



Minnesota  
STATE COLLEGES  
& UNIVERSITIES

# WEEKLY UPDATE

A WEEKLY COMMUNICATION FROM THE CENTER FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING

March 12, 2007

## SoCTL *The Scholarship of Teaching & Learning at CTL*

### The Emerging Trend of “Doing” and “Thinking”: Integrating Professional and Liberal Education

It's not surprising that the issue of assimilating liberal and professional education would surface in a country that has gone from the agricultural age to the industrial age to the information age and beyond. The educational system in the United States often is given credit as being a prime reason why this country was able to advance so rapidly into the information age. Throughout these eras, however, we tended to separate liberal and professional education—both mentally and physically. Liberal education was the “thinking” side, and professional education was the “doing” side.

**Changing World.** But the world has changed! Because we now operate in a globalized environment, our educational system has likewise changed. How are these changes affecting our teaching and learning in the classroom? Liberal education or general education is, in many minds, “... not regarded as having intrinsic value or as contributing to personal welfare and career preparation” (Hutton, 2006). This viewpoint is changing, however, and efforts are being made to bring “doing” and “thinking” closer together within the professional curricula for attorneys, financial analysts, software engineers, radiologists, and students studying in other fields. According to Hutton, there are more professional programs integrating liberal learning objectives into their curricula than there are liberal arts programs integrating professional learning objectives. As the demand for conceptual thinking in the workplace increases, however, this lead is expected to wane and the lines between liberal and professional or career programs will blur.

**Right-Brain Thinking.** Daniel Pink introduces a new age for today's world—the conceptual age. This age requires our graduates to be able to apply right-brain hemisphere abilities, such as seeing the big picture, handling the identification of patterns from among huge data stores, expressing emotions, defining ethics, synthesizing and using other talents that we've often overlooked or undervalued (Pink, 2005). To function in this era, “... the professions have made a concerted effort to bring ‘doing’ and ‘thinking’ closer together within their own curricula.” (Hutton, 2006). There is growing support for well-educated workers who have the ability to write and speak well, analyze data, synthesize information and continuously learn new concepts—in other words, “Go right, my good brain!”

**Conceptual Age.** Our left-brain thinking has brought us much success. These linear, logical and analytical talents are still necessary today. In fact, they're indispensable; but they're no longer enough. The professions are acknowledging that students must have a strong grounding in general education and specific knowledge and skills in a professional field. To meet the global challenges of competition in the conceptual age, the old division between “doing” and “thinking” hopefully will transpire into programs that include “doing,” “thinking” and “knowing.” Incorporating these concepts into our classrooms can help our graduates succeed in a world that is increasingly complex and competitive.

Pink, D. (2005). *A Whole New Mind: Moving from the Information Age to the Conceptual Age*. Penguin Group (USA) Inc.

Hutton, T. (2006). *The conflation of liberal & professional education: pipedream, aspiration, or nascent reality?* Association of American Colleges and Universities.

Yvonne L. Shafer

### We want your feedback about the Weekly Update Newsletter!

[Take this 2-minute survey](#)

If you send us your name and e-mail address you will be entered into a drawing for a free books on teaching.

## Teaching Tip of the Week

### My Dog Ate My Homework!

Have you told your students how you are going to handle late work, both in your syllabus and verbally for those of you who meet face-to-face? Laying the ground rules at the beginning of the course helps you, as the instructor, to navigate the myriad of reasons and excuses you will encounter throughout the semester. Here are some questions to consider:

- Do you accept late work?
- What are the penalties for late work?
- Does it make a difference how late the work is given to you?
- Do students lose a percentage of their grade per day or per week for each late assignment?
- Do you have some reasons in which you will take late work without penalty?
- How many assignments/tests will you accept after the deadline?

Communicating the rules of late work clarifies your position, while helping to both minimize subjectivity and eliminate confusion.

-Zala Fashant

## CTL Report

### “It Ain't Over 'til It's Over!”

*“I was heart broken, and disappointed that RSP/ITeach was cancelled due to the storm. I can't even begin to feel like what I expect you are all feeling right now, in light of what held the promise to be one of the biggest and best ever.”*

This is what one faculty member told us about the cancellation of the Realizing Student Potential/ITeach Conference; and we at the CTL system office totally agree. Because we received so many comments like the above, we're not giving up. Work has begun with our planning committee and partners to consider whether it is possible to hold the conference later this year. Therefore, stay tuned! We'll let you know as soon as we reach a conclusion.

-Yvonne L. Shafer

**Committed to Improving Student Learning**

## Dates to Remember!

### Spring Discipline Workshops

**MAR 16-17:** ENGLISH COMPOSITION: CROSSING LINES, FORGING CONNECTIONS & EXTENDING OPPORTUNITIES

Century College. [Discipline Workshop Information](#)

**MAR 16:** USING TECHNOLOGY TO TEACH FOREIGN LANGUAGES

St. Cloud State University [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 18-20:** HEALTH EDUCATORS – GROWING TOGETHER: EDUCATING, ENRICHING, AND EMPOWERING

Arrowwood Resort & Conference Center, Alexandria.

[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

### Faculty Development Presentations in YOUR Hometown!

It was very sad to cancel last weekend's RSP/ITeach conference in Minneapolis, but that does not mean that development opportunities are not available for the faculty throughout the state. For example, CTL staff members are always available to present about teaching and learning topics on campus at your institution.

Any of CTL's staff members can travel to your campus and present on a topic of your choice. Our coordinators are happy to arrange a visit and find the right person to assist you in identifying a topic and arranging a visit. Yvonne Shafer is the CTL faculty coordinator for educator professional development at career and technical colleges and at Minnesota State University Moorhead. Martin Springborg is the faculty coordinator for educator professional development at community colleges and at the other six universities. Faculty members should contact the CTL leader on their campuses to arrange a campus visit or presentation by CTL staff members.

A list of some possible presentations is on the Web at

[www.ctl.mnscu.edu/about/staffpresentations.html](http://www.ctl.mnscu.edu/about/staffpresentations.html).

The general contact for CTL is [CTL@so.mnscu.edu](mailto:CTL@so.mnscu.edu), (651) 649-5740.

The directory of campus leaders is at [www.ctl.mnscu.edu/facdev/user\\_leader-list.php](http://www.ctl.mnscu.edu/facdev/user_leader-list.php).

-Thomas Wortman

## Featured Events

### TWO DISCIPLINE WORKSHOPS THIS WEEK

#### [English Composition: Crossing Lines, Forging Connections & Extending Opportunities](#)

#### March 16 – 17 at Century College

English faculty! Make sure you “seize the opportunity” to meet with your colleagues, share different methods, pedagogies, and styles in teaching composition, and learn about the ways that English faculty members are collaborating in, crossing lines, and extending composition instruction. Presenters include Steven Pinker, Dr. Mike Palmquist, and Dr. Will Hochman—as well as many system faculty members.

For additional information, look at the [agenda](#) or contact Randall McClure, (507) 389-5512, [randall.mcclure@mnsu.edu](mailto:randall.mcclure@mnsu.edu).

#### [Using Technology to Teach Foreign Languages](#)

#### March 16 at St. Cloud State University

*Ne soyez pas en retard...* for this workshop on the use of technology in the teaching of foreign languages! In this one-day workshop, facilitator Marlene Johnshoy from the University of Minnesota and Houghton Mifflin's Faculty Programs will work with participants to build technology expertise with hand-on instruction. Hurry—[registration closes March 15!](#)

For additional information, contact Josephine Books, (651) 457-7851, [jbooks@inverhills.edu](mailto:jbooks@inverhills.edu)

-Martin Springborg

REALIZING STUDENT  
POTENTIAL / ITEACH  
THE FIRST-YEAR STUDENT IN THE 21ST CENTURY

**A conference so good it just has to be rescheduled! Details soon!**

