

Inside Independent Learning

Looking Back, Looking Forward

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This month marks the one-year anniversary of our Inside Independent Learning Newsletter, and what a year it has been! Together, we have discovered new tools, set standards, and assisted nearly one thousand students in achieving their educational goals!

Every day, Independent Learning embodies the Wisconsin Idea by providing educational opportunities to students outside of a physical classroom.

Independent Learning continues to grow; this year, DCS IL instructors are working with over 100 students



more than this time last year.

As instructors, we have connected with our colleagues and shared successes and frustrations. We have worked as a team to address common problems

and needs.

The coming year is certain to bring more exciting changes. More courses will be revised: We will serve more students. We will undergo the first round of the ACE accreditation process as we strive to gain recommended credit status, making the credit transfer process easier for our out-of-state students.

And, while we cannot predict what additional changes the coming year will bring, we can be certain that we will work together to meet any challenges that come our way.

IL Instructor Meeting

Announcing the Forth Quarterly DCS IL Instructor Appreciation and Professional Development Meeting: A Working Lunch with the D2L Design & Development Team

**August 21, 1-3 pm
Room 7045, 21 N. Park Street
Madison, WI 53715**

The focus of the May DCS IL Instructor meeting was a listening session. We enjoyed hearing from you about your ideas, questions, and concerns.

We are dedicated to improving the IL program as an academic team and we value your feedback.

The next IL Instructor Meeting will be held at the end of summer, on August 21st.

Members of the D2L Design & Development team, who work on our course revisions with us, will be

present at the meeting to give a presentation on D2L tools that can be helpful in managing your D2L courses so that your instructional time is more productive and rewarding.

If you are interested in finding out more about D2L tools and the Design & Development team, I invite you to browse their new website: www.ce.uwex.edu/campus-partnerships/online-program-development/instructional-design/resources/

At this website, you can access their assortment of helpful tip sheets for D2L courses. You might find it useful to read about some of the tools and think about how they might augment your teaching in advance of the August meeting.



D2L Exams with Software Secure

Recently, our partner institution UW Extension made a strategic decision to close its exam proctoring room. This means that students can no longer take their IL exams with UW Extension in Madison.

This change does not impact some of our students at all. Students residing outside of the Dane County area will still follow the same procedure for finding and getting an exam proctor approved. For students living in the Madison area, this means that they will also have to follow the procedure for finding and getting their local exam proctors approved, instead of simply scheduling their exam with the Extension Proctoring Service.

If you are working with a student who is struggling to find an exam proctor in the Madison area, please let Sarah (skorpi@dcs.wisc.edu) know. She is happy to work with students to find an acceptable exam proctor.

Closing the exam proctoring room also signifies a new exam proctoring method for IL students enrolled in D2L courses. Soon, IL students taking courses via

D2L will have the option of taking their exams online, at their own convenience, without needing to schedule an exam with a proctor.

Many instructors may be understandably concerned about the academic integrity of their courses and exams if the exams are taken online. I am happy to say that we are working on a pilot of the online exam process with a few select courses, and the results are encouraging.

First and foremost, at this time, students can opt to take a paper exam with a human proctor as before, or they can opt to take their exam in D2L.

If a student enrolled in one of the pilot courses elects to take an exam in D2L, that student must log in to Software Secure, the online exam proctoring company. Software Secure then establishes a secure connection, checks student identification, and records audio and video of the student taking the exam, as well as the computer screen and everything on the computer the student accesses during the exam.

Once the student completes the exam, all recordings are reviewed by multiple

employees at Software Secure. Any rules violations or suspicious activity in the audio, video, or computer screen recordings are flagged. Once the exam review has been completed, an exam report is sent to Student Services. Student Services sends that report along to Sarah, who spot checks the recordings and either notifies the instructor of the clean report, posts the exam (and course grade) herself, or notifies the instructor of academic misconduct and initiates the suspected academic misconduct procedures.

While still in its pilot phase, online exams are proving to be a secure way to increase the accessibility of IL courses while maintaining academic integrity.

If you teach an IL course via D2L, you may soon receive an email with more information about the online exam process and a request to review and approve the D2L version of the exam. If you receive such an email, it is important to note that you will receive a separate MOU for the exam review work, and that the exam itself will not be available to the students in your course until the pilot has concluded.

Course Revisions

After nearly a year of work, French 203 and 204 and Italian 101 and 102 will soon be open again for student enrollment! Thank you to our French and Italian instructors and the Design & Development team for your dedicated work on these revisions! We are moving toward a course revision model that allows a course to stay open to students for enrollment during the revision process. Our goal is to revise all courses on a regular basis.

If you are teaching a course that has been slated for revision this year, please expect Sarah to be in touch with you regarding the revision schedule, the revision scope, and compensation in early July.

Our friends at Design & Development have been working to modernize the

look of IL D2L courses, and I think you will be impressed by the feel of the new D2L courses.

If your course is not slated for revisions this year, please remember that you can still work on drafting Bloom's Taxonomy inspired course and unit objectives for your course. (Please contact Sarah when you are ready to begin for an MOU and compensation information.)

If you are teaching a course that is not slated for revision this year, but you discover a typo, broken link, or inaccurate information due to developments in your field, please let Sarah know as well.

As we move forward with course revisions and transition our print courses to the D2L delivery format, it is likely that some low enrollment courses will be withdrawn to make room for new courses. If you have an idea for a new course in your



field that you believe would fit a specific general education requirement and attract the interest of IL students, please let Sarah know, She is keeping a list of new course development ideas so the appropriate market research can be done.

Good Practice Reminder: Online Writing Lab (OWL)

At one time or another, most writers could benefit from someone looking over or reviewing their work. On physical campuses, many instructors refer their students to the campus writing center for paper editing or general writing skills. IL instructors face a unique situation: many resources are available at no cost online, and many IL students are enrolled on a campus with a writing center. However, referring students to their local campus writing center can be awkward, and not all IL students are enrolled in other college courses.

Often, IL instructors take it upon themselves to act as a course instructor and a writing tutor. This can work quite well for motivated students who need only a few tips here and there. Unfortunately, some IL students need more writing help than their course instructor is able to provide.

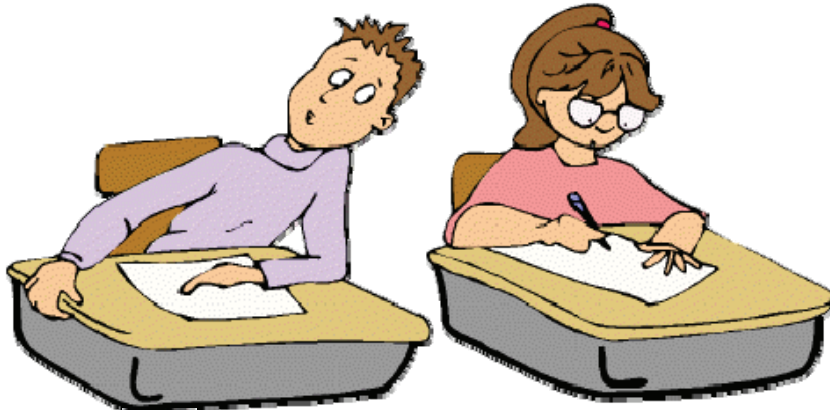
UW Extension offers a resource that can begin to address this need. The Online Writing Lab (OWL) is intended to offer writing assistance to anyone enrolled in a course that is connected with CEOEL, including Independent Learning. At the OWL website (owl.wisconsin.edu), students can access general writing resources, such as *Comprehending (and Avoiding) Plagiarism* and *Crafting Sentences*. Students can

also submit essay assignments and receive feedback regarding developing and organizing the essays as well as suggestions related to improving writing style. An OWL coach will also spot and explain specific and recurring spelling and punctuation errors with examples from the student essay. Just like a campus writing center, the OWL coaches will not edit, proofread, or rewrite the student's work. Instead, the OWL coaches will provide suggestions for improvement so that the student knows how to approach his or her document and edit, proofread, or rewrite his or herself.

If you have a student in your class who might benefit from OWL, please do not hesitate to refer that student to the OWL website:
owl.wisconsin.edu



D2L Gem: TurnItIn



From time to time, most instructors encounter student work that appears to have been cited incorrectly or taken from another source. The task of proving that the work submitted was not authored by the student then falls to the instructor. Without evidence of the source, plagiarism cannot be proven.

D2L now offers a tool called TurnItIn that simplified the process of identifying sources of plagiarism. This

DropBox tool, once activated, checks the student's submitted work against multiple website and the TurnItIn assignment database. This ensures not only that any content copied from the internet will be marked, but also that any content from an assignment turned in by another student will also be flagged.

TurnItIn then generates an authenticity report that the instructor can view with any flagged areas of concern and

likely source texts.

More information on this tool can be found on the UW Extension Design & Development Resource site and also as a PDF: www.ce.uwex.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Turnitin.pdf

If you teach a print course and receive your assignment submissions via the iStudy submission tool, you cannot make use of TurnItIn, but there is another tool available to you. You can copy and paste your student's assignment into www.plagiarismdetector.net and run a free analysis. You will then be able to view a report that goes through the student's work, line by line. If there are any instances of word-for-word plagiarism, you will be able to view the results. It is important to note that individual bold words do not indicate plagiarism, but bold sentences do.

If you find evidence of plagiarism, please give the student a grade of 0 on the assignment and contact Sarah immediately.

Ideas & Suggestions

Remember, if you have any questions or concerns that you think would be of interest to your IL colleagues, please submit them for future IL Newsletters.

Email ideas to:
skorpi@dcs.wisc.edu

Save the Date:

Next DCS IL Instructor Meeting:

A Working Lunch

August 21 from 1-3 pm

Room 7045, 21 N. Park St.

Madison, WI

UW-Madison

**Distance Teaching & Learning
Conference**

August 11-13, 2015

Madison, WI

dtlconference.wisc.edu

Coming Next Month: Your Rights as an Instructor

If you have any helpful tips or hints that you would like to share with your IL colleagues, please be sure to let Sarah know by April 15. If you have any questions that you would like to see addressed in future newsletters, just let Sarah know.



Introducing: Jan Starczewski

I have now been living in the US for close to ten years. Born in the UK and raised in France, I have roots that connect me to Italy, Poland and Algeria (where my mother was born).

I am currently writing my dissertation on two French philosophers: Denis Diderot and Jean-Jacques Rousseau; I am interested in what is called intellectual history, I focus on literary texts seeking to understand the ideas and worldviews of these authors and how they relate to the time they were living in. I am particularly interested in philosophy, theology, and political science.

I have now been teaching French for as long as I have been in America and thoroughly enjoy it. I have also taught courses on history, culture, and literature. In the summer I usually go to my hometown in Nice, France, and teach English at the University summer school there. Being in between two cultures (my father lives in the UK) can be unsettling at times but mostly enriching.

Teaching with IL has been a good experience, as it is different than



traditional teaching; I like the fact that students can follow a course at their own pace, and the variety of backgrounds and places they are from brings a different perspective to what I do.