

# Teaching and Learning in Higher Education

Number 45

Winter 2007

## Engaging Students Through Active Learning

**Chris Knapper**

Queen's University, Emeritus

### The Problem

Recently, a journalist asked if I had any views on faculty claims that today's university students seem distracted (to use a polite term) in class - talking, sending text messages, even answering their cell phones.



*Classroom settings affect learning.*

What he was describing is a lack of student engagement - or at least engagement with the class, the teacher, or subject matter. The issue of student engagement has become central, as many Canadian universities embrace the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)<sup>1</sup> as the preferred indicator of teaching effectiveness.

Engagement has a great deal to do with the students' own attitudes, motivation, and approaches to learning. But teachers, classrooms, and the organization of settings for learning also play a role. Large classes and high student-to-faculty ratios undoubtedly make teaching more impersonal, and make it more difficult to

ensure that teaching remains relevant to students' needs. But some teachers, even in very large classes, seem to have no difficulty engaging students' attention, whereas others have great difficulty establishing rapport, even when classes are small.

How might we encourage student engagement and make learning a more active process, even in large lecture settings?

### Why Active Learning?

By *active learning* I mean that students are not simply listening passively to a lecture, but become *engaged* with the ideas being communicated, *process* the information, *integrate* ideas with what they already know, and can subsequently *transfer* their learning to new situations. Most of us know intuitively that learning by doing is more effective than simply listening or reading (e.g. learning a new computer application). There is also empirical evidence that active learning strategies promote greater cognitive development in university students.

Lecturing is the most popular method of university teaching worldwide, mainly because it seems to be a very efficient method of communicating with large numbers of students at one time to 'cover' content. There is abundant empirical evidence, however, that students often do not fully comprehend or retain information transmitted in lectures.

Low motivation, boredom, and fatigue can all play a role in the lack of student attention.

One important way of counteracting these factors is active involvement of students in lecture classes. Another approach is to introduce some variety, or even tension.

Many of the strategies for introducing active learning are well known. They include encouraging accurate student note-taking (e.g. by use of incomplete handouts<sup>2</sup>), in-class demonstrations (perhaps linked to a set of interpretive questions to answer on the spot), quizzes and short opinion surveys, and brief small group discussions on questions posed by the lecturer. These techniques certainly work, and some of the lecturers who have used them successfully are among our most admired 3M National Teaching Fellows.



*Engagement through small group discussions.*

### Beyond the Lecture

But it is also important to recognize that most learning takes place *outside* class,

*continued on page 4*

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## Electronic Discussion

### STLHE Forum

The STLHE electronic mail forum, active since October 1988, supports the exchange of opinions, ideas and experiences concerning teaching and learning in higher education.

To subscribe, contact the list coordinator:  
Russ Hunt, Email [hunt@stu.ca](mailto:hunt@stu.ca) or visit  
Communication at [www.stlhe.ca](http://www.stlhe.ca).

## Teaching and Learning in Higher Education Newsletter

### Number 45, Winter 2007

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## Winter Newsletter: Engaging Students

Engaging students in learning, through  
methods such as active learning, self-  
directed learning, peer mentoring and group  
activities has vast rewards. This issue  
shares several different perspectives and  
strategies.

If you have any items for 'Recent  
Publications' or any other suggestions  
regarding the STLHE Newsletter, please  
contact the Editor.

## Recent Publications by STLHE Members

Germain-Rutherford, A. & Bakary, D. (2006).  
Défis de la formation à l'utilisation des TIC  
dans les universités: modèle de formation à  
l'intégration des TIC. dans N. Colet & M.  
Romainville (Ed.) *La pratique enseignante  
en mutation à l'université* (pp.153-169).  
Bruxelles: Editions de Boeck.

Kalman, C. (2006). *Successful Science and  
Engineering Teaching in Colleges and  
Universities*. Vermont: Anker.

## Rédacteur du bulletin de la SAPES

Appel de déclarations d'intérêt pour les  
postes de rédacteur et de co-rédacteur

Le bulletin de la SAPES paraît trois fois l'an.  
La période de nomination recommandée est  
de trois ans, avec possibilité de  
renouvellement. La rédactrice actuelle du  
bulletin participe à toutes les étapes de la  
production. Le poste de co-rédacteur est un  
nouveau poste. Sa création vise à favoriser la  
présentation de contributions dans les deux  
langues.

La préférence sera accordée aux personnes  
qui présenteront les atouts suivants :

- Expérience de la rédaction et de l'édition
- Capacité d'organisation
- Capacité de travailler avec d'autres  
personnes
- Accès à un réseau d'éducateurs
- Accès à une infrastructure de soutien  
pour le processus rédactionnel
- Statut de membre de la SAPES.

**Processus de sélection :** Un jury formé de  
la présidente de la SAPES et de représentants  
du Réseau de formateurs en pédagogie de  
l'enseignement supérieur et du Conseil du  
Prix d'enseignement 3M.

**Transition :** La rédactrice sortante assurera  
la co-rédaction d'un numéro avec le nouveau  
rédacteur.

**Candidatures :** Les candidats sont invités à  
soumettre une lettre de déclaration d'intérêt  
où ils feront état de leur expérience et de  
leurs idées concernant les orientations. La  
lettre devrait s'accompagner d'un *curriculum  
vitae*.

## Call for Editors STLHE Newsletter

Expressions of interest are invited for editor  
and co-editor.

Three issues of the STLHE Newsletter are  
published annually. The appointment is  
recommended for a term of three years,  
with an option to renew. Currently, the  
editor is involved in all stages of production.  
The co-editor is a new position, with the  
goal of encouraging bilingual contributions.

Preference will be given to people with:

- Experience in editing and publishing
- Organizational skills
- Ability to work well with others
- Access to a network of educators
- Infrastructure to support editorial process
- Membership in STLHE.

**Selection Process:** Candidates will be  
selected by a panel including representation  
from the STLHE President, Educational  
Developers Caucus and Council of National  
3M Teaching Fellows.

**Transition:** The retiring editor will co-edit  
one issue with the incoming editors.

**Submissions:** Candidates should submit a  
written letter of interest indicating relevant  
experience, ideas for future directions, and a  
curriculum vitae.

**Date/date limite: le 6 avril/ April 6, 2007**

**To/destinataire:** Sylvia Riselay  
[riselays@mcmaster.ca](mailto:riselays@mcmaster.ca)

For additional information, please contact/  
Pour des renseignements supplémentaires  
Erika Kustra, Editor: [kustraed@mcmaster.ca](mailto:kustraed@mcmaster.ca)

## Forming Small Groups

**Julie Weible and Rosalie Pedersen**  
University of Calgary

Forming groups for class activities can be challenging and stressful for both students and instructors. Yet working in groups is a great way to increase student engagement, critical thinking, and a learner focused class.

Here are nine effective strategies that can be used to create informal groups. Some of these activities take minimal time while others can be an activity in themselves. Some work well with large classes, while other are better suited for small classes.



*Forming groups quickly for small group work.*

- 1. Candies** Predetermine how many groups you need and how many students per group. Purchase as many types of candies as you have groups and mix the candies all together in a bowl. As students enter the class, ask them to pick a candy. When it is time to get the groups together, tell all the students with candy A to get together, candy B to get together, and so on.
- 2. Alphabetical lines** For quick group formation, use the class list to assign groups based on last names (i.e. from A – C = one group). If you have time, you can ask students to line up alphabetically (without speaking for an added challenge). To change the groups, try first names, favourite foods, hockey players or theorists. You can also try birthdays, so that students line up by birthdates.
- 3. Clock/dance card** At the beginning of the class, have students fill out a clock or dance card, which includes who their partner will be at a specified time e.g. 1:00 Shari, 2:00 Jo. It is important that both students sign up for the same time on each of their cards!

Each time you want to form a dyad, ask the students to find their partner for a specific time. This allows you to change partners often. You can use the same strategy without the specific times, so

- that students sign up for their first partner, second partner, and so on.
- 4. Topic areas** Place flip charts around the room, labeled with with topics areas. Let students know the number of group members allowed in each group. Have students sign up for the topic they would like to explore.
- 5. Matches/predetermined categories** Ask students to find someone else wearing a matching item, such as a baseball hat or earrings.

For predetermined categories, prepare in advance for the number of groups required. Distribute to each student a topic, artifact, item or key word that fits one of the categories. Challenge students to find their category group. For example, if the category is teaching methods, key words for students could be lecture, active learning and discussion. This activity is beneficial because it helps student become acquainted with key words and course topics.

- 6. Pre-assigned groups** Create name cards and put them on tables in groups before students arrive. If that is not possible, ask students to move to where their name tag is located.
- 7. Random** Ask each person to find someone close to them. Next time ask

them to pick someone new. Another way to change the groups is to ask a few students to move spaces, or move to the back of the room and then to form groups with those around them.

- 8. Find your partner** Tape a word or name to each person's back and ask them to find others with the same concept on their backs. For example, students wearing the words forming, storming, norming and performing would form the "Stages of Team Development" group. The words can be appropriate to the discipline or just for fun. The same strategy can be used with puzzle pieces.
- 9. What is your opinion?** Have students rate their agreement with a statement on a scale of 1 to 25 (or whatever number works). Ask them to form a line based on their rating. Use their position to create the desired number of groups. For example, if you want four groups, then count 1,2,3,4; 1,2,3,4. The advantage is that you can choose to create groups of people with the same or different view points.

Engaging students in group activities and discussions can have a large impact on their understanding and retention of information. Forming groups is often a critical step in the success of these teaching methods. Choose the method of forming groups that will best match your learning objectives.

## Engaging Students

continued from page 1



*Most learning occurs outside of class.*

when students have time to reflect, integrate information from different sources, and debate issues and insights with colleagues.

If we fill students' time with formal classroom instruction, there will be little left for such processes. This forces us to ask some hard questions about the available time of both students and teachers.

It may look 'efficient' to have students listen to lectures for 15 hours a week<sup>3</sup> while we

diligently 'cover' the key concepts in the field. But if students do not properly comprehend, own, and build upon this material, then the time has been wasted as far as real learning is concerned. Just as we used to talk of spending **quality time** with family, we might do well to consider **quality learning** for our students.

Quality learning is one reason for the persistence of such approaches as problem-based learning, inquiry learning, and project work, despite current resource constraints.

These methods place considerable demands on teachers' time and pedagogical expertise, but at their best they have in common an emphasis on student activity, and engagement with issues that are relevant to students' lives. As a result, these methods can produce learning that transfers readily to many situations beyond the classroom.

Of course engaging students can be risky both for teachers and students, since it involves transferring some power and control from one to the other and making students responsible for their own learning.

In the world beyond university, that is where the responsibility for learning will ultimately lie.

- <sup>1</sup> Sponsored by Indiana University.
- <sup>2</sup> Prepared notes that cover the main points of a lecture but with key elements lacking.
- <sup>3</sup> A typical load for a full-time student at many Canadian universities, not counting time spent getting to and from the classroom.



*Christopher Knapper, one of the founding members of the Society, publishes extensively on teaching and learning.*

## Council of National 3M Teaching Fellows

**Alex Fancy**

Mount Alison University

We are delighted to include with this newsletter a copy of the University Edition of Maclean's magazine profiling this year's 3M National Teaching Fellowship award

winners. Congratulations to our newest Fellows! Also, please refer to the enclosed insert which details an opportunity to contribute to *Silence in Teaching and Learning*,

a book being edited by the Council of National 3M Teaching Fellows.

Version française incluse.

### 2008 Call for Nominations 3M National Teaching Fellowships

STLHE and 3M Canada invite nominations for the 2008 3M National Teaching Fellowships Program. Up to ten awards, presented annually at the STLHE Conference in June, recognize exemplary contributions to educational and teaching excellence in Canadian universities. Awards are open to all individuals currently teaching in a Canadian university, regardless of discipline or level of appointment.

**Note:** The 2008 Call will have some revisions.

Details: [www.mcmaster.ca/3Mteachingfellowships](http://www.mcmaster.ca/3Mteachingfellowships)

**Deadline/date limite: November 16/ le 16 novembre, 2007**

Telephone/téléphone: (514) 848-2424, ext. 2928 / 2793

Email/Courriel: Arshad Ahmad ([arshad@jmsb.concordia.ca](mailto:arshad@jmsb.concordia.ca))

### 2008 Appel de candidatures Prix d'enseignement 3M

SAPES et 3M Canada lancent un appel de candidatures. Dix prix, remis chaque année au mois de juin lors du congrès de la SAPES, soulignent les contributions remarquables à l'avancement de l'enseignement supérieur dans les universités canadiennes. Est admissible toute personne qui enseigne actuellement dans une université canadienne, quels que soient sa discipline et son rang. L'appel de candidatures sera modifié cette année.





## Sharing Successful Learning Strategies

### For Learners

Putting learning to use:  
An experiential education initiative

**Geoff Webb**  
York University

A unique feature of Experiential Education (EE) at Atkinson (York University's second largest faculty, with 10,000 students and over 350 faculty members) is that it is not a practicum, nor a placement, but rather a **group-based** course assignment, embedded in the curriculum.

Small teams of senior students work on client-identified endeavors for up to fifty percent of their course grade. Teams have project choice from the outset, so student buy-in is maximized. Organizations see students grappling with important, time-sensitive issues, while students enhance their disciplinary knowledge, increase their professional skills, and make career connections.

Student teams select projects from a pre-screened list that is sent to Atkinson's EE Manager, Geoff Webb, and co-approved by the course director. Clients are discouraged from overly defining their project, because an important learning point is enabling the teams to craft a project plan that meets academic requirements, while delivering tangible value to the client (for profit and not for profit organizations).

EE is well integrated with active learning classroom endeavors and students are fully supported regarding project coordination and the setting of expectations. Verbal and written progress reports are mandated and EE hosts/clients are regularly surveyed regarding satisfaction and progress. Student peer evaluations are also built in and group dynamics carefully monitored.

Towards the end of the endeavor, student teams often present findings and recommendations to their project sponsor either in class or off site. Clients assess the suitability of the team's suggestions and overall professionalism. This evaluation informs the final EE grade.

The time commitment for organizations is low, involving no more than five face-to-face meetings supplemented by email, phone and webcam updates.

In the winter semester of 2007, over 90 organizations such as UNICEF, the University Health Network, the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, the Toronto Arts Council and Bank of Montreal are partnering with approximately 650 students. This number will grow as more faculty members add EE to their teaching and learning toolkit.

For more information, contact Geoff Webb at [gwebb@yorku.ca](mailto:gwebb@yorku.ca) [www.yorku.ca/akevents/academic/ee/index.html](http://www.yorku.ca/akevents/academic/ee/index.html)

### For Teachers

Sharing food and thought  
energizes course redesign cohorts

**BJ Eib**  
University of Calgary

To support groups of faculty who are redesigning their courses, we host 'cohort lunches' several times a semester. The Teaching and Learning Centre (TLC) provides a simple lunch (sandwiches, fruit and drinks) and organizes the meeting space and agenda. The purpose is to build a sense of mutual support; therefore the focus is on sharing ideas, materials and questions in an informal, discussion environment.

Each meeting focuses on one topic, such as orienting students to the course, assessing and grading, or structuring the content of course outlines. Usually, we invite one or two past participants to present ten-minute snapshots of their course redesign and its implementation, with a focus on the topic for that particular session.

The rest of the 75-minute session is devoted to small group discussions of the topic. TLC staff distribute name tags among the tables in a slightly different configuration each time. This helps break up project teams and 'old friend groups' so that participants can discuss issues and see that they have much to learn from those from other disciplines and situations.

Cohort members leave the lunch with new ideas and suggestions, answers to many of their questions, and a few resources (relevant articles, tip-sheets, websites) to aid their ongoing course redesign work. Often, they also have scheduled a time to get together with a new colleague to continue a discussion that began during the lunch.

TLC staff respond to requests for information and material by posting online, sending a follow-up email or providing it at the next lunch.

For more information, contact BJ Eib at [eib@ucalgary.ca](mailto:eib@ucalgary.ca)



*Faculty meet to redesign courses over lunch.*

# Piloting an Undergraduate Course-based Peer Mentoring Program

**Tania Smith**  
University of Calgary

Academic peer mentoring programs are certainly not new to higher education, but in our small pilot program, we have supported undergraduate learning through peer leadership in an efficient, collegial, and cost-effective manner.

At the Faculty of Communication and Culture at the University of Calgary, a single course empowers students to enhance their peers' learning in a diverse and growing number of courses in our small liberal arts faculty.

## Course Description

"Collaborative Learning and Peer Mentoring" is a half-year, 3-credit course that combines a 40-hour practicum with weekly discussions of the theory and application of collaborative learning in higher education. It counts as an option within the student's major in any program in our faculty.

## Impact on Students

In over 400 student surveys over two years, 73-77% of students who actively engaged with our peer mentors perceived a significant or marginal benefit to their academic and/or social engagement with learning.

## Program Design

I designed the program in 2005 with the indispensable support of our Associate Dean Academic, Doug Brent. I function as the program coordinator as well as the peer mentors' instructor, guiding and teaching up to 30 peer mentors per year and coordinating with their host instructors.

Senior undergraduate students partner with an instructor to perform a small practicum as a peer mentor in a course they have taken previously. Applications demonstrate good academic transcripts, personal motivation, prior mentoring-related experience, and strong recommendations from faculty members. Partnering peer mentors with a host instructor who knows and trusts them provides a foundation for self-confidence and smoothes their integration into the course.

## Peer Mentor Roles

Peer mentor roles supplement, never replace or duplicate, instructors' and teaching



*Tania Smith with her peer mentors.*  
*Photo by Ken Bendiktsen, University of Calgary*

assistants' roles in a specific course. Peer mentors neither grade student work nor lecture authoritatively on core course material. Instead, they support active learning by leading a combination of in-class and extra-curricular activities from an undergraduate peer's perspective. For example, peer mentors might offer in-class presentations, co-facilitation of class discussion, small group activities, extracurricular study groups, feedback on drafts, online discussion, individualized tutoring, and support for students who speak English as an additional language.

## Assessment Methods

During the term, peer mentors submit weekly service logs by email to their host instructor and program coordinator, attend weekly mentoring classes, do assigned readings and reflective writing, and observe and analyze another peer mentor at work. A final report, service portfolio, and social event involving host instructors and prospective peer mentors wraps up the experience.

## Student Engagement Model

We chose to embed service within an academic credit course because our teaching philosophy favours apprenticeship through the combination of academic theory and

experiential service-learning. Our peer mentors collaborate in the design of their own roles and activities through pre-term role planning consultations with their host instructor and myself. As they write their proposal, they conduct some self-directed research and consult about specific skills and knowledge they will need.

Peer mentors with time in their schedules and extraordinary dedication often volunteer above and beyond the practicum expectations, especially if they are partnered with a very supportive host instructor.

The adventure of taking on an innovative role in higher education and the joy of collaborating with an instructor whom the mentor respects offer more rewards than a typical course. However, the Collaborative Learning and Peer Mentoring course they take concurrently is essential as it provides a diverse cohort of peer mentors with an intellectual and social center of support and education. Approximately half of our peer mentors have continued their mentoring service or collaborated in my research and writing about peer mentoring.

## Impact on Instructors

Instructors who host peer mentors have responded very positively to the program, ending their term with very positive comments on the experience and hosting peer mentors in subsequent terms. Faculty also appreciate talking with each other about how they have deployed peer mentors to support their teaching.

By April 2007, peer mentors will have served in 12 different courses ranging from Canadian Studies to Women's Studies, and 13 of our faculty members (both sessional and full time) will have hosted peer mentors.

## New Refinements

This term, by partly combining the introductory peer mentoring course with a new course for advanced peer mentors, we are now able to provide more guidance for our new peer mentors, thus enriching the experience for all.

# One Approach to Student Engagement: Strengthening the Nexus Between Research, Teaching and Learning

**Julia Christensen Hughes**  
STLHE President  
University of Guelph

*This article is part of an ongoing international exchange among the presidents of the societies for teaching and learning from Canada, Australasia, and the United States. What follows is an adaptation of a report written by Julia Christensen Hughes, President of STLHE, and Evelina Rog, following a Canadian "Roundtable on Research, Teaching and Learning," facilitated by STLHE and the Canadian Federal Government during 2006. Many of the recommendations generated are directly applicable to strengthening student engagement. The full report is available at [www.mcmaster.ca/stlhe/projects/index.html](http://www.mcmaster.ca/stlhe/projects/index.html)*

Last spring STLHE, Human Resources and Social Development Canada (HRSDC), and the University of Guelph collaborated in organizing a Roundtable for exploring the research/teaching/learning nexus in post-secondary education (PSE) and for identifying potential strategies for creating national, provincial and institutional contexts in which all of these essential activities might thrive.

At the Roundtable, participants expressed concern about the increasing polarization of research and teaching in Canada, the desire of colleges to become more involved in research, and the need to provide more support for the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL). Participants were also concerned about low levels of student engagement as well as the ability of the PSE system to meet the needs of students from traditionally underrepresented groups (e.g. Aboriginal students, students of immigrant families, students with disabilities and non-high school completers). Canada's competitiveness on the world stage for dealing with these issues was also raised.

Participants concluded that there is a need to strengthen Canada as a **learning society** and to develop a comprehensive, national vision for PSE. To make the case for further government investment in PSE, we need research in at least three areas:

1. Current versus desired learning experiences and outcomes
2. Current versus desired participation rates in PSE, including those of under-represented groups
3. The potential to market an improved Canadian PSE system internationally

Further, participants suggested (1) that sources of funding and communities of practice need to be established for exploring these issues and (2) that the role of the granting councils and the Canada Research

Chairs program (CRC) could be strengthened in this regard. Several institutional strategies were also suggested.

## **Institutional-level Strategies**

1. Establish an institutional vision that includes the research/teaching/learning nexus and the institution's contribution to a learning society.
2. Implement curricular development and assessment approaches that explicitly support the development of critical inquiry skills and citizenship behaviours and encourage the integration of these learning outcomes across the curriculum.
3. Commit to the use of innovative and active pedagogical approaches (e.g., critical inquiry, problem-based learning, community service learning) in both domestic and international contexts.
4. Develop a connected community of faculty, educational developers, learning and writing specialists, librarians, and learning technology staff etc. to support course development and the implementation of effective pedagogies.
5. Encourage greater collaboration and/or integration between teaching support departments and offices of research (i.e., both should be perceived as core services, and have similar prestige and focus).
6. Ensure tenure, promotion, and merit-based pay policies adopt a broad definition of scholarship, value teaching, and reinforce the integration of research, teaching and learning. Reward departments whose faculty achieve success in these areas.

7. Establish institutes or other formal structures to support faculty interested in pursuing the SoTL.
8. Provide professional development opportunities for faculty and graduate students; encourage and/or require their participation in courses on pedagogical theory and practice.
9. Profile and celebrate teaching and learning successes and its scholarship in institutional publications and events, and through awards programs (for individuals, programs and departments).
10. Foster collaboration between university and college researchers.

STLHE continues to advocate for the implementation of these recommendations.



*Julia Christensen Hughes, President of the Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*



## Creative Problem Solving: Green Guide Review

Anne-Marie Ryan  
Dalhousie University

What do door stops, artists, engineering, communicating and creativity have in common? They are all part of the kind of creative problem solving approach proposed by Daryl Caswell in *Creative Problem Solving*.

In this latest of the Green Guide series, Caswell advocates for teams of students to solve a real-world, or 'wicked' problem through the practices of familiarization, functionality, and testing, embedded within the theoretical framework of the triad, narrative, participatory inquiry, and non-linear processing. Of course, Caswell also recognizes the importance of the tools of the problem solving trade - communication, visualization, and collaboration. As we read the guide, these interconnected triads unfold.

Using his own experience with developing and teaching courses on creative problem solving, Caswell takes us on a journey first through the nature of this problem solving approach, then on to the underlying framework and pedagogical rationale. He culminates with an overview of some of the practical considerations, including, to the author's credit, potential pit-falls and cautionary tales.

Caswell's own marriage of art and science allows for a free-flowing and well-organized readable Guide, well-peppered with narratives, anecdotes, and student comments. The underlying premise of Caswell's creative problem solving is that students need 'wicked' rather than tame problems to solve; wicked problems being real-world problems for which there is no one right answer.

I read the Guide with interest and heightened recognition of the potential of deep learning in such an approach. So it is with great

delight that I have found a 'real' problem for my students to take on in the next few weeks.

To my surprise, I am starting to understand that not only is this a true learning adventure for the students, it is also a learning adventure for the instructor.

Caswell, D. (2006). *Creative Problem Solving*. Green Guide No. 7. London, Canada: STLHE/SAPES.

## Learning through Inquiry: Green Guide Review

Brad Wuetherick  
University of Alberta

The Boyer Commission (1998) argued that universities ought to provide research experiences for every undergraduate student, beginning with an inquiry-based first year and culminating in an inquiry-based capstone experience. The STLHE Green Guide, *Teaching the Art of Inquiry*, is an exceptional tool for exploring exactly how to do that.

*Teaching the Art of Inquiry* provides a compelling and practical introduction to a number of issues, including: What is inquiry? Why is it an effective teaching and learning method? How and where inquiry can be used effectively? The answers are provided using examples drawn from inquiry courses taught across a diverse range of science, social science, and humanities courses, and across all four years of study.

Both authors have extensive experience using inquiry-based learning in their teaching. A self-reflective approach, combined with anecdotal examples from successful inquiry courses, adds tremendously to the case for using inquiry at the undergraduate level. From exploring the usefulness of a research workshop to introduce students to the

inquiry process, to the potential role of peer assessment in the inquiry assessment process, this guide has something of value for all instructors, academic developers, and administrators interested in inquiry.

Having used this guide extensively as a resource for faculty interested in innovative pedagogy, I have found inevitable gaps. The case for inquiry would be stronger had the authors demonstrated the impact of inquiry on student learning. For example, the recent work of Justice *et al* (admittedly completed after the Green Guide), demonstrates explicitly how inquiry can benefit student development, adding evidence that inquiry is one of the most powerful pedagogies for enhancing student learning.

As well, the guide would be improved by including some administrative lessons from the Canadian experience. Faculty members implementing inquiry-based learning need to be aware of a range of issues, such as debates over class size, allocation of resources, and the administration involved when teams of instructors teach one inquiry course.

### STLHE Green Guides



Short handbooks on a wide variety of teaching and learning issues.

To order: [www.bookstore.uwo.ca](http://www.bookstore.uwo.ca)  
The Bookstore at Western

*Teaching the Art of Inquiry* does not claim that inquiry is the only pedagogical method that should be employed with students. However, in a society embracing increasing complexity and demanding university graduates have the ability to thrive in that complexity, the skills of research and inquiry have an important role in the future of undergraduate education in Canada. This Green Guide can play an important role in making the acquisition of these skills a reality on your campus and in your classroom.

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## EDC Corner Educational Developers Caucus

## La chronique du Réseau de formateurs en pédagogie de l'enseignement supérieur

**Teresa Dawson**  
EDC Chair, University of Victoria

As I write this, the winter Conference on Engagement and Educational Development co-hosted by the Universities of Guelph and Waterloo is upon us. An enormous vote of thanks is due to co-chairs Trevor Holmes and Donna Ellis and their incredible teams, as well as to Alice Cassidy, Vice-Chair Professional Development, for the amazing job they have done together to bring us this wonderful event. What fabulous sessions we have to enjoy, on everything from getting started in faculty development on a shoestring to getting published in the scholarship of teaching and learning.

Vous pouvez également prendre connaissance des premières initiatives découlant du Plan de perfectionnement professionnel que les membres du Réseau de formateurs en pédagogie de l'enseignement supérieur (Réseau) nous ont demandé de mettre en oeuvre. Il s'agissait d'organiser un atelier préalable au congrès à l'intention des nouveaux concepteurs pédagogiques en tant que professionnels en début de carrière sur le thème de l'engagement de nos communautés, et un autre atelier destiné à leurs homologues plus chevronnés sur le thème de l'engagement du corps professoral envers notre travail.

Les affiches conçues à ce propos concernent des sujets variés, allant de la satisfaction des besoins des apprenants d'une seconde langue aux questions d'accessibilité, en passant par la formation des aide enseignants et les efforts déployés pour conceptualiser le champ du développement pédagogique dans un contexte international. Nous pouvons en outre vous fournir des détails sur le nouveau programme de subventions qui a été financé grâce à vos efforts soutenus en vue de recruter des membres institutionnels au nom de la SAPES. Qui plus est, l'ensemble des essais, articles et critiques de sites Web publiés en 2006/2007 sous la coordination de Jennifer Jasper de l'Université de la

Colombie-Britannique, et auxquels de nombreux membres ont collaboré, sera diffusé à titre de ressource sur le site web du congrès du Réseau.

I am struck by how much is happening in the Caucus, the depth and range of experience of members and how kind people are in sharing their expertise so willingly with others. I hear about new initiatives almost daily. All of this is done on a volunteer basis by some of the very busiest people I know. I cannot tell you how privileged I feel to chair a group with such generosity of spirit. When colleagues in other areas ask me about it, I tell them it is the EDC way. I hope we will treasure such collective collegiality always.

En parlant de personnes très occupées, je tiens à vous rappeler que deux postes au sein de la direction du Réseau seront prochainement ouverts, étant donné que les mandats respectifs du secrétaire et du vice-président des Communications viennent à expiration. Nous vous invitons à poser votre

candidature en vue des élections. La direction du Réseau devra en outre nommer un nouveau trésorier parmi ses membres, alors n'hésitez pas à communiquer avec nous si vous possédez les compétences voulues et avez le désir de vous impliquer. Nous espérons combler ces postes d'ici la prochaine réunion générale du Réseau, qui aura lieu dans le cadre du congrès de la SAPES, à Edmonton.

Speaking of busy people, just a reminder that two positions on the EDC Executive will be open shortly as the current Secretary and Vice-Chair, Communications, are reaching the end of their terms. Please consider letting your name stand in the elections. The Executive will also need to appoint a new Treasurer from among the membership, so please let us know if you have particular skills and interests in this area. We hope to have these positions filled by the next EDC General Meeting at the STLHE 2007 Conference in Edmonton.

The Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education  
La Société pour l'avancement de la pédagogie dans l'enseignement supérieur

### STLHE/SAPES Conference 2007



June / Juin 13 – 16, 2007

University of Alberta, Edmonton



### Evolving Scholarship L'Évolution des Connaissances

[www.ualberta.ca/UTS/STLHE](http://www.ualberta.ca/UTS/STLHE)

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## Message de la présidente



**Julia Christensen Hughes**  
Présidente de la SAPES  
Université de Guelph

L'année 2007 s'annonce aussi palpitante que stimulante pour nous tous dans l'enseignement supérieur étant donné que les attentes sur le plan de la mobilisation étudiante, de la réforme des programmes scolaires, de l'accessibilité, des mécanismes et des mesures de reddition des comptes pour évaluer la qualité ne cessent de prendre de l'ampleur, sur toile de fond de pressions budgétaires sans cesse plus fortes. La Société continue à se mobiliser auprès des gouvernements fédéral et provinciaux ainsi que des associations afin que ces questions importantes soient étudiées sous tous leurs aspects.

### Poste de présidente

En outre, cette année apportera un certain nombre de changements majeurs au sein de la Société pour l'avancement de la pédagogie dans l'enseignement supérieur (SAPES). Nous sommes impatients d'accueillir en juin Joy Mighty, de l'Université Queen's, au poste de présidente. Pour effectuer une transition en douceur, Joy et moi discutons depuis un certain temps déjà de ce qui doit être fait au cours des prochains mois. Joy et Margaret Wilson, de l'Université de l'Alberta, s'emploient en particulier à la rédaction de nos statuts constitutifs et espèrent avoir terminé le tout d'ici le congrès du mois de juin. L'un des aspects les plus importants de la constitution en société est l'occasion qui nous est donnée de réfléchir sur notre structure et notre organisation. À mesure que les activités de la Société gagnent en complexité, en visibilité et en étendue, il nous faut reconnaître, plus que jamais, combien il est indispensable de faire les choses de la bonne manière.

### Comités

C'est dans cet état d'esprit que nous nous apprêtons à élargir l'un de nos comités permanents, celui des Publications, en plus d'en créer plusieurs autres. Ces comités seront indispensables à l'atteinte des objectifs de la Société et auront aussi pour vocation d'offrir des débouchés aux membres de la SAPES qui souhaitent s'engager plus directement dans les activités de la Société.

### Poste de rédacteur

L'un de ces débouchés se présentera au sein du Comité des publications. Après 3 années passées comme rédactrice de notre bulletin d'information *L'avancement de la pédagogie dans l'enseignement supérieur*, Erika Kustra se retire. Erika a fait un travail tout à fait exceptionnel, apportant un regard nouveau et beaucoup de professionnalisme. Merci, Erika, pour tout ce que vous avez accompli! Nous sommes actuellement à la recherche d'un ou deux membres intéressés à assumer ces fonctions très importantes. En raison de notre engagement sur le plan du bilinguisme, l'idéal serait que l'une de ces deux personnes maîtrise parfaitement le français. J'invite donc les personnes intéressées à me le faire savoir.

### Représentantes régionales

Également, tous nos sincères remerciements à Teresa Dawson ainsi qu'à Eileen Herteis, dont les mandats en tant que représentantes régionales ont pris fin cette année. Teresa a joué un rôle-clé dans le démarrage de notre projet *La mission professorale et l'enseignement et l'apprentissage* ainsi que dans l'organisation du colloque national sur le même sujet qui s'est déroulé en 2005 à l'Université de Toronto à Scarborough. Teresa a également été l'un des organisateurs du congrès 2005 de la SAPES à l'Université de Toronto.

Quant à Eileen, c'est de main de maître qu'elle a assumé le rôle de responsable de notre portefeuille des adhérents. Le succès retentissant qu'a connu la campagne institutionnelle d'adhésion de l'année dernière peut être attribué en grande partie aux efforts qu'elle a déployés. Merci, Teresa

et Eileen! Nous sommes ravis de souhaiter la bienvenue aux deux nouvelles représentantes régionales qui les remplaceront--Nicola Simmons de l'Université Brock, représentant le centre de l'Ontario, et Shannon Murray de l'Université de l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard, représentant Terre-Neuve-et-Labrador, le Nouveau-Brunswick, et l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard. Un grand merci à celles et ceux d'entre vous qui ont participé à nos cyberélections régionales au cours des derniers mois!

### Campagne institutionnelle

Notre campagne institutionnelle de renouvellement des adhésions est l'autre tâche importante qui est actuellement en cours. Les activités de la Société dépendent des efforts spontanés de nombreuses personnes, avec l'aide de notre merveilleuse coordonnatrice administrative, Sylvia Riselay, et les recettes générées grâce aux adhésions. Sans ces fonds, la Société ne serait tout simplement pas aussi efficace dans l'exécution du mandat qui est le sien. Nous vous saurions gré de vérifier si votre institution en est membre, ou si le moment est venu de renouveler son adhésion, et s'il y a lieu d'encourager les dirigeants de votre institution à adhérer à notre organisation.

### Congrès

En terminant, je voudrais remercier, au nom de la Société, celles et ceux d'entre vous qui ont fait parvenir des propositions pour le congrès de la SAPES qui aura lieu en juin, à l'Université de l'Alberta à Edmonton, ou qui travailleront à l'examen des propositions au cours du prochain mois. Merci encore pour tous vos efforts au profit de la Société.

Mes meilleurs vœux pour un trimestre d'hiver couronné de succès!

*English version on page 11*

## President's Report

**Julia Christensen Hughes**  
STLHE President  
University of Guelph

The year 2007 will likely be both exciting and challenging for all of us in higher education as expectations for student engagement, curriculum reform, accessibility and accountability/quality measures continue to rise, along with escalating budgetary pressures. The Society continues to engage with federal and provincial governments and associations in exploring these issues.

### New President

This year will also bring a number of important changes to STLHE. In June, we look forward to welcoming Joy Mighty from Queen's University as President. In support of a smooth transition, Joy and I have been discussing what needs to be accomplished over the next several months.

### Incorporation

Joy together with Margaret Wilson of the University of Alberta, have been working hard on our articles of incorporation and hope to have this process concluded by the June conference. One of the most important aspects of becoming incorporated is the opportunity to reflect on how we are structured and organized. As the work of the Society continues to grow in complexity, visibility and volume, we recognize, more than ever, how essential it is to get this right.

### Committees

With this in mind, we are in the process of expanding one of our standing committees - Publications - as well as creating several new ones. These committees will be essential in achieving the goals of the Society and will also provide opportunities for STLHE members who want to get more directly involved in the Society's work.

### Call for Newsletter Editor

One immediate opportunity is on the Publications Committee. After three years at the helm as Editor of our newsletter, *Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*, Erika Kustra is stepping down. Erika has done an absolutely tremendous job, creating an entirely new look and level of professionalism. Thank you, Erika, for all you have achieved! We are currently seeking one or two members who are interested in taking on this very important role. Given our commitment to bilingualism, ideally one of these individuals will be fully fluent in French. If you are interested please let us know.

### Regional Representatives

Heartfelt thanks also go to Teresa Dawson and Eileen Herteis whose terms as regional representatives concluded this past year. Teresa was instrumental in getting our scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) initiative off the ground and hosting the National Symposium on the SoTL at UTSC in 2005. She was also one of the organizers of last year's STLHE conference at the University of Toronto.

Eileen played a masterful role as head of our membership portfolio. The tremendous success of last year's institutional membership campaign can be attributed in large measure to her efforts. Thank you, Teresa and Eileen!

In their place, we are delighted to welcome our two newest regional representatives - Nicola Simmons from Brock University, representing Ontario Central, and Shannon Murray from UPEI, representing NL, NB, and PEI. For those of you who participated in our regional electronic elections over the past several months, thank you so very much!

### Institutional Membership Renewal

Another important task that is currently underway is our institutional membership renewal campaign. The work of the Society is dependent on the volunteer efforts of many people, supported by our wonderful Administrative Coordinator Sylvia Riselay, and the revenue generated through memberships. Without these funds, the Society would not be nearly as effective in achieving its mandate. Please do inquire as to whether or not your institution is a (renewing) member, and if not, encourage your senior administration to join.

### Conference

Finally, to those of you who submitted proposals to STLHE's June conference at the University of Alberta in Edmonton and/or will be hard at work vetting the proposals, thank you so much for your efforts on the Society's behalf.

Best wishes for a successful term!

*En français à la page 10*

## Institutional Members: Renewal Campaign

### Founding and New Members

Acadia University  
University of Alberta  
University of British Columbia  
Brock University  
University of Calgary  
Carleton University  
Concordia University  
Concordia University College of Alberta  
Conestoga College  
Dalhousie University  
Durham College  
Fanshawe College  
Fleming College

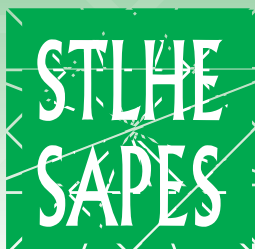
University College of the  
Fraser Valley  
University of Guelph  
Kwantlen University College  
Lakehead University  
Lambton College  
Malaspina College  
University of Manitoba  
McMaster University  
Memorial University of NL  
Mohawk College  
Mount Allison University

Mount Saint Vincent University  
University of New Brunswick  
Niagara College  
Northern Lights College  
Nova Scotia Agricultural College  
Nova Scotia Community College  
University of Ontario Institute of  
Technology  
University of Ottawa  
University of Prince Edward Island  
Université du Québec à Montréal  
Queen's University

Ryerson University  
Saint Jerome's University  
Saint Mary's University  
Sheridan College  
Simon Fraser University  
Thompson Rivers University  
University of Toronto  
Trent University  
University of Waterloo  
University of Western Ontario  
Wilfrid Laurier University  
University of Windsor  
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