

## Summer PROfessional Development

### Session 6: Opportunities to Conduct Teaching as Research

Friday, August 7, 2015

The goal of this session was to learn about Teaching as Research (TAR). The purpose of TAR is to conduct applied research on student learning, evaluate how well teaching methods work, and to see how well students are learning the material. Different opportunities to be engaged in TAR are available. Some of them are: Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SOTL) Practitioner Program (1 semester), Graduate Research and Teaching Fellowship (GRTF) Program (2 semesters), and courses such as *ALS 6016* or online CIRTl courses. An important thing to keep in mind is that for human subjects research, IRB approval or exemption may be needed, especially to publish or present results.

The three panelists (Amy Larson, Nirav Patel, and Nick Mason) conducted different research projects. Amy was not teaching at the moment when she did her project. She looked at whether having prerequisites such as organic chemistry and molecular biology affected student performance in biochemistry. Her research was done through surveys, and showed that there was no difference in student performance because instructors taught the course in a way that allowed students to pass without the prerequisites. Nirav Patel looked to see what factors correlated with Cornell students and postdocs participating in University-Wide Teaching Conference workshops. Nick Mason conducted his research through the GRTF program while he taught a first-year writing seminar. He focused on how experiential learning through field trips affected student understanding of evolution and biodiversity.

For the final activity we worked on editing a TAR question to be more specific and testable.