Whether you are preparing to teach a new course or are looking for ways to improve one that you have taught for years, the advice of your colleagues can be invaluable. Whatever problem you are trying to solve, someone out there has already taken a crack at it and can save you the time and frustration of trying to pave the way alone. You don’t have to be stuck in your silo. The Expert Down the Hall is a growing collection of resources shared by your colleagues across campus, in your department, or just a few doors away from you. The “Experts” featured are instructors who have something that works for them (probably after years of trial and error), and it might work for you too. If it doesn’t, then at least now you know who might be able to give you some advice.

The flip side of volunteering to share as an “Expert” in this project is that you have a chance to explore the next step in developing your teaching. If you have any questions about how to improve your methods, you get to broadcast them across campus and get input from colleagues who have tried the same things you are trying. That’s what we in the educating about educating business like to call a Personal Learning Network.

All of these resources will be hosted on ESU’s own, relatively-new blogging platform (which is available to faculty, staff, and student postings... a great idea for documenting your semester’s activities). The EDTH page is at:

http://blogs.emporia.edu/staff/theexpertdownthehall/.
Meet the first featured “Experts”*

*Note: Quotations have been requested around the term “Expert” because the “Experts” who shared in this project feel like they are just regular instructors who tried something and made it work, following the idea that real experts are people who have already made most of the mistakes that you are about to; they just made them sooner.

Dr. Marian Riedy, Assistant Professor in the School of Business, explains her “Topics in the News” reports that she uses to promote independent research and legal literacy in her law courses.

Dr. Rajesh Singh, Assistant Professor in the School of Library and Information Management, shares his experience using student-led blogs as a replacement for the standard discussion boards that cover assigned readings.

Andrea Dubois, a graduate student in Psychology, explains her research on using a simple assessment tool that measures the mental connections that students are making within a given set of content.

Dr. David Edds, Biology Professor, gives some tips on conducting field experiences with students, including ideas of assessing student work, planning some of the logistics, and maximizing the value of the experience.

Every teacher has a favorite tool or trick. If you would like to help others by sharing yours (or would like to volunteer a colleague without their knowledge), please let me know.