

## VITAL Services Video

Hello and welcome to Villanova University and to the Villanova Institute of Teaching and Learning. I'm Gabriele Bauer, and I have the pleasure of serving as the director of VITAL, a university wide unit that supports faculty in their instructional activities in support of high quality or deep student learning.

How do we support our Villanova faculty? We work with faculty across all disciplinary backgrounds. We also partner with departments and university offices to help identify and support students' learning needs as they emerge. Our services are free of charge, they are confidential, and they are grounded in a professional partnership between a faculty member and a VITAL consultant. What does that partnership entail? Well, the faculty bring their disciplinary content expertise to the partnership and the consultant contributes her pedagogical content knowledge. So, it's really based on a very collaborative approach.

What does the actual consultation process entail? Our instructional consultation process is rooted in a research based approach that was developed by Nyquist and Wolfe in 1990, and that is displayed in the graphic that you can see on the screen and that follows a research based framework that you're very familiar with as a faculty member in terms of conducting your own research in the discipline. And so it really starts out with an instructional question, an issue, an area of interest that faculty bring to us. Then we collect data, we analyze the data, we interpret the data, and then finally we act on the data, or we make decisions based on the results we have obtained. So let me provide you with an example. A faculty member may be interested in knowing how to increase student's participation in in-class discussions. So that would be the instructional question that the faculty member brings to me as the consultant. So the first step is that we collect data from various sources. For example, one of the sources is the faculty member herself. So I might ask the faculty member, how do you facilitate discussion in your class? How long have you facilitated discussion? How do you find the discussion is working both for you, and for the students? We then also collect data from course materials, such as the syllabus, where we might look at, what are the learning goals for the discussion? How does participation in discussion contribute to a student's final grade in the course? We might also look at another data source, namely the CATs, which is Villanova's version of the end of term student feedback data, and we may review the CATs to see what student perceptions are regarding in-class discussions; what works for them, what doesn't work so well for them. We may also, in agreement with the faculty, conduct a class observation. So I may come in on a day designated by the faculty member and just observe how she is conducting class discussion, and then meet with her to provide her with feedback.

So as you can see from the example, we can collect data in a number of ways, by talking with you as a faculty member, reviewing the syllabus, reviewing CATs, conducting an observation, there are other options as well. In the next step, we then analyze the data, and we're basically looking at, what did we learn from all these different data sources? What kinds of themes or patterns emerge regarding student participation in class discussion? From analysis, we move on to interpretation where we also draw on current research on facilitating in-class discussion. And we also look at what is it that we've learned that help students contribute, and what could further enhance their contribution in discussion? Now that we have done our homework, basically, we finally look at translating our findings into action. And again, that step is very much done in collaboration, or partnership, with the faculty member. And we're really looking at, based on what we have found, and what we know in terms of research and literature on conducting effective in-class discussions, what concrete interventions might the faculty member incorporate into her class to increase student's participation? For example, could it be the way that

students are preparing for in-class discussion outside of class? Could it be by providing more explicit guidelines for student's participation? Or could it be by designing a self-assessment tool that the students could use to gauge their own participation and then obtain faculty feedback on their participation? So there are many different ways that we could translate our findings into action, and then the faculty member in consultation with us would decide on how to proceed. We may also decide to conduct another classroom observation once those interventions have been implemented, to collect more data on how it might actually be working.

So as you can see, the research process is a very cyclical project, and it kind of depends on what you find, and how you would like to proceed in terms of enhancing the student's learning experience. So this research based approach really guides all of our work with faculty, whether it be one on one, with faculty groups, with departments, or by conducting university wide sessions. Always, really, student learning is at the center of our work. And so the question we always ask is, how do your teaching approaches, your assignments, your feedback, and your assessments support students' learning, in your courses, in your discipline, here at Villanova.

You might be curious about what services or resources does VITAL provide, and how these services and resources support you as faculty in your instructional role. So, let's take a closer look at our services first, and share some examples, and then we'll highlight some of the resources. So let's look at the VITAL services. On the left hand side you can see beginning service listings moving all the way to the right. We have already addressed instructional consultations, classroom observations. A service I'd like to highlight is the early-term student feedback process, whereby faculty invite students to provide feedback on their learning experiences mid-term, so typically during week four, five, or six, in the semester. It's focused on two questions: what's helping you learn in your course, and what would further enhance your learning in the course? The student feedback is really elicited to improve the student's learning experience in this course, so to make changes to further enhance student's learning. It's very different from the CATs which are end of term, and no modifications can be made in the current class. The students respond very positively to the early-term student feedback process, and so we encourage faculty to utilize it.

We also offer sessions that are tailored to specific, for example, department needs. So currently we are working with departments on incorporating a peer review process, and also looking at assessment of teaching effectiveness in the discipline. We also offer university-wide programs, for example the Teaching and Learning Strategies, which we cosponsor with colleagues in UNIT, in the Center for Instructional Technologies. We also offer monthly Food for Thought programs. Those are monthly lunch and discussions with faculty to network and to dialogue about teaching issues that are relevant to being here, a faculty member at Villanova, such as working with students on Undergraduate research, or supporting students as they go on the job market, or incorporating more active learning approaches into our teaching.

We are also offering online seminars for faculty who are currently teaching online, who are fairly new to teaching online. It's a seminar entitled, "Taking Your Course Online." It's offered on a semester basis, it's a six-week course that completes with a certificate of participation. We also have available instructional Minigrants for all faculty on our campus. Those are designed really to help faculty enhance either the learning or teaching or assessment approaches, either at the course or programmatic level, and to really encourage innovation in their teaching. We also work with specific groups, or cohorts, of faculty, such as faculty who are new to Villanova. And so we do offer a program for faculty who are newly appointed to

teaching at Villanova. It's a two part program, the first part in August, the second part revisited in January. And also the new faculty are always invited to apply for a travel fellowship to a regional, research based teaching conference that introduces them to scholarly teaching in the discipline, but also to their dual roles as teacher-scholars at the university, and also encourages them to consider presenting their teaching innovations at regional conferences. So I hope that gives you an overview as to the array of services we provide, and helps you identify a service that you think would be of service to you, and we'll now move on to some of our resources.

As you can see we offer a number of resources, all of them available online. I'd like to highlight a couple of them. On the left hand side you can see indicated the Monday Morning Mentor. This is a program that has been really highly appreciated by faculty here, as it's an online program that is available twenty-four/seven that faculty can access from their mobile device, on their desktop, as their schedule permits. And it's about twenty minutes long, and focuses on different topics in higher education, for example, critical thinking, problem solving, the flipped classroom, how to engage students in discussions online. Another resource is our extensive library that is searchable via the library database and all the books can be taken out at the VITAL office in 106 Vasey Hall. And it really ranges from current research on teaching, learning, and assessment, but also provides career development opportunities for faculty. It also has an extensive portion on supporting graduate students, particularly in terms of preparing them for future faculty positions. The VITAL links kind of compliment the Monday Morning Mentor, the Teaching Professor, the library, by linking to more extensive online resources on particular areas in higher education. It could be active learning, it could be syllabus development, it could be problem-based learning. And last but not least, a publication entitled, "Teaching with Augustine: A VITAL Conversation," and this is really designed to engage faculty in reflection and dialogue on what it means to be a faculty member at an institution with a very distinguished Augustinian Catholic identity, and to start exploring that in conversation or dialogue with colleagues. We always welcome faculty suggestions for resources, as this is kind of how we develop resources that are really relevant to the university and faculty community.

Our work is always in support of effective teaching and deep learning, and we really work with faculty to help enhance their effective teaching practices, by grounding our work in research based principles of student learning, such as Bloom's taxonomy of student learning, learning-centered teaching practices such as the flipped classroom approach or active learning approaches, as well as summative and formative assessment process of student learning. So we're asking the question as to how do you know that your students are actually learning in the environment that you're providing for them, or how do you know that students are meeting the learning goals that you have set out for them? And we very much look forward to working with you, to exploring your questions, and to supporting you in your role as teacher-scholar here at Villanova University.

Please stop by our office located in 106 Vasey Hall during regular office hours, visit our website, and also contact us via email at [vitalinfo@villanova.edu](mailto:vitalinfo@villanova.edu). Thank you, and we look forward to hearing from you.