

## Raising the Issue of Online Course Assessment

To support and sustain assessment activities, the SATAL program trains undergraduates in data gathering and effective reporting. Without charge to users, this service offers a variety of data gathering options with subsequent evaluation of results, if requested. Common options include **focus groups**, **classroom observations**, **interviews** of individuals or groups, **survey distribution**, and **classroom videotaping**. These services are provided upon request and are shaped to the specific needs of the teacher or program supervisor. Each SATAL client receives a detailed report that summarizes the results of the inquiry and that highlights any emerging trends. Since 2009 faculty and administrators from throughout the campus have used SATAL services with steadily increasing frequency, from an average of 30 services provided in its first year, 42 services in its second year, to 60 services in its third year. Faculty and staff have reported they are “very satisfied” with types of services available, helpfulness of findings, the request process, and the professionalism of SATAL students. The SATAL program was instrumental in UCM’s successful 2011 accreditation review. SATAL was selected as a finalist for the Innovation Award at the 2011 Professional and Organizational Development (POD) Conference in Atlanta.

As online education grows at UC Merced, so does the need for online course assessment. Research confirms that students learn most effectively from active engagement with information and ideas, and one of SATAL’s goals is to develop assessment tools for online course assessment to verify the effectiveness of online instruction and student learning. The SATAL program has already carried out **class interviews** for some hybrid writing courses, and now there is clearly a need to investigate how existing assessment tools can be adapted for online instruction. The program is working on adapting the **online class interview** process to

help faculty strengthen their teaching by providing them with anonymous, candid feedback on the course’s strengths and weaknesses.

Over the past several years, there has been increasing interest in hybrid courses at UC Merced. The SATAL program is invested in identifying tools that give faculty timely, accurate, and in-depth feedback about the hybrid courses they are teaching. Faculty interested in using SATAL services in their classrooms, should contact Adriana Signorini at [asignorini@ucmerced.edu](mailto:asignorini@ucmerced.edu).



*Undergraduates Ryan Sowers and Topher Gehrman facilitate a class interview per faculty request.*

## Teaching with New Media

This academic year the CRTE is offering a certificate program on *Teaching with New Media* (TWNM), aimed at helping faculty and instructional staff incorporate digital tools in their class or curriculum. We asked three faculty participants to share about the experience in the program. Here, Maria Radhika Albert (Math), Alex Tolley (Biology), and Carrie Menke (Physics) share some insights.

**CRTE:** *What initially motivated you to attend the TWNM workshops?*

**AT:** I think we are in a potential transition point with education, and technology is an enabler of