The UA Learning Initiative is an approved Higher Learning Commission (HLC) Quality Initiative designed to enhance and support student learning through integrated programs for both faculty and students. These initiatives are focused on leading faculty and students through discussion and activities focused on understanding and using effective strategies that can improve student learning and enhance retention of learned content and concepts.

Effective Strategies include:
- active involvement of students within the classroom setting;
- low-stakes testing throughout the semester
- better use of technology within the classroom.

The faculty and the students work separately as well as together to increase student learning.

**Faculty Learning Communities (FLCs)**

Faculty Learning Communities (FLCs) focused on discussion about and reform of teaching practices in undergraduate courses are at the core of the Faculty portion of the Initiative. The FLCs typically have 6-10 members from a wide variety of disciplines, some with considerable experience using evidence-based teaching strategies and some with very little experience but a high level of interest. The members read and discuss relevant literature including *Make it Stick: The Science of Successful Learning* by Brown, et al., 2014, and *Small Teaching: Everyday Lessons from the Science of Learning* by James M. Lang, 2016. The members practice implementing new strategies in their classes, conduct peer observations and engage in meaningful dialog about the effectiveness of the various approaches.

**Learning to Learn Series**

The goal of the Learning to Learn Series is to help UA students become better learners. Each part of the series focuses on one evidence-based learning strategy and provides useful information about it, why the strategy works and how faculty can incorporate simple exercises to teach their students to use such a strategy and become better learners.

**Student Advocates for Improved Learning (SAIL) Program**

The Student Advocates for Improved Learning (SAIL) Program is the basis of the Student portion of the Initiative. In this program, undergraduate students prepare to act as SAIL Fellows by participating in sessions with faculty and other academic professionals where they learn about best practices for learning and retaining knowledge as well as conceptual understanding. Similar to the FLCs, SAIL Fellows study important references including *Make it Stick: The Science of Successful Learning* by Brown, et al., 2014. Once prepared, SAIL Fellows meet with small groups of students to educate them about which study strategies work best (e.g. retrieval practice) and which strategies don’t work as well (e.g. highlighting).

I really like transparency in the way we teach students. In particular, and this relates to Zoe’s post of “Why”, I like to share with my classes what motivates me to teach a course: the learning outcomes. We all have them in our syllabi, but these mostly don’t get revisited with the students after the first day of class. Today I dedicated part of my HNRS 170 class to sharing the learning outcomes again with my students, then reviewing which outcome we’ve reinforced so far with a given class activity. Now, from an assessment standpoint I don’t yet have a metric to go by for evaluating this, but I believe it is a good practice for aligning where we are as a class in the semester with the syllabus, and giving the students a sense of progress. What is your perspective? (Tom Wilson)

Assessment? Most definitely! This initiative is not only about the use of innovative and proven teaching techniques, but also about the assessment of student learning! How do we know that these integrated programs are working? By evaluating how well the students respond to these approaches based on evidence.