Faculty work on...

Teaching and Learning

Graduate Study Abroad
John Drift
This project focuses on providing a deeper understanding of the kinds and nature of graduate study abroad that are available through universities, the experiences participants have in these programs, and learning outcomes related to their various activities. Especially relevant is the transformative dimensions associated with participating in graduate study abroad, particularly those related to the goals of internationalization, such as development of awareness, intercultural sensitivity, and intercultural competence. The project, which is currently in development, represents an extension of prior qualitative research that has studied the experiences of graduate students who have participated in short-term study abroad experiences offered through our program in Higher, Adult, and Lifelong Education, as well as research conducted by MSU’s Dr. Kristin Jemile Miller into Group Projects Abroad supported by the Fulbright-Hays Program. Analysis of the data and presentation of findings continues with both of these earlier projects. In this current proposal, the research team is seeking funding for a multi-year project focusing on the institutions that make up the IC, but is planning to move forward on some activities in late Spring or Summer, 2011.

Student Involvement: A graduate research assistant within HALE has been involved in helping with the review of relevant literature in study abroad. In addition, two students were involved with the earlier, qualitative project in the data collection procedures for three cohorts of study abroad participants, conducting semi-structured interviews and participant observations of the experiences abroad. In addition, seven former or current HALE students have been involved in various aspects of the data analysis and writing or presentation of findings. Papers and/or abstracts authored by these students have been presented or are in the works for the AESC, the Adult Education Research Conference, the conference of the Comparative and International Education Society, and the Mississippi Research in Practice Conference.

Reading and Writing Online
Steve Weiland
Two recently completed studies and another about to begin reflect new practices of reading and writing in online teaching and learning. “Digital Literacy and Adult Learners: An Experiment in Hypermedia Reading” reports on the results of a study of the online reading and search activities of graduate students. A closer look at a hypermedia-based assignment shows that despite claims for their practices in online reading, students’ performance in writing about the results failed to display effective use of online resources. The case is made that in order for students to meet high expectations in using the Web they must be equipped with skills that are foundational to genuine digital literacy. “What Do We Want from Writing in Online Learning?” offers an analysis of the role of online teaching and student learning in online e-learning, with design favoring PowerPoint for instructors and brief informal writing for students (as in posts to a discussion forum). What will be lost as traditional writing gives way to new forms of “digital literacy” deserves attention in the growth of the online curriculum. A new project will look at the reading preferences of online graduate students. While titles for the “Net Generations” suggest complete adaptation to screen reading, actual preferences favor traditional print by a large margin.

Student Involvement: Two HALE PhD students, who contribute to the teaching of online EAD 315 courses in the College of Education-wide MA program, helped in the design of the two of the studies, and in data gathering and writing.

An Apprenticeship in Teaching and Learning
Patricia Ems
Educational Administration offers a laboratory-based undergraduate leadership class, EAD 335, Student Leadership Development, which is often taught by HALE graduate students. This course represents a contribution to undergraduate leadership development and a significant professional development experience for HALE graduate students. Instructors report that the experience provided powerful learning, both short and long term. Instructors gain invaluable contact with undergraduates, gather perspectives on the formal learning environment, practice curriculum design and outcomes assessment, and develop respect for the role of faculty in higher education.

Many graduate students, even those lacking previous instructional experience, have important experiential and conceptual backgrounds in student affairs, curriculum design, and the scholarship of leadership that gives them appropriate tools for teaching. Instructors often teach in pairs.

This mentioned teaching experience provides extensive training and supervision, leadership literature, observation and feedback, and ongoing support for the instructors. Instructors are expected to have their own learning goals, provide periodic reflections, attend professional development sessions, and provide a summative reflection of their experience. Some instructors have additional requirements in consultation with their advisor and depending on how the teaching experience fits within their program plan.

Student Involvement: One HALE PhD student serves as the Graduate Assistant to help administer this course. All HALE students may serve as instructors for EAD 335 in face-to-face or hybrid classes during Fall and Spring semesters; and HALE PhD students may teach online during Summer.

Faculty Career Development and Enhancement
Roger Baldwin
This line of work focuses on the phases or seasons of the academic career, including the challenges, rewards, and developmental needs of faculty at different career stages (novice to senior). It also considers methods and strategies to support faculty and keep them current and vital as they progress through academic life. Most recently, in collaboration with MSU’s Office of Faculty and Organizational Development, the focus has been on the middle years of the academic career. A Change magazine article summarizes key findings from this project. With support from the Andew Mellon Foundation, Dr. Baldwin also studied the impact of varied faculty career enhancement programs at colleges across the U.S. Quite logically, the next step in this work is to focus specifically on late-career faculty. The goal is to understand this often neglected part of academic life. A second objective is to gather knowledge and insights accumulated over a lifetime that can inform new and aspiring academicians and help them to rank their priorities and plan for a productive and fulfilling career.

Student Involvement: Students have played important roles in this work over many years. They have helped with reviewing the literature, designing data collection strategies, interpreting findings, and collaborating on several conference presentations, and publications. Student involvement continues in the senior faculty phase of this work.

Co-mentoring in the “Classroom”
Roger Baldwin
For several years Dr. Baldwin has co-taught with HALE PhD students who wish to gain teaching experience in MA level courses as part of their graduate education. Many of these students are considering a faculty career, and this is a good way to experience a key part of the academic role first hand. Dr. Baldwin serves as the instructor of record, and the PhD student is called a “teaching apprentice.” These labels may imply that this is a one-way teaching-learning relationship with a mentor who facilitates the learning of an advanced student. However, in reality, this has been a two-way co-mentoring experience where both parties learn and grow from the team teaching opportunity. The teaching apprentice stimulates creative thought about alternative ways to address a topic in class, how to engage students fully in the learning experience, and, especially, how to use technology in effective ways to communicate with millennial students and promote their development. Most recently, this two-way collaboration occurred in Dr. Baldwin’s first online teaching experience. Working with a technologically-sophisticated PhD student was an effective way to help Dr. Baldwin learn alternative ways to use new technological tools in his instruction while the PhD student benefited from the experience of course planning and weekly discussions to plan strategy for each instructional unit. Co-teaching with HALE students is an example of a learning community at its best.

Student Involvement: HALE PhD students have co-taught several classes for over a period of at least six years. This has been a win-win for the teaching apprentice, for Dr. Baldwin, and for students in the classes because they get to see different instructor perspectives on complex educational issues.

The Teaching Practices of Tenure-Eligible and Contingent Faculty
Roger Baldwin and Matthew Wawrzynski
Faculty staffing practices are undergoing a major transformation as many institutions reduce the number of faculty appointed to “permanent” tenure-eligible positions and replace them with instructors on contingent (temporary, short-term) contracts. This shift in faculty appointments has been gradual over a period of years. In the process, there has been little attention to how teaching practices and overall educational quality have been affected by this significant change. To focus attention on this issue, Dr. Baldwin and Dr. Wawrzynski have used data from the National Study of Postsecondary Faculty (NSOPF) to compare the instructional practices of faculty on long-term and short-term contracts (full-time and part-time), their preliminary findings indicate that part-time faculty are less likely to employ learning-centered teaching practices and more likely to use subject-centered teaching methods than are their full-time (tenure-eligible and non-tenure-eligible) faculty colleagues. This work was recently highlighted in a Chronicle of Higher Education story and will soon be published in a special issue of the American Behavioral Scientist that examines this important shift in faculty staffing.

Higher, Adult and Lifelong Education
at Michigan State University