Learning Showcase a Stellar Success
By Barbara Carder, M.S.

The 2014 Learning Showcase was held on November 14 in Ross Auditorium at the Franklin downtown campus. Fourteen of the 106 posters presented at the event were created by i4 faculty and staff. Here is a glimpse at three of those posters.

Dr. Lewis Chongwony presented his poster titled “An Investigation of the Impact of Open Education Resources (OER) in Higher Education: The Case of Franklin University and its Use of OER.” Open education resources create access to educational resources with minimal or no cost to students. Dr. Chongwony feels that this is important to both the students and for the faculty who design our courses. “If an OER is used, a designer does not have to follow the structure of a textbook. This allows for creativity and improves the learning experience for our students.”

Dr. Yi Yang co-presented a poster titled “Choosing Appropriate Technologies to Engage Millennial Students” with doctoral student Dennis Pribe. Millennial students (born after 1982) have specific characteristics and learning styles. They are very technology-savvy, so we must strive to engage these students. Dr. Yang states that, since there will be five generations in the workplace by 2020, our instructional methods must be adjusted to effectively engage students and promote learning. “This event was very beneficial in that we drew great interest from our own faculty and staff and outside organizations as well. These connections between education and employers are vital for the University.”

Dr. Xiaopeng (David) Ni co-presented a poster titled “Matchmaker, Matchmaker, Make Me a Match: Does Cognitive Style Make a Difference?” with Dr. John Brent and Dr. Ray Forbes. Their presentation focused on the question of how to better match students’ individual learning capabilities with instructional modalities. Their study investigated whether differences between instructor and student learning styles may account for performance disparities in a sample size of 161 students in a statistics course. Dr. Ni feels that the Learning Showcase is a valuable, well-organized event that builds our community of practice. “I was impressed with the variety of research, and was happy to receive some feedback, inspire and get inspired, and find new opportunities to collaborate about the research.”

(Article continues on page 2.)

Chinese School Association Conference
By Barbara Carder

I4 faculty Dr. David Ni co-chaired Chinese School Association in the United States (CSAUS)’s tenth national conference, held in Phoenix, AZ, from Dec. 12 to 15. Dr. Ni delivered a presentation on community education that emphasizes communication, collaboration, and contribution through emerging technology.

This year, Dr. Ni received the award for Outstanding Leadership in Chinese Education and Culture. Dr. Ni is a board member for the organization, and the vice-chair for the tenth national conference. The organization includes more than 400 member schools, 8,000 teachers, and 100,000 enrolled students from all over the United States.
Statistical Strategies: A Multimedia Approach
By Adam Reid

Recently, the i4 team completed the development of a major multimedia project for MATH215 - Statistics. Twenty-eight multimedia pieces were developed, resulting in more than 6 contiguous hours of interactive instructional content reinforcing the majority of topics and concepts covered in the course. The multimedia serves as an opportunity for students to get further exposure to course content in an accessible, dynamic way.

All 28 multimedia pieces follow the same structure and parameters: A topic is broken down into multiple parts, and each part is 5 minutes long or shorter, to reduce cognitive overload. Within each part, there are animated slides with narration, using real-world examples and realistic data sets. This information delivery portion is followed by a dynamic, interactive summary slide, recapping the main points of that part.

Lastly, there are 2-3 “check your learning” questions that give students a risk-free opportunity to test their understanding of the content. Each question is accompanied by extensive feedback so students can fully understand why the correct answer is correct and how to calculate that answer. The questions range from traditional interactions such as multiple choice and drag-and-drop, to more advanced interactions such as constructing a boxplot, populating a back-to-back steam and leaf plot, or building a histogram.

This multimedia creation, in conjunction with a major course redesign, served as the impetus for a quantitative study of the course that will begin with the Winter 2015 term and will be led by MATH 215’s lead faculty member, Dr. Nimet Alpay, with Dr. Natalya Kohler, Carolyn LeVally, and Adam Reid.

Learning Showcase (continued from p.1)

The poster presentations were judged and two of the three poster presentations above won awards. Dr. Chongwony’s poster won first place in the Outstanding Instructional Designer category, and Dr. Yang’s poster won first place in the Outstanding Faculty category.

“The outstanding design and teaching research, application, and innovation exhibited by the i4 faculty and staff reflected Franklin University’s commitment to learning and education across the globe. We look forward to their continued commitment as they foster excellence in higher education,” said Dr. Karen Miner-Romanoff, Dean of the College of Health & Public Administration, and chairperson of the event.

For more information about the Learning Showcase event and a summary of the 2013 poster presentations, go to: http://tinyurl.com/oa3uvco

The 2014 Learning Showcase guide should be available on the LibGuide website (http://guides.franklin.edu/) by early 2015.

Course-Embedded Program Assessment
By Carolyn LeVally

This past fall, the Institute has implemented the course-embedded method for program assessment. Program assessment is extremely important for external accreditation and internal improvement purposes; this new method, along with other assessment methods, will help create an efficient and effective assessment system.

The process of course-embedded program assessment is simple. When an instructor enters a course that includes artifacts for program assessment, he/she will see several learning objects labeled “Program Assessment.” These objects explain how each program outcome will be measured using designated artifacts. Using these specified program assessment objects, instructors will then enter points into the GradeBook, based on how well each student’s artifact meets the program outcome. Rubrics are provided in these objects in order to aid instructors in this evaluation.

Once the artifacts have been evaluated, the Assessment Office will aggregate these results and work with program chairs to set goals for improving how well a program meets its outcomes. For a more in-depth look at the role of the instructor in program assessment, please view the following video: http://tinyurl.com/meyezlc
Trends in Gamification
By Lucy Snyder

Gamification and game-based learning have become hot topics in education and instructional design.

“The fundamental difference between gamification and game-based learning is its purpose or why it is being used,” says i4 instructional designer Dr. Yi Yang. “The purpose of gamification is to motivate and change learner behaviors.”

She says that a successfully gamified website or course incorporates gaming elements such as competition and fun rewards for mastery and productivity. For instance, the fitness site Fitocracy offers a level system similar to role-playing games (RPGs) that players can ascend by completing real-life exercise regimens.

“(Another) good example of gamification can be found at Recyclebank.com,” Dr. Yang says. “This website encourages users to cut back on water consumption or purchase greener products by rewarding points for vendors such as the Honest Company, Macy’s, etc.”

On the other hand, game-based learning is the use of games designed to promote learning by teaching specific topics and skills. Classic examples include typing games that teach students keyboarding skills or word puzzle games that teach spelling skills. Games that simulate environments such as a small business can teach students more complex concepts such as supply and demand or accounting.

Dr. Daniel Bell, the Program Chair for the Interactive Media Design Program at Franklin, is enthusiastic about the possibilities that gamification offers students and educators.

“Students currently in school from secondary and beyond can benefit from game-based learning more than any other previous generation of students,” he says. “These students have grown up in a world where digital games are everywhere, and are therefore familiar with and can easily use the digital gaming technology.”

“Researchers have unique opportunities to understand how learning occurs during game play and how to apply these findings to teach others,” he adds. “Observing youth playing popular digital games provides educators with unique opportunities to examine exactly what and how learning occurs within the game environment.”

Professional Development Series Recap
By Erin Wehmeyer

In August, Dr. Yuerong Sweetland presented “It Takes a Village: Assessing and Improving Student Learning” as part of the i4 professional development series. Here is a recap in her own words:

“I was glad to see a diverse crowd that consisted of folks from different areas on campus, in addition to a visitor from outside of Franklin. Assessment has often been deemed as only pertaining to academics. However, assessment should never be the exclusive arena of a few offices or departments. After all, we all ASSESS, formally documented or not, to explore and improve. This presentation gave me the opportunity to share my knowledge and experience with a broad community. At the same time, insightful discussions occurred among participants on some critical issues.

For example, participants discussed how data can be presented to allow best utilizations across the campus to inform decision making. We may not have the perfect solution right now. However, as technology continues to mature, many of our processes are improving. Hearing voices from different areas have truly enriched the conversation and broadened views for all participants.”

“"You are always a student, never a master. You have to keep moving forward. ”

– Conrad Hall

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Issue contributors: B. Carder, C. LeVally, E. McClurg, A. Reid, L. Snyder, A. Vinchesi, E. Wehmeyer

“In order to create an engaging learning experience, the role of instructor is optional, but the role of learner is essential.”

– Bernard Bull