Innovations in Faculty Development

By Paula Vincini

Transforming teaching and learning using technology requires an environment that supports and rewards faculty for undertaking such a venture. At Tufts, Academic Technology (AT) has sought ways to create such an environment through its multidimensional faculty development program of speakers, workshops, grants, consultations, publications and beginning this past summer, the Summer Institute for Teaching and Learning with Technology.

Programs at the University of Delaware and Indiana University provide examples of other innovative faculty development programs — both of which have won Theodore M. Hesburgh awards and certificates of excellence for faculty development.

The Institute for Transforming Undergraduate Education

The University of Delaware’s Institute for Transforming Undergraduate Education (ITUE) promotes “reform of undergraduate education through faculty development and course design”. The program specifically focuses on incorporating “active, student-centered forms of learning, particularly problem-based learning (PBL).” ITUE has partnered with the Practical Resources for Educators Seeking Effective New Technologies (PRESENT), a teaching, learning and technologies center to provide workshops, individual mentoring and sustained follow-up support. Since 1997, 350 ITUE Fellows have participated: 200 from the university; 100 from other US institutions and 50 from international institutions. The program also sponsors an international conference on PBL in higher education and a WebCT/Active Learning Institute.

The Carnegie Academy for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (CASTL)

In 1998, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching launched a new kind of faculty development initiative — one that “engages the research talents of faculty to improve undergraduate learning” — with the Carnegie Academy for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (CASTL) program.

An excellent example of one of the Carnegie programs is at Indiana University, referred to as “the flagship institution for the scholarship of teaching and learning.” This faculty-driven initiative supports an annual series of faculty presentations; a “Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SOTL) jumpstart” workshop; a SOTL paper series; a Pew-funded course portfolios group; and a newly launched International Society for the SOTL. The Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Dean of the Faculties recently announced a new $35,000 SOTL Leadership Grant for academic departments.

Many faculty focus their research on the use of technologies to meet learning goals. Examples from colloquia in recent years include research on distributed education, case studies using an interactive web-based tool, and student electronic portfolios.

Read more about innovative faculty development programs and connect to their sites at the Academic Technology website at http://at.tccs.tufts.edu/.

Paula Vincini is an instructional designer with over 20 years of teaching and training experience in post-secondary education.
Profiles in Faculty Development, Part 1

By Pauline Stieff

This is the first of a two-part series on Tufts staff who hold unique positions assisting faculty in integrating technology into their teaching and research. All of these individuals have educational experience outside of the technology field which enhances their ability to assist faculty who have little technical familiarity. In this issue, we profile Daniel Cogan-Drew and Melissa Dodd of the Medford campus.

As Technology Coordinator in the Tufts Education Department, Daniel Cogan-Drew assists faculty and students in using technology in the various education programs, including the graduate K-12 Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT), art education, school psychology and museum education. Dan’s responsibilities encompass all areas of technical support, including providing one-on-one and group instruction, managing a computer lab and overseeing the use of digital cameras, scanners and other peripherals. Faculty development support in the Education Department extends to curriculum development and outreach; therefore, Dan also teaches a class, supervises pre-service teachers, attends conferences and serves as a contributor and editorial committee member for this newsletter.

Dan has a diverse background in secondary, post secondary and college teaching and education. After earning a BA in English and Spanish at Wesleyan University and an MA in English from Brown, he taught English, literature and Spanish in high schools in Connecticut, Rhode Island and Georgia. Additionally, he taught writing to military personnel and at the writing center at Brown University. Dan gained experience in technology in education through creating and customizing databases and developing and maintaining software as a content producer at a small software development company and working as a computer education consultant at Brown.

Dan’s enthusiasm and versatility is reflected in several recent projects. Dan was Tufts’ technology director for the Teach 21C, a federally funded grant initiative for the Medford, Malden and Everett public schools supporting classroom applications of technology to enhance teaching and learning in the 21st century. He is also working on the Videopapers Project in which digital “videopapers,” interactive media objects combining video, text, and still images, are used intensively by the Education Department to study classroom-teaching episodes. Videopapers can be published in CD-ROM or posted on the Internet. The basis of this idea is to expand the use of the videopaper as a medium for capturing and sharing teaching within other programs and departments across the university. Dan, who is currently enrolled in the Educational Studies Masters Program would like to see Tufts invest in more video projects as well as develop more mechanisms for collaboration and outreach between and among departments and schools.

Like Dan, Melissa Dodd, Program Coordinator in International Relations, has a non-technical background. She began her career teaching English in Spain after earning her BA in Human Development and Family Studies from Cornell. Then, while earning an M.Ed in Administration, Planning and Social Policy (with a concentration in International Education) at Harvard, Melissa worked in the Graduate School of Education in a number of positions. She designed and administered an online community for Harvard alumni, faculty and students with research interests in Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as provided educational content and coordinated marketing efforts for participants in the US and abroad.

Such experience provided Melissa with a solid foundation for her job at Tufts where she manages the operations of International Relations (IR), a cross-disciplinary program which serves 60 faculty in 16 departments. Eleven percent of Tufts students choose IR as their course of study, making it the largest undergraduate major. Forty percent of undergraduates study abroad during their junior year. During that time, students often lose touch with faculty making it difficult for them to develop the skills to conduct research and create a thesis when they return for their senior year at Tufts.

Melissa came to Tufts (along with IR Director Christiane Zehl-Romero) in the Fall of 2001 to bridge the gap between students and faculty. Using Blackboard software, she helped
Article Review

The Scholarship of Teaching: What's the Problem
www.doit.gmu.edu/Archives/feb98/bass.htm

In this 1998 article, professor Randy Bass explores a challenge faced by educators at all levels of instruction — how to understand more about what your students understand. As a student not only of American Studies but also of teaching (Bass has been a Pew Scholar in the Carnegie Foundation's Teaching Academy Project), he is interested in delving into issues surrounding student learning and implications for classroom instruction. The occasion for his initial inquiry into this area was an encounter with his own "failing grades" — as awarded in his students' course evaluations. He confronted himself openly and honestly with these shortcomings and began to realize "I knew very little about why certain students did better than others. Or, more generally, I knew very little about how students came to know the material I was teaching."

As he thought further about the relationship of students' perceived understanding and his own basic assumption that his students achieved a "mimicry of mastery" over the semester, Bass couldn't be sure either that this "mimicry" was learned in his course or even that it was demonstrated by any but those who already had it. On the issue of his own assessment of student understanding, he admits, "I wasn't sure if there was any meaningful difference between understanding and performing understanding." He asked himself three important questions: 1) what percentage of his students could he really prove were achieving all/some/one of his goals for the course? 2) Which one of these goals was preeminent, in his mind? 3) Was he spending enough time on this central objective? He realized that his main goal, a synthesis of disparate sub-goals, received almost no attention in and of itself.

Part of his challenge was to explore the problems within the notion of teaching for student understanding. The further he probed this issue, the more he realized he needed to understand "the extent to which students' prior understandings of a field... situate a person to acquire new knowledge." All of this led him to administer a thorough written exercise based explicitly on valued skills and concepts — on the first day of class. The exercise aided him in diagnosing areas — both in content and in process — that would demand greater attention over the course of the semester if he were to succeed in meeting his larger objective: genuine student understanding.

Daniel Cogan-Drew is the Technology Coordinator for the Education Department and a former high school and post-secondary teacher.

APT 2003 Grant Recipients

The 2003 winners of A Partnership in Technology (APT), AT’s Faculty Grant Program, were announced in early June. Each recipient will receive 600 hours of AT staff time during the 2004 fiscal year.

The winners are:

Laurie Baise, Civil and Environmental Engineering, School of Engineering for Web Interface for Two and Three Dimensional Visualization of Subsurface Data.

Marina Bess, Child Development School of Arts and Sciences, for Virtual Communities of Learning and Practice: A Constructionist Authoring Toolkit.

Katherine Miller, Family Medicine and Community Health, School of Medicine, for Computer Enhanced Learning in Family Medicine.

Ronald Thornton, Center for Science and Mathematics Teaching, School of Arts and Sciences, for Creating an Active Science Learning Environment in Lecture Settings and Across the Web.

Pauline Stieff, Grants Specialist in Academic Technology, is a writer with extensive development experience in the non-profit sector.

Roonald Thornton, Center for Science and Mathematics Teaching, School of Arts and Sciences, for Creating an Active Science Learning Environment in Lecture Settings and Across the Web.

School of Arts and Sciences, for Creating an Active Science Learning Environment in Lecture Settings and Across the Web.

Virtual Communities of Learning and Practice: A Constructionist Visualization of Subsurface Data.

Engineering for Web Interface for Two and Three Dimensional...
What is a Blog?

The term blog is a combination of “Web” and “log” and is usually a personal web site “organized as a series of dated items” which reflects opinions or commentary and often links to articles or other blogs. Academic blogs allow professors, students, and adjuncts individually and in groups to “tackle serious questions” with the advantages of using a less academic tone, speed, immediacy, and interaction with a diverse audience. A recent Chronicle of Higher Education article on academic bloggers reported that most blog sites represent public policy, law or the social sciences.

Harvard Law recently established a WebLog site at http://blogs.law.harvard.edu/. This site also offers a ranking of the site’s most popular weblogs.

For links to blogging articles and sites, visit the AT web site at http://at.tccs.tufts.edu/.

Please send us your comments:

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AT Summer Institute

On May 20–23, Academic Technology sponsored the first Summer Institute for Teaching and Learning with Technology on the Medford campus. The Institute format offered morning presentations and discussions and afternoon computer workshops on the use of instructional technologies to enhance classroom teaching and student learning.

The twelve faculty attending represented various departments, including Electrical & Computer Engineering; Drama and Dance; Urban & Environment Policy & Planning; Classics; English; German, Russian & Asian Languages and Romance Languages.

Each instructor received a $500 stipend for attending and met individually with AT staff to discuss a classroom project. AT will be working with other support staff to provide ongoing assistance for these projects for the next academic year.

Institute presentations included Integrating Active, Individualized Learning through Web-based Technologies; Using Web-based Quizzes/Surveys for Meaningful Learner Assessment; and Using Digital Library Resources & Databases to Strengthen Research Skills.

Guest presenters were Dr. Curt Bonk, Indiana University; Dr. Flora McMartin, MERLOT; Kimberly Bonner, Center for Intellectual Property in the Digital Environment, University of Maryland University College; and Dr. Charles Graham, Brigham Young University. Tufts presenters included Dawn Irish, David Bragg and Rosemary Antonucci, TCCS Training Department; Laurie Sabol, Tisch Library; and Jane Morris, Ginn Library.

Calendar October, 2003

- **APT Grants Workshop**
  - October 2
  - 2–4 p.m.
  - Large Conference Room, Campus Center

- **Austin Lecture Series**
  - “The Application of IT for Teaching in the Humanities,” Randy Bass, Director, Center for New Designs in Learning and Scholarship, Georgetown University
  - October 23
  - 3:30–5:30 p.m.
  - Location: TBA, check AT web site for more information

- **AT Open House**
  - October 30
  - 1–4 p.m.
  - 16 Dearborn Road

Innovations in Learning

Next issue of Innovations in Learning: Critical Thinking