

Opportunities and New Directions 2012: *Fostering Deep Approaches to Learning*

Thursday, April 26, 2012

Twelve-week terms. Thousands of students rotating through co-op terms off campus. Larger classes limiting course delivery and assessment options. These and other factors could easily result in students moving across the surface of learning rather than delving more deeply into disciplinary or interdisciplinary ways of creating, questioning and validating knowledge. Yet at Waterloo, examples abound of engaged students doing impressive work in spite of – or even as a result of – these constraints. Deeper approaches to learning in which students retain and apply knowledge in new contexts, make connections, transform their ways of seeing and being in the world, and motivate themselves and others to engage in critical and analytical thinking are evident in every Faculty.

Whether it be at the program, course, assignment, or single class level, what have you tried that has led to deeper approaches to learning? As participants in this year's conference, we want you to leave with practical tools and rationales that you can adapt to your own disciplinary setting.

For OND 2012, we invite you to report on formal investigations into teaching practices as well as to share information about practical instructional approaches.

Possible topic areas include:

- Assignments and activities that engage your students and inspire them to think deeply
- Undergraduate research opportunities in or out of the classroom
- Making co-op or other hands-on experiences more meaningful
- Using curriculum review to promote deeper learning
- Measuring deep and surface approaches in courses or across programs
- Exploring/questioning limits of deep vs. surface learning as a framework

This year we welcome you to propose one of four ways (showcase, workshop, poster or paper) to share a teaching method or an assessment tool that you have found fosters a deep approach to learning. Both sharing practices and formal research on teaching have considerable value, helping us to develop usable knowledge to enhance our teaching practices. For this year's conference format we are providing two tracks: 1. sharing practices and 2. research. **Proposals are due Monday, February 27, 2012.**

Sharing Practices

Showcase: 15-20 minutes

Share a teaching method or an assessment approach that fosters deep learning in your context

Workshop: 50 minutes

Take your audience through a real example of your teaching or assessment approach with some hands-on time built in

Poster

Present a tool or technique and interact with attendees during our poster session

Research

Formal Paper: 15-20 minutes

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Present empirical findings or contemplate theoretical or methodological issues related to research on student learning at the course or program level

Poster

Present empirical findings and interact with attendees during our poster session

All proposals will be vetted by the conference organizing committee; submissions in the research track will undergo blind peer review.

Wednesday, April 25, 2012

Pre-conference workshop: Integrating research and teaching to foster deep student learning

Brad Wuetherick (University of Saskatchewan) and Marcy Slapcoff (McGill University) lead a half-day workshop on embedding the teaching-research link into your own course in ways that will engage students and promote their learning. For this hands-on experience, please bring a syllabus from an existing course or ideas for a course you are planning to teach.