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CTL News

Supports for Teaching and Learning at UCQ

Mohamoud Adam
Director of Academic Development and Support

At the University of Calgary, there is a strong focus on the development of research-informed teaching practice. At UCQ we value quality education, with the ultimate goal of enhancing teaching and learning. Research has shown that teaching and learning is one of the main factors that impact student engagement and student success. To that end, at UCQ we offer numerous supports. Below you will find information related to how various departments and people at UCQ can help you. If you are uncertain about who to contact, please do not hesitate to ask me.

UCQ Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL)

Dr. J. A. Gilles Doiron
Centre for Teaching and Learning Specialist

Supporting you

Listening to you

**Working together to innovate and improve the UCQ
learning environment**

The CTL is here for you: not only to facilitate professional development workshops but also to provide one-on-one and small group consultation on educational issues.

Do you require support for instructional design, such as lesson planning or designing appropriate learning activities or assessments?

Are you interested in educational technology or in selecting/creating educational media? Do you need assistance with Desire2Learn?

The CTL also encourages and supports the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SOTL) and is pleased to assist and collaborate with faculty in formulating research related to classroom or curriculum challenges.

Would you appreciate confidential feedback on your teaching style and classroom interaction? Ask about "Formative Feedback for Classroom Teaching". We'll need to meet for a pre-observation session to select the lesson and review the learning objectives, materials, and activities, and we will select the appropriate classroom teaching observation checklist. After the class, we will then arrange a time to discuss your class.

At the CTL, we are looking forward to sharing our ideas and energy as we seek to create the best possible learning experience for our UCQ students. Drop by or contact me or Angela any time.

The Learning Commons: Not Just for Students

Falina Norred
Writing Centre Specialist

Did you know that our Learning Commons not only offers direct support to students but that we also support faculty research and teaching activities? Whether new or seasoned UCQ faculty, whether hedging with trepidation or battle-ready and initiated, the Learning Commons is a key institutional resource to help you respond to the research and teaching opportunities provided by our unique context at the University of Calgary's branch campus in Qatar.

This context has shaped our "learning commons" as one that extends service boundaries beyond student survival. Supporting faculty transitions and success is a critical mission, and we are committed to collaborating with you so that your curriculum is accessible to our student population.

Mohamoud Adam, Director of Academic Development and Support, puts it best when he says, "our support for faculty is specifically focused on supporting them towards finding and articulating the best evidence-based practices to support teaching and learning."

The Learning Commons provides direct assistance to faculty in the following areas.

Research and Writing Support

Our librarians and writing specialists can provide support for you at every stage of the research and writing process, from refining a research strategy and locating articles to providing feedback on writing in development. The Learning Commons can support faculty to enhance their teaching with a specific focus on the scholarship of teaching and learning. We are committed to moving UCQ to examine our practices with respect to our teaching.

Nursing Instructor, Raigne Symes, for example, recounts assistance with the literature review that was invaluable in moving a UREP project forward: "the Learning Commons has helped me and my students immensely," she says.

In-Class and Course-Related Instruction and Resource Support

Our curriculum-integrated approach to providing literacy instruction and resources can be delivered in-class to your students with a two-week notice and a copy of your syllabus. We provide in-class support through lectures, workshops, and material development (rubrics and assignment templates).

Don't forget that the resource collection of the library can be developed in consultation with us. If your course needs up-to-date resources, please let us know.

Our staff can also provide technical and resource support with *Turnitin* and course management software (D2L).

Academic and Information Literacy Integration

In 2015, as part of the nursing curriculum renewal process at UCQ, a librarian and writing specialist reviewed course outlines and their respective learning objectives to create an academic and information and literacy integration document. This document consists of course-specific assignment recommendations to which you may refer and use in your courses. Each assignment recommendation is associated with various literacy skills that have been distilled from research literature. This project is ongoing. If you would like a copy of this document, please contact Falina.

Feel free to drop by or contact any of us in the Learning Commons - Dan, Doris, Emerson, Falina, Inesia, and Sumayya. Ask us how we can support you in your teaching, and we are sure to have a great conversation!

Improving Comprehension through Collaboration

Jody Shimoda

Undergraduate Program Language Lead

Since 2015, I have served as the Undergraduate Program Language Lead. The goal of this role is to facilitate interdisciplinary pedagogical collaboration between nursing and language instructors in order to enhance classroom practice and improve student learning outcomes. Projects undertaken focus on the promotion of connected content and language delivery through building awareness of the use of second language acquisition pedagogy and practices within content courses. To date, projects have concentrated on instructional strategies as well as language use in content and materials development. Examples of recent projects include:

- the creation of a strategic reading and vocabulary program (materials and delivery strategies) to support a course textbook
- assessing course materials for the use of 'plain language' to develop clear assignment explanations and rubrics
- reviewing and providing feedback for exam testing items with regard to comprehensibility

The goal of this support is to assist content instructors in delivering appropriately leveled classroom instruction and in creating materials that support students studying in a second language. If you have any project ideas or language-related issues in your classroom which you would like to discuss, please do not hesitate to drop by my office, F36E, in the 2nd floor nursing area.

CTL Professional Development Opportunities

Educational sessions

Educational sessions will be offered once or twice a week throughout the semester. Topics of these sessions will be based on themes. At this time, the themes are:

- Teaching English as a Foreign Language Students
- Instructional Strategies
- Educational Technology
- Educational Assessment
- Scholarship of Teaching and Learning

To develop specialized knowledge within a particular theme, faculty will be able to earn certificates.

If faculty members attend three sessions on one theme within one academic year, they will receive a certificate in that theme (for example, *UCQ Certificate in Instructional Strategies*).

Certificate Courses

Longer courses, such as the Instructional Skills Workshop (ISW), will be offered throughout the year at the beginning of the semester, end of semester, or reading break.

For a calendar of events, visit Sharepoint - <https://intranet.ucalgary.edu.ca/sites/ucq/>

If you have any questions, please ask Gilles or Angela.

The First Day of Class

Angela Waigand

To be honest, the first day of class is my least planned day of the semester. Although I walk into the room with a repertoire of ideas and a plethora of materials, what I actually do depends on the cohort of students. If they're all new to the university, I will likely spend more time on the course outline. If they appear to lack classroom etiquette from the start, I may spend more time establishing classroom protocol. If they all know each other, I will spend less time on ice breakers. Regardless of how much time I spend on each task and the approach that I take, I always have the following goals in mind for the first day:

Establish rapport

For Arab students, in particular, having good personal relationships with those they spend time with is important. Arab students appreciate it when instructors want to know them as individuals, they like knowing a little about the instructor, and they enjoy building relationships with their classmates. To establish this rapport and build a community within the classroom, I always incorporate an icebreaking activity into the first day's lesson. For examples of icebreakers, go to:

- <http://www.crlt.umich.edu/blog/breaking-ice-your-students>
- <https://ucats.osu.edu/bookshelf/teaching-topics/shaping-a-positive-learning-environment/12-icebreakers-college-classroom/>

Make sure that the students understand how the course objectives and outcomes of my class fit into their overall learning

For example, if I'm teaching an academic writing course, I ensure that students understand why academic writing is important to their education, in general, and how certain concepts and skills that we cover will help them in their nursing courses, in particular. I want the students to understand the importance and relevance of my course from the very beginning so they are more likely to focus and apply themselves in and outside of class. In the past, I have had previous students come on the first day so they can speak from their own perspective of how my course fits into their overall education and how what they learn has helped them in their other courses and in nursing. To read an article on establishing relevance, visit:

- <https://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/effective-teaching-strategies/why-are-we-doing-this-establishing-relevance-to-enhance-student-learning/>

Review the course outline

Again, my approach will depend on the group. Regardless of which approach I take, I will usually choose to focus on certain parts of the course outline myself but allow students to take responsibility for understanding other parts on their own. I may do this by giving them the course outline as a jigsaw reading with follow-up comprehension questions or I may ask them to read

parts of it at home and then take a Desire2Learn (D2L) quiz to check their comprehension. For an extended explanation of jigsaw reading, see:

- <https://www.schreyerinstitute.psu.edu/pdf/alex/jigsaw.pdf>

To create a quiz in D2L, see:

- <http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/quizzes-and-survey-basics/>

Use active learning strategies

I want students to understand that it won't be enough to sit and listen in my class. From the very first day, I use a variety of activities. Students may have to work in groups or pairs, or they may write on the whiteboards or do an activity where they mingle with other classmates. I may also give them partial outlines to ensure that they take notes. For an article on active learning in higher education, read:

- <https://www.stlhe.ca/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/STLHE-Newsletter-45-2007-Winter.pdf>

Share classroom expectations

From the first day, I want to develop a classroom of mutual respect and understanding of expectations. One of the strategies that I have used in the past is illustrated in *Best and Worst Classes*, found here:

- <https://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/teaching-professor-blog/first-day-of-class-activities-that-create-a-climate-for-learning/>

Teach something

Even on the first day, I teach *something*. I want the students to understand that time is valuable and that we need to make the most of each minute. I want them to understand that I care about their learning, to care about their own learning, and to be excited to learn something from the very first day.

Call for Submissions

We will be launching our **first official newsletter** in January, 2018. The purpose of *CTL News* will be to share research, ideas, and insights into teaching and build a community of educators.

We are looking for contributors who have:

- successfully tried a new teaching idea in class
- observed a class that used a great teaching strategy
- tested a new assessment strategy that was successful
- attended a workshop at UCQ or elsewhere that others might find useful
- read an article about teaching that others should know about
- conducted research on their teaching that they'd like to share

If you have an idea, consider submitting an article.

Submission guidelines

- All articles must be related to teaching, the scholarship of teaching and learning, or education and they must be relevant to the UCQ context.
- If citations are used, they must be formatted according to APA style.
- All articles submitted are subject to editorial review.
- The deadline for submission for the January edition is November 16, 2017.

For more information or to discuss your ideas, please contact Angela.

Contacts

| Name | Position | Contact | Email | Office |
|-------------------|---|-----------|-------------------------------|--------|
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