

Journal for Academic Excellence

Dalton State to Host Annual Teaching and Learning Conference March 20

Center for Academic Excellence Dalton State College

A Division of the Office of Academic Affairs

The mission of the CAE is to facilitate, support, and enhance the teaching and learning process at Dalton State College. The Center serves to ultimately improve student success and achievement of learning outcomes by promoting the creation of effective learning environments through the provision of resources and faculty development opportunities.

Mark your calendars, write your proposals, and prepare your minds for the Sixth Annual Teaching and Learning Conference. The March 20th meeting will feature a day of workshops and presentations as well as a keynote from Dr. Todd Zakrajsek. The Conference theme is "High Impact Practices" and there will also be tracks on assessment, faculty development, and teaching and learning.

Todd Zakrajsek is the Executive Director of the Academy of Educators in the School of Medicine and an Associate Professor in the Department of Family Medicine at UNC-Chapel Hill. Todd is the immediate past Executive Director of the Center for Faculty Excellence at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Prior to his work at UNC, he was the Inaugural Director of the Faculty Center for Innovative Teaching at Central Michigan University and the founding Director of the Center for Teaching and Learning at Southern Oregon University, where he also taught in the psychology department as a tenured associate professor. Todd currently directs four National Lilly Conferences on College and University Teaching and Learning.



Todd Zakrajsek

Todd also sits on two educationally related boards: ERI for Lenovo Computer and TEI for Microsoft.

Dr. Zakrajsek received his Ph.D. in Industrial/Organizational Psychology from Ohio University. He has published and presented widely on the topic of student learning, including workshops and conference keynote addresses in forty-two states and six countries.

All information is provided at the [official conference website](#). Dr. Raina Rutti is serving as the Conference Chair this year. The deadline for proposals is February 6 and early registration ends February 28. The conference begins at 8:00 a.m. and ends at 6:00 p.m.



A Word from the Director



Dr. Marina Smitherman

We all know academic life is busy beyond measure. Keeping all the plates spinning and juggling the myriad of balls are constant endeavors. Yet what our students need from us in order to succeed keeps changing, and to respond we need to be armed with the “High-Impact” tools that the evidence shows help our particular student demographic succeed in the long term. If I had a dollar for every time someone told me that he or she wanted to participate in one of our workshops but couldn’t because of scheduling—well, you can probably complete that sentence for yourself!

Whether you like to grade in your PJs on a Friday, like to be in charge of your own schedule at the times you get to or you just simply prefer to work independently on professional development when you feel inspired, then CAE “Learn Anytime” is here to help you. We have combined opportunities that can be worked through at your own pace whenever you can fit them into your busy schedule. If education is going on-demand, why shouldn’t our own professional development?

CAE “Learn Anytime” has three major components to make life easier for you. Missed a workshop that looked great because you were teaching? We are now recording all our workshops and putting the videos and handouts up on the Center for Academic Excellence Bright Space page. We have also moved our RAP (Reflection and Application) Sessions following each workshop into the discussion boards. Find our

page and ask to enroll; it is as simple as that.

Second, as a campus, we also now have access to on-demand videos from Magna Publications, which are a fantastic cutting-edge resource that includes 60- to 90-minute archived video sessions covering topics such as:

- ◆ Using Brief Interventions to Maximize Student Learning
- ◆ 10 Ways to Engage Your Students on the First Day of Class
- ◆ How to Integrate Self-Regulated Learning into Your Courses
- ◆ Strategies for Making Your Courses Relevant and Engaging

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◆ Seven Strategies to Enhance Learning through Group Work

To get started, go to magnapubs.com, log in or create an account for yourself via a unique URL, and enter our authorization code under “Subscriptions.” I will be emailing this information out to campus shortly. We have paid for this access code, so please do not share this outside of our campus community.

Next, are you interested in teaching hybrid and/or online courses but not sure where to start? A small cohort from Dalton State will be working through the next BlendKit2015 MOOC based at the University of Central Florida for five weeks, February 23 through March 30. This set of subject-matter-neutral, open-educational resources related to blended learning will provide you with assistance in designing and developing your own blended learning course using best practices. Please contact me (msmitherman@daltonstate.edu) if you would like to join this group and learn skills in this growing area of education.

Furthermore, in response to your feedback our Brightspace training has also gone to an on-demand service, thanks to the expertise of Dr. Tom Gonzalez. We feel that this should better help our newer faculty get started and anyone wishing to try something new. If you have training needs at any time, please submit a request via the Bright Space helpdesk or contact Tom (tgonzalez@daltonstate.edu) and he will be out to help. We moved in this direction because of the issues with scheduling technology training when the people who need it are able to attend. Please let us know how you think this is working for you.

This semester our major focus is making our 6th Annual Teaching and Learning

Conference on March 20 our best yet! Our theme this year is “High Impact Practices for Engaging and Retaining Students,” and our keynote, who is profiled on the first page of the *Journal*, is one of the nation’s best. It is the most affordable T&L conference in the state, with an early-bird registration before March 1 at a 50% discount. Just \$30 to cover your fees and food for the day—quite a deal. We will have sessions on everything from undergraduate research to first year experience, capstone and writing-intensive courses.

We are excited about bringing a conversation about how we can fully engage in High Impact Practices with our undergraduates at a time when Georgia is considering launching its own LEAP project. Please consider submitting a proposal today. The deadline has been extended to February 25. More information, proposal submission and conference registration is available at www.daltonstatecaeconference.com.

Lastly, the center is here to serve you and meet your needs for your own development. If you would like to see something running or would like to propose an event, please just let us know. It is also great to hear from you if you have implemented something from one of our workshops that has helped you or your students succeed so that we can look at expanding our funding and our offerings to you.

Hope you all have a wonderfully productive and Happy Spring Semester 2015,

Kind Regards,

Marina.

Director, Center for Academic Excellence

Faculty and Staff Recognition



Cheryl Owens, Assistant Professor Nursing, presented a poster on "Evaluating the Health Needs of Students at DSC" at the Georgia Nursing Leadership Doctoral Symposium on November 1.



Dr. Raina Rutti, Associate Professor of Management, and Dr. Christy Price, Professor of Psychology, presented "Dealing with Controversial Issues in the Classroom" at the Professional and Organizational Development (POD) Network conference in Dallas on November 7.



Dr. Price also presented "Engaging Modern Learners" at Metropolitan State University in St. Paul, MN, on October 11. She also served as the keynote presenter for the International Society for Exploring Teaching & Learning in Denver, CO on October 17. Another speaking engagement was at William Woods University, Fulton, MO, on October 25, as well as the AACSB Conference for Associate Deans in San Antonio, TX, November 10.



Dr. Robert Clay, Associate Professor of Mathematics, presented a recording of the musical composition "Changes" at the annual meeting of the AMATYC (American Mathematics Association of Two Year Colleges) on November 14 in Nashville, TN.

She also presented the keynote address "Motivating Students" at the Associated Colleges of the St. Lawrence River Valley Teaching & Learning Conference in Canton, New York, on November 10. She finished the year speaking overseas at Koc University in Istanbul, Turkey, on December 16 and 17, where her topics were "Creating Courses of Excellence" and "Effective Mini-Lectures."



Dr. Gene Mesco, (Associate Professor of Biology, recently published the article "The Universal Principles of Evolution" in *World Futures: The Journal of New Paradigm Research*. His co-authors are J. Simmons and D. Vo.

Faculty and Staff Recognition



Dr. Baogang Guo, Professor of Political Science and Director of the Center for International Education, recently published "New Trends in China's Administrative Reform," in *China Currents*, Vol. 13. The full text of the article is accessible at this [link](#).



Dr. Kris Barton, Associate Professor of Communication and Chair of the Department of Communication, presented his paper "Voyeuristic Gratifications: An exploration of viewers' reasons for watching documentary-based reality television programming" at the National Communication Association's Conference in Chicago in November 2014.



Seven representatives of Dalton State attended the Georgia Communication Association Conference on February 20 and 21. Dr. Tami Tomasello, Assistant Professor of Communication, and Ms. Hannah Stanley presented on "Postcards to Tweets: The Stability of Social Communication in a Changing Media Environment." Dr. Barton presented, "A Case for Popular Culture: Incorporating Alternative Texts in the Communication Classroom." Ms. Tucker presented "The Use of Research Self-Disclosure in Qualitative Data Gathering." Ms. Sarah Min presented "Adaptation and Persuasion Across Cultures: Examining Social Influences Utilized by Asian Students in American Classrooms." Students Sean Self and Megan Standridge also presented, on using theatre techniques to improve public speaking instruction and stereotypes in the Men in Black films, respectively.

Faculty and Staff Recognition



Dr. Jenny Crisp, Assistant Professor of English and Director of the QEP, has had accomplishments in two arenas. Two grants written by Dr. Crisp for the Adult Education program of the Chattooga County Literacy Council have been funded this fall, one from the Tillotson-Menlo Charitable Foundation (\$5,000) and the other from the Mohawk Carpet Foundation (\$3,500).

Dr. Crisp also presented "One College's QEP: Transforming Developmental English for Long-Term Success" on December 7 at the SACS/COC 2014 Annual Meeting, which was held in Nashville, TN, this year.

Additionally, she coauthored "Top-Ten IT Issues, 2015, Inflection Point," for the *EDUCAUSE Review* (Vol. 50, No. 1, Jan/Feb 2015) and was interviewed in January 2015 for the *EDUCAUSE Review Online* article "Developing Strategies for Implementing Analytics" (<https://www.educause.edu/ero/article/developing-strategies-implementing-analytics>).

Dr. Tom Mullen, Associate Professor of Political Science, presented a guest lecture to the Rotary Club of Dalton on January 28. The title of the presentation was "Syria, Iraq, Isis, and the United States." His host was Dr. John Hutcheson, former Vice President for Academic Affairs at Dalton State.



"American Women converse on Middle Ages Flab," a poem by Associate Professor of English Marsha Mathews, will appear in the upcoming issue of *Southern Women's Review*.

In addition, *Contemporary Poetry: an International Literary Journal*, Volume 2 has accepted Marsha's poem "Turning 35" for their Winter issue. "Tribal Court in the Bush" can soon be read in *Gargoyle Literary Journal*, Issue 62, 108-9.

Finally, her poem "Secrets of the Sisala" will be reprinted in *Fourth River Reviews's "Best Writing of Ten Years"* online issue, alongside a blog in which Marsha discusses the origins of her poem, which evolved from the field study of Anthropologist Bruce T. Grindal stationed in Northwest Ghana in the 1960s.



From the Editor's Desk

I am sure I am not alone when I say that 2014 was a year of changes for me. Along with personal loss, I had some professional gains. One of them is beginning a position as the Interim Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs on January 2. I was so excited about starting the new job that I showed up on January 2—to a very lonely campus! But like everyone, I had plenty of projects to tackle and was grateful for the solitude of my office as I listened to Mozart (thank you, YouTube), watched the cold, heavy rain outside, finished two syllabi, set up this journal, and worked on writing.

What did 2014 bring you, and what will 2015 bring? I trust good things. One good thing is the opportunity to present your research on teaching and learning at the annual conference Dalton State holds every year in March. More information is found about it in this journal. You may also wish to publish something in this journal. In talking to many faculty members over the last eighteen months, I have learned of special expertise many have in regard to student engagement, dealing with difficult classroom issues, technology, creativity, public speaking, and other subjects that bear upon our work as faculty in a student-centered institution. I challenge you to consider writing a short piece sharing your skills and knowledge with your colleagues and others who might find this journal through search engines.

To the right you will see the graphic to remind you about the “Thank a Teacher” app that was started by the CAE in September. We are happy to report that there were 270 letters sent to 127 teachers in Fall 2014. That is a fabulous start. Remember, it’s not just for students to “thank a teacher”—you can thank a colleague as well at this [link](#).



**Remind your students to
“Thank a Teacher”**

**Coming Soon:
Thank a Staff Member**



February

2015

Mon.	Tue.	Wed.	Thu.	Fri.
2	3 Brown Bag "Capstone Courses" Eddie Miller, 12:15pm	4 Brown Bag "Capstone Courses" Eddie Miller, 12:15pm	5 Library Tech Talk "Maximize your Research" 2-3:00pm Library Classroom	6 Interactive Workshop "Before you flip out, Tips on flipping the classroom" Josie Baudier & Tracie Stromie (KSU)10-12, PH207
9	10	11	12	13
16	17 Teaching at its Best Leading Effective Discussions (Ch13-14) 3:15-4:15pm PH202	18	19 Teaching Unprepared Students: The Basics (Ch1-3) 3:15-4:15 LIA206	20
23 Coffee & Conver- sation – Courage to Teach, Ch.5 12:30- 1:30pm LIA 310 BlendKit 2015 Week 1	24 Coffee & Conver- sation – Courage to Teach Ch.5 12:30- 1:30pm, PH 202	25 Teaching Unprepared Students: The Basics (Ch1-3) 3:15-4:15 LIA206 Georgia SOTL Com- mons, Savannah	26 Georgia SOTL Commons, Savannah, GA	27

Teaching at Its Best Book Group led by Elizabeth Lucht & Marina Smitherman

Courage to Teach Coffee & Conversation Group led by Barbara Tucker

Counseling & Career Counseling run by Travis McKie-Voerste, Career Counseling.

Library Schedule organized and led by Melissa Whitesell and David Brown

BrightSpace training provided on a one-to-one basis by Tom Gonzalez and Pat Horton

Schedule is correct as of February 1, 2015 and any changes will be sent via Email, Facebook and Twitter

T&L Conference proposal submission and registration can be found at www.daltonstatecaeconference.com.



March 2015

Mon.	Tue.	Wed.	Thu.	Fri.
<p>2</p> <p>Spring Break</p> <p>CAE Learn Anytime</p> <p>BlendKit 2015</p> <p>Week 2</p>	<p>3</p> <p>Spring Break</p>	<p>4</p> <p>Spring Break</p>	<p>5</p> <p>Spring Break</p>	<p>6</p> <p>Spring Break</p>
<p>9</p> <p>CAE Learn Anytime</p> <p>BlendKit 2015</p> <p>Week 3</p>	<p>10</p> <p>Teaching at its Best</p> <p>Experiential Learning</p> <p>(Ch15-16)</p> <p>3:15-4:15pm</p> <p>PH202</p> <p>USG Monthly Series</p> <p>"Quality Matters in the USG"</p> <p>Irene Kokkala, UNG</p> <p>12-1:30pm</p> <p>Online</p>	<p>11</p>	<p>12</p> <p>Journal Club</p> <p>Scholarship of Teaching and Learning</p> <p>10:00-11:00pm</p> <p>PH 202</p>	<p>13</p> <p>Advising Training</p> <p>9-10:30am – Advising Basics</p> <p>10:45-12:15pm – Best Practices</p> <p>Peoples Hall 207 then 105</p> <p>Advanced Red Folder Training –</p> <p>10-11am, Location TBD</p> <p>Annual Report Writing Workshop</p> <p>12:30-2:00, Brown Bag.</p> <p>Peoples Hall 207</p>
<p>16</p> <p>CAE Learn Anytime</p> <p>BlendKit 2015</p> <p>Week 4</p>	<p>17</p>	<p>18</p> <p>Teaching Unprepared Students</p> <p>Learner Centered Education (Ch4-6)</p> <p>3:15-4:15</p> <p>LIA206</p>	<p>19</p> <p>Teaching Unprepared Students</p> <p>Learner Centered Education (Ch4-6)</p> <p>3:15-4:15</p> <p>LIA206</p>	<p>20</p> <p>6th Annual T&L Conference</p> <p>"High Impact Practices for Engaging and Retaining Students"</p> <p>www.daltonstatecaeconference.com</p> <p>8:00-6:00pm</p> <p>Peoples Hall</p>
<p>23</p> <p>Coffee & Conversation –</p> <p><i>Courage to Teach</i>, Ch.7</p> <p>12:30-1:30pm</p> <p>PH 202</p> <p>CAE Learn Anytime</p> <p>BlendKit 2015</p> <p>Week 5</p>	<p>24</p> <p>Coffee & Conversation –</p> <p><i>Courage to Teach</i>, Ch.7</p> <p>12:30-1:30pm</p> <p>PH 202</p> <p>Teaching at its Best</p> <p>Inquiry-Based and Case Method (Ch18-19)</p> <p>3:15-4:15pm</p> <p>PH202</p>	<p>25</p> <p>**Tuesday 24th**</p> <p>USG Monthly Series</p> <p>"Using WordPress as an Assessment Tool"</p> <p>Ben Wright, ABAC</p> <p>12-1:30pm</p> <p>Online</p>	<p>26</p>	<p>27</p> <p>Interactive Workshop</p> <p>"Academic Excellence through Active Learning, Assessment, and Inclusive Teaching"</p> <p>Drs. Hays, Chenoweth & Mesco</p> <p>10:00-12noon, PH207</p>



April 2015

Mon.	Tue.	Wed.	Thu.	Fri.
		1	2	3
6	7 Teaching at its Best Problem-Based Learning (Ch20-22) 3:15-4:15pm PH202	8 Brown Bag "Intellectual Property Rights for Researchers" - Ben Laughter, 12:30-1:30pm Location TBD	9 Journal Club Scholarship of Teaching and Learning 10:00-11:00pm PH 202	10
13 Coffee & Conversation – <i>Courage to Teach</i> , Ch.7 12:30-1:30pm LIA 310	14 Coffee & Conversation – <i>Courage to Teach</i> , Ch.7 12:30-1:30pm PH 202	15	16 Brown Bag "Monument Men" – Leslie Harrelson 12:30-1:30pm Location TBD	17 Student Scholarship Showcase – Sessions throughout the day, Location TBD
20	21 Brown Bag "Progress towards becoming a Hispanic- Serving Institution." Quincy Jenkins 12:30-1:30pm, Loc TBD.	22 Teaching Unprepared Students – Richer Campus Environment (Ch7-8) 3:15-4:15 LIA20 6	23 Teaching Unprepared Stu- dents – Richer Campus Environ- ment (Ch7-8) 3:15-4:15 LIA206	24

Georgia SOTL Commons is March 25-27th at Coastal Georgia Center, Savannah, GA. USG Teaching & Learning Conference is April 8-9th in Athens, GA.

Registration for free USG Monthly Faculty Development series is at http://www.usg.edu/faculty_affairs/workshops/category/academic_year_2014_2015 CAE Learn Anytime; Faculty have access to Magna Commons archived video series, see email for subscription details.

CAE is currently piloting a Teaching Development personal consultation service, contact the center if you are interested in participating.

Engaged with Technology: Using Apps to Motivate Student Learning

Abstract: Views of technology are specific to each generation. From a Baby Boomer’s perspective, the development of digital media was the biggest technological advance, Generation X was intrigued by the internet, whereas Millennials are immersed with multiple forms of technology in their daily activities. From an educators’ perspective, we are faced with a teaching dilemma: how to incorporate different applications (apps) of technology into the classroom in order to keep young scholars engaged. The purpose of this proposal is to provide Interior Design faculty with a better understanding of specific apps of technology, utilization within courses and student perceived benefits. Faculty members and students were charged with researching apps that were relevant to specific course assignments and incorporating their use within the assignment. Post-test questionnaires were used to evaluate ease of use, effectiveness as a learning tool, applicability within the course, and stimulated learning experience. Quantitative and qualitative responses were collected from students at the end of the semester with a focus on app use and technology. Eighty-eight percent of students believed there was a benefit of app use in their courses and 96% of students thought apps would be useful in their future career. With this information, interior design educators will be able to select more appropriate apps for the classroom, helping them remain current with technological trends while stimulating student learning and engagement.

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Introduction

Technological innovation is driving new trends in education and student learning styles. Millennials, engulfed in technology, exhibit major differences in learning methods, attention spans, and how they access information. This change is a contributing factor causing higher education to experience a shift from an e-learning (electronic) environment to an m-learning (mobile) environment (Caudill, 2007). To best provide for this generation of students, educators must embrace technological advances that are current. Ehrmann (2004) agrees, stating that “the use of technology can alter and enhance the role of the faculty member and widen the range of experiences and

resources available to the student” (p. 13). Educators that have a full understanding of mobile technology utility, both positive and negative, can help heighten student awareness of the resources available during and after their education. To this end, the purpose of this study was to determine if introducing m-learning apps into the classroom, specifically in Interior Design courses, would prove useful with course assignments, beneficial with learning the subject matter, and useful in their future career.

Background

Technology within the classroom is not a novel idea, but with the introduction of the e-reader in 1999 the method of learning began to shift.

Digital media has begun to overtake print media, and its multifaceted use is becoming the norm in the classroom. Hawkes and Hategekimana (2009) discussed new learning styles and determined that mobile learning represents the idea that students now have numerous resources that allow them to work anywhere and anytime. They argued that this new trend is essential because it increases successful academics, while preparing students to work with technology effectively in the workplace.

When taking a closer look at M-learning tools, Apple iPad's apps (apps) is one of the most researched applicable new technologies. The iPad offers a unique learning experience to users because of the wide range of apps. A literature review revealed that students often enjoy the use of apps within the classroom, but there is still some hesitation in adapting to this newer approach to learning by both students and faculty (Marmarelli & Ringle, 2011). In Marmarelli and Ringle's (2011) study, students rated many aspects of the iPad positively including battery life, durability, legibility, paper savings, single-function benefit, referring to course texts, highlighting and annotation, form factor, and touch screen. Some of the potential drawbacks of the iPad were noted as PDF functions, file system, and the lack of a keyboard. Many of these drawbacks can be suppressed through the use of specific apps (Marmarelli & Ringle, 2011). Proper facilitation and transitioning can make app use within the classroom promising (Etheredge, Cooper, Kendall, & Moody, 2013).

In other research specific to the iPad, Pepperdine University researchers Bush and Cameron (2011) distributed iPads to students in a pilot study. Researchers observed and surveyed students and faculty to gain insight to how the iPad can be used in the classroom. They found that students enjoyed using the iPad because of its mobility, ease of use, and all of the apps available to their discretion. Furthermore, they mentioned that, in order to integrate the iPad to the university, faculty should have a good understanding of the iPad's utilization, develop specific applications for their courses, and have good development support from their institution (Bush & Cameron, 2011).

Although there is a strong demand to integrate technology into the classroom, some educators are not as thrilled about embracing change. The Chronicle of Higher Education stated that some faculty members feel more burdened by having to keep up with new technology, and not rewarded when they do use it (Dodds, Callender, & Henry, 2012). Educators revert back to older means of distribution of information, which does not always allow newer generations of students to engage and develop their own competencies. Despite this, it is important to inform faculty of the numerous applications such devices can provide. For instance they can plan coursework, manage the classroom, communicate with students, and deliver course materials. Melissa Venable (2011) stated that if faculty plan for technical support, start small and build, and get feedback on the use of technology, this might help with the integration process.

Different mobile devices have thousands of apps available for download that can be used within academics. Apps for basic functions like accessing photos, developing calendars, and utilizing videos on YouTube are useable at every level and within every discipline of education. More specific apps like Dropbox, Evernote, team viewer, nue.notes, Pearson e-text, and quick voice recorder may be more beneficial in higher education. The majority of apps are simple to use, and easily accessible. As an educator, apps provide another course resource that can potentially engage the new generation of learners. Identifying relevant apps specific to each field is an important next step for educators. Previous research shows that students are able to use apps to help brainstorm, take notes, create presentations, collaborate with peers, develop sketches, draw plans, or edit photos (Etheredge, et al., 2013). Although practice and research illustrates possible applications, the implications on student perceptions are often not elaborated on. Educators should thus begin considering how students perceive these apps and assess the utility within courses.

Embracing technological innovations is essential for education given the changes in

learning styles and the educational environment. Although many educators are integrating technology, the use of apps within the classroom is an underdeveloped area. Given that newer learning styles are more mobile and driven by digital media; the use of apps within education is likely to flourish. Academics need to research the uses of these newer devices and how specific apps can be used to provide better resources to facilitate active learning.

Methodology

Sample

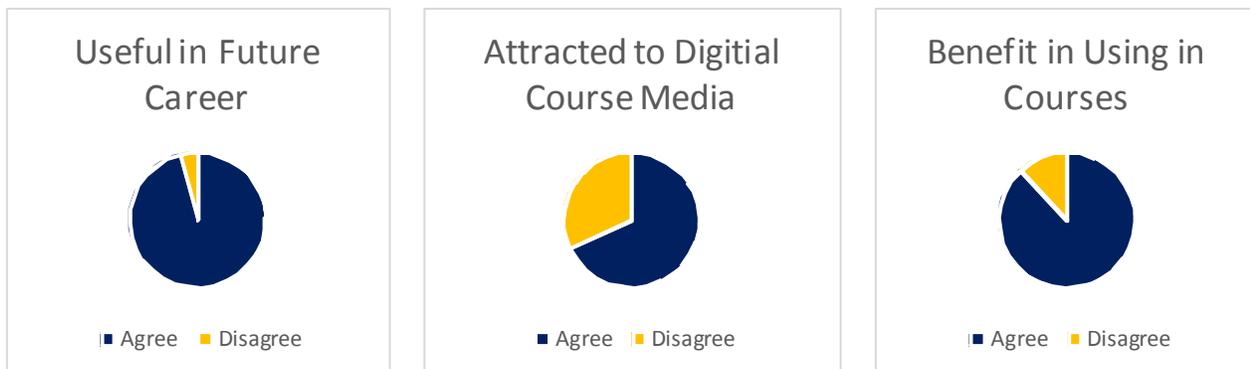
Four interior design instructors conducted a pilot study to determine if introducing apps into the classroom would prove useful with course

assignments and beneficial with learning the subject matter. Students of multiple interior design undergraduate courses were assigned an exercise by their instructors to research apps that were relevant to their course content over a two day period. The sample included 51 interior design students; nine students in the Contract Design II course, fifteen students in the History of Design I course, fourteen students in the Interior Systems Design course, and thirteen students in the Color Systems course. Each instructor further investigated the list of apps provided by the students. After spending a week of testing and investigating the possible apps, the instructor recorded relevance of each app including mobile

Table 1 – Course projects with app use

Course	Assignment	App
Contract Design II	Create videos	iMovie, iPhoto
History of Design I	Visually categorize time periods	iMindMap
Interior Systems Design	Create image board and provide specifications	Houzz, LightSmart
Color Systems	Create a color scheme	Color Companion

Figure 1. Student responses on sample items



device availability, cost, current app rating, and usefulness for the course. This allowed the instructor to become more familiar with the apps and able to guide students with using the apps for their course assignment. Each instructor then applied relevant apps to specific course assignments to be completed by the students.

App Administration

A variety of apps were incorporated throughout four interior design courses. Students were able to use their mobile device or borrow the instructor's iPad to complete the assignment. The final project for Contract Design II required students to create a video for their final project presentation using iMovie and iPhoto. The instructor for History of Design I implemented a brainstorming app, iMindMap, to help students visually categorize and organize the time periods of historic styles. Interior Systems Design used the Houzz app to create an inspiration board of design ideas for their residential lighting project. The Interior Systems Design course also used the app LightSmart which demonstrated the color of light and provided specifications for energy efficient light sources. Students in the Color Systems course used the Color Companion app which creates a color scheme based off of a piece of artwork that they upload into the app. The students then used the color scheme to design a room for their course assignment.

Once the assignments or projects were complete, the fifty-one students and four instructors were surveyed concerning mobile access to the apps, usefulness with course assignment, drawbacks of using the apps, usefulness in future career, attraction to digital versus printed material, and benefits of using apps in interior design courses. The student survey included close-ended questions, open-ended with short answer questions, and statements rated on a Likert scale, while the faculty survey included only open-ended questions. A cover letter accompanied the survey informing participants of the university-approved study and noted that participation was voluntary and would be kept confidential. Quantitative data from the surveys was recorded using SPSS.

Results

Student and faculty perceptions regarding app use in the classroom were generally well received. Figure 1 shows the main findings for the student survey. Overall, 88% of students felt that the apps were beneficial in the course and 96% believed the apps to be useful toward preparing for future careers. Over half of the students were also attracted to digital media rather than print media. Overall, students enjoyed the uniqueness and freedom within each app. Although qualitative data was positive, student comments revealed hesitations and concerns with app use, mainly in the areas of mobile device accessibility and technology issues.

The students' responses to the open-ended question in regards to what they learned from using the apps in course assignments were positive. Multiple students commented on how the LightSmart app used in the Interior Systems Design course gave them a better understanding of course material. Other students commented on the realization that apps were resourceful and that "everything is turning electronic". The apps also proved resourceful as a way to find inspirational ideas for their course assignments. Overall, students became more aware of interior design apps that they did not know about.

Faculty surveys revealed responses similar to student responses. In general, they felt that apps were pertinent to their course work, and students demonstrated an understanding of the course material through app use. All faculty surveyed believed that the students were more engaged and gained more from the course with the use of apps because it "created an interesting arena for them to learn". In the end, the faculty surveyed still preferred both digital and print media.

Despite the benefits of incorporating apps within course material, it is important to discuss some of the negative aspects revealed in this study. Not only do some faculty members feel the burden of having to keep up with new technology, but they must also spend time exploring the apps to determine whether or not they are applicable within course assignments. It is important to also

consider that not every student may have an iPad or iPhone which impacts the accessibility of the apps. Again, this increases the burden of discovering apps that are available on multiple devices. Faculty and students alike commented negatively on app distractions. Distractions in this sense were related to being so engrossed in the app itself, they were sidetracked from the course assignment. Other negative comments mentioned the difficulty of viewing the small screen of an iPhone while using apps.

Conclusions

Current technology in the classroom is expected with newer generations of students. Apps are a specific way that instructors can educate, engage, and prepare students for future careers. To do so requires a better understanding of apps, and how educators can better integrate and use them within courses. Part of this adaptation requires knowing both faculty and student perceptions towards apps as a resource for learning course material. This pilot study reveals that despite the few negative aspects, incorporating apps in the classroom was useful to the students and faculty. In addition, students became more aware of the resourceful interior design apps that supplement their learning and will be beneficial in their future career.

References

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The Challenges and Strategies of Group Projects within Higher Education

Abstract: Group work is considered an essential component of the learning process within higher education. Skills learned within group projects, such as polished communication, leadership, and analytical problem solving, reflect the dynamics of the professional work environment that students are preparing to enter. Unfortunately, students and instructors often find the process of group work challenging and difficult. This paper explores the fundamental challenges facing instructors working with group projects and the strategies needed for successful group work within the curriculum.

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Introduction

Andrew Carnegie once said, "Teamwork is the ability to work together toward a common vision, the ability to direct individual accomplishment toward organizational objectives...the fuel that allows common people to attain uncommon results" ("Teamwork." n.d.). Merriam-Webster dictionary defines teamwork as "work done by several associates with each doing a part but all subordinating personal prominence to the efficiency of the whole" ("Teamwork", 2014). There is no question of the importance of teamwork skills to education and the professional environment (Caruso & Woolley, 2008; Colbeck, Campbell, & Bjorklund, 2000). In fact, respondents to a 2006 Ken Blanchard Companies survey on pressing corporate issues reported that "they spend 30% of their day in a team setting and another 34% spend as much as 50% of their time working in a team setting" (1). Employers consider that academic institutions are responsible for preparing students with the workplace skills of teamwork (Cassidy, 2006) which leads program accreditation boards to often require the skill set in curriculums. But while teamwork teaches invaluable skills, group projects are complex and present hazards for instructors and students alike.

This paper explores the fundamental challenges facing instructors working with group projects and the strategies needed for successful teamwork.

Challenges

According to Carnegie Mellon University's Eberly Center for Teaching Excellence & Educational Innovation (n.d.), the hazards of group projects stem primarily from motivation and management issues. To understand these challenges, we must realize what they encompass. Much of the teamwork used in college classrooms is not well designed or well managed (Weimer, 2014). Russ & Dickinson (1999) assert that many of the problems associated with teamwork result from a lack of understanding and respect for the collaborative process. Instructors and students alike want the performance benefits of teamwork without recognizing that a lot of hard work is required to create an atmosphere where collaboration can thrive (Tyson, 2011).

Coordination

Group projects are generally more complex and broader in scope than an individual student can accomplish therefore requiring extra time and energy for students to coordinate schedules, meetings, correspondence, and participation in the collective decision making process (CMU, n.d.).

Too often goals and responsibilities are not clear. Design, supervision, and assessment of group projects also require extra time and energy from instructors before, during, and upon completion of the project (Kendall & Moody, 2011).

Motivation

Teamwork is often fraught with conflict that can have an adverse effect on student motivation within a group. Various dedication levels, stubbornness, perfectionism, and competition can create conflict among group members. Team members can also exhibit phenomena such as free-riding and social loafing, which have the ability to lower productivity and erode group morale (CMU, n.d.). Although these problems are similar to personnel issues and very few people relish working on them, in reality, a single problem member will have very negative effects on the strength and morale of a team. Another element effecting group morale is that work is often doled out to team members with everyone knowing their part, but not knowing the whole picture (Petty, 2010).

Strategies

Each individual member of a group has different ideas, temperaments, and schedules that they bring to the table regarding group projects. As outlined above, these differences open the door for exploration into successful group project strategies. But while it is important for instructors to work toward minimizing the hazards of group work, you must also remember that students do learn real-world skills solving the inherent issues involved. That being said, Kendall and Moody (2011) state that instructors must pay close attention to strategies with regard to purpose, project structure, group formation, and effective assessment and grading systems in order for group projects to thrive.

Purpose

Instilling the importance of a shared purpose among each group member is an integral component to ensuring that collaborative learning groups will be effective learning tools (Katzenbach, Entel & Mahoney, 2002). Like goals and objectives, instructors should emphasize the overall context for the project and the tangible products

that will be produced. Although specific project goals may differ, it is important to explain the practical value of teamwork skills within the workplace to all members (CMU, n.d.).

Structure

Carefully structured teamwork involves positive interdependence and individual accountability. Instructors must creatively select and structure projects proposed for teamwork in order to convince students of the need for interdependence. This includes projects that are too large to complete on their own, projects that require the involvement of various skills, or projects with students from multiple disciplines. Instructors should break large projects into manageable steps or stages and set interim deadlines to model how professionals handle the project in the real world (CMU, n.d.). Structure also ties to another key area of successful teamwork, the formulation of groups.

Group Formation

Most students accept the idea of working together on projects, but often express concerns about how groups will be chosen. (Kendall, Etheridge, Moody & Cooper, 2014). Student concern is well founded, for the success of collaborative student learning groups depends on how well they are organized (Katzenbach et al., 2002). Often instructors are unaware or misinformed about effective grouping strategies (Rau & Heyl, 1990). There are generally two documented methods for determining group membership: self-selection and assignment. Self-selection means allowing students to choose their own groups (James, McInnis, Devlin, 2002). Carnegie Mellon University (CMU, n.d.), in a recently published article, observed that students who were allowed to choose their own groups ended to form collectives that were “homogenous with respect to ability and culture...(which) often resulted in strong teams and weak teams” (CMU 1). Therefore Rau & Heyl (1990) believe that self-selection groups are mainly appropriate with temporary groups that are not graded; they exist just to accommodate students getting to know others in the class.

Instructors may assign students to groups

intentionally, randomly, or on the basis of a criterion selection (CMU, n.d.; Kendall et al., 2014; Rau & Heyl, 1990). Intentional assignment works best when the instructor takes care to group students with complimentary skill sets together; like a strong organizer with a strong creative talent (Katzenbach et al., 2002). Instructors must be careful, however, to recognize the difference between skill and motivation. When strongly motivated students are grouped with poorly motivated students, the motivated student is generally saddled with the responsibility for their team member (CMU, n.d.).

Random assignment pairs students within a group without a specific method or pattern (Kendall et al., 2014). This simple, easy technique of grouping students can be effective, but unfortunately, can also create an ideal environment for “free-riders” – poorly motivated students looking to depend on the work of their peers (Rau & Heyl, 1990). This is a significant area of concern for students. Criterion-based assignment takes place when instructors group students by ability; generally in preparation for criterion (like tests or non-academic examinations) meant to measure aptitude. Rau & Heyl (1990) have shown that all three methods can be effective when administered judiciously. Instructors must draw on their education and experience, and be sensitive to diversity and student ability, to compose effective learning groups.

Group Size

The size of learning groups is also important to how they function. Research shows that groups of a certain size, or a certain number, can experience negative or positive consequences independent of other variables. Groups with too many students are harder to regulate and monitor, conditions that can lead to unequal participation, poor motivation, and “free riders” coasting on the work of others. As groups grow larger, so does the amount of energy required to lead them. Larger groups can start to lose focus and direction due to difficulty of leadership. Katzenbach et al (2002) call this phenomenon the “herding” effect. On the other hand, groups that are too small can become homogenous, and therefore less well equipped to

deal with the diverse sets of challenges. One strategy proffered by Rau and Heyl (1990) to increase the stability of student groups is to make them permanent. Permanence forces the group to adapt, gain experience, and learn how to work together and trust each other. Permanent groups are more consistent and more stable. But even then, students do not instinctively have the interpersonal skills needed for successful collaborative work. They must be taught these skills and how to use them (Johnson & Johnson, 1990). Incorporating corporate team building activities within the curriculum is a great way to ensure that students have needed group skills. Open discussion on what skills are needed can lead to the development of a group accountability contract that each group member must sign. Other activities may include, how to identify negative group roles, how to deal with disagreements, and how to promote open communication (CMU, n.d.).

Assessment and Grading

Instructors are consistently challenged with how to grade group work fairly. In *Assessing Group Work*, James et al. (2002) suggests implementing one grade for the overall group and one grade for each individual in the group. Individual grades allow diligent students to pull ahead of other team members. Katzenbach et al (2002) follows that individual grades are vital because of the largely individual products produced in groups and the strong individual accountability students hold over their tasks. Instructors must also consider the importance of grading the process of teamwork skills and group dynamics, not just product (CMU, n.d.).

Conclusion

Group projects are a fundamental to education and the professional environment. Unfortunately for many, “teamwork is an elusive ideal that carries with it lofty dreams of doing more with less” (Tyson, 2011). Students and instructors are often exasperated by the challenges that group projects hold. Through careful planning, well-informed and formed groups, and effective rubrics that hold the individual as well as the whole group accountable, successful group projects can be achieved. Students can develop the skills needed

for the professional world and instructors can assign more complex and authentic problems within classrooms.

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Journal Submission Guidelines and Editorial Policies

1. Faculty members (and professional staff) may submit the following:

- Book reviews on scholarly works on higher education administration or issues, college teaching, or adult learning published within the last two calendar years.
- Scholarship of Teaching and Learning research. This is defined as a study in which an activity, strategy, approach, or method that reflects best practices or evidence-based research is tried in the classroom. The faculty member sets up an intervention, executes it, and assesses the impact, employing quantitative or qualitative methods. Articles should indicate that IRB process was followed where applicable, with documentation.
- Literature review that synthesizes, in a relevant and interesting way, the evidence, theory, and/or research on a particular aspect of higher education, college teaching, adult learning, brain research, etc. Professional staff could write about issues in student services or advising, for example.
- Essay of personal reflection of a classroom incident or phenomenon with an evidence- or theory-based approach to interpreting the incident or phenomenon.
- Articles should attempt to have c

2. Style Sheet

- Submissions should be in APA VI format and Times New Roman 12 pt. font. Use APA guidelines in terms of margins. The writer should try to preserve his or her anonymity as much as possible. The editor will redact the name of the writer from the document's title page before sending to reviewers.

3. Review Process

- The submissions will be peer reviewed by three faculty members, whose identity will be known only to editor and not to each other. One member of the review committee will be a faculty member in general discipline represented in the article, one will be a faculty member with an advanced degree in education, and one will be drawn from the advisory committee or other volunteer reviewers.
- Articles will be returned to the writers in a timely manner with an indication of rejection; conditional acceptance (revise and re-submit, with suggestions for doing so), and accepted (possibly with request to edit or make minor changes). A rubric will be used for assessing the articles. It will be available to potential submitters upon request. If none of the members approves the article, it will be rejected. If one of the members approves the article, it will be considered a conditional acceptance. If two approve it, it will be returned for the necessary editions and published when finished. If three approve it, it will be published as is or with minor corrections.

4. Submissions should be sent as Word files to btucker@daltonstate.edu

5. Published articles will appear in the *Journal for Academic Excellence*, which will be available on the Center for Academic Excellence's website and thus accessible by Internet searches.