INSIDEINDEPENDENTLEARNING

A special thanks to Buri Lor for the new Inside IL Newsletter design!

Save the Date Announcements:

Coffee with Sarah: October 22, 2 pm at Manna Cafe (611 N. Sherman Ave.)

Quarterly IL Instructor Appreciation and Professional Development Meeting: November 20, 1 pm at 21 N. Park Street, Rm 7045

Distance Teaching & Learning Conference 2016 : August 9-11 dtlconference.wisc.edu

Student Completion Rates:

Independent Learning students are a diverse group of learners with a diverse set of needs. In the August edition of Inside Independent Learning, we had the opportunity to get to know our students through demographic information. In this edition, we explore student completion rates. Students who enrolled in Independent Learning courses in 2013 completed their IL courses at a rate just under 60%. Of the students who did not complete their IL course, 1% transferred to a different IL course, 8% withdrew from their course, and 31% timed out, which means that they did not complete their coursework in the allowed 18 month period (12 months, with a possibility of two additional 3 month extensions.)

A closer look at data from students who completed their course indicates that IL students with varying commitments and time needs are able to successfully complete their courses, no matter whether the course is Online or in print form. 2/3 of students who completed their IL course were enrolled in Online courses. This detail does not change significantly for students who did not complete their course, roughly 2/3 of students who did not complete their IL course also took their course Online.

Of the student who completed their IL course, 19% were able to complete their coursework in 15 weeks or less, following a semester or interim-semester schedule. 22% of IL students were able to complete their coursework in 200 days or less, the equivalent of two semesters. 35% of IL students completed their coursework in their 12 month enrollment period, although they did need more than two semesters to complete the work. 11% of IL students completed their coursework on their first extension and 13% of students who completed their IL course finished their course-

October 8 is National Student Day. Take a moment to acknowledge your students in your course D2L News-feed on October 8. You can schedule the announcement in your news-feed next time you log in to your course.

work during their second extension. Research has shown that students who begin their coursework sooner are more likely to complete their course. Our specific IL completion rates support this research. Of the students who did not complete their coursework, 60% did not submit any assignments. 7% submitted one lesson, 5% submitted 2 lessons, 4% submitted 3 lessons, 3% submitted 4 lessons, and 2% submitted 5 lessons. This data suggests that the most important time for an instructor to make contact with a student is BEFORE the first lesson is submitted. Sending a friendly welcome email and contacting students who have not submitted an assignment at the end of their first month of enrollment can help students get started in their IL course. As the data show, once students submit even one lesson, they are significantly more likely to complete their IL course.

Best Practices for Assignment Feedback:
- Embedded throughout paper
- Personalized
- Provides areas for improvement
- Adds specifics
- Starts with the positive
- Is timely
- Is summarized in 2-3 direct action comments

D2L Gem: Grade-Mark

Each week, more IL Instructors are beginning to use TurnItIn to help detect potential instances of plagiarism in student assignments and Grade-Mark is a time-saving tool for providing detailed feedback.
In the past, many IL instructors used Word's Track Changes function to provide assignment feedback. Grade-Mark allows you to work through this process at a much more rapid pace.
Grade-Mark can be utilized in Dropbox, so there is no need to download and save student assignment files on your personal computer.
With Grade-Mark, you can highlight text in a student's assignment and write a custom comment about that text, or you can select from a list of common editing marks and comments. You can even create and save your own common editing comments for use with future student assignment submissions.
Grade-Mark also provides general information about a student's work, such as a word count and originality percentage.
Grade-Mark can be used with files that are saved as doc and docx, ppt and pptx, xls and xlsx, html, txt, pdf, jpeg, gif, and png. This means that using Grade-Mark helps ensure that you will be able to open and com-

ment on student assignments, even if your personal computer does not have the capability of viewing a specific file type.
The Instructional Design Team gave a brief overview of Grade-Mark at the August IL Instructor meeting. If you would like more information about Grade-Mark, please check out the following websites:

Instructor QuickStart:
http:-//turnitin.com/en_us/training/instructor-training#quickstart4

Instructor Training:
http://turnitin.com/en_us/training/instructor-training/grademark-overview

If you would like to use Grade-Mark in your D2L courses, please let Sarah know.

Good Practice Reminder: Connecting with Colleagues

At one of the first Quarterly Independent Learning Instructor Appreciation and Professional Development meetings, one of the instructors suggested that it would be nice to have a way to connect with IL colleagues. This would allow instructors to share challenges and successes with other instructors, and help develop conversation around the special and specific field of teaching independent learners. Following this meeting, we created a wisclist that can be used to help facilitate such conversations. IL Instructors can post to the WiscList by addressing their email to: ilinstructors@lists.wisc.edu
Keep in mind that the IL Instructor Website is also available as a useful resource for IL Instructors. There, you will find all past editions of the Inside IL Newsletter as well as many handy

technical documents. The Website address is: go.wisc.edu/ilinstructors
Additionally, our Instructional Design Partners at UW-Extension (CEOEL) developed a useful web resource: http://ce.uwex.edu/campus-partnerships/online-program-development/instructional-design/resources/

Introducing: Ed Hopkins

Ed Hopkins' area of interest is in Wisconsin's climate, climatic change and science education. He has co-authored a book entitled Wisconsin Weather and Climate (University of Wisconsin Press) with Prof. Joseph M. Moran of the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay. He has contributed to
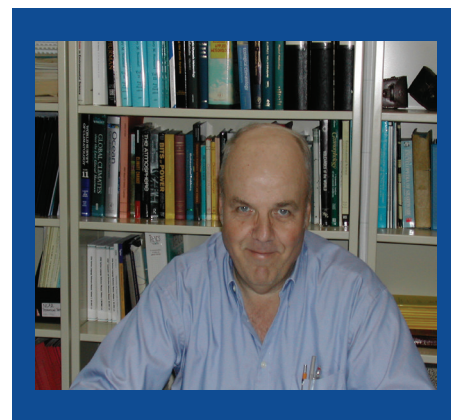
the operation of the State Climatology Office for more than ten years. In addition, he has at least twenty years of experience teaching the introductory level meteorology courses, both at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and at Northern Illinois University. Ed has been actively involved with the education activities of the American Meteorological Society and the National Geographic Society. He has prepared a resource listing of meteorological educational materials directed for elementary and secondary school teachers. Ed has taught Meteorology 101: Weather and Climate with Independent Learning for several decades.