

7th Annual Symposium on Innovative Teaching

Reaching New Heights of Learning at SFU



**The SFU Undergraduate Curriculum Initiative:
New Heights of Learning at Simon Fraser University
www.sfu.ca/ugcr**

Simon Fraser University has approved sweeping changes to its degree requirements that will apply to all undergraduate students admitted for September 1, 2006, and thereafter. These innovations are being implemented in order to enrich the quality of an SFU undergraduate education, and to better prepare students for more promising futures.

The approved changes include the requirement that students complete 6 credits in courses identified as “writing-intensive” (W), 6 credits in courses identified as “quantitative-reasoning” (Q) and 24 credits identified as “breadth” (B) including:

- a) 18 credits of Designated Breadth (DB) (6 credits of Social Sciences, 6 credits of Humanities, and 6 credits of Sciences); and
- b) 6 credits of Undesignated Breadth (UB) (courses taken outside the student’s major program).

An important aspect of implementation is the chance to examine how and what we are teaching, and to ask how this can be improved to encourage more active and thoughtful learning. We hope that this Symposium on Innovative Teaching will provide participants with both practical solutions to course redesign challenges and the chance to reflect on their courses and their teaching.

Barbara Frisken, Chair,
Undergraduate Curriculum Implementation Task Force
Simon Fraser University

*The 7th Annual Symposium on Innovative Teaching is presented
by the Learning and Instructional Development Centre in cooperation
with the Office of the Vice President, Academic and the Undergraduate
Curriculum Implementation Task Force.*

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Wednesday, May 18, 2005

8:30 – 9:20 AM

Refreshments and Registration in Halpern Centre Lobby

9:20 – 9:30 AM

Opening Plenary Session and Welcome from

V-P, Academic, John Waterhouse

Halpern Centre 126

9:30 – 10:45 AM

Keynote Presentation 1.1 in Halpern Centre

From Outcomes to Input:

Entrusting Departments to Improve Writing

Chris Anson (North Carolina State University)

Halpern Centre 126

Writing across the curriculum often takes the form of a campus-wide requirement designed to increase the amount of writing students do in their coursework. But there is increasing awareness of the conditions that work against the cultivation and sustenance of cross-curricular programs when they are too standardized and imposed too strongly from above. Campus-wide requirements and criteria for WAC programs often fail to acknowledge crucial differences in disciplinary and curricular structures, resources, and departmental cultures. How can institutions create a system of continuous program improvement in writing and higher-order thinking that has internal value to each department? One promising approach is designed to promote localized attention to writing by investing academic units with an interest in achieving outcomes that are meaningful to them and specific to their own curricula. In describing this approach, I will provide examples of ways it is being productively implemented in several contexts.

10:45 AM – 11:00 AM

Refreshment Break in Halpern Centre 114 (Lounge)

11:00 AM – 12:30 PM

Concurrent Sessions 2.1 and 2.2 in Maggie Benston Centre

Session 2.1

Why writing IN the discipline? Faculty share ideas to illustrate why they are committed to writing in their disciplines.

Lee Hanlan, Arne Mooers, Evan Tiffany, Robbie Dunlop, Greg Dow, Wendy Strachan (Simon Fraser University)

Maggie Benston Centre 2290

Faculty who have been teaching W-courses over the past three years will discuss the value and significance of writing in teaching and learning in their discipline. The intent of the session is to open up a larger discussion of what writing in the disciplines means in various disciplinary contexts, and to touch on some of the theoretical frameworks that inform writing-intensive learning pedagogy.

Session 2.2

Our Students' Expectations:

How might they respond to the curriculum changes?

Russell Day (Simon Fraser University)

Maggie Benston Centre 2296

In this workshop, we will explore some theoretical ways of understanding our students and how their complex, multifaceted, and diverse expectations will impact our attempts to introduce new curricula. We will begin with a brief overview of some more traditional approaches to understanding students (Perry), understanding learning (behaviourist), and the role of teacher. We will then review some more recent ways of looking at the learning process, and compare the 'generations' of students (Baby Boomers, Generation Xers, Millennials). With these new models in hand, we will explore ways of 'hooking' students so they become invested in the changes.

12:30 – 1:15 PM

Lunch Break in Halpern Centre 114 (Lounge)

1:15 – 2:30 PM

Welcome from Director, Centre for Writing Intensive Learning,

Wendy Strachan and introduction of

Keynote Presentation 3.1 in Halpern Centre

Writing as Learning and Defining the Discipline:

California State University, Monterey Bay's Integrated

Writing Program in Earth Systems Science and Policy

Daniel Shapiro (California State University, Monterey Bay)

Halpern Centre 126

How might the development of disciplinary writing programs benefit students, faculty, and the disciplines? Over the past eight years, I have been part of a team developing a disciplinary writing program for undergraduate students majoring in Earth Systems Science and Policy, an interdisciplinary science and environmental policy program at California State University, Monterey Bay. Our writing program consists of a series of core writing courses that meet both discipline-specific and university-wide writing outcomes. I will present an overview of our program and writing outcomes, describe our processes for initial and ongoing development of our program, and show the ways students, faculty, and our discipline benefit from our integrated writing program.

2:30 – 2:45 PM

Session Break

Wednesday, May 18 2005

2:45 – 3:45 PM

Concurrent Sessions 4.1 and 4.2 in Maggie Benston Centre

Session 4.1

Writing to help learning, thinking, and critical analysis

Karen Ferguson, Ian Chunn (Simon Fraser University)

Maggie Benston Centre 2290

Faculty from History and Communications will describe writing strategies intended to develop students' critical-analytic ability. Examples include: using low stakes writing to develop fluency in explaining sophisticated theoretical material in one's own words; learning how to map the discursive structures in key research articles; learning the structure of argument, counter argument and conclusion for critical analysis papers; and the use of reader response to develop critical reflection and analysis of primary sources.

Session 4.2

Learning Support for Undergraduates:

Tips and Tools for Helping Your Students Succeed

Mark Bodnar (Simon Fraser University)

Maggie Benston Centre 2296

As undergraduate students learn about a new subject, they start from a point of 'not knowing.' Their course assignments require research skills and specialized knowledge that they often have not yet developed. As a result, they may use the wrong search tools, cite inappropriate sources, and spend too much time not finding the information they need. By understanding the common obstacles students face, instructors will be better equipped to design assignments that address these obstacles in advance.

In this session, participants will learn:

- the competencies required by students to successfully engage in academic research
- how to guide students in their ongoing development of these competencies
- what SFU Library resources are available to address some of these skills

Through interactive exercises and group discussion, participants will identify their own approach to research in a new area, and how this relates to the student experience. Key research competencies will be presented, with examples relating to courses across disciplines. Various library resources that relate to the research process will be demonstrated, including the new online tutorial "Understanding and Avoiding Plagiarism," guides to academic writing, and RefWorks bibliographic citation software.

3:45 – 4:00 PM

Session Break

4:00 – 5:00 PM

Concurrent Sessions 5.1 and 5.2 in Maggie Benston Centre

Session 5.1

Issues in implementing an upper-division W-course

Maite Taboada, Susan O'Neill, Len Berggren, Kathryn Alexander

(Simon Fraser University)

Maggie Benston Centre 2290

Faculty identify issues and challenges and issues that arose in their courses (effectiveness of peer reviews, ESL and writing, students' unfamiliarity with research writing, moving beyond memorization and regurgitation) and provide examples of how the writing-intensive approach enhanced students' familiarity with research genres, developed fluency in key concepts and disciplinary thinking, and promoted better learning of complex content material. This session will showcase a diversity of assignments in Historical Mathematics, Systemic Functional Linguistics, and Educational Psychology.

Session 5.2

**Supporting Graduate Students
in their Roles as Teachers**

Jennifer Jasper, Desiree Mou (University of British Columbia)

Maggie Benston Centre 2296

Teaching assistants play a crucial role in the education of undergraduates. Capable, confident TAs create an active learning environment and are often an essential link between students and faculty. Many go on to become instructors - their TA experience forming the foundation of their training as teachers.

This session explores the principles and practicality of creating relevant training programs for teaching assistants – relevant to both their current and prospective duties. We will begin the discussion by outlining programs for Teaching Assistants offered at UBC, and encourage others to share information on programs at their institutions.

Through small group work, we will develop principles that drive comprehensive teacher training programs. We will then brainstorm challenges to implementing such programs and identify solutions to these challenges.

By the end of this session, participants will:

- explore teacher training programs for teaching assistants across institutions
- discover principles that underlie successful programs
- identify challenges to and solutions for implementing these programs

This workshop would be of interest to those working with teaching assistants as well as those designing teacher training programs.

Thursday, May 19, 2005

8:30 - 9:00 AM

Refreshments and Registration in Halpern Centre Lobby

9:00 – 10:15 AM

**Welcome from UCITF Chair, Barbara Friskin
and introduction of**

Session 6.1 A Place to Learn:

Catherine Murray, Dennis Krebs (Simon Fraser University)
Halpern Centre 126

Dr. Catherine Murray presents an argument that the undergraduate curriculum initiative must be understood within the context of the comprehensive university's special place in post secondary education today. Drawing on the work of Allan Tupper and Tom Pocklington in their book *No Place to Learn*, she proposes the need to find new rationales for undergraduate learning which take the longer view. She outlines governance, administrative, and policy challenges in reinstating the importance of teaching and learning in SFU's community. Dennis Krebs will comment on the paper and outline what he sees are the priorities over the next decade in continuing to improve SFU as a *place to learn*.

10:15 - 10:30 AM

Refreshment Break in Halpern Centre 114 (Lounge)

10:30 – 11:30 AM

Concurrent Sessions 7.1 and 7.2 in Maggie Benston Centre

Session 7.1

**Making a difference in the quality of student writing;
designing assignments that encourage problem-solving
and critical thinking**

Wendy Strachan (Simon Fraser University)
Maggie Benston Centre 2290

In this workshop, we identify some general characteristics of writing assignments that prompt students to develop their thinking and writing. Participants will have the opportunity to engage in a process that can be applied to re-thinking their own assignments and develop ideas for ways to help students better understand what they are looking for.

Session 7.2

Workshop for Superheroes

Veselin Jungic, Lou Crockett, Jesai Jayhmes (Simon Fraser University)
Maggie Benston Centre 2296

Can a cartoon superhero help students to understand a complicated educational topic more easily? Three moderators (an artist, an actor and author, and a mathematician) will talk about their experience of making 'Math Girl', a cartoon in which Math Girl uses calculus to save her friend Pat Thagorus. Two versions of the cartoon will be shown. The participants will be invited to create a superhero in their disciplines.

11:30 AM – 12:30 PM

Lunch Break in Halpern Centre 114 (Lounge)

12:30 – 1:30 PM

Concurrent Sessions 8.1, 8.2, and 8.3

in Halpern Centre and Maggie Benston Centre

Session 8.1

A Public Forum: The Learning & Instructional Development Centre Strategic Plan

David Kaufman and John Moore (Simon Fraser University)
Halpern Centre 126

In November 2004, the Learning and Instructional Development Centre (LIDC) assumed responsibility for Surrey's eLearning Innovation Centre (eLINC). Then in April, 2005, the Centre for Writing Intensive Learning (CWIL) was transferred from the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences to the LIDC. The LIDC is now engaged in writing a three-year strategic plan to guide future activities. The process of preparing this plan includes soliciting feedback from LIDC staff and the SFU community. The LIDC director, Dr. David Kaufman, has already consulted with many individuals and university groups with mandates associated with teaching and learning, such as Faculty Deans and/or Associate Deans, SFUFA, the Senate Committee on University Teaching and Learning (SCUTL), Instructional Development Group (IDG), and the Learning Technologies Coordinating Committee (LTCC). Three focus groups also have been held, consisting of people who have used LIDC services over the years: one for classroom and technical services, another for media production, and a third for teaching support. In this session, a public forum will be held to discuss the current draft of the strategic plan.

LIDC's core mission (from the draft report) is to assist in the creation of an enriched academic environment at Simon Fraser University by:

- providing a strong, coordinated and sustainable infrastructure to support the development and delivery of exemplary instruction, whether classroom-based, fully online, or in a blended model
- using the same infrastructure to support research in technology-enhanced teaching and learning and to foster linkages between research and practice
- delivering services and support, reaching new off-campus students, and creating a strong sense of community for students and instructors
- delivering professional development programs and events to faculty and staff

Thursday, May 19, 2005 (continued)

Session 8.2

Being a W-course TA: A step toward professional development?

W-TAs, Jon Driver, Kathryn Alexander (Simon Fraser University)
Maggie Benston Centre 2290

Experienced TAs will discuss how learning to teach using a W approach has contributed to their own professional development, either by enhancing their teaching skills as instructors, developing awareness about their own research writing, or in designing successful assignments and curriculum. Dr. Jon Driver, Dean of Graduate Studies will respond to the TAs and discuss the implications of writing-intensive learning for graduate students and their professional development as academics.

Session 8.3

Dynamic Concept Maps as Teaching Tools

Olusola Adesope, John Nesbit (Simon Fraser University)
Maggie Benston Centre 2296

In recent years, there has been substantial interest among educational researchers in the instructional use of concept and knowledge maps (Novak, 1990a; O'Donnell, Dansereau & Hall, 2002; Dansereau & Newbern, 1997). The research literature has confirmed that studying or constructing maps enhances learning. Research has explored the use of these maps as aids in communication, lectures, study materials and collaborative learning (Canas et al., 2003).

A dynamic concept map is an animated, node-link image synchronized with audio. This session will demonstrate how computer-based, dynamic concept maps can further enhance teaching and learning. These initial research efforts may be extended to build a generic tool for instructors. We also see dynamic maps as a potential tool to help realize the new undergraduate curriculum requirements. We will discuss ways in which instructors and students can make use of such maps, then open up for discussion how these tools can be best used at SFU and beyond.

1:30 – 1:45 PM

Session Break

1:45 – 2:45 PM

Concurrent Sessions 9.1 and 9.2 in Maggie Benston Centre

Session 9.1

**How much feedback is enough? Being efficient
as well as effective in responding to writing**

Wendy Strachan (Simon Fraser University)

Maggie Benston Centre 2290

A major challenge of W-courses is giving feedback on writing that is useful and meaningful and leads students to revision. This session offers examples and rationales for a continuum of responses from which to choose, based on purpose and the developmental level of the writing.

Session 9.2

Rewarding University Teaching: A Panel Discussion

Barbara Frisken, Slava Senyshyn, Sue Roppel, and Howard Trottier

(Simon Fraser University)

Maggie Benston Centre 2296

A crucial part of SFU's undergraduate curriculum initiative is faculty support and participation. We are asking faculty to change what they teach and how they teach it, and we hope that the initiative will result in faculty becoming more engaged in the curriculum and in their teaching. However, a frequent comment that we hear from faculty is that they feel that efforts to improve their teaching are not rewarded and may even be detrimental to their advancement. This panel will address the question: What can we do to improve the university culture so that faculty feel that their interest and involvement in teaching is appreciated?

2:45 – 3:00 PM

Session Break

3:00 – 4:30 PM

Concurrent Sessions 10.1 and 10.2 in Maggie Benston Centre

Session 10.1

Grading 400 Essays Exams: Assessing student learning in large courses (and seeing daylight!)

Russell Day, Joan Sharp (Simon Fraser University)

Maggie Benston Centre 2290

This workshop will examine the challenges of assessing learning in larger courses in both the arts and the sciences. The challenge is even more daunting when trying to assess deep learning (as opposed to surface learning), critical thinking skills, and written communication skills. After a brief overview of 'why' we assess, the workshop focus will shift to an open format sharing of answers to the 'how' questions. How do you create valid and reliable assessment tools that measure deep learning? How do you create rubrics that can be used by multiple TAs to ensure grading consistency? How do you help your students maintain their academic integrity in a large class setting? How do you provide feedback to students about their written answers so they may learn from their mistakes? How do you deal with grade appeals? Even the logistical issues will be examined, such as, how do you distribute and collect 400 exams with minimum effort?

Session 10.2

Timing and wording of low-stakes writing: Making it work to help students' learning and thinking

Kathryn Alexander (Simon Fraser University)

Maggie Benston Centre 2296

Low-stakes or exploratory writing can provide the intellectual building blocks and scaffolding for formal writing assignments. This workshop will focus on when to connect low stakes writing to lecture material and course content, and on what kinds of questions or prompts are likely to generate effective exploratory writing. We will engage in some exploratory writing exercises ourselves, view and discuss samples generated from across the disciplines in the SFU community, and then develop criteria for successful low stakes assignments applicable to our own teaching and disciplinary contexts.

5:00 to 7:00 PM

Cocktails and Curriculum

Join us for a social gathering and good conversation at the Highland Pub (in the MBC) compliments of the UCITF.

Friday May 20, 2005

9:00 – 9:30 AM

Refreshments and Registration in Halpern Centre Lobby

9:30 – 10:30 AM

Concurrent Sessions 11.1 and 11.2 in Maggie Benston Centre

Session 11.1

The Loudmouth, the Contrarian, and the Complainier: Understanding disruptions in the classroom

Elana Brief (Simon Fraser University)

Halpern Centre 114 (Lounge)

How can we learn from disruptions in our classrooms? What can we do to minimize the time spent off-topic, as we try to maintain order? In this participatory workshop, instructors (sessionals, TAs, and faculty) will investigate what drives the loudmouths, contrarians, and complainers to act out in our classes. We will explore how unexpressed student fear can lead students to undermine their own progress in our courses, and how, as instructors, we can be cognizant of, and respond to, students' needs. Through activity-directed small and large group discussions, we will consider unpleasant situations which we have encountered as instructors or students. By the end of the session, participants will be able to identify some underlying messages in disruptive behaviour and to choose from a variety of possible responses. Ultimately, participants will learn the tactics for the best pre-emptive strike against disruptions: the techniques that allow student ambivalence to be expressed in the classroom.

Session 11.2

Institutionalizing Innovation? Bringing Teaching, Research, and Practice Together in a Faculty-Led Institute

Cheryl Amundsen, Mark Fettes (Simon Fraser University)

Halpern Centre 126

Faculty, students, and administrators from across SFU are invited to take part in a roundtable discussion on the long-term implications of the curriculum initiative. At the heart of the session is the question: Can the curriculum initiative make a real difference to the undergraduate experience at SFU? The session facilitators will briefly make a case that this will happen only if faculty come to make excellent teaching a greater priority, and that this requires that teaching be seen as an intellectual challenge and worthy domain of research in all of the diverse fields that make up the university. A proposal will be outlined to establish a university-wide institute for teaching and learning with strong links to the disciplines. Discussion will focus on the value and feasibility of such a project, along with issues of design and implementation.

Friday, May 20, 2005 *(continued)*

10:30 AM – 11:00 AM

Refreshment Break in Halpern Centre Lobby

11:00 AM – 12:15 PM

Welcome from V-P, Research Mario Pinto

An introduction of Keynote Presentation 12.1

Halpern Centre

Capturing Innovative Teaching through the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning

Teresa Dawson (University of Toronto, Scarborough Campus)

Halpern Centre 126

As faculty at institutions across North America revise undergraduate curricular offerings to better meet the learning needs of their students, questions frequently arise as to the role that such innovative work will play in faculty careers. It is perhaps no coincidence that the new rounds of curriculum redesign are taking place at the same time as a new area of scholarship—the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning—is emerging. Decades of work by dedicated faculty and staff, curriculum designers, faculty developers, and teaching and learning centres, as well as initiatives by organizations such as the Carnegie Foundation and others, mean that we are much better prepared to understand both how to be successful in achieving curricular change and how to reward faculty for their crucial role in such initiatives. Ultimately the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning provides an opportunity to think differently about faculty roles and rewards. It offers us the chance to reduce the persistent and stressful dichotomies that exist in faculty lives between research, teaching, and service. It also helps faculty and their institutions be rewarded for the innovative work that they do in supporting student success, by encouraging them to become leaders in an international community of scholars dedicated to creating new disciplinary knowledge around teaching and learning.

12:15 – 12:30 PM

Closing Plenary Session in Halpern Centre

Closing Remarks from V-P, Academic, John Waterhouse; Director, University

Curriculum, Sarah Dench; and Chair, UCI Task Force, Barbara Frisken

Halpern Centre 126

Keynote and Session Presenters

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Notes

