R·I·T

2015 TEACHING AND LEARNING SYMPOSIUM:
COLLABORATIVE AND INCLUSIVE LEARNING

Event Report

VERSION 1.3 | SEPTEMBER 2, 2015

Prepared by: Rebecca Johnson and Michael Starenko, Teaching and Learning Services

Prepared for: Jeremy Haefner, Ph.D., Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs
Neil Hair, Ph.D., Executive Director, Innovative Learning Institute

SUMMARY

The inaugural 2015 Teaching and Learning Symposium, hosted by Teaching and Learning Services (TLS), was held on Friday, August 14, from 1:00 to 5:00 pm, in Gosnell Hall. The sessions, which ran from 1:00 to 4:00, were held in room A300 and were then followed by a one-hour reception in the Gosnell Hall Atrium.

A total of 57 RIT faculty, teaching staff, and graduate teaching assistants attended the event. To cost of the event was $871.61, which covered materials and catering.

This year's theme, Collaborative and Inclusive Learning, was reflected in four sessions that explored how RIT faculty have created collaborative and inclusive learning environments in diverse disciplines and in a variety of contexts (full descriptions of the sessions and the presenters' biographies are included in Appendix A):

1. **Nick DiFonzo**: *Team-Based Learning: A Structured Problem-Based Approach*

2. **Carol Marchetti, Susan Foster, Gary Long, and Michael Stinson**: *Broadening Access to Team Work: Effective Tools and Strategies*

3. **Bruce Leonard, Stan Rickel, Amos Scully, and Richard Shearman**: Staging Chaos: *How to Prepare for and Facilitate Student Collaboration*

4. **Dianna Winslow**: *Student-Centered Learning and Collaborative Projects*

TLS will soon launch a blog, "Teaching and Learning at RIT," which will be used to provide asynchronous faculty support, raise the profile of Teaching and Learning Services, enable us to promote content on our website, and provide a forum for ideas in development. We continue to write posts to build the blog before a formal launch, but we did not want to miss the opportunity to capture the valuable resources associated with the sessions of the Teaching and Learning Symposium. The blog post linked below was distributed to symposium attendees along with a link to the post-event feedback survey: https://tlsblog.rit.edu/teaching-and-learning-symposium-collaboration-and-inclusion-resources/

We recommend that the next Teaching and Learning Symposium be held on Friday, August 12, 2016.

BACKGROUND

In late 2014, Dr. Neil Hair, Executive Director of the Innovative Learning Institute, charged us with researching peer institutions to determine what, if anything, they are offering in the way of conferences, symposia, and other half-day or longer events devoted to teaching and learning. We were additionally charged to use these research findings to plan and offer a teaching and learning conference at RIT in 2015.

The following criteria were used to select 20 benchmark schools for the study:

- Schools on RIT's official list of benchmark schools

- Schools like RIT that are relatively large in student enrollments and that are research-oriented and technology-focused

- Schools with teaching and learning centers or other units known for their leadership and excellence in faculty development

We presented our findings to Dr. Hair in December 2014. While five conference models were identified and described in the 2014 Benchmark Report on Teaching and Learning Conferences, we were able to recommend only the "Pre-Semester Teaching Fundamentals Conference" model for RIT. Our rationale was based on the following considerations:

> *Discussion and recommendation: In the absence of a keynote speaker or speakers, this model is the lowest cost of the five models identified in our research. We estimate the cost for 40-50 participants (plus 8-12 faculty and staff facilitators) to range from $1200-$1500 per event for breakfast, lunch, and incidentals. Of the five models considered, we recommend this one for the following reasons:*

> 1. *The relatively low direct costs of this model (not including TLS staff time)*

> 2. *Conference is focused on specific RIT instructor groups with clearly identified needs (new and developing faculty, experienced faculty looking for a refresher, graduate students planning a career in teaching, TAs)*

> 3. *The two separate "teaching days" will mesh well with the timing and purpose of RIT's New Faculty Orientation (offered every August) and Destination Intersession (offered every January)*

> 4. *Conference "learnings" could be directly applied in the upcoming semester*

> 5. *The conference format would allow for a wide range of session topics*

In planning a new type of teaching and learning conference, we necessarily had to adapt the above "Pre-Semester Conference" model for a number of situational factors. For instance, because New Faculty Orientation extended into the morning of Friday, August 14, we developed an innovative "half-day" (four-hour) event for the afternoon time slot.

FEEDBACK FROM ATTENDEES

A total of 18 of the 57 attendees responded to our evaluation survey, which was a slight variant of the standard Teaching and Learning Services post-event instrument. With one exception, the vast majority of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that the Symposium:

- Met my expectations

- Provided useful information

- Presented the materials clearly

- Pace of information presented was just right

- Inspired me to take action

- Would recommend this event to a colleague

The first of four open-ended questions asked, "What did you find helpful [about the Symposium]?" In their answers, we noted the following:

- Respondents valued the interdisciplinary and participatory format and appreciated the opportunity for networking. This comment pulls together the threads of a number of other comments: "I really liked the participatory format, which demonstrated how to use the ideas in class. The sharing by both presenters and people in the audience gave me new ideas and more vigor for trying them. It is helpful/supportive to know that other struggle with the same issues in class. I also got some good new contacts during the social hour."

- Respondents also commented specifically about each of the sessions, with comments such as "Team-Based Learning [Nick DiFonzo's session] and the efficacy of how to carry out various strategies was useful. I will try out some of these strategies while I am teaching." "I liked the idea of one big project for an entire week [T-151 Project], especially as it satisfied an industry need." "I loved the specific ideas from the DeafTEC group and I will definitely avail myself of what you post online for resources [referring to the fore mentioned blog post: https://tlsblog.rit.edu/teaching-and-learning-symposium-collaboration-and-inclusion-resources/]"

- Respondents also appreciated the opportunity to watch their peers teach. "Great energy on the part of the presenters and seeing them 'teach,'" and "[I enjoyed] seeing, and participating in, just a few of the available methods of teaching/learning out there."

The second open-ended question asked, conversely, "What did you find least helpful?" Again with one exception, the vast majority of the respondents offered constructive criticism about specific aspects of the sessions as well as the overall event. These included:

- Would have been nice to get some evaluative information (e.g., pros and cons) about the teaching and learning approaches, not just experiencing or seeing those approaches in action.

- There could have been more discussion about the difficulties of team teaching, including issues about limited resources—for example, the availability of scratch pads, white boards, and other collaboration materials for a class of 60 students set up in an auditorium-style room.

- The fixed-seats in the symposium room, Gosnell A300, were problematic for experiencing collaborative teaching and learning.

- At three hours total, the sessions were collectively too long and the organizers did not set aside enough time for Q & A and wrap-up discussions.

The third open-ended question—which was a significant addition to the standard TLS survey—asked attendees "What topics would you like to see addressed at future Teaching and Learning Symposia?" The topics suggested for further symposia included:

- "Approaches for dealing with classroom behavior issues."

- "Teaching, grading, and evaluating critical thinking."

- "Cultural and Bilingual-based learning."

- "Continued info on how to integrate Deaf/HH student more fully into mainstreamed classes."

- "Sharing of techniques and technologies that have worked for others (on any topic)."

- "More discussion opportunities and Q & A about strategies that have worked well for other faculty."

- "Fostering institutional changes to make implementing collaboration across colleges easier."

- "The latest advances in using classroom clickers."

- "More issues related to teaching Deaf/HH students."

- "Using more technology to engage students."

- "Proven techniques the build creativity and trust with students."

- "Information and/or discussion regarding the spaces/venues/rooms where teachers intend learning to happen; and how much the 'learning space' impacts (both positively and negatively) lesson planning."

The fourth open-ended question—"What assistance would you need in order to put ideas from this event into practice?"—produced responses that were inspired by the presentation by Marchetti, Long, Foster, and Stinson; by current physical limitations in some classrooms; and by an interest in continuing and expanding the conversations on collaboration and inclusion:

- "Different classroom space and smaller class sizes."

- "Better access to whiteboard for humanities classes."

- "Another workshop with Carol Marchetti's group."

- "Faculty Learning Community? I may try to initiate a new activity within my college."

- "I would like to work with others who are interested in improving DHH and accessible education. I think I am new enough to the culture and some of the ideas that I would really benefit from a group of like-minded individuals who were working on the same issues."

- "Departmental buy-in. . . .Helping worker bees is great, but showing the "queens" some of this would help us all."

RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the good turnout, high quality of the sessions, and generally positive post-event feedback, we think the inaugural Teaching and Learning Symposium was a great success. We therefore recommend that a second Symposium be offered on the afternoon immediately following next year's New Faculty Orientation—that is, on Friday, August 12, 2015, 1:00-5:00.

In order to reach more RIT faculty, teaching staff, and graduate teaching assistants, we recommend that the organizers of the 2016 Symposium aim to increase attendance in a way that supports the interactive, participatory activities that were so highly valued in the first Symposium. We think that 70-90 participants would be about the ideal size for the next Symposium. An event of that size would be small enough to allow high levels of participation, yet also expand access.

To attract these 70-90 participants, we recommend that the 2016 Symposium program be fully developed by April 2016 and that the first "hold the date" announcement be sent to the RIT community in early May, and that similar announcements be sent throughout the summer of 2016.

Because post-event feedback was rightly critical of the fixed benches and seats in the 2015 Symposium venue—Gosnell A300—we recommend that the 2016 Symposium organizers book a venue that physically permits the interactive, participatory activities that were the hallmark of the inaugural Symposium.

APPENDIX A: 2015 TEACHING AND LEARNING SYMPOSIUM PROGRAM

Session Presenters and Topics

Nicholas DiFonzo

Team-Based Learning: A Structured Problem-Based Approach

This session will demonstrate Team-Based Learning (TBL), an active instructional method that improves learning performance, enhances student engagement, and develops learning skills. With TBL, the primary course objective shifts from content transmission (lectures) to helping students learn how to use course content to solve significant structured problems.

Carol Marchetti, Susan Foster, Gary Long, and Michael Stinson

Broadening Access to Team Work: Effective Tools and Strategies

Working in teams can be daunting, particularly for students who struggle with language. In this session, participants will experience teamwork through the eyes of these students and learn about a communication tool and instructional supports to facilitate cooperative learning in the classroom. Originally developed for deaf students, this approach addresses the needs of all students who struggle with teamwork due to language difficulties.

Bruce Leonard, Stan Rickel, Amos Scully, and Richard Shearman

Staging Chaos: Preparing for and Facilitating Robust Student Collaboration

Rewarding group work requires rigorous preparation and benchmarking. Learn from faculty in the Industrial Design and Environmental Sciences programs how they set the stage for group work in a variety of contexts, how they form groups, and how they assess group results.

Dianna Winslow

Stepping out of the way? Student-Centered Learning and Collaborative Projects

Using a student-centered approach means having to teach students how it works. Assigning collaborative projects requires teaching students what it means to collaborate. This session is a conversation about the pedagogical benefits of student-centered learning and fostering positive, productive collaborative practices in the classroom. It is also a caution about some of the potential pitfalls inherent in "de-centering" yourself in the classroom.

Presenter Bios

Nicholas DiFonzo, PhD, is a professor in the Department of Psychology and teaches social psychology, attitudes and social cognition, group processes, and positive psychology. He has used Team-Based Learning for more than three years. DiFonzo is an authority on the psychological dynamics of rumor. He has been the PI or co-PI for 15 external grants projects funded by numerous agencies, including the National Science Foundation, the Institute for Public Relations Research, and the Australian Research Council.

Susan Foster received her PhD in special education and rehabilitation from Syracuse University in 1983. She has worked in the Department of Research at Rochester Institute of Technology's National Technical Institute for the Deaf since 1984. Current research projects focus on access for deaf students in educational settings, as well as the career development of deaf professionals.

Bruce Leonard started his teaching career as an adjunct faculty member in the School of Design and was appointed lecturer in 2013. His professional career included stops at Unicor, Pulos Design Associates, Harris Corporation, and 32 years at Eastman Kodak Company where he rose to the position of Manager, Digital Cameras and Devices Industrial Design. He currently holds 21 patents in the fields of consumer photography and medical imaging. Products developed by Leonard and his Kodak design staffs have been recognized by IDEA, Red Dot, iF, Good Design/Chicago Athenaeum, and CES Innovations.

Gary Long came to NTID in 1976 and was one of the founding members and subsequent chair of the Department of Educational Research and Development. In addition to his research responsibilities, he taught undergraduate and graduate courses in psychology and research methods at NTID, RIT, and the University of Rochester. He received his MA and PhD from Texas Christian University majoring in mathematical and cognitive psychology. His research efforts have focused on student learning strategies, reading comprehension, online learning, and best practices for instruction in mainstream settings. He is currently co-PI on DeafTEC, a National Science Foundation Center of Excellence.

Carol Marchetti teaches statistics in the School of Mathematical Sciences in the College of Science at RIT and serves as the PI for Project Thinking CAP (Communication, Access, and Persistence among Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students in Foundational Statistics Courses), co-PI for Facilitating Knowledge Building in Cooperative Learning of Statistics in Mixed Teams with Deaf/Hard of Hearing and Hearing Students, and co-PI for Advance RIT--Creating Opportunity Networks for Engagement and Collective Transformation: Increasing the Representation and Advancement of Women Faculty at RIT.

Stan Rickel is a generalist at heart and possesses a wide range of design interests and skills. As an accomplished cabinetmaker, he has designed and crafted furniture for many private clients throughout the US while his skills in the fabrication and engineering of sculptural work fostered collaborations with artists such as Denis Oppenheim and Ed Rothfarb. Shortly after graduating from Pratt with his BID, Stan was appointed senior designer for Charles Pollock International, and went on to establish his own firm. As a principle of Rickel Jackson Design, Stan's clients include: Farberware, Anchor Hocking Glassware, Conair, Mel Appel, Mattel, Galoob, Hasbro, Tiger Electronics, Trimark, United Chair, Les Prismatiques, and George Kovacs. As an educator for the last 15 years, Stan has taught at Pratt Institute and Syracuse University prior to joining RIT's Industrial Design Program in 2001, where he served as the Department Chair and the Graduate Coordinator, leading the department to one the highest ranked industrial design programs nationally and internationally. He is currently serving as the graduate director of industrial design. Stan has authored, co-authored, and presented papers on subjects ranging from experiential learning to interactive design to abstraction in the 21st century.

Amos Scully is an artist/designer and professor of Industrial Design. Scully received his MFA from the California College of Arts and his BFA from RIT. Scully's work has been exhibited in solo and group shows across the United States and Canada at museums, universities, artist spaces, and galleries, including such venues as the Portland Museum of Art, Headlands Center for the Arts, Orange County Center for Contemporary Art, and Old Dominion University. His recent paper presentations include the Design Principles and Practices in Rome Italy, and InSEA Congress in Heidelberg, Germany.

Rick Shearman has been a member of the Science, Technology, and Society department in the College of Liberal Arts for longer than he cares to remember. He teaches courses in environmental science/studies at all levels – from freshmen to graduate students. When not teaching, he spends much of his research time reading Aristotle.

Michael Stinson is a professor in the Master of Science in Secondary Education program in NTID, and received a PhD in educational psychology from the University of Michigan. His research interests include classroom motivation of deaf students, social adjustment of mainstreamed students, and facilitation of lecture comprehension.

Dianna Winslow is an assistant professor of English and associate director of the University Writing Program in charge of First Year Writing at RIT. She received a BA in English education and theatre arts and a MA in English, with a concentration in language and literacy, both from California State University, Chico, and a PhD in composition and cultural rhetoric from Syracuse University. Winslow's research interests include writing program administration, community-engaged approaches to teaching and research, the rhetoric of social

movements, and scholarship and teaching for social change.