| Faculty Learning Community Application **2017-18** | |
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| Applicant Information | |
| Name: | Status:  \_\_\_ Tenure-track faculty \_\_\_ Lecturer/Sr. Lecturer  \_\_\_ Part-time faculty/Adjunct \_\_\_ Staff |
| Office Phone: |
| Department: | Course(s) that you teach: |
| Email Address: | Number of years teaching/working at UMBC: \_\_\_\_\_\_ |
| WHICH FLC(s) ARE YOU APPLYING FOR?Although you may only participate in one FLC, you may choose up to 3 to apply to, ranking them 1, 2, and 3 below to indicate your order of preference. We will try to accommodate your first choice. Descriptions of all the proposed FLCs are at the end of this application form. | |
| \_\_\_\_ **Critical thinking: Teaching students to analyze, evaluate, and use information**  (Co-Facilitators: Joanna Gadsby & Katy Sullivan, Library)  \_\_\_\_ **Fostering Engagement in the Digital Classroom**  (Co-Facilitators: Milvia Hernandez, MLLI, & Tim Phin, Ancient Studies)  \_\_\_\_ **Fostering Student Reflection and Self-Regulation**  (Facilitator: Kal Nanes, Mathematics & Statistics)  \_\_\_\_ **Improving Student Writing: Exploring Evidence-Based Feedback Methods**  (Facilitator: John Schumacher, Sociology, Anthropology, Health Administration and Policy)  \_\_\_\_ **Teaching Falsifiability and “alternative facts” as an APP or in the classroom** (Facilitator: Craig Saper, Language, Literacy & Culture)  \_\_\_\_ **Teaching Sustainability & Climate Change** (Co-Facilitators: Matt Baker, GES, & Roy Meyers, Political Science)  \_\_\_\_ **What makes a good test? Designing and improving summative assessments**  (Facilitator: Sarah Leupen, Biological Sciences) | |
| Background & interest Please respond to the following questions in reference to your first choice of FLCs. | |
| 1. Why would you like to participate in this faculty learning community? | |
| 1. Do you have some expertise, experience or information relevant to this topic? If so, please describe briefly. | |
| 3. What changes in your teaching practice might you be interested in making through participating in the FLC? | |

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| **FALL 2017 SCHEDULE**  Please mark the times during which you will ***not*** be regularly available during the fall semester. | | | | | | |
|  | Monday | tuesday | wednesday | thursday | | friday |
| 8:00-8:50 |  |  |  |  | |  |
| 9:00-9:50 |  |  |  |  | |  |
| 10:00-10:50 |  |  |  |  | |  |
| 11:00-11:50 |  |  |  |  | |  |
| 12:00-12:50 |  |  |  |  | |  |
| 1:00-1:50 |  |  |  |  | |  |
| 2:00-2:50 |  |  |  |  | |  |
| 3:00-3:50 |  |  |  |  | |  |
| 4:00-4:50 |  |  |  |  | |  |
| 5:00-5:50 |  |  |  |  | |  |
| Signatures | | | | | | |
| **APPLICANT:** If I am selected as a participant in the Faculty Learning Community, I agree to participate fully in the community’s activities. I will participate in the meetings, readings, projects and reports associated with this learning community. I will share things I learn with other faculty members. | | | | | | |
| Signature of applicant: | | | | | Date: | |
| **DEPARTMENT CHAIR/SUPERVISOR:** I endorse the above applicant’s participation in the Faculty Learning Community and will value the curricular and pedagogical work completed by acknowledging the time commitment required by the FLC. | | | | | | |
| Signature of Chair/Supervisor: | | | | | Date: | |

Please submit your application by email to [fdc@umbc.edu](mailto:fdc@umbc.edu) **by Friday, May 26, 2017**. Applicants will be notified by June 23, 2017 of their acceptance to an FLC.

**DESCRIPTIONS OF PROPOSED FLCs**

**2017-18**

**Critical thinking: Teaching students to analyze, evaluate, and use information**

**(Co-Facilitators: Joanna Gadsby and Katy Sullivan, Library)**

How do we encourage students to move beyond opinions formed from click-bait headlines and limited personal experience in order to think critically about information? A recent study conducted by the Stanford History Education Group verified what we have been experiencing in our classrooms: Students, of varying ages and backgrounds, are ill-equipped to critically evaluate the credibility of information available to them. The researchers’ findings demonstrate that most college students cannot distinguish between mainstream and fringe sources and do not recognize potential bias in information.

In this FLC, we will investigate ways to introduce students to a reflective discovery and critique of information, an understanding of how information is produced and valued in our various disciplines, and use of information in creating new knowledge. As a deliverable, participants will develop or revise units, lessons, assignments, activities, or assessments to support students’ abilities to critically evaluate information.

**Fostering Engagement in the Digital Classroom  
(Co-Facilitators: Milvia Hernandez, MLLI, and Tim Phin, Ancient Studies)**

This FLC aims to examine a variety of digital tools, web-based applications, and Blackboard add-ons that permit students to share, view, and discuss visual and textual materials among themselves and with their instructors. These tools create a space for asynchronous conversations that can be referenced both inside and outside of the traditional classroom. The pedagogical value of these tools is that they help to maximize conversations and/or discussions, whether those are held between students and their instructors or among the students themselves. These discussions then create an environment that enhances student productivity and engagement.

In this FLC we will explore and plan to implement these learning tools (e.g. VoiceThread, Padlet, Collaborate, Google Docs, etc.). Participants will develop assignments using one or several of these tools in order to enrich their lessons and lectures so that learners will develop their critical thinking skills and advance their digital literacy. The chief goal of this FLC will be for participants to develop, implement, and assess at least one new digital assignment or modify an existing one.

**Fostering Student Reflection and Self-Regulation**

**(Facilitator: Kal Nanes, Mathematics and Statistics)**

Many students have very limited understanding of what learning is and how to do it effectively. Many rely on unproductive study methods, appear unable to monitor and direct their own thought processes, and seem to give up too quickly when faced with challenging problems. Research shows, however, that the range of skills, attitudes, and habits that students need to develop in order to become effective, independent learners can be nurtured in our classrooms.

In this FLC, we will discuss what’s known about promoting student self-regulation including fostering student metacognition, persistence, and abilities to self-evaluate. Participants will work together on developing strategies and activities to capture these ideas in their courses.

**Improving Your Students’ Writing: Exploring Evidence-Based Feedback Methods  
(Facilitator: John Schumacher, Sociology & Anthropology)**

Faculty across disciplines are often dissatisfied with the basic quality and clarity of their students’ writing. Yet, few faculty have any expertise or training in evidence-based ways to improve student writing through their assignments, papers, and associated writing feedback. Does the prospect of reading 35 (or more) student research papers, lab reports, or another thesis/dissertation draft fill you with angst?

The objective of this FLC is to interrupt this cycle by exploring the interdisciplinary literature on best practices in improving student writing, integrating these findings into courses, and responding to student papers, theses, and dissertations. FLC participants will review the last 10 years of evidence-based writing feedback techniques and then practice using them in their own disciplinary teaching and scholarly advising activities. FLC participants will have a set of new techniques, tailored to their own classes, and become knowledgeable resources for other interested faculty members in their departments.

**Teaching Falsifiability and “alternative facts” as an APP or in the classroom  
(Facilitator: Craig Saper, Language, Literacy & Culture)**

Scientists agree that the foundation of the scientific method is falsifiability: For a hypothesis to be verifiable, the hypothesis must also be potentially proved false. Yet, even as it is the cornerstone of science (and a crucial part of logic, rhetoric, and scholarly research throughout the university), we rarely teach it explicitly in our classes.

In this FLC we will explore whether and how we teach falsifiability in our classrooms. We may also explore the following questions: How might we teach falsifiability across all disciplines? How might falsifiability relate to legitimate news and scholarship, fake news, and "alternative facts?" Does it relate to issues of school choice and funding of vouchers? Should falsifiability be taught in the social sciences, arts, or humanities, or simply in the sciences? What can we learn about teaching falsifiability from science education? Or, what can we learn about teaching falsifiability for science education? Finally, can computer scientists and technologists develop ways to test falsifiability algorithmically?

**Teaching Sustainability and Climate Change  
(Co-Facilitators: Matt Baker, GES, and Roy Meyers, Political Science)**

How do we prepare informed students for living in a world with climate substantially altered by human action? How can we build the capacity of students to act so that those disruptions do not become catastrophic? Some UMBC classes already address these questions, but usually within department or disciplinary silos.

This learning community will bring together faculty from across campus to share disciplinary approaches for teaching these topics and to foster communication among faculty and across disciplinary boundaries. Faculty will discuss effective pedagogical strategies for building student awareness of the causes and impacts of climate change, and to develop their ability to contribute to sustainable mitigation and adaptation responses. They will also explore the potential for a coordinated, interdisciplinary sustainability curriculum across campus.

**What makes a good test? Designing and improving summative assessments  
(Facilitator: Sarah Leupen, Biology)**

Many disciplines use exams for summative assessment (either as their entire summative assessment or part of it), but few faculty have been trained in how to design them. In addition to exploring the research on improving a test’s reliability and validity, we will also consider more philosophical questions about learning goals and the purposes of summative assessment. In other words, are we using summative assessments to measure learning, to promote learning, to differentiate/rank students? And how should we best design assessments to meet the specific goals of our philosophy, discipline, and course.

The group may also go beyond thinking about traditional exams to explore practical skills testing, oral exams, and other types of assessments. The literature has much to say about how to design assessments, and we can learn from that. But within disciplines we tend to have narrow ideas of what constitutes a good test, thus we can no doubt learn a great deal through simple cross-disciplinary conversations.