Price Kerfoot, a researcher at Harvard Medical School, practices a method called “spaced repetition” to improve student memory retention by as much as 50%. Two dozen studies over five years have confirmed his results. Dr. Kerfoot sent weekly emails containing multiple-choice questions to students, to which students then responded by smartphone or computer. Each week the questions mixed new material with information already covered. At the end of the course, the students who received the emails scored significantly higher on an exam than those who did not. This method is easy to design into an online environment using selective release. It is applicable in face-to-face classes too. In addition to explaining more about this method, the article linked below details how one can use this method for self-study.


### Teaching Students How to Argue

An article titled “Engaging Students in Argument” was published in the March 2011 issue of The Teaching Professor.

In this article Greg Gildersleeve, an instructor at a Kansas community college, shares how he teaches students how to argue through a simulation. Gildersleeve feels like, “textbooks provide instructions and models, [he] has found that few methods engage students so fully in the process of arguing and counterarguing as a face-to-face role-playing scenario.”

The model Gildersleeve developed can be adapted for different content areas. He presents his students with the scenario of a new corporation coming to a small town. This corporation, named FRAMcorp, already has a bad reputation for causing pollution, increasing traffic in rural areas, and driving local competitors out of business. FRAMcorp’s new plant will not only employ 500 people in Homeland Square, obviously a made-up location, but will also cause restaurants and retail stores to open, increasing employment opportunities.

*Article continued on page 5.*
We are bringing in outside professionals to conduct interesting and thought-provoking workshops on advanced teaching pedagogy. Contact Nina Stein at nstein@trcc.commnet.edu or 860-885-2357 to RSVP or if you have any questions.

- **Session 1: Identifying the Potential in Students**
  - **Date, Time & Location:** Wednesday, April 18, 2012, 4-6 PM, B214
  - **Presenter:** Michele Campagna, Montclair State University
  - **Description:** While our students come to our campus from varying backgrounds they share the common goal of attaining the education and training that will propel them forward to secure a more successful future. What employers are telling higher education institutions is that the knowledge, skills, and values they seek in prospective employees are those that will prepare these employees for the challenges and demands that they will encounter in today's workplace. This session will explore these issues and the high-impact educational practices that faculty can utilize in the classroom to discover and maximize the potential of their students.

- **Session 2: Net Generation Students: Who They Are, Why They are Different, and Teaching Strategies That Work For Them**
  - **Date & Time:** Thursday, May 3, 2012, 4-6 PM, C243
  - **Presenter:** Robert Feldman, University of Massachusetts Amherst
  - **Description:** In this workshop, we will focus on today's Net Generation students, discussing how they are different from students of prior generations. We will then talk about strategies that address students of today, focusing on ways of engaging them and on several innovative (and inexpensive) technologies that can be incorporated into the classroom. We'll also consider the changing roles of instructors, and talk about preparing Net Generation students for careers and lifelong learning.

- **Session 3: Transformational Leadership in the Classroom: Teachers as charismatic, motivating, and influential leaders**
  - **Date & Time:** Monday, May 7, 2012, 4-6 PM, B214
  - **Presenter:** Darrin Griffin, University of Buffalo
  - **Description:** Teachers provide leadership in college classrooms, and the behaviors they exhibit as leaders impact a variety of student outcomes (Bolkan & Goodboy, 2009). Bolkan, S., & Goodboy, A. K. (2009). This workshop will examine how to use transformational leadership in the classroom to foster student motivation and, subsequently, students’ approaches to their studying. Results suggest that when teachers influence students’ intrinsic motivation through the use of intellectually stimulating behaviors, students approach their learning in deep and strategic ways, and are less likely to adopt a surface-level approach to their studies.

- **Session 4: Re-energizing Your Teaching**
  - **Date & Time:** Tuesday, September 11, 2012, 4-6 PM, B214
  - **Presenter:** Maryellen Weimer, Penn State University
  - **Description:** Most college teachers begin their careers full of enthusiasm for teaching. But their idealistic goals and the realities of academic careers often collide, leaving teachers with tarnished goals and sometimes cynical perspectives. The goal of the session: propose ways of thinking about growth and change that can increase both the motivation to teach and effectiveness in the classroom.
The New Normal?

One challenge in the new role for community colleges will be to keep the general education curriculum from being marginalized by the turmoil created as we focus on workforce preparation. The concept of the “new normal” for community colleges is based on the perception that many community college students are not merely passing through on their way to a four-year degree, nor are they training to enter the world of business and industry upon graduation. Many will come and go intermittently throughout their adult careers as new needs for training emerge.

The article linked below reminds us that community colleges must also prepare students to become responsible citizens who understand civic duties in a democratic society.


Civic Learning

Five years ago, more than half of 14,000 students tested failed a civic literacy exam. This prompted the U.S. Department of Education to invite the Association of American Colleges and Universities and the Global Perspective Institute to prepare a report on the state of civic learning and democratic engagement in the country and to prepare an educational plan for the future.

“The first and the most essential charge upon higher education is that at all levels and in all its fields of specialization, it shall be the carrier of democratic values, ideals, and process,” the report states.

In one response, the American Association of Community Colleges plans to offer free online workshop resources on civic engagement in higher education this year.

Read more from:
- Inside Higher Education News

“We are sending out the message that democracy matters and it is dangerous to keep democracy on auto-pilot.”
~Carol Schneider, the AAC&U president
TED, known for streaming 18-minute inspiring video lectures, announced last year that it would start producing five-minute videos directed toward the educational community. The new channel, called TED-Ed, is unveiling its first production, a collection of eleven videos aimed first at the high-school audience, later for higher-ed, to "ignite the classroom discussion." Their goal is to add a new video each day. Among the first video topics are "How many universes are there?", "Why don't we see evidence of alien life?" and "How pandemics spread (through history and across the world)."

TED-Ed: http://www.youtube.com/user/TEDEducation

Call for Articles and Events!

We are looking for articles for future IDEA Center newsletters. If you would like to submit an article, please e-mail Nina Stein at nstein@trcc.commnet.edu.

If you have an event that you would like included in the "Calendar of Events" section of the newsletter, please send the information to Nina Stein at the above e-mail address. Please include the name of the event, facilitator, location, date, and time.

Just for Fun...

The Google Art Project

The Google Art Project allows you to interactively explore 17 art museums around the world. Not every painting in each museum is contained on the site. The feature I find most fascinating is the zoom ability. You can zoom-in to any painting in any collection close enough to see individual brush strokes, and sometimes even see through the canvas.

- Visitor Guide YouTube Video
Some concerned citizens have come together to form the Homeland Square Neighborhood Association (HSNA) in order to make their concerns public. FRAMcorp has agreed to debate the HSNA and allow the people of Homeland Square to decide the fate of the plant coming to their town. If they veto the plant, they will build in another town.

The class is divided into three groups; a group representing FRAMcorp, a group representing HSNA, and a third group representing the townspeople. The first two groups have time to plan how to present their case to the townspeople who are voting. The two groups debate the issues for about 20 minutes. During this time, the townspeople are able to ask questions to either side. In order to make this task more challenging, the townspeople are required to reach a consensus. This also gives them practice arguing and counterarguing.

When Gildersleeve notices certain students not participating, he draws them in by assigning them individual roles, such as the FRAMcorp’s director of public relations who could lose his/her job if the citizens veto the plant. Gildersleeve has strategically left out specific information in the scenario to force students to engage their imagination. This also shows the importance of research, because without fully understanding the opposition, both groups “often make assumptions about the other that do not hold up under scrutiny.”

The students are drawn in to the activity, and specifically into their group defending their cause. One student took on a role of a farmer who was concerned about how the toxic waste would damage his land. Students representing FRAMcorp defend their side by emphasizing the advantages: more jobs, hiring locally, minimal training, and going green. Gildersleeve has found that students resort to tactics that are humorous and unintentionally revealing.

Gildersleeve feels that the result is not as important as the process of arguing and counterarguing. “By projecting themselves into imaginary roles, students often emerge from the exercise with a deeper appreciation of the pros and cons of controversial issues.” Students are able to personalize controversial issues rather than read them in their textbook.

Google Jockey

An article titled “Using a Google Jockey to Enhance Classroom Discussion” was published in the Journal of Chemical Education by Pence, L.E., Greene, E., and Pence, H.E. (2010) and discussed in the May 2011 issue of The Teaching Professor.

The authors realized that students lacked, “a rich set of mental images” associated to the concepts being discussed. They thought that adding images, including cartoons, to their lectures and discussions would give students a visual context for the topic and thus be more engaged. This is where the “Google jockey” comes into play. A student was selected to search the Internet for images related to the topic and display them for the class to see.

The authors found that students mastered the technique fairly quickly and easily, possibly due to their high technical literacy. They also found that having a student who was familiar with the topic and had previously worked with the professor had an easier time with extra task.

After four classes, 92% of the students felt that the images contributed to the discussions and 42% said they were distracting. At the end of the semester, 90% of the students felt they could cope with the images and none felt they were distracting.

The authors admit that this strategy will not work with all courses, but maybe in seminars or courses for nonmajors.
## Calendar of Events

### April

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Facilitator</th>
<th>Room</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Qwizdom Workshop</td>
<td>N. Stein</td>
<td>E211</td>
<td>4/4</td>
<td>1-3 PM</td>
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<tr>
<td>myCommnet/Blackboard – Faculty Support Open Lab</td>
<td>K. Barfield</td>
<td>E108</td>
<td>4/4</td>
<td>4-6 PM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Getting Started with Bb Learn</td>
<td>N. Stein</td>
<td>E108</td>
<td>4/13</td>
<td>1-3 PM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Getting Started with Bb Learn</td>
<td>K. Barfield</td>
<td>E108</td>
<td>4/14</td>
<td>9-11 AM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Identifying the Potential in Students – Michele Campagna</td>
<td>D. Ferreira</td>
<td>B-214</td>
<td>4/18</td>
<td>4-6 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>myCommnet/Blackboard – Faculty Support Open Lab</td>
<td>K. Barfield</td>
<td>E108</td>
<td>4/20</td>
<td>9-11 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bb Learn – Tips &amp; Tricks for Utilizing Video and Media in Your Course</td>
<td>K. Barfield</td>
<td>E108</td>
<td>4/23</td>
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### May

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<tr>
<td>Net Generation Students – Robert Feldman</td>
<td>D. Ferreira</td>
<td>B-243</td>
<td>5/3</td>
<td>4-6 PM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transformational Leadership in the Classroom</td>
<td>D. Ferreira</td>
<td>B-214</td>
<td>5/7</td>
<td>4-6 PM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Science Teaching Workshop</td>
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<td>U Conn</td>
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### June & July

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<th>Time</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bb Learn – What is My Role in the Online Classroom? Ways to Engage and Interact with Your Online Students</td>
<td>K. Barfield</td>
<td>E108</td>
<td>6/25</td>
<td>1-2:30 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bb Learn – Why and How to Best Use Rubrics in Blackboard Learn 9.1</td>
<td>K. Barfield</td>
<td>E108</td>
<td>7/24</td>
<td>1-2:30 PM</td>
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Please use the Course Cart to register for the computer and Blackboard workshops located in E108.

“Any smoothly functioning technology will have the appearance of magic.”  