IDEA Center
January/February 2013 Volume 2, Issue 4

Welcome 2013!

Welcome back to TRCC! I hope everyone had a nice holiday and was able to spend time with family and friends.

A BIG THANK YOU to Judy Snayd for funding and organizing our Professional Day speaker, Gail Alofsin. Gail is an inspirational and educational speaker as well as a university professor at URI. Gail spoke to us about making more time for us, communication skills, and being more positive.

During her first session titled Eat a Frog For Breakfast! 7 Steps to MORE TIME for YOU!, we learned some procrastination busters, ways to say no nicely, and time management practices.

Can I hear YOU? Recharging Your Communication Skills was the title of the second session. Faculty and staff discussed communication challenges in our work life, identified ways to communicate efficiently and tactfully with our colleagues, and learned ways to identify the barriers to effective and active listening.

The afternoon session was titled How Purple are YOU? The Power of Positivity. We discussed how positivity enhances the quality of our relationships and how optimism, confidence, and character will help us in doing our best, both personally and professionally.

To find out more information about Gail, visit her website: www.gailspeaks.com.

Community Colleges and Unemployment

The U.S. Department of Labor is pouring $2 billion into community college job retraining courses, which is part of the Trade Adjustment Assistance program. Fast-track courses as few as 12 weeks, offer industry-recognized certificates that hopefully will “fill the void.” The biggest challenge is getting a student back into the workforce, since many employers look for experience. The measurable data is not in yet, but what these programs will provide most is an understanding of what models do work to re-employ graduates.

Funds are being distributed, at $500 million at a time, from 2011 to 2014 to community colleges who design programs that teach new skills quickly and create relationships with companies who currently have job openings.

To learn more, read the article below.

Blackboard Learn Student Support Changes

Please note that as of the start of January 2013 we no longer have 24/7 technical support for distance learners and other users of Blackboard Learn to be able to reach a person. However, there is still an array of technical support for students as described below. Please remember that we have limited or no administrative access to external publisher systems (Pearson, McGraw-Hill, Elsevier, MacMillan, etc.) so that for publisher systems either you must provide your own technical support to your students or you must send them to the publisher’s call center or web site for support.

### Three Rivers

- Student support website, [www.threerivers.edu/support](http://www.threerivers.edu/support) with support documents and several videos.
- Email assistance is always available via TR-DistanceLearning@trcc.commnet.edu. Students can expect a response within 24 hours except during holidays, weekends, or extended breaks. I answer emails directly and this can be assigned to others when I am away so please provide students with the distance learning email address rather than my college address.
- Phone support for technical problems is available via the IT Help Desk at 860-885-2334 during college core hours.
- In person support is available via the IT Help Desk during college core hours. Note that the IT help Desk will be able to track problems and may direct students to my office so please send students there rather than directly to my office.
- Password resets: in-person password resets can be performed in the Registration department in the A wing. Additionally, passwords can be reset via the following means as described on our student support web page.
  a. Reset your NetID password via Fax: [Out-of-Area Students](http://www.threerivers.edu/support)
  b. Reset your NetID password via email
  c. Self-reset your NetID password via email
  d. Change your password in myCommNet

### Conn(SCU) System

- Student Support website, [websupport.ct.edu](http://websupport.ct.edu) with FAQs and a support ticketing system
- Phone Support at (860) 493-0221
  Note that hours for phone and web ticketing are not 24/7 and that they are unavailable on State holidays.
  - Monday – Thursday: 8:00am – 8:00pm
  - Friday: 8:00am – 5:00PM
  - Sunday: 1:00pm – 9:00PM

### Collaborative

- **Student Orientation within Blackboard:** provided that a student is able to login and use Blackboard, he/she will find many useful documents and tutorials in the Student Orientation course in which all students are enrolled.
Blackboard Learn Faculty Resources

Listed below are some resources that you can use ANYTIME to get help with Blackboard Learn.

- **TRCC Faculty Blackboard Resources** – This is a list of short videos and step-by-step guides to assist you with specific items on Blackboard Learn. [http://www.trcc.commnet.edu/Div_IT/EducationalTechnology/Faculty_Bb.shtml](http://www.trcc.commnet.edu/Div_IT/EducationalTechnology/Faculty_Bb.shtml)

- **Blackboard Learn Faculty Orientation Course** – All faculty are enrolled in this course. You will see it under the “Courses in which you are enrolled” list when you login to Blackboard.
  - **Self-Paced Modules** – Learning modules or folders on each tool.

- **Connecticut Community Colleges EdTech Videos** - [http://www.youtube.com/ctccedtechtraining](http://www.youtube.com/ctccedtechtraining)

- **IITT Course Cart: Online Registration System for Faculty and Staff Training** - [http://www.commnet.edu/academics/iitt/coursecart.asp](http://www.commnet.edu/academics/iitt/coursecart.asp)

- **On Demand Learning Center**: Video tutorials that can help supplement your users get trained. - [http://ondemand.blackboard.com/](http://ondemand.blackboard.com/)
The Academic Year in Review

Inside Higher Education published a humorous brief review of the past academic year in higher education. It is fun to read. The link is provided below, but here are some examples:

- Colleges and universities need to drop sports.
- Colleges and universities need to turn athletics into degree programs.


Characteristics of a Great Teacher

What do you think is a student’s view of what makes a great teacher? In the article linked below, the author states that her perspective has changed after many years of administrative experience and hundreds of teacher evaluations. It turns out that providing classroom entertainment and little homework is not what students value in the long run. What counts most is the teacher’s attitude toward students, and his/her flexibility, and love of the subject.


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.

What Professors Can Learn From Preschool Teachers

The first-hand observation linked below is the result of one professor’s visit to a preschool class. It has been noted that college students pay attention to what professors say less than 40% of the time. A good preschool teacher knows how to keep a student actively engaged, by varying classroom approaches, by mixing tinkering with projects and related discussion activities, and by creating student-led classes. Taking advantage of the moment benefits the student more than trying to cram everything from the syllabus into a lecture in order to keep on track.

Preschool and K-12 teachers encourage tinkering. Tinkering is not something they invented, but nonetheless, it has become a movement educators around the world have embraced. In the article linked below, Schwartz states “Tinkering offers an opportunity to decide for yourself what it is you are interested in learning.” These concepts can, and should, be applied to higher education classrooms as well.

- Maker Faire Website: http://makerfaire.com/
- Exploratorium: Global Studios Website: http://www.exploratorium.edu/globalstudios/
Learner-Centered Teaching

Learner-centered teaching focuses attention on:
1. what the student is learning,
2. how the student is learning,
3. the conditions under which the student is learning,
4. whether the student is retaining and applying the learning, and
5. how current learning positions the student for future learning.

To help educators accomplish the goals of learner-centered teaching, this important book presents the meaning, practice, and ramifications of the learner-centered approach, and how this approach transforms the college classroom environment. Learner-Centered Teaching shows how to tie teaching and curriculum to the process and objectives of learning rather than to the content delivery alone.

The book is divided into two parts. The first part is about what changes when learning becomes learner-centered. The second part explains how to implement the learner-centered approach.

Available in the IDEA Center E-211

Learner-Centered Assessment on College Campuses

This book combines current thinking and research regarding how undergraduate students learn with the principles of best practice in assessment and teaching. This book will help connect three trends in higher education today: 1) the focus on learning and learners, 2) the emphasis on the assessment of learning, and 3) the need to continually improve what those in higher education do.

The first part of the book helps the reader develop a deeper understanding of learner-centered perspective. This includes how assessments have changed in higher education and some principles of good assessment practice. The second part explains how to implement a learner-centered perspective into the classroom. Included in this part is using rubrics to provide feedback and portfolios to promote, support, and evaluate learning.

Targus Wireless Laser Presentation Remote

The IDEA Center has 7 wireless laser remotes that faculty and staff are able to check-out. They are very easy to use, even for the non-tech savvy person! This is a great way to move around your classroom and continue teaching so you are not stuck at the podium. Included in the bag with the remote are directions and the Targus User Guide.
IDEA Center Newsletter

Calendar of Events

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Can’t attend any of the workshops above? Don’t worry! You can go online anytime to www.go2knowledge.org to participate in on-demand professional development.

Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember. Involve me and I learn. ~Benjamin Franklin

Please use the Course Cart to register for the computer and Blackboard workshops located in E108.