

## Annual Report 2011-12

(Inclusive of Summer 2011)

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### **I. Mission**

ITLAL is a center for faculty 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. Personnel for 2011-12**

ITLAL reports to the Vice-Provost/Dean for Undergraduate Education. Beginning in 2012 it will begin reporting to the Office of Academic Affairs. Staffing for 2011-12 reflects a loss of one position, a graduate assistant who had been responsible for various ITLAL research initiatives.

Bill Roberson, Ph.D., Director  
 Steven Doellefeld, Ph.D., Associate Director (& Assistant Dean of Undergraduate Education)  
 Billie Franchini, Ph.D., Assistant Director  
 Kimberly Van Orman, Instructional Consultant  
 Sue Barnes, Technology Coordinator  
 Kathy Plunkett, Office Manager  
 Shannon Scotece, Future Faculty Fellow (Political Science)  
 Rosti Spitchka, Graduate Assistant (Information Technology Management)

### III. Overview of 2011-12

This 2011-12 report includes the results of ITLAL's first extended self-study. The purpose of the study has been to measure ITLAL's observable 5-year impact on the teaching-and-learning culture at UAlbany. This was done first by documenting four in-depth cases (see section V) that describe in some detail how university faculty make use of ITLAL's services; and second, by conducting a survey of users (see section IV) asking them to self-report on their perceived impact of ITLAL in their teaching.

#### 2011-12 Data Highlights

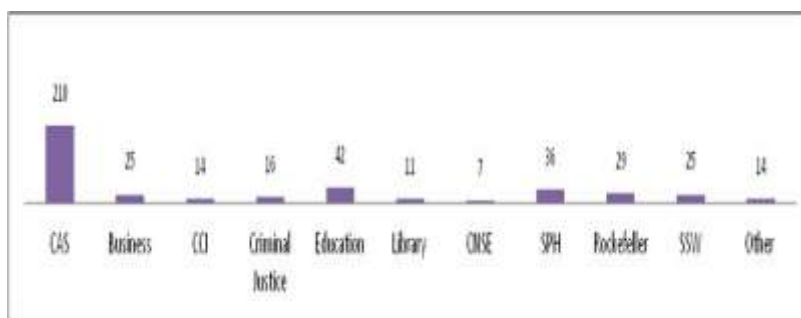
- 781 individual faculty/staff used ITLAL during 2011-12
- 233 individual GTA 's used ITLAL during 2011-12
- 956 = total attendance at ITLAL events
- 40 new participants in ITLAL's Instructional Leadership and Technology Leadership Academies
- Growth in demand for ITLAL services (media digitizing +27%; mid-term surveys +19%; clickers +18%)
- Continued growth in demand for workshops by the Albany Interactive Theater Ensemble (AITE)
- 500+ individual consultations
- Creation of a "Preview Your Classroom" web area on the ITLAL web site
- Expanded role and activities of the Future Faculty Leadership Council
- Increased number of requests for performances by the Albany Interactive Theater Ensemble
- Continued high levels of web traffic, locally, nationally and internationally, with more than 28,000 unique visitors

### IV. Highlights of ITLAL Impact Survey

In Spring semester 2012 all current and former users of ITLAL services and resources were asked to participate in a survey designed to assess, via user perspectives, the impact that ITLAL has had on the teaching and learning environment of UAlbany. A-F below summarizes the key findings of the survey. The full report can be found in **Appendix B**.

#### A. Who responded to the survey

Of 544 total survey respondents, the majority (59%, 335 individuals) identified themselves as frequent or occasional users, reporting that they made use of ITLAL's services at least once a year. Another 17% of respondents (95 individuals) reported making use of ITLAL's services less than once a year, and 24% (139 individuals) of respondents identified as non-users or former users. Of the 423 respondents who identified an affiliation with a college or school within the university, each college and school within the university and each of the four campuses was represented.

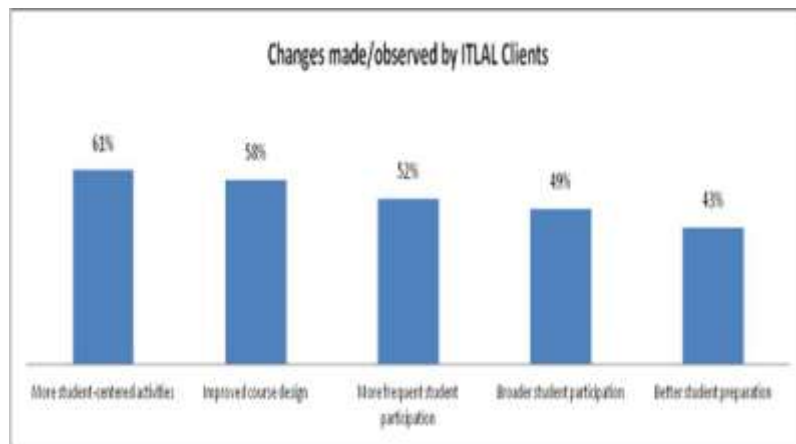


#### B. Evaluation of ITLAL's Services

Those who used ITLAL's services once a year or more (frequent and occasional users) reported the most benefit to their teaching overall. Among these users, 333 individuals rated the usefulness of ITLAL services. The services that were most frequently rated as somewhat or very useful included Workshops on Teaching (81%, 266 individuals); Newsletters (50%, 158 individuals); Individual consultations on teaching or related topics (49%, 156 individuals); Website teaching resources (46%, 145 individuals); and the Mid-term survey service (42%, 131 individuals).

#### C. Perception of changes in teaching practices

Of frequent and occasional users of ITLAL's services, 313 individuals reported changes they had seen in their teaching as a result of using ITLAL's services. The most common changes reported by respondents included the following: use of more student-centered activities (61%, 190 individuals); use of more student-student interactions (56%, 176 individuals); better course design (52%, 162 individuals); clearer learning objectives (51%, 158 individuals); and improved syllabi (44%, 137 individuals).



#### D. Changes in student behavior and performance

Among frequent and occasional users of ITLAL's services, 294 individuals reported positive attitudinal and/or behavioral changes seen in students as result of changes in their teaching. These included more frequent student participation in class (58%, 169 individuals); greater number of active participants in class (59%, 144 individuals); improved student preparation for class (43%, 125 individuals); higher levels of student energy in class (36%, 107 individuals); and increased student interest in what you teach (35%, 102 individuals).

### ***E. Other Comments about ITLAL's Impact from rare users***

The 17% of survey respondents (95 individuals) who identified as rare (less than once a year) users of ITLAL services were much less likely to report significant changes in their own teaching, but their responses did suggest a belief in the importance of ITLAL's work and awareness of resulting changes in the culture of teaching at UAlbany. Several respondents indicated interest in the support offered but reported that they do not have time to attend events: "I am intrigued by many things you offer, but there are only so many hours in the day."

### ***F. Overview of Survey Data***

The variety of respondents suggests that ITLAL's impact cuts across the University, in terms of departmental affiliation, position titles, and length of time teaching at UAlbany. Frequent and occasional users' responses and comments indicate that work with ITLAL has often affected the work in individual instructors' classroom practices, with users reporting better-designed courses with clear goals, more and more productive interactions between students as well as between students and instructors, and better communication between instructors and students. In addition, the responses of those instructors who have made use of ITLAL's services less frequently suggest that those who do not frequently take advantage of these services are aware and have seen evidence of their direct and indirect effects on the culture of teaching at UAlbany.

## **V. Four Case Studies**

ITLAL staff interviewed four faculty members who have made extensive use of ITLAL services and resources, and wrote up their experiences, so as to help ITLAL communicate its purpose, function and impact. Their narratives all focus on one of the methods ITLAL has consistently promoted since its inception, Team-Based Learning. The full case write-ups can be found in Appendix A.

### ***David Rousseau, Rockefeller College***

(Excerpt) Dr. Rousseau initially tried some innovations on his own, including shifting from lecture format to student presentations, using clickers to improve student engagement, and introducing permanent teams for a variety of tasks, including presentations, leadership of discussion, and constructing a class wiki. He had some success with these experiments but found that the results of these efforts were sporadic and that improvements came very slowly... After engaging with ITLAL staff in 2007 to continue refining these strategies, Dr. Rousseau observed that the additional support helped improvements come more quickly and systematically. He began to place greater emphasis on structuring student encounters with content to meet the critical thinking goals he had envisioned. A key innovation following from conversations at ITLAL was re-designing assignments that required students to spend more time thinking about problems before getting information through reading or lectures... As the various changes that he had implemented began to yield more visible results, Dr. Rousseau contacted ITLAL to learn Team-Based Learning (TBL), which he has fully implemented in two iterations of his RPOS 399 course. This method helped him to build on his previous successes by focusing courses on the problem-solving skills he had identified as a goal early on and creating more coherent courses.

### ***Shawn Bushway, School of Criminal Justice***

(Excerpt) Dr. Bushway at first resisted going to the teaching center for assistance. His expectation was that the best he could get from ITLAL would be suggestions for additional techniques, all of which would be marginally effective and very time-intensive. But by summer 2007 he decided that a change was inevitable, as much for his personal satisfaction as for his professional advancement. He made an appointment and began working one-on-one with an ITLAL consultant, who listened to his story and matched his particular need and challenge with a method that would target the kinds of learning outcomes he valued. The consultant shared documents and provided Dr. Bushway with resources on Team-Based Learning, and then put him in contact with two other UAlbany users of Team-Based Learning. The contact with colleagues supported his decision to plunge into a full adoption of the method in a single semester... In the course overhaul Dr. Bushway changed everything. This meant reducing the use of lectures as the primary mode of information distribution, and setting up procedures that held students accountable for their own reading and preparation. Having prepared students opened the door to the goal he had always held: getting students to step into the role of professional decision-makers, who use research and conceptual thinking to inform their decisions.

### ***Anne Hildreth, Rockefeller College***

(Excerpt) Dr. Hildreth had been teaching at UAlbany for nearly twenty years before she began to work with ITLAL. She had consistently received satisfactory teaching evaluations and identified herself as a teacher who cared about her students' learning, but she believed that she could improve. While she had achieved some success with using cases and real-life examples in her courses to provoke student understanding of key concepts, she continued to struggle with framing questions to provoke productive critical thinking and meaningful discussion among her students. This desire to create better questions led her to ITLAL... In 2007-08, Dr. Hildreth was developing a new course in Election Reform (RPOS 204). Seeking to create a more problem-driven, critical thinking-based course, she worked with ITLAL staff to design this course using a full implementation of Team-Based Learning (TBL). She began by designing six conceptual units around key reform problems and potential solu-

tions. From there, she describes a new approach to content and student activities that created a more authentic and integrated experience... Dr. Hildreth reports that her work with this method has directly affected her teaching across the board. She has used strategies from the method to create an atmosphere of individual student accountability and opportunities for meaningful student collaboration and reflection around more problem-based strategies.

***Kristen Hessler, College of Arts and Sciences (Philosophy)***

(Excerpt) Dr. Hessler taught a general education ethics course in a large lecture center at UAlbany, and was frustrated by how poorly a large percentage of the students were doing, even though her teaching evaluations were on par with similar courses. After initially working with ITLAL to incorporate “clickers” into her classroom, she found students paying more attention in class and saw their performance start to improve. After attending an ITLAL course design workshop, she decided to implement Team-Based Learning (TBL). Students were held accountable for coming to class prepared by the use of individual and team tasks. She describes the changes in student performance as a result of TBL to be “remarkable.” Attendance and overall engagement were improved and her SIRS scores reflected a greater satisfaction on the students’ part. Most encouraging, the students were answering more difficult questions and were now able to apply their knowledge to novel problems and cases on exams. On exams and in papers, students also demonstrated a greater awareness of themselves as moral agents and were able to reflect on how the course mattered to them personally and to take an interest in moral and political matters that they had not thought of before.

## **VI. Faculty Development Events (Workshops, seminars, etc.)**

***UAlbany Fall Faculty Retreat (August, 24 2011)***

The annual Fall Faculty Retreat hosted Dee Fink, Ph.D., author of *Designing Significant Learning Experiences*. 91 faculty members participated, representing 10 colleges and schools. The retreat was facilitated at Beacon Hill Catering in Scho-dack, NY. The following is a small sampling of participant comments on what they valued most about the presentation/ workshop:

- Talking with people from other departments is very useful. Useful presentations and gorgeous setting; I hope these retreats keep going
- Very stimulating and convincing. Strongly encouraged me to make several positive changes in my teaching
- The idea that individuals can begin conversations with their peers to initiate change rather than waiting for change to come from above...
- Most useful was thinking about alignment of institutional goals with departments, courses, and individual students
- Appreciate the opportunity to reflect on my own teaching approach and ability as well as hear perspectives of colleagues
- It was helpful to rethink the goals needed to be set at the university, department, and instructor levels
- ... how to interview new faculty members on teaching was helpful because I’m on a search committee
- Specific suggestions on how to get students to take responsibility for their own learning
- Inspiring and helpful. Please keep doing the retreats and thank you! Great venue

***Academies***

ITLAL academies in the format of 2-3 day boot camps + semester-long follow-up occur at the beginning or end of each semester and are designed to lead participants completely through concrete changes in how they teach. Instructors who apply are required to achieve specific benchmarks and meet clear standards in order to receive the honoraria associated with participation. As of May 2012, **205** faculty members and **19** graduate students have participated in ITLAL Academies since the program began in 2008. Academies for the 2011-12 academic year:

***Instructional Leadership Academies (ILA)***

December 2011	Team-Based Learning	4 Faculty Participants 5 Graduate Student Participants
May 2012	Team-Based Learning	14 Graduate Student Participants
May 2012	Discipline-Driven Design	6 Faculty Participants
<b>Total for 2011-12</b>	<b>3 ILA’s</b>	10 Faculty Participants 19 Graduate Student Participants

***Technology Leadership Academy (TLA)***

January 2012	Web-enhanced Courses	11 Faculty Participants
<b>Total for 2011-12</b>	<b>1 TLA</b>	11 Faculty Participants

### Sampling of participant comments

- I'm delighted by this training. I'm much more optimistic about using TBL than I was 3 days ago!
- I really appreciate your expertise and enthusiasm as well as your generosity with sharing this wonderful method which I needed to rescue my teaching part of my academic career.
- I enjoyed the teamwork and appreciate the assurance that the resources are here if they're needed.

### **Workshops for Faculty and Instructional Staff (for full event descriptions see Appendix B)**

Date	Title of Event	Attendance
Aug 12	Are You Ready to Try Clickers? A Workshop for New Adopters	13
Aug 25	Fall Faculty Retreat	91
Sept 10	Critical Thinking 2.0; or The White Whale	15
Sept 23 & 29	Designing a Dynamic Discussion	47
Oct 4 & 5	Minimal Marking for Maximum Impact	27
Oct 18	Edward Zlotkowski: Community Engagement	17
Oct 19	Identifying and Overcoming Unexpected Barriers to Learning	11
Dec 9	Just-in-Time Teaching with Gregor Novak	37
Jan 12	Course and Syllabus Design for Deeper Learning	29
Jan 24	Excel Grade Book Clinic	21
Jan 31 & Feb 3	Exploiting Error and Uncertainty to Increase Learning	19
Feb 22	Faculty Spotlight: Team Based Learning	31
March 5 & 6	Break the Economy of Cheating	13
May 10	D. Pace, Decoding the Disciplines	20
May 10	D. Pace, Decoding the Discipline of History	9
May 10	D. Pace, Lessons from decoding the Humanities and Social Sciences	14
<b>Total</b>		<b>414</b>

### **Customized Events for Departments/special groups**

June 3	"Revitalize your Teaching by Putting the Focus on Learning" for HPMB Retreat	20
Nov 3	"Critical Thinking" for Public Health	9
Nov 7	"Critical Thinking" for Public Health	13
Feb 24	"Minimal Marking for Maximum Impact" for Biology GTAs	15
May 16	Peer Evaluation of Teaching Process for School of Social Welfare	9
Oct. 6	Introduction to Clickers for University Senate	20
May 10	Introduction to Peer Evaluation for Social Welfare	6

## **VII. Albany Interactive Theater Ensemble (AITE)**

AITE continues to provide interactive enactments of faculty professional situations as a means of creating opportunities for reflection and change of perspective. The audience for AITE is growing across campus, as performances are more frequently being requested by groups outside ITLAL.

### Performances for 2011-12

- "Difficult Conversations" performed for the CAS Chairs Retreat, August 2011
- "The Annoyed Student" parts 1 and 2 for the CLUE Seminar hosted by the Provost's Office, August 2011
- "Birds of a Feather" performed for the College Teaching Symposium for Graduate Students, August 2011
- "The Sinking Ship" performed for the Fall Faculty Retreat, August 2011
- "The Book Sale" performed for Omicron Delta Kappa, March 2012
- "The Concerned Mentor" performed for Chairs' Leadership Day sponsored by the Provost's Office, May 2012

## **VIII. Graduate Student Professional Development and Preparation to Teach**

### ***GTA Symposium***

ITLAL's annual College Teaching Symposium for Graduate Students features current, experienced GTAs in leadership and mentoring roles, and no longer restricts its focus to new TA's. The Fall 2011 Symposium was facilitated by 18 experienced graduate students who worked to develop and deliver this year's mini-workshop topics. Dee Fink, Ph.D., delivered a keynote address.

### **Professional Development Workshops for Graduate Students**

Aug 26	GTA Symposium	103
Sept 14	Demystifying the Academic Job Market	13
Sept 22	Effective CV and Cover Letters	10
Oct 17	Teaching Portfolios for Future Faculty	4
Nov 2	Preparing for the Academic Job Interview	10
Feb 6	Make Your Lectures More Interesting	12
Feb 14	Teach and Still Get Your Dissertation Research Done	14
April 17	Finding an Academic Job That Fits Your Needs	20
<b>Total</b>		<b>186</b>

### **Preparing Future Faculty Certificate Program**

ITLAL's Future Faculty Program, a suite of activities to prepare graduate students for their careers in academe, entered its third year of operation, and completed its second full cycle of three courses. New to this year was the use of official course numbers. At the end of the year we also received permission to cross list the courses in Public Administration and Political Science (in addition to the Education numbers we already have access to).

Fall 11	ACAS 601: Seminar in College Teaching	13
Spring 12	ACAS 602: Preparing for the Professoriate	6
Fall 11	ACAS 603: Becoming a Reflective Teacher	8

Students represented the following colleges:

ACAS 601: College of Arts & Sciences (8), Education (1), Social Welfare (3), Rockefeller (1)

ACAS 602: College of Arts & Sciences (4), Rockefeller (2)

ACAS 603: College of Arts & Sciences (6), Education (1), Social Welfare (1)

### **Invited presentations/workshops within departmental courses for GTA professional development (2011-2012)**

Sept 19	"Best Practices for Peer Observation of Teaching" for APSY 892 (Practicum in College Teaching)	12
Oct 4	"Teaching Large Classes" for Teaching course in Sociology	10
Oct 25	"Teaching Portfolios for Future Faculty" for Teaching course in Sociology	10
Nov 8	"Teaching at UAlbany" (Active learning for TAs) for first semester graduate course for Political Science	10

### **Future Faculty Leadership Council (FFLC Members 2011-12)**

School of Public Health: Naomi McKeon

College of Arts and Sciences: Lindsay Morton, Amaris Guzman, Rebekah Layton, Elizabeth Peterson

School of Education: Anna Valtcheva

Rockefeller College: Shannon Scotece, Susan Appe

School of Social Welfare Sarah Maynard,

### **Future Faculty Leadership Council Outreach**

In the 2011-2012 academic year, the Future Faculty Leadership Council offered a variety of programs for graduate students interested in faculty careers. This year, the focus was on active learning, and each member went to his/her respective department to present topics related to engaging students in the classroom (Kimberly, can we document this?). Additionally, each member posted to the FFLC blog on issues related to professional development, teaching, and managing life as a graduate student. As the FFLC continues to expand its reach across campus, it has grown from eight members to ten active members who will be involved in planning for the upcoming year, which includes adopting greater responsibility for the annual College Teaching Symposium for Graduate Students. Ongoing activities of the FFLC can be viewed on the "UA Future Faculty blog at <http://www.uafuturefaculty.blogspot.com/>.

### **All-Campus Events sponsored and hosted by the Future Faculty Leadership Council**

Participants

Oct 10	Peer Editing CVs	5
Oct 24	Panel discussion: Long-term planning	16
Feb 12	Panel discussion: Negotiating Academic Job Offers	12
May 12	Summer Teaching Boot Camp	25

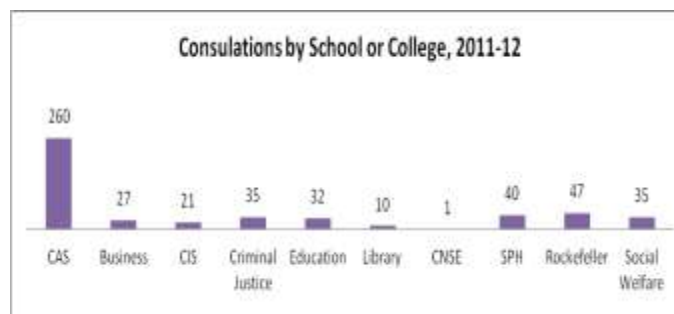
### ***Departmental Events hosted by individual FFLC members***

Psychology Rebekah Layton Lindsay Morton	1) CV and Research Statement workshop (assisted by 2 faculty members) 2) Active learning	7 20
Social Welfare & Rockefeller Sarah Maynard Susan Appe	CV writing workshop	7
Biology Liz Peterson	1) QE2 Workshop 2) Q & A Session for new TA's 3) Active Learning	5 1 1

## **IX. Consulting and Assessment Services**

### ***Individual Consultations***

Consultations vary in format, from classroom observations, virtual visits to online course activities, face-to-face meetings, and extended phone and online exchanges. They range over a wide array of topics, such as course design and management, increasing student engagement, use of instructional technology, assessing student learning, departmental culture, scholarship of teaching, and academic career development.



### ***Mid-term student surveys***

Requests for this service continue to increase year to year.

Semester	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Summer	0	3	2	0	5
Fall	14	58	73	98	129
Spring	21	48	88	126	132
<b>Total</b>	<b>34 (pilot)</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>224</b>	<b>266</b>
<b>Growth</b>	<b>Baseline</b>	<b>300%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>19%</b>

## **X. Instructional Media and Technology Services**

### ***Clickers***

ITLAL, in collaboration with ITS, 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. In 2011-12 there were **14 new users**, bringing to a total of **90** the number of instructors who have taken advantage of this service since its inception in 2007-08. ITLAL also supported the adoption of clickers for voting by the UAlbany Faculty Senate. In spring of 2012 ITLAL conducted a pilot with one instructor using iClicker2, the latest version of the iClicker technology. Overall the results of the pilot were positive, paving the way to making the new technology available in Fall 2012.

### ***i-Peer***

Instructors who teach using Team-Based Learning find that one of the most challenging components is the “peer evaluation” process. When done on paper, this can require that an instructor handle hundreds of pages. In 2011 ITLAL installed and began providing an instance of the software i-Peer on its instructional development server. This tool helps instructors using Team-Based Learning to set up an electronic course roster that allows students to go online, find their team members, and conduct the peer observation electronically. A student’s own evaluations from peers appear in consolidated form in his/her own individual account. Twelve instructors at UAlbany took advantage of this service in 2011-12.

### ***Moodle***

ITLAL receives requests from time to time to help with technical support for courses taught internationally. Students who enroll in a UAlbany course via an institution abroad sometimes do not have the credentials needed for participation in UAlbany’s secure instance of Blackboard. As a pilot, ITLAL has installed an instance of Moodle on its instructional development server, to allow instructors to manage an online course for international students.

### ***Streaming Media Production***

ITLAL provides digitization services for faculty, transferring nearly any kind of media source into formats usable in web-based applications. Converted Items are made available on a secure server to faculty and their students. In the Fall of 2011 the software on the media server was upgraded to reduce download times and allow more simultaneous users.

Year	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-2011	2011-12
Total new requests	173	345	275	308	299
Total items (cumulative) processed and stored for streaming	6,494	8,804	10,296	10,872	11,775
<b>Total number of instructors using streaming media</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>205</b>	<b>221</b>	<b>281</b>
<b>Annual increase in number of users</b>	<b>Baseline</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>27%</b>

## **XI. Classroom Support Initiatives**

### ***Preview Your Classroom Web Area***

New this year was the roll-out the new “Preview Your Classroom” section on the ITLAL website. These pages allow faculty to look at the specifications and pictures of each registrar-controlled classroom on campus so that they can plan their course with full awareness of their assigned physical space.

### ***Portable Classroom Pilot***

This program has now fulfilled its intended purpose—to ensure technology support in classrooms which have none. Three faculty members took advantage of the program in 2011-2012. This service is being phased out in 2012-13, as nearly all classrooms will have a baseline of technology.

## **XII Print and Web Resources**

ITLAL’s extensive web-based resources continue to be visited frequently by faculty and faculty development specialists world-wide.

*Website Traffic for 2011-12 (statistics exclude ITLAL staff visits)*

Page Loads	Unique Visitors	First Time Visitors	Returning Visitors
76,103	35,178	28,621	6,557

*Comparative chart*

Year	07-08	08-09	09-10	10-11	11-12
Monthly average page loads	1,951	3,587	5,711	5,402	6,342
Monthly average individual visitors	843	1,424	2,036	1,907	2,932

### ***ITLAL Publications***

***Teaching at Albany*** (distributed to 2200 readers)

What’s Really Possible in a Large Classroom?

What’s Happening with UAlbany Classrooms?

***Graduate Teaching at Albany*** (distributed to 1000 readers)

Don’t Leave Your Future to Chance: Build Your Teaching Portfolio Now

Teaching Portfolios

## **XIII. ITLAL Committee Work and University Service**

***ITLAL staff members served on the following committees and work groups.***

Strategic Planning Implementation Committee: Faculty and Instructional Development

Classrooms Advisory Committee

Technology Coordinators Forum

Campus Committee on University-Community Engagement

Future Faculty Leadership Council

LISC

ROTC

Committee on Centers, Institutes, and Specialized Research Labs



## **XIV. Sampling of UNSOLICITED Comments from participants in ITLAL events or users of ITLAL services**

### **On Academies and Workshops**

- I want to thank you...for a very enjoyable and informative experience at Thursday's retreat. I greatly admire and value what you are doing for the U Albany faculty. I am learning a great deal from your efforts and hope I will be able to effectively apply that knowledge to the benefit of the students.
- Just get out from my first TBL stats class. I think the opening is quite promising, they seem more motivated and like the idea of teamwork based learning. It works and exceeds my expectations! ... I feel more confident now.
- Thanks so much for the workshop on Course Design on Thursday. It was tremendously worthwhile.
- I attended the "Minimal Marking" workshop that you offered yesterday. It was both helpful and very timely. You may be interested in taking a quick look at the attached assignment that I will be giving to students... Just thought you might enjoy seeing that your work really has an impact!
- I have attended your workshop on Exploiting errors in the classroom and I would be very interested in the slides you presented. If you had any doubt, I have to say again how that particular workshop was very (very very) useful for me. Thank you for offering it,
- Thank you very much for the informative, engaging and fun workshop today. I'm looking forward to implementing what I learned.
- Your presentation...yesterday was terrific... You pitched it perfectly for the audience and gave them a heap of immediately useful, important tips (with accompanying handouts!). I hope this can become a standard part of the course, to ensure that ALL our incoming PhD students have the benefit of such a presentation.
- I just went through the mail and found my course evaluations. I am surprised by the comments as I expected much worse (see attached). The silent majority were very positive as this core course is considered very difficult and typically gets lower reviews. Grades actually went up with TBL. Reviews did also... Thank you so much for all your help with TBL. I would not have tried it without your workshop and encouragement.
- Hi! I attended the iClickers workshop this morning and I was hoping you could forward me the PPT presentation that was given. I really enjoyed the section on inquiry-type questions the most, but I found the entire presentation to be very helpful and informative. I'm only a 2nd year Ph.D student, but I'll definitely be using the iClickers when I start teaching next summer! Thanks a lot!
- Thank you very much for organizing a very interesting and stimulating Workshop... Thanks again for providing a very interesting perspective on teaching and for your enthusiasm, it makes ITLAL events especially enjoyable.
- I just read a semester project assignment that blew me away. It was the learning portfolio I assigned at the last minute as an option for the semester project. I have to thank-you and Dee Fink as I only added it after the faculty retreat
- Thanks for a wonderful workshop this morning. I'm working on a lesson plan for a class that uses a case study and will put these ideas into practice for that, and will try to send it to you before our meeting on Thursday...
- I want to, first, thank ITLAL for the enlightening and enjoyable College Teaching Symposium on August 26. The speaker, Dr. Fink, made a particularly insightful and focused presentation.
- Thank you very much for organizing a very informative lecture! Thank you very much for your help and for your work on improving teaching at UAlbany.

### **On Classroom Preview Web Area**

- To whoever coordinated the classroom-preview resource, GREAT idea. Thanks! Had I seen this sooner, I would have realized that FA126 will be a bother for trying to set up table & chairs for my debate class.
- This is a great feature. It's really useful if you're looking for a room that would suit you.
- Thank you for this! This is something I have thought would be useful in the past and I will definitely use it in the future.
- This is fantastic, Faculty are going to love it. Thanks for all your hard work.
- This is sooooo exciting. Nice work.
- To whoever coordinated the classroom-preview resource, GREAT idea.
- Had I seen this sooner, I would have realized that FA126 will be a bother for trying to set up table & chairs for my debate class. This site will be especially important for classes assigned to the BA rooms circa 1950s.

### **General Feedback**

- Your office was very responsive, and sent me fresh links within 24 hours. I haven't had time to check them, yet, but I was very impressed. Thank you.
- Yesterday was my first meeting with my class since you and I met due to the snowstorm, midterm and then break. So, I just wanted to let you know that it went SOOOO much better! ... Thanks so much—again!

Thanks for your time today. I feel more empowered and optimistic after talking with you! I'll keep you posted in the event I accomplish anything.

It's really great having you and your office as a resource. I feel so much more prepared as a teacher than I did two years ago.

I wanted to share what the student in question said to me last night to provide a conclusion to this conversation...

After the final semester project presentations, the student that reflected on the paradox of groups and individuals said the following to me in a social gathering, "Until this course, I would not have believed (if someone told me) that a group can lead. In my experience only individuals lead. Now I know otherwise". Many other students had similar comments... I have to thank-you because the power comes from what you, ITLAL, do to help faculty a) plan courses and b) get out of the way! ...Thanks again for all of your help with the design and management of this course. You are a huge part of student success.

Thank you very much for your efforts at ITLAL. Your programs have helped my colleagues and I become much better teachers. I am looking forward to participating in many more of your activities once my coursework is completed for good this semester. All the best!

ITLAL is a fabulous resource, thank you for your excellent leadership of it, and all the assistance you and your staff have provided to the Information Literacy department

Thank you very much for meeting with me and making valuable suggestions, I will try to implement them....Unfortunately there are very few opportunities for hands-on experience in an abstract physics or math class, but I will try to increase the role of the in-class discussions (I am already having more discussions in comparison to the last year... Thanks again for your help, I will modify my teaching style and let you know about results.

Just wanted to let you know that my iPeer mid-term evaluations went very well. I'll use it again for the end-of-semester evaluations, and I'm never using paper again! Especially for my big class... Thanks for all your help!

The events at ITLAL and your personal involvement have been extremely beneficial to me, and I want to use this opportunity to express my gratitude for your work... Thanks again for your help!

You know I am learning a great deal. I think I have been waiting all my life (you know that song) for TBL. It has allowed me to connect with students in ways where traditional teaching cannot we are developing a very important relationship together. It takes time and I am learning what that looks like in terms of weeks. I see it evolving and do not rush it. The students see it too. And they are really learning--beyond what I could have expected in terms of the learning outcomes. I am confident that they are going to go out and be really great managers. Now comes the sad part, I am going to really miss them when they are gone.

## APPENDIX A: FULL CASE STUDIES OF FOUR UALBANY FACULTY MEMBERS

### Shawn Bushway, Professor of Criminal Justice

#### **Prior to Working with ITLAL**

Long before coming to UAlbany or working with ITLAL, Dr. Bushway was able to express clear ideas about his course learning outcomes. He was passionate about teaching, and had an advanced sense of what he wanted his students to do: develop their analytical-critical thinking and apply formal conceptual knowledge to real-world scenarios. And early in his career he had developed a set of practices that were successful with his students. For example, he engaged students through mini field research projects, asking students to collect, analyze and report on economics data in their local environment. He experimented, too, with in-class techniques, such as asking students to work with cases or solve puzzles. In so doing, he had applied the evidence-based logic that informs his criminal justice research, and he had even published a quasi-experimental evaluation of these techniques in the *Journal of Criminal Justice Education*.

A change in institutions in 2005 brought Dr. Bushway into contact with a new population of students and a different academic culture. The transition was challenging and at times painful. With his existing approach to teaching he met broad resistance from students and found it difficult to maintain a positive, supportive classroom atmosphere, in spite of his efforts and intentions. He described his classroom environment as one in which “it felt like me and the stuff against the students” rather than everyone working toward some common learning goal. This situation endured for two years, and was beginning to have an effect on his promotion to full professor. Dr. Bushway continued to experiment with various techniques in order to defuse the tension of his classroom and better engage students, but only about half the students responded positively.

#### **Working with ITLAL**

Dr. Bushway at first resisted going to the teaching center for assistance. His expectation was that the best he could get from ITLAL would be suggestions for additional techniques, all of which would be marginally effective and very time-intensive. But by summer 2007 he decided that a change was inevitable, as much for his personal satisfaction as for his professional advancement. He made an appointment and began working one-on-one with an ITLAL consultant, who listened to his story and matched his particular need and challenge with a method that would target the kinds of learning outcomes he valued. The consultant shared documents and provided Dr. Bushway with resources on Team-Based Learning, and then put him in contact with two other UAlbany users of Team-Based Learning. The contact with colleagues supported his decision to plunge into a full adoption of the method in a single semester.

Dr. Bushway discovered in the TBL implementation an unexpected resonance with his own goals for students, and also found a process and tools that could motivate students to work at a higher level. He was drawn to the way the method’s incentivizing structures fostered student self-determination and autonomy. From the very beginning, he found relief from a stressful classroom in a system that allowed him to set up a structure, then step aside while students worked through the process without micromanagement. He began to recognize that within this structure he could play a more productive role: that of consultant and resident expert, rather than the keeper of the grades. This change was highly attractive at multiple levels.

In the course overhaul, Dr. Bushway changed everything. This meant reducing the use of lectures as the primary mode of information distribution, and setting up procedures that held students accountable for their own reading and preparation. Having prepared students opened the door to the goal he had always held: getting students to step into the role of professional decision-makers, who use research and conceptual thinking to inform their decisions. In his undergraduate course on the economics of criminal justice, for example, he asked students to practice applications of economic principles by examining the real-world functioning of cartels and monopolies. In his graduate course (research methods) he asked students to conduct an analysis on actual police data and prepare a report for the NY State Police, who came to class for the final presentation.

An ITLAL consultant visited Dr. Bushway’s courses during the first semester of TBL implementation. The feedback focused on refinement of a generally effective process: minimize instructor interaction with student groups during tasks; make lectures more focused and shorter. Additional classroom observational visits took place over subsequent semesters and Dr. Bushway continued to meet often with ITLAL staff.

#### **Changes in Learning Outcomes**

Overall, Dr. Bushway’s undergraduate students responded extremely well right from the start. The classroom climate immediately warmed up and students recognized that the process was designed to help them learn. An unexpected benefit from the new decision-driven approach of TBL has been that Dr. Bushway is now better able to see students’ thinking processes

and logic. This is useful feedback, as it helps explain students' prior reluctance to engage with the course content. Before, students remained at the periphery of economic thinking, memorizing facts and concepts, but not developing a capacity for *using* the concepts. In the new approach students studied the concepts on their own, then got a great deal of practice using those concepts during class. As a result, they were quickly able to advance to more complex, more sophisticated work and thinking. Exam questions and other assignments have now become considerably harder, but students do not score lower than they did in the past when the goals were much less ambitious. Students now leave the course with a clear sense of what it means to apply economic thinking to issues of criminal justice. For a final exam Dr. Bushway uses a scene from a movie to get his students to demonstrate their ability to apply course content in an explanation of a complex crime scenario. Before adopting the new method, few students could conduct the required analysis and reflection. Now it's clear from student responses that they are able to "think like economists."

### **Changes in Student Satisfaction**

Of equal importance is the overall change in student attitudes. Although the economics content of the course had previously been that for which CJ students showed little enthusiasm, in more recent semesters, Dr. Bushway's course has become intriguing for them. The team structure of the course creates a level of interaction that makes students want to attend and tackle the hard material. Students routinely now comment in course evaluations that the course "Challenged us to think and argue..." or taught us "to think about criminal justice in a whole different way." Even though the course is now pitched at a higher level than before, there has been no reduction in student interest. In fact, the course is now regularly oversubscribed, in spite of its reputation for "making [students'] heads hurt."

In his first undergraduate course at UAlbany, before his first visit to ITLAL and before adopting the new approach, Dr. Bushway hit a low point in his undergraduate student evaluations of Course-1.8/Instructor-2.0. Since then he has averaged Course-4.32/Instructor-4.43. In Spring 2011 he received a rare perfect (5/5) score for both the class and the professor, despite the fact that the median student reported working over 5 hours (high for UAlbany) on the course each week outside of class. Another telling statistic is scores on student responses to items measuring students' perceived level of "intellectual challenge" (4.70) and "stimulated interest" (4.56). Dr. Bushway's evaluation scores are consistent with the broader research showing that students respond positively to an instructor who respects them through authentic challenge coupled with a clearly indicated pathway toward success.

The response by students in Dr. Bushway's graduate course is also steadily improving, albeit less dramatically, although the student evaluations in Fall 2011 were at an all-time high of Course-4.67 and Instructor-5.0. Using TBL techniques in the graduate courses, Dr. Bushway has been able to assign much harder work and see students perform at a level that would have been unimaginable in prior semesters. For example, students who knew virtually nothing about research methods (and nothing about basic data management tools such as Excel) were able to effectively and credibly conduct a raw data analysis, and then make a professional presentation to inform real policy for the NY State Highway Patrol.

### **Impact on Career**

One of the more significant outcomes of Dr. Bushway's experience in major course renovation is how it has affected the way he understands his capacity and effectiveness as a teacher: "For the first time in my career I can say that students consistently seem to enjoy having me as their teacher—and truly believe that I am there to help them learn the material. It is now me and the students versus the stuff, rather than me and the stuff versus the students. Since I genuinely enjoy helping people learn difficult concepts, this has been a boon for me as well. I love going to class every week."

Dr. Bushway's experience has also opened up new, unexpected but productive lines of professional activity. He co-authored with an ITLAL staff member and another Criminal Justice colleague an article for *The Criminologist*, the newsletter for the American Society of Criminology, and then co-presented a very well-attended workshop with the same authors at the annual 2011 ASC conference. Several CJ faculty members nationwide have subsequently sought Dr. Bushway's advice on teaching criminal justice and criminology. He was also invited to present a paper at a special workshop on teaching for the Association of Public Policy Analysis and Management. The paper from that workshop, co-authored with a member of the ITLAL staff, will be published in the *Journal of Public Affairs Education*.

## **David Rousseau, Associate Professor of Political Science and Interim Dean of the Rockefeller College of Public Affairs and Policy**

### **Prior to Working with ITLAL**

Dr. David Rousseau arrived at the University at Albany in 2005. At his previous institution, he had taught using a standard lecture format and believed that the method was successful with that student population. In his first semester at UAlbany, however, it became clear that this format was not working with the population of students at this institution, finding Albany students to be more passive overall. Additionally, he knew that he wanted to focus and develop students' critical thinking skills, but he wasn't doing that as effectively as he believed he could have in his current courses. This was becoming more of a focus in his thinking about his teaching than the content itself. He found himself asking, "How can they come out of this class able to think about new problems?"

Toward this end, Dr. Rousseau initially tried some innovations on his own, including shifting from lecture format to student presentations, using clickers to improve student engagement, and introducing permanent teams for a variety of tasks, including presentations, leadership of discussion, and constructing a class wiki. He had some success with these experiments but found that the results of these efforts were sporadic and that improvements came very slowly.

### **Working with ITLAL**

After engaging with ITLAL staff in 2007 to continue refining these strategies, Dr. Rousseau observed that the additional support helped improvements come more quickly and systematically. He began to place greater emphasis on structuring student encounters with content to meet the critical thinking goals he had envisioned. A key innovation following from conversations at ITLAL was re-designing assignments that required students to spend more time thinking about problems *before* getting information through reading or lectures.

As the various changes that he had implemented began to yield more visible results, Dr. Rousseau contacted ITLAL to learn Team-Based Learning (TBL), which he has fully implemented in two iterations of his RPOS 399 course. This method helped him to build on his previous successes by focusing courses on the problem-solving skills he had identified as a goal early on and creating more coherent courses.

*Now my courses are student-focused and driven by problem-solving. I am able to use activities in class to really get students to grapple with something in a productive way. I have also found that TBL lets me use some activities that I had used previously as "add-ons" in a more integrated way. I had previously used debates, but it wasn't clear how they were really integrated; now they are part of the overall mission of the course because they are essential to develop the critical thinking skills I want students to have when they leave.*

By designing courses around student-driven activities, he has found that lectures are nearly non-existent in his TBL courses and that his relationship with content coverage has changed as well. This has required some adjustments in his thinking about content. Early in the process of transforming his course design, Dr. Rousseau reports some frustration with this problem.

*I was frustrated about doing less coverage and more depth. I think it requires a kind of re-socialization to learn that you just won't make it through half the chapters in the textbook. It's easier to do when you're converting a newer course or designing a new one. In those cases it's easier to let go and say, "We just aren't going to talk about X this year."*

He has grown more comfortable with this process and is willing to sacrifice some of the content coverage for the improvement he has seen in his students' critical thinking skills.

Another instructional design experiment that Dr. Rousseau has undertaken with ITLAL's help is the adoption of blended learning for a graduate course in 2009. After participating in the Technology Leadership Academy on Blended Learning in May 2009, he developed a modified approach to a blended design, continuing to hold regular class meetings but shortening each meeting by one hour to allow students to work individually in the online environment.

*I used the blended approach to create a reflective, assignment-driven approach. I was able to combine interactive class meetings with students' individual online work to integrate the course readings, class discussion, and assignments in a meaningful way.*

In addition to a blended approach, Dr. Rousseau used TBL-inspired team activities in this course as well. While he believes that he would need to make modifications to the design in order to use this model again (this iteration proved more time-consuming than anticipated for both students and instructor), he enjoyed it and would like the opportunity to experiment further with this model. He found that he was able to use the blend of in-class and online work to continuing pushing students toward the kind of critical thinking he values most in his courses.

### **Changes in Learning Outcomes**

Overall, Dr. Rousseau reports outcomes that have made his teaching innovations worthwhile, including improved critical thinking and argumentative skills and positive changes in student expectations and behavior. Perhaps the greatest change has been in the levels of student engagement he reports in his classes. In his initial encounters with UAlbany students, he

reports that he found the majority of the students were passive and disengaged. Since the changes in his courses as a result of his work with ITLAL, he reports a drastic shift in that distribution with the vast majority of students engaged in the work of the course.

Dr. Rousseau has found that his efforts have produced some tangible results in student performance, reporting that in-class debates are much better after TBL than they had been in earlier courses. Students require much less coaching outside of the classroom and the depth and sophistication of the arguments students make are overall much better. In addition to changes in students' performance, Dr. Rousseau reports some important changes in their attitudes and behavior.

*I have seen great changes in their expectations of themselves and others. They expect others to do equal work and participate in the teams. This has transformed the culture of the class because it has also led them to expect more of themselves. And now I expect and get a lot more of them than in the past.*

He has found that these attitudinal changes carry over into students' behavior outside the formal classroom setting in very positive ways as well. One of his favorite things about TBL classes is the charged atmosphere that exists even before class begins.

*I love the noise and the talking that is happening when I walk into class. Students are arguing about the reading, chatting with each other, having real conversations. It is a very different environment from the dead silence when you walk into a traditional classroom.*

### **Changes in Student Satisfaction**

While Dr. Rousseau has consistently received high ratings on student evaluations in his time at UAlbany, there have been some identifiable improvements as he has modified his teaching. These changes are most visible in courses using student teams. In courses where Dr. Rousseau had used permanent teams prior to formal training with ITLAL, the average instructor rating was 4.1 and course overall rating was 3.64. In courses with full implementation of TBL, average instructor rating was 4.51 and course overall rating was 4.14. Scores measuring students' perceptions of academic rigor were higher as well, including "intellectual challenge" (4.7) and "stimulated interest" (4.2).

Dr. Rousseau's blended course received particularly high ratings, with an overall instructor rating of 4.9 and a course rating of 4.5. The majority of students reported spending 5 hours a week or longer on the course, also giving high scores to the level of "stimulated interest" and "intellectual challenge" (4.8 for both), suggesting that the course's rigor correlated with students' satisfaction.

## **Anne Hildreth, Associate Professor and Associate Dean in Political Science**

### **Prior to Working with ITLAL**

Dr. Anne Hildreth had been teaching at UAlbany for nearly twenty years before she began to work with ITLAL. She had consistently received satisfactory teaching evaluations and identified herself as a teacher who cared about her students' learning, but she believed that she could improve. While she had achieved some success with using cases and real-life examples in her courses to provoke student understanding of key concepts, she continued to struggle with framing questions to provoke productive critical thinking and meaningful discussion among her students. This desire to create better questions led her to ITLAL.

### **Working with ITLAL**

In 2007-08, Dr. Hildreth was developing a new course in Election Reform (RPOS 204). Seeking to create a more problem-driven, critical thinking-based course, she worked with ITLAL staff to design this course using a full implementation of Team-Based Learning (TBL). She began by designing six conceptual units around key reform problems and potential solutions. From there, she describes a new approach to content and student activities that created a more authentic and integrated experience:

*I made limited use of lectures and did more team problem solving activities during the class—rank order these activities and explain your rationale, design a proposal that achieves this result, given this amount of money, what would you invest in and why. I began to choose the readings with a different goal—how they fit together, the dilemmas they raised, each unit had a more contested / problematized nature.*

While she has not adopted TBL in all of her courses, Dr. Hildreth reports that her work with this method has directly affected her teaching across the board. She has used strategies from the method to create an atmosphere of individual student accountability and opportunities for meaningful student collaboration and reflection around more problem-based strategies. In Spring 2009, Dr. Hildreth participated in a support group for faculty teaching writing-intensive courses. This group held a series of structured conversations, facilitated by ITLAL staff, about best practices and concrete strategies for helping faculty and their students succeed in writing-intensive courses. Using a combination of approaches derived from these sessions and her work on TBL, Dr. Hildreth has initiated key changes in the integration of student writing into her courses. Relying on a TBL-influenced balance of individual and group work, she assigns group tasks that require students to interpret and explain data and individual writing assignments for reflection. She has also started incorporating smaller, more focused

writing tasks that allow students to practice the kinds of thinking the discipline requires. Finally, she has also begun providing more models of strong writing instead of relying strictly on criticism and over-marking of student papers to communicate the values associated with effective written communication in Political Science.

In addition to these intensive encounters, Dr. Hildreth has been a regular attendee at ITLAL workshops and events, both as a participant and as a mentor to other faculty and graduate students adopting TBL and other active learning-inspired approaches.

### **Changes in Learning Outcomes**

As a result of her ongoing work with ITLAL, Dr. Hildreth has reported positive outcomes for her students, beginning with the level of intellectual challenge her courses now provide. Changing the activities in which students were engaged positively affected the day-to-day activities of the classroom, but more importantly has allowed Dr. Hildreth to create a learning environment that provokes students to approach complex questions like political scientists.

*I have always believed that there are many ways to look at political problems and issues and I have resisted the temptation of giving students a perspective on politics. As a result, I shied away from thorny problems because I viewed their solution as contingent. In this teaching method I believe I am more effectively serving their learning by revealing a process of investigation, modeling different perspectives on political problems. It is much more consistent with how I believe political questions should be approached.*

As a result of this more authentic approach to the content of the course, she has seen changes not only in students' approach to the content, but shifts in attitudes and behavior as well, both in their interactions with the content and with each other. In addition, her own beliefs about what students can and should be doing in her courses have been transformed.

*I now have greater expectations of students to apply concepts and extend their logic to other circumstances more easily. Students now teach each other as they discuss and debate things. They develop better arguments for their positions by helping each other. They pay greater attention to reading. They compete in teams in a constructive way. They are committed to their team mates and proud of the academic work they accomplish together.*

In addition to these cognitive goals, Dr. Hildreth has seen positive social outcomes for students in her Election Reform (RPOS 204) course in particular. She reserves half the seats in the course for incoming freshman interested in Political Science as a way of inviting students into the major. This deliberate enrollment strategy combined with the use of TBL has been successful in attracting students to the major but has also in connecting incoming students to the institution in a positive way.

### **Changes in Student Satisfaction**

The transformation in student attitudes, behaviors, and sense of integration into the university are evidenced in course evaluation data, which reveal an overwhelmingly positive response to Dr. Hildreth's implementations of TBL and use of TBL-influenced strategies. Student comments from RPOS 204 demonstrate high levels of student engagement. In Fall 2009, 29 or 35 students who responded when asked, "What went well in this class?" commented positively about the use of teamwork in the class, as a tool for engagement and for learning as well as a means of lending coherence to the course content. In Fall 2010, 23 of 28 students offered positive remarks regarding teamwork in response to the same question. Many noted that the use of team activities provided a framework for social and intellectual engagement, noting that their groups "learned and had fun with each other at the same time" or that teamwork "really helped me understand the material better" and "was a stimulant that made of the material more engaging and easier to learn."

Student evaluation data from sections of RPOS 204, initially offered as a TBL course in Fall 2008, demonstrate steady improvement in overall scores, with overall professor and course ratings improving to 4.47/5 and 4.21/5 in Fall 2010. Most strikingly, the overall professor (4.43/5) and course (4.12/5) ratings of Dr. Hildreth's TBL courses are significantly higher than those in non-TBL courses (average professor rating or 3.99/5 and average course rating of 3.65/5). Students' responses to questions indicating engagement and academic rigor are consistently higher in TBL courses as well, with average scores indicating a higher level of "intellectual challenge" (4.36) and "stimulated interest" (4.26) in these courses.

### **Long-Term Impact**

While Dr. Hildreth greatly values the evidence of greater rigor and improvement in student evaluation scores in this course, the outcome of her TBL courses that she finds most gratifying is their long-term effect on students. She believes the primary evidence of her success is the long-term relationship this course has created between her and her students and between those students and the content.

*More than one student has told me that my Election Reform [RPOS 204] class was the best class they have ever had—they say it was so fun and so interesting. And I had had more students contact me semesters later for material on some of the topics from that course than any other—students who had graduated and are working in politics, other current students still digging into the material, working on papers related to those topics. So, I believe it reached students and engaged them in learning in a way that I always wished my courses did.*

## **Kristen Hessler, Assistant Professor of Philosophy**

### **Prior to ITLAL**

After her first year of teaching at the University at Albany, Kristen Hessler, an Assistant Professor in Philosophy, was frustrated with teaching her large introductory ethics course in a Lecture Center (LC) classroom. Her goal for the classroom was for students to analyze and critique philosophical texts as well as to construct and defend their own views on the same topics. However, she was unhappy with student performance on these tasks, even though her student evaluations were on par with other LC philosophy courses. Even in her upper division classes, she found that students did not read outside of class and did not perform to her expectations on exams and papers. As a result, she found herself dumbing the courses down. This only marginally improved the student's engagement, but made the course less interesting for her to teach.

She decided to make changes to improve the students' performance and increase their learning. Dr. Hessler believed that in teaching the large lecture general education course she had an opportunity to help students grow intellectually and to prepare them to succeed in their college careers and she wanted to take better advantage of that opportunity. She also thought that it shouldn't be impossible to *enjoy* teaching these large courses and hoped for an improvement on that score as well.

### **Working with ITLAL**

To that end, the next year she worked with ITLAL to incorporate a classroom response system ("clickers") into her course. This technology proved useful for promoting student attendance, increasing understanding of how well students were learning, as well as for providing a way for students to take on a more active role despite the lecture-hall setting. Given the improvements she noticed, she decided to do more to increase the engagement level of the students and to try to help them handle more difficult material. That is when she decided to redesign her course to incorporate Team Based Learning (TBL).

Dr. Hessler attended a two-day ITLAL course design workshop that focused on TBL. As a result, she made deep changes to both the day-to-day activities of the course and to the assessments. Students were expected to come to class prepared and were held accountable by individual and team tasks. During the semester, ITLAL consultants observed her teach, providing some feedback to help her fine tune her approach. Dr. Hessler found that restructuring the course into the TBL format was helpful in two ways. First, it required her to think more clearly about what she really wanted the students to *do*. She had to become more explicit about all of those goals she had, but hadn't really thought about before. For example, she wanted students to know how to make an argument, and to know the readings they were covering (e.g. from the dialogues of Plato). So, when she planned her courses, she made sure that students had in-class and out-of-class assignments that provided them the opportunity to *practice* working with arguments, using Plato's dialogues. These assignments provided an additional benefit—she found it helpful to have it confirmed that the stuff she was teaching could be used by students. After having "dumbed down" the course before, she found it validating to see how students' thinking was changed by their experience.

### **Changes in Learning Outcomes**

Dr. Hessler describes the results of TBL on student performance as "remarkable." Not only was she giving them hard quiz (RAT) questions *at the beginning* of units (before she lectured on them), the students were doing better than previous students had done on end of section exams. Lectures, discussions and activities in the body of each unit were more productive, because a substantial number of students already had a grasp of the most important concepts from their engagement with the material outside of class. She was therefore able to design exams to test students on more complex application and analysis problems rather than testing them on how well they did at simply reporting information from the reading or the lectures. In her earlier course, exam questions assessed basic understanding of concepts, for example: "*How does Kant's categorical imperative test work? Explain using two of Kant's own examples. State and defend your opinion about whether these examples are successful.*" Because they had the opportunity to practice making judgments and to apply theories, Dr. Hessler could give students novel situations on exams and both she and her students trusted in the students' ability to critically analyze them, for example: "*Sid is a person who is frequently angered by daily life. For example, being stuck in a traffic jam fills him with rage, which he then vents on his co-workers or family members when he gets out of the car. He often insults people and threatens them when he is angry, and has a very difficult time apologizing afterwards. Explain what Socrates would say about whether Sid is moral, given how Socrates understands morality in the human soul.*" Despite giving students harder questions, the final grades for the course increased. In the pre-TBL course, the distribution of grades was dismal: A=23%, B=25%, C=11%, D=4% and 35% of students failed (the average of final grades was 65). Post-TBL, a greater percentage were passing the course A=23%, B=38%, C=25%, D=10% and only 5% failed (the average of final grades was 80).

Attendance and overall engagement improved as well: since students knew that exams would require them to engage in more complex intellectual tasks, they also knew that they needed to participate on a daily basis during the semester to prac-



tice these kinds of tasks. And most students responded to the structure of the TBL course by recognizing that they had to transform their study habits. One student wrote on the SIRF: “You MUST do the readings. I’m someone that never bothered to read outside of class, until this one.”

### **Changes in Student Satisfaction**

Dr. Hessler’s SIRF scores reflected this change in the students’ experience. The average “Instructor, Overall” rating for the first three semesters of teaching 114 in an LC without TBL was 3.35. Over the first two semesters (S09 and F09) with TBL the same number rose to 4.06. Over the same time periods, student reports of how challenging the class was rose from 3.86 to 4.17. These numbers are closer to what she receives in her upper division and graduate courses, and suggest that students appreciate and respect teachers who challenge them. Dr. Hessler reflects that she has had a similar realization “I now think that, in my early teaching, an even greater problem than student disengagement from learning was my own disengagement from teaching.”

In addition to seeing students perform better on harder assessments, Dr. Hessler was pleased to find that students were also showing progress in more broad ways. One of the most important of these was that she saw her students take responsibility for their own learning and to acquire or further develop the academic skills required to support their learning. Most ambitiously, on their exams and papers, students demonstrated that they were “more aware of themselves as moral agents, to be able to connect our philosophical reflections to their own moral thinking, to broaden their thinking about morality beyond their own personal moral dilemmas and take an interest in larger issues of social and political justice, and to become familiar with moral questions and perspectives that might have escaped their notice thus far.”

### **Instructor reflection**

Dr. Hessler found her experience using TBL to change her relationship to teaching and to UAlbany students:

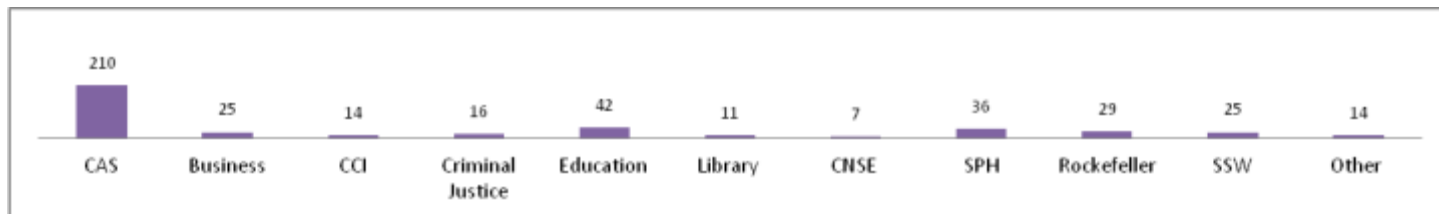
*TBL has been for me not an end in itself but a doorway into a more engaged, challenging, and rewarding model of college teaching. My classes have come to feel to me like learning communities—I know my students much better than I used to, and the students develop strong connections with each other in my classes. My own attitude has shifted from one of deep disappointment in our students to one of deep respect for them. While not every student is capable of, or interested in, making significant changes, I have seen many students take more responsibility for their own learning, become deeply engaged with philosophy, and proactively seek opportunities for further learning and even service based on the content of their philosophy courses. As a result, teaching, for me, has become one of the most rather than least satisfying components of my work at UAlbany.*

## APPENDIX B: REPORT FROM ITLAL IMPACT SURVEY

### A. Who responded to the survey

Of 544 total survey respondents, the majority (59%, 335 individuals) identified as frequent or occasional users, reporting that they made use of ITLAL's services at least once a year. Another 17% of respondents (95 individuals) reported making use of ITLAL's services less than once a year, and 24% (139 individuals) of respondents identified as non-users or former users.

Of the 423 respondents who identified an affiliation with a college or school within the university, each college and school within the university and each of the four campuses was represented.



407 respondents identified their current position, indicating that a wide range of faculty, staff, and graduate student positions was represented in the survey responses.

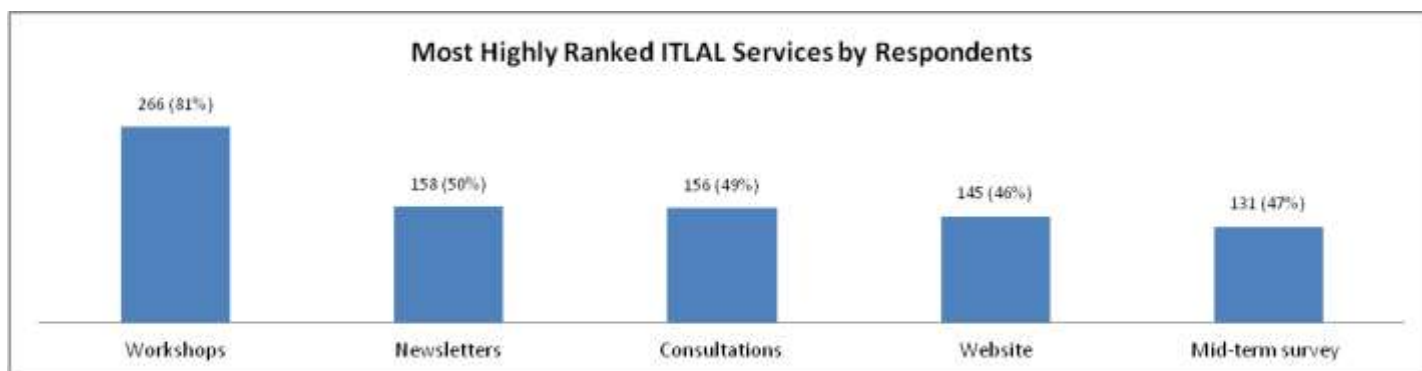
Associate Professor	22% (88 individuals)
Assistant Professor	15% (61 individuals)
Professor	15% (60 individuals)
Visiting full-time (Asst, Asso, Prof)	1% (5 individuals)
Lecturer/Instructor (full time)	5% (22 individuals)
Part-time instructor	18% (75 individuals)
Graduate Teaching Assistant	19% (78 individuals)
Professional Staff	7% (29 individuals)

A similar distribution was seen in terms of length of time respondents had been teaching at UAlbany. Of 421 individuals responding, there were almost equal numbers in all categories, suggesting that ITLAL's services are useful for instructors across experience levels.

Fewer than 3 academic years	26% (109 individuals)
3-5 academic years	24% (102 individuals)
6-11 academic years	23% (97 individuals)
12 or more academic years	27% (113 individuals)

### B. Evaluation of ITLAL's Services (frequent and occasional users)

Those who used ITLAL's services once a year or more (frequent and occasional users) reported the most benefit to their teaching overall. Among these users, 333 individuals rated the usefulness of ITLAL services. The services that were most frequently rated as somewhat or very useful included Workshops on Teaching (81%, 266 individuals); Newsletters (50%, 158 individuals); Individual consultations on teaching or related topics (49%, 156 individuals); Website teaching resources (46%, 145 individuals); and the Mid-term survey service (42%, 131 individuals).



Some exemplary comments on the usefulness of ITLAL's services include the following:

All services provided by ITLAL are extremely beneficial to faculty members. Workshops, surveys and consultations make us aware of new teaching techniques, which make learning more productive and enjoyable for students. I am very impressed by the ability of ITLAL staff to come up with creative solutions to

all types of problems one can encounter in a classroom and by their patient assistance in implementing these solutions.  
 My [graduate] students are very enthusiastic about your services.  
 I find the staff at ITLAL to be extremely knowledgeable and helpful.  
 I know many of our graduate students have benefited tremendously from the Teaching Portfolio awards program. They don't always win, of course, but they end up with a wonderful portfolio.  
 ITLAL provides an invaluable service to the University - teaching and learning are changing so quickly its crucial that we have an organization on campus that provides training, leadership and community around these changes.  
 I find individual consultations/trouble shooting to be the most helpful for me as an instructor. The workshops and speakers/academies were very important for me getting my feet wet with ITLAL and were exceptionally helpful for getting me thinking about my own teaching.

Of frequent and occasional users of ITLAL's services, 313 individuals reported changes they had seen in their teaching as a result of using ITLAL's services. The most common changes reported by respondents included the following: use of more student-centered activities (61%, 190 individuals); use of more student-student interactions (56%, 176 individuals); better course design (52%, 162 individuals); clearer learning objectives (51%, 158 individuals); and improved syllabi (44%, 137 individuals). Some exemplary comments about changes in teaching include the following:

It's not necessarily more efficient to make these changes, but it makes me feel better about my teaching.  
 Since I am in the process of preparing for a course that uses Team Based Learning, my interaction with, in particular the one-on-one conversations with ITLAL are helping to shape my thinking about TBL in general as the type of team exercises I am considering in particular.  
 I now use Blackboard - after taking a 2 or 3 day intensive workshop affected my attitude toward teaching: consider most who learns more (shouldn't be instructor, but students)  
 I already did a lot of student-centered activity in my classes, so I didn't check use of more student-centered or student-student activity but as a result of ITLAL I believe I have created \*better\* activities.  
 I am most grateful to ITLAL for your support in developing online courses.  
 Because I teach classes of 100 or more, the session I went to on making lectures more engaging and interesting was extremely helpful. I frequently use techniques I picked up from that relatively short session.  
 I remember my first year teaching - before ITLAL - and remember how horrible the experience was. Everything that makes me who I am today as a teacher is because of the learning and support to change I received from ITLAL. It was especially helpful to learn about tricks that improve learning in real ways for students. For the most part, students are doing better grade wise, attending class, participating, and I couldn't be much happier.

Among frequent and occasional users of ITLAL's services, 294 individuals reported positive attitudinal and/or behavioral changes seen in students as result of changes in their teaching. These included more frequent student participation in class (58%, 169 individuals); greater number of active participants in class (59%, 144 individuals); improved student preparation for class (43%, 125 individuals); higher levels of student energy in class (36%, 107 individuals); and increased student interest in what you teach (35%, 102 individuals). Some exemplary comments include the following:

The mean scores on my exams for my freshman Criminology course went up by about 12 points when I adopted Clickers. Students were better prepared because there were pop quizzes and attendance was better because it was possible for me to take attendance daily.  
 We changed our class on DNA Repair, using ITLAL suggestions to enhance student participation. This worked very well.  
 Writing assignments run a bit more smoothly, especially in the early stages (avoiding getting preliminary drafts that weren't just hastily written the night before)  
 As a result of support and offerings to assist in the process of teaching, I am more confident in exploring new and perhaps some better methods and ITLAL has helped me increase ideas and practice on student collaboration. I think this increases student resonance to the material I teach.  
 ITLAL has been a fabulous resource in this regard. I always have used learner-centered teaching methods, but they have helped me raise my teaching to another level.  
 I still have "problem students" but for the students that are there to learn, the changes have really helped. In one class, I give very difficult activities at times (300 level elective course) and students will engage with the material and it is awesome to see them debating and trying to figure out the applications.

### **C. Comments about ITLAL's Impact (rare users)**

The 17% of survey respondents (95 individuals) who identified as rare (less than once a year) users of ITLAL services were much less likely to report significant changes in their own teaching, but their responses did suggest a belief in the importance of ITLAL's work and awareness of resulting changes in the culture of teaching at UAlbany. Several respondents indicated interest in the support offered but reported that they do not have time to attend events. Some exemplary comments include the following:

Though I have not participated in the offered workshops and seminars, I have been consistently impressed with the topics over the past few years.  
 ITLAL seems to make a strong effort to address the challenges of being a grad student and instructor, and to also offer very practical classes in teaching.  
 I am intrigued by many things you offer, but here are only so many hours in the day.  
 My impression is that ITLAL is doing great things for teaching at UAlbany. Please don't take my lack of involvement to indicate lack of enthusiasm for what you do. When I was chair, I sent lots of young faculty and TAs your way.  
 The room designs you did over the last 2 or 3 years on the podium have been great. The amount of wall space, round tables, swivel chairs have made teaching much easier.  
 I think I have only attended one or two workshops, but they were very important in helping me to develop/refine my style and philosophy of teaching. Two points: 1) It is very important to clearly determine my teaching goals. 2) Students are busy. It is best for everyone to make the learning as EFFICIENT as possible.

### **D. Overview of Survey Data**

The variety of respondents suggests that ITLAL has reached faculty members and graduate students across the University, in terms of departmental affiliation, current position, and length of time teaching at UAlbany. Frequent and occasional users' responses and comments indicate that work with ITLAL has affected the work in individual instructors' classroom practices, with users reporting better-designed courses with clear goals, more and more productive interactions between students as well as between students and instructors, and better communication between instructors and students. In addition, the responses of those instructors who have made use of ITLAL's services less frequently suggest that even those who do not frequently take advantage of these services are aware and have seen evidence of their direct and indirect effects on the culture of teaching at UAlbany.

## APPENDIX C: WORKSHOP DESCRIPTIONS for ITLAL ALL-CAMPUS EVENTS

### Are You Ready to Try Clickers: A Workshop for New Adopters

ITLAL invites all interested faculty and member of the instructional staff to join us for an orientation to the world of “instant feedback” in the classroom. Imagine being able to check students’ thinking on a knotty problem, or to poll them to determine their presuppositions, or even to check their understanding of a basic concept. All of this can be done quickly, so that you can direct your class time and efforts toward those things students really need. This workshop includes an opportunity to practice for those who are contemplating the use of this maturing technology. Come see how clickers are being used here at UAlbany and in other institutions and join us for a discussion on best practices, benefits, challenges and technical issues related to the use of this tool.

### Special Event: Critical Thinking 2.0; or, The White Whale

We’ll look at ways of “provoking inquisitiveness” and inducing the “productive frustration” that is the emotional launching pad for critical thinking. We’ll investigate why students resist risk-taking in their thinking. We’ll discuss how to promote independence rather than helplessness.

### Designing a Dynamic Discussion

Classroom discussions can provide an opportunity for students to develop a deeper understanding of course content and to practice applying the concepts they’ve learned. But truly productive and intellectually provocative discussions require careful planning and forethought. This practical workshop will discuss the skills that students can develop in well-planned discussions and will demonstrate several techniques to help encourage student engagement through discussions and ultimately enhance student learning.

### Minimal Marking for Maximum Impact

How much feedback is enough? How much feedback is effective? Our desire to help students is what makes us effective teachers, but at what point does our enthusiasm to help work against learning? It’s a tricky balance we have to strike. And for some of us there is the feeling that if we don’t correct all the mistakes a student makes, we might be contributing to a culture of carelessness. You’ll be glad to know that a vast body of research on these very concerns has created a set of informed best practices from which any grader/marker of student writing can benefit. Minimal marking is a strategy that guides instructors on which kinds of problems to mark in various situations, so that students get a coherent set of feedback that really helps them learn.

### Identifying and Overcoming Unexpected Barriers to Learning

Have you ever encountered students whose work or behavior just doesn’t seem to make sense? Perhaps you’ve seen a student who speaks eloquently during class discussions but turns in written work that is nearly indecipherable, or maybe it’s an obviously bright student who just can’t get assignments completed and turned in on time. Sometimes students don’t respond to classroom situations or assignments as we expect due to poor preparation or an unfamiliar teaching method. In other cases, however, students are facing special circumstances such as a learning disability (either diagnosed or undiagnosed) that is limiting their capacity to navigate your course successfully. In this workshop, you will learn about dealing with some of these special cases by hearing from campus experts on student learning disabilities. You will also explore some strategies for structuring classroom encounters and assignments that will help all of your students be more successful.

### Just-in-Time-Teaching (JiTT) with Gregor Novak, Professor of Physics, U.S. Air Force Academy

In the old days we spent a large amount of class time telling students what they needed to know by giving lectures. Then we tested students’ accumulated understanding. The problem was (and still is), students who did not already know exactly why they were studying the subject had trouble getting traction. Even very smart students bailed, often because their only motivation was extrinsic: pass the test; get an A; get the course credits; get into med/law school. Dr Novak will be at UAlbany on December 9 to show us another way: he asks students to read, and then go online before class to respond electronically to carefully constructed web-based assignments. Then, before class, the instructor reads the student submissions “just-in-time” to adjust the classroom lesson to suit the students’ needs. While in class the students work through tasks and problems designed to reinforce concepts from the reading. The heart of JiTT is the “feedback loop” formed by the students’ outside-of-class preparation that fundamentally affects what happens during the subsequent in-class time together. Join us for what will be a highly engaging session, in which Dr. Novak will show participants how to structure and manage this process.

### Course Design for Deeper Learning

How do you want students to be different at the end of the semester from how they were at the beginning? What kinds of learning experiences in your course are likely to induce those changes? In this session, participants will zero in on factors that contribute to the development of student thinking, knowledge, and know-how. Participants will develop a plan that allows them to design or revise a course in ways that promote stronger student engagement with the materials, greater student mastery of disciplinary thinking, as well as more purposeful and efficient course management for the instructor.

### Excel Grade Book Consultations

Isn’t it time you stopped calculating all those grades at semester’s end, when you could let a piece of software do it for you? It’s not hard to use Excel for basic grade book management, and once you do it you’ll have the template forever. Just bring in any relevant grading information (your syllabus, written grade book, etc.) and you receive one-on-one assistance to create a grade book for your class. Setting up your Excel grade book early in the semester will save you time and allow you to keep up with students’ progress so as to avoid surprises at the end of the semester.

### Exploiting Error and Uncertainty to Increase Learning

Are your students making enough mistakes? Classrooms need to be places where opportunities for error are frequently and carefully staged so that student thinking can be made more visible. Mistakes cause students to pay attention and ultimately lead to reflection. This is where deeper learning occurs. As instructors we sometimes get so wrapped up in making sure that students have enough information to avoid mistakes that we forget that’s not how they learn. They learn by continually testing what they think they know and understand. This workshop models and provides examples of teaching so as to allow students to discover the limits of their knowledge. Finding ways, as teachers, to create an environment where error can be “exploited” and correctness can be “managed” will be key.

### Faculty Spotlight: Team-Based Learning

Come and learn about the experiences of those instructors who have chosen to incorporate the Michaelsen method or Team-Based Learning (TBL) into their classrooms. TBL is a method of teaching that holds student teams accountable for their learning while also ensuring that individuals pull their weight. Various faculty members will share their personal experiences and anecdotes in adopting this method of teaching as well as some challenges and rewards they have experienced in the classroom.

### Break the Economy of Cheating

Economists have known this for a long time; cheating is a behavior driven by incentives. When stakes are high and the perceived benefit outweighs the risk of potential costs, we should not be surprised that students make the calculation to cheat. Students who are invested in and responsible for the quality of what happens in the classroom are less likely to cheat, for the simple reason that they would be cheating themselves. This session does not promise simplistic or facile techniques to inhibit cheating, but it does propose a realignment of priorities in course design: make your classroom a community of invested students, whose collective commitment to what happens is consequential for their individual well-being.

### David Pace, Ph.D., on Decoding the Disciplines (to clear student pathways to learning)

If you've watched students stumble in absorbing key concepts and perspectives, or in adopting the kinds of thinking essential for your discipline, it's possible that the "code" of your discipline is still invisible to them. Students' preconceptions, accidental habits of analysis, and patterns of inference can be based on assumptions that have little to do with how your discipline really functions. These interruptions—or *stall-outs*—in learning, what some learning specialists call "bottlenecks," have to be surfaced and confronted intentionally before learning can continue. *Dr. David Pace*, Carnegie Fellow, Distinguished Teacher, Co-Author of the influential *Decoding the Disciplines*, and Emeritus Professor of History from Indiana University, has spent the better part of the last ten years refining approaches to dealing with disciplinary bottlenecks. He has worked closely with university faculty members on several continents, from all disciplines, including science and math, social sciences, humanities and fine arts, to help them conceptualize the specific bottlenecks of their disciplines, and to develop strategies for overcoming them. Join us for a rare opportunity to work with David, and to explore with him the "bottlenecks" of your own discipline.

### David Pace: Lessons from decoding the Humanities and Social Sciences

This session will focus more directly on challenges of disciplinary thinking in a range of related disciplines, in particular those that overlap in goal and function with History. Participants in this session will work through cases and activities designed to draw attention to specific difficulties students face in recognizing and handling evidence.

## APPENDIX D: WORKSHOP DESCRIPTIONS FOR GTA and FUTURE FACULTY EVENTS

### Demystifying the Academic Job Market

There's a light at the end of the dissertation tunnel, and you've decided it's time to start looking for a job. But where do you even start? In this session graduate students considering a life in academe will learn from UAlbany faculty members who have recently entered the professorate. Join us in this discussion, which will consider issues as wide-ranging as application strategies, CV's, and on-campus interviews, including some do's and don'ts.

### Writing Effective CV's and Cover Letters

A well-organized CV and cover letter are crucial for landing the academic job you have been working toward as a graduate student. While separately they address different aspects of your preparation and experience, together they can be a powerful tool to convince a prospective academic institution that you have the skills necessary for the job AND that you are a fit for their institution. This workshop will help you develop a clear plan for how best to organize your credentials into a CV and gain techniques for putting together a cover letter that brings you one step closer to that perfect academic position.

### Teaching Portfolios for Future Faculty

You know that you are a great teacher—all your students and colleagues say you are. But how can you *show* it? One great way is by developing a strong teaching statement and assembling a portfolio that showcases your accomplishments and development as a teacher. This workshop will provide examples and give you tips for collecting and displaying materials that will help you articulate your philosophy of teaching and demonstrate your strengths as a teacher.

### Preparing for the Academic Job Interview

So you've landed an interview...and the panic is setting in! This workshop will walk you through the "typical" faculty interview, and give you an idea of what to expect. Learn the ins and outs of interviewing for faculty positions. We will discuss the proper preparation and potential pitfalls of the most common interviewing scenarios: phone, conference and on-campus.

### Make Your Lectures More Interactive

Whether you have a "performer" personality or not, or whether you lecture a lot or a little, it's useful from time to time to re-visit "best practices" for making your lectures engaging, interesting, and effective learning tools for students. How can you ensure that (a) the lecture's content and delivery serve the purpose you intended it to, and (b) the context and set-up for each lecture lead to maximum impact on student learning? In this workshop, participants will experience a variety of techniques for engaging students via lectures and reflect upon ways that their current lectures can be revised for heightened effect.

### Teaching and Still Get Your Dissertation Research Done

The day-to-day concerns of teaching can be so great and so immediate that it's hard to focus on more long-range plans (like finishing that dissertation and graduating!). This workshop will offer strategies to help you spend less time on your teaching without sacrificing the quality of your students' learning and still keep chipping away at that dissertation research.

### Finding an Academic Job that Fits Your Needs

You know you want to work in academe, but in what capacity and where? 80% of PhD graduates don't end up working at research universities, and many who do aren't happy in that environment. Join us for a panel discussion with faculty members from local four-year schools and community colleges to learn what their faculty life is like.