



Minnesota
STATE COLLEGES
& UNIVERSITIES

WEEKLY UPDATE

A WEEKLY COMMUNICATION FROM THE CENTER FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING

April 30, 2007

SoCTL *The Scholarship of Teaching & Learning at CTL*

Deeply Rooted Ideas

"Today's professors and administrators have acquired, from their own experience as students, deeply rooted ideas about higher learning that may hinder their ability to respond to new circumstances." So writes Jack Lindquist in the 1981 book *The Modern American College* (Chickering and Gamson, 1981). He goes on to question how these professors, steeped in the traditions of the professor of the past, can possibly hope to teach 40- or 60-year old adult learners, minority students, or those students with unique demands quite different from the white, middle-class 18-22-year old. Given that changes in our student body will only be increasing more rapidly in the future, he goes on to say that the greatest challenge to collegiate professional development is to educate and socialize faculty and administration for tomorrow's postsecondary education. In short, what do tomorrow's students need? And how can faculty members respond to those needs?

On to 1995, to Robert Barr and John Tagg's influential article *A New Paradigm for Undergraduate Education*. They introduce the idea of the Learning Paradigm, and to a solution to the problem of the rapidly changing student demographic. The Learning Paradigm focuses on student learning, as opposed to the Instruction Paradigm, which focuses on faculty instruction. This new paradigm "liberates institutions from a set of difficult constraints," namely the increasing demand for postsecondary education from increasingly diverse students—in the face of declining budgets. It does this in part by creating learning environments and experiences for communities of students, by drawing on their many talents, and by empowering them to learn rather than telling them what they need to know. In the Learning Paradigm, faculty, courses, and the content therein (syllabi, lectures, etc.) are highly adaptable to changes in the student population. Finally, write Barr and Tagg, the Learning Paradigm "supports any learning method that works, where 'works' is defined in terms of learning outcomes, not as a degree of conformity to an ideal classroom archetype." The cycle of those deeply rooted ideas about higher learning is quite possibly halted, albeit painstakingly slowly.

Jump now to 2006, and to the changing academic career as described by Jack H. Schuster and Martin J. Finkelstein in *The American Faculty: The Restructuring of Academic Work and Careers*. Today, we are asking what has become of that traditional academic career. Has it given way to the life of part-time instruction at various institutions, of academic "jobs" vs. academic careers? In fact, it has not. But our institutions are more focused on student learning and on faculty instruction. Faculty members are carrying slightly heavier teaching loads today, and more university appointments are teaching-only. There also has been, in the recent past, a sharp increase in faculty members' use of instructional technology. In 1998, just shy of ten years ago, faculty members were already reporting spending 2.75 hours per week communicating with their students via e-mail. This was before the recent surge in online instruction. The question (and challenge) is whether we will use instructional technology effectively, and remain focused on student learning. After all, as Shuster and Finkelstein make a point of writing, "the job of a good scholar and teacher is to continuously learn; and that is a tall, continuing order."

So where are we now? The Learning Paradigm has been embraced by many, but not all. Our advances in technology have helped us to effectively meet the needs of our increasingly diverse student body, but only on a course-by-course basis. In short, we're not there yet—and we won't be anytime soon unless more faculty and administrators take action. Case in point: I recently downloaded the Podcast of a class from a reputable institution. Attending this class from my office, I watched a faculty member give his lecture, chalk in hand, to a group of about 100 very static students. For more than an hour, he told us what we needed to know. Indeed, "[t]oday's professors and administrators have acquired, from their own experience as students, deeply rooted ideas about higher learning that may hinder their ability to respond to new circumstances."

-Martin Springborg

Chickering, Arthur W. and Associates. (1988). *The Modern American College*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
Barr, Robert B. and Tagg, John. (1995). A New Paradigm for Undergraduate Education. *Change, November/December*, 13-25.
Schuster, Jack H. and Finkelstein, Martin J. (2006). *The American Faculty: The Restructuring of Academic Work and Careers*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.

Teaching Tip of the Week

Question of the Week – Stretching the Final Exam

In courses where I have used a final exam as a portion of the summative assessment, I found I had too many challenging questions that I wanted to use, leading me to this assessment technique.

By using one of those questions each week after teaching the topics, I found that students took a much deeper look at the material, were able to synthesize, analyze and evaluate cases where they needed to apply the information, and provided extremely substantive answers.

I liked to use an online component of the course to provide the question of the week, opening it up at the beginning of each new week and allowing them the week to submit their response.

-Zala Fashant

CTL Report

[CTL Discipline Workshop: Using Technology to Teach Foreign Languages](#)

A group of foreign language faculty members met at Saint Cloud State University on March 16 for a workshop on the use of technology in the teaching in their discipline. Marlene Johnshoy, from University of Minnesota Houghton Mifflin's Faculty Programs, facilitated the workshop.

Planners Maria Mikolchak, Saint Cloud State University; Josephine Books, Inver Hills Community College; and Luis Guadaño, St. Paul College report that Johnshoy's demonstration on different types of software and how they can be integrated and used specifically for foreign language instruction was received in a very positive way.

Planners assert that the most important accomplishment of the workshop was the creation of a forum in which foreign language instructors facing similar types of issues, such as lack of specific software designed for foreign languages, different computer skills of students, and various instructors with different computers skills, could get together to discuss their concerns and exchange ideas.

-Martin Springborg

Committed to Improving Student Learning

Dates to Remember!

Spring Discipline Workshops

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

CTL Summer Opportunities

JUNE 4-30: TEACHING ONLINE WORKSHOP. Registration opens May 1.

[Additional Information](#)

JUNE 11-15: RSP • ITEACH WEB CONFERENCE. Registration opens May 1.

[Additional Information](#)

Regional Conferences

MAY 22: CLASSROOMS OF THE FUTURE CONFERENCE - Teaching, Learning, & Technology: In that Order. Keynote speaker: Steve Gilbert, The TLT Group. Hamline University. [Conference Information](#)

MAY 24: eLEARNING: GAMES & SIMULATIONS WORKSHOP for ALL Levels of Education -- K-12 & Higher Ed. Normandale Community College [Conference Information](#)

MAY 31 – June 1: CIVIC ENGAGEMENT PRACTITIONERS RETREAT - A Minnesota Campus Compact retreat for all civic engagement practitioners and those who coordinate or lead service-learning and community service on member campuses. St John's University, Collegeville, MN.

[More information](#)

JULY 8-12: INTERNATIONAL DESIRE2LEARN USE CONFERENCE: Fusion – Realize the Potential. Keynote speakers: Ruth Clack, Will Richardson, Nancy White. Duluth Entertainment Conference Center (DECC) / Lake Superior College [Conference Information](#)

CTL Resources for Faculty

The POD Network is an organization called *Professional and Organizational Development in Higher Education*. It is an organization that fosters human development in higher education through faculty, instructional, and organizational development. POD offers publications, conferences, consulting, and networking, and offers services and resources about faculty development. Many resources are available directly at the POD Web site (<http://www.podnetwork.org/>) and other POD resources are in the ITeach center (<http://www.ctl.mnscu.edu/iteach/>).

Among the POD Network's resources in ITeach is a series of 14 reading packets that CTL purchased for use by faculty and staff members in our system. Each reading packet contains a series of articles—grouped by topic—that addresses issues in teaching and learning, in topics ranging from “Critical Thinking” to “Evaluation and Grading Issues.” The reading packets are at <http://www.ctl.mnscu.edu/iteach/resources/podreadings.html>.

Speaking of POD, the organization has assembled a series of articles, guides, and other materials for faculty members to use when they are responding to crises on their campuses, or in the aftermath of a crisis. Those resources are at <http://www.podnetwork.org/crises.htm>.

- Thomas Wortman

Featured Events

LIBRARY DISCIPLINE WORKSHOP

Library Reference and Information Literacy Services in the Digital Age

May 1, 2007

Planners: Planners: Todd Digby, Office of the Chancellor; Larry Kellerman, Central Lakes College; Kendall Larson, Winona State University; Ann Nelson, Hennepin Technical College

You might be thinking that visits to libraries have been decreasing, but many people studying these statistics would say—NOT TRUE! Yes, the physical visits have dropped; but that's only half the story. Every year, libraries receive more and more virtual visits; and the increases in online schools and online degrees have been major contributors to this rise. Yes, libraries have changed! So come join us at this workshop to discover those social and technological changes and to join in on the library talk.

This workshop will focus on how library reference services and information literacy can be delivered in effective ways in a virtual online environment. As our students interact with the library in digital ways, librarians need to have a good understanding of best practices and tools available to help bring library services to students in the most effective manner. Discussion sessions will allow librarians from around the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system to keep current and share best practices regarding Virtual Reference, Desire2Learn integration, LibData implementations, and tutorials.

Participants are encouraged to register at the Center for Liberal Arts, CLA 120, North Hennepin Community College, Brooklyn Park, between 9:00-9:30 a.m. on Tuesday, May 1.

-Yvonne L. Shafer

Mark your calendars!

**RSP • ITEACH Online Conference
June 11-15**

**On the deck or on the dock,
plan to attend!**

**Registration opens May 1!
www.ctl.mnscu.edu**

Chance of Mosquito Bites 100%