



Minnesota
STATE COLLEGES
& UNIVERSITIES

WEEKLY UPDATE

A WEEKLY COMMUNICATION FROM THE CENTER FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING

April 9, 2007

SoCTL *The Scholarship of Teaching & Learning at CTL*

Pedagogy: Is It Important?

Most of us probably have heard some of the arguments about what's more important in the classroom—subject matter knowledge or pedagogical comprehension and experience. David C. [Berliner \(2000\)](#) writes about the top 12 teacher education criticisms that he hears. A couple of them are: "All you need is subject matter knowledge; the rest is a waste of time." And "Any reasonably smart person can teach; all you have to do is follow the textbooks. . . ." (p. 359). There should be no argument about our needing to be subject matter experts, so let's move on to an equally important topic. How important is pedagogy? Pedagogy is a substantial topic—student development, learning process, teaching methods, assessing learning, among others. One fascinating aspect of pedagogy is the relationship between faculty and student.

Faculty-Student Contact. Most college teachers have spent many years becoming experts in their disciplines of study. Most of us have not completed a traditional teacher education program where we learn the skills of teaching and learning; so we are sometimes unaware of what matters most to college students. Fortunately, there are years of research findings to enlighten us about how we can be better teachers and support better student learning. Jose Cuseo's article on "[Faculty-Student Contact Outside The Classroom: Supporting Evidence & Promoting Practices](#)" comprises a review of several research findings about student-faculty contact outside the classroom. Three studies that he highlights are from George Kuh (1981), Vince Tinto (1987) and Alexander W. Astin (1993). Kuh concludes "The empirical evidence seems unequivocal: Faculty-student interaction is an important part of a quality undergraduate experience" (1981, p. 21). Tinto reaches a similar conclusion: "Institutions with low rates of student retention are those in which students generally report low rates of student-faculty contact. Conversely, institutions with high rates of retention are most frequently those which are marked by relatively high rates of such interactions" (p. 66). Astin's research involves ". . . a longitudinal study over a 25-year period, which included a national sample of approximately 500,000 students and 1300 institutions of all types. He finds that student-faculty interaction was significantly correlated with every academic achievement outcome examined, namely: college GPA, degree attainment, graduating with honors, and enrollment in graduate or professional school." Similar findings are found in K-12 schools. [John Hattie](#) synthesizes over 500,000 studies where K-12 student achievement is identified as being most influenced by the students themselves (50%) and next by teachers (30%).

Our positive engagement with students can help produce better outcomes for students of all types and in a variety of college experiences. The faculty-student contact is one of the most important practices we can include in our practice of pedagogy.

References

Berliner, David C. (2000). *A Personal Response To Those Who Bash Teacher Education*, Journal of Teacher Education, American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education. Retrieved April 4, 2007, from

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Teaching Tip of the Week

Classroom Discussion Strategies for Later in the Semester (Part 1)

By now you have gotten to know your students well, (and in a few cases, too well!). There are some specific strategies that are better to use once the classroom culture is better established.

- Expand the size of your discussion groups to increase diverse input.
- Create a more dynamic atmosphere by choosing respondents who are sitting more physically distant from one another.
- Pose questions and tell students you want them to think for a minute or discuss possible answers for a few minutes before responding to the entire class.
- Avoid calling on those whose body language indicates they are not mentally engaged; it can stifle the discussion and possible future involvement.

Continued next week. . . .

-Zala Fashant

Source: Lyons, R. (2003). *Success Strategies for Adjunct Faculty*. Pearson A & B.

CTL Report

Promoting Healthy Behaviors Discipline Workshop

On April 2, 2007, health, physical education and exercise science educators met at Inver Hills Community College for a workshop about Promoting Healthy Behaviors. The keynote speaker was Mary Thissen-Milder, PhD, State Director of Health and Physical Education, from the Minnesota Department of Education. Her presentation was on "The State of Health and Physical Education in Minnesota and Resources from the Department of Education." She presented a wealth of data, including the observation that 47 states and the District of Columbia have state standards for physical education and three do not. The three that do not have state standards are Iowa, *Minnesota* and Ohio. Additional information can be found at www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/PECAT.

Keep watch on the CTL Web site for follow-up information about the outcomes of this workshop.

-Yvonne L. Shafer

Committed to Improving Student Learning

Dates to Remember!

Spring Discipline Workshops

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

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](#)

Regional Conferences

APR 12-13: KEEPING OUR FACULTIES IV: RECRUITING, RETAINING, AND ADVANCING FACULTY OF COLOR

Radisson University Hotel, Minneapolis. [Conference Information](#)

MAY 22: CLASSROOMS OF THE FUTURE CONFERENCE - Teaching, Learning, & Technology: In that Order. Keynote speaker: Steve Gilbert, The TLT Group

Hamline University. [Conference 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

BEEP for best e-practices

St. Petersburg (Fla.) College has amassed an amazing collection of resources aimed at improving online and technology-enhanced practices. BEEP, or Best Educational E-Practices, is a U. S. Department of Education-funded effort to provide the public with scores of information, tips, hints, and links to Web sites that explore all things technology. The Web site for BEEP's project is

<http://www.spcollege.edu/eagle/research/beep/>. Here are some highlights.

- The November 1, 2006, issue (<http://www.spcollege.edu/eagle/research/beep/beep53.htm>) explores student retention. The issue is devoted to keeping students enrolled and engaged. For example, the issue contains a link to a Web site at the University of Washington that highlights the “five P’s” of effective online instruction. “Online learners come to your course with expectations about the frequency and kind of interaction they will have with you,” reads the site. These tips are to be prompt, be personal, be positive, be practical, and be patient.
- iPods, wikis, and blogs are explored in the January 1, 2006, issue (<http://www.spcollege.edu/eagle/research/beep/beep48.htm>). Resources there include an introduction to podcasting, an article about how iPods can be an alternative to notetaking, and an excellent article entitled “Weblogs in Education: Bringing the World to the Liberal Arts Classroom.”

BEEP is just one of the many resources available to faculty members through CTL's ITeach Center. Drop in today at <http://www.ctl.mnscu.edu/iteach/>.

- Thomas Wortman

Featured Events

Health Educators Discipline Workshop

Arrowwood Resort & Conference Center, Alexandria

April 18 - April 20, 2007

Keynote Speaker: Tou Ger Xiong – Teaching Culture Through Laughter

This 2007 Health Educators Conference will provide information to health educators that will assist them in meeting the dynamic learning needs of a diverse student body and making connections among health educators. Issues of cultural diversity and underrepresented groups in faculty and students (ESL, males, and individuals with disabilities) will be addressed throughout the conference. The agenda also encompasses aspects such as a holistic view of health, wellness, self-care, creativity, healing, and nurturing. The theme of the conference details the need for educating, enriching and empowering the current health educator workforce in the interest of retention of those educators as well as fostering an environment that will be attractive to those in healthcare that are contemplating going into healthcare education.

Keynote speaker Tou Ger Xiong is a Hmong diversity consultant and storyteller, comedian, and rap artist. His presentations combine humor, folklore and music. His presentations have won praise from many groups across the United States.

[Registration](#) will only remain open through April 10, so register now! Contact conference planner Angie Rogers at 218-744-7521 or a.rogers@mr.mnscu.edu for more information on this event.

-Martin Springborg

Mark your calendars!

CTL Online Summer E-Conference June 11-15

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

Details to follow soon.

Chance of Cancellation Due to Snow
0%