graduate teaching assistants) for the purpose of developing higher levels of student engagement in large or gateway (weed-out, high failure rates) courses. The two-day seminar led to individual re-design projects with various points of focus: clickers; peer instruction; teams and groups; activity design for critical thinking; reading and readiness assessment; and course policies to promote student motivation and autonomy. The redesigned courses are being taught in Spring 09 and Fall 09.

- *Technology Leadership Academy 2009: Web-enhanced Courses (collaboration with ITS)*. Learning from the experiences of the first cohort in the TLA-Blended Learning, ITLAL created an additional step in the process of course development for blended learning. The TLA for Web-enhanced Courses consisted of a two-day boot camp to learn use of web-based instructional tools for most common teaching tasks. This middle step was designed to better prepare faculty for the challenge of developing a fully blended course (50% face-to-face, 50% online). 8 full-time faculty members participated.
- *Technology Leadership Academy 2009: Blended Learning (partnership with Education, ITS and Sloan Foundation)* The second round of Blended Learning has 12 participants from English, Education, Anthropology, Information Studies, Political Science and Criminal Justice. This year's TLA Blended had a condensed blended format with online components happening before, during and after the academy. Participants are aiming to replace 50% of seat time with online components.
- *Technology Leadership Academy 2008: Blended Learning (partnership with Education, ITS, Social Welfare, Public Health and Sloan Foundation)*. The first cohort of faculty in the 2008 Academy on Blended Learning completed their implementations in Fall 2008 and Spring 2009. The academy consisted of a 3-day boot camp plus extensive consultation with individual faculty members during the fall and spring semesters. 19 faculty members from the Schools of Public Health and Social Welfare succeeded in delivering a blended course.

V. Assessment Services in support of teaching and learning

Peer Observation Resource Book

ITLAL adapted for UAlbany a web-based book (originally assembled and edited by the ITLAL director for UT El Paso) on effective peer observation for both formative and summative purposes. The purpose of this book is to provide faculty, deans and chairs with information on best practices, in the interest of broadening the campus perspective on effective assessment of teaching.

Mid-term student surveys (confidential only, for formative feedback on teaching)

ITLAL completed the pilot phase of this project in Summer 2008, rolling out the service to all UAlbany in Fall 2008. Faculty members make their request for appropriate survey forms online (based on the kind of teaching they do), and the forms are delivered in time to be administered on the appointed day. Once the forms are returned to ITLAL, the reports are generated within 2-3 days, and the results returned to the faculty in complete confidentiality.

Semester	2007-08	2008-09
Summer	0	3
Fall	14	58
Spring	21	48
Total	34	136
Growth		300%

Classroom observation and Videotaping

ITLAL has not heavily promoted this service, but is receiving occasional requests. 12 observations/videotapings were conducted in the 08-09 academic year. Greater use of this service is anticipated in 09-10, stemming from the recent publication of the Peer Observation Resource Book and two Fall 09 events devoted to this topic.

Survey services for institutional research

ITLAL continues to work with Institutional Research & Student Orientation to develop instruments and administration processes for specific survey functions. IRPE uses the ITLAL survey system for administering summer SIRFs.

Scholarship of Teaching and Academic Research

Working with the School of Criminal Justice, ITLAL piloted use of the survey system in support of faculty seeking to collect research data on teaching and learning from the students in their classes. Training and support are now available on demand for faculty or staff who wish to learn to use the survey tools for research purposes.

Consultations on Program Review

- ITLAL consulted with 5 CAS departments and 1 CCI department on revision of program learning outcomes.
- ITLAL delivered two workshops (total attendance = 55 faculty) on outcomes assessment, in support of departments undergoing program review.

Consultations on General Education Assessment

General Education Assessment Committee: ITLAL worked with IRPE and with the GEAC to provide a series of workshops for faculty participating in Gen-ed Assessment.

Gen-Ed Writing Assessment: ITLAL worked with the General Education Committee, the Undergraduate Dean, IRPE and Professor Bob Yagelski to pilot a specific approach to assessment of upper and lower level writing. This project required training readers and managing a two-day session for scoring of writing samples

VI. Learning Communities

Learning Communities are faculty-driven workshop and event series, coordinated by an ITLAL consultant.

Teaching Writing-Intensive Courses

Due to expressed concerns about a lack of training and support for teaching writing, ITLAL sponsored a group project for six faculty members (representing History, Political Science, Sociology, Music, Communication) who were teaching writing-intensive courses during the Spring 2009 semester. The goal of the group has been to explore (over 3 meetings) common challenges that teachers face when teaching writing and ultimately to develop a set of resources, which will be featured on ITLAL's website, based on research and the experiences of faculty members at UAlbany.

Service Learning (Collaboration with Social Welfare)

Service learning efforts were expanded this year as ITLAL and CPSP developed a grant-driven pilot for faculty support in service learning. ITLAL applied funding from its budget to projects in the Honors College. ITLAL and is providing pedagogical support while CPSP works to match university faculty and courses with appropriate community partners. Participating faculty represent Political Science, History, Journalism and Social Welfare.

Teaching International Competency (Collaboration with International Education)

ITLAL worked closely with International Education to foster campus-wide discussions on the teaching of international topics and cultural competency. The program consisted of 1) faculty presentations (October) on teaching practices, 2) a faculty panel (February) on developing cultural competency in students, 3) a workshop demonstration (November) of the simulation game BaFa BaFa, 4) a workshop on activities designed to foster cultural competency (March), and 5) a session designed to evaluate instruments that measure global competency (May).

VII. New Faculty Orientation (Collaboration with Office of the Provost)

ITLAL worked closely with the Office of the Provost to expand New Faculty Orientation into a year-long program of events that track to faculty needs during the first year.

August:	Preliminary Orientation and Resource Fair (hosted by Provost Sue Philips)
September:	Teaching and mentoring undergraduates (facilitated by Vice-Provost Sue Faerman)
October:	Teaching and mentoring graduate students (facilitated by Dean Marjorie Pryse)
December:	Research (facilitated by Vice President Lynn Videka)
March:	When to Say Yes, How to Say No (facilitated by Tine Reimers)
May:	Tenure Day (hosted by Sue Philips; facilitated by Tine Reimers)

VIII. Individual Consultations

ITLAL consultations with faculty, GTA's and staff in teaching roles increased by 30% (from 333 in 07-08 to 434 in 08-09). These consultations occur over a wide range of topics, dealing with teaching/learning objectives that faculty wish to explore with a staff member: increasing student engagement and participation; challenging students to think at a higher level; assessing student learning. Other topics include trouble-shooting for an ongoing course, selecting and learning appropriate media and technologies, evaluation of teaching, outcomes assessment, reflection on career choices, and reflection on professional relations.

Office hours extended to Downtown campus (Collaboration with Social Welfare)

ITLAL expanded its face-to-face availability to faculty by scheduling weekly office hours in Draper Hall. This pilot effort will determine if it would be useful for ITLAL to set up a permanent satellite office on the downtown campus, as well as eventually on the East and Nanotech campuses.

Summary of Consultations by School or College

College or School	2007-08	2008-09
Arts and Sciences	164	218
Business	31	23
Computing and Information	9	22
Criminal Justice	2	26
Education	11	21
Library	1	3
Nanoscale Science and Eng.	1	6
Rockefeller	16	39
Public Health	28	20
Social Welfare	47	70
Totals	333	448
Annual Growth rate:	34+ %	

IX. Workshops and other events (for full event descriptions see Appendix)

Events on Teaching for Faculty and Instructional Staff

Date	Title of Event	Attendance
June 18/19/20	Technology Leadership Academy 2008: Blended Courses	19
Aug 28	What's going to be on the Test? (New Faculty Orientation)	28
Sept 10	Leading Discussions that are Substantive AND Engaging	15
Sept 15&16	Provoking Curiosity and Fostering Critical Thinking	34
Sept 25	Strategies for Dealing with Difficult Students and Difficult Situations	24
Oct 2	Creating a Grade Book in Excel: Open House	15
Oct 6&7	The Student Learning Portfolio: Beyond tests, presentations and papers	13
Oct 14	International Outreach Lunch	25
Oct 22	Incorporating Media & Podcasting into Your Teaching	17
Oct 30	Strategies for Assessing Student Learning	24
Nov 19	Teaching to Promote Cultural Awareness (BaFa BaFa)	19
Jan 12 & 13	Technology Leadership Academy 2009: Web-Enhanced Courses	8
Jan 14	Course and Syllabus Design	24
Jan 15 & 16	Instructional Leadership Academy: Teaching Large Classes	7
Feb 2 & 5	Why Do Students Struggle with Abstraction?	22
Feb 10	What Is Streaming Media, and How Can You Teach With It?	6
Feb 26	Faculty Showcase: Team-Based Learning	14
Feb 27	Internationalization Panel: Helping Students Encounter the Foreign	21
Mar 2	Teaching Portfolios for Faculty	9
Mar 4	Designing Activities that Explore Cultural Values	6
Mar 11	Excel Grade Book Open House	7
Mar 13	Writing Student Learning Goals	31
Mar 20	Maryellen Weimer: Learner-Centered Teaching	28
May 7	Internationalization: Global Competency	5
May 8	Team-Based Learning: An Orientation to Readiness Assurance	13
May 18/20/22	Technology Leadership Academy: Blended Learning	12
Total		446
Average		17+

Events for GTAs & Preparing Future Faculty

Aug 28	ITA Orientation	38
Aug 28	TA Orientation	93
Sept 4	Demystifying the Academic Job Market	11
Sept 23	Effective CV and Cover Letters	10
Oct 23	Writing Grant Proposals as a Graduate Student	77
Oct 29	Teaching Portfolios for Future Faculty	27
Nov 5	Preparing for the Academic Job Interview	20
Jan 20	Easy Classroom Activities to Increase Student Engagement	15
Jan 29	Getting Students to Do the Reading	7
Feb 12	How to Find the Right Faculty Job for You	10
Mar 21	SKILL Conference on Teaching and Learning	35
Total		345
Average		31+

Events for Departments/Groups

November 7	UHS Languages: Using Portfolios to Put Learning in Context	170
February 9	Creating a Syllabus that Emphasizes Student Learning (for Sociology Graduate Students)	8
December 4	Developing a Mentoring Program for Junior Faculty (for Organization of Women Faculty)	22
March 30	Teaching Portfolios for Future Faculty (for Sociology Graduate Students)	6
April 3	Plagiarism – How to design assignments and evaluation situations that discourage or inhibit dishonesty (For UHS)	12
Total		218

ITLAL Presentations/workshops within faculty courses

February	BaFa BaFa simulation in Journalism course	40
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New Initiative: Interactive Theater

ITLAL piloted a new project, the **Albany Interactive Theatre Ensemble (AITE)**, modeled after the Cornell Interactive Theater Ensemble and the CRLT Players (University of Michigan). The purpose of this project is to develop ways to more intensively and authentically engage faculty and graduate students, on a wide range of university and professional issues (diversity, civility, teaching, professional preparation, etc.). A first performance of “The Job Interview” occurred during a November 5 workshop for graduate students, “Preparing for the Academic Job Interview” and was revised and repeated for an encore performance during the SKILL Conference. Plans are underway to develop scenarios on teaching and learning for Fall 09.

X. Professional Development Programs for Graduate Students

Preparing Future Faculty Program (collaboration with Dean of Graduate Studies)

ITLAL’s Preparing Future Faculty program is envisioned to be a coordinated suite of activities to better prepare graduating students for their on-campus teaching, as well as for their careers in academe. The core of the program consists of three courses: Seminar in College Teaching; Preparing for the Professoriate, and Reflective Teaching (including the preparation of a teaching portfolio). In 08-09 the PFF has shifted from its developmental pilot stage to a promotional one. A second iteration of the Seminar in College was offered in Fall 08, and six students from Philosophy and Counseling Psychology attended. The Spring 09 offering of Reflective Teaching took the form of a working group, focusing on the teaching portfolio. Ten students (Sociology, Physics, Public Policy, Education, Biology, LLC, Criminal Justice, Earth and Atmospheric Sciences) participated.

Teaching Portfolio Awards

ITLAL launched a contest intended to foster GTA interest in taking a more scholarly approach to their teaching. 34 graduate students completed an “intent to submit” form, and each of these individuals consulted with an ITLAL staff member for coaching and feedback. 13 of the original applicants submitted a completed portfolio for the award. A committee of three faculty members judged the finalists. Three awards and two honorable mentions were given at the 2009 SKILL Conference and the winners were part of a panel discussion at the conference as well.

SKILL Conference

ITLAL sponsored its 5th annual SKILL Conference for graduate students in teaching roles on Saturday, March 21, 2009, at University Hall. The conference included a keynote presentation by Maryellen Weimer of Penn State University, a presentation by the Albany Interactive Theater Ensemble, and a panel discussion led by the winners of Teaching Portfolio Awards. 15 graduate students from UAlbany and Buffalo State University made concurrent presentations as well. 47 graduate students from Albany and surrounding institutions registered for the conference.

Re-focused TA and ITA Orientations

ITLAL provided for the first time a TA-specific event for graduate students who are in or will be in teaching roles. The program included a special reception and workshop for 38 international TA's, and featured experience graduate student teachers in roles as mentors and breakout session facilitators during the conference. A panel of 5 UAlbany faculty from several schools and colleges contributed a conversation on "lessons learned." Attendance overall for the event was 93.

International TA Engagement

ITLAL focused on helping international TAs make connections with resources and individuals. The TA orientation (see above) dedicated a pre-orientation session to issues specific to international TAs (topics: the culture of the American classroom, classroom management techniques). The ITA session also served as a conduit to ensuring that ITA's would participate in the larger TA community during the regular orientation.

XI. Media and Technology Services

ITLAL provides digitization services for faculty, transferring nearly any kind of media source into formats usable in web-based applications. Items are converted to a streamable format and made available on a secure web to faculty and their students.

Requests	2007-08	2008-09
Total new requests	173	345
Total items processed and stored for streaming	6494	8804
Total number of instructors using streaming media server:	129	160

iTunes U Pilot: ITLAL is currently working with 3 faculty volunteers to test the iTunes software and prepare for broader faculty use of this new service. iTunes U allows users to manage and distribute educational multimedia content through mobile devices online using Apple's iTunes software.

LUNA Project (Digital Archives)

In collaboration with Art, ITS and the Library, ITLAL is developing a new service for faculty who wish to make high resolution image collections to store and manage using LUNA software. ITLAL will become one of 3 primary points of service for faculty members seeking to use this resource.

Clickers

ITLAL continues to promote effective use of classroom clickers through workshops and individual consultations, and provides extensive ongoing support for any instructors seeking to adopt the technology. Through coordinated efforts with ITS, ITLAL has helped UAlbany support a single platform for all clicker use, thus simplifying purchases for both students and the bookstore. 22 new adopters were recorded in 08-09

XII. Web Site Expansion

New content and functionality

- *Peer Observation Resource Book* (+ Spanish version)
- Online Searchable Index of ITLAL Library for teaching, learning, assessment and leadership
- Discipline specific teaching resource area
- Online Orientation/Handbook for GTA's
- Google Calendar function for linkage with clients' calendars
- Search tool for website

Website Traffic

The incomplete data below show rates since Jan 2009, information acquired through the use of new tracking software. Information for Summer/Fall 08 is not currently available. Based on actual 2009 numbers and average monthly use, ITLAL website use is projected to be up substantially compared with 07-08.

Month	Page Loads	Individual visitors	First-time visitors	Returning Visitors
Jan 2009	1,653	1,059	970	89
Feb 2009	2,734	1,478	1,323	155
Mar 2009	2,895	1,643	1,407	236
Apr 2009	3,964	1,591	1,097	494
May 2009	6,191	1,939	1,244	695
June 2009	4,085	1,234	717	517
Total	21,522	8,944	6,758	2,186
Average	3,587	1,424	1,126	364

Comparative chart for 07-08 and 08-09 website use rates

Pages or unique visitors	07-08	08-09
Monthly average page loads	1,951	3,587
Monthly average individual visitors	843	1,424

XII. ITLAL Publications

Teaching at Albany (distributed to 2200 readers)

September 2008, *Team-based Learning: A Test Case* (A UAlbany faculty member narrates her journey)

March 2009, *Do Your Students Feel Responsible for their Own Learning?*

Graduate Teaching at Albany (distributed to 2200 readers)

February 2009, *Busting Myths about College Teaching*

XIII. ITLAL Staff Professional Development and Scholarship

- POD (Professional and Organizational Development Network) Conference 2008: Bill Roberson (with Christine Reimers), "Weaving Judgment into Knowing."
- AIPU (Association internationale de la pedagogie universitaire) Conference 2008: Bill Roberson (with Christine Reimers), « De débutants à penseurs : vers un paradigme transformatif et multidisciplinaire à travers l'enquête et la découverte»
- Lilly Conference on Teaching, South 2009 : Bill Roberson, "The Courage to Think : Using uncertainty and error to foster inquiry"
- Lilly Conference on Teaching, East 2009 : Bill Roberson, "Think before You Know: Converting knowledge into objects of inquiry"

XIV. ITLAL staff committee work and service

- Council on Academic Assessment; GEAC Subcommittee;
- LISC
- Writing Program Task Force
- ROTC
- Husted Classroom Committee
- Classroom Advisory Committee
- Technology Coordinators Forum
- Center for Language and International Communication (CLIC) steering committee
- Community and Public Service Program
- Faculty Committee, Middle States Self Study

XV. Surveys of Faculty and GTA's

ITLAL conducted two surveys during the year, in an attempt to learn more about faculty and GTA expectations for their teaching, to assess their needs, and, where possible given the newness of ITLAL, to collect data on satisfaction with ITLAL's services.

Findings from Spring 2009 survey of Pre-tenure faculty members (71 respondents)

- 99% expressed at least some interest in working toward improvements in teaching.
- 83% report that their department offers some or strong encouragement for instructors to work on improving their teaching.
- 85% believe that teaching is at least somewhat important in tenure decisions in their department.
- 75% reported using ITLAL's services occasionally or frequently.
- Asked to compare their experiences at other centers to those with ITLAL most said that we compare favorably with other centers they have used (while acknowledging that they may have greater interest now and/or that they have different needs than at previous institutions).
- Several commented on ITLAL's professionalism.
- The services that were considered most useful were workshops, academies/ open houses; newsletters; and the website.
- The topics that the most respondents appeared likely to attend were critical thinking, teaching with technology, evaluating student learning, teaching with cases, and leading discussions.

Findings from Fall 2008 survey of Graduate Students in Teaching Roles (159 respondents)

(ITLAL workshops and services for TA's were not fully developed when the GTA survey occurred, but the information collected was useful for planning.)

When asked to identify sources of support for their teaching...

- 90% reported seeking guidance from faculty members
- 80% reported seeking guidance from their fellow GTA's
- 64% report a departmental orientation as offered and/or required for GTA's in their departments
- 64% report having assigned faculty mentors

Needs and interest with respect to professional preparation...

- 87% indicated a desire for support for general professional development issues (preparing for job interviews, choosing and finding a job in an appropriate institution, writing cover letters, and preparing for a tenure-track position).
- 77% expressed an interest in workshops/services addressing one or more of these topics: teaching students to think critically, planning and leading discussions, active learning strategies, and test and assignment design
- 57% expressed an interest in workshops/services addressing the following technologies: Blackboard, Streaming Media, Electronic Portfolios, and E-Res

XVI. Unsolicited Comments from participants in ITLAL events or users of ITLAL services

Workshops

I was at the workshop yesterday, and found it paradigm-shifting. Could you send me copies of your slides from the presentation? After I've thought about them some more, I would appreciate an opportunity to talk with you about my course.

Thank you for your presentation yesterday on abstract thinking. It was very enlightening and my brain still hurts from being put in the position that I put my students in. This is all really good!

I forget to get back to you about my senior writing seminar last spring. I had attended the ITLAL workshop on preparing a syllabus, goals and assessments right before the start of the spring semester. Since this course was a whole new prep., I was in a good situation to try out some different techniques. Overall, the class went very well! In fact, those were my highest evaluations ever. It was a lot of work (being a writing seminar, not the techniques necessarily) but I really enjoyed the course and the students really enjoyed the course... So, thank you for your help and the workshop! The timing right before the start of the semester was perfect for me since I was still working on my syllabus and could really take advantage of the workshop. Thanks!

Thanks for the session, and for sending the quote. I was motivated to revise my syllabus as a result of your talk.

I think the workshop was a success! Your marketing skills obviously work a treat! I think the students did seem to get a lot out of the workshop, Well done, you put a good workshop together!

I attended your class on Wednesday regarding course and syllabus design. I enjoyed the class, and plan to implement several of the lessons that I learned.

Your course was useful and positive. I enjoyed it and have been thinking about what I want the students to leave with as a result of having taken this course. Thank you.

Thank you very much for your thoughtful and refreshing perspectives on teaching and engaging in scholarship. This really supported some of the direction I was going with my upcoming workshop. I learned some potentially useful techniques as well but mostly the support to respect and engage students, was very helpful. If you would like to share your power point from today, I would like to read it. I look forward to more from ITLAL.

Just a quick note to say that Ruth did a great job today at the UHS foreign language teachers' workshop. The presentation, exercise, and enthusiasm with which she addressed the multitude (about 170 teachers) was quite impressive. One teacher told me that she was really pleased to learn how to do shorter exercises because she teaches larger classes. The hints and suggestions were well received. Ruth is very articulate and clear in what she presents too. Thank you for sharing her with us.

I've only been to a couple ITLAL seminars so far but have found them informative and helpful. I hope to attend more and see you again in the future!

Thanks again for presenting this morning. I always get charged up by what you say and always learn a lot. And I mean that very sincerely.

Thanks so much for such an informative teaching seminar today. I really enjoyed it. Per our discussion, I was wondering if you wouldn't mind sending me a copy of your presentation? Thanks so much. And thanks so much for offering your seminars here on the downtown campus – it's much appreciated.

First I wanted to say how much I enjoyed the academy (last) week. Even though I intended it use the ideas for my Fall 09 class, I have decided to incorporate some in-class exercises into my spring course as well. Sort of a trial run. My class is about 50 students so I thought such exercises as informal polling and some group work might be good.

I structured some of my clicker questions around the ideas you presented in my XXX class – 250 kids in LC7. I received some of the best and most thoughtful interactions from the students I've seen in this type of format. If you can send me the slides, I'd appreciate having them for later reference. Thanks for the injection of insight!

You and your team did an awesome job in assembling the workshop materials and recruiting [graduate] students to attend!

Consultations on Course and Assignment Design

Just gave the midterm in the undergraduate class. They had to watch the movie Traffic and do an analysis (in groups). I couldn't believe how good some of the discussion was – the majority gets it, and the discussions are good even when they get the wrong answer. I just sat there and laughed – I wish I could have visual evidence of the difference between the last time I taught this class and this time. The difference is so big it's not even funny. These students are not rocket scientists, but they are actually getting the main concepts, and are enjoying it in the process. I have never had students tell me that they enjoyed a midterm before. I have always believed that exams are supposed to be learning experiences, but I could never really say that this was in fact true – these group exams are definitely learning experiences – thanks for helping me make this work.

Thank you so very much for all your helpful suggestions and invaluable advice for revamping courses. I incorporated your suggestions for the first course, but I mistakenly used 'participation,' but I will substitute the recommended term for the second course.

[user of Team-Based Learning] Gave my first RAT [Readiness Assessment Test] in research methods. I think it was fairly challenging... Individual grades ranged from 7 to 9 out of 10. Both groups got 10 out of 10, and had no questions or issues. Ensuing discussion revealed fairly detailed understanding of issues. Very cool to see learning in action.

Yesterday in a faculty meeting, a colleague of mine (who didn't at the time know that I'm using TBL in my LC) said something like, "Sure it's nice for students to work in groups, but it's impossible in an LC!" To which I was able to reply, "It is possible -- and I have video to prove it!" So, yes, I see even from where I am that it's important to get people to see what is possible, & I'm on board to help, if possible.

I just wanted to let you all know about two things that students have said to me recently: First, on last week's snow day, just after classes were cancelled, I was walking through the Campus Center when I heard a student from my LC course (in which we're doing TBL) call out, "Dr XXX! I'm sorry that we can't have class today!" I don't think I've ever heard those words strung together in that order from a student before, and I think it's the teamwork that she was looking forward to.

Second, in my 300-level course I've been doing similar sorts of activities less formally, including having students work on quizzes alone & then in teams. Yesterday class ended before the students could finish working in their teams, so before they discovered whether their answers were right. A student said on the way out, with feeling, "I don't care about the points -- I just want to know the answers!" Also a sentence I think I may never have heard before.

Obviously these anecdotes don't add up to anything approaching a scientific assessment of how things are going in these classes, but they do bolster my sense that my courses are definitely more fun for both me & my students this semester (so far), and that the students are more engaged, and that makes me optimistic about some real learning taking place this semester. Thanks for all your help!

I did the RAT with my undergraduate classes on two chapters of principles of microeconomics (Supply and Demand). Last time I tried this, I took 2 classes to lecture, and the students never got it, in part because they never read it. After an hour of RAT, I had 8 students who were reasonably competent with supply and demand curves, and the concept of elasticity. It was truly impressive. I didn't lecture for a minute, and we spent the rest of the class doing Family Feud and other things to make concepts a bit more concrete. I wish I could have videotaped the discussions -- they were animated -- about SUPPLY AND DEMAND curves.

Services

I just wanted to send a quick note to say thanks to ITLAL for the enormous help they've been giving to my students ...and me -- the ability to stream the films and videos they need to view for class has made a big difference, especially to the students who commute. It's been a pleasure to work with Sue Barnes on this -- her turnaround time has been faster than I could have hoped for (and is much appreciated). I've also been grateful for her clear communication regarding the status of the work and when material is ready for pick up. It's a terrific resource -- thanks so much.

Thanks. These mid-semester surveys are a great idea. The one I did last semester was helpful in learning what they liked in terms of delivery/activities and what was not so accepted.

Thank you for going above and beyond... my students, my teaching portfolio, and I appreciate it!

[Media services] Thanks, very much! It almost goes without saying that all of this would not have been possible without the great staff in ITLAL!

This [mid-term survey] is a great service to offer. I've done mid-course evaluations before, but only eyeballed the results. Having some actual stats will be great.

General Comments

As a long time professor of measurement, evaluation, assessment and statistics on this campus...I want you to know that each item you send shows clearly the relevance of your knowledge, the sensitivity of your approaches, and a realism that gives you a great chance to be effective. I'm happy that you are the person in the office you're in; very few others in such offices seem to me to be deserving of praise...Just wanted you to know that you'd made a difference even when silence may previously had been read as indifference. Not so.

I just had the occasion to read your (full!) report of ITLAL activities [2007-08], and wanted to send along my applause! You have done a remarkable job of creating, building, and expanding ITLAL, and the report of activities for the year is truly remarkable in all that you have done. It is good, also, to see the very positive reception that you're having, and the substantial number of faculty and TAs who are engaged in the activities and services.

...thanks also for speaking last week at the FYE task force meeting. It was very helpful. I also read the lavender article on inductive teaching and learning that you distributed, and will be trying to apply its ideas more strategically in my grad course this fall... I have finally come to terms with the realization that students just don't want to hear faculty talk that much anymore (does anyone want to hear anyone else talk that much anymore?) and yet they cannot be permitted to do all the talking themselves. Thanks for your evangelical work on this!

I just wanted to thank you for your good work these past two weeks. I think Albany is very lucky to have you all. I've really appreciated the way that the workshops I have been involved in have been handled, introducing solid approaches to teaching that are more than techniques, but grounded in a set of beliefs about teaching and learning, while at the same time treating us

all as adults who come to the workshops with lots of prior knowledge. I also appreciate that the readings have been short, clear, and relevant and especially that you all really know whereof you speak, from your own experiences as teachers.

XVII. ITLAL Staff for 2008-09

- Steven Doellefeld, Ph.D., Associate Director (& Assistant Dean of Undergraduate Education)
- Ruth Scipione, Instructional Consultant
- Billie Bennett, Ph.D., Instructional Consultant
- Kathy Plunkett, Office Manager
- Sue Barnes, Technology Coordinator
- Kimberly van Orman, Future Faculty Fellow (Philosophy)
- Andrew Kerlow-Myers, Graduate Assistant (Counseling Psychology)
- Chris Cunha, Graduate Assistant (Business)
- Bill Roberson, Ph.D., Director