Telg, a faculty member at UF since 1995, is well known for his work in distance education instructional design and as an adviser to many students in the department’s communication and leadership development program. He advises as many as 60 undergraduates in that program each year, as well as several master’s and doctoral students. He also oversees his department’s two undergraduate minors in extension education and agricultural communication, as well as the interdisciplinary minor in leadership.

Telg founded UF’s Agricultural Communicators of Tomorrow organization in 1995 and its student members have consistently been part of the ACT’s national leadership. Among his many other awards, Telg was IFAS’ nominee for UF’s Academy of Distinguished Teaching Scholars in 2009 and in 2008, he received the Southern Regional Outstanding Teacher Award from the North American Colleges and Teachers of Agriculture.
**SPRING 2011 BROWN BAG SEMINAR SERIES**

The Spring 2011 Brown Bag Seminar Series will include four presentations focused on faculty development in lecture, technology, and quality student assessment.

Please visit the Teaching Resource Center web site or email Natalie Coers (ncoers@ufl.edu) to register for the seminars you plan to attend. Please feel free to bring your lunch to enjoy during the seminar.

**Tuesday, January 18**  
*Engaging Students in Large Lecture*  
Noon-1PM, MCCD 1031  
Guest Panel

**Tuesday, February 15**  
*Creating Quality Exams*  
Noon-1PM, MCCD 1031  
Dr. Grady Roberts

**Tuesday, March 15**  
*Creating Quality Rubrics*  
Noon-1PM, MCCD 1031  
Dr. Linda Jones

**Tuesday, April 12**  
*Innovative Uses of Sakai*  
Noon-1PM, FSHN 362  
Guest Panel

**SCHOLARSHIP OF TEACHING & LEARNING**

The Scholarship of Teaching & Learning group is designed to connect a faculty member’s teaching and course design practices to research. Over the course of a semester, faculty members in this group will develop a research idea connected to teaching and learning, solidify the research project, and move the project through IRB approval in preparation of implementing the project. The group will meet 1-2 times per month for the Spring 2011 semester, with meetings being held on various Tuesdays over the lunch hour. If you are interested in being a part of the Spring 2011 Scholarship of Teaching & Learning group, please contact Dr. Grady Roberts (groberts@ufl.edu), or Natalie Coers (ncoers@ufl.edu).

**HOW ARE YOU USING SAKAI?**

The Spring 2011 semester marks the transition to the Sakai course management system for all faculty and students. The tools available through Sakai offer faculty new opportunities for innovative uses of the course management system for each of their courses. The CALS Teaching Resource Center is seeking faculty members and graduate assistants who are utilizing these new tools in innovative ways for their courses. As you make the transition to Sakai, let us know: how are you using Sakai in your teaching? Email Natalie Coers (ncoers@ufl.edu) with your comments, or follow the link below to fill out the [Innovative Sakai Uses form](#).

**SAVE THE DATE…**

**12TH ANNUAL**

**CALS TEACHING ENHANCEMENT SYMPOSIUM**

**TUESDAY, AUGUST 16, 2011**

“TEACHING THE iGENERATION”
In addition, IFAS’ Grady Roberts received one of the two USDA/NIFA New Teacher Awards, given to faculty with no more than seven years of teaching experience in higher education. The award carries with it a $2,000 stipend.

Roberts, an associate professor with the agricultural education and communication department since 2008, is director of the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences’ Teaching Resource Center. The resource center serves CALS instructors and faculty through workshops, seminars and individual consultations to improve teaching skills. It also acts as a reservoir for state-of-the-art information about teaching and learning.

Roberts was a faculty member in agricultural education at Texas A&M University for four years before joining the UF faculty in 2008. His research interests include experiential learning and teaching and learning in university settings; and he is the author or co-author of 40 peer-reviewed journal articles. Roberts was recognized as a Teacher Fellow by the North American Colleges and Teachers of Agriculture in 2009.

UF leads all institutions in the number of faculty recognized by the Excellence in College and University Teaching Awards with 12. The following current and former UF/IFAS faculty have received awards since the program began in 1992: National Teaching Award—Rick Rudd (2006), Elaine Turner (2004), Michael Olexa (2001), Gail Kauwell (2000), Donald Hall (1997); New Teacher Award—Brian Myers (2008); Regional Teaching Award—Michael Kane (2009), Tracy Hoover (1999), Direlle Baird (1995), John Strayer (1994). The APLU is an association of 218 public research universities, land-grant institutions and public university systems.

National Teaching Awards Presented to Two CALS Faculty Members (cont’d)

Engage Your Students with Google Voice in the Classroom

by Kate Tyler

While some professors at the University of Florida are trying to minimize cell phone usage during class, one professor is encouraging it.

Sherry Larkin, an associate professor in the department of food and resource economics, started using a feature of Google Voice last fall that allows students to e-mail or text questions to the professor during class.

“I have been brainstorming different ways to get students involved for a long time,” Larkin said. “I attempted to harness the power of the dark side.”

Larkin implemented the system in fall 2009 after enrollment in her class, Valuing Environmental Protection in Florida, reached over 200 students.

Google Voice is a free service offered by Google that can be used in a personal or business setting. It allows customers to link multiple phones together to one number and allows them to monitor incoming messages online.

In this setting, students are able to text message one phone number during class and ask a question about the course material. A professor can then monitor the incoming messages and use the feedback to steer the class discussion, Larkin said.

This system also encourages students to ask questions that they may be nervous to ask in front of a large class.

“I remember sitting in classes wanting to ask questions but I never asked,” Larkin said. “This system provides an alternative.”

Although some days she receives more text messages then others, Larkin believes that students are excited to utilize the program.

“Sometimes I will receive text messages that simply say ‘I like your shoes today,’” Larkin said.

Kathryn Earley, a student in her class, commends Larkin for coming up with the unique idea.

“I think it is a good idea for large classes like this one,” Earley said.

Larkin is still brainstorming different ways to utilize Google Voice in her classroom, and plans to continue using the program in the future.

“At least students are engaged in class,” Larkin said. “Instead of text messaging their friends, they are texting me.”
Blogging in the Classroom: Pedagogical Approaches to Using Blogs for Reflection

An Innovative Idea Submitted by Dr. Greg Gifford, Dr. Nicole Stedman, & Karen Cannon

Introduction
Reflection has been a long-standing tradition in agricultural education, especially as it relates to the use of experiential learning in classrooms (Roberts, 2006). There are many theoretical orientations to experiential learning and each identifies the practice of reflection as an essential learning component in the educational process (Townsend, 2002). Traditional reflection methods have included journaling (paper and electronic document), shared discussion, role play/taking, making metaphors, fish bowling, etc. However, as the student demographic changes and millennials become the prevailing student majority identifying teaching methods which align with their comfort and preferences will be increasingly important. Blogging as means to engage student reflection is an appropriate and relevant tool to add to the teaching “toolbox.” Yet, before an instructor can capitalize on this method it is important to establish a basis for what blogging is and the many forms it can take as a classroom pedagogical tool.

Methodology
Blogs are part of a cadre of online tools that have grown in popularity in recent years (Richardson, 2006). Blogs, originally known as Web Logs, are instantly updateable websites that allow the author or authors to publish personal thoughts and comments in the same manner as a personal journal or diary (Blood, 2002). Scholars have commented on the integration of blogs into teaching and learning, developed specific strategies for utilizing blogs in the classroom and have suggested using blogs for the dissemination of information from teacher to learner and from learner to teacher (Gifford, 2009; Gupta & Meglich, 2008; Pittinsky, 2003; Richardson, 2006).

Three methods we utilized for blogging in the classroom included instructor blog (teacher to learner), student blog (learner to teacher) and a combination of instructor and student blogs (teacher to learner/learner to teacher). Each of the three methods presents a unique strategy for instructors and learners to analyze and synthesize course concepts and discussions.

Student Blog
In an undergraduate leadership course, students participated in a 20-hour service-learning project outside of and in addition to the classroom requirement. Students were assigned to write a series of leadership blogs to reflect upon their service-learning project and integrate concepts learned in the classroom with the experiences at the project site. Students were specifically assigned to use a “what — so what — now what” model in their writing. Students using the what—so what—now what model for a blogging reflection exercise averaged higher grades and more consistently met the objectives of the assignment.

Instructor Blog
In an undergraduate agricultural communications course the instructor utilized a course blog as a tool to reach students outside of the classroom. The blog provided a means to encourage critical thinking about class topics or objectives, as well as additional academic content that could not be covered in class. Using blogs in this manner allows for more time outside the actual classroom that instructors can stimulate thought and provide extra incentive for searching out and using additional resources.

Combination Blog
In a graduate leadership course both instructor and students blogged about personal leadership experiences. This allowed for students to have a model of blogging provided by the instructor, but also provided students with insight into the instructor’s thoughts about leadership and her faculty role. Students shared their personal stories and thoughts over the course of the semester and were encouraged to read one another’s blogs and post comments which were supportive and reflective. Additionally, a course blog was developed to host thoughts and perspectives related to the course, as well as provide a platform for links to student blogs. It has been found to be an innovative way to have students reflect on their experiences and familiarize them with social media.

Advice to Others
Educators’ use of internet tools will enhance teaching and learning with a generation of students who are increasingly using the internet as a primary source of information (Gupta & Meglich, 2008). Educators may find adaptation of pedagogy to meet this shift toward the internet to be a particularly useful and effective method for meeting the learning styles of today’s students (Pittinsky, 2003).

Educators may consider integrating blogging technology into the learning experience for students by replacing hand-written or hard copy journals with online blogs. Educators may also find blogging useful as a means for disseminating, reviewing and supplementing course material.

References


Dr. Greg Gifford and Dr. Nicole Stedman are faculty members in the Agricultural Education and Communication Department. Karen Cannon is an AEC doctoral student.
SUBMIT YOUR NEWSLETTER IDEAS...

The Teaching Resource Center newsletter—CALS EduGator—will be a monthly publication for CALS teaching faculty members. The newsletters will include: features of innovative ideas used by CALS faculty, teaching tips, Teaching Resource Center event information, teaching resource recommendations from faculty members and other various items. If you have an innovative idea for us to feature in the newsletter, an upcoming event you would like announced, or a resource you would like to share, please contact Natalie Coers (ncoers@ufl.edu) with more information.

Newsletter submissions for the February edition are due by January 15.

VISION

Fostering excellence in the scholarship of teaching and learning.

MISSION

Positively impact the academic experience of CALS students by providing services and resources designed to enhance the teaching abilities and professional development of CALS faculty.

PROGRAMMATIC THEMES

Distance Education  Outcomes & Assessment
Technology Enhanced Instruction  Advising & Mentoring
Teaching Effectiveness & Innovation  Curriculum Development