Next Steps: Programs, Resources and Links

Next steps:
Explore our online resources
Sign up for the Preparing Future Faculty Series. Start with the Seminar, then workshop on Course Design, then create your teaching dossier through the seminar and workshop on teaching

Find more information about teaching with our Instructor’s Online Tutorial: http://teaching.uchicago.edu/tutorial/index.html

Discussion Leading Resources:
Peter Frederick, “The Dreaded Discussion” Improving College and University Teaching, 29 (1981)
David Yamane, “Course Preparation Assignments” Teaching Sociology 34 (2006)
Barbara Gross Davis, “Discussion Strategies” Tools for Teaching

Sign up for next quarter’s programs at:
Teaching.uchicago.edu

This quarter, 30 faculty members and postdoctoral teaching fellows from 18 different departments came together to take on the always prevalent teaching challenge: discussion leading. Robert Lagueux, founding director of the first-year seminar program and director of the teaching academy at Columbia College, led the group in addressing questions such as: What are the goals of a class discussion, How do we avoid common pitfalls? How can we provoke thoughtful and engaging conversations among our students?

Email teaching@college.uchicago.edu to get involved.

Smart Teaching Spotlight: Megan Heffernan – Discussion Leading

This November, Megan Heffernan requested an individual teaching consultation from the center in order to receive feedback and enhance her teaching. Two of our consultants visited Megan’s MAPH core class on a Friday afternoon and were impressed with the deftness with which she led discussion.

Here is what her consultants, Cecilia Lo and Brandon Cline had to say:

Megan has developed an excellent skill set for facilitating discussion, which showed in a robust class dialogue. She has an assertive but congenial classroom presence, asked open-ended questions that encouraged analytical reasoning, and felt comfortable admitting her uncertainty about an issue. When students got stuck in a complex issue (the distinction between the ideological and repressive state apparatus in Althusser’s revision of Marx), Megan was adept in helping students break the issue down into a series of smaller, easier to handle questions.
Over 650 students and faculty participated in CTL programs this quarter

**Our Fall 2011 Programs**

**Graduate Student Programs:**
- “Workshop on Teaching in the College”
- “Workshop on Philosophy of Teaching Statements”
- “Seminar on Teaching Portfolios”
- “Workshop on Teaching Portfolios”
- “Seminar on Course Design”
- “Workshop on Course Design”
- “Creating Assignments to Structure Your Course”
- “PFF Luncheon: Teaching at Liberal Arts Colleges” with faculty from across the Midwest
- “Visual Literacy in the Classroom: How to Find, Create, and Display Images” Amanda Rybin
- “Structuring Your Scientific Paper” Jean-luc Duomont

**Microteaching**
- “Increasing Undergraduate Achievement in Science at Highly Selective Universities: an Overview of Some Classic and Recent Studies” Craig Nelson
- “Succeeding at the Academic Job Market in the Sciences” Elizabeth LeClair

**Individual Teaching Consultations and Mid-Course Reviews**

**Faculty Programs:**
- “SSA Faculty Retreat: Classroom Teaching Issues, Part I: Teaching Students at Different Levels of Ability. Part II: Some Strategies for Leading Effective Discussions” Rob Lagueux
- Junior Faculty Seminar: ‘Leading Discussion’ Rob Lagueux,
  - Part I: How and Why, Pitfalls and Solutions’,
  - Part II: Some Strategies and Thoughts on Discussion Leading”

**Teaching Consultant Programs:**
- “Teaching with Technology” Rob Lagueux
- “Discussion Leading: Case Studies” Rob Lagueux

She asked students to think back to what they had already learned (what Marxist theory said about the State), helped them reiterate what they had a good handle on (how things worked according to what Marx said about bourgeoisie law), and then built discussion back up to the complex question by asking students to compare and contrast what they already knew and with the new information.

It was also readily apparent that Megan had cultivated a collegial classroom environment: almost everyone participated in discussion, and the interchanges occurred predominately between students without needing to be funneled through Megan.