Division III Brown Bag Discussion

Sept. 17, 2014

Present: John Caraher, Sharon Crary, Hilary Eppley, Bridget Gourley, Dan Gurnon, Jacob Hale, Jeff Hansen, David Harvey, Matt Hertenstein, Mary Kertzman, Pascal Lafontant, Rich Martoglio, Jim Mills, Selma Poturovic, Pam Propsom, Jackie Roberts, Michael Roberts, Dan Rusu, Daniel Scott, Naima Shifa, Fred Soster, Khadija Stewart

Jackie presented a brief summary of the results of the FY student TOSLS scientific literacy skills test. We don’t have a ceiling effect; our results are within the range of those presented in the original Gormally et al. paper and should allow us to detect any change at post-test.

Then people shared new approaches they’re using in classes this semester.

Dan Gurnon—SRF, Understanding Science, ½ credit class for first-year students. Idea is based on a technique called CREATE, which he got from our WISER website. Uses brief primary source papers and the accompanying popular press summaries. Then looking at process of science in various science disciplines at DePauw. This process has helped students express some of their anxieties about science. Another person suggested that it’s important to deal with students’ emotions and worries related to science, and we don’t always feel like we have time or that it fits into our regular courses. First-Year Seminars are a place where some of this can occur and we seem to have more science FYS classes this year.

Michael Roberts—Changes made to his Statistics and Cognitive Psych courses as a result of Ed Prather’s summer workshop and the S Workshop. Students do more working with partners, worksheets, reading primary sources and questioning their understanding. More sense of community in the class. Using Ed’s ABCD “response system” to get at student understanding. It’s been helpful to him; better gauge on what students are getting and what they’re not, when he needs to move on and what he needs to review.

Daniel Scott—Also using the ABCD cards. One of his biggest challenges is coming up with good, reasonable wrong answers that students might give. He uses the cards more to force everyone to vote “yes” or “no” on questions.

ABCD activity helps keep students awake at 8:00 a.m. Can identify students who consistently answer wrong and reach out to them for special attention. Forces all students to get involved and not just the one or two vocal ones who always participate. Some people are also using mobile, individual whiteboards for students. Can also collect the whiteboards and use the student answers to do an ABCD vote on.

Another person does a lot of group work and students have to turn in a certain number of “tickets” or come to the board to show their work to get full participation credit in the course. Loosens up the students and makes them more likely to ask questions.

How do we capture “more lively classrooms” as a measure when we’re writing the IUSE grant?

We need to make contact with Jamie Stockton, who has done some previous research on DePauw students’ science literacy.