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## Welcome to Connections - Your Teaching and Learning Resource

**Sue Vajoczki** - Director, Centre for Leadership in Learning

Thank-you! Thank-you! Thank-you! All of us in the Centre for Leadership in Learning are very grateful for the help and the effort that students, staff and faculty contributed to the successful launch of the new learning management system (LMS), Avenue To Learn. We know that a lot of people put a lot of work into the unsuccessful 2009 launch of ELM and, in many cases, had to 'redo' that work again for the launch of A2L this past fall. We greatly appreciate your efforts and the partnerships we have developed across the campus and with Desire2Learn, the current vendor of our LMS. During 2011-12 we will be rolling out additional functionality for the A2L system including: e-portfolios and a learning object repository.

Did you know that during a typical lecture a student's attention is greatest during the first 18-21 minutes and then rapidly declines? Did you know that by introducing a different activity, a change of pace, or even a 60 second stretch break at the 18-21 minute mark you can increase a student's attention for the next 18-21 minutes? What could you do to break the lecture at this point? Perhaps you could ask your students to write down the most important idea from the first twenty minutes of the lecture, or you could have them answer two or three multiple-choice questions about the content of the lecture to that point. You could also have them engage in a Think-Pair-Share activity (wherein students think about a question you pose, pair with a partner to discuss, and subsequently share their thoughts with the larger group). If you want some assistance introducing this concept to the courses that you teach please give us a shout in CLL and we will lend a hand.



We're pleased to report that CLL has moved to a new location. We look forward to meeting with you in our new space on the 5th Floor of Mills Library.

All the best for a successful term teaching!

## Thinking About Teaching & Learning

### It's Time to Transform Undergraduate Education

**Pierre Zundel** - President, University of Sudbury

**Patrick Deane** - President, McMaster University

Next spring will bring university leaders together for a workshop on undergraduate education in Canadian universities, courtesy of the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada\*. Such a meeting is welcome, overdue and potentially transformative. Its success, though, will depend upon our managing to escape from the essentially nostalgic mindset that has hampered real pedagogical progress in our institutions for at least the last decade. We have been incapacitated by a witches' brew whose ingredients are familiar to all – escalating costs, declining public investment, rising enrolments, proportionately declining faculty complements, and so on – yet we have failed to heed the advice we would normally give our students in such circumstances: to reorient ourselves to our goals and explore alternative or even radically different ways to approach them.

Universities have typically responded to resource pressures with the simple expedient of cost reduction on the input side of the educational equation. Thus we have seen the proliferation of sessional contracts and ballooning class sizes while the prevailing learning model – the “teaching technology” model – has remained largely frozen. In this model (as in the famous Figueri depiction of Aristotle instructing Alexander the Great), the knowledge expert (the professor) tells the novice (the student) about his discipline. The former does the teaching, the latter does the learning, and, as the context for this encounter has worsened under pressure of declining resources, it is questionable whether either does so effectively. Even in the best circumstances

this approach trivializes the role of the student and exaggerates the professing function in the learning process. The teaching technology model brings to mind some old industrial processes, before the discovery of catalysts, in which a huge amount of fossil fuel was consumed to provide the activation energy for chemical reactions.

It may be that some students emerge from this process able to solve problems, communicate effectively and interact meaningfully, but that outcome is not inevitable or even likely. This has been noted many times before, but even so, recent attempts to address the resource crisis in higher education have failed to move far enough beyond the model of a teacher addressing a room of essentially passive students: witness the very problematic differentiation proposed in *Academic Transformation: The Forces Reshaping Higher Education in Ontario* (Queen's Policy Studies Series, 2009) between "research" and "teaching" institutions. The discourse is still lamentably focused on maximizing inputs, on feeding as many people as possible from the same basket of bread. But let's be serious: none of us are miracle-workers, and when there are 5,000 minds to feed it is foolhardy to proceed as if there were five. We need to seek new and better ways to satisfy the hunger of our students.

What is required is a radical re-conceptualizing of the teaching and learning process, where the goal becomes "helping students learn" rather than "teaching." We need to lift ourselves above the instructor-instructed dialectic, and above that equally factitious binary of teaching and research. Were we to see the terms in each dialectic as complementary rather than oppositional, then we could imagine a wider, possibly infinite, range of models for learning. We could craft processes of study better suited to the outcomes sought by students, more efficient and more encompassing in the deployment of resources, and less vulnerable to changes in our material circumstances.

When, bearing in mind the analogy of the catalyst, we focus on student learning and think of teaching as helping students learn, then a number of pedagogical and curricular design options become conceivable. "Course preparation" changes from an exercise in content selection and sequencing to a pedagogical design problem in which the ultimate objective is explicitly described. We can be much more creative and can choose among many more variables. The traditional lecture course is no longer the only model we consider. The professor is not the only person responsible

for helping the student learn. Others can be involved, including the students themselves, their peers, community members, community organizations, societies and institutions. We, the teachers, become more concerned with what the students are actually doing. We begin to think more broadly about the kinds of situations in which students learn. For example, other cultures and environments become a resource for helping students learn when we take part in international internships. The challenges of professional practice or the problems of certain social groups become opportunities to engage in problem-based or service learning.

Bringing new resources and new pedagogies into play requires us to relax longstanding structures and barriers. This makes us question the traditional roles of students and faculty; a much higher level of engagement and responsibility is assumed by students. Service and experiential learning require coordination and a new or greater commitment of staff time; this may change the ratio of academic to professional staff. Faculty members bring their scholarship and experience into an altered dynamic in which they contribute significantly as designers and facilitators rather than mainly dispensers of formal declarative knowledge.



Students at a Duke University lecture in the 1940s. Lecture-based teaching of this sort remains common to this day.

Image from the Duke University Archives: <http://library.duke.edu/archives>. Licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Non-Commercial-Share Alike License.

In our resource-limited context, five questions need to be asked – and asked without presupposing too quickly that we know the answers – if we are to realize the full value of this shift towards learning, away from teaching:

- What do students need to be able to do by the end of their course or program?
- What pedagogical and curricular opportunities can we design to help them learn to do it?

- What resources can we consider as we design these learning opportunities?
- What can we do as institutions or educators to bring those resources to bear on student learning?
- How will we know whether we are successful?

An interesting example of the impact of asking these questions is to be found at Alverno College, a liberal arts college in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, where all students in programs ranging from religious studies to nursing must demonstrate eight college-wide abilities at graduation. Alverno College takes in a majority of visible-minority, first-generation, part-time students – groups that historically have encountered difficulty in postsecondary education. All the degree programs incorporate a high level of self-, peer and instructor assessment, as well as a curriculum designed to help students learn the eight abilities as interpreted for each degree program. The college uses no grades, relying on narrative feedback to help students meet learning objectives. One of the requirements for the highly integrated programs Alverno offers is frequent, well-prepared faculty planning and information-sharing activities. To help motivate students and provide student and program assessment, several hundred community volunteers assess the work of students and give them and the college feedback in assessments done outside class at strategic points in the program. The clarity afforded by explicit, college-wide learning outcomes makes it practical to use community assessors as an important learning resource. The lack of grades focuses students on the high-quality feedback they receive from a variety of sources. Frequent faculty planning sessions make it possible to integrate learning efforts over the whole curriculum. Alverno places well above the 90th percentile for National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) scores.

Students at Quest University, Canada's first private, non-profit liberal arts college, based in Squamish, B.C., follow a "block program" consisting of just one course at a time for 18 class days. This approach gives faculty maximum flexibility on where and how they teach, since students aren't required to be on campus for any other course during those 18 days. This opens the door to field studies, project work, international travel and a wide variety of experiential learning. Students concentrate on one topic at a time and build strong social interaction skills during project work and seminar classes. To attempt this, the university had to put in place a very different academic calendar and train faculty to make effective



use of large, concentrated blocks of time with students. In 2009, Quest University had the highest NSSE scores in North America.

At Université du Québec à Montréal, an ingenious program of intercultural exchanges is helping students learn from each other in education, social work, career planning and French as a Second Language (FSL). The program organizers create several events that bring FSL learners (most of whom are also immigrants or international students) into close contact with francophone students from education, social work and career planning. Each group of students learns different things from the encounters – for example, social work students learn about the challenges facing new immigrants in Quebec society while FSL students learn about that society and how to cope with their anxiety as novice language learners. In every case, students complete assignments based on the experiences. To implement the program across several faculties, staff and instructors have had to collaborate and communicate very effectively. Thanks to creative educational design and a broad-minded approach to the resources at their disposal, a modest number of faculty and staff in this innovative program generated substantial learning and high satisfaction among the hundreds of students across the collaborating departments.

At the University of Sudbury, the departments of religious studies and Native studies both operate extensive undergraduate research programs with honours students, engaging them in graduating-year colloquia and, in some cases, scholarly publishing. These practices substantially increase student engagement and provide the kind of experiences that are most valued by students. The practices are not resource-intensive since much of the work related to these is carried out in senior seminar courses.

In many institutions of all sizes across the country, faculty members make use of problem-based learning to help students develop content mastery, reasoning, and research and social interaction skills. McMaster University's medical and chemical engineering programs pioneered this approach, but problem-based learning has found wide application in many fields, including medicine (Dalhousie University and Université de Sherbrooke) and forestry and leadership studies (University of New Brunswick). Recently, a similar enquiry-based approach at University of Guelph led to improvement in student performance across a range of traditional courses for little extra faculty time (Summerlee and Murray). At the end of third year, Guelph students who had taken

the enquiry-based course in first year showed significantly higher average grades than those who hadn't. Thus, well-constructed changes in pedagogy can lead to both substantial improvement across the curriculum and more student engagement. We could list many more examples.

What these initiatives have in common are the following:

- they started with the question of what students should learn;
- the learning programs they designed make creative use of non-traditional approaches and resources;
- the academic unit was structured to make those resources available;
- in most cases, they gathered systematic information about their results;
- in most cases (except the examples of Quest and Alverno), the experiments are taking place in pockets in institutions.

To have a substantial effect on the quality and efficiency of university education as a whole, approaches like these need to be scaled to the institutional level. Change in any large and complex organization is constrained by a number of factors, including resources and regulatory and policy frameworks. In most universities, resources are overcommitted and funds are not available for substantial investment in innovation. In addition, government funding formulas typically, and not unreasonably, support policy objectives that increase access to postsecondary education (for example, through "growth funding") rather than support objectives that improve learning.

To create the environment in which large-scale innovation takes place, such constraints need to be removed, reformed or at least appropriately mitigated to facilitate change and flexibility. The first and greatest impediment to change, however – and the one over which we have the most control – is our own habit of intellectual self-limitation: of conceiving the future always in terms of the past, and the possible in terms of the proven. As Thomas Kuhn argued half a century ago, advances in science depend upon some sort of profound escape – be it momentary, be it apparently insignificant – from inherited paradigms. In the case of universities, the change to thinking about learning rather than teaching will be the necessary first step.

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*\*Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada Workshop on Canadian University Undergraduate Education, March 6-8, 2011, Halifax. The workshop is designed exclusively for university presidents and vice-presidents, academic, who are encouraged to attend as a team and to bring a student to the dialogue.*



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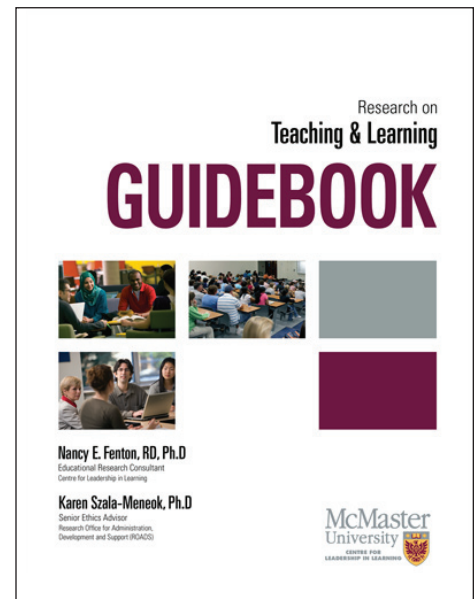
# Partnerships

## Co-creating a Research on Teaching & Learning Guidebook

**Karen Szala-Meneok** - Senior Ethics Advisor, Research Office for Administration, Development & Support

Nancy Fenton and I recently collaborated on the Centre for Leadership in Learning's new "Research on Teaching and Learning Guidebook". We met a few years ago when she was planning some post-doctoral research and accepted my invitation to come over to the research ethics office for a consultation to work out the details. That first chat over coffee led to many more lively discussions about research ethics, so that by the time Nancy accepted her position at CLL as Educational Research Consultant, we had gotten to know each other pretty well. We both enjoy research and teaching and share a commitment to finding ways to continuously improve our own teaching skills as well as to contributing to teaching excellence at McMaster. So when Nancy told me about the idea for writing a guidebook on teaching and learning research, I thought it was great. Being invited to collaborate on the research ethics section was timely because the Research Ethics Board has been reviewing an increasing number of pedagogical projects; we knew that professors would benefit from hearing these messages. Having them brought together in one guidebook made sense to me. We figured the ethics section would be useful because when professors invite their students to take part in their research, the power differential that exists between them can pose some tricky problems around voluntariness. Alerting pedagogical researchers to these kinds of issues early when they are developing their research proposals can help them manage these ethics issues better, protect their students and contribute to the overall rigor of their research.

It was a real joy collaborating with Nancy. I discovered that CLL staff usually knew when we were working together because of the amount of laughter coming from Nancy's office! We both have very busy schedules and we worked out a realistic timeline and balanced our writing responsibilities. I found that being able to enjoy working together was an important ingredient to help stay committed, on track and creative. Good collaboration is based on respect and trust. I think Nancy and I were able to develop that back when we first started chatting about research ethics. Having some fun whilst working on the guidebook just added to the satisfaction of the task and made me look forward to getting work done.



For more information about the Research on Teaching & Learning Guidebook, or to obtain a copy, contact Elvia Horvath at [horvathe@mcmaster.ca](mailto:horvathe@mcmaster.ca) or at x24540.

## New CLL Location!

We're thrilled to announce that CLL has moved to a new, more easily accessible location on the 5th floor of Mills Library. Watch for an upcoming announcement about our post-move Open house. We look forward to seeing you in the new space!

## The CLL-MSU Relationship: An Excerpt from the 2010-11 MSU State of the Union Address

**Mary Koziol** - MSU President

One particularly important relationship the MSU strengthened considerably this year was that between the MSU and the Centre for Leadership in Learning (CLL). As the MSU represents the student voice and CLL provides teaching and learning professional development opportunities for faculty and for Teaching Assistants, a strong partnership allows students another medium to partake in the dialogue concerning teaching quality. In addition, it allows CLL a connection to students to ensure they are aware of current student needs. Both groups share an important similar objective - excellence in the teaching and learning experience. However, both approach it from a slightly different perspective so there is an opportunity for synergy. CLL consults the MSU for input regarding course evaluations, the learning management system and a number of other issues concerning teaching and learning and student engagement.

To read the entire State of the Union Address, visit:

<http://www.msumcmaster.ca/studentGovernment/bod/president/SOTU.htm>

CLL's Connections Newsletter is published twice yearly. If you are interested in contributing to the next edition, please contact Beth Marquis at [marquie@mcmaster.ca](mailto:marquie@mcmaster.ca).

## Curriculum Notes

### Ontario's New Quality Assurance Framework

Karen Nicholson - *Teaching & Learning Librarian, McMaster University*

In 2010, Ontario's publicly funded universities adopted a *Quality Assurance Framework* that establishes the protocols for the approval of new undergraduate and graduate programs and the review of existing programs. The *Quality Assurance Framework* replaces the Undergraduate Program Review Audit Committee (UPRAC) and the Ontario Council of Graduate Studies (OCGS) review processes, and moves Ontario universities into the mainstream of international quality assurance practices and outcome-based education. Outcome-based education is a student-centered approach to education that focuses on the intended learning outcomes resulting from instruction. The three components that comprise an outcome-based approach to learning are:

- an explicit statement of learning intent expressed as outcomes which reflect educational aims, purposes and values;
- the process or strategy to enable the intended learning to be achieved and demonstrated (curriculum, teaching, learning, assessment and support and guidance methods); and,
- criteria for assessing learning which are aligned to the intended outcome. (Jackson, 2002, p. 142)

Outcome-based education presents a number of advantages for students and instructors, including: providing a means for students to articulate the knowledge, skills and experience acquired during their programs; encouraging continuity between undergraduate, postgraduate and continuing education; and providing a strategic way to enhance the quality of teaching and learning (Harden, 1999).

In keeping with an outcome-based approach to education, the *Quality Assurance Framework* includes two documents that outline the threshold level learning outcomes that Ontario students must demonstrate in order to successfully complete their programs. These are the *Undergraduate Degree Level Expectations* (UDLEs) and the *Graduate Degree Level Expectations* (GDLEs). Graduates at specified degree levels (e.g., B.A., M.Sc.) are required to meet these standards. The six areas of competence outlined in the *Undergraduate Degree Level Expectations* are:

- |                                   |                                       |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Depth and Breadth of Knowledge | 4. Communication Skills               |
| 2. Knowledge of Methodologies     | 5. Awareness of Limits of Knowledge   |
| 3. Application of Knowledge       | 6. Autonomy and Professional Capacity |

The six areas of competence outlined in the *Graduate Degree Level Expectations* are:

- |                                      |                                       |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Depth and Breadth of Knowledge    | 4. Professional Capacity and Autonomy |
| 2. Research and Scholarship          | 5. Level of Communication Skills      |
| 3. Level of Application of Knowledge | 6. Awareness of Limits of Knowledge   |

In order to comply with the *Quality Assurance Framework*, departments will need to identify learning outcomes for each program offered and to map these to the undergraduate or graduate Degree Level Expectations, as appropriate. In outcome-based education, a "design down" process is employed which moves from program level "exit outcomes" to course outcomes and outcomes for individual learning experiences. Outcomes at each successive level need to be aligned with, and to contribute to, the program outcomes and the Degree Level Expectations.

For more information, see: <http://ccl.mcmaster.ca/COU/> or contact Lori Goff at [lgoff@mcmaster.ca](mailto:lgoff@mcmaster.ca).

#### References:

Harden, R. M. (1999). AMEE guide no. 14: Outcome-based education: Part 1-an introduction to outcome-based education. *Medical Teacher*, 21(1), 7-14.

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### President's Awards for Excellence in Teaching

**Nomination Deadline: March 15, 2011**

The President's Awards demonstrate the value that McMaster attaches to its educational function and recognize those who, through innovation and commitment, have significantly enhanced the quality of learning by McMaster students. All full-time and part-time faculty (including those on contract) are eligible.

For further information, visit:

[ccl.mcmaster.ca/awards\\_and\\_grants/](http://ccl.mcmaster.ca/awards_and_grants/)

### CLL Teaching & Learning Grants

CLL disburses large grants of up to \$10,000 annually, with a submission deadline of March 1st. Submissions for grants of up to \$1000 are accepted 3 times per year on June 1st, October 1st, and December 1st. The key criterion for these grants is that the proposed project should improve the quality of students' learning at McMaster.

For further information, visit:

[ccl.mcmaster.ca/awards\\_and\\_grants/grants.html](http://ccl.mcmaster.ca/awards_and_grants/grants.html)

### Instructional Skills Workshop for Faculty

**April 7, 11 and 14, 2011**  
**9:00 am - 5:00 pm each day**

The ISW is an experiential, peer-based instructional development program. Over the course of 3 days (24 hours), participants will have opportunities to expand upon their instructional skills, practice new teaching approaches, and connect with colleagues from a range of disciplines.

Register now at: [ccl.mcmaster.ca/events](http://ccl.mcmaster.ca/events)



## CLL Profile



**Lori Goff**

Instructional Designer, CLL

Written by **Natalie Paddon**,  
Centre for Leadership in  
Learning

In August 2010, Lori Goff joined us in the Centre for Leadership in Learning as an Instructional Designer.

Lori completed her Bachelor of Science and her Master of Science degrees at the University of Guelph and later returned to the academic world to complete a Master's degree in Education at Brock University. She is currently completing a Ph.D. in Educational Leadership and Policy at Brock as well.

Lori has a history of work experience in higher education as she has held previous positions in areas such as student-to-student support services and peer-mentoring programs, as well as part-time professorial positions, instructional assistant positions and instructional design positions. At McMaster, Lori has been involved in course and curriculum design and revision in the department of Biology and the Life Sciences program, and has published and presented on both scientific and educational topics.

As an instructional designer in CLL, Lori has developed online workshops with the Council of Ontario Universities surrounding quality assurance and outcomes-based education. Lori is available to assist faculty and curriculum committees in curriculum mapping and in writing program and course learning outcomes that map to the university degree level expectations. Lori's Ph.D. work complements her position in CLL as it focuses on quality assurance and its implementation within Ontario universities.

Lori has also facilitated Avenue to Learn training sessions on campus. She has not only helped to familiarize faculty and staff with the various tools in Avenue, but also demonstrated pedagogically effective ways to use these tools. If you are wondering whether Avenue to Learn can be used to help you implement a new assignment or project, you can contact Lori for support.

For Lori, her role in CLL is both rewarding and engaging. "I am thrilled to be working in CLL alongside such an exceptional group of people." She points out that she is "especially excited with the many opportunities [she has] to work with and support faculty and staff across campus in their initiatives to create the best possible learning experience for McMaster students."

To reach Lori, please email her at [lgoff@mcmaster.ca](mailto:lgoff@mcmaster.ca)

## Teaching & Learning Strategies

### Small Group Work

**Barbara Chettle** - PhD Candidate, Cognitive Science of Language

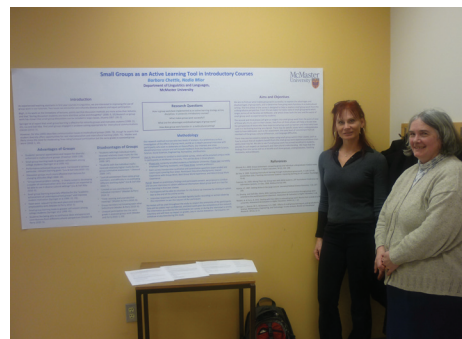
**Nadia Mior** - MSc Candidate, Cognitive Science of Language

As experienced teaching assistants in first year courses in Linguistics, we are interested in improving the use of group work in our tutorials. Two issues we encounter are culturally diverse students and equal participation. Questions that we have pondered include: How is group work best implemented as an active learning strategy across disciplines in university introductory courses? What makes group work successful? What are the advantages and disadvantages of group work? How does group work function in a multicultural setting? Current research provided interesting results.

Bligh, in his work on the limitations of lectures, points out that discussion methods are more active than lectures, and that "during discussion students are more attentive, active and thoughtful" (2000, pp.9, 10). Springer et al (1999) report that small group learning is effective for minority groups and motivates students. Liu and Dall'Alba (2010) find small groups engaged in problem-solving appropriate for intercultural communications classes. However, De Vita (2005) describes communication issues in multicultural groups, though he asserts that student diversity offers opportunities for real internationalism and intercultural learning. Maiden and Perry (2010) stress the need for moderating 'free-riding' [unequal participation but the same grade] in assessed group work.

We discovered various advantages to using group work as a teaching tool, such as: "Team work relevant to the work place and acquiring employability skills" (Maiden & Perry, 2010, p.5) and development of "a cluster of communication skills that students are expected to be able to use in diverse cultural settings" (Liu & Dall'Alba, 2010, p.3). The disadvantages we found include: "Unequal participation but the same grade in assessed group work" (Maiden and Perry, 2010, pp. 1, 10), "Lack of commitment from some group members, and difficulty in co-ordinating different working styles" (Liu & Dall'Alba, 2010, p.7).

This preliminary investigative work, which was conducted as part of our course work for CLL's graduate course, Education 750, provides an excellent background for us to explore small group work from the undergraduate perspective ranging across all six faculties at McMaster. Further research about small group work as a teaching tool in undergraduate courses can be invaluable for curriculum development in the years to come.



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## SoTL News

### McMaster University Re-Envisions SoTL Conference: “Research on Teaching and Learning: Integrating Practices”

Nancy Fenton - Educational Consultant, CLL

The Centre for Leadership in Learning (CLL) at McMaster University held its second annual Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) conference on December 9<sup>th</sup>, 2010. Based on the successes of last year's inaugural event, the conference was re-envisioned, expanded and renamed “Research on Teaching and Learning: Integrating Practices.” This year's theme of “*integrating practices*” provided an opportunity for faculty, students, staff and administrators to exchange ideas across disciplines and institutions, and to take part in ‘conversations of discovery’ about gaps and opportunities between classroom research and practice.

Over 75 scholars from a diverse range of disciplines and international institutions provided a total of 39 peer-reviewed presentations (workshops, short and long papers, and posters). The workshop leaders addressed topics uniquely tailored to both the beginner and the advanced SoTL researcher, providing over 135 conference participants ample choice from such topics as: “A Beginners Guide to Educational Research Designs,” “SoTL Surveys: Getting it Right!” and “From Data to Dissemination: A Writing Workshop for SoTL Researchers.” A full slate of short and long concurrent paper presentations covered a broad range of subjects, including: complexity in the classroom; integrating research into the science curriculum; connections between ESL and ASL; and the question of whether or not critical thinking pedagogy should ‘go wild’.

This year's distinguished keynote speakers were Dr. Julia Christensen Hughes and Dr. Joy Mighty, both past-presidents of the Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (STLHE), and co-editors of the exciting new book *Taking Stock: Research on Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*. They delivered a provocative and stimulating talk entitled, “*Taking Stock: Integrating Research and Practice*.” Their remarks encouraged conference attendees to identify opportunities for integrating research findings into their own practice through implementing innovative, evidence-based approaches that foster student engagement and deep learning. The active engagement of the attendees reflected how useful the discussion was for exploring possibilities to reduce the gaps between research and practice in promoting effective teaching and learning.



Keynote speakers Joy Mighty (Left) and Julia Christensen Hughes at the 2010 Research on Teaching & Learning Conference.

A *Research on Teaching & Learning Guidebook* was launched at this year's conference. This guidebook, developed by Dr. Nancy Fenton and Dr. Karen Szala-Meneok, provides introductory information about SoTL research and includes a description of key teaching and learning concepts, a discussion of the scholarship of teaching and learning cycle, worksheets, and useful resources to assist newcomers to research on teaching and learning.

The conference concluded with a wine and cheese reception and a poster presentation session. All 12 posters were well attended and provided participants continued opportunity to dialogue on such rich topics as “instructor's perspectives on inquiry teaching and learning,” “quality assurance in Ontario Universities,” “expanding horizons in mentorship,” and “today's students.” At the end of the day, we were thrilled to observe and to take part in so many cross-disciplinary conversations that encouraged the public engagement of research on teaching and learning. Sue Vajoczki, director of CLL, said, “the support given to the conference by the School of Graduate Studies, the University Library, the Research Office of Administration, Development & Support and the Office of Institutional Research and Analysis was outstanding and demonstrates McMaster's broad commitment to SoTL work and to teaching and learning quality. Furthermore, the growth in the number of conference participants, the range of topics presented and the excitement amongst the conference participants during the day indicate to us that the idea of integrating practice and research in the classroom has traction at McMaster and beyond. We are excited to see what next year's conference brings.”

## SAVE THE DATE!

for next year's  
Research on Teaching & Learning  
Conference

December 7th and 8th, 2011  
McMaster University  
Hamilton, Ontario  
Canada

### Petro Canada-McMaster University Young Innovator Award

Nomination Deadline: March 15, 2011

The Petro Canada-McMaster University Young Innovator Award is a program that provides an opportunity to build on the connection between research and teaching by engaging undergraduate students in research. This Award is unique in that it: recognizes the research achievements of an innovative scholar within the first eight years of his or her research career; and, provides funding support to enable the active participation of undergraduates in the research endeavour.

For further information, visit:  
[cll.mcmaster.ca/awards\\_and\\_grants/petro\\_canada\\_award.html](http://cll.mcmaster.ca/awards_and_grants/petro_canada_award.html)

### Learning Technologies Symposium

April 21, 2011

This annual symposium, hosted by CLL in collaboration with RIVET, the learning technologies division of the Program for Faculty Development, will be held this year on April 21.

Register now at: [cll.mcmaster.ca/events](http://cll.mcmaster.ca/events)

## Research Update

### Echo360: An Effective Tool for Universal Instructional Design?

Nancy Fenton - Educational Consultant, CLL

#### Summary:

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), 2005 calls on members of the public sector to develop, implement and enforce a set of mandatory accessibility standards. More specifically, it builds upon five key areas: accessible customer service; accessible information and communications; accessible built environment; employment accessibility and accessible transportation. AODA represents a more comprehensive legislative and regulatory framework than its predecessor, the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001.

McMaster, as a public sector institution, falls within the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario's mandate to maintain its public education function. Roles have been added within the AODA to consult all levels of the education system in order to build accessibility into the education experience. More specifically, McMaster's role as a public education institution places emphasis on the accessible information and communications requirement of the AODA. This requirement states that standards should be in place to address the removal of barriers in access to information, including information being provided in person, or through print, a website or other means.

#### Purpose:

This *access to information* standard brings the use of lecture capturing technologies more directly into focus. The existing literatures on recording audio and video material have shown significant benefits for all students, yet the experiences of students with disabilities have not been systematically explored.

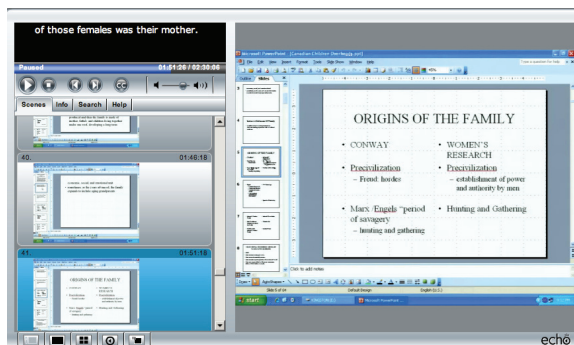
The purpose of this research project is: (1) to explore the perceptions and experiences of students using Echo360 lecture capture technologies; (2) to explore how faculty members and students, with/without registered disabilities utilize Echo360; and (3) to understand how the use of lecture capture technologies (i.e. Echo360) aligns with the new AODA legislation.

This research is an example of how collaborations across university disciplines and partnerships between departments and industry can breed successful ideas. On this multi-disciplinary team are researchers from the Faculty of Social Sciences (Geraldine Voros, Dr. Susan Watt); the Centre for Leadership in Learning (Dr. Sue Vajoczki, Dr. Nancy Fenton, Dr. Beth Marquis, Jacob Tarkowski) and the University Library (Otto Geiss, Lorna Turcotte, Vivian Lewis, David Kidney). The Centre for Student Development has participated as an Institutional Collaborator and Advisor. This team of social science researchers and administrative specialists also partnered with industry on this project.

Geraldine Voros' students proved to be perfect candidates for inquiring into the use of lecture capture technologies since Geraldine already makes use of such technologies in her classroom and is a keen proponent of practicing inclusive teaching and learning approaches.

#### Who's Affected?

This study aims to understand how lecture-capturing technology aligns with the new AODA legislation and how it addresses the needs of all students, in particular students with reported or unreported disabilities. The teaching and learning community at McMaster University will learn about students' perceptions and experiences of such technology. The results will be posted on the CLL website when available. In addition, any group exploring the implications and applications of the new AODA legislation in higher educational contexts may be interested in the results.



A screenshot of an Echo360 lecture capture.

### Centre for Leadership in Learning

Mills Library, 5th Floor  
905.525.9140, ext. 24540  
cll@mcmaster.ca  
McMaster University  
1280 Main Street West  
Hamilton, ON  
L8S 4L6

[cll.mcmaster.ca](http://cll.mcmaster.ca)

#### Connections Newsletter

Editor: Beth Marquis  
Design: Reg Woodruff

