

February 2009

Vol. 3 No. 2

February Highlights

February 2009 Issue

February 4/5 & 18/19
Early Career Faculty Circle

The 2009 Spring Teaching Excellence Series is underway. . . ([more](#))

February is a good time to schedule Midterm Chats . . . ([more](#))

February 11
Diversity Webinar

The registration deadline for Teaching Learning Communities is approaching . . . ([more](#))

February 11 & 25
Teaching Excellence Series
#1: Teaching & Learning
With Millennials

Spring semester grant proposals are due this month . . . ([more](#))

The Spring Institute is right around the corner, view the schedule and register soon . . . ([more](#))

February 12 & 26
Teaching Excellence Series
#2: Teaching and Learning
With Digital Natives

Meet the CTLT Staff: Gina Akers shares her experiences as a new intern . . . ([more](#))

CTLT can provide your faculty candidates with a tour of our facilities . . . ([more](#))

Spotlight on Service: The Community Engaged Classrooms program helps connect your students to community organizations that need their help. . . ([more](#))

From the Director's Desk: Patrick O'Sullivan writes about the role of professional development in maintaining the university's competitive edge . . . ([more](#))

Ask the CTLT Staff: Cyndy Ruszkowski answers a question about teaching large classes. . . ([more](#))

Check out the CTLT events calendar to find out what will be happening in February . . . ([more](#))

It's Not Too Late to Participate in the Spring 2009 Teaching Excellence Series "They Don't Make Students Like They Used To!"

Most instructors teach the way they were taught, but students are constantly evolving, shaped by a variety of external forces, including (but not limited to) new and improved technologies. The generation of students currently in our classrooms is best known as "millennials" or "digital natives." CTLT's Spring 2009 Teaching Excellence Series will help instructors keep these student engaged by providing a new perspective on these learners. Three sessions remain in each series, so it's not too late to join the conversation!

Did you know?

The CTLT offers both Short Courses and self-paced online courses on using Blackboard CE6 in the classroom.

Series 1: Teaching & Learning with Millennials (Wednesday, 12-1:30)

Remaining Sessions:

- Teaching Millennials: What they Expect; What they Need; How they Learn (2/11)
- Transitioning to College: The First Year and Beyond (2/25)
- Meet the Parents: Helicopters, Bulldozers, and More (3/18)

Series 2: Teaching and Learning with Digital Natives (Thursdays, 3-4:30)

- Beyond the Group Project: Digital Collaborations (2/12)
- Beyond the Lecture: Digital Teaching (2/26)
- Beyond Office Hours: Digital Communication (3/19)

All session descriptions can be found at <http://www.teachtech.ilstu.edu/programs/tes/>. Each Teaching Excellence Session is designed to function independently or as a part of the series, so participants are welcome to attend as many or as few as they can fit into their schedules. Those who attend three or more sessions in a single series will receive a certificate suitable for inclusion in ASPT documentation.

Note: All sessions are held in the CTLT Resource Commons. Refreshments will be served.

For Information/
Registration:
www.teachtech.ilstu.edu



Schedule Midterm Chats This Month!

3

Now is the time to start scheduling a Midterm Chat with a CTLT facilitator. Because the most successful results occur when midterm chats are performed during the 5th-10th week of the semester, they will be offered between **February 9** and the start of spring break.

Midterm Chats offer students a chance to provide their instructors with feedback on the progress of the course while it is being taught and there is still time to make changes.

One student who participated in a Midterm Chat in a graduate class reported, "It was wonderful to discuss with fellow classmates and the CTLT facilitator both positive and negative feedback about the class. After the midterm chat, my professor came back to class with changes to our course that incorporated our needs. I was impressed with how much she cared about her students and wanted them to succeed, even if that meant adjusting her teaching."

The Midterm Chat process includes the following four steps:

- 1. Initial meeting:** At the initial meeting, we will ask you to provide a context for the process by answering some [questions](#) about the course, your students, and your teaching.
- 2. Classroom Visit:** During our [meeting with your class\(es\)](#), we will ask students to respond to three or four [standard questions](#) and if you wish, one or two specific questions of your own design.
- 3. Feedback Phase:** At our follow-up meeting, we will provide you with a written summary of our conversation with your class and answer any questions you might have about it. We will also, of course, be happy to help you reflect on the feedback and plan an appropriate response to it.
- 4. Action Phase:** For the best results, you will want to have a follow-up meeting to discuss the feedback with your class. Research demonstrates that this meeting is crucial in improving student engagement, motivation, and learning in the class. A nice by-product is that this meeting **CAN** improve end-of-term instructor ratings as well.

All information gathered during the Chat process is strictly confidential.

For more information about Midterm Chat policies and procedures, [click here](#). To schedule a Midterm Chat, e-mail [Claire Lamonica](#), [Cyndy Ruszkowski](#), or [Mayuko Nakamura](#).

"Sow a thought, and you reap an act; Sow an act, and you reap a habit; Sow a habit, and you reap a character; Sow a character, and you reap a destiny."

-Charles Reader

For Information/
Registration:
www.teachtech.ilstu.edu



Teaching-Learning Communities are Still Available 4

Don't miss the chance to sign up for a Teaching-Learning Community (TLC) this semester! The registration deadline is **Friday, February 13**. TLCs offer ISU educators opportunities to meet in small groups and investigate topics of shared interest.

Jodi Hallsten, from the School of Communication, has enjoyed her TLC. "My experience in the TLC has been outstanding on several levels," she said. "During our meetings I have had some amazing teaching epiphanies that have unquestionably shaped my teaching for the better." Jan Hill, from the Department of Criminal Justice Sciences, said, "The CTLT staff are very gracious with their time and resources. Conversations with other new faculty are particularly enlightening."

CTLT offers a variety of TLC topics each semester. The CTLT staff will facilitate or find facilitators for the groups as needed and will purchase a maximum of \$200 worth of books for each group.

TLCs are now forming for the following groups for Spring 2009:

- Internship/professional practice program coordinators
Convener: Tom Lamonica, School of Communication
- Grad students interested in teaching in higher education
Facilitator: Elizabeth Zold, CTLT
- Faculty preparing for tenure
Facilitator: Patrick O'Sullivan, CTLT
- Early-career faculty (1st, 2nd, 3rd year of teaching)
Facilitator: Claire Lamonica, CTLT (No registration is required for this circle.)

TLCs are also forming around the following topics:

- Social networking tools in instruction
Facilitator: Mayuko Nakamura
- Online teaching
Facilitator: Jean-Marie Taylor
- Effective use of clickers in classrooms
Facilitator: Cyndy Ruszkowski
- Teaching in large classrooms
Facilitator: Cyndy Ruszkowski
- Universal design in the classroom
Facilitator: Cyndy Ruszkowski

To suggest a topic or get more information about TLCs, call or email Cyndy Ruszkowski (8-5848, cruszk@ilstu.edu).

TLC descriptions and online registration are also available at the CTLT website at: <http://www.ctlt.ilstu.edu/programs/tlComm.php>

Did you know?

The CTLT is offering a Spring Institute during ISU's spring break for faculty members that want to freshen up on their teaching and technology skills.

For Information/
Registration:
www.teachtech.ilstu.edu



Grant Proposals Due This Month

5

Last semester the CTLT awarded nearly \$10,000 in grants, enabling six projects proposed by ten faculty members. You could be one of the recipients for the spring semester if you apply by **Friday, February 27**. Tenured and tenure-track faculty, non-tenure-track full-time instructors, and AP staff with teaching responsibilities at ISU are welcome to apply.

Teaching and Learning Development Grants are among the most popular grants CTLT offers. These grants help the Illinois State community by supporting faculty innovations in teaching and learning. Jessie Krienert and Jeffrey Walsh from Criminal Justice Sciences said they used their grant to “foster student learning through the use of dynamic interactive learning modules that supplement traditional techniques and enhance student opportunit[ies] to learn.” Individual winners can receive up to \$1,500 and teams of two or more can get up to \$2,000 to support their project. The application must include a cover letter, a brief abstract, an 800-1,000 word narrative, and a budget request. “It has been a wonderful experience to have funding to pursue our interest in introducing cutting edge teaching technologies (Softchalk) into our research methods courses, which have long been considered a challenging learning environment for students,” Krienert and Walsh said.

Teaching Innovations Evaluation Grants support faculty who wish to evaluate their own teaching. These grants are meant to encourage and support teachers engaged in teaching improvement projects. Recipients of the award can win up to \$500. The application must include a cover letter, a brief abstract, a short narrative, and a budget request.

Instructional Podcasting Development Initiative Grants help ISU faculty interested in studying how podcasting can be used to enhance teaching and learning. This program is sponsored by the Campus Technology Support Group (CTSG) and the CTLT. Grants, which include reimbursement for project-related software or hardware purchases, will be up to \$500. Applications must include a cover letter, a brief abstract, and a short narrative.

Instructional Virtual Reality Development Initiative Grants support faculty interested in investigating how instructional virtual reality can be used to improve teaching and learning. Grant awards, which include reimbursement for project-related software or hardware purchases, will be up to \$500. Applications must include a cover letter, a brief abstract, and a short narrative.

For more information on these grants, including how to apply and specifics on application materials, visit the CTLT [webpage](#).

“The highest reward for a person’s toil is not what they get for it, but what they become by it.”

-John Ruskin

For Information/
Registration:
www.teachtech.ilstu.edu



Plan Now to Attend CTLT's Spring Institute 2009

While spring break tends to be a time of relaxation for most students, many ISU faculty members use the break to catch up on grading, course preparations, and/or neglected research projects. With help from the Center for Teaching, Learning & Technology, the break can also be a time to sharpen your Blackboard skills and hone your instructional strategies.

"Spring break is a time when faculty have a brief break from fairly relentless demands on their time from teaching," Patrick O'Sullivan, CTLT director, said. "These workshops offer them the chance to tackle a challenge even while they're catching up on grading and course preparations."

CTLT is providing \$100/day stipends for eligible faculty (tenured, tenure-track, full-time A/P and NTTs with teaching responsibilities), up to a total of \$300 for the week. We also serve lunch so participants can socialize with colleagues from across campus.

All workshops meet from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. and are held in the ITDC Building, 301 S. Main. Space may be limited, so click [here](#) to register online today.

Registration deadline: Wednesday, March 4, at noon.

Workshop Schedule

Room/Time	Monday, 3/9	Tuesday, 3/10	Wednesday, 3/11	Thursday, 3/12	Friday, 3/13
Room 108 9am-3pm	Blackboard: Intro & Grade book	Blackboard: Content & Organization	Blackboard: Assignments, Group Manager, Grading Forms	Blackboard: Communication Tools	Blackboard: Assessments
Room 103B 9am-3pm	Putting Course Content Online	Got Papers? How to Grade Student Writing and Still Have a Life	Synchronous Communication Tools	Effective Teaching with "Clickers"	Time Saving Strategies in Online Teaching
Instructional Resource Commons 9am-3pm	Avoiding "The Big Sleep": Effective Strategies for Teaching Extended Class Sessions	Engaging students in a large classroom	"Read 'em and Weep"? Making Sense of Student Evaluation of Teaching		



Did you know?

The CTLT provides Early Career Professional Development Circles for faculty members that are in their first three years of teaching at ISU and are looking for peer support and new ideas for their classrooms.

For Information/
Registration:
www.teachtech.ilstu.edu





Meet the CTLT Staff: Gina Akers

Name: Gina Akers

Title: Communications Intern

Education: BA in Journalism expected in May 2009

"Cultivate your garden. Do not depend upon teachers to educate you ... follow your own bent, pursue your curiosity bravely, express yourself, make your own harmony."

-Will Durant

Gina Akers has joined the CTLT staff as an intern for the spring semester. Akers is a senior journalism major at Illinois State. She is also a senior staff news writer at the Daily Vidette. While she appreciates her experiences and responsibilities at the Vidette, she wanted a different type of experience for her internship. "I have already worked for a newspaper. I wanted to work in a different environment to prove that I have a wide range of skills," she said. Her duties at the CTLT include writing, editing and creating materials. Although she just started, Akers enjoys her internship thus far. "I like that I can use my writing and editing skills in a different environment than I'm used to," she explained. One challenge she has faced at the CTLT is working with ISU faculty and staff. "I'm used to working with students. Now my colleagues are no longer my peers, so it will take some getting used to," she said.

Akers started working for ISU's newspaper in August, writing three to four stories a week on various topics. She enjoys her job at the Vidette because it is not only challenging, but also rewarding. "It can be difficult to take a broad story and make it unique to the ISU community," she said, "but I love being able to provide people with information in a hopefully refreshing manner." She also copy edited for the Daily Vidette last semester. Akers is the RSO president of Cornerstone Christian Fellowship. She enjoys volunteering and attending various functions for the campus ministry. She is also looking forward to spending her spring break on a mission trip to Mexico with Cornerstone. After she graduates in May, Gina hopes to become a journalist for either a newspaper or magazine.

Bring Your Faculty Candidates to Tour CTLT

Is your department interviewing potential faculty members? The Center for Teaching, Learning & Technology provides a 20-30 minute tour to inform these candidates about CTLT resources, programs, and facilities that benefit ISU faculty. Candidates are introduced to all CTLT departments, the Cross Chair, and the University Assessment Office. Those who join the faculty then have a head start on knowing what the CTLT can do to support them. Interested departments can arrange candidate tours by contacting Beth Welch (8-3694; eawelch@ilstu.edu).

For Information/
Registration:
www.teachtech.ilstu.edu



Community-Engaged Classrooms

Many faculty already include community experiences for students as part of their course planning. Others may have considered engaging students with the community to enhance learning, but were unsure how to get started. ISU now has a program available to assist those who are new to this approach to teaching and learning, as well as those who already incorporate civic engagement into their classes.

The mission of the Community-Engaged Classrooms (CEC) program is to connect Illinois State University faculty and classrooms with community organizations and their needs, while focusing on course learning goals. The purpose includes impacting student education through curriculum-based service learning and developing students who are socially aware and involved in the community.

The program assists ISU faculty and community organizations with identifying potential projects and establishing partnerships. These experiential learning projects are coordinated by faculty members within a semester-long course, and are connected to the curricular learning objectives. Faculty are encouraged to include reflection activities for students as part of the learning process. Samples of reflection assignments, planning worksheets, community organization names and contacts, and other resources are available at the CEC website, www.communityengagedclassrooms.ilstu.edu.

A variety of potential projects are currently posted at the CEC website, but additional projects and contacts are available. You may contact community organizations directly or contact the program coordinators at communityengagedclassrooms@ilstu.edu for assistance. We are happy to work with you.

Examples of community projects include:

- Assisting a local Spanish newspaper with advertising and articles
- Constructing business policies & procedures, or helping create marketing plans and materials
- Designing and creating organization websites
- Developing and facilitating activities for adult or child day care participants
- Providing music for patients in a healthcare facility
- Helping plan and coordinate an organization's conference
- Learning and supporting "go green" activities
- Teaching children how to handle food allergies effectively

For additional information, or for assistance in planning a civic engagement project for your course, visit the Web site or contact Cyndy Ruskowski (8-5848; clruszk@ilstu.edu).

Did you know?

The CTLT has a "made-to-order" programming option, where schools, departments, and units can request workshops on specific materials needed.

For Information/
Registration:
www.teachtech.ilstu.edu



From the Director's Desk

Staying Competitive in Uncertain Times

Here's an amazing statistic: In 2008, ISU educators spent more than 10,000 hours in CTLT-sponsored workshops and classes. That's not a typo: more than 10,000 hours. That is equivalent to 1,400 faculty work days devoted to updating, refining, and strengthening teaching — and that doesn't include the hours spent putting new teaching strategies into practice.

As CTLT's director, I'm proud to be able to report these numbers to my supervisors in the Provost's Office as an indication of CTLT's success. However, the entire campus should be glad that so many ISU faculty are investing in their teaching because it just may help ISU keep its competitive edge when we need it the most.

Higher education faces two rather worrisome developments in the coming decade. The current economic meltdown could be prolonged and take an increasing bite out of universities' finances. In addition, demographic trends predict a shrinking pool of high school graduates and thus fewer tuition-paying freshmen entering the nation's universities.

As universities' finances tighten and student applications trail off across the country, competition for freshmen and community college transfers could get intense. Universities will use every argument and incentive they can marshal to encourage more applications and then turn applicants into students.

What does this mean for ISU? I don't have the answer, but I have more than my natural optimism feeding my confidence about ISU's future. The hundreds of faculty who are spending thousands of hours in CTLT workshops are enhancing our ability to thrive through the uncertain times ahead.

Recruiters use such things as sports teams, student fitness centers, extra-curricular opportunities, and scholarships in their recruitment pitches. But for tuition-paying parents, the quality of their child's education is generally a top priority. They need to know their child will be taught by teachers who are experts in their field *and* experts in instruction. This could override all other considerations — without it, nothing else really matters.

If I'm right, that the most powerful argument a university can make to potential students is the promise of an outstanding educational experience, then evidence of ISU faculty's extensive professional development work over the years can help us compete for new students. Once enrolled, students who find that their teachers are not only knowledgeable but well-versed in the best teaching practices will be more likely to stay with us through graduation and promote us to their younger siblings and friends.

So it's OK to join CTLT's programs for a variety of reasons. But also know that investing in your teaching now just might help keep ISU financially and strategically strong in the future.



Patrick
O'Sullivan,
CTLT Director
*Click photo
for podcast*

*"We must always change,
renew, rejuvenate
ourselves; otherwise we
harden."*

-Johann Wolfgang Von
Goeth

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Registration:
www.teachtech.ilstu.edu



Patrick B. Sullivan

Tips for Teaching in Large Classrooms



Question: I'm going to be teaching in a large classroom next semester for the first time, and I'm scared to death! Do you have any tips?

Answer: You're not alone! The first semester in a large classroom can cause real anxiety. The good news is that you may discover the transition won't be as difficult as you anticipate. Much of what you do to create authentic learning in the small classroom can also be used in the large classroom, with modifications.

You should also remember that there is no one "right way" to teach in a large classroom. It's important to consider your own teaching style, who your students are, and the goals of your course. But consider addressing the following questions as a blueprint for your course planning, and maybe some of that anxiety will be relieved:

- What goals do I have for student learning in this course? Is it realistic to include the same goals as in a smaller class? Do my goals need modification?
- What am I already good at that I can still use in a large class? (Consider your mastery of the subject, organizational skills, encouraging/approachable personality, sense of humor, reasonably high expectations — these don't have to go away!)
- What do I know about student learning that is still important in a large learning environment? (Consider active engagement, repetition and practice, sense of community, clear expectations, and relevance of examples.)
- What class activities and assignments do I currently use — if I'm already teaching a smaller section of the same course — that I would like to continue to use? What modifications do I need? (Consider length of written assignments, GA/TA assistance, change in grading strategies, importance to class goals, and managing collection/return of papers.)
- What challenges will I face in a large class that are different from a smaller class? What can I do to manage the challenges of a class this large? (Consider there may be increased distractions, "hiding" in the back or not attending at all, increased paperwork/grading management, easier/increased cheating, and fewer teacher/student interaction opportunities.)

(Continued on the next page.)

Did you know?

The CTLT has a library full of beneficial teaching and learning books, in the Resource Commons room. The library is open to all of ISU faculty members.

For Information/
Registration:
www.teachtechilstu.edu



ASK THE CTLT STAFF: Tips for Teaching in Large Classrooms (Cont'd)...

- Is there technology available that can help streamline my workload, and that I'm willing to learn *and* use? (Consider Blackboard and Classroom Clickers.)

Once you've answered these questions, you might also want to consider some general suggestions such as:

- Identify class rules and consequences, post them online and in the syllabus, review them, and solicit student feedback.
- Use class "contracts" or quizzes for points to confirm student understanding of rules and expectations.
- Reduce paper by using online quizzes, group projects, and electronic gradebooks.
- Reduce student anonymity by learning some names/providing name cards and using them; using "clicker" questions worth points, assigning small groups for discussion and reporting; encouraging group study or tutoring; making contact before/after class through greeting, smiling, eye contact, sharing examples in class, and moving around. Get creative!
- Address diversity by meeting the needs of a variety of learning styles.
- Establish anti-cheating plans for exams and include them in the class rules.
- Check with other experienced faculty to garner ideas.
- And above all, maintain a sense of humor — it's YOUR survival!!

Finally, always remember that we at CTLT are here to help! For more information about teaching in the large classroom, contact Cyndy Ruszkowski (8-5848; clruszk@ilstu.edu).

*"All of the top-achievers
I know are life-long
learners ... looking for new
skills, insights and ideas. If
they're not learning, they're
not growing ... not moving
towards excellence."*

-Denis Waitley

For Information/
Registration:
www.teachtech.ilstu.edu



February at CTLT

12

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
2	3	4 9:00am-11:00am Blackboard CE6: Communication Tools 2:00pm-3:00pm Early Career Faculty Circle	5 2:00pm-3:00pm Early Career Faculty Circle 3:00pm-4:30pm Word 2007: Mail Merge	6 9:00am-12:00pm Online Cohort Program– Course Design Session 1 10:00am-11:30am Intro to Blogs
9 9:00am-11:00am Blackboard CE6: Journaling & Reflective Assignments 3:00 pm-4:00 pm Select Survey	10 2:00pm-4:00pm Intro to TurningPoint Clickers	11 10:30am-2:00pm Diversity Webinar 12:30pm-1:30pm Teaching Excellence Series 1 3:00pm-4:30pm Creating Website with Expression Web Template	12 10:00am-12:00pm Intro to Second Life 1:00pm-4:00pm Intro to Photoshop Part 1 3:00pm-4:30pm Teaching Excellence Series 2	13 10:00am-12:00pm Digital Camera Basics 1:00pm-4:00pm Intro to Blackboard CE6
16	17 9:00am-11:00am Blackboard CE6: Rubrics & Grading Forms 12:00pm-1:00pm Clickers: Best Practices	18 2:00pm-3:00pm Early Career Faculty Circle	19 9:00am-12:00pm SoftChalk Lesson Builder 1:00pm-4:00pm Photoshop Part 2 2:00pm-3:00pm Early Career Faculty Circle	20 9:00am-12:00pm Online Cohort Program– Course Design Session 2 10:00am-12:00pm Digital Photo Editing Basics
23	24 1:00pm-3:30pm Expression Web: Level 1	25 10:00am-12:00pm Blended Course Workshop 12:00pm-1:30pm Teaching Excellence Series 1 4:30pm-7:30pm SPSS Basics	26 2:00pm-4:00pm Intro to Camtasia 3:00pm-4:30pm Teaching Excellence Series 2	27 *Grant Proposals Due! 10:00am-12:00pm Intro to Photoshop Elements 1:00pm-3:00pm Blackboard CE6:Gradebook

Did you know?

The CTLT has a new picture display of the CTLT faculty and staff in the main lobby.

For Information/
Registration:
www.teachtech.ilstu.edu

