INNOVATIONS in Teaching & Learning conference

16th Annual Innovations in Teaching and Learning Conference

STRATEGIC TEACHING

Office of the Provost
STEARNS CENTER FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING
George Mason University

A Message from the Conference Director

As many of you know, the last few years of teaching have been quite a challenge. The ITL Conference has sought to not only support teaching during difficult times, but to meet instructors wherever they are. To that end, the ITL Conference consisted of a hybrid structure, with one day of virtual sessions via Zoom and a second day of in-person sessions. This decision was prompted by our experience during the pandemic, which saw record numbers of registration for the two years we held an on-line conference. We also endeavored to address our new realities while putting the conference in reach of more instructors at George Mason. I'd like to recognize the staff of the Stearns Center for Teaching and Learning, particularly the 2024 ITL Planning Committee, and Ashley Joiner of University Events, for their support in making this year's conference a reality.

In addition to providing abstracts for the Teaching Talks, Interactive Sessions and On-Demand Resources, we are excited to share insights about this year's conference to show how the conference continues to meet its goal of providing community around teaching and learning. We hope this will encourage you to participate in next year's conference.

Warmly,

Crystal S. Anderson, PhD

Associate Director of Engaged Learning
ITL Conference Director
Stearns Center for Teaching and Learning

GOALS

The Innovations in Teaching and Learning (ITL) conference provides an opportunity for instructors at George Mason University to share their teaching practice and learn about developments in teaching. As a result, the conference has three goals:

Bring instructors from different disciplines and status together around their teaching.

Provide opportunities for instructors to share knowledge and experiences around teaching with their colleagues.

Provide opportunities for instructors to learn about teaching from colleagues.

Conference Presenter Highlights

The 2024 ITL Conference was held September 19-20, 2024, in a hybrid format. The theme, “Strategic Teaching”, aimed to highlight strategies for thriving in an ever-shifting educational landscape. The conference also highlighted ways that George Mason instructors can meet teaching challenges to create thriving learning environments for students.

83 RFPs Submitted

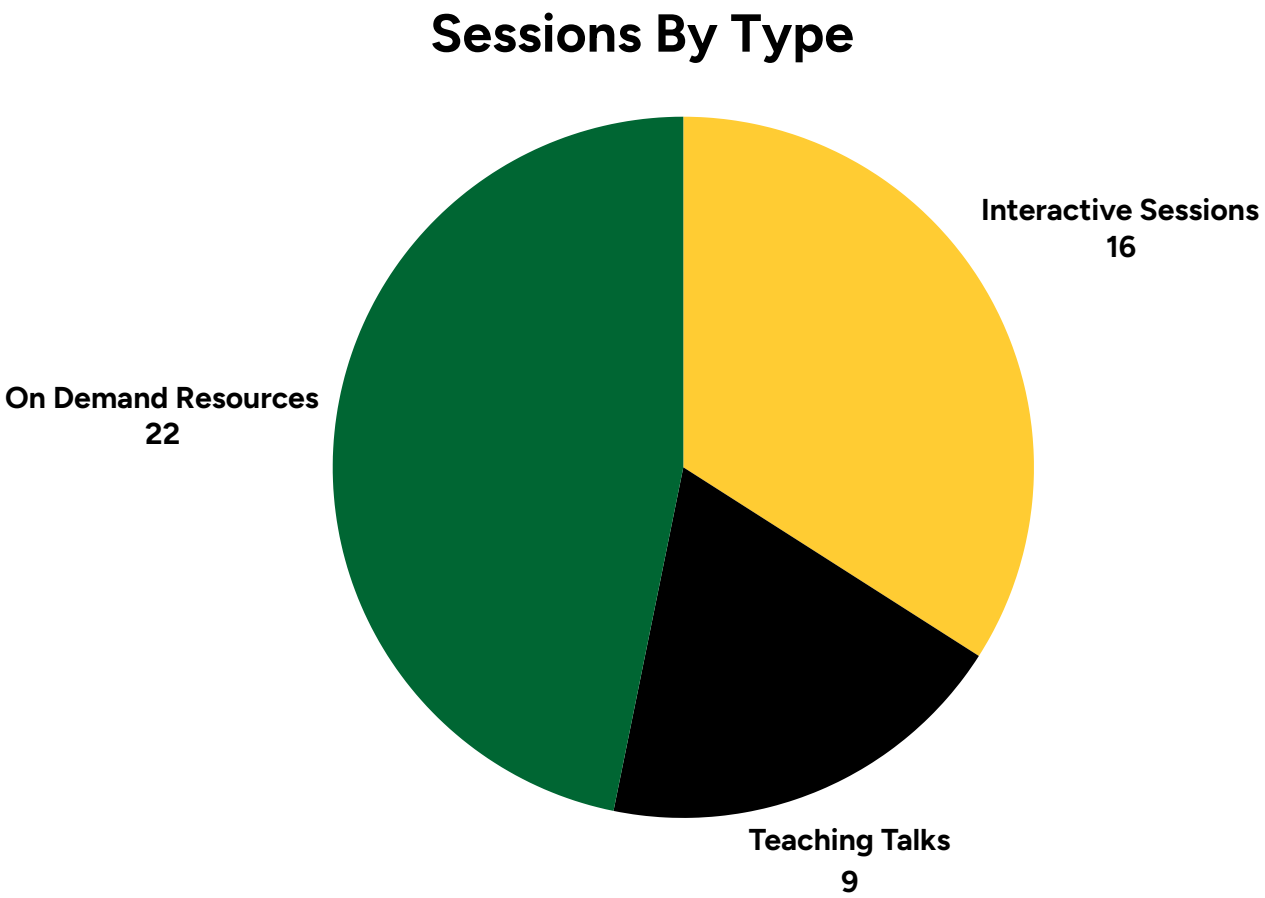
73 Presenters

47 Conference Sessions

Conference Program Highlights

The conference seeks to provide a variety of sessions to meet the interests of a variety of participants.

- Teaching Talks via Zoom featured presenters who shared teaching strategies used in class as well as the results.
- Interactive Sessions, held in person in the Johnson Center, featured presenters who shared in-depth experiences with teaching and learning and provided an opportunity for participants to engage in an activity.
- On Demand Resources are teaching artifacts that show the types of assignments and teaching resources instructors use in their classes.



Conference Program Highlights

Full-time term faculty made up the bulk of attendees, followed closely by tenure-line faculty and graduate/ post-doc students.

79% of registrants attended the conference.

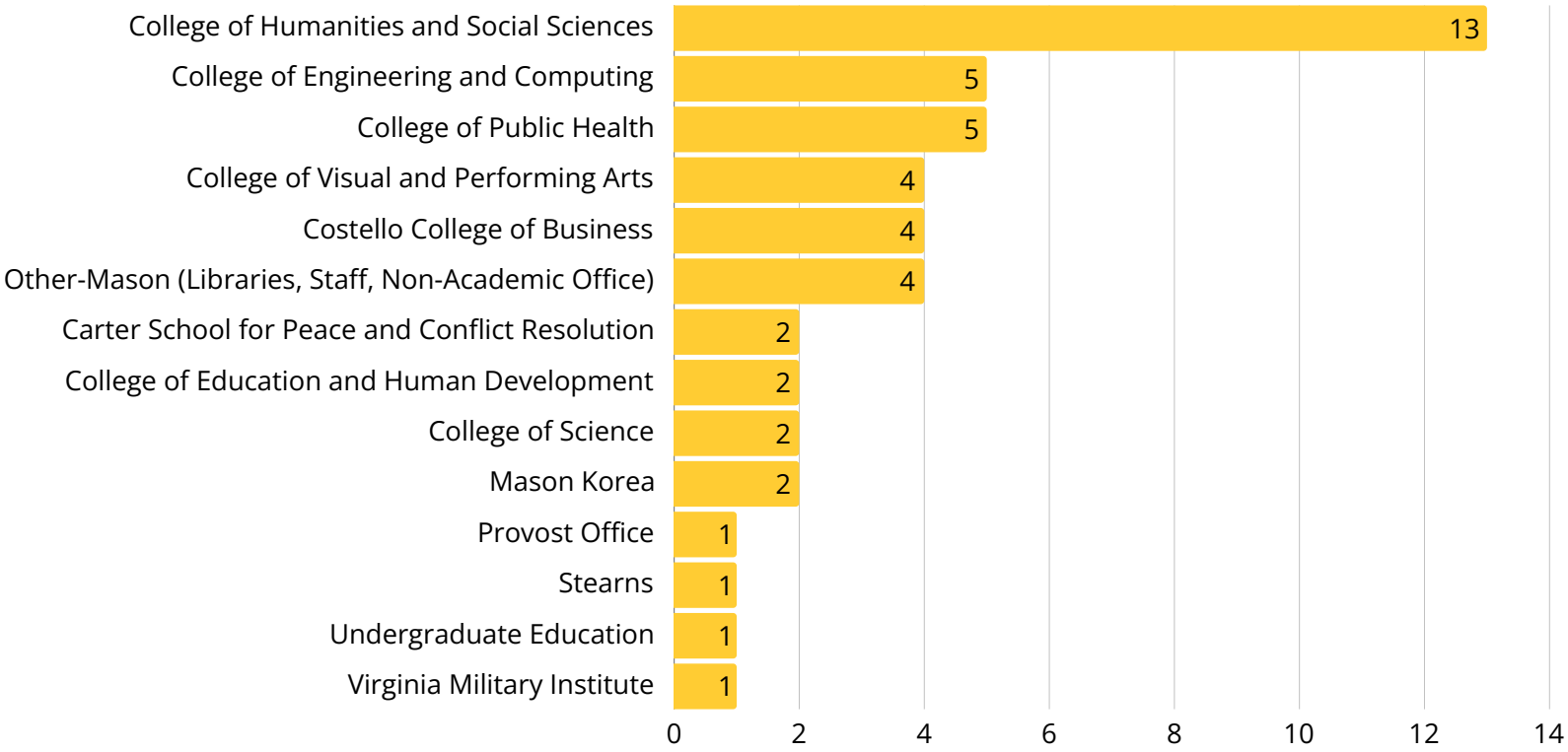
328 Registrants

259 Attendees

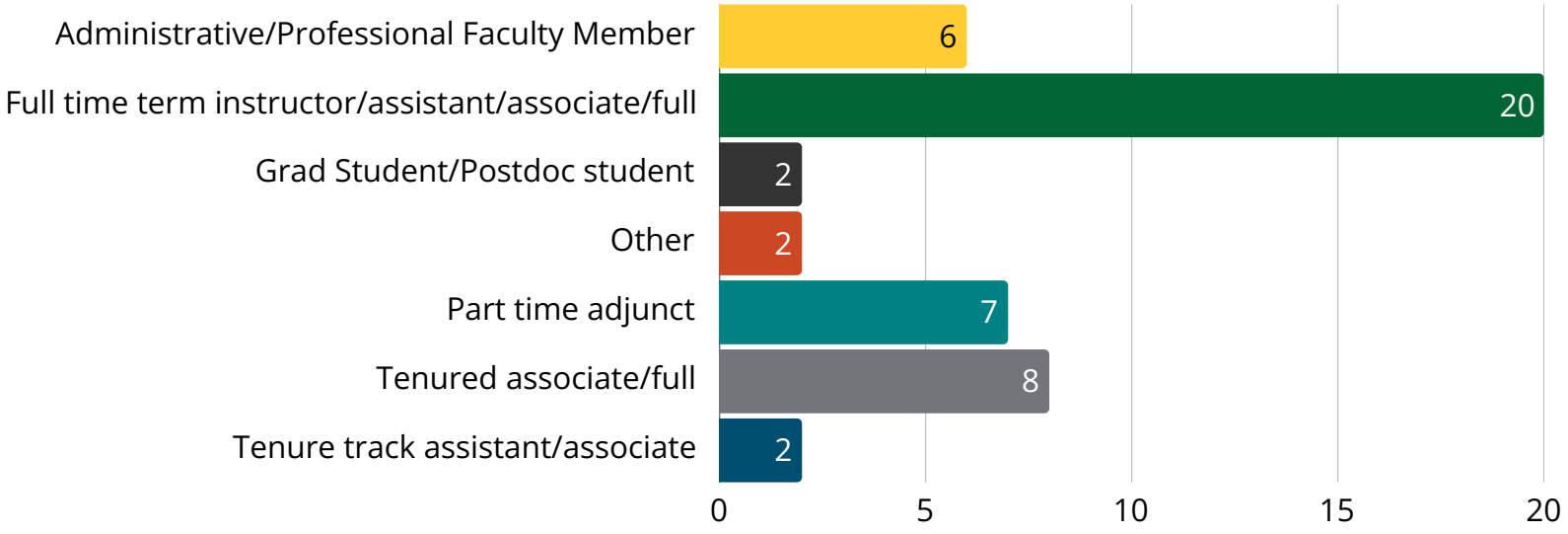
ITL brings instructors from different disciplines and statuses together.

- Eight out of ten of the colleges and schools at George Mason had instructors present at the conference.
- The College of Humanities and Social Sciences contributed the highest number of presenters, followed by the College of Engineering and Computing and the College of Public Health.
- Full-time Term faculty represented the bulk of presenters, followed by tenure-line faculty and administrative and professional faculty members.

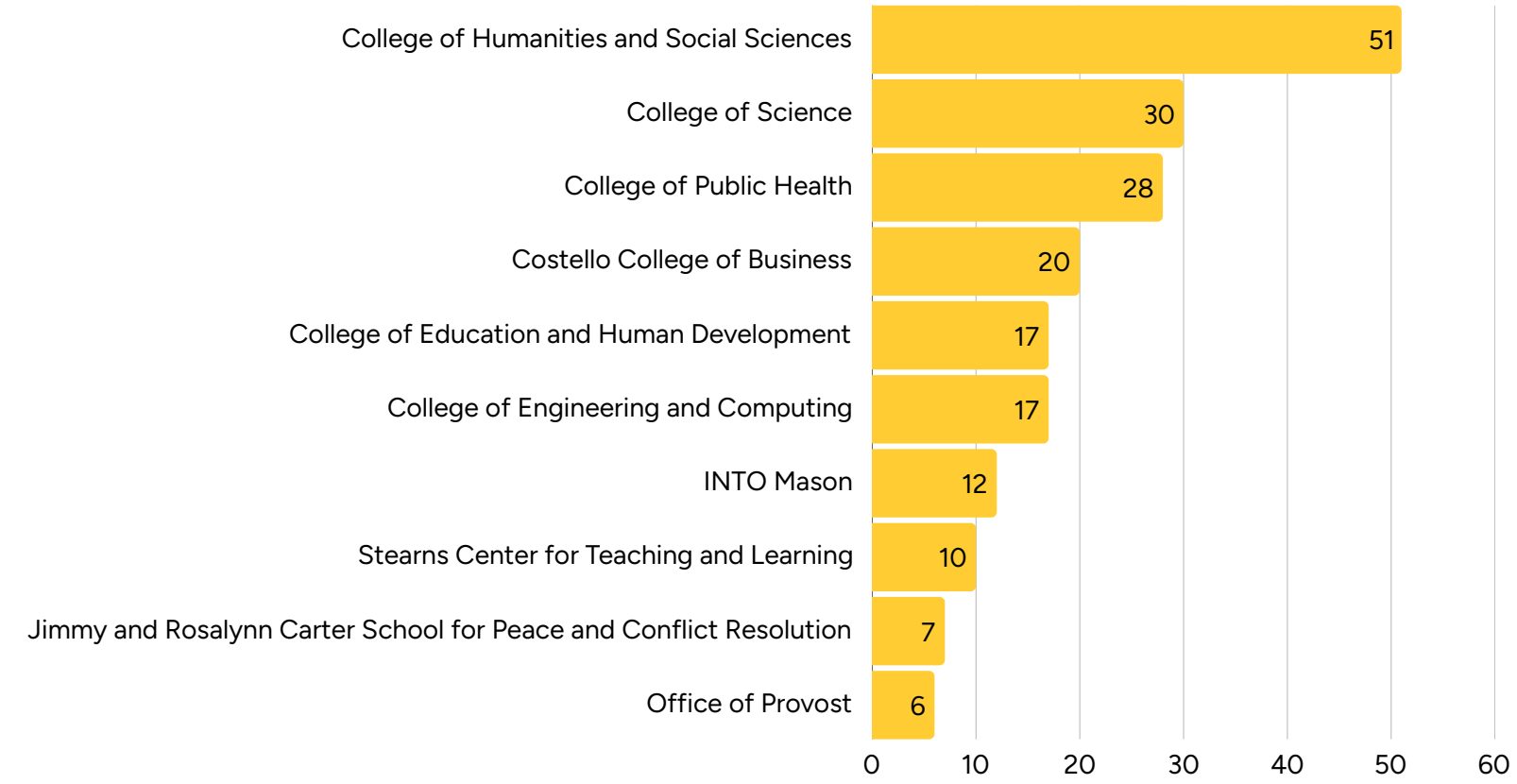
Lead Presenters by College or Office



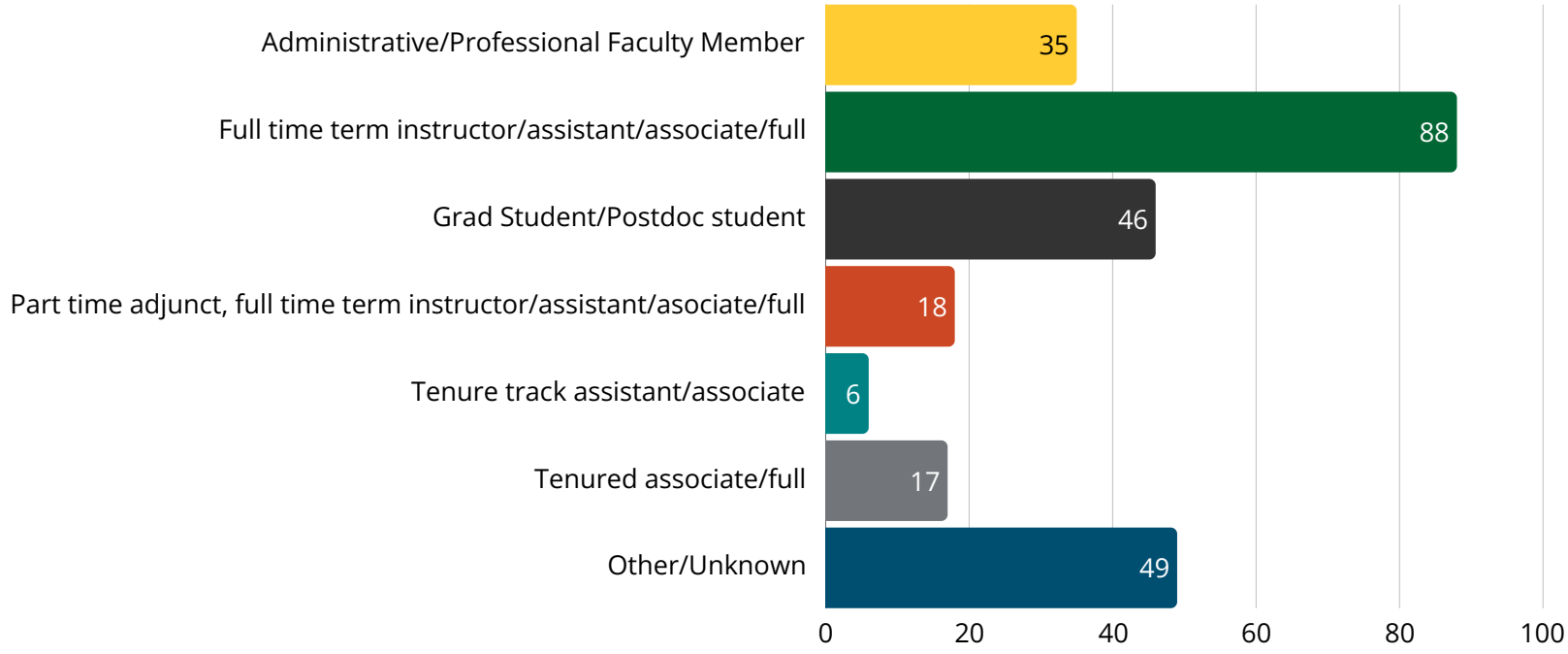
Lead Presenters by Employment Status



Top 10 Colleges and Offices by Attendees



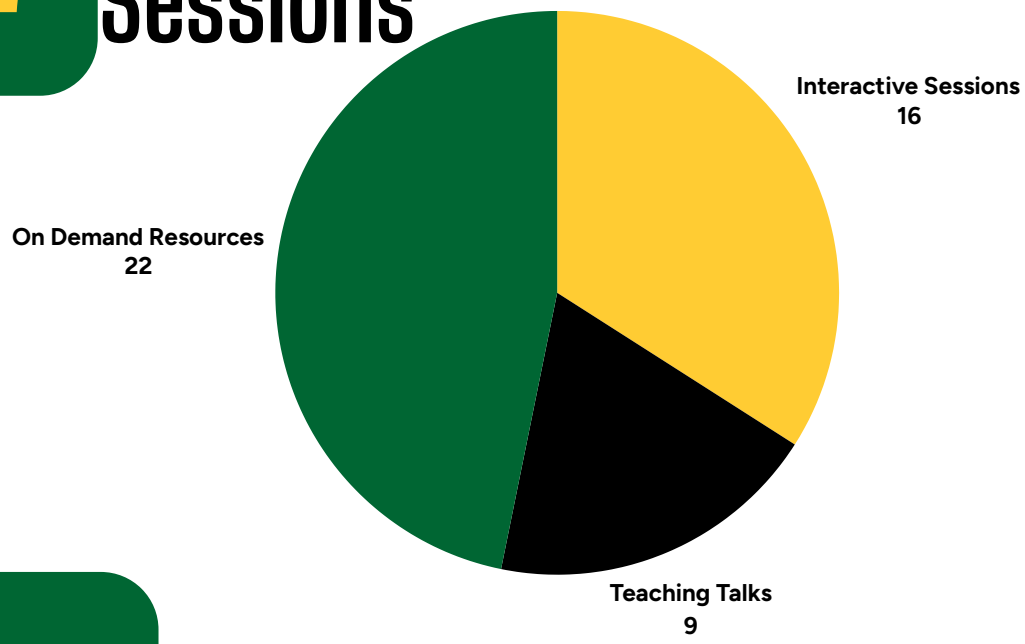
Attendees by Employment Status



ITL provides opportunities for instructors to share knowledge and experiences around teaching with their colleagues.

While most of the conference's sessions were interactive, the conference leveraged asynchronous resources that attendees accessed before, during, and after the conference.

47 Conference Sessions



192 Interactions with On-Demand Resources

ITL provides opportunities for instructors to learn about teaching from colleagues.

In addition to having different types of sessions, the conference resulted in many attendees finding the information they learned useful.

92 % Surveyed found the conference valuable

91 % Surveyed found found the knowledge, skills, and strategies shared helpful to their own teaching practice

2024 ITL Innovations in Teaching and Learning Conference

Session Abstracts

Interactive Sessions (IS)

10:00 a.m. – 10:50 a.m.

Developing Assignments that Foster Critical Literacies when Using Generative AI

Douglas Eyman, Susan Lawrence, Sharon Doetsch – Kidder

Two years after the explosion of interest and trepidation following the release of OpenAI's ChatGPT 3.5, faculty are still engaging in initial experiments and innovations. Student use of AI tools is increasing as well, and both students and faculty are wrestling with how to determine when it is appropriate to use these tools and how to use them effectively. AI tools can support student learning, but we have a responsibility as educators to ensure all students understand their uses and limitations. This session offers faculty models for considering when and how to use generative AI tools in their courses.

Community Based Learning: Challenges and Opportunities Panel

Kristin Wright, Shauna Rigaud, Cara Snider

During this workshop we invite a panel of faculty, community partners, and CECiL team members to share their experience in designing, facilitating, and partnering on community-based learning (CBL) courses! Topics discussed will include getting started with CBL, working with partners/working with Mason, learning outcome design, ethical considerations, and reflection. The CECiL team will also share resources the office can provide to facilitate CBL experiences at Mason and in the community. Any faculty or graduate students preparing to teach CBL in all modalities are invited to learn more about best practices and share experiences. Attendees will walk away equipped with new knowledge about CBL pedagogy, resources for getting started, and access to a network of peers interested in this teaching style.

Weeklong Plan for Cultivating Classroom Respect

Joyce Johnston

Five years of data collection have revealed that the quality students most crave from classmates is respect. Over and over, respondents to a civility survey revealed that they felt that almost any topic could be fruitfully discussed if only respect were present. The tool is a survey asking students to choose the three positive behaviors they most value from others from a list generated by previous classes. The survey creates a basis for the class to

generate its own code of classroom civility. This activity is suitable for any position involving contact with student or adult groups; participants can be in grade 9 through adult. Besides norming groups towards positive interpersonal behaviors, the survey/discussion activity provides participants with a tool they can use in group participation in or outside of academia.

Grading Conversations: Insights from the Grading Process Task Force

Seth Hudson, Elisabeth Epstein, Douglas Wilson

Beginning in the Fall of 2023, the Grading Process Task Force (GPTF) began the two-year undertaking of assessing the advantages and disadvantages of the A+ to F grading scheme at Mason. GPTF's charge, from Mason's Faculty Senate, also called for consideration of the alternative grading system adopted in response to COVID-19. The results of these initial efforts will be shared and feedback from faculty members will be sought. The task force has analyzed quantitative data on Mason grades from 2017-2023, revealing some interesting variations in grade distributions and averages among colleges, including a temporary increase in grades during the COVID-19 pandemic. The task force recognized the need to contextualize the quantitative data with qualitative insights from faculty regarding how faculty utilize the current grading scales, their perspectives on the COVID-19 alternative grading policies, and their views on potential alternatives for our grading scheme. By triangulating quantitative data, faculty insights, and student perspectives, the goal of the GPTF is to develop a comprehensive understanding of grading practices at Mason. These efforts will shed light on student experiences with grading, the impact of grades on academic and professional pursuits, and potential disparities in grading across demographic groups.

11:00 a.m. – 11:50 a.m.

Everything You Need to Know About Teaching a Mason Core Course (and didn't know to ask!)

Laura Wheeler Poms, Laina Lockett

Congratulations, you are teaching a Mason Core course! But what does that really mean? How could it possibly be any different from teaching a major course? Surprise – it is! Whether this is your first time teaching a Mason Core course or your 25th, this interactive session provides you with an array of tips, tricks and techniques every instructor can use to successfully navigate the challenges (and appreciate the joys!) of teaching in our general education program. By definition, the majority of students in Mason Core courses are non-majors. What does this mean for student engagement, course content coverage, scaffolding, assignment design and even student support? We will focus on the differences between teaching a major course and one with the broader learning outcomes associated with a Mason Core course. We will also preview a new series of continuing professional development workshops designed specifically for Mason Core instructors. Participants are invited to discuss their challenges, share their solutions, and consider how the ideas presented might apply to their course. By the end of the session, participants will have new

strategies for increasing student engagement and success while better managing the additional workload that often comes with teaching a general education course.

Ungrading: Challenges and Opportunities in Undergraduate Teaching

Maoria J. Kirker, Lisa Gring-Pemble

In Ungrading: Why Rating Students Undermines Learning (and What to Do Instead), Susan Blum and Alfie Kohn outline some of concerns about letter grades. These concerns range from grades incentivizing cheating to grades detracting from meaningful learning, to grades discouraging creativity and risk-taking. Because Mason faculty are required to submit final grades (and sometimes midterm grades) for students and because ungrading is not common at Mason, implementing the strategy of ungrading can be daunting. In this interactive session, we explore how to effectively deploy ungrading in the undergraduate classroom. We will review why we decided to implement ungrading, the challenges we encountered/mistakes we made, and the benefits of ungrading for both students and faculty. This session would benefit any instructor who teaches undergraduate courses, especially those in the humanities and social sciences. Participants will leave the session with some ungrading ideas and strategies they can use in their own courses to enhance student learning.

Using AR to Help Foster Belonging in Co-Curricular Spaces

Erin Fay, Taylor Harris, Veronica Visser

How can Augmented Reality (AR) be used to reduce stress and peak student interest? What is AR anyway, and how can it play a role in post-secondary education? Join us in this active learning session as we share our research project developing an AR campus tour for first-generation transfer students, and hear how students themselves helped guide the design. The session will provide an introduction to AR technology, such as the Blippar platform, and will discuss how AR can be utilized within teaching and learning. This session would benefit any instructor interested in learning more about AR technology in curricular and co-curricular spaces. Everyone will leave with a list of resources and an increased understanding about the potential of AR in education spaces.

Unveiling Pedagogical Insights Through SoTL: Conducting Classroom-Based Research Projects at Mason

Breana Bayraktar

Join us for an illuminating session where we delve into the world of classroom-based research projects aimed at enhancing teaching and learning experiences in higher education. This session will showcase innovative classroom-based research projects aimed at enhancing teaching and learning experiences in higher education. Drawing upon Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL), Discipline-Based Education Research (DBER), and practitioner inquiry/action research, presenters will share insights into research methodologies, experimental designs, and analyses used to investigate pedagogical practices and student learning outcomes.

1:00 pm – 1:50 pm

Volts, Wires, and Waves: Charging Up, Building Connections, Breaking Through

Jill Nelson, Cameron Nowzari, Kathleen Wage

This session describes the adventures of a group of faculty as they set out to incorporate inclusive pedagogical strategies aimed at providing all students with the foundational knowledge, critical thinking skills, and metacognitive awareness needed to succeed in Electrical and Computer Engineering. The literature on inclusive pedagogies stresses the importance of structure in achieving equitable outcomes, e.g., [Hogan and Sathy, Inclusive Teaching, 2022]. In spring 2024, the instructors for two foundational courses (ECE 101 and 201) implemented new structures for in-class exercises and formative assessment. To evaluate the effectiveness of these interventions, they administered the Metacognitive Awareness Inventory [Schraw/Dennison, 1994] at the beginning and the end of each course and used the Critical Incident Questionnaire [Brookfield, 1998] to understand student learning experiences. With the support of a peer learning community consisting of other department faculty and advisors, they explored how to put ideas from Inclusive Teaching and Teach Yourself to Learn [McGuire, 2018] into practice. In this session, the panelists will share their successes, failures, inspirations, and frustrations and describe plans for continued improvements in ECE 101/201 and other foundational courses.

Collaborative Discussion Guides: Scaffolding Socialization and Learning Community Belonging

Amanda Bryan, Elizabeth Duesterhoeft, Grace Donovan

From the theories of teaching Indigenous research methods, the decolonization of education, and responsive methods, we find that collaborative learning and knowledge building is one notable method of building a thriving learning community. However, without scaffolding the socialization skills necessary, students often maintain a sense of awkward confusion about their "place" in such a process. A successful foray into teaching the necessary skills of socialization to construct belonging into a learning community can be seen through the assignment of Collaborative Discussion Guides (CDG). CDGs provide students with a framework to engage their fellow classmates as they guide each other through deciphering and learning from a text. Commencing with a familiar place of summary and written reflection, students become comfortable with their ideas and more willing to give them voice as they collectively move into more involved tasks of large discussion and application. In this interactive session, instructors will try their hands at developing a Collaborative Discussion Guide, complete with a summary, guided reflection, large group discussion questions, and activity.

Grading 100s of Exams (the Easy Way) with GradeScope

Raven Russell

GradeScope is a GMU approved tool for grading that provides an advanced interface, along with AI features, that makes grading hundreds of tests, quizzes, or exams simpler, less error-prone, and faster. This session walks participants through connecting a course to GradeScope, setting the exam for grading, creating reusable rubrics, using the AI grading

features, viewing grade results, and releasing/communicating grades to students. Time permitting, the session may introduce other assignment types in GradeScope, such as homework. While this session is directly specifically at instructors and teaching assistants with large classes, many of the features introduced are also useful for those grading smaller classes with regular smaller assignments over a semester.

Popping the Bubble: Self-Study to Enhance Writing Intensive Courses

Leslie La Croix, Samita Arora, Chelseann Christopher

Are you an educator who feels like you are teaching alone in a "bubble"? Is it a struggle to find ways to meaningfully engage and collaborate with other higher education professionals? Are you struggling to find ways to increase student success through best instructional practices? Then join us in this session to learn all about the process of self-study! Self-study employs a collaborative and reflective approach to discuss ways to increase student engagement, ensure best practices are being implemented, and find new and innovative ideas to promote teaching excellence. At this session we will discuss the process of creating a self-study group, as well as the challenges and benefits of engaging in this research process.

2:00 pm – 2:50 pm

Should Your Department Offer a Course on How to be a Successful Graduate Students?

Samuel Acuna

Should your department offer a course on how to be a scientist and a successful graduate student? Although eager to participate, new graduate students may not yet know how to conduct scientific research, which includes the practical and logistical realities of working in a research lab and within an academic institution. Complicating this further, new graduate students also need to learn how to navigate the competing priorities and expectations of graduate student life, balancing coursework, teaching, outreach, and research while not losing sight of their own professional development to meet their goals. Students know that to become good researchers and contribute to the field during graduate school, it is essential that they quickly acquire and develop proficiencies in fundamental research skills and learn to navigate the demands of graduate school. But where might a new student learn fundamental research skills and how to be a successful graduate student? Although considered a fundamental component of graduate training, the process of teaching research and professional skills (and which ones) is not consistent across departments, research labs, or cohorts of students. We offer a course in the Bioengineering department to teach students fundamental research skills and how to be successful in graduate school.

The Practice of Full Spectrum Listening

Kimberly Jackson Davidson, Sarah Atif

This session will engage participants in an activity they can adapt for courses in most disciplines and to most learners. This session will demonstrate experientially how essential intentional listening can be to team-based inquiry and problem-solving. In the current

polarized context, students, workers, and scholars of every stripe can benefit from a deliberate focus on how we comprehend, or disregard, other's observations, values, and concerns in the public square, the workplace, and academia. The facilitators will guide the participants in Full Spectrum Listening, one of the dialogic practices promoted by Essential Partners (EP). EP designed the Reflective Structured Dialogue (RSD) process to work with diverse individuals dwelling and working within polarized communities to develop connections characterized by respect and dignity in the face of divergent/opposing ideas about tackling challenging and even wicked problems on a foundation of mutual dignity. The Full Spectrum Listening activity is a practice that cultivates a way of listening to others that engages us fully in considering with respect what others choose to tell us.

How Can We Use AI as a Catalyst for Learning?

Mara Schoeny, Faria Rashid

This session is an opportunity for discussion and sharing of experiences with using AI in the classroom, oriented towards how instructors can engage students in understanding the use of AI in professional settings. We will begin with sharing examples of AI use in development, peace building, and conflict resolution projects and invite participants to share how they have seen AI used in other professional and disciplinary settings. We will share and invite others to share examples of classroom activities with students that begin to develop relevant skills and abilities for their post-graduation work. We will share good practices from other institutions that apply across disciplines as educators navigate the positive potential, as well as strong critiques regarding the use of AI. As the tools and contexts of AI use continue to evolve, we aim to provide an open space for learning and sharing experiences at the crossroads of teaching, AI, and professional development.

OTEA Panel: Transforming Our Online Teaching Strategies in New LMS

Anna Evmenova, April Mattix-Foster, Darlene Smucny

In our interactive session, a panel of past Online Teaching Excellence Award (OTEA) winners (2018-2024) will guide conversations about transforming online teaching strategies in order to leverage functions and tools in Mason's new LMS, Canvas. We also will highlight the pivotal role of online instructors as leaders to successfully implement new educational technologies enhancing Mason students' online learning experiences.

Teaching Talks

10:00 a.m. - 10:50 a.m.

Dynamic Classroom Activities for Engaged Learning Experiences

"Figure Facts": An Activity to Help Students' Understanding of Primary Literature

Jennifer Brielmaier

Learning to interpret data from primary research articles is essential for understanding and critically evaluating scientific literature. Undergraduates usually have little experience interpreting figures from research articles. This can hinder their understanding of the research and lead to frustration. This session will describe the use of an activity called Figure Facts, originally developed by Round and Campbell (2013), to enhance students' understanding of research articles. The Figure Facts template requires students to carefully examine each figure in the primary research article that has been assigned for discussion in the next class meeting. To complete the template, students must describe the methods that were used to generate the data for that specific figure, then identify specific conclusions that can be drawn from the results. This activity requires students to take a "data-centered" approach to reading and evaluating research articles. This session will explain how Figure Facts has been implemented in an upper-level, writing-intensive neuroscience seminar course in which primary research articles were assigned for reading and discussion. Changes in students' assignment scores over the semester, their attitudes toward Figure Facts, and their self-reported feelings of competency in interpreting data will also be discussed.

Bringing Key Decision Makers into the Classroom

Lynnette Leonard

This presentation will share a strategy to enrich a class assignment by engaging key decision makers from campus. The strategy can be a good place to start for faculty interested in increasing engagement in their classroom especially those courses that fulfill a general education requirement. We will describe how faculty at Mason Korea engage the campus leadership and staff in the final presentations for the COMM 101 courses. In addition to providing specifics on the process of identifying key decision makers and scheduling, we will detail the external outcomes and reactions from students, faculty, and leadership/staff. This presentation will benefit instructors wanting to enhance the learning opportunities in their course, but may be constrained by resources, experience, or curriculum.

From Curiosity to Inquiry: “This Is About Skyrim?” Part 1

Stephanie Grimm

This talk outlines an approach to undergraduate scholarship and research instruction; designed and delivered collaboratively with Computer Game Design faculty and a subject librarian; and piloted in two semesters in 2023 and 2024 in a Game Studies special topics course. Students begin with a basic question about a well-known video game: “What do scholars talk about when they talk about Skyrim (Bethesda Softworks, 2011)?” Designed as an intentional contrast to the typical research question-to-thesis setup, this activity helps students to become more comfortable and resourceful with library search tools and academic literature while opening their eyes to the broad possibilities of scholarship.

Harnessing Technology to Ignite Student Engagement

Leveraging the Anatomage Table as a Dynamic Teaching Strategy

Andrea Landis

This presentation will introduce the Anatomage Table, a cutting-edge educational tool that offers a highly interactive and immersive experience for teaching anatomy and health assessment. Its utilization in the School of Nursing provides high-resolution 3D visualizations of anatomical structures, allowing students to explore the human body in great detail. This visual approach enhances comprehension and retention compared to traditional 2D images. The Table can simulate various clinical scenarios, allowing undergraduate and graduate nurses to practice diagnostic reasoning and treatment planning in a risk-free environment. This prepares them for real-life clinical situations and improves their clinical reasoning skills.

Learning to Program with a "See, Learn, Do, Show" Approach

Gene Shuman

Creating good software (i.e., programming) is a skill that must be learned through repetition in its early stages. Like learning to play a musical instrument, learning to program requires a lot of practice. Only after the skill is developed can the student/novice programmer join a software development team, similar to a musician only joining a band or orchestra after their abilities are sufficient. The challenge is getting students to practice – to get the reps. Problems are (1) ensuring students are ready to perform the activity with the necessary information before starting, (2) incentivizing them to engage in the activity, and (3) evaluating their progress only after sufficient practice. "See, Learn, Do, Show" is a method of organizing a course so that instruction is given first (lecture) – the "See" part. Next, in "Learn", the student is given practice problems to work with the support of a coach to help them solve the problem. "Do" involves the student solving an assigned problem on their own. Finally, "Show" is the evaluation step, conducted throughout the semester, in which students demonstrate mastery of the activity, usually by completing a quiz or exam.

Prototype And Vision of Game-based Mathematics Curriculum

Jacob Enfield

This presentation will discuss PaizoMath, a suite of web-based games designed to promote learning of mathematics. PaizoMath is intended to change the negative feelings that so many kids have towards mathematics by challenging them in an engaging (fun) manner where the stakes of failing are low and learners are encouraged to experiment in their learning. The platform currently consists of 6 games including Mental Math which focuses on math vocabulary and mental arithmetic; Pirate's Life which focuses on number lines and coordinate planes; The Song of Cibola which focuses on solving linear equations; Zombie Line Defense which focuses on graphing points, linear equations, and linear inequalities. Additionally, a student dashboard that includes learning resources to supplement each game, and a teacher dashboard that includes game performance analytics and teaching resources, including debriefing materials for each game. Beyond sharing the existing PaizoMath platform, a future vision for the platform will be described.

Innovative Methods to Enhance Student Engagement

Incorporating Photovoice in Classroom Learning: An Undergraduate Psychopathology Course Example

Alison Hundertmark

This presentation will share evidence from an undergraduate Psychopathology course on practices for incorporating Photovoice methods into class activities and learning. Photovoice is a community-based participatory action research (PAR) method using photojournalism techniques. The purpose of this method is to promote involvement in research that is proactive and empowering for the participant while retaining the analytical powers of a formal inquiry (Wang & Burris, 1994). This presentation will include (1) the theoretical framing of Photovoice for students, (2) the materials and implementation procedures used for the lesson (presented in an interactive demonstration), and (3) feedback and examples from students' work.

Peer-Led Team Learning

Amanda Brooks

This presentation aims to explore how structured peer-led team learning (PLTL) can enhance students' engagement, academic performance, and leadership skills. The PLTL approach involves introducing structured PLTL to both teaching team members and students. It encompasses the development of case scenarios, problem-solving questions, questionnaires, reflection documents, and pre-post briefings for group leaders. To ensure equal opportunities, students are randomly assigned to groups of 5-6 students per group, and group leaders are collaboratively chosen within each group using a rotation system. All students will be introduced to PLTL during the first week, and group leaders will provide reflections on group activities after each session. By attending this presentation, participants will gain insights into implementing structured PLTL throughout a 15-week course. During the presentation, we will share our experiences regarding what has worked well and what hasn't and students' reflection results. In addition, the outcomes related to cultural competency, self-efficacy, stress levels, and overall satisfaction will be discussed.

11:00 a.m. - 11:50 a.m.

Implementing Inclusive Teaching Strategies for Diverse Learners

Promoting Classroom Inclusion for Military Family Learners

Amy Page

Military-affiliated family members include spouses, children, and partners of military service members. This presentation will provide background information about students who are military-affiliated family members as well as the significance to George Mason University of promoting inclusion for this group. Presenters will discuss the unique strengths of these learners in the academic environment along with specific challenges

faced by this community which necessitate tailored engagement and inclusion strategies. Presenters will offer strategies for facilitating classroom inclusion (including in-person and online courses) in the short-term as well as recommendations for promoting long-term professional development that address this community's specific circumstances. Particular focus will be given to strengthening mentoring relationships, building social capital, promoting belonging, and enacting cultural responsiveness.

How I Manage Deadline Extensions to Model and Practice Inclusiveness

Colleen Reynolds

The presenter will share a system that allows students to request extensions to assignment due dates. The solution prioritizes fairness by being transparent and open to all students. It prioritizes teacher sanity by using the LMS for documentation. The attendees who would be most likely to consider this approach are undergraduate instructors who assign and evaluate written assignments in any modality. Participants will take away a plan to either 1) help them manage their existing extension practices or 2) to make their courses more equitable by offering increased flexibility to students.

An Interactive Tool to Promote a Positive Class Atmosphere

Joyce Johnston

Five years of data collection revealed that the quality students most crave from classmates is respect. Over and over, respondents to a civility survey revealed that they felt that almost any topic could be fruitfully discussed if only respect were present. That led to the development of a week-long curriculum that I use at the beginning of every semester. We begin with an open-ended blog posing questions about academic civility online or in person. Next come readings by authorities from multiple perspectives (theoretical, journalistic, academic, social) as well as coaching in interacting with faculty and administrators, codes of netiquette for relating to other students, especially on discussion boards. The unit concludes with students forming their own code of classroom civility. The tool is a survey asking them to choose the three positive behaviors they most value from others from a list generated by previous classes. The results: students consistently report a safer classroom space where they feel valued and respected by others so they can focus on their learning and on exchanging valuable contributions with others. Suitable for all instructors working with students at any university level.

Integrating VR and Game Design for Transformative Learning

Collaborating With the VSGI To Develop a VR Crime Scene

Jacob Enfield

This presentation will describe a virtual reality learning experience imagined by Steven Burmeister, Assistant Professor of the Forensics Science Department, and developed by students working with GMU's Virginia Serious Game Institute (VSGI). A demo of the existing prototype will be shared and a vision of how the project will evolve and be used

will be discussed. From attending this presentation, participants will see how VR can provide an immersive and highly interactive learning experience; develop an understanding of how faculty could utilize the VSGI as a production studio to progress their own game-based learning endeavors; and try out the immersive experience using the Meta Quest.

Solving the Mystery of How to Engage Learners

Sherif Abdelhamid

This presentation will discuss the implementation of a murder mystery game developed to promote learning of SQL (Structured Query Language). The project was funded by the 4VA grant as a collaboration between Virginia Military Institute where the game will soon be implemented and GMU's Virginia Serious Game Institute (VSGI) where the game is currently being developed. The initiative underscores a novel approach to engaging undergraduate students in mastering SQL by integrating game-based learning within the curriculum. The study will be completed in time to share the results during the presentation, including student perceptions of the game and the impact it has on their performance on subsequent assignments. From attending this presentation, participants will learn how to engage students in the revision process, which can result in improved student performance.

Improving Game Programming Reading Comprehension with AI Generated Code, *Nathaniel Hahn*

This session will describe an approach to integrate AI generated code into a game programming course for the goal of improving code reading comprehension of students. While many programming courses focus on teaching students how to write code, when many students enter their careers they will spend more time reading code than writing code. Students without experience reading code may struggle early on in their careers, but it can be hard to provide opportunities for students to practice code reading comprehension. By using AI generated code, students can practice their code reading comprehension skills and prepare for when AI code generation tools become more mainstream in the industry.

Pedagogical Support for Various Learners

Inclusive Professional Development Strategies for Military Learners

Glynita Bell

Building on the content from the "Promoting Classroom Inclusion for Military Family Learners" teaching talk, this teaching talk will expand on actionable strategies that faculty and mentors can use to promote inclusive, culturally response professional development. Attendees will also learn ways to strengthen social capital among military family learners.

From Curiosity to Inquiry: "This Is About Skyrim?" Part 2

Seth Hudson

This talk—the second of a two-part series—follows the coursework students engage after completing the "What do scholars talk about when they talk about Skyrim?" outlined in Part 1. Departing from the traditional final paper that often expects students to write in an unfamiliar genre (as 'Game Studies' includes scholars and writers from a range of disciplines), this project challenged students to create an entry for Fifty Key Video Games (Perron et al, 2022). Armed with the experience (and co-created slide decks) from our collaborative library session, students move forward with agency to explore their chosen "51st Key Video Game" and see what scholars have to say about it, across disciplines and (when appropriate) beyond the academy. This talk will review the series of related exercises developed to provide significant instruction and operationalize the lessons learned in our initial Skyrim session, as well as address issues encountered—by students and instructors alike—in the process. Audience: Instructors interested in reframing student writing as a communication of informed inquiry, rather than a detailed imitation of existing work by established scholars will find this session—and its companion talk in Part 1—useful. Additionally, instructors looking to provide significant instruction in writing and related research activities will leave with new strategies on building coursework around student engagement, rather than a target product.

Writing Respectfully About Race and Racism: Using the Writing Center's Resources *Courtney Massie*

This teaching talk orients viewers to the Writing Center's guide to writing respectfully about race and racism and its companion resource for Mason faculty that provides strategies for using the guide in their courses. Created and revised in 2022 and piloted in select courses in 2023-24 through a series of Stearns Center ARIE grants, the guide is designed to foster a process of personal reflection, self-education, and structural thinking for students undertaking writing assignments related to race and racism in the United States. The companion resource offers concrete suggestions for how to assign and discuss the guide, use it when designing writing assignments, and tailor use of the guide to different student audiences.

12:00 p.m. - 12:50 p.m.

Cultivating Professional Growth for Faculty and Graduate Students

Scaffolding Intercultural Development/Civic Engagement Goals Across Mason's Undergraduate International Pathways

Mohamed Mohamed

These materials are the result of a Curriculum Improvement Grant-funded collaboration between faculty from INTO Mason, CHSS, and Mason Korea. The project aimed: 1) To integrate and align civic engagement and antiracist and inclusive excellence (ARIE) learning goals throughout the Undergraduate Pathways curriculum and 2) To redesign key courses to ensure that they suit the linguistic and cultural needs of International Pathways students and direct entry international students at both Fairfax and Mason Korea

campuses. We will share a curriculum map of revised Learning Outcomes along with sample assessments and activities tailored to the needs of international and multilingual students. Our redesigned courses help international pathway students engage in campus conversations around racism, equity, and inclusion, and civic life, and develop a sense of belonging to the Mason community.

Professional Development Programs for Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) Across Three Stem Disciplines

Nishchal Thapa Magar

Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) are often the lead instructors in recitations and undergraduate labs. Universities have adopted different strategies to prepare their GTAs for the course content, class management, and teaching methodologies needed to run an effective class. Some of these approaches include pre-semester workshops, academic year workshops, regular meetings with course coordinators, pedagogy courses, learning communities, and apprentice teaching. These different approaches have a range of goals from content knowledge to understanding research-based teaching methods, to practice in the classroom with feedback. In this talk, we present a framework for understanding the range of GTA professional development models and our approach to GTA training across three departments - Mathematics, Physics, and Computer Science (CS) - at George Mason University. The GTA professional development presented here evolved from local practices to meet the needs of a project that worked to embed more active and collaborative learning in large introductory courses.

Expanding Horizons in Online Educational Environments

Using Simulation to Promote Experiential Learning

Avinash Mainkar

To enhance real-life learning, I use an online simulation in my class. Students, in teams and in individual capacity, run an athletic footwear company in head-to-head competition against companies run by other class members. With more than 50 decisions in multiple functional areas, the simulation is complex. But it gives students a hands-on exposure to formulating and implementing a sustainable business strategy. I have used the above simulation for more than five years at Mason. By drawing on this experience, this proposal will describe in detail how I have used this simulation in my class.

Handout Hack: Enhancing Student Engagement with UDL

Heidi Blackburn

As educational institutions like Mason expand their online learning presence, the reliance on digital documents has become paramount. To enhance student learning experiences, we must look to best practices for universal design for learning (UDL) and explore how to apply these strategies effectively in our teaching. This presentation aims to share a practical approach that elevates student engagement with presentation handouts by centering on UDL principles. This strategy focuses on seamlessly integrating UDL best

practices into PowerPoint slides and handouts for use after class. By using UDL, we create learning materials that cater to students from diverse backgrounds, including English Language Learners (ELL), international students, those with learning disabilities, and neurodiverse learners. Traditional dense handouts and lengthy presentation slides—often posted on platforms like Blackboard—can overwhelm students, leading to missed information and diminished engagement.

Transitioning from Respondus LockDown Browser to Honorlock

Avinash Mainkar

The aim of the upcoming ITL conference is to "highlight strategies for thriving in an ever-shifting educational landscape." One shift for Mason faculty going forward, among others, will be the use of Honorlock instead of Respondus LockDown Browser. The Stearns Center has offered workshops to educate faculty about Honorlock. I attended one such workshop during 2023. In spite of being an experienced Respondus user, I struggled with the hands-on Honorlock activity. This proposal will show a side-by-side comparison of the steps required to implement Respondus and Honorlock. Because most Mason faculty are familiar with Respondus, the steps will be anchored in how we implemented Respondus in our prior courses. This could potentially make the transition to Honorlock more seamless and efficient.

Navigating Curriculum Development for Impactful Learning

Curriculum Mapping—A Multi-Dimensional Approach

Steve Brown

This presentation will share how curriculum maps can be used for purposes beyond the traditional approach of meeting requirements of external accreditors. We currently experience a wide variety of formats used with little articulation what would be considered best practice. And, as most maps focus only on meeting accreditor requirements at a program level, they miss the opportunity to address other issues that individual instructors face at the course level. Well-constructed maps can serve as an excellent tool in improving connections between faculty members that leads to developing courses and instructors that have better connection to the curriculum as a whole.

Promoting Diversity Across the Curriculum: The Carter School Experience

Leslie Dwyer

In 2023, the Carter School for Peace and Conflict Resolution began an initiative encouraging faculty to diversify the range of perspectives offered on their syllabi and to dialogue about how to engage with students with diverse backgrounds. The initiative included a baseline survey of select core course syllabi, a series of "Syllabus Jams" and "Pedagogy Jams" for faculty to collaborate; and workshops devoted to promoting more inclusive approaches to teaching peace and conflict resolution. This talk will discuss challenges and lessons learned from this initiative. Participants who will benefit from this

talk include all teaching faculty interested in issues of diversity and inclusion, especially those working on curricular initiatives in their own units.

Infusing KEEN's Entrepreneurially Minded Learning (EML) at Mason

Girum Urgessa

The Kern Entrepreneurial Engineering Network (KEEN) is a nationwide partnership of undergraduate engineering and computing programs whose mission is "to graduate engineers with an entrepreneurial mindset so they can create personal, economic, and societal value through a lifetime of meaningful work." George Mason University became a KEEN partner institution at the end of 2023. KEEN partner institutions amplify the teaching of technical engineering and computing skills by incorporating the 3Cs (curiosity, connections, and creating value) of an Entrepreneurial Mindset (EM). The mindset is considered to include "a set of attitudes, dispositions, habits, and behaviors that shape a unique approach to problem-solving, innovation, and value creation." This presentation will cover how the College of Engineering (CEC) faculty at George Mason University are incorporating Entrepreneurially Minded Learning (EML) in the classroom and participating in nationwide KEEN faculty development workshops.

On Demand Resources

Teaching First-Year Composition Multilingual Students to Use GenAI Ethically

Alice Wrigglesworth, Jason Kifer, Melissa Bruce

Our project involves creating a selection of teaching materials that encourage the ethical use of generative AI (GenAI) models in the instruction of first-year composition to multilingual students. Artifacts include annotated strategies, in-class activities, and prompts, all of which can be adapted by instructors to their specific courses and student levels. The strategies and materials address the challenges and opportunities presented by GenAI in composing research questions, refining thesis statements, focusing broad topics, constructing language revision prompts, and critically analyzing GenAI content.

Content Based Rubrics: Support Students While Improving Grading Practices

Chelseann Christopher

The included artifact is an example of a content based rubric that was created to align to a paper assignment for an early childhood education class. Content based rubrics provide many benefits for both educators and students. Students are able to easily glean the expectations for their work when using this type of rubric, thus lowering their anxiety and increasing the likelihood that assignments will be completed to the appropriate expectations of higher education. Additionally, students are able to easily discern areas of improvement once an assignment has been graded, thus allowing for more specific feedback that does not require the explicit commentary of the educator. Content based rubrics allow educators to objectively evaluate the content of student work, ensuring that

students are receiving equitable and fair grading practices. By aligning these rubrics closely to syllabi assignment guidelines, educators are able to ensure student success by eliminating the stress of open ended prompts and providing scaffolded support to guide learning outcomes and products. These rubrics afford less intensive grading time, as they can be embedded in Blackboard and focus on the content of the work, not the quality of the writing. All disciplines, modalities, and levels would benefit from this session.

Honoring Students' Linguistic Diversity through Programmatic Inclusive Teaching Initiatives

Courtney Wooten

This digital poster offers participants interested in programmatic inclusive teaching initiatives an overview of one program's long-term efforts to support faculty professional development and develop curricular changes. Mason has the most diverse student population of any four-year college or university in Virginia, with its students coming from over 130 nations and speaking over 80 languages. Linguistic diversity--the diversity of languages and the variations within a language (e.g., Black English, Chicana English, accented English)—is a significant component of our students' experiences and campus culture. Linguistic justice is an orientation to language that acknowledges that standard language is a myth and that privileging some forms of English over others is tied to the racialization of English speakers' identities and replicates forms of systemic racial oppression (Lippi-Green 2011; Alim, Rickford, and Ball 2016). Thus, linguistic justice is an important part of inclusive teaching at Mason's campus and serves as one type of inclusive teaching development that can occur within a program. The digital poster describes how presenters from Mason's Composition Program built a scaffolded approach to helping its approximately 100 faculty - term, adjunct, and GTA - engage with linguistic justice scholarship and develop approaches to linguistic diversity that support Mason's students and their in-progress curriculum revision process building on this work.

Developing DEI Resources Within a Transdisciplinary Context

Kimberlie Fair

Mason Korea provides a unique interdisciplinary teaching and learning environment for faculty to regularly interact with other faculty outside of their disciplines on issues of student engagement and success. This collaborative interdisciplinary environment creates an opportunity for faculty to exchange effective strategies for integrating DEI principles into classroom practices among faculty members from diverse academic backgrounds. This session will showcase the impact of sharing Anti-Racist Inclusive Teaching (ARIT) resources from faculty members across various academic programs and disciplines. Drawing from the ARIT initiatives that five ARIE faculty members representing multiple disciplines, including Business, History, Computational and Data Sciences, English for Academic Purposes, and Sociology, the session will illustrate how these initiatives have facilitated meaningful conversations among program coordinators from various academic programs and have normalized these practices for many faculty members across the campus. It is expected that the demonstration of these cross-disciplinary teaching resources will broaden instructors' understanding of DEI, sensitizing them to the diverse needs of multilingual and multicultural students, and refine their approaches to inclusive

teaching. Moreover, this session aims to provide valuable insight into inclusive teaching practices for full-time faculty engaging in an interdisciplinary program or faculty representing diverse disciplines within and across academic units/departments. By showcasing concrete examples of how faculty members across disciplines have integrated DEI into substantive active learning and pedagogical strategies, the audience will gain practical knowledge to cultivate their own teaching practices.

Exceptional Ideas: Innovation Tournament Discussion Board Assignment

Laurie Meamber

This assignment utilizes the structure of an innovation tournament popular in new product development within a standard LMS text based discussion board. It can also be adapted for use in other discussion board formats, such as video discussion boards. The instruction sheet follows the TILT model, describing the purpose of the assignment in relation to the course – including skills and knowledge, the tasks involved, an example, and the grading rubric. The assignment is broken into two parts – an initial posting and a reply. The initial posting is completed in teams and the reply is individual. The first part of the assignment asks teams to craft a descriptive name for the idea/post, to give a brief description of the idea as connected to potential customer/user for the idea, and statement on the problem the idea solves. The second part asks individuals to view the submissions and to respond to how well the idea addresses a meaningful customer/user need and the opportunity to offer additional comments. Learners practice creative thinking, presenting ideas, and giving and receiving constructive comments. Students also progress towards choosing an idea to carry forward as part of the course project. This type of assignment can be used across a variety of courses and contexts when asking individuals to generate ideas (thoughts, concepts), present them to others, and (give) gather useful feedback in order to further refine them. Attendees can benefit from reflecting on the assignment sheet and how best to adapt it for idea generation in other disciplines.

Scaffolding Intercultural Development/Civic Engagement Goals Across Mason's Undergraduate International Pathways

Mika Endo, Sharon Doetsch-Kidder, Mohamed Mohamed

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Bridging the Barriers: Tailoring for Diverse Learners in Health Informatics

Sanja Avramovic, Abdul Hafeez

Health informatics classrooms often embrace diverse learners. Traditional instructional methods can leave some students behind. This session explores a dynamic teaching approach presenting strategies like tiered explanations, real-life examples, varied assessments, and peer-led instruction, all aimed at promoting student success regardless of background or learning style.

Resource for Supporting Multilingual Students' Oral Communication in English

Shelby Broberg

This resource is a training module designed to enrich understanding about oral communication of multilingual clients with first languages other than English. This online module is developed for training communication centers' consultants on the key concepts related to English pronunciation, but can be used by Comm 101 instructors and other faculty who work with multilingual students. Users will gain an informed perspective on accented speech and be introduced to research-based techniques to support the multilingual students they work with in improving the understandability of their English speech. The module includes information, activities, and prompts for reflection on topics such as comprehensibility, accentedness, intelligibility, segmental/suprasegmental features of English pronunciation, and client-consultant interactions for a successful consultation. While the module is designed with multilingual clients in mind, it is helpful for understanding speech by speakers from all linguistic backgrounds to enhance their linguistic skills and verbal delivery. This module has been piloted by communication center consultants and revised for content, accessibility, and audience engagement. It is widely accessible to all educators to provide them with ideas to promote equitable and inclusive education to students from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

We hope you will join us in 2025

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