Final Reporting from FLC's

Faculty Learning Community (FLC) on Enhancing the Quantity and Quality of Academic Reading of Graduate Students

This FLC **was established in spring 2012 and** investigated a graduate students' reading, and designed and implemented teaching interventions tested the classes the members teach. We developed a plan of activities to understand AUB graduate students' difficulties with academic reading and to find ways to overcome these difficulties. We started by discussing the relevant literature about challenges to graduate reading in western and non-western contexts, then assessed instructors' and graduate students' perspectives on graduate student reading by holding 5 focus group discussions with faculty and students.

Main findings indicate differences in views and expertise. Faculty expected readers to be able to understand differences among genres and manage large quantities of reading. Students were perceived to lack reading skills, while students reported they read a wide range of genres, face challenges with academic reading, find a disconnect between theoretical readings and practice, and are unable to see meaning/relevance of readings to their lives.
The interventions tested infused informal conversations about reading, developed graduate level reading skills in the course learning outcomes, integrated activities and conversations about reading in course material assessing effectiveness through interactive forums. The interventions suggest that quantity and quality of reading can be enhanced in graduate courses when instructors draw explicitly on abilities and knowledge students bring; integrate graduate reading skills in course designs and build in specific strategies to support good reading.
Recommendations for faculty members to support graduate student reading pertain to a change of attitude and approach to teaching through knowing their students by asking about their reading experiences, existing knowledge and skills, being explicit about expectations, providing guidance and strategies for advanced reading.
To test more of the FLC activities across classes at AUB, both graduate and undergraduate to integrate regular conversations on reading and allow students' experiences to be shared.

Faculty Learning Community (FLC) on Community-Based Learning (CBL)

Following a foundational Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) workshop in Fall 2011, faculty in the English Department integrated Community-Based Learning (CBL) into their courses. Recognizing that effective CBL requires robust cross-departmental support, a multidisciplinary **Faculty Learning Community (FLC) on CBL** was established in Spring 2012.

The initiative aimed to serve as a collaborative forum for networking, exploring course-level implementations, examining the impact of CBL on teaching writing, and laying the groundwork for sustainable multidisciplinary cooperation. Over the 2012–2013 academic year, members successfully experimented with classroom applications, documented resources on SharePoint (facilitated by Rayan Fayed), and engaged with campus stakeholders—including CCECS, the Neighborhood Institute, and the FHS Outreach Unit.

Main findings and challenges indicate that while classroom implementation and peer-to-peer support succeeded, institutional and structural hurdles hindered long-term multidisciplinary growth: *Scope & Recruitment Barriers***:** The original title ("FLC on CBL in Writing") inadvertently siloed participation within writing programs, discouraging cross-disciplinary engagement. *Expertise & Scheduling Constraints***:** Competing faculty schedules made meetings difficult to sustain, and the heavy reliance on only one or two experienced members created a coaching bottleneck.
Attrition & Sustainability: By Fall 2013, departures, sabbaticals, and leaves severely reduced the core membership. Revised efforts to recruit campus-wide failed to generate active cross-departmental interest, prompting the FLC to suspend operations for the 2013–2014 academic year.

Recommendations: To ensure future FLCs achieve sustainable, campus-wide impact, institutional adjustments are required: **Institutional Recognition:** Formally recognize and reward faculty time and effort dedicated to FLC work through workload weighting or professional development incentives to secure commitment. **Specialized Professional Support:** Partner with expert units—such as CCECS to manage community partner vetting and placements, and CTL to deliver structured workshops on CBL course design and assessment methodologies.

Faculty Learning Community (FLC) on Team-Based Learning

In the beginning of the 2012-2013 fall semester, the FLC on Team-Based Learning (TBL) was created. The objectives of this FLC were to explore ideas, evidence-based information, and resources on TBL, at both undergraduate and graduate levels. The TBL FLC members (N=8) met nine times every 3 weeks over 7 months, and engaged in various activities, including reading, planning, and running TBL teaching modules. Many issues were discussed in length to include peer evaluation, the use of a modified format of TBL that is customized to the course's learning goals and schedule, and teaching scholarship. Most importantly, most members experimented with TBL by running a full TBL module or customizing it to their students' needs and teaching objectives. Interestingly, participants learnt and experimented with additional teaching and learning methods such as blended learning, voice over power point (VOP) and audio response systems (ARS or clickers). Most participants valued the interactive discussions, sharing of experiences, and collegiality. Challenges included lack of time commitment, and the difficulty in pursuing an individual educational project.

Recommendations: This is a report on a first relatively positive experience with a TBL FLC at AUB. We hope that data from the individual teaching and learning projects that were facilitated by participation in this FLC are disseminated within the academic community. This is important as any FLC's ultimate aims are to enhance students' learning, foster interdisciplinary collegiality and promote teaching scholarship.

Faculty Learning Community on Blended Learning: Design, Implementation and Assessment

This FLC allowed its participants to assess the effectiveness of Blended Learning on students, and bridge the divide between students and faculty members.

To achieve its goals, the FLC conducted 3 Focus Groups and 2 Faculty interviews. The interview questions focused on the themes of course design, workload, pedagogy, and perceptions of success. The FLC then bridged the results between students' focus groups and faculty interviews.

Main findings were that students reported that Blended courses helped improve their interpersonal communication skills, gave them the space for them to practice giving constructive criticism to their peers, and allowed them to have a flexible schedule, which enhanced proactive learning and improved their research skills and their sense of accountability. Almost all students perceived Blended Learning to be more work and thus a more stressful experience. Other issues related to course organization and administration were also brought up such as unclear syllabus, lack and or insufficient feedback by course instructors; vague assignments particularly forums with no clear purpose not to mention cheating and copying during online exams. All reported technical challenges related to connectivity issues. The research team still needs to continue interviewing faculty members to complete the research.

Recommendations were to develop a Blended Learning Toolkit, enhance the students' orientations and evaluation, and organize an awareness event to promote this teaching methodology (E-learning Day).