Most faculty tinker with their teaching all the time, making adjustments in response to a given class’s understanding and performance. But sometimes you need a major overhaul of an existing course or to design a brand new one. Do any of these scenarios sound familiar?

• You have been dissatisfied with students’ work in a class and would really like to figure out why they never seem to do well on their end of semester projects.

• You’ve got a course you’ve taught a number of times that you know needs reworking, and there are interesting approaches to teaching it that you’ve read about, but you haven’t had time to incorporate them.

• You want to move components of your traditional campus course online to make more time to problem solve in class, but you don’t want to sacrifice any of your content goals in the process and need to develop exercises and assessments that ensure nothing gets lost.

• You will be moving into a new active learning space and need to create activities and assignments that allow you to take full advantage of it.

• You will be offering an online course and want to put assessments in place to ensure that students learn as much as in your on-campus courses.

• You will be teaching a new course next year, and would like to develop some effective ways of helping your students build their writing and research skills.

If any of these scenarios describe where you find yourself (or if you could write an alternative), then it is likely that course development work will occupy some of your time this summer.

OID has a number of programs intended to help with that work. Deadlines for those workshops and grant programs will be coming up quickly this spring. In this issue of On Teaching as well as on the OID web page (oid.UND.edu), you will find the details you need to get help with your teaching-related work. In this issue we highlight one pedagogical development program (the WAC Workshops, see pages 2-3) and another summer opportunity (the SIDP cluster grants, see page 4-5). So read on, and be in touch if we can help you tackle the ongoing challenges of teaching.
Like an ill-fitting suit, some writing assignments are baggy, full of extra fabric in all the wrong places. They are loaded with requirements and criteria for success that are surely valuable (like fine Italian wool), but at the same time they provide too many opportunities for students to trip on their cuffs. Other writing assignments are tight in all the wrong places. They include restrictions, warnings, and admonitions that may be well intentioned but ultimately inhibit students’ intellectual movement.

Nothing fits quite like a tailored suit, and nothing aids student learning quite like a well-crafted writing assignment. Luckily, we in the writing across the curriculum (WAC) program are adept at helping faculty match writing assignments to course objectives and curricular goals. Whether you’re teaching an introduction to the major, a senior capstone, or a graduate seminar, WAC can help you put together a fine ensemble of writing assignments.

I’ll dispense with the fashion metaphor (for now), and get on with tips for teaching with writing at different levels of the curriculum.

Lower-Division (100 and 200) Courses: Lower division courses can be the trickiest of all. Often, these courses are introductions to majors or Essential Studies (ES) courses that serve majors and non-majors alike. In either case, instructors may feel they have to sacrifice depth for breadth. They assign short-answer essay exams that test content knowledge and recall, rather than longer term papers that might promote analysis (for example) but are time-consuming to assign and grade.

Luckily, other options exist. WAC proponents have long advocated “writing-to-learn,” which suggests that students can use writing to make sense of complex concepts, see relationships among readings, and develop a personal connection to course concepts. Journals are a useful genre for achieving these goals: students write to themselves as audience in a low-stakes environment where they do not have to worry about right and wrong answers. They assign short-answer essay exams that test content knowledge and recall, rather than longer term papers that might promote analysis (for example) but are time-consuming to assign and grade.

400-Level Courses: If students are only just becoming enculturated into a major at the 300 level, they usually own the identity by the 400 level: “I’m a Spanish major.” “I’m in air traffic control.” “I’m an engineer.” At this level, instructors have a real opportunity to use writing in creative ways. Some of the best upper-division courses use true-to-life assignments in which students have to communicate with others in a real or simulated situation. You might have your students...
participate in a mini-conference where they share research findings with each other (and perhaps with other colleagues in your field). Or you might have them design a product—say, pizza delivered by unmanned aircraft—and pitch it to a prospective client (I’m looking at you, Rhombus Guys). Such assignments require students to apply disciplinary knowledge, and even create new knowledge, as well as communicate that knowledge to specific audiences (disciplinary or lay) in a variety of genres (reports, diagrams, PowerPoints, memos, emails, and so on). These kinds of assignments do require some management, so a clear timeline and map describing how each part fits with the whole will benefit you and your students.

Graduate Level: Graduate school is simultaneously the easiest and the most difficult level at which to teach writing. Some students are motivated to learn and to become experts in the field, while others have the cynical attitude of an expert, but without the ability. Either way you may be left thinking, “Didn’t they learn all this in undergrad?” Most WAC research shows that learning to write in any field is a gradual process filled with setbacks, particularly when writers encounter a new task in a new context. Remember how you struggled to write your dissertation proposal, or to turn your dissertation into a monograph? My best advice at the graduate level is to share with students the role writing plays in building and sharing knowledge in your discipline. Much of the above advice applies here as well, including explicit teaching of disciplinary standards, simulated or real-life writing tasks, and so on.

Your department or program may also benefit from thinking about the role writing can play across levels, from the lower division through graduate school. In that case, this article could provide an outline for your entire curriculum, not just advice for individual courses.

As an expert, you know a lot about writing in your field, and if you teach writing, you have likely thought a lot about how to do so. We in the WAC program can build on your expertise and experience with guidance on developing and clarifying assignments, as well as curricula, that address your goals (and your department’s goals) for teaching and learning.

To that end, we are offering two workshops this summer: Teaching with Writing, for individual faculty members who want to incorporate writing into a course; and Building a Writing-Enriched Program, for cohorts of three faculty members who want to think more broadly about the use of writing in their department or program. You can go to oid.und.edu for more information, or come to one of our information sessions on March 2nd or March 5th at 4:00 in the President’s Room in the Union. I promise to wear a well-fitting suit.
SIDP CLUSTER PROPOSALS DUE
MARCH 2 @ noon

FIDC is offering Summer Instructional Development Project (SIDP) Cluster grants to enable faculty to work collaboratively on course design or redesign. The intent of the SIDP Cluster Program is to support faculty in embracing a broader view of student learning that encompasses not only their own courses, but also other courses their students take. Ultimately the goal is to enhance the student learning experience by bringing intentionality, coherence, and sound pedagogical practice to how students experience the curriculum.

Faculty seeking to collaborate in a cohort of three or more have multiple options for proposing an SIDP cluster. A group from a discipline or academic unit could work to embed a common theme (e.g., leadership, integrity or global warming) or to create alignment between courses (e.g., an intro course, a required 200 level course, and a capstone). An interdisciplinary cohort might pursue a specific pedagogical approach (e.g., experiential learning, inquiry-based learning, undergraduate research) or use comparable teaching resources (e.g., active learning classrooms, distance technologies). Or faculty might improve common types of experiences in the curriculum (e.g., adding specific objectives to capstone courses, embedding specific assignments in courses that give academic structure to study abroad).

We encourage consideration of formal workshops now supported by OID as one means of assisting group efforts and creating opportunities for collaboration. More information on these opportunities is available in this issue as well as online at www.oid.und.edu.

Applications are due March 2 at noon. Full details are available at oid.UND.edu.

REFLECTING ON OUR SIDP CLUSTER GRANT EXPERIENCE

NIKKI BERG BURIN (HISTORY AND WOMEN & GENDER STUDIES), NICOLE DERENNE (ART) AND MERIE KIRBY (HONORS)

The Summer Instructional Development Project (SIDP) Cluster Grant supports collaborative efforts to improve the quality of teaching beyond standard course development. We received a SIDP grant in the summer of 2014 with the goal of creating a bank of activities for the First Year Seminar (FYS) Program that would promote students' effective transition to university life. The FYS Program aims to help first-semester freshmen develop the academic skills necessary to be successful in college. While each FYS course focuses on a unique academic subject drawn from a wide variety of disciplines, all FYS instructors incorporate transition skills into their classes. We saw the SIDP Cluster Grant as an opportunity to collaborate on strengthening this key component of FYS classes.

One of the greatest challenges faced by FYS faculty is the fluid and consistent incorporation of transition activities into the primary course content. To address this challenge, we identified three key broad transition areas that impact first-year students' academic success: 1) adapting to the university, 2) developing academic skills, and 3) becoming a reflective learner. As a team, we created fifteen core activities that addressed these broad transition areas and that could easily be incorporated into the primary course content of any FYS course. We provided suggestions as to how individual faculty might include the transition activities into their respective courses, and we also created assessment materials. We piloted the activities last semester and achieved our overarching goals for the SIDP Cluster Grant. By collaboratively entrenching transition activities in our respective courses and making the activities available to other FYS instructors, we enhanced student engagement and learning.

The collaboration required for the SIDP Cluster Grant was integral to the success of our project. Although our classes were taught independent of one another, the integration of the transition activities we worked on together had an overwhelmingly positive effect on student learning in each of our classes. Most obviously, working together allowed us to create a substantial bank of activities in one-third the time it would have taken us to create them individually. More in-

continued on page 5
portantly, though, the interdisciplinary nature of our collaboration facilitated the development of a rich and comprehensive set of activities. With backgrounds in history, art history, and literature, we drew on our respective areas of expertise and were able to share ideas that we might not have come up with individually.

The timing of our project during the summer gave us ample time to fully integrate new activities into our primary course content. During the six-week grant period, we met four times. First to set the parameters of our collaborative work: each member would create five activities as minimum: one to support reflective learning, another to encourage adaptation to the university community, and three activities to promote the development of academic skills. We next met to present and review drafts of our activities, then to revise and finalize them, and a final time to assess our collaborative work and describe how we planned to integrate the activities into our individual course schedules.

We applied the transition activities to FYS courses taught in Fall 2014. We found the most success when we were able to adapt the activities to reinforce primary course content. For example, to help students achieve basic skills, we created a worksheet designed to help students identify specific expectations for a given assignment, which ultimately encouraged students to think critically about the specific expectations for any and all coursework. For more advanced skills, such as active reading or preparing to write a term paper, we developed scaffolded activities that helped students achieve these essential skills. Reflective learning was addressed in self-assessment assignments given throughout the semester. To assist the students in adapting to university life, we emphasized the complex network that supports students at every level of their schooling by incorporating activities led by staff of the Writing Center, the Chester Fritz Library, the Student Success Center, etc. in an effort to reinforce the notion that students are not alone in their academic efforts. All transition activities produced through the SIDP Cluster Grant were made available to other FYS faculty through Blackboard.

We found that our work through the SIDP Cluster Grant was an overwhelming success. This success was due, in part, to the careful planning at the start of the grant project, in which we clearly outlined our goals, roles, responsibilities, and outcomes. We fostered effective communication throughout the grant period, through productive meetings and effective communication. Perhaps the most vital aspect of our collaboration was the fact that we were each equally committed to the success of this project, and trusted our collaborators to do their best work.

The most important measure of success, however, lies in students’ successes. The array of activities created through our collaboration — and the instruction that we provided to assist in incorporating these activities into our classes — improved student learning and engagement. This was reflected in the efforts put forth by students in the classes, and in levels of engagement in class discussion and critical thinking exercises. As one student indicated on a course evaluation, “Everything we did helped me keep up with other classes … we did things to help us learn for all classes”. Another student stated, “We did activities that showed me best how to spend my time, study, form relationships, and listen.”

While we created our transition activities for our FYS classes, the value of our SIDP Cluster Grant experience extends well beyond the confines of those courses. We have and will continue to incorporate some of the activities into other classes and we also plan to seek out future opportunities for collaboration. Our experience confirmed the immense benefits of working together on a common project.

Interest in the SIDP Cluster program has been very strong. In 2014 the FIDC received 9 proposals involving 31 faculty, and were able to fully fund 6 projects involving 22 faculty. Thirty-five faculty attended the November information session this fall.
This two day workshop has two sessions, Online Course Design (Friday afternoon) and Student Engagement in Online Learning (Saturday morning). You can attend either or both.

**Dr. Lorna Richey Kearns**, Director of Online Programs, Center for Instructional Development and Distance Education (CIDDE) at the University of Pittsburgh, will conduct the workshops. Dr. Kearns manages all facets of Pitt Online, focusing on new and emerging programs; and was the Team Leader of Pitt’s Coursera initiative. Prior to being promoted to this role in 2013, Lorna was a Senior Instructional Designer with the Center for Instructional Development and Distance Education (CIDDE). In this role, she worked with Pitt faculty to develop online graduate courses in nursing, education, library science, and gerontology. Lorna has hosted a variety of faculty development workshops, and is a major resource within CIDDE on teaching, learning, and technology topics. She holds a Master’s Degree in Information Science from the University of Pittsburgh and Ph.D. in Adult Education from the Pennsylvania State University.

**Online Course Design Workshop**

**Friday, April 24** from 1-4 pm  
SCALE-UP classroom (O’Kelly 61)

Thinking about putting a course online? Or have one online that you’d like to re-think? If so, please join us for an afternoon of online course design.

In this workshop, we will cover the basics of online pedagogy, describe the components and structure of an online course, and offer a pathway for getting started. At the end of the workshop, participants will be able to:

- Identify essential components & related technologies of an online course.
- Apply a model of course design to the outline of an online course.
- Recognize common decision points in developing an online course.

Book included with registration: *Conquering the Content: A Blueprint for Online Course Design and Development* by Robin M. Smith.

**Student Engagement in Online Learning Workshop**

**Saturday, April 25** from 9am-12 pm  
SCALE-UP classroom (O’Kelly 61)

Online learning offers more possibilities for student engagement than you might think. In this workshop, you will learn how to create and cultivate “presence” in an online course. And you will see how teaching strategies and instructional technologies can come together to support active, engaged student learning. At the end of the workshop, participants will be able to:

- Apply Moore’s framework of student interaction to an existing or planned online course.
- Identify tools and technologies for use in creating active learning opportunities for students.
- Describe strategies for creating and sustaining student engagement in an online course.

Book included with registration: *Continuing to Engage the Online Learner: More Activities and Resources for Creative Instruction* by Rita-Marie Conrad and J. Ana Donaldson.

Registration information available on the OID main page ([www.oid.und.edu](http://www.oid.und.edu))
ON TEACHING SEMINARS

Spring 2015

Guiding Graduate Theses and Dissertation Writers
   Wednesday, March 4, 12:00-1:00pm (register by Monday, March 2 at noon)

What Do Alumni and Employer Surveys Tell Us About Student Learning?
   Friday, March 13, 8:30-9:30am (register by Wednesday, March 11 at noon)

Globalizing Your Course
   Wednesday, April 8, 8:30-9:30am (register by Monday, April 6 at noon)

Cheating Lessons: Learning from Academic Dishonesty
   Wednesday, April 29, 12:00 - 1:00pm (register by Monday, April 27 at noon)

To register & reserve a meal, visit oid.UND.edu. For information, contact Jana Diemert, 777.4998

STUDENT FEEDBACK:

Arrangements for SGIDs (small group instructional diagnosis, a process for soliciting student feedback at midterm) can be made now. Anyone teaching a class at UND may request an SGID. This includes faculty, part-time instructors, and GTAs.

SGIDs are conducted by trained faculty who work as facilitators for the process in their colleagues’ classrooms. A facilitator will collect information from your students, summarize it in a report for you, and provide you with high-quality student input regarding their learning.

You’ll have this information at mid-semester, rather than waiting until semester’s end when course evaluations are completed. Furthermore, the interactive nature of the process can motivate students to think more carefully and deeply, so SGID feedback is often more thorough than course evaluations, providing you with a clear understanding of student perceptions.

SGIDs are intended to be formative (i.e., for your own benefit as a teacher) rather than summative (they are not to be used as an evaluation of teaching, for example in promotion and tenure files).

To schedule an SGID, please contact Jana Diemert at 777.4998 or jana.diemert@UND.edu

EVENT

THE STATE OF ONLINE AND DISTANCE EDUCATION AT UND
Presentation and luncheon

Wednesday, April 1
Noon-1pm
Memorial Union Ballroom

Come join us for a presentation which will survey the current state of online offerings and education at UND, as well as discussing the challenges and opportunities created by online and distance learning for higher education.

RSVP to und.oid@email.und.edu by noon March 23rd to attend and reserve a lunch.

Luncheon sponsored by the Office of Instructional Development in collaboration with Assessment and Regional Accreditation; the Center for Instructional and Learning Technologies; Extended Learning; and the Registrar; and in partnership with the Senate Online and Distance Education Committee.
TAKE PART IN A SUMMER WORKSHOP

ACTIVE LEARNING (5/7 deadline)
May 19-21
12:30-4:30 pm
Contact: Anne Kelsch, 777.4233, anne.kelsch@und.edu

TEACHING WITH WRITING (4/1 deadline)
May 18, 20, 22, 26, 27, 2015
8:30 am-12:30 pm
Contact: Chris Basgier, 777.3321, christopher.basgier@und.edu

BUILDING A WRITING ENRICHED PROGRAM (4/1 deadline)
June 1 - 5, 2015
8:30 am-12:30 pm
Contact: Chris Basgier, 777.3321, christopher.basgier@und.edu

TEACHING WITH TECHNOLOGY
May 18-21 and May 26-29, 2015
12:30 pm-4 pm
Contact: CILT, 777. 2129, cilt@und.edu

TEACHING WITH TECHNOLOGY
June 8-11 and 15-18, 2015
8:30 am-12:00 pm
Contact: CILT, 777. 2129, cilt@und.edu

ON TEACHING is published six times a year as a service to UND faculty.
OID Director: Anne Kelsch.
WAC Coordinators: Chris Basgier and Jessica Zerr
UWP Acting Coordinator: Kimberly Stewart
OID/WAC Staff: Jeanne Boppre & Jana Diemert.