FACULTY DEVELOPMENT NEWSLETTER
SEPTEMBER 2010

Welcome
Welcome to the first newsletter from Innovation in Teaching, Assessment, and Scholarship

Addressing International Students' Needs
Elizabeth Riddle discusses issues resulting from the university's objective to significantly increase international student enrollment beginning Fall 2010.

Faculty Spotlight
Schools within the Context of Community—a fall immersive learning experience co-directed by Eva Zygmunt-Fillwalk and Pat Clark.

Event Spotlight
Can Our Students Really Multi-Task?

The Bookshelf
How People Learn: Brain, Mind, Experience, and School

Services Spotlight
Midterm Feedback Service

Upcoming Events
Workshops, seminars, and trainings throughout the month of September

Innovation in Teaching, Assessment, & Scholarship
www.bsu.edu/itas

Welcome

Welcome to the first faculty development newsletter. In an effort to better serve the various professional needs of the faculty at Ball State, the Office of Teaching and Learning Advancement, Learning Technologies Consulting and Support, Research and Design, and the Office of Academic Assessment and Institutional Research have joined forces as **Innovation in Teaching, Assessment, and Scholarship** (ITAS). This new partnership has brought these groups together to the 4th Floor of Teachers College—a single location to assist faculty members with their teaching and scholarship responsibilities.

Many of the goals of these individual units remain:

- We assist faculty members with all aspects of their teaching—providing workshops, seminars, and individual consultations on a wide range of instructional issues.
- We provide training and consultation on a variety of instructional technologies including Blackboard, Web Gradebook, inQsit, and rGrade.
- We consult with faculty members on all aspects of their research projects including research design, data collection and analysis techniques, and statistical software.

In addition, ITAS will further develop these services by

- promoting faculty excellence in disciplinary research and the scholarship of teaching and learning.
- advancing student learning through student, course, and programmatic assessment.
- encouraging collaboration among instructional support units and the faculty.

Through this new structure, we are exploring ways of combining our knowledge and experience to better serve faculty needs—and to recognize that your work isn't so neatly divided into teaching, technology, and research. Your responsibilities merge and flow together, and now so will our services for you.

Some of the initial collaborative projects we worked on this past spring included

- "Research Refreshers" series—helping faculty members understand research methodologies and tools needed for scholarly work.

- i>clicker training and support—combining instructional technology and pedagogical innovation to improve student engagement.
- rGrade training and consultation—supporting the development of assessment plans and the collection of data.

Over the course of the summer months, we updated our website and hope you find it to be an excellent resource wherever and whenever you need. You will find information regarding services and resources in all three areas of teaching, assessment, and scholarship. We have created simple URLs for several of the high-traffic pages to facilitate quick access:

Teaching International Students	www.bsu.edu/itas/international
New Faculty Programs	www.bsu.edu/itas/newfaculty
Instructional Technology	www.bsu.edu/itas/instructionaltech
Teaching Tips	www.bsu.edu/itas/teachingtips
Workshops	www.bsu.edu/itas/workshops

Finally, we offer this monthly newsletter as a way of keeping you up to date on our programs and services. Each issue will contain
- A *Main Article* regarding topics of interest in the areas of teaching, assessment, and scholarship at Ball State.
- A *Faculty Spotlight* introducing, or reintroducing, you to colleagues from across the university.
- A *Bookshelf* highlighting materials you may find of interest.
- Resources and services available through Innovation in Teaching, Assessment, and Scholarship.
- A *Calendar* of upcoming events with links to registration.

We hope you find our newsletter informative and helpful. In order to provide the highest quality of assistance, we want to hear from you. Please send your ideas for article topics as well as websites and/or books you have found useful in your teaching, scholarship, and professional development our way. In addition, general suggestions for improvement are always welcome.

Best wishes for a successful academic year. **Back to top**

Addressing International Students' Needs

Elizabeth M. Riddle

Department of English

An important objective of Ball State's Strategic Plan has been to increase international student enrollment to 1000 by 2012. The enrollment currently stands at some 900 students over the course of this academic year, which itself represents a considerable increase over recent years. In addition to addressing the important goal of promoting internationalism, the planned increase will bring additional revenue to campus in a time of reduced support from the state.

The greater international presence on campus will bring many educational and social rewards, including more student diversity and richer opportunities for cross-cultural exchange, both in and out of class. It also brings with it a need to recognize the special challenges that many international students face, as well as the classroom impact of changing student demographics.

One obvious are of concern is language. This includes not just the pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary of English, but also writing styles in different disciplines, styles of verbal politeness, and patterns of conversational interaction, all of which can vary across languages and cultures and have a considerable effect on student success and the classroom atmosphere.

Culture shock is another common concern, involving not just the values, behaviors, material goods, and the like of the larger community, but also the culture of the classroom. Another issue is that cultures may differ as to what counts as permissible collaboration or citation, which can lead to unintended violation of the U.S. norms of academic integrity.

In addition, personal factors such as loneliness may be more acute in international students than in others, as distant as they are from their homes and lacking immediate, personal support networks. Their professors may be the adults they know best in this country. Another response to loneliness and culture shock is for students from a particular cultural and linguistic

group to spend most of their free time together, which fulfills an important human need, but can work against developing more comfort with the language and culture of the host country.

Finally, it is very important to think about all the ways in which our classrooms and the larger Ball State and Muncie communities can formally and informally incorporate the richness of varied human experience and ways of thinking that international students can contribute.

This year, ITAS will be offering workshops, newsletter articles, and website modules to help address these and other issues related to the increasing internationalization of the campus.

Back to top

THE BOOKSHELF

How People Learn: Brain, Mind, Experience, and School

Bransford, John D., Brown, Ann L., and Rodney R. Cocking, eds. *How People Learn: Brain, Mind, Experience, and School: Expanded edition*. Washington, D. C.: National Academy Press, 2000.

"The emerging science of learning underscores the importance of rethinking what is taught, how it is taught, and how learning is assessed." p. 13

How People Learn: Brain, Mind, Experience and School, originally released in hardcover in the spring of 1999, has been newly expanded to show how the theories and insights from the original book can translate into actions and practice, now making a real connection between classroom activities and learning behavior. This paperback edition includes far-reaching suggestions for research that could increase the impact that classroom teaching has on actual learning.
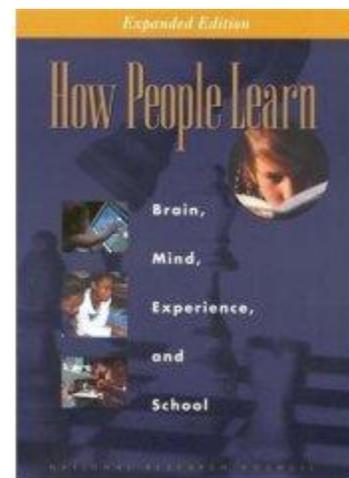
Like the original hardcover edition, this book offers exciting new research about the mind and the brain that provides answers to a number of compelling questions. When do infants begin to learn? How do experts learn and how is this different from non-experts? What can teachers and schools do—with curricula, classroom settings, and teaching methods—to help children learn most effectively? New evidence from many branches of science has significantly added to our understanding of what it means to know, from the neural processes that occur during learning to the influence of culture on what people see and absorb.

How People Learn examines these findings and their implications for what we teach, how we teach it, and how we assess what our children learn. The book uses exemplary teaching to illustrate how approaches based on what we now know result in in-depth learning. This new knowledge calls into question concepts and practices firmly entrenched in our current education system.

Topics include:

- How learning actually changes the physical structure of the brain.
- How existing knowledge affects what people notice and how they learn.
- What the thought processes of experts tell us about how to teach.
- The amazing learning potential of infants.
- The relationship of classroom learning and everyday settings of community and workplace.
- Learning needs and opportunities for teachers.
- A realistic look at the role of technology in education.

<div align="right">from <u>nap.edu</u></div>

Innovation in Teaching, Assessment, and Scholarship (ITAS) has several copies of *How People Learn* to loan to Ball State faculty members. <u>Contact us</u> to request a copy.

<div align="right">**Back to top**</div>

FACULTY SPOTLIGHT

Schools within the Context of Community – Fall 2009

Co-Directors

    Eva Zygmunt-Fillwalk

    Associate Professor of Elementary Education

    Pat Clark

    Associate Professor of Elementary Education

Additional Faculty Support

    Gail Bader, Assistant Professor of Anthropology

    Mark Malaby, Assistant Professor of Social Foundations of
Education/Multicultural Education

    Jon Clausen, Assistant Professor of Secondary Education/Educational
Technology

    Winnie Mucherah, Associate Professor of Psychology – Educational Psychology

    Donna Williams, Instructor of Elementary Education

"Teaching is more than lesson planning and implementation. It is also about developing relationships and understanding the community."

In August 2009, sixteen undergraduate students in early childhood and elementary education embarked on a semester that would transform their image of the elementary school. This image would not only include teachers and students, but, more importantly, the neighborhood community. Under the direction of Eva Zygmunt-Fillwalk and Pat Clark, both Associate Professors of Elementary Education, students enrolled in the Immersive Learning experience *Schools within the Context of Community*.

The goal of this course was to go beyond viewing children merely as members of a classroom from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., to understand that their lives outside of the school day directly impact their performance during the school day. This would mean forging a relationship with the students' caregivers and families.

Each day of the semester, the class met off-campus in the Whitely Neighborhood on the eastside of Muncie. While the main classroom was located in the Roy C. Buley Community Center, additional locations throughout the community—Longfellow Elementary School, Huffer Memorial Children's Center, and Head Start—were used as well. The students were enrolled in 18 credits of integrated coursework including practicum, early literacy, child development, child guidance and classroom management, educational foundations, and educational anthropology taught by a cadre of Ball State faculty representing multiple disciplines.

The students experienced some struggle at the onset due, in part, to the course's non-traditional features—attending class off-campus in a "9 to 5" timeframe as well as the "integrativeness" of the coursework. Other struggles pertained to the community aspect of the course as many of the students had little prior knowledge of diversity. In addition, they were intimidated by meeting with and talking to family members—one of the main purposes of this Immersive Learning experience.

By the conclusion of the semester, the early struggles were long forgotten as the students had become quite comfortable in the community and interacting with the children and their families. They had experienced a sincere sense of hospitality from the community which resulted in their desire to become involved above and beyond the course requirements. When the Buley Center faced the possibility of closing due to a lack of funding, the students observed the

community come together to keep the center alive. Their genuine desire to help resulted not only in assisting with the community's fundraising efforts, but planning their own as well.

Reflecting on the benefits of this experience, Zygmunt-Fillwalk and Clark commented that the students went from being recipients to participants in their own education. Benfits for the immersive learning faculty members included the collaboration with colleagues—intellectual stimulation as well as engaged conversations incorporating philosophical and day-to-day issues—and the relationships they developed with their students.

Their advice for faculty interested in pursuing an immersive learning experience?

- Work with someone you like—you will be spending a substantial amount of time together.
- Build in planning time.
- Obtain a graduate student to assist you.
- Be flexible and willing to work with ambiguity—this is partly due to the student-driven element of the course as well as unexpected opportunities that may arise.
- Consider in advance how you will document the process and potential research issues as a result of the IL course.

And, finally, be prepared for an intense, yet rewarding, experience.

Due to the success *Schools within the Context of Community*, Zymunt-Fillwalk and Clark are repeating this course each fall. The benefits of repetition will be shared by Ball State students and the Muncie community.

If you are interested in further information regarding immersive learning at Ball State, visit www.bsu.edu/immersive.

Back to top

SERVICES SPOTLIGHT

Midterm Feedback

One of the most valuable ways to improve our teaching is with feedback from our students, but waiting until the end of the semester reduces its effectiveness. Innovation in Teaching, Assessment, and Scholarship (ITAS) is available to help you collect timely and valuable information from your students midway through the semester. This service is offered in two formats—facilitated or through inQsit.

Facilitated

In this format, an ITAS staff member acts as a facilitator and leads a structured discussion in your class to gather feedback from your students. While you have to give up a class period (at least 45 minutes), you will gain valuable feedback on your teaching while there is plenty of time in the semester to make adjustments to the course. This process is meant to help you improve your teaching, not to serve as an evaluation tool, so the results are confidential—we don't report them to anyone but you.

Students respond well to this model since it allows them to openly discuss how the class is going, feeling comfortable with the anonymity of the process and the prospect for positive change in the class. Because the discussion is structured and facilitated, it turns complaints into constructive recommendations. What it takes from you is an openness to student suggestions, as well as a willingness to discuss the results with them afterwards.

Here's how it works:

Initial Meeting
You'll meet with a facilitator (typically an ITAS staff member) to discuss what kind of feedback you want from your students—certain aspects of your teaching, specific assignments, personal concerns, etc. We'll discuss the procedure and set up a date for the in-class discussion.

In-Class Discussion

On the day of the discussion, you'll briefly introduce the activity and the facilitator, and then you'll leave the room. The facilitator will break the class into small groups of 4-5 students and ask them to write individually for a few moments on the questions below. Then the groups will discuss their comments and decide on their top 2-3 answers for each question. Finally, each group will report out to the larger class and the facilitator will help the class decide on the top 3-5 answers to each question. The questions can vary, depending on the initial meeting, but typically follow this pattern:

• What about the class best helps you learn?

• What changes could the instructor make to improve your learning?

• What could you as a student do to improve the class?

• Other questions as determined in the initial meeting.

Report Writing and Results Meeting

After the facilitator gathers written and oral comments, he or she will prepare a short written report for you that highlights the results of the discussion, the student recommendations, and any other issues that arose during the class session (e.g. significant points of disagreement, etc.). You will then meet with the facilitator to discuss the report and possible actions or changes you might consider.

Follow-Up Class Discussion

After you have time to digest the report and consider changes—hopefully within a few days— you should discuss the results with your class. Most teachers will go through the list and talk about what changes they are willing to make, and what changes they cannot or will not make… and why. That honest discussion is key to keeping the process open and productive.

Please note the following guidelines:

• We will offer this service during weeks six through ten of each semester; moving it any later makes meaningful changes more difficult.

• We expect that you will be able to meet with your facilitator within a week of the in-class session.

• We ask that you gather feedback on only one class per semester; our resources are limited, and so is your ability to adjust your teaching mid-semester without feeling overwhelmed.

If you are interested in having us help you with this type of midterm feedback, please contact ITAS to schedule an initial meeting. If your department wishes to facilitate these sorts of activities on your own, we are happy to meet with you to discuss the procedure in more depth, and to share the materials we use.

Online Survey through inQsit

ITAS will create a survey for your class to complete through inQsit. You can use the same questions and/or create your own. While this format does not allow for a facilitator to assist students in thinking constructively, nor does it allow students to discuss the topic and hear what peers have to say, it does allow you to obtain feedback without taking class time to do so.

If you are interested in using the online survey format of the Midterm Feedback service, please contact Yasemin Tunc to create your survey.

Back to top

EVENT SPOTLIGHT

Can Our Students Really Multi-Task?

Thursday, September 23
3:30 – 5:00 pm
TC 412

We regularly hear the claim that students can multi-task, allowing them to use various technologies while still engaging in our classes. Recent research, however, shows that what happens is actually more like task-shifting, and that such behaviors actually lessen our ability to do any of those individual tasks very well. Facilitated by Melinda Messineo (Sociology) and Dominic Caristi (Telecommunications), this discussion will explore these issues and what they mean for our teaching and our students' learning.

Back to top

UPCOMING EVENTS - September 2010

Wednesday, September 1

Blackboard: Designing an Effective Course Site	1:00-2:00pm	TC411

Clicker Workshop – Downloading and Synching your Rosters

Web Gradebook	2:00-3:00pm	TC412
Blackboard	3:00-4:00pm	TC412

Blackboard: Safe Assignments	3:00-4:00pm	TC405
Blackboard: Q&A	4:00-5:00pm	TC405

Thursday, September 2

Blackboard: Content Management	11:00am-12:30pm	TC412
Blackboard: Safe Assignments	12:30-1:30pm	TC405

Clicker Workshop – Downloading and Synching your Rosters

Web Gradebook	2:00-3:00pm	TC412
Blackboard	3:00-4:00pm	TC412

Blackboard: Engaging Students	3:30-5:00pm	TC405

Tuesday, September 7

inQsit – Creating Online Tests	2:00-3:30pm	TC405

Wednesday, September 8

Prezi Presentations for Educators	11:00am-12:30pm	TC411
Blackboard: Content Management	1:00-2:30pm	TC411
Blackboard: Q&A	4:00-5:00pm	TC405

Thursday, September 9

Blackboard: Engaging Students	12:30-2:00pm	TC412
Blackboard: Content Management	5:00-6:30pm	TC411

Friday, September 10

Video Conference overview for Faculty, Staff, and Administrators

	10:00-11:00am	BC200
Blackboard: Safe Assignments	11:00am-12:00pm	TC405
Blackboard: Grade Center	1:00-2:30pm	TC411

Monday, September 13

Blackboard: Safe Assignments	2:00-3:00pm	TC405

Video Conference overview for Faculty, Staff, and Administrators

	3:00-4:00pm	BC200

Tuesday, September 14

Blackboard: Safe Assignments	11:00am-12:00pm	TC405

Wednesday, September 15

inQsit – Creating Online Tests	12:00-1:30pm	TC411
Alpha Seminar	2:00-3:00pm	TC412
Blackboard: Q&A	4:00-5:00pm	TC405

Thursday, September 16

Blackboard: Designing an Effective Course Site	12:30-1:30pm	TC412
Alpha Seminar	11:00am-12:00pm	TC412

Tuesday, September 21

Blackboard: Grade Center	11:00am-12:30pm	TC412

Wednesday, September 22

Alpha Seminar	2:00-3:00pm	TC412
Prezi Presentations for Educators	3:00-4:30pm	TC411
Blackboard: Q&A	4:00-5:00pm	TC405

Thursday, September 23

Can Our Students Really Multi-Task?	3:30-5:00pm	TC412
Alpha Seminar	11:00am-12:00pm	TC412

Friday, September 24

Blackboard: Engaging Students	1:00-2:30pm	TC411

Monday, September 27

Blackboard: Designing an Effective Course Site	3:00-4:00pm	TC411

Wednesday, September 29

Alpha Seminar	2:00-3:00pm	TC412
Teaching Online: Rethinking Teaching	3:00-4:00pm	WB144
Blackboard: Q&A	4:00-5:00pm	TC405

Thursday, September 30

Alpha Seminar	11:00am-12:00pm	TC412
InQsit – Creating Online Tests	11:00am-12:30pm	TC412

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