



Minnesota
STATE COLLEGES
& UNIVERSITIES

WEEKLY UPDATE

A WEEKLY COMMUNICATION FROM THE CENTER FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING

January 22, 2007

SoCTL *The Scholarship of CTL*

Surveys indicate that 40 to 78 percent of higher education institutions utilize instructional grants to promote improved instruction, yet there is minimal empirical evidence available to demonstrate the effectiveness of instructional grants (Weimer & Lenze, 1991). Despite the paucity of empirical evidence, 70 to 90 percent of American universities surveyed rated instructional grants as an effective or very effective means to improve instruction (Lenze, 1996). Further survey results indicate that instructional grant programs help to prioritize teaching, lead to innovative changes in an academic unit's instructional practice, enhance teaching and learning in individual courses, foster new teaching techniques, increase student satisfaction with revised courses, and are viewed as the most effective means to improve classroom instruction (Wright, Cook & Brady, 2000).

In addition to survey results, interviews with grant recipients identify two major trends: 1) instructional grants "legitimize" projects to enhance teaching and learning, and 2) the funding of institutional grants had a "domino effect" which allowed opportunities for further instructional enhancements beyond the specified grant (Wright, Cook & Brady, 2000). Similar to "legitimizing" improvements in teaching and learning (McAlpine and Gandell, 2003) developed a framework to assess the extent to which the funding of institutional grants can foster a scholarly approach to teaching as identified in Boyer's scholarship model. They argue that a scholarship approach to teaching can serve to elevate the status of teaching, similar to the status of research at higher education institutions. Instructional grants follow or encourage Boyer's scholarship of teaching by identifying a base of expertise, making that expertise more public, and finally evaluating and assessing effectiveness (McAlpine & Gandell, 2003).

The literature also offers suggestions to improve the effectiveness of instructional grants. Successful projects are dependent on faculty and constituent forums that encourage collective input and engagement around instructional change. In other words, rich dialogue among faculty members about teaching and learning is necessary to bring about instructional improvement and enhanced student outcomes. In addition to faculty forums, the concept of the grant project as an ongoing process - rather than as an end - product is strongly encouraged. Similar to findings involving action research as a professional development tool, the most effective instructional grants emerge from a long-term perspective and highlight the evolutionary nature of instructional improvements (Wright, Cook, & Brady, 2000).

Despite the lack of empirical support, the literature supports instructional grants as a means to honor the role of teaching and bring about sustainable improvements in instruction and student learning through the use of a collaborative, scholarship approach.

Lenze, L.F. (1996). *Instructional Development: What Works?* NEA Higher Education Research Center Update, Vol. 2, No. 4

McAlpine, L. & Gandell, T. (2003) Teaching improvement grants: Their potential to promote a scholarly approach to teaching. *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, Vol. 27, No. 2.

Wright, M., Cook, C.E., & Brady, E. (2000) *Using Grants to Enhance Student Learning* for the Center for Research on Teaching and Learning, University of Michigan.

Weimer, M., & Lenze, L.F. (1991). Instructional interventions: A review of the literature on efforts to improve instruction. In J. C. Smart (Ed.), *Higher Education: handbook of Theory and research*, Volume 7 (pp. 294-333). New York: Agathon Press.

REALIZING STUDENT POTENTIAL/ITEACH 2007 CONFERENCE

FULL PROGRAM

Conference Information: www.ctl.mnscu.edu

Teaching Tip of the Week

Student Disclosure Exercise

There is a new game show on NBC called "Identity," which gave me this idea about getting students to talk more with one other during the semester. The show asks a contestant to match a skill or trait to a person out of a set of players.

On an index card, each student should write down a hobby or interesting fact about themselves that they are willing to post. They may then record their name on a second card. Each class session you can start off with one student volunteer to try to match a hobby with another student. This also works great for the end of the class meeting or when you need to a quick break. The student who is matched can confirm or deny. As students learn more about one another, they feel connected to or grounded as a member of your class.

- Zala Fashant

CTL Report

Women's Studies Discipline Workshop, April 2006

CTL's first Discipline Workshop for the field of Women's Studies took place April 6-7, 2006, with over 62 participants representing both the 2-year colleges and the 4-year state universities, the University of Minnesota and the University of St. Thomas were in attendance. The keynote address, "The State of Women's Studies in MnSCU and Beyond," was presented by Judith Roy, Century College, and President of National Women's Studies Association. Concurrent sessions were presented by faculty from eight system institutions and from the University of St. Thomas. The sessions included (1) Focus on Students: Identities and Communities, (2) Pedagogy and Practicalities: How to Get the Job Done, (3) The Academic Scene for Women's Studies in MnSCU, and (4) Intersection: Theory and Activism Across Disciplines. Overall, faculty leaders felt the workshop was successful and strongly recommended that the workshop be an annual event. [Additional recommendations.](#)

-Yvonne L. Shafer

Committed to Improving Student Learning

Dates to Remember

MAR 1-3: REALIZING STUDENT POTENTIAL / ITEACH 2007 CONFERENCE
 Minneapolis Community & Technical College/
 Metropolitan State University (Minneapolis Campus)
[View Full Program](#)
[Keynote Speakers](#)
[Registration](#)
[Travel Planner](#)



MAR 16-17: ENGLISH COMPOSITION: CROSSING LINES, FORGING CONNECTIONS & EXTENDING OPPORTUNITIES
 Century College. [Discipline Workshop Information](#)

MAR 25-26: CHINA SYMPOSIUM 2007
 St. Cloud State University. [Discipline Workshop Information](#)

APR 2: PROMOTING HEALTHY BEHAVIORS
 Inver Hills Community College. [Discipline Workshop Information](#)

APR 21: WHAT NEW SIGN LANGUAGES CAN TEACH US ABOUT ASL
 Location: North Star Academy, St. Paul. [Discipline Workshop Information](#)

APR 27-28: MATHEMATICS: SHARPEN THE FOCUS
 Duluth Entertainment Convention Center. [Discipline Workshop Information](#)

MAY 1: LIBRARY REFERENCE AND INFORMATION LITERACY SERVICES IN THE DIGITAL AGE
 North Hennepin Community College. [Discipline Workshop Information](#)

CTL Resources for Faculty

GRANTS AVAILABLE TO FACULTY MEMBERS

The *Chronicle of Higher Education* reported this week that the Ad Council soon will start a multimedia campaign designed to raise public awareness about the steps required to prepare for college.

In CTL, we've also been thinking about college readiness. One way that our faculty members can address this issue is through our **Instructional Development Grants**. These grants, of up to \$10,000, are for projects to improve college readiness and/or transition from high school to college or university; The program should include collaboration and partnership programs between system faculty members and high-school (grades 9-12) teachers. The application deadline is February 23.

Another exciting grant opportunity from CTL is our **Designed for Learning** initiative. This grants program offers up to \$25,000 in a systemwide initiative focusing on redesigning large-enrollment, multi-section courses. Redesign usually uses technology-supported active-learning strategies to achieve improvements in learning outcomes and cost savings. The deadline for applications to this program is March 30, but there is a mandatory Web conference scheduled for February 2.

More information about both of these grants is at www.ctl.mnscu.edu/programs/grants/funds.html. To get more information or to discuss your ideas, contact CTL's grants director, Thomas Wortman, at 651.297.1483 or thomas.wortman@so.mnscu.edu.

Featured Event

What New Sign Languages Can Teach Us About ASL

This Discipline Workshop, to be held at Grace Church in Roseville, will introduce sign language teachers and interpreters to the most recent work on sign languages. Workshop topics will include: 1) research on new sign languages used around the world (sign languages less than 75 years old), 2) fingerspelling and sign languages – how they complement each other, and 3) how sign languages around the world are changing as they age. The focus of the workshop is on developing knowledge and skills in describing sign languages to students and to the public (e.g. Is sign language universal? How do sign languages around the world differ from one another? Are there differences between newer sign languages and older sign languages such as ASL? How will sign languages change into the future?)

Carol Padden, a professor of Communications at the University of California, San Diego, will be the presenter at this Discipline Workshop. She is co-author of two textbooks on ASL: *A Basic Course in ASL* and *Learning ASL* and two books on deaf culture *Deaf in America: Voices from a Culture* and *Inside Deaf Culture*. Her recent research includes work on a new sign language in Israel.

Workshop planners include Sherri Rademacher, St. Cloud Technical College; Dianne Lyles, Minnesota State University, Mankato; and Tanya Hoting Mrazek, Central Lakes College.

Registration is open for this Discipline Workshop! However, you must register and reserve your hotel room by March 20, 2007 in order to take advantage of the discounted lodging rate at the Country Inn & Suites in Roseville.

[Registration and additional information](#)

-Martin Springborg

Register for
RSP/ITeach 2007
Today!