EXAMPLES OF SUCCESSFUL PROPOSALS FOR SESSIONS AT THE FEBRUARY 2015 RESEARCH ON TEACHING AND LEARNING SUMMIT

(Acknowledgments to presenters for providing permission to reproduce these submissions)

Proposal Title: Chasing Away Teaching Slumps through Interdisciplinary Teaching Circles

Abstract: Regardless of the passion with which we enter careers in higher education, at some point, teaching slumps may occur. Exemplary teaching cannot be a one-time goal to achieve and forget. Rather, we must have authentic tools for engaging in faculty development in order to transform teaching slumps into fresh opportunities for refining our practice. Interdisciplinary teaching circles can provide such transformative tools. This interactive presentation describes the work of an interdisciplinary arts and literacy faculty teaching circle designed to unite students across disciplines within a community-based research project. Join us to explore how teaching circles might reinvigorate your practice.

Session Description: The arts and literacy interdisciplinary faculty teaching circle described in this presentation has a theoretical grounding in the Performance Cycle, as developed by the ArtsLiteracy Project from Brown University (Wootton & Landay, 1998). With roots in the literary work of Bakhtin, 1981 and critical pedagogy (Freire, 1970; 1974; 2005), the teaching circle focuses on cross-cultural, arts-integration and creative approaches to instruction rather than more standardized, passive approaches. We also build heavily on the National Writing Project model of teachers teaching teachers. Faculty across disciplines and stages of their academic careers would find this session valuable. The teaching circle described is composed of three department chairs, junior, and senior faculty. Attendees should leave the session with a quality example of a strong interdisciplinary teaching circle, engaging in collaborative research and curriculum development. This work reinvigorates practice, supports the Georgia College QEP—Building a Culture of Engaged Learners, and provides members with powerful resources for deep reflection and enhancement of their teaching practices. Based on this model and several other circles, attendees will have opportunities to work together to consider how similar teaching circles could be implemented within their college/university teaching contexts to foster faculty development in the scholarship of teaching and learning.

Session Track: Faculty Development

Format: One-hour presentation

Presenters: Linda Golson Bradley, Natalie King, and Jessica L. Shumake, Georgia College and State University
Proposal Title: Co-Teaching in a Linked Learning Environment

Abstract: Teaching involves numerous knowledge, skills, and dispositions. The intricacies of acquiring these complex knowledge and skills are critical during the field practicum for students in the Teacher Education credential program. The demands of the K-12 Academy-based Linked Learning environments add an additional set of skills required for educators expecting to teach in these schools. The traditional master teacher / student teacher model does not fulfill the aforementioned needs nor the demands of the high-stakes environment in the value-added situation of the 21st Century's schools in California. The Co-Teaching mentorship approach has begun to show enhanced pedagogy for Teacher Education students.

Session Description: The challenges of acquiring the extensive knowledge and skills during the field practicum for students in the Teacher Education credential program are extensive. This was typically accomplished through a traditional master teacher/ student teacher model. However, as demands have increased in the k-12 field as a whole and in specialized programs, such as Linked Learning sites, the traditional model is no longer effective. This study explores the potential influence the Co-Teaching model on the acquisition of the knowledge, skills, and dispositions with students in the Teacher Education credential program, specifically at Linked Learning sites. A sociocultural lens on learning places individuals in a social context interacting with others who are more capable peers or more capable mentors (Vygotsky, 1978). The notion explains the expert guides the interpersonal interaction, using language as a tool. The empowerment of the learner comes from using language as a tool to interface. In Vygotsky's theory, learning precedes development. He argued, "learning is a necessary and universal aspect of the process of developing culturally organized, specifically human psychological function" (1978, p. 90). Rogoff and Wertsch (1984) extended Vygotsky's (1978) claim that all cognitive development results from interaction that occurs between individuals engaged in concrete social interaction. The development is negotiated between the content and the context of the situation. I propose Co-Teaching provides these opportunities for purposeful and intentional interaction resulting in contextual learning. Individuals working with programs that include apprentice component, both in and out of the field of education (i.e. Teacher Education) will relate to the content presented. Audience members will be familiar with the impact of the intentional modes of interaction and learning as presented through the model of Co-Teaching in the Linked Learning environment via qualitative evidence as presented by poster and discussion.

Session Track: Teaching and Learning

Format: Poster session

Presenter: Diane Mukerjee, California State University-East Bay
Proposal Title: Using Core Competencies for student assessment and program effectiveness

Abstract: Because professors think and act in manners that are not immediately obvious to students, explicit expectations are needed to describe the complex learning and apprentice-like achievement for students in graduate programs. In order to meet these demands of clarity and explanation, we developed the Core Competencies rubric in 2010. Annual use of the Core Competencies rubric by thesis mentors provides discrete, attainable, and repeatable measures of student success in practices critical to their future career. The Pilot Study of Core Competencies for Program Assessment (2014-15) measures student progression, identifies program successes and/or failures, and lays the foundation for continuous improvement.

Session Description: In order to provide a framework for comparison of student achievement over time and to build a measurable basis for continuous program improvement, faculty use the Core Competency rubric annually at Van Andel Institute Graduate School (VAIGS). This comprehensive, developmental rubric describes the learning and behaviors practiced by successful scientists. In this session, participants will plan their own core competencies tailored to complex learning outcomes in their discipline, program, or learning environment. Those who intend to measure student achievement in apprentice-like programs will find easy application, however those with program goals including professional behaviors, higher-order skills, and research-based projects will also find this session appropriate. (All disciplines are welcome!)

The following goals for core competencies will be applied in the session:
* To demonstrate commitment to student professional development through authentic assessment
* To support teaching and mentoring in a transparent process of formative assessment
* To leverage core competency outcomes as direct measures of program effectiveness

Each participant will generate a draft set of core competencies, obtain peer review from other session participants, and target a meaningful delivery method to take these novel ideas back to their home institution.

Session Track: Assessment

Format: One-hour presentation

Presenters: Julie Turner, Michele Nelson, and Steve Triezenberg, Van Andel Institute Graduate School
Proposal Title: Case Study Method -- Beyond Business

Abstract: Although largely pioneered and refined within the Harvard Business School, case study method can be effectively utilized in disciplines outside of business. By considering some simple twists to the traditional business school approach, faculty in other disciplines can tailor case study method to maximize its use and value in their own classes. Also, as Communications research on interpersonal and group dynamics shows, faculty members who worry about sustaining a case-related class discussion can avail themselves to strategies that will position themselves to be effective facilitators.

Session Description: This session introduces non-business faculty to the business school roots of case study method and offers some practical advice on modifying the traditional business-related, graduate-level case study approach in order to make this powerful pedagogy more friendly for use in a variety of non-business, undergraduate disciplines. Advice draws upon the session presenter’s own personal experience in adopting case study method for his Media Ethics class, as well as pedagogical literature that highlights such topics as learning styles, student control/empowerment, and theory vs. practice. The session also draws on literature from the Communications field -- especially research about interpersonal communications and group dynamics -- to provide strategies that can help faculty members position themselves to be effective case study facilitators. The session is open to anyone -- from early-career faculty members who might want to consider adopting case study as one of their touchstone pedagogies, to more established instructors who, after having relied on other pedagogies, are looking for a way to inject a different approach into one or more of their classes.

Session Track: Teaching and Learning

Format: One-hour presentation

Presenter: Dave Kaszuba, Sussquehanna University
**Proposal Title:** Do Practice Exams In Science Courses Help Students Perform Better In Exams And Get Better Final Grades?

**Abstract:** Students in Human Anatomy & Physiology I were offered practice exams as a way of preparing for the actual exams. Results showed that students taking practice exams performed better than students who did not. Students who took all four practice exams had a significantly higher passing rate (80.95%) than the class as a whole (65.7%), including students that did not take any practice exams (50.0%). However, the study also showed that the percentage of students getting an A as a final grade was more or less constant regardless of whether students took all, some or none of the practice exams.

**Session Description:** The poster will present the results of a study that examined the effects of completing online practice exams by students enrolled in Human Anatomy & Physiology I on individual formal exams and overall course success. The practice exams were comparative in structure to formal exams, i.e., same number and type of questions. Students were also given the same time to complete practice exams as the formal exam. We will provide a handout with a description of the study as well as the results to interested visitors. The results of our study are of interest to all faculty that use structured assessments, such as multiple choice tests, in science classes.

**Session Track:** Teaching and Learning

**Format:** Poster session

**Presenter:** Peter Reuter, Florida Gulf Coast University