INNOVATIVE EXPERIENCES

- **Progress Reports- (101 and 201)** I administer "Progress Reports" to students to assess their development and awareness of course progress and procedures. The reports are designed for students to calculate and reflect on their current grade ad well as their learning strategies. In each report students have the opportunity to make comments/suggestions about the class (e.g., lectures, class assignments, required readings) and how I could improve their learning experience.

- **Discussion Days- (101 and 415)** Students are assigned additional readings, outside of their primary text. Then they are asked to prepare questions or a written reflection of a "discussion day" topic. Additional readings allow me to expand upon course content as well as encourage students to read and write more often. Discussions require a certain level of mastery for me as an educator. These specific types of assignments hold me and my students accountable for more enriched learning and discussion

- **Tear and Share- (101, 201)** I found that in a large introductory class that it is important to engage students so they do not feel anonymous. The tear and share is a list of questions I asked students to share about themselves. The questions are mostly faculty and/or asked students about topics they were interested in psychology.

- **Technology for Statistics – (201)** I have consistently integrated innovative learning technology into my statistics class. The following programs allow me to assess student knowledge as well as provide additional strategies for student success.

  a.) **APLIA**-This web-based instructional system provides an additional platform of learning for students. For example, APLIA presents students with problems to work on that coordinate directly with their text book. Students appreciated the ability to see whether or not their answers were correct immediately after completing a problem. In addition, APLIA gives students feedback using text-style explanations of how to solve the problems. APLIA encourages students to work through their text and, in many cases, requires them to pass through the material multiple times. This is essential for understanding statistics. This tool is combined with in-class, written problem sets. Although APLIA indeed is more work for students (in addition to written problem sets) it has immediate application and conceptual benefits. Students who realize this appreciate APLIA as a learning tool.

  b.) **TOPHAT**- Is an online course text and teaching platform. This system provides me with an editable text, which is slick for course personalization, and provides opportunities for custom engagement with students. For example, I can ask questions, engage in discussion, and poll the students as we are going through course content. This was especially useful as many students in statistics are worried about asking a "stupid" question. The system allowed me to build in learning checks to ensure all student questions were answered and student questions, when desired, could be anonymous. This platform also comes at a significant cost reduction to the students compared to a traditional statistics textbook; it cut their costs in more than half. Although there was a learning curve to this platform, my students have enjoyed using it.

  c.) **SPSS**-Is a computer program designed to analyze data. Students are exposed to computer assignments that show them how to analyze data AFTER they have learned to analyze similar data by hand. Students who go on to take Research Methods or who plan to conduct research in the social sciences will use this program again and again.

- **What's the Point**- **(201)** Students often have reservations about completing statistics. In my classroom I make consistent effort to relate the material to their lives. That said, creating a lecture-based component called, "What's the Point" was a simple and direct way to ensure students are aware of the importance of what they are learning. Throughout lecture and applied work, I stop to remind students why they are learning something and how it could be used in the field of psychology. This is a very practical way to "check-in" with students to see if they are getting the big picture of the learned statistic. Presenting students with this conceptual information was a great way to determine if students did not understand a concept and affords an additional opportunity for them to ask questions.
- **Debates**-**(325)** Students are asked to debate a topic of contention in Cognitive Psychology. I have done this project for several semesters; however, it is always getting refined. For example the last time I taught this course I realized I needed to change the Debate format and guidelines to include more details on how students can be engaging. Students do not have much practice with public speaking outside of introductory speech classes. Thus, I needed to spend more time teaching them the difference between delivering information and being excited and engaged about a topic. I also included a new rubric (in addition to the rubric I use to assess students on debates) in which students were asked to evaluate each member of their group. Students seemed to enjoy holding group members accountable for their work. One issue, however, is that group members often do not want to reveal too much negativity about group members at the risk of getting a lower group grade. I hope to continue to refine the debate process/requirements as students benefit from this unique method of learning.
- **Media Component**-(**325**) Each student has access to a computer in the classroom and there are also large-screens of my lecture material at small desks seating 5 people around the room. These technologies give the class a very interactive feel. Students are able to engage in Cognitive Experiments (CogLabs) on their computers at my direction. This provides students with hands on application of cognitive theories and important access to experimentation.
- **CogLabs-** **(325)** As noted above, these interactive web-based experiments provide direct application of some of the more challenging topics in Cognitive Psychology. Labs engage students in understanding how research is conducted in Cognition and provide direct application of theoretical topics presented in text.
- **Blog writing – (415)** Students are asked to take an academic paper and craft a blog post that distills down the jargon of an academic piece into something the general public should understand. Students are guided through drafts of their blog by way of peer review and instructor comments. This project allows students to evaluate how media is used to teach psychology to the public.