

Teaching and Learning Center
Roundtable
September 28, 2017

Moderator: Norah Kerr-McCurry, Director TLC

Lead Faculty Fellow: George Reklaitis

Attendees:

Burke, Barbara	McAuley, Mara
Burns, Bill	Mura, Debbie
Edward, Katherine	Qaissaunee, Mike
Goode, Cathy	Shaloum, Jonathan
Jackson, Dinneen	Wesley, Raj
Liu, Nancy	

Norah welcomed the faculty to the first roundtable of the new term. She explained that Paul Keating established the Roundtable in 2008, with the theme of engaging the learner.

George Reklaitis, Lead Faculty Fellow, agreed that the principal focus should be to teach and engage students and added this could be the focus for upcoming roundtables. To begin the discussion he asked: What works for you?

Norah spoke of the initiative of meeting the achievement and retention gap. In her Lincroft class, she has 30 students, mostly white males about 18 years old. In the Neptune class, the students are 50% white, 50% African American. Six in the class are over 25 years old and there are also four 16 year old students. She asked, "Do we need to adjust what we do in the classroom to address the outcomes?"

The discussion continued:

- Mara McAuley noted the difference in the skills of the students. Some come "underprepared" in their writing skills, for example, in the APA format used in research papers. She refers students to the Writing Lab.
- Norah explained her new approach to the cell phone issue that she has used in her classes this term. The phones can be left on the desk in vibrate mode and after 30 or 40 minutes, she lets the students check their phones for important messages. She noted that faculty have been talking about how to handle cell phones in the classroom since 2008.

- Bill Burns noted that this style allows Norah to be more flexible and understanding. It is just one of the ways to handle this issue. Raj agreed that you should “do what serves the purpose.”

The discussion continued and faculty gave specific methods they use in the classroom to encourage learning. There were also suggestions on how to handle students that have issues with classwork or personal problems.

- Mike Qaissaanee discussed interactive learning and explained that teams are working to identify complex, hard to grasp concepts.
- Jon Shaloum and Nancy Liu gave the example of working on setting up a review online for five trigonometry concepts. This site is web-based, available on all devices and is voluntary and confidential. This review can eliminate spending classroom time on concepts that the student should know before going ahead in the physics program.
- Bill noted that there are students in other areas that have issues with difficult concepts and our internal resources should be able to aid these students.
- “Meet the student where he is.” Barbara Burke gives the students an activity and tells them it will be discussed the next week. This should encourage the student to do the work before the next class. Nancy agreed that you must emphasize the need to do the homework. Katherine Edward added that the exercise or activity should be relevant and “have meaning to their own life.”
- Raj has the students read the chapter and identify major concepts and definitions as a basic structure for homework. The students are to be prepared to discuss the definitions in class and are told not to come to class unprepared.
- Nancy expressed the fact that she has to warn students that if they do not do the work, they will not do well on quizzes or tests. She feels she has tried everything, including peer tutoring as suggested by Dinneen Jackson, but to no avail. Dinneen also said she would be happy to come to talk to the class about time management. Cathy Goode said counseling also provides this service.
- The use of the APA format was addressed. Debbie Mura uses it in her classes. Raj Wesley said the learning assistants have to be well trained in APA formatting so they can assist the students. Bill suggested the tutorial on the library site.
- Katherine noted that many of the students have jobs and other outside commitments. If there were more scholarships available to relieve the burden of the cost of college, perhaps the students could spend more time on their studies.
- Debbie said students in 7th and 8th grades should be given information about college and the work that is entailed.
- Cathy, Counseling, noted that her office offers many programs including test taking skills and test anxiety. There is also an online counseling program available for students.

- Norah added that all the online students are put into an Online Student Community course where they can find hints, tips and tutorials. They can also email any questions they may have. Right now there are 93 faculty teaching 3000 students online.
- Debbie said this course could be required before taking an online course. Norah suggested that this course could be made available within each and every online course.
- Sabrina Matthues is the new faculty hire; Bill explained that she will be developing a Guided Pathways three-credit course in Career Studies that addresses college preparation as one of the topics. This course will be required for the liberal education degree.
- Because of the 72 credits required for the engineering degree, Mike said that a student in a career pathways program would be one semester behind in the engineering program. Cathy also said that the engineering degree cannot be completed in two years.
- Barbara suggested that the course be taken in the summer session and then a career decision could be made before the fall term.

In conclusion, George said it was “a great discussion” and an opportunity to engage in interdisciplinary discussions.

The next Roundtable is scheduled for October 26th in MAC 203.