



Minnesota
STATE COLLEGES
& UNIVERSITIES

WEEKLY UPDATE

A WEEKLY COMMUNICATION FROM THE CENTER FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING

February 19, 2007

SoCTL *The Scholarship of Teaching & Learning at CTL*

Student Success in a Multicultural Minnesota

Here at CTL, as we prepare for our upcoming annual conference, Realizing Student Potential/ITeach, focused this year on “the first-year student in the 21st century,” we’re thinking a lot about student transitions to college life. Even more particularly, in the middle of, Black History Month and on the anniversary of Abraham Lincoln’s birth, we’re thinking about issues related to realizing the potential of all students. Our campuses, like those all over the United States, are increasingly multicultural, diverse places, and not all students find it easy to make the adaptations needed to successfully complete a freshman year, much less fully realize their potential for a college education.

The dismaying truth in higher education, as in K-12, is that there is an “achievement gap” between the program completion and graduation rates of students of color and White students (Carey, 2004, e.g.). At our own system’s universities, as late as 2004 (the latest date for common published data), there were gaps that ranged from 13.8% to 30.4%. At one university, for example, 50.6% of all students graduated within 6 years, while 36.8% of under-represented minorities had. At another, 48.6% of all students had graduated, as compared to 18.2% of under-represented minority students (College Results Online, 2007).

Numbers like these deserve campuswide and systemwide discussion—by students as well as faculty and administrators. Presumably, all of our students, whether in career and technical, professional, or liberal arts programs, want an education that prepares them to succeed in their future lives—as thinkers and problem-solvers, as workers and citizens, as collaborators with other adults and as teachers of children. Most students come intending to graduate, and most intend to continue living in Minnesota after graduation.

There is growing evidence that the best preparation for graduation as well as for life in a diverse, increasingly international, 21st-century America, happens at colleges and universities that welcome and enrich themselves through diversity (Hurtado, 2006). Psychologist Patricia Gurin has found in a review of national data, for example, that students benefit from interaction with students from diverse backgrounds in increased complexity of thinking during college, and in increased “cross-racial interactions five years from college.” (Gurin, 1999)

At the classroom level, faculty in every discipline can take multicultural approaches to the curriculum; they can work to engage all students in active and deep learning activities; and they can join students and colleagues in multicultural extracurricular and cocurricular activities, in order to demonstrate a commitment to the intercultural world of the 21st century—and help to realize the potential of all students.

-Lynda Milne

Carey, K. (2005). A matter of degrees: Improving graduation rates at four-year colleges and universities. Washington, DC: Education Trust.

Gurin, P. (1999). New research on the benefits of diversity in college and beyond: An empirical analysis. *Diversity Digest*, 3(3), 5, 15. Available at www.diversityweb.org/Digest/w01/alternative.html

Hurtado, S. (2006). How diversity affects teaching and learning: Climate of inclusion has a positive effect on learning outcomes. Available at http://www.diversityweb.org/research_and_trends/.

College Results Online is an interactive Web site, maintained by that allows any user to examine overall graduation rates and see how those rates have changed over time; learn about universities’ records graduating diverse groups of students; compare the graduation rates of similar colleges and universities that share many characteristics and serve similar student populations.

Register Now!

REALIZING STUDENT POTENTIAL/ITEACH 2007

CONFERENCE PROGRAM

Registration Closes February 22!

Teaching Tip of the Week

Bringing Closure to Student Work

Many instructors hate doing something assigned to us, only to never hear about it again. So do our students. Make sure this doesn’t happen in your class by using the following ideas:

- Have each student, independently or in small groups, report on a certain facet of the assignment as they turn them in. If in groups, have a discussion of the different facets so students can share with the entire class.
- Groups can write out a summary of their conclusions or ideas which they or you read to the class.
- Through graphic organizers, minutes, journals, threaded discussions have students record the strategies they used and the results they obtained in completing the assignment. Students can share or decide on the ones they found most helpful as a class.

-Zala Fashant

Magnan, Robert (1990). *147 Practical Tips for Teaching Professors*. Atwood.

CTL Report

CTL Workshop—Grant Seeking and Proposal Writing

The Center for Teaching and Learning staff Thomas Wortman, Grants Director, and Yvonne Shafer, Faculty Coordinator, conducted workshops at the Brooklyn Park and Eden Prairie campuses of Hennepin Technical College on January 12, 2007. The topic was “Grant Seeking and Proposal Writing: It’s Not That Hard to Fund Your Ideas!”

Tom’s “Top 11 Tips for Successful Proposals” included Buy the Book (*The Complete Idiot’s Guide to Grant Writing* by W. Thompson, New York: Alpha, 2007), Read the RFP Carefully, Build Relationships, Share Your Ideas, Plan Enough Time for the Process, Pay Special Attention to the Budget Details, Don’t Pad Your Budget, Make Your First Paragraph the Most Important, Include Relevant Research, Use the “Wortman Stupid Test” and Create an Evaluation or Assessment Plan.

The workshops were well received and CTL staff left with a parting message: There’s money out there; just go ask!

-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

Join over 1200 of your colleagues
who are coming to this event!

[Program](#) [Travel Planner](#) [Register Now!](#)



Featured Event

Using Technology to Teach Foreign Languages

On March 16, St. Cloud State University will host a [CTL Discipline Workshop](#) entitled *Using Technology to Teach Foreign Languages*. Workshop planners Maria Mikolchak, Saint Cloud State University; Josephine Books, Inver Hills Community College; and Luis Guadano, St. Paul College, have arranged for presenter Marlene Johnshoy, University of Minnesota faculty member and representative from Houghton Mifflin's Faculty Programs, to provide a one-day workshop focused on building technology expertise with hand-on instruction. The workshop is intended for language educators, and promises to assist participants in the use of technology in the teaching of foreign languages within the framework of the national standards for foreign language learning.

Houghton Mifflin's Faculty Programs are offered in conjunction with the International Association for Language Learning Technology and the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages. Interested Foreign Language faculty should contact Josephine Books at (651) 457-7851 or jbooks@inverhills.edu. Registration is available online at <http://www.cvent.com>.

[Printable Workshop Brochure](#)

-Martin Springborg

Register by Thursday!

CTL Instructional Development Grants

Deadline is February 23!

This week, write up your ideas and submit them to:

<http://www.ctl.mnscu.edu/programs/grants/funds.html>

CTL Resources for Faculty

Success for First-year, Introductory, and Gen-Ed Courses

The theme for CTL's RSP/iTeach conference on March 1 through March 3 is "The First-Year Student in the 21st Century." CTL has other resources to supplement those from the conference. Here are two, both from CTL's online reading packet (www.ctl.mnscu.edu/iteach/resources/pod/Packet8) about teaching introductory and general education courses.

In "What did I do right in one freshman seminar? What did I do wrong in another? What will I do next time?" Richard Schoenwald, from Carnegie Mellon University, compares two first-year seminar classes that he taught—with very different outcomes. Schoenwald's essay analyzes his role in organizing and teaching the two seminars and offers practical tips to ensure success and alleviate failure.

North Carolina State's Virginia S. Lee highlights the importance of inquiry-guided learning (IGL), which is especially useful in large-enrollment or introductory classes. In her article, "Promoting Learning Through Inquiry," she discusses IGL and gives examples of practices with increasingly more independent investigation of concepts, problems, and issues in the classroom. She writes that students "are like amateur scientists whose cognitive development advances through continuous interaction with and exploration of the environment."

-Thomas Wortman

Here is a great way to save \$75...
Register for
[RSP/iTeach 2007](#)
by February 22!