

The Thompson Center for Learning and Teaching Advisory Board and Director are pleased to announce the ninth year of Teaching Circles made possible through a generous gift from Marian Wright “in support of excellence in teaching.”

Marian Wright Teaching Circles 2008-2009

What are Teaching Circles?

Small groups of faculty, 5-10 per group, who agree to meet **at least six times throughout the academic year** to work together on a specific issue or concern in their teaching and their students' learning.

Why join a Teaching Circle?

- to meet with other interested colleagues for an informal discussion of teaching
- to collaborate with other faculty on a specific topic or project that will have an impact on teaching
- to learn together and share ideas around a common theme or question in teaching
- to continue to develop professionally as a college teacher

What are some possible topics for a Teaching Circle?

Developing interdisciplinary curriculum for new general education courses
Ethics in public life
Living and learning communities
Multidisciplinary (theme-based) courses
General Education and our students
Civic engagement projects and classroom pedagogy
Improving curriculum assessment
Assessing and grading students' learning
Course and syllabus design
Problem-based learning
Using case studies in teaching
Improving large classes
Teaching and learning with technology
Teaching portfolios
Teaching as professional scholarship for research and publication
Learning styles and teaching styles
Writing across the disciplines
Enhancing students' critical thinking skills
Ethical issues in teaching
Classroom assessment techniques (CATs)
Understanding and using new teaching methods in your discipline
Any other teaching topic agreed upon by all members of the Teaching Circle

What are the guidelines for forming and maintaining a Teaching Circle?

- Marian Wright Teaching Circles will be formed at the beginning of the academic year and must meet at least six times, starting in early October. In addition, facilitators will meet once with the TCLT director for a mandatory information session and planning. After the Teaching Circles have met for one academic year, the Thompson Center will schedule a session for celebration and sharing of Teaching Circle accomplishments. At least one Teaching Circle member must be represented at this event.
- All teaching faculty may participate in a Teaching Circle: part-time, full-time, visiting faculty, and full and part-time tenure-track and clinical-track faculty. Staff members may be invited to participate in a Teaching Circle at the discretion of the Teaching Circle faculty members.
- Groups may be from the same discipline or cross-disciplinary.
- Each Teaching Circle must have a specific focal topic, issue, concern, question, project, or problem that it will spend the year addressing.
- Each group will receive \$500 to support the group's activities. This money can be used for books or materials, duplication of articles, refreshments for meetings, local travel, a guest speaker, or other expenses that further the project the group has undertaken.
- One person who is a tenure-track, tenured or clinical-track faculty member must agree to facilitate the group. This person will arrange and announce meeting times, dates, and locations; manage the group's finances; and make any necessary arrangements for the group's activities. The facilitator is also responsible for submitting a one-page form after each meeting that lists the members who attended and summarizes the meeting in a few sentences. At the end of the academic year, the facilitator will be asked to write a one-page report summarizing the group's work plus a final expense report.
- The summary of each group's work will be published online on the Thompson Center's website. Teaching Circles are encouraged to consider developing programs, papers, or articles for dissemination beyond UM-Flint.

Can Teaching Circles from 2007-2008 be renewed?

Yes, a Teaching Circle can continue to meet and be funded for a second year, but they must submit a new application form and also permit new members to join the Teaching Circle. Teaching Circles may be renewed for a third or subsequent year; however preference will be given to new or second year Teaching Circles.

How can I form a new Teaching Circle for 2008-2009?

Ask colleagues in your department or other departments if they would like to form a Teaching Circle based on a topic in your discipline or any teaching issue you would like to pursue. Or, if you have a specific idea in mind, contact the TCLT who will put out a call on the fac/staff email list asking if anyone is interested in forming a Teaching Circle on your topic. The Thompson Center would be happy to help you identify colleagues across campus who might want to join a Teaching Circle on a particular project or issue. Facilitators of the 2007-2008 Circles would also be good resources with whom to discuss your idea for a Circle.

How can I apply for a Teaching Circle?

The attached one-page application form must be submitted by **Wednesday, September 24, 2008** to Mary Jo Finney, Director, Thompson Center for Learning and Teaching, 241 French Hall or via email at tclt-email@umflint.edu. The TCLT can fund up to 7 Teaching Circles this year subject to approval by the Thompson Center for Learning and Teaching Advisory Board. For further information or to discuss a possible topic for your Circle, contact the Thompson Center or talk to any member of the Center's Advisory Board.