Excellence in Teaching & Scholarly Matters

Inside this Issue

Dear Colleagues,

Welcome back to campus for spring semester!

Over the coming weeks, we will focus our programming on this semester's essential question: "How can we best assess student learning?" In addition to learning more about various workshops and programs (see pp. 4-6), you can find out about our lending library resources on assessment (p. 11), and read about how the CTSE can help you assess your course with student feedback (see p. 14).

In this issue, we are also happy to present a few updates on exciting initiatives happening around the university related to teaching and learning. The first is a progress report on one of CTSE's Teaching and Learning Innovation Grant (TEALIG) recipients in our lead article "Mining the Archives to Teach and Learn Information Literacy and Critical Analysis" by CAS faculty member Pat Reeve and archivist Jessica Sedgwick (pp. 2-3). You can also learn more about TEALIGs on p. 12.

A second article offers an update on Suffolk's first Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) that just finished in December (pp. 8-9). We also have a report on the Center for Learning & Academic Success's (CLAS) iStudy initiative (p. 13).

This spring the CTSE will launch its final grant funded year of the Faculty and Professional Learning Community (FPLC) program. Look for an update on the program and application information for 2015-2016 on p. 15. Also, don't forget to mark your calendars for Suffolk's 5th Annual Technology Symposium – you can learn more about the event and our keynote speaker, Michael Wesch, on p. 7.

Lastly, the CTSE staff is excited to welcome Linda Bruenjes to our team. Read more about Linda on pg. 10 and please take a moment to stop by to welcome her to Suffolk.

Have a wonderful semester and we hope to see you at several of our upcoming events!

Suffolk University
Center for Teaching & Scholarly Excellence

Katie L

Jessica Sedgwick, Associate Archivist, Moakley Archives and Institute
Pat Reeve, History, CAS

This fall, with the support of a Teaching and Learning Innovation Grant (TEALIG) awarded by the Center for Teaching and Scholarly Excellence, a team of CAS faculty from Biology, Government, and History; archivists from the Moakley Archives and Institute; and reference librarians from Sawyer Library collaborated to develop and disseminate Open Educational Resources (OERs), which are educational materials and resources offered freely and openly for anyone to use and – under some licenses — to re-mix, improve, and redistribute. OERs can include course materials, content modules, learning objects, resource collections, and software or programs that support the creation, delivery, and use of open learning content.

Our multidisciplinary team will design OERs that help faculty and students take advantage of – and navigate the challenges of — a complex, ever evolving, and sometimes overwhelming information landscape. In order to meet these goals, we are developing primary source/ inquiry-based curricula that promote student acquisition of the cognitive skills needed to gather and use information from a critical standpoint. Our project has two related goals: first, preparing faculty to define information and describe information formats (i.e., modes of "delivering, displaying, storing . . . and transmitting information") and, second, engaging learners in analysis and decision-making essential to gathering, evaluating, and synthesizing information. [1]

There is a critical need for OERs that increase undergraduates' information literacy. In 1989 the American Library Association (ALA) Presidential Committee on Information Literacy issued a Final Report, which found that the abilities to "find, evaluate, and use information effectively to solve a particular problem or make a decision" are essential in a digital age having a burgeoning and disjointed information base. [2] However, recent scholarship indicates that information literacy curricula developed since 1989 are insufficiently faculty-enabled and student-centered, leaving K-16 faculties ill-equipped to teach discipline-specific information literacy, and students lacking in the knowledge and capacities needed to navigate an evolving "information society." [3]

We intend to meet these challenges by designing, piloting, and evaluating a specific type of OER: the document-based question (DBQ). DBQs are inquiry-based learning activities aimed at developing students' information literacy skills and capacity for evidence-based arguments. DBQs ask students to examine and analyze primary sources; compare and contrast information; contextualize events; reconcile differing positions; or identify biases, inconsistencies, or missing points of view; and can take the form of short in-class exercises, homework assignments, or projects of longer duration

To develop this curriculum, we are mining an under-utilized instructional resource here at Suffolk: The Moakley Archive and Institute, which holds a rich set of primary source materials (historical, first-hand accounts) that comprise diverse topics and time periods. [4] Research shows that such primary source materials are valuable educational tools for facilitating student learning

in two linked domains: information literacy and critical analysis. For example, 627 faculty surveyed in 2007-2008 reported that students who worked with primary sources learned "to approach sources skeptically, corroborate evidence, and hypothesize . . . explanations." [5] Thus, students developed higher order thinking skills needed to internalize strategies for evaluating, reconciling, and synthesizing information. As this suggests, the abilities to ask and answer pertinent questions are integral to data retrieval, analysis, and use.

We launched the project fall 2014 by developing a variety of DBQs based on historical documents from the Moakley archives related to court-ordered busing for school integration in Boston. Students enrolled in Pat Reeve's History 200 methods course piloted six exercises. One focused on population change over time in Boston and its affects on debates over busing. Students received the following materials: 1950 and 1970 reports by the Boston Development Authority, which reported aggregate demographic data from the city's 16 planning districts. Using this data, students tracked Boston's changing demographics over a twenty-year period by visually representing the statistics on two maps, one for 1950 and another for 1970. Next they reflected on the scope and pace of change over twenty years, as represented on their maps, and hypothesized how those changes may have shaped arguments for and against busing as a method of integrating schools. Engaging with an exercise like this enables students to develop and strengthen a number of critical thinking skills, including: extracting, comparing, and interpreting information; making inferences; contextualizing events; and formulating hypotheses. Because this DBQ focuses on skills development rather than content, we are working with our faculty partners

to adapt it for use in other disciplines, such as Government. In the next phase of the project, we will develop and test additional OERs, evaluate the effects of student and faculty engagement with OERs, and create guidelines and recommendations for further OER use, expansion, and development at Suffolk and beyond.

[1] Li and Lester, "Rethinking Information Literacy Instructions in the Digital Age," 571-2, 574

[2] The American Library Association, "Presidential Committee on Information Literacy: Final Report." (January 10, 1989). Accessed February 10, 2014. Here information literacy is defined as the "intellectual framework for understanding, finding, evaluating, and using information—activities which may be accomplished in part by fluency with information technology, in part by sound investigative methods, but most important, through critical discernment and reasoning." American Library Association, "Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education," (2000), 4. http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/ informationliteracy competency. Accessed February 10, 2014.

[3] Lili Li and Lori Lester, "Rethinking Information Literacy Instructions in the Digital Age," The International Journal of Learning. Vol., 16, No. 11 (2009): 569. These findings are validated by a study of the Educational Testing Service, which concluded, "only 13 percent of 3,000 college students and 800 high school students who took the ETS Information and Communication Technology test scored as information literate." Andrea L. Foster, "Students Fall Short on 'Information Literacy,' Education Testing Service's Study Finds," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 53, no. 10 (Oct. 27, 2006): A36, cited in Melissa Gross and Don Latham, "Undergraduate Perceptions of Information Literacy: Defining, Attaining, and Self-Assessing Skills," *College & Research Libraries*. Vol. 62, No. 1 (2001): 336.

[4] Under-utilization is a common problem for university-based archives. On the reasons for this, see Doris K. Malkmus, "'Old Stuff' for New Teaching Methods: Outreach to History Faculty Teaching with Primary Sources," *Libraries and the Academy*. Vol.10, No. 4 (October 2010): 425-426.

[5] Malkmus," Teaching Undergraduates with Primary Sources: Highlights of Survey," Society of American Archivists – 2008 Research Forum. Accessed February 12, 2014. http://www.crlt.umich.edu/ sites/default/files/resource_files/Malkmus%20Teaching%ndergraduates%20with%20Primary%20Sources.pdf. Accessed February 11, 2014.

Events and Programs

You may register for any of our events by contacting Rebecca Sullivan at ctse@suffolk.edu or by calling 617-573-8222

Scholarship and Productivity

WRITING CIRCLES KICK-OFF EVENT

Thursday, January 29th, 12-1pm

Scholarly Writing Circles (SWCs) are groups of three to four faculty members who agree to be accountable to one another for a semester as they work on their writing and research goals. SWCs can check-in with one another via email, face-to-face meetings, phone calls, or other forms of communication to encourage one another, troubleshoot writing issues, or ask for feedback.

The CTSE staff will match you with a group of scholars from across the institution and offer encouragement throughout the semester via a monthly email of news, tips, and events related to research and scholarly writing. SWC members are encouraged to attend the SWC Kick-Off Meeting on Thursday, January 29th from 12pm-1pm. This meeting will be followed by a workshop on setting research and writing goals from 1-2pm.

SWCs are encouraged to post their research and writing progress, and to set monthly goals, on the CTSE's Scholarly Writing Accountability Shared Document: http://bit.ly/1k4lyJ4

Facilitator: Katie Linder, Director, CTSE

For more information about SWCs or to ask any questions, contact Katie Linder at klinder@suffolk.edu

SETTING WRITING & RESEARCH GOALS WORKSHOP

Thursday, January 29th, 1-2pm

Goal-setting is one of the foundational components to effective and efficient writing. In this session, we will explore the positive impact of goal-setting and how to create realistic and measurable goals for ourselves. We will also set goals for the semester and establish accountability partners for our writing and research productivity.

Facilitator: Katie Linder, Director, CTSE

TEALIG INFORMATION SESSION

Tuesday, February 3rd, 1-2:30pm

If you are intending to apply for a CTSE Teaching and Learning Innovation Grant (TEALIG) then you are highly encouraged to attend this information session to find out all you need to know about applying for this funding.

Facilitator: Katie Linder, Director, CTSE

No need to RSVP, just stop by during this hour to find out more about this grant opportunity.

DEDICATED ON-CAMPUS WRITING DAYS

Fridays—February 6th, March 6th, April 3rd and May 1st

Location: King's Chapel Conference Room, 73 Tremont Street, 12th floor.

Morning session 9am-12pm
Afternoon session 1-4pm

The CTSE hosts Dedicated On-Campus Writing Days. This is a time for faculty writers to dive into writing projects with concentrated time, effort, and support. This session will help you keep the momentum going with your writing projects. We'll provide the space, and peace of mind - you provide the words. Choose to attend a morning session, an afternoon session, or stay for the whole day!

Teaching and Learning

CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT TECHNIQUES WORKSHOP

Wednesday, February 11th OR Thursday, April 9th, 1-2:30pm

Classroom Assessment Techniques (CATs) are small, informal assessment practices that simultaneously engage our students and help us collect information about student learning. In this workshop, participants will learn tips and strategies for how to incorporate meaningful assessment techniques into our classrooms as well as suggest best practices for how to use the information we can glean from CATs. Participants will see several CATs modeled and will also walk away with a range of ideas that can be immediately incorporated in their classrooms.

Facilitator: Katie Linder, Director, CTSE

TEALIG PRESENTATION— A PHILOSOPHICAL COMPUTER GAME: PLAY, LEARN AND FIND THE MEANING OF LIFE

Thursday, February 12th, 1pm
(More information on page 11)

FACULTY AND PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES (FPLC) INFORMATION SESSION

Thursday, February 19th, 3-4:30 OR Friday, February 20th, 10-11:30

CTSE Faculty and Professional Learning Communities provide the support and motivation for members of the Suffolk community to research recent pedagogical and curricular trends, to implement these and other new teaching strategies in their classrooms, and to measure the impact of these new strategies on student learning. FPLC participants are chosen from an applicant pool of Suffolk University faculty and administrative professionals with teaching responsibilities who are interested in studying and conducting an individual classroom-based research project. Criteria for selection include: commitment to quality teaching, level of interest in the program, need, openness to new ideas, and potential for contributions to the program. If you are interested in learning more about the FPLC program, please come to this information session.

Facilitator: Katie Linder, Director, CTSE

ALTERNATIVE SPRING BREAK FOR FACULTY

Tuesday, March 10th through Thursday, March 12th, 10am-4pm each day

Are you sticking around for spring break this year? The CTSE offers professional development opportunities during this week. A detailed schedule will be forthcoming. Previously, workshop topics have included: faculty handbook overview, qualitative research methods, SPSS, IRB Net, data safety and monitoring, and best practices for productive research assistants

Facilitators: TBA

GRADING DAZE

Monday, May 4th through Friday, May 8th, 9am-4pm each day

Looking for a quiet spot to grade? Need coffee and a snack to keep you going during grading?
The Center for Teaching & Scholarly Excellence space will be available the week of **May 4th-8th** from **9am-4pm** each day for faculty to drop in and work on their grading. Coffee, tea and snacks will be provided. We hope to see you there!

COURSE DESIGN INSTITUTE
Tuesday, May 26th—Friday, May 29th 10am-3pm each day

Do you need to revise a course because of enrollment fluctuations? Are you prepping to teach a new course, or are you frustrated or bored with the one you are already teaching? This four-part intensive institute is designed to provide you with the tools, time, and collegial support needed to really dig in and design or re-design your course. Upon completion, you will have created the basic structure of your course-including a draft syllabus, assignments, assessment tools, and course outline. Each participant will receive a complimentary workbook of course planning materials and lunch! Space is limited as CDIs are capped at 10 participants.
Facilitator: TBA

Events and Programs *(continued from page 6)*

You may register for any of our events by contacting Rebecca Sullivan at ctse@suffolk.edu or by calling 617-573-8222

Teaching with Technology

ONLINE COURSE DESIGN INSTITUTE

Wednesdays – April 1ˢᵗ, 8ᵗʰ, 15ᵗʰ, 22ⁿᵈ, 29ᵗʰ, and May 6ᵗʰ

(meets online both synchronously and asynchronously)

The CTSE has developed an Online Course Design Institute that offers a coherent, holistic approach to online course design. This series presents specific tools, ideas, strategies, and theories as part of larger processes related to teaching, scholarship, and learning. This Institute is flexible, rigorous, and relevant for faculty professional development in online course design and delivery.

Topics Include:

- Introduction to Flipping the Classroom
- Managing Resistance in the Flipped Classroom
- Using Video to Focus on Student-Centered Learning
- Digital Story Telling
- Using Technology to Create a Classroom Learning Community

Facilitator: Linda Bruenjes, Associate Director, Technology Innovation in Learning & Teaching

USING MULTIMEDIA TO MOTIVATE STUDENT LEARNING

Wednesday, February 18ᵗʰ, 1-2:30 or Monday, April 6ᵗʰ, 10-11:30

We know our students love YouTube videos, Kahn Academy tutorials, and other visual and interactive technologies, but how might multimedia be used to motivate student learning?

In this session we will explore some examples of effective multimedia, talk about how to integrate it into and outside of the classroom, and develop an assessment plan for measuring student learning when engaging with multimedia. Participants will leave this session with research-based assessment ideas that will be applicable to their courses.

Facilitator: Linda Bruenjes, Associate Director, Technology Innovation in Learning & Teaching

Don't forget about the many resources in our lending library and video collection.

We also welcome suggestions for future workshops and programs. Please email us your recommendation or request at ctse@suffolk.edu.

SAVE THE DATE
June 2nd & 3rd
Technology Symposium 2015
Featuring
Michael Wesch, Keynote speaker

Dubbed "the prophet of an education revolution" by the Kansas City Star and "the explainer" by Wired Magazine, Wesch is a recipient of the highly coveted "US Professor of the Year" Award from the Carnegie Foundation. His "videos on culture, technology, education, and Information have been viewed over 20 million times, translated in over 20 languages, and are frequently featured at international film festivals and major academic conferences worldwide. Wesch has won several major awards for his work, including a Wired Magazine Rave Award, the John Culkin Award for Outstanding Praxis in Media Ecology, and he was named an Emerging Explorer by National Geographic.

Learn more about Michael at http://mediatedcultures.net/ michael-wesch/

Michael Wesch's keynote, The End of Wonder in the Digital Age, will be held Tuesday, June 2 at 10am:

It took tens of thousands of years for writing to emerge after humans spoke their first words. It took thousands more before the printing press and a few hundred again before the telegraph. Today a new medium of communication emerges every time somebody creates a new web application. A Flickr here, a Twitter there, and a new way of relating to others emerges. New types of conversation, exchange, and collaboration are realized. Taken together, this may be seen as the emergence of the greatest knowledge machine ever invented. The amount of information dwarfs the greatest libraries. But the knowledge machine runs on imagination, curiosity, and wonder. Without an active imagination and the courage to act on it, this great knowledge machine becomes nothing but the world's most powerful distraction device. It is at this critical moment that we must recreate our classes and learning environments as places where imagination can be nurtured and flourish. This talk explores the environments and conditions in which imagination and wonder thrive, why those environments are increasingly scarce in our learning environments and throughout society, and what we can do about it.

Dave Kusek runs Digital Cowboys, a consulting practice that has been working with Suffolk to create online courses. The History of Boston MOOC offered in fall 2014 was the first effort to develop a robust online offering designed to expand the audiences that Suffolk reaches. Below, Dave tells us more about his experiences running out this first MOOC and what it means for future offerings.

For the History of Boston MOOC, what do the numbers look like? Was there active participation?

The History of Boston MOOC had 4778 students enrolled at the moment. The course ran on the Canvas platform, but there was also a Facebook group affiliated with the course that had approximately 1200 people enrolled and actively participating.

The course is 8 modules over 8 weeks, with about 50 components for each module (videos, slide shows, text, graphics, etc.). Although some students completed the course early, the course continued to run through the end of December.

What has been the most successful thing about how the MOOC is structured?

We wanted to make the course more social and let the crowd participate in commenting and adding material relating to Boston history. The Facebook group has been very successful in that regard. People are contributing videos, articles, links and other resources on the Facebook page.

We also developed a badge system for a trivia game and a scavenger hunt game included in the MOOC with 22 badges that can be earned throughout the course. At the halfway point of the course 17,000 badges had been shared from the course out to Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter. The badge system and games have been a fun way for students to learn and has also been a great success in promoting the course through social media.

Do you have a particular success story you like to tell about the MOOC?

Feedback on the course from students has been very positive. There was some concern because of the sheer amount of content in the course including location videos, slide shows and other material that we created along with Bob Allison. Given all this content, it was a pleasant surprise to see people complete the course and even ask for more content. Students are commenting on how much they have learned about Boston. The course has been called "exceptional" and there are comments that this is the best online course that students have ever taken.

Parents of students in Boston are also an audience for the course. One parent wrote in from Mexico

stating she was grateful to learn about the city given that her child is studying at Suffolk, so the course is also reflecting well on the institution, which was one of our goals

What obstacles have you encountered thus far running out the MOOC?

A lot of the things you might expect have happened in that people don't have enough time to get through all the material – course participants have asked that the course be left up longer so they have more time to look through the videos. MOOC drop-off rates are generally high, and this MOOC is no different, but the good news is that people want to get through the material even if they don't have time. This might give us an opportunity to run the course continuously in the future to give people time to peruse the materials at their own pace.

What will happen to this course once the MOOC is complete?

The MOOC will definitely be run again. We have a process to go through to evaluate the student's experience and gather feedback so we can improve the course. We will probably try to run a continuous version of the course starting in the spring. If the course is open continuously, we might rethink the navigation so it's no so sequential. We want to make it as accessible as possible.

Bob Allison will also be using the material in his classroom, in a hybrid format. And there is also a for-credit version of the course that will be also offered to our undergraduate students as a 14-week course in the Spring.

Do you think Suffolk will produce another MOOC? Are any future projects already in the works?

We are about to begin work on a course with the Law School that will be the first formal Professional Studies course on Intellectual Property for small business and creative marketplace audiences. This is a course for entrepreneurs, artists, designers, filmmakers, and small business owners to help them understand copyright, patents, trademarks, etc. and how these concepts apply to their business or vocation. We hope to run out that course in fall 2015. It will not be a MOOC, but part of a new continuing education effort that we are in the early stages of planning with the Provost's office.

Right now, there aren't any other MOOCs in the works, but we are using the experience we gained from producing this one to other areas that can expand the market for Suffolk.

Final thoughts?

The inclusion of social media into the classroom is a technique that faculty should take a look at. In the MOOC, we've seen how social media makes the material come alive for the students and they really get engaged. The Facebook component of the MOOC has helped to both add content and display student contributions, as well as let students comment on each other's posts. This is something that might be interesting for faculty to experiment with – the opportunities to create private Facebook groups make this all the more possible for the classroom.

Introducing Linda Bruenjes

I am excited to have the opportunity to introduce myself as the newest member of the Center for Teaching and Scholarly Excellence at Suffolk University, a center that enjoys a national reputation for distinction under the leadership of Katie Linder. As Associate Director, Technology Innovation in Learning and Teaching (TILT), I look forward to working collaboratively and in consultation with Suffolk University faculty, administrators, and staff to assist in the development of instructional strategies designed to achieve course objectives in the online, hybrid, and face-to-face classroom environments.

My previous experience at two well-regarded institutions of higher education in the Boston area was focused on using technology to support the science of learning in my evolving, and sometimes simultaneous, roles as faculty, department chair, director of teaching, learning and technology and director of online learning. As an alum, I am pleased to be returning to Suffolk to support its learning community.

Personally, my husband and I are the proud parents of two daughters, and we have just welcomed a new son-in-law to the family. We all enjoy spending time outdoors and participating in both summer and winter activities. (Anyone up for a lunchtime walk/run?)

I am extremely pleased to be joining Katie and Rebecca in welcoming you to stop by the Center to say hello so that I can begin to understand how we can work together to achieve your teaching and learning goals.

Best wishes for a successful Spring 2015 semester.

-Linda

# Get Involved with Unity Week

Unity Week (February 23rd– 27th,) is an annual weeklong celebration of diversity and community. It is a collaborative effort by students, faculty, and administrators and has traditionally consisted of entertainment, speakers, dialogues, open classes, food and music. These events not only recognize the diversity represented within the University, but affirms the value and vitality that this pluralism brings to the individual and collective experience here at Suffolk.

The goals/learning objectives of Unity week are to showcase who you are, to challenge and educate others on issues that affect Suffolk community members on and off campus, reflect on your life/identity and to connect with one another.
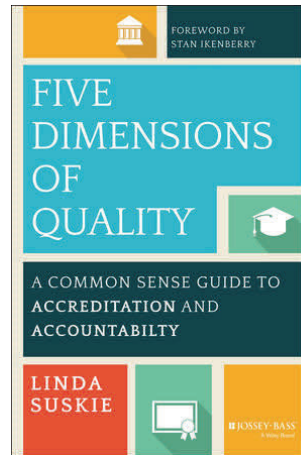
Please check the Suffolk University calendar for a list of events.

For more information contact Alexandra Paterson at apaterson@suffolk.edu

The CTSE has several books in our Lending Library that focus on how to best assess student learning.
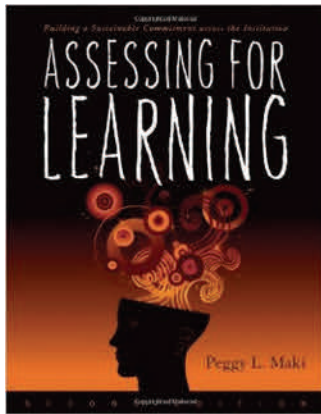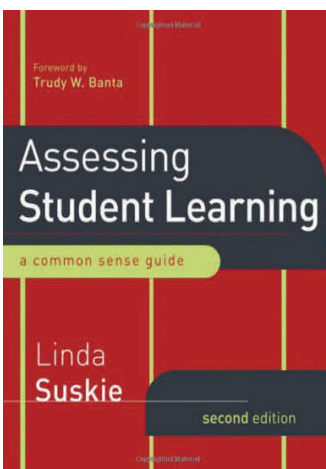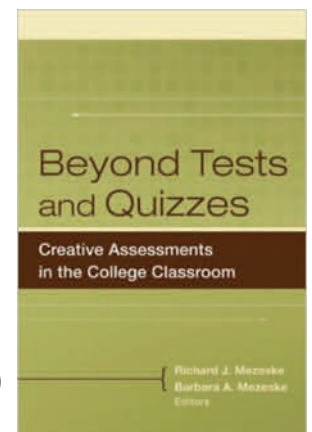
Assessing for Learning

Peggy L. Maki (2010)

Five Dimensions of Quality: A Common Sense Guide to Accreditation and Accountability
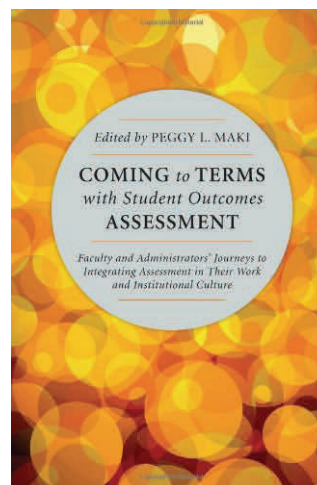
Linda Suskie (2015)

Assessment Clear and Simple:
A Practical Guide for Institutions, Departments and General Education
Barbara E. Walvoord (2010)
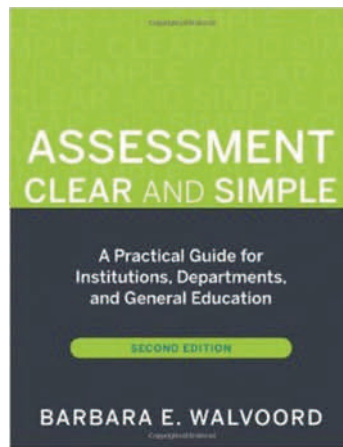
Beyond Tests and Quizzes: Creative Assessments in the College Classroom

Richard J. Mezeske and Barbara A. Mezeske (2007)

Assessing Student Learning: A Common Sense Guide, 2nd edition
Linda Suskie (2009)

Coming to Terms with Student Outcomes Assessment: Faculty and Administrators' Journeys to Integrating Assessment in Their Work and Institutional Culture

Peggy L. Maki, Editor (2010)

Teaching and Learning Innovation Grants

The CTSE Teaching and Learning Innovation Grants (TEALIGs) provide seed funding of up to $2000 for an individual or up to $5000 for a group of 2 or more to encourage new and innovative ideas designed to continue to improve and sustain the quality of education at Suffolk University. Awards support projects that directly enhance the learning experience of Suffolk students. TEALIGs have two funding cycles:

	Fall Funding Cycle (for funds to be used January 1-June 25)	**Spring Funding Cycle** (for funds to be used July 1-December 31)
Application Due	October 15th	February 15th
Decision Received	November 15th	March 15th

Please submit all applications to Katie Linder (klinder@suffolk.edu) by the deadlines listed above.

For more information (including FAQs and Application Form), please see:
http://www2.suffolk.edu/offices/50721.html

Congratulations to our Fall 2014 TEALIG awardees:

Pat Hogan (CAS) : AAC&U Conference Presentation; Steve Novick (CAS): FATE Conference Presentation; Dominic Thomas (SBS): ICIS Conference Presentation; Ilona Anderson (CAS): FATE Conference Presentation; Susan Nichter (CAS): FATE Conference Presentation

Save The Date: TEALIG Information Session

On **Tuesday February 3rd, 2015** from 1-2:30pm the CTSE is hosting an information session for anyone interested in applying for a TEALIG. If you are considering submitting an application, you are highly encouraged to attending this session to find out all you need to know about applying for this funding.

Facilitator: Katie Linder, Director, CTSE

There is no need to RSVP; just drop by during this hour to find out more about this grant opportunity!

TEALIG Presentation
## A Philosophical Computer Game: Play, Learn and Find the Meaning of Life

On **Thursday, February 12th, 2015 at 1pm,** Evgenia Cherkasova (associate professor, philosophy), Dmitry Zinoviev (professor, computer science) and Nicholas Raby (graduate student, MEPP) will present a working prototype of the computer game they designed to help students learn philosophy in a fun and engaging way. In the game, the player functions as an active learner, choice-maker, and "traveler" in the history of ideas. The project was sponsored by the CTSE TEALIG grant. RSVP by emailing Rebecca Sullivan at CTSE@suffolk.edu

CLAS wraps up the fall semester with a successful iStudy event

Linda Foley-Vinay, Director, Center for Learning & Academic Success

Employing *Connect with CLAS* as a theme, the Center for Learning & Academic Success held its semi-annual iStudy event on Thursday, Dec. 4, 2014. Billed as a kick-off to end of term obligations and final exams, the event focuses on providing students with academic support, stress-relief techniques, healthy eating tips, and organizational strategies to help them succeed. More than 400 students participated in the event, held on the 9th floor of the Stahl building, which was co-sponsored by OCHO, the Sawyer Library, the Center for Health and Wellness, the Student Alumni Association, the Suffolk University Peer-health Educators Resource, and the Center for Teaching and Scholarly Excellence

iStudy featured content tutors for 24 specific classes, as well as professional writing and math tutors, and a research librarian for across the curriculum needs. Students enjoyed both one-to-one and small group tutoring sessions. In addition, academic coaches were available to help students with time management, planning, and study tips. Stress-busting activities included massages, therapy dog visits, yoga, a Connect4 tournament, and a photo booth. All of this work was fueled throughout the day with healthy food, including whole-grain pancakes, wraps, and fruit, nuts, and water throughout the day.
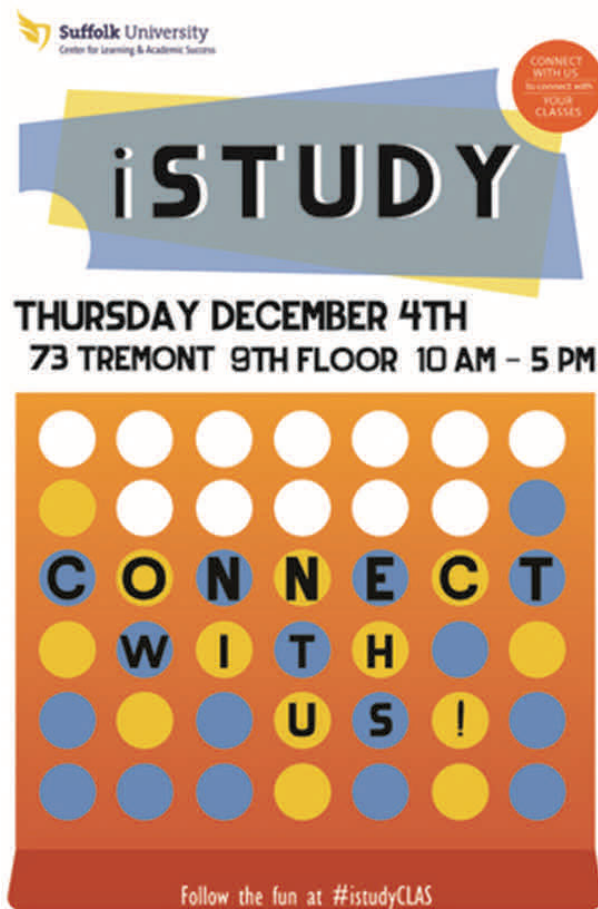
The program has grown over the years to include a number of campus partners, which we hope will illustrate for students the connections between academic success, recreation, and healthy living. The students were thrilled to have a "One-Stop Shop" to launch their exams. We would love to invite the faculty to get involved in next spring's event, please contact one of our staff members if you have ideas about how you might participate. To keep up to date on what's happening at CLAS throughout the year, like us on Facebook at

SuffolktheCLAS and/or follow us on Twitter @SuffolkCLAS.

Highlights from Thank-A-Prof

Through the Thank-A-Prof program, students' positive, unsolicited feedback is recorded through a letter that the instructor receives from the Center for Teaching & Scholarly Excellence. The CTSE also sends a copy of the letter to the instructor's department head. Feedback from students is collected for the Thank-A-Prof from the middle to the end of each semester. Letters are sent electronically to instructors after grade deadlines have passed. With hundreds of letters sent to faculty each year, the CTSE consistently receives positive feedback from instructors regarding the student feedback they receive.

"Intelligence, fairness, steady pace, and organization are just a few of the many qualities you possess! I can say without hesitation your teaching style and lectures were a KEY ingredient to my success and enjoyment in the course! I know I am not alone in this! A true asset to Suffolk! "

"His discussions in class are lively and he makes his students feel like their voices matter. His kind spirit and passion for working in the field are contagious! Students walk into his office with one question and leave with a reading list and organizations to explore!"

"I have not only learned so much about the subject matter, but through this and other courses I have taken with her, I've learned about what it means to be a good teacher, a leader who both offers guidance and is humble and open to the members of the group, and about how to be a dedicated, well-balanced person."

"I found myself looking forward to each class because the Professor's enthusiasm for the topic was so infectious. I would like to thank her again for a wonderful semester!"

"Passionate about student success and always there to help a student in need!"

"I'd like to thank my Professor for allowing me to become interested in a topic that I would not normally have been interested in. The secret to her success lies within her ability to make students a central focus of the teaching process."

"I truly appreciated the way you got to know all your students and made connections with each one of us."

"His teaching is extremely engaging. Every class is it's own adventure."

Improve Your Courses with Student Feedback

A Midterm Feedback Session is a confidential method that uses small group discussion among students to provide feedback to the instructor.

The process takes about 20-30 minutes with the faculty member out of the classroom on a scheduled day.

Research has shown that faculty who conduct mid-course feedback and have a consultation raise their teaching evaluations and improve learning. Look for more information regarding signing up for a Midterm Feedback Session later in the semester.

Once a Midterm Feedback Session is requested, you will receive a form that allows you to provide us with additional details about your class.

For more information, or to request a session, contact Rebecca Sullivan at ctse@suffolk.edu

FPLC Update & Spring Applications

Thanks to a generous grant from the Davis Educational Foundation established by Stanton and Emily Davis after Mr. Davis' retirement as chairman of Shaw's Supermarket, Inc., the CTSE has offered Faculty and Professional Learning Communities (FPLC) to Suffolk faculty, staff, and administrators since 2013.

FPLCs are cross-disciplinary groups of 8-10 faculty, staff, and administrators who meet throughout the academic year to share their experiences, learn from one another, and explore the literature on the latest pedagogical and curricular trends. Each FPLC is facilitated by two people, usually a faculty member and an administrator/staff member. FPLCs also concentrate on the social aspects of building community; off-campus retreats and conferences include times for fun, and some gatherings during the year will also include family and guests. The FPLCs have a curriculum designed to address a special campus teaching and learning need, issue, or opportunity that are tied to the institutional strategic plan.

The FPLCs at Suffolk are topic-based. Topic-based FPLCs have a curriculum designed to address a special campus teaching and learning need, issue, or opportunity. These FPLCs provide opportunities for learning across all faculty ranks and cohorts and make appropriate professional staff members available to focus on a specific theme. In 2014-2015, the FPLC topics are Experiential Learning, Service Learning, Internationalization, and Gameful Learning.

(Gameful Learning FPLC trip from the Pinball Wizard Café in summer 2014)

To learn more about the FPLC program, check out the CTSE website:
http://www.suffolk.edu/academics/28956.php

We hope you'll consider facilitating or joining an FPLC in 2015-2016!

The application process for FPLC facilitators and participants for 2015-2016 will begin later this spring. To learn more, join us at an information session:

Thursday, February 19th, 3-4:30pm , OR

Friday, February 20th, 10-11:30am

Work with a CTSE Staff Consultant

Individual faculty consultations are designed to provide support for faculty who would like to improve their teaching or scholarship. Faculty members work one-on-one with a CTSE staff member based on their own goals and needs.

During an initial meeting, the instructor will outline the issues that they want to explore and the CTSE staff member will provide resources, support, and a plan for action that may include a classroom observation, gathering additional feedback from students, reviewing previous teaching evaluations, evaluating publications, sabbatical planning, or meeting regularly for conversations about teaching, scholarship, or teaching with technology.

Individual consultations can address a number of teaching and scholarly support issues and concerns including, but not limited to, assessment, active learning, the course design process, creating a scholarly pipeline, and the scholarship of teaching and learning.

To set up an individual consultation, email Rebecca Sullivan (rasullivan@suffolk.edu).

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Please let us know if you would like to write an article, book review, or be otherwise featured in *Excellence in Teaching & Scholarship Matters*.

We also welcome any suggestions that you may have to make this newsletter more valuable to your teaching or your scholarship.