Faculty Focus is a publication for all instructors at the University of Central Florida. This includes full- and part-time faculty and teaching assistants at all UCF campuses. Its purpose is to provide an exchange of ideas on teaching and learning for the university’s community of teachers and scholars. It is envisioned that this publication will inspire more dialogue among faculty, whether in hallway discussions, departmental meetings, or in written articles. This represents an opportunity for faculty to reach their peers throughout the growing UCF community. The Faculty Focus invites you to contribute your ideas on teaching and learning in a short essay.

See the guidelines for submission online at <www.fctl.ucf.edu/focus/guidelines.htm>. Publication dates will be the middle of the first and last full months of each semester, and submission deadlines will be the Friday of the week prior. MLA format is preferred. Please send your submissions to Faculty Focus, fctl@mail.ucf.edu.

Gabrielle Fennimore is a Visiting Faculty member in the Department of Art. She is originally from Cincinnati, Ohio and holds a Ph.D. in Art Education from Ohio State University. She has enjoyed teaching both university and public school settings. Her favorite area of interest is working with artists and communities. She has worked for programs such as AmeriCorps, the Baker-Hunt Foundation, and a variety of community arts programs.

Somehow over the course of my teaching career, I had avoided instructing the dreaded large lecture class. For me, the large lecture class is one in which there are 300+ students in an amphitheater setting. Looking back at the environments in which I previously held Art History or Art Appreciation courses, I couldn’t recall ever having more than 25 students per class. So when I was asked to teach a large lecture course here at UCF in the Art Department, I wasn’t sure what to expect.

As I began my preparatory work for the course, I found myself doing all the content work one would do for students in a smaller classroom setting. I had been trained in Art Education to construct a course from a problem-based, or inquiry-based approach—but how was I to accomplish this with such an enormous class size? And there was also no teaching assistant assigned to the course—it was just me. I began to feel inadequate and unprepared for what lay ahead. I decided to visit the classroom space and make an appointment with the multimedia coordinator as it is a smart classroom. Armed with my content in various forms of presentation, such as slides, PowerPoint and CD-ROM image banks, I was determined to fully utilize what technology was available to assist me in that room. That room! What I was not fully prepared for was the day that I walked into what seemed like the Roman Hippodrome. Out of horror I found myself picturing the scene in the movie Gladiator, where Russell Crowe stands screaming to a frenzied mob, “Are you not entertained!” as the coliseum backdrop whirls around him. The multimedia coordinator chatted on about how to best operate the console as I stared out into hundreds of dimly lit empty seats.

Because I am a visual artist, I took the impact of actually seeing all those empty seats in that room for me to realize that my entire approach to course design needed to change for this particular class. I poured through resources aimed at instruction and classroom management. Most research I found discussed strategies for teaching large lecture courses from the perspective of offering suggestions on how to improve your lecturing. The idea behind this was that large lecture classes were somehow only good for transmitting large amounts of knowledge, cumulated from different sources, in one direction. Some offered limited suggestions for class activities that encouraged “active classroom thinking,” and others simply negated the idea of lecturing at all together, citing it as an outdated mode of teaching. But nowhere could I find research that told me how to run a large lecture class without the aid of online technology that encouraged or invited a problem-based, and/or inquiry-based mode of learning. The contention seemed to be that with the size of the class, it was somehow impossible or impractical to do this. I begrudgingly began to agree with some of this thinking as I understood that the evaluation and assessment criteria that comes with the application of those teaching methods in this situation could not...

...continued on page 2
serve students in the best way. In fact, the quality of intimate interaction that is required of problem-based and inquiry-based learning, I felt, would ultimately become diminished or watered-down in this large scale environment.

I began to look at how distance learning courses measured success. It seemed reasonable to me to associate 300+ students sitting in an auditorium doing activities, with 300+ students participating in an online course, but whom the instructor may never see. Distance learning courses allow for large scale enrollment because the technology (such as WebCT or Blackboard) is used as the classroom management tool. In my situation, the fact that the technology could handle the “grunt” work for large enrollment was key. With technology doing the bulk of the management work, such as keeping attendance, quizzes, grading, article posting, syllabus/handout distribution, mid-term/final distribution, etc., the instructor is more free to focus on content.

I wanted to combine my active classroom teaching methods with the use of this classroom management technology so that I could focus on content and spend more time creating meaningful, structured activities for students. I imagined the course in the form of a hybrid, where diverse class activities could now be divided and managed successfully throughout the week: traditional lecture days, online activities and readings, and study groups or recitation periods. For example, weekly, students could attend a large lecture day in which they would gather and collect information on the week’s topic. The information presented at the lecture would then be needed to complete online activities, readings, or discussions for the next period. Students would also be required to attend recitation or study group sessions to interact with each other and to review and share the week’s project or information.

In restructuring my course under this hybrid philosophy, I identified four areas of course development that would need to occur: student support, instructor support, content support, and long-term course goals. Innovations in these specific areas are not only tied to me, the instructor, but also to my department for future commitments and investments in furthering the quality of the course. Writing this summary, I felt that these types of innovations should have already been introduced to the course some time ago; many other large lecture courses across campus have already initiated similar developments. But I suspect there are still others somewhere out there on campus teaching the large lecture, who like myself are struggling with similar problems. By sharing some of my experience and structural ideas, I wanted to encourage others in similar positions to begin to reassess their course in

Varying the Context of Class Discussions: A Strategy for Active Learning? Kerstin Hamann

Kerstin Hamann is Associate Professor in Political Science. In addition to her primary research area in Spanish politics and comparative industrial relations, she has conducted research and published numerous articles and conference papers on the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning. She has served as a CAS Faculty Fellow and also as a Senior Faculty Fellow at the FCTL, and she has won several teaching awards at UCF. She is a member of the executive board of the Undergraduate Teaching Section of the American Political Science Association and serves on the editorial board of a national Scholarship of Teaching and Learning journal, the Journal of Political Science Education.

I am constantly looking for ideas to improve all my courses. In my mind, even the courses that I have taught several times and the ones that receive good course evaluations can always be further refined. It is not just the content that needs updated, so I keep telling myself, but also the way the content is delivered–in other words, how I teach the course. In some cases, the need for revising course delivery methods is obvious. This was the case with an upper-level political theory course I recently revised. When I first taught the course a few years ago–actually, about 10 years ago–it enrolled about 15 students and was taught in a small conference room with an even smaller whiteboard and not much else. The next year, about 30 students enrolled in the class. After not having taught it for a number of years, I now find myself in front of 75 students in a multi-media classroom. I realized fairly quickly that the mixture of lecture and seminar-style discussion, informed by the assigned class readings, was not going to work with 75 students, or at least not the way it was used to work. Therefore, I needed to rethink the way I was going to deliver the course material. While the lecture part was easy to adjust and supplement with PowerPoint slides and other visual aids, the discussion and critical thinking parts were somewhat more challenging to modify to the larger classroom setting.

For this particular class, discussion constitutes an important element of the instruction. But how do you engage 75 students in discussions that critically analyze political theory texts, apply ideas to new contexts, and make connections between readings? How can one prevent individual students from taking over and dominating the discussion while the majority of the students sits there silently, wondering what the few are talking about? To minimize this situation, I have devised several ways in which students can engage in meaningful discussions. Sometimes, I divide the class up into small groups that discuss different readings or questions, and then report back to the class. Some discussions take place in small online groups. And some discussions take place with the entire class,

“The eternal mystery of the world is its comprehensibility.” — Albert Einstein

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Teaching Related Conferences


NISOD: International Conference on Teaching and Learning Excellence May 29-June 1, 2005 Austin, Texas http://www.nisod.org/conference/index2.html


CRLL 3rd International Conference What a Difference a Pedagogy Makes: Researching Lifelong Learning and Teaching June 23-26, 2005 Stirling, Scotland http://crll.gcal.ac.uk/conf.htm


The Relay for Life is the American Cancer Society’s signature event and the number one, non-profit, special event in the country. UCF will host the Relay this coming year at the UCF track. If you are not on a team but would like to be, come join our team at the Faculty Center. For more information go to <http://www.fell.ucf.edu/events/relayforlife>.

Dr. Judy Welch, Dr. Alison Morrison-Shetlar, and Dr. Ruth Marshall are making another quilt as a gift for the Relay for Life. They are offering this quilt in a drawing which will be made during the relay. If you would like to view the quilt and place your name in the bowl for the drawing to receive the quilt, please stop by the Faculty Center.

Proceeds go to Relay for Life.

Donations are welcome.

Stop by the Faculty Center (CL1-207) and enter now!
The Office of Undergraduate Studies would like to announce the University of Central Florida Undergraduate Research Journal. Enter the UCF Journal website at <http://www.ejournal.ucf.edu>. The Journal is currently seeking manuscripts for the premier issue. Manuscripts should be submitted as soon as possible. The Journal is also seeking reviewers of these manuscripts as all manuscripts will undergo a double-blind review process. Information about the Journal and manuscript submission can be found at the Journal web site located at <http://ejournal.ucf.edu>. The Submissions procedure page can be found at: <http://www.ejournal.ucf.edu/submissions.php>.

The Journal is seeking reviewers of future manuscripts. Many faculty members have been preloaded into our reviewer database. In order to add or update your profile for the Journal please follow the following steps:

1. From here click on the right-hand menu where “Faculty Mentors” is located. This should take you to the following page: <http://www.ejournal.ucf.edu/index.php>.

2. Click on your name and hit the “Update Profile” underlined link on the page or click where it says to “register a new account”.

3. Click on your name and hit the “Update Profile” underlined link on the page or click where it says to “register a new account”.

4. Please fill in all appropriate information and follow the instructions to complete or update your profile.

5. If you have any questions, you may e-mail for assistance at ejournal@ucf.edu.

Through your efforts we hope that your undergraduate students’ manuscripts will be published in the University of Central Florida Undergraduate Research Journal. We look forward to receiving, reviewing and publishing your undergraduate student research manuscripts.

Sincerely,
Alejandro Brice, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
Editor, The University of Central Florida Undergraduate Research Journal
ejournaleditor@ucf.edu

UCF-Fit Program:
The purpose of the UCF-Fit program challenge is to build community at UCF through fitness and wellness activities.

UCF-Fit meets Wednesdays in front of Classroom Building 1 at 5:15 pm. All faculty, staff and students are invited to participate. Joggers and walkers of all levels are welcome.

The UCF-Fit program is growing so keep checking the web site <http://www.fclt.ucf.edu/ucf-fit> for future events.

...Reflective thinking is always more or less troublesome because it involves overcoming the inertia that causes one to accept suggestions at their face value; it involves willingness to endure a condition of mental unrest and disturbance. Reflective thinking, in short, means judgment suspended during further inquiry; and suspension is likely to be somewhat painful.

John Dewey

Vol. 4, No. 1 2005

Announcing the University of Central Florida Undergraduate Research Journal

Vol. 4, No. 1 2005

Blended Student Groups: Managing Students With Diverse Academic and Professional Backgrounds in the Small to Moderate Size Class

L. Timothy Worrell

Tim Worrell is an Associate Professor in the Department of Health Professions and this year’s Faculty Fellow at the University of Central Florida. He joined the UCF faculty on a part-time basis in 1973 and became a full-time faculty member in 1976. His clinical specialties include invasive and non-invasive cardipulmonary diagnostics.

Many professors deal with student groups that come to the university with quite diverse academic and professional backgrounds. Unlike the “traditional” college class comprised of 18-19 year old freshmen, 19-20 year old sophomores, etc., some classes may be comprised of some of these traditional students as well as older adult learners who have previous professional and life experiences. Examples of this can be found in the various limited access clinical programs found in the College of Health and Public Affairs here at UCF. One such program is the Registered Respiratory Therapist (RRT) Transfer program which was developed to track credentialed practitioners with Associate of Science degrees in Respiratory Therapy into the B.S. program in Cardiopulmonary Sciences. These RRT-Transfer students come to our program with any-where from 2-20+ years of clinical experience. They enter the undergraduate program as seniors and are “blended” in with our traditional students who have been here since entering as freshmen. As a result of this blending, interesting group dynamics develop which may create either frustrations or opportunities for the professor not encountered in a more traditional college class with a more homogeneous makeup.

The first thing that must be understood is that there are certain “givens” associated with this type of class makeup. These givens are as follows:

1. There is a wide range of academic and professional experiences in these student groups. Some students may have very little “real world” experience while others may have anywhere from 2-20 years of experience. Some have only completed traditional general education requirements, while others may have completed a community college professional training program in addition to their general education requirements.

2. These students have diverse lifestyle choices.

3. These students have diverse life management skill sets (time and stress management skills). Often the students with real world experience are older and more mature than the traditional students.

Once these givens are understood, a variety of techniques can be utilized to enhance the learning environment for these stu-
The Three Bears

As with most mentoring systems, a tremendous amount of "give and take" will occur, benefiting both the experienced and less experienced students in the class. The unique nature of the dynamics of the classroom in any course is often the main force that determines the identity of the class. It is one of the continually changing variables in any class no matter how many times the professor teaches the material. It is what keeps the teaching and learning experience fresh for both the professor and the students. Teaching blended student groups makes this an even more rewarding experience for the professor.

Reinventing the Wheel: Developing an Empirical Research Methods Course

Beth Rapp Young

Grad students studying literature usually don’t need to know much about empirical research methods, so our department’s research methods course has focused mostly on library research, bibliography, and an introduction to the profession of English. With the growth of M.A. programs in Rhetoric and Composition, Professional Writing, and Technical Communication, however, increasing numbers of students need to be familiar with empirical research. They may not carry on their own empirical study, but they certainly will need to read empirical studies and they need to understand how such an experience with children’s stories, and the fourth is the abridged version of a real study. The same questions, asking that the variables, measures, and data types be identified, follow each synopsis. Of course, these exercises cover only a small portion of the course content, but if they can provide a "training wheels" experience that will result in students being more ready to tackle the real articles, their creation will have been well worth the effort. Now I need to start thinking up some easy examples for the basic statistics we’ll be using. Let’s see… As I was traveling to St. Ives, I met a man who had a number of wives that was more than two standard deviations above the norm…. This may take awhile.

UCF Summer Faculty Development Conference

May 2 - 5, 2005
RFP Due 5 p.m., Friday, March 4, 2005

The Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning will provide 120 $1,000/person grants for faculty members who are transforming courses or departments by emphasizing the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL), assessment of learning outcomes, research, service learning, interdisciplinary collaboration, community engagement, or other innovations. Faculty members from all colleges are invited to apply (team submissions will be given preference).

<http://www.fctl.ucf.edu/events/summer_conf>
Jim Katt is Assistant Professor for the Nicholson School of Communi-
cation. He is a consultant and co-au-thor of the book "Making Power Point Work for You.

One of the goals in my undergraduate Communication Research Methods class is that students be able to read quantitative communication research from scholarly journals and identify the variables being studied and understand the methodology employed. This sounds simple enough, but most students come into the class having never even seen a scholar-
ly journal, much less read and understood one of the articles. We talk about independent and dependent variables in class, and they seem to understand the concepts, but when they start reading the journal articles, with their academic voice and methodological jargon, many students become intimidated, confused, or both.

What I needed were some non-threatening examples that would allow my students to get some practice reading and identifying variables before they jumped into the professional journals. In addition, next semester the course is being offered in a "M" format—web based components and face-
to-face time—so what I really needed were examples that would allow them to practice online.

The online modality seemed to be ideal for this simulated practice, drill-and-repetition type of pedagogy, in some ways, superior to a face-to-face setting. Alone at their computers, students would have no opportunity for social loafing or hang-
ing back until another class member came up with the an-
swers. And each student could work at his or her own pace with no penalty for those who take more time for this sort of task. The trick was to devise some examples that would in-
clude the proper elements for them to identify, but not require them to slog through the difficult academic writing—yet.

After some thought, it occurred to me that one source of the novice research reader’s angst might be that it is difficult to imagine the research scenarios that the articles describe. Until one has had the opportunity to understand the methodology of several studies, much of what is discussed in the articles just doesn’t make sense. And how does one ever come to under-
stand several studies without figuring out the first one. Don’t misunderstand me, I think struggling with a difficult task is a fine way to learn, and I realize removing most of the difficulty would probably also remove most of the learning experience. That said, I also realize that being intimidated and confused can cause frustration, diminished self-efficacy, and de-motivation. The answer lay in creating examples that students

...sometimes inexperienced students will go to the nearest library and search for their favorite pre-existing beliefs—but that research method would not be valid, and an understand-
ing of the scientific method can help explain why.
Interdisciplinarity, Activism and Assessment: Complementary or Contradictory? Lisa Logan, Terri Fine, and Leandra Preston

Lisa Logan is Associate Professor of English and, since August 2002, Director of the Women’s Studies Program in CAS. Her research interests include early American women’s popular fiction and personal narratives of travel, captivity, domestic abuse, and crime, and she has also published and given workshops on feminist pedagogy. Terri Fine is Associate Professor of Political Science. Her interests focus on American politics with an emphasis on women and politics, political parties and public opinion. Leandra Preston is the first ever full-time Visiting Instructor in Women’s Studies. Her research interests include theories of activism, third-wave feminist theory, and Italian-American women’s writing.

Gass-roots organizing for change and the measurement of student and program outcomes seem strange bedfellows. Yet we will try to convince you that activism and assessment complement one another perfectly in an interdisciplinary program. Sure, the former conjures up images of blue-jean wearing, sign-carrying, sixties-style action; and the latter must be well-blued-nicked folks sitting in offices. But in interdisciplinary programs, we wear many hats.

If you’ve felt your department squeezed as legislators lose less support, university budgets shrink, and departments place higher demands on their tenure-line faculty, a quick visit to an interdisciplinary program may make you feel better, if only to say, “At least I’m not there!” One big challenge facing interdisciplinary programs across the country is a dearth of resources that primarily employ women pay less than those occupations that primarily employ men, then they will grasp a broader perspective of women, to build their syllabi, new and seasoned instructors can access a WebCT account that delineates clear and consistent goals and objectives that work across disciplines and that are vital to the Women’s Studies program’s goals and mission.

One important course goal is that students gain knowledge and experience about women’s and gender issues—that theory is integrated into critical practice. To that end, the site houses how-to guides for running activism projects, including benefit shows and The Clotheline Project, a list of community partners in Brevard and Orlando, and specific assignments that introduce the course and modules for each unit from which instructors can draw as they build their own syllabi. A sample assignment introduces students to feminist activism through assigned texts and a list of feminist organization web sites. After completing the readings and discussion, students visit at least three web sites from the list provided, select one web site, and construct a fact sheet about that organization, including opportunities for activism. These fact sheets then become part of the course materials for instructors and students, posted in WebCT for use throughout the duration of the course.

Another module helps students (and instructors) to understand a social scientific approach. One key element in this module is the interdisciplinary claim that single events, whether on the individual, group or mass level, rarely occur because of one other event. This means that explaining women’s place in society, in our workplaces and our communities, faculty and program goals and objectives that work across disciplines and that are vital to the Women’s Studies program’s goals and mission.

The UCF Libraries’ Information Source, which is located in the UCF Libraries’ Circulation Department, includes the UCF Libraries’ Interlibrary Loan, Course Reserves, and Microform collections. The UCF Libraries’ Circulation Department provides books and other materials for the university’s mission of service to the Central Florida community. This service provides additional help in clarifying common misconceptions about copyright. If books and other materials are to be placed on reserve, current fair use guidelines do not cover the use of material beyond one semester. At the end of each semester, all reserve materials must be returned to the UCF Libraries. Guidelines that pertain to copyright are available online at http://library.ucf.edu/Administration/Policies/Copyright.

By focusing the economic perspective is, by definition interdisciplinary. Service learning provides excellent methods for learning about and addressing certain social problems. For example, the United States elections system is, save for presidential elections, funded through private monies. These private funds may range from individual contributions to large private foundations that fund themselves, or organizations called Political Action Committees. When students develop an understanding of how women’s and money issues are inter-twined in the public and governmental, they will grasp a broader perspective of women.

Case in point: students matriculating in the Women’s Studies Program’s interdisciplinary undergraduate minor must take the required course, WST 3015: Introduction to Women’s Studies, a service-learning course. With only one permanent faculty member and 10-12 sections needed per year, this highly interactive interdisciplinary course, taught by instructors from a range of disciplines, succeeds because of the program’s dual commitments to activism and assessment.

As a survey course, the course covers a broad scope of issues in weekly interdisciplinary units. Obviously, instructors have different training and background. Through assessment strategies, Women’s Studies has strengthened its interdisciplinary approach. For example, to build their syllabi, new and seasoned instructors can access a WebCT account that delineates clear and consistent goals and objectives that work across disciplines and that are vital to the Women’s Studies program’s goals and mission.

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1. Pay a royalty fee to the copyright owner for each photocopy obtained. Most often, the UCF Libraries make these payments through the Copyright Clearance Center (CCC). For journals not registered with the CCC, the UCF Libraries try to obtain a copy through commercial document providers or attempts to obtain written permission from the publisher.
2. Purchase an original copy of the work.
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Course Reserves: The UCF Libraries’ Circulation Department, including the main library and other branches, provides course reserve services to support the teaching activities of the university. All reserve materials must comply with copyright laws. Any item for which the faculty and staff have obtained written permission from the copyright holder, materials that fall within certain fair use guidelines may be placed on reserve. Current fair use guidelines do not cover the use of material beyond one semester. At the end of each semester, all reserve materials on reserve will be removed from reserve.

Faculty placing materials on reserve are responsible for verifying that those items are copyright compliant. When required, written permission must be obtained. Libraries’ staff may require proof that materials placed on reserve do not violate copyright guidelines. If books and other materials are to be placed on Course Reserves are owned by the UCF Libraries, these guidelines do not apply. These guidelines are updated only if materials are personal property obtained through Interlibrary Loan or by some other means.

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“Current fair use guidelines do not cover the use of material beyond one semester.”

Our institutions and the structures that fund them are changing, but that shift doesn’t mean the end of interdisciplinary programs and the faculty who teach in them. As agents in our workplaces and our communities, faculty and program leaders have the power to transform the institutional spaces we inhabit through our strategies for thinking through them. Assessment, properly employed, can enhance the navigation of interdisciplinary spaces amenable and even consistent for students and more user-friendly for overtaken faculty who move in and out of these programs. Empowering faculty and students, changing our thinking, transforming our institutional spaces—that’s definitely activism.

One important course goal is that students gain knowledge and experience about women’s and gender issues—that theory is integrated into critical practice. To that end, the site houses how-to guides for running activism projects, including benefit shows and The Clotheline Project, a list of community partners in Florida and Orlando, and specific assignments for the course and modules for each unit from which instructors can draw as they build their own syllabi. A sample assignment introduces students to feminist activism through assigned texts and a list of feminist organization web sites. After completing the readings and discussion, students visit at least three web sites from the list provided, select one web site, and construct a fact sheet about that organization, including opportunities for activism. These fact sheets can become part of the course materials for instructors and students, posted in WebCT for use throughout the duration of the course.

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For example, the United States elections system is, save for presidential elections, funded through private monies. These private funds may come from individuals, foundations, corporations, that��ates themselves, or organizations called Political Action Committees. When students develop an understanding of how women’s and money issues are intertwined in the public and government (for instance, those jobs that primarily employ women pay less than those occupations that primarily employ men), then they will grasp a broader sense of why women can’t receive campaign contributions, smaller amounts, when compared with men seeking the same offices. By focusing the economic perspectives of women, their experience, our political thoughts can be better understood.

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- <http://www.copyright.gov>

These web sites:

- <http://www.mcli.dist.maricopa.edu/proj/res_meth/login.html>

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- "let us reform our schools, and we shall find little need to reform in our persons." - John Ruskin

Training Wheels Online

Jim Katt

One of the goals in my undergraduate Communication Research Methods class is that students be able to read quantitative communication research from scholarly journals and identify the variables being studied and understanding the methodology employed. This sounds simple enough, but most students come into the class having never even seen a scholarly journal, much less read and understood one of the articles. We talk about independent and dependent variables in class, and they seem to understand the concepts, but when they start reading the journal articles, with their academic voice and methodological jargon, many students become intimidated, confused, or both.

What I needed were some non-threatening examples that would allow my students to get some practice reading and identifying variables before they jumped into the professional journals. In addition, next semester the course is being offered in the “M” format—weekly modules and graded face-to-face—so what I really needed were examples that would allow them to practice online.

The online modality seemed to be ideal for this simulated practice, drill-and-repetition type of pedagogy, in some ways, superior to a face-to-face setting. Alone at their computers, students would have no opportunity for social loafing or hanging back until another class member came up with the answers. And each student could work at his or her own pace with no penalty for those who take more time for this sort of task. The trick was to devise some examples that would include the proper elements for them to identify, but not require them to slog through the difficult academic writing—yet.

After some thought, it occurred to me that one source of the novice research reader’s angst might be that it is difficult to imagine the research scenarios that the articles describe. Until now, novice research readers, in particular, might be too confused, or both.

Therefore, the answer lay in creating examples that students could study are carried out. My project, therefore, was to expand the graduate research methods course, ENG 5009 Methods of Bibliography and Research, to include empirical research methods.

Since so many other disciplines have long-standing empirical research methods courses, I wanted to avoid reinventing the wheel. At the same time, I wanted the empirical material to become an organic part of the course rather than a tacked-on appendage. The transformation of this course is at one line with similar changes in graduate programs at other universities (e.g., Page).

In this article, I’ll first describe some of the online resources that have been useful for my course (an M course) and might be useful to other faculty. Next, I’ll talk about how the empirical concepts can be a coherent part of a humanities course.

Marcopa Online Tutorial on Scientific Research Methods [http://www.mcll.dist.marcopa.edu/proj/res_meth/login.html]

This site introduces five research methods (Experimental, Correlation, Natural Observation, Survey, Case Study) using examples from varied science and social science disciplines (anthropology, psychology, sociology, geology, and biology). A tutorial helps students assess their knowledge of the strengths and limitations of each method. A free trial is available.

Athabasca University Online Tutorial on Threats to Internal Validity [http://psych.athabascau.ca/html/validity.html]

This site explains nine threats to internal validity, providing examples from hypothetical experiments. A follow-up tutorial asks students to classify 36 hypothetical experiments as internally valid or not; if not, students must identify the specific threat to internal validity. The tutorial links to “related sources” that provide more information about the subject matter of the experiments.


This site provides computer graphics designed to help students understand statistical concepts such as bivariate relationships and sampling distributions.

Research Methods Knowledge Base [http://www.socinfo.com]

The Research Methods Knowledge Base, developed by a professor of policy analysis and management at Cornell University, is a comprehensive web-based textbook that addresses all of the topics in a typical introductory undergraduate or graduate course in social research methods. It covers the entire research process as well as the major theoretical and philosophical underpinnings of research (e.g., ethics).

Online Tutorial on Variables and Hypotheses [http://depts.clackamas.edu/soci/cf/glossary/variables.html]

This online tutorial, developed by a faculty member at Clackamas Community College in Oregon, introduces the basic concepts of variables, hypotheses, and the difference between correlation and causation.

This material is not as difficult to integrate as it might seem for two reasons:

1. Most English M.A. students are or will be teachers, and every teacher needs to know how to formulate and test hypotheses to assess the success of a pedagogy (if nothing else). Furthermore, the subfields represented in our department (Rhetoric and Composition, Technical Communication, etc.) are as closely allied to the social sciences as they are to the humanities. I assigned student groups to locate published empirical research that related to their subfield and that used the different empirical methods we were studying. Because the undergraduate experience with English Studies is primarily literature courses, many students were surprised at how often scholars in English Studies conduct empirical research.

2. English is an evidence-based discipline. Humanities scholars need to plan their research methods in advance, to carry out their research systematically, and to present their findings in a manner analogous to other disciplines. It is important to determine whether their conclusions are warranted; although, English students may be less accustomed to thinking about their work in those terms. For example, sometimes inexperienced students will go to the nearest library and search for only those web sites that have the pre-existing beliefs—but that research method would not be valid, and an understanding of the scientific method can help explain why.

"...sometimes inexperienced students will go to the nearest library and search for only those web sites that have the pre-existing beliefs—but that research method would not be valid, and an understanding of the scientific method can help explain why."
students. As with all classes, these students require a game plan for the course. A well organized course syllabus should pro-

provide this need for a formal and detailed guide so that all essential information concerning the course is includ-
ed in the syllabus including the mode of instruction, meeting times, text books, exam schedule, grading policy, academic dress code, code of ethics etc. This will help both the faculty member and the student for the course, and it is essential that the contract be as clear as possible. This can prevent many problems as the course progresses throughout the semester.

Students need to feel they have an identity in the course. Within the size limitations of the class, the professor should try to know and voice encouragement to all the students enrolled. For that, eCommunity can be an invaluable tool in assis-
ting the professor in connecting a face to a name. This tool is very help-
ful in making initial contacts with all of the students in the class and for all subsequent contacts during the semester. An initial assignment requiring the students to introduce themselves with a short biogra-
phical sketch will provide a much better appreciation of the di-
verse found within these blended groups of students. The professor should add his/her own short biographical sketch (not their professional curriculum vita) so the students have a better understanding of the faculty member’s academic and professional background. Many times students will question why a certain faculty member is teaching a particular course, and this biographical sketch can answer this question nicely. Once the semester begins, eCommunity can be used through-
out the term for communicating course issues as well as a means of sending short notes of encouragement to students who are doing their best to understand difficult course materi-
als. These quick notes can have a very positive influence on the individual student as well as the group as a whole.

A number of interesting teaching scenarios may be encoun-
tered when teaching student groups that have this blended characteristic. The students with more extensive professional backgrounds may be paired with the students who are less experienced and have more academic and professional backgrounds to create an in-class mentoring system that both groups will find helpful. The students with more extensive professional back-
grounds bring real world experience to the classroom which can be invaluable, especially in clinically based programs.

The unique nature of the dynamics of the classroom in any course is often the main force that determines the identity of the class. It is one of the continually changing variables in any class no matter how many times the professor teaches the same class, it is what keeps the teaching and learn-
ing experience fresh for both the professor and the students. Teaching blended student groups makes this an even more re-
warding experience for the professor.

Reinventing the Wheel: Developing an Em-
pirical Research Methods Course
Beth Rapp Young

Beth Rapp Young is an Assistant Pro-
fessor of English and director of the
University’s "career education" cen-
ter that has been involved with writing centers and WID initiatives since 1986.

Grad students studying literature usually don’t need to know much about empirical research methods, so our de-
partment’s research methods course has focused mostly on library research, bibliography, and an introduction to the
profession of English. With the growth of M.A. programs in
Rhetoric and Composition, Professional Writing, and Techni-
cal Communication, however, increasing numbers of students
need to be familiar with empirical research. They may not carry out their own empirical study, but they certainly will
read empirical studies and they need to understand how such

could relate to having had any previous research ex-
perience. My solution was to begin with examples that we set in
the course that are familiar children’s stories. How could any-
one be intimidated by Jack and Jill or The Three Bears?

Eventually, I had to come up a number of these friendly-con-
text examples. For one I have a series of practice “arti-
cles.” They are short, non-intimidating, and (I hope) fun. The first two are based on children’s stories. The third is fictitious, a little silly, but close to research that might actually take
place. The final example is an abridged version of an actual
study published in a journal. The article has been reduced to
the bare essentials and is written in a similar style to the previ-
ous two, these exercises make the students have worked through this progression of examples will be ready (or
at least closer to ready) to tackle the real thing.

Here’s the first sample, a study that would have real problems
getting through IRB, complete with an accurately formatted
(albeit phony) APA citation:

Smith, A. (1951). “The Effects of Safety Warning Mes-
gages on Children Performing in Task-Team Dyads”,

Having observed two youngsters take a nasty spill while
fetching water, Researcher Smith wondered if a warn-
ing message to “be careful while climbing the hill” re-
duced the rate of slips and falls. He also wondered if males were more likely to fall first, causing their female part-
ners (dutifully hanging onto the bucket) to attempt to stop the tumble before the other partner. Smith rented 60 pairs of ten-
year old children to participate in his experiment. Each pair consisted of one boy and one girl. Each pair was
given a bucket and instructed to go up the hill and fetch a
pail of water. Half of the groups were also told to “be
careful while climbing the hill.” The other half were
simply told to fetch the water with no additional warn-
ing. The pairs were randomly assigned to the “warning” or “no-warning” group. The participant-pairs performed
the tasks separately, could not see the other pairs per-
forming, and, in fact, were not aware that there were
other pairs. Three observers watched all of the pairs of
children attempt the task. The observers noted if any of
the children fell down while attempting to fetch the
water and which child (boy or girl) fell first. In cases we
were not able to make a determination, the observa-

tions will be given preference.

1. What are the independent variable(s)?
2. How are they operationally defined/measured?
3. What type of data will the independent definitions? (nominal, ordinal, interval or ratio)
4. What are the dependent variable(s)?
5. How are they operationally defined/measured?
6. What type of data will the dependent measures yield? (nominal, ordinal, interval or ratio)

I won’t include the full text of the remaining examples, but the second (Behr & Behr) has to do with taking a walk while por-
ridge cools. The third is more realistic, making no references
to children’s stories, and the fourth is the abridged version of
a real study. The same questions, asking that the variables,
measures, and data types be identified, follow each synopsis.

Of course, these exercises cover only a small portion of the
course content, but if they can provide a “training wheels” ex-
perience that will result in students being more ready to tackle
the real articles, their creation will have been well worth
the effort. Now I need to start thinking up some easy examples for
the basic statistics we’ll be using. Let’s see… As I was travel-
ing to St. Ives, I met a man who had a number of wives that
was more than two standard deviations above the norm…

This may take awhile.

Faculty Center Showcases
UCF Artist Anschion E. Maiden

Anschion E. Maiden was born in South Af-
rica and immigrated to the U.S. in 1997.
She completed a B.A. at the University
of Pretoria. She works at the Eastern
Europe Linkage Institute and Office
of International Studies. She is also affectionately known as the “scarf lady” for her community project knitting
scarves for Russian orphans.

Her work is inspired by the tribal art work that permeates the homes and communities of rural South Africa. The primary components were purchased from street vendors in Namibia, South Africa and indigenous
Ndebele bead workers. Please come to the Faculty Center this semester to view her work.

UCF Summer Faculty Development Conference
May 2 - 5, 2005
RFP Due 5 p.m., Friday, March 4, 2005

The Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning will provide 120 $1,000/person grants for faculty members
who are transforming courses and emphasizing the Scholarship of Teaching and Learn-
ing (SoTL), assessment of learning outcomes, re-
search, service learning, internship, serviceengagement, or other innovations. Faculty members from all colleges are invited to apply (team submis-
sions will be given preference).

<http://www.fctl.ucf.edu/events/summer_conf>
The Office of Undergraduate Studies would like to announce the University of Central Florida Undergraduate Research Journal. Enter the UCF journal web site located at: <http://ejournal.ucf.edu>; The Manuscripts will undergo a double-blind review process. Information about the Journal and manuscript submission can be found at the Journal web site located at <http://ejournal.ucf.edu/index.php>. The Journal is seeking reviewers of future manuscripts. Many faculty members have been preloaded into our reviewer database. In order to add or update your profile for the Journal please follow the following steps:
2. From here click on the right-hand menu where “Faculty Mentors” is located. This should take you to the following page: <http://www.ejournal.ucf.edu/faculty.php>;.
3. Click on your name and hit the “Update Profile” underlined link on the page or click where it says to “register a new account”;
4. Please fill in all the appropriate information and follow the instructions to complete or update your profile;
5. If you have any questions, you may e-mail for assistance at ejournal@mail.ucf.edu.

Through your efforts we hope that your undergraduate students’ manuscripts will be published in the University of Central Florida Undergraduate Research Journal. We look forward to receiving, reviewing and publishing your undergraduate student research manuscripts.

Sincerely,
Alejandro Brice, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
Editor, The University of Central Florida Undergraduate Research Journal
ejournal@editor@mail.ucf.edu

UCF-Fit: The purpose of the UCF-Fit program challenge is to build community at UCF through fitness and wellness activities.

UCF-Fit meets Wednesdays in front of Classroom Building 1 at 5:15 pm. All faculty, staff and students are invited to participate. Joggers and walkers of all levels are welcome.

The UCF-Fit program is growing so keep checking the web site <http://www.fclt.ucf.edu/ucf-fit> for future events.
serve students in the best way. In fact, the quality of intimate interaction that is required of problem-based and inquiry-based learning, I felt, would ultimately become diminished or watered-down in this large scale environment.

I began to look at how distance learning courses measured success. It seemed reasonable to me to associate 300+ students sitting in an auditorium doing activities, with 300+ students participating in an online course, but whom the instructor may never see. Distance learning courses allow for large scale enrollment because the technology (such as WebCT or Blackboard) is used as the classroom management tool. In my situation, the fact that the technology could handle the “grunt” work for large enrollment was key. With technology doing the bulk of the management work, such as keeping attendance, quizzes, grading, article posting, syllabus/handout distribution, mid-term/final distribution, etc., the instructor is more free to focus on content.

I wanted to combine my active classroom teaching methods with the use of this classroom management technology so that I could focus on content and spend more time creating meaningful, structured activities for students. I imagined the course in the form of a hybrid, where diverse class activities could now be divided and managed successfully throughout the week: traditional lecture days, online activities and readings, and study groups or recitation periods. For example, weekly, students would also be required to attend recitation or study group sessions to interact with each other and to review the mixture of lecture and seminar-style discussion, informed by the assigned class readings, was not going to work with 75 students, or at least not the way it was used to work. Therefore, I needed to rethink the way I was going to deliver the course material. While the recitation part was easy to adjust and supplement with PowerPoint slides and other visual aids, the discussion and critical thinking parts were somewhat more challenging to modify to the larger classroom setting.

In restructuring my course under this hybrid philosophy, I identified four areas of course development that would need to occur: student support, instructor support, content support, and long-term course goals. Innovations in these specific areas are not only tied to me, the instructor, but also to my department for future commitments and investments in furthering the quality of the course. Writing this summary, I felt that these types of innovations should have already been introduced to the course some time ago; many other large lecture courses across campus have already initiated similar developments. But I suspect there are still others somewhere out there on campus teaching the large lecture, who like myself are struggling with similar problems. By sharing some of my experience and structural ideas, I wanted to encourage others in similar positions to begin to reassess their course in the form of a hybrid.

"The eternal mystery of the world is its comprehensibility.” – Albert Einstein

Varying the Context of Class Discussions: A Strategy for Active Learning

Kerstin Hamann

Kerstin Hamann is Associate Professor in Political Science. In addition to her primary research area in Spanish politics and comparative industrial relations, she has conducted research and published numerous articles and conference papers on the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning. She has served as a CAS Faculty Fellow and also as a Senior Faculty Fellow at the FCTL, and she has won several teaching awards at UCF. She is a member of the executive board of the Undergraduate Teaching section of the American Political Science Association and serves on the editorial board of a national Scholarship of Teaching and Learning journal, the Journal of Political Science Education. I am constantly looking for ideas to improve all my courses. In my mind, even the courses that I have taught several times and the ones that receive good course evaluations can always be further refined. It is not just the content that needs updated, so I keep telling myself, but also the way the content is delivered—in other words, how I teach the course. In some cases, the need for revising course delivery methods is obvious. This was the case with an upper-level political theory course I recently revised. When I first taught the course a few years ago actually, about 10 years ago—it enrolled about 15 and was taught in a small conference room with an even smaller whiteboard and not much else. The next year, about 30 students enrolled in the class. After not having taught it for a number of years, I now find myself in front of 75 students in a multi-media classroom. I realized fairly quickly that the mixture of lecture and seminar-style discussion, informed by the assigned class readings, was not going to work with 75 students, or at least not the way it was used to work. Therefore, I needed to rethink the way I was going to deliver the course material. While the lecture part was easy to adjust and supplement with PowerPoint slides and other visual aids, the discussion and critical thinking parts were somewhat more challenging to modify to the larger classroom setting.

For this particular class, discussion constitutes an important element of the instruction. But how to engage 75 students in discussions that critically analyze political theory texts, apply ideas to new contexts, and make connections between readings? How can one prevent individual students from taking over and dominating the discussion while the majority of the students sits there silently, wondering what the few are talking about? To minimize this situation, I have devised several ways in which students can engage in meaningful discussions. Sometimes, I divide the class up into small groups that discuss different readings or questions, and then report back to the class. Some discussions take place in small online groups. And some discussions take place with the entire class.
Faculty Focus is a publication for all instructors at the University of Central Florida. This includes full- and part-time faculty and teaching assistants at all UCF campuses. Its purpose is to provide an exchange of ideas on teaching and learning for the university’s community of teachers and scholars. It is envisioned that this publication will inspire more dialogue among faculty, whether in hallway discussions, departmental meetings, or in written articles. This represents an opportunity for faculty to reach their peers throughout the growing UCF community. The Faculty Focus invites you to contribute your ideas on teaching and learning in a short essay.

See the guidelines for submission online at <www.fctl.ucf.edu/focus/guidelines.htm>. Publication dates will be the middle of the first and last full months of each semester, and submission deadlines will be the Friday of the week prior. MLA format is preferred. Please send your submissions to Faculty Focus, fctl@mail.ucf.edu.

February 2005

Innovations for the Large Lecture
Gabrielle Fenimore

Gabrielle Fenimore is a Visiting Faculty member in the Department of Art. She is originally from Cincinnati, Ohio and holds a Ph.D. in Art Education from Ohio State University. She has enjoyed teaching and learning in a short essay.

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As I began my preparatory work for the course, I found myself doing all the content work one would do for students in a smaller classroom setting. I had been trained in Art Education to construct a course from a problem-based, or inquiry-based approach—but how was I to accomplish this with such an enormous class size? And there was also no teaching assistant assigned to the course—it was just me. I began to feel inadequate and unprepared for what lay ahead. I decided to visit the classroom space and made an appointment with the multimedia coordinator as it is a smart classroom. Armed with my course content in various forms of presenta-