What is the IDEA Center?

The Innovative Design in Educational Advancement (IDEA) Center first opened in February 2011. The mission of the IDEA Center is to maintain and support well-qualified, committed faculty and staff who utilize both proven traditional and progressive student-centered learning approaches. The vision is to build a dynamic, measurable, and nationally recognized space with a reputation of innovation that exemplifies TRCC’s teaching and learning values in action.

A needs assessment survey was conducted for both faculty and staff. Information was taken from the surveys to plan future workshops and purchase resources. Many workshops were held during the 2010-2011 academic year on topics such as faculty academic advising, syllabus development, and active engagement techniques.

A variety of resources were purchased for faculty and staff to use. From books, to DVD’s, to wireless presenters, the IDEA Center has a good selection of materials on a variety of topics.

Resources Available

- Books – Topics include rubrics, assessments, grading, Asperger’s Syndrome, and learner-centered teaching, etc.
- DVD’s – Randy Pausch’s The Last Lecture and 7 topics of Simulated Lectures & Demonstrations
- The Teaching Professor Newsletter
- The Chronicle of Higher Education
- Qwizdom student response system (clickers)
- Wireless laser presenters
- Digital camcorder
- Digital Voice Recorder

For a full list of resources go to the Resources page of our website - http://www.trcc.commnet.edu/Div_academics/IDEA/resources.shtml
College faculty insider’s guide to the first day of class
By Dave Ferreira

Introduction
The first day of class is one of the most crucial classes you will have during the semester. This class can also be the most challenging. Some instructors use an icebreaker and briefly go over the syllabus before dismissing their students 30 minutes early. Others feel the need to cover everything to the point where students are overloaded with information. A research study by Perlman and McCann (1999) found both approaches to be counterproductive.

Students do not have high expectations for the first day of class. This is due in part to previous classes that ended early and a student's desire to use the first week of classes to "shop" for the right set of courses. They want to know what is in the syllabus, how much work to expect, and what the instructor’s policies on attendance are.

The first day of class is the time to introduce the course, gain the students’ interest, and start the semester on a positive note. This guide is mean to help faculty in establishing goals for the first day of class and strategies to meet these goals. A sample lesson plan for a 50 minute class is provided and can be replicated as needed.

*Article continued on page 5.

Techy Tip

Making Digital Flashcards
You can use Google Docs on a PC or Android device, to create digital flashcards. Google Docs is a free program. To make flashcards, start with the Google Docs Spreadsheet function. The trick is to add a gadget called “Word Study Program” under the “Insert” column in the spreadsheet.
Detailed step-by-step directions are linked below. This would be a great link to share with your students through Blackboard or an e-mail.

Redesigning Test Review Sessions

An article titled “Active review sessions can advance student learning” was published in *Advances in Physiology Education* by Terence Favero (2011) and discussed in the January 2012 issue of *The Teaching Professor*.

After realizing that review sessions rarely lead to better preparing students, Favero redesigned his exam review sessions. He did not want his review sessions to consist of students asking questions, but rather providing them with opportunities to solve problems with low-stakes. He also decided to hold the review sessions during normal class time.

In order to help students develop better problem-solving skills, Favero used two active learning strategies. First, he used an “open-ended strategy” where students would record the 5 most important facts, theories, or concepts from the unit. Students paired up to compare lists, shared with the group, then Favero added topics students missed. Next, students created multiple-choice questions.

The second strategy was a “closed-ended” strategy. Favero would take ten higher-level and critical thinking questions from a previous exam and reviews strategies for solving these tricky problems.

Favero noticed that these sessions, although not popular in the beginning, do reduce pretest anxiety and helped him notice student misconceptions.

Student Engagement

An article titled “Improving student engagement: Ten proposals for action” was published in *Active Learning in Higher Education* by N. Zepke and L. Leach (2010) and discussed in the May 2011 issue of *The Teaching Professor*.

Student engagement is a popular phrase and has different definitions depending on who you ask. Zepke and Leach propose broad definitions to incorporate specific descriptions. For example, engagement is “students’ cognitive investment in, active participation in, and emotional commitment to their learning.”

The article briefly discusses ten ways to promote student engagement. Listed below are five of the topics.

1. Enhance students’ self-belief
2. Recognize that teaching and teachers are central to engagement.
3. Create learning that is active, collaborative, and fosters learning relationships.
4. Create educational experiences for students that are challenging and enriching and that extend their academic abilities
5. Enable students to become active citizens

“Student engagement is the product of motivation and active learning. It is a product rather than a sum because it will not occur if either element is missing.”

~By Elizabeth F. Barkley

To read these articles and others from *The Teaching Professor*, come to the IDEA Center.
Adjunct Professional Development Program

In January 2012, the IDEA Center sponsored an Adjunct Professional Development Program. Thirty-eight adjunct faculty members participated in 12 hours of instructional development. As they use what they learned during the spring semester, they will reflect upon their experience through writing an article for the Title III newsletter and filling out an impact survey. Topics include syllabus development, technological resources, providing substantive feedback, active engagement techniques, classroom management, and classroom assessment. Adjunct faculty members engaged in enriching discussions, shared frustrations as well as positive experiences. Based on requests, the IDEA Center will be hosting Adjunct Faculty Forums periodically throughout the year.

Adjunct Faculty Forum

When – Monday, February 13, 4-6pm (Open House style, come when you can)
Where – C-207
What – An opportunity for adjunct faculty to get together and discuss what is going well and give suggestions to one another.

**We will be having Adjunct Forums periodically throughout the semester.**

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.
One activity that has been shown to foster instructor-student rapport is a group activity that allows the student to interview the instructor (Hermann & Foster, 2011). This activity gives students an opportunity to think about what is important to themselves and their peers. It also creates an environment where meaningful questions about the course are not only wanted but expected.

Goal 2 – Communicate key elements and expectations for the course

Fun but relatively meaningless icebreaker activities are not viewed positively by students on the first day of class (Henslee, Burges & Buskist, 2006). However, using icebreakers that draw the students into the course content is viewed as beneficial to the instructor and student (Anderson, McGuire & Cory, 2010). For example, one of the key elements in First Year Experience is to understand and improve the teaching/learning process. Designing a discussion around the roles/responsibilities of the instructor and student would not only introduce a core concept in the course, but would also start to relate expectations.

Goal 3 – Promote desired student behaviors

In addition to relating the expectations of the course, students also want to know the preferred student behaviors. Promoting important behaviors is one technique (Nilson, 2003). For example, a desired behavior of First Year Experience Students is self-regulated learning. Providing an opportunity for students to reflect at the end of the class relays the importance of self-regulated learning.

Goal 4 – Actively involve the students

Building an atmosphere that actively involves all students builds a community of learners. There are many ways to actively involve students on the first day (Provitera-McGlynn, 1996):

- Make eye contact with all students and not just those that have responded
- After asking a question, wait 5-10 seconds instead of responding to the first person who raises their hand
- Have students write down their answers first
- Take a poll for certain questions
- Show enthusiasm
- Move around the room

Strategies to create a welcoming environment

- Strategy 1 – Greet the students
- Strategy 2 – Share information about yourself
- Strategy 3 – Addressing the students
- Strategy 4 – Learning the student’s name
- Strategy 5 – Share (appropriate) personal experiences

Sample introductory lesson plan

- Introduction (5 mins)
- Overview of syllabus (10 mins)
- Student introductions (5 mins)
- Student Discussion (5 mins)
- Interview (20 mins)
- Reflection/ contact info (5 mins)

**For the full version of the article with more details for creating a welcoming environment and the sample lesson plan contact Dave Ferreira at dferreira@trcc.commnet.edu.**
### Calendar of Events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Facilitator</th>
<th>Room</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
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**April**

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