

TEACHING

AT ISU

Project LEA/RN™: Scholarship in Action

Committed to the Promotion, Improvement, and Advancement of Learning

Barb Licklider, Associate Professor, Education Student Services, and Director of Project LEA/RN™

In 1994, a handful of Mechanical Engineering faculty and a faculty member from the College of Education embarked on a journey to enhance engineering professors' effectiveness in the classroom. Little did they know at the time that they were developing Project LEA/RN™ (Learning Enhancement Action/Resource Network) — a faculty-initiated and faculty-led educator development effort designed to promote even more effective learning environments within college classrooms. Project participation has grown from 18 faculty to over 300 faculty and staff from nearly every college within Iowa State University along with faculty from two other major universities and six Iowa community colleges.

What does involvement mean?

Although initial activities involve strategies to more fully actively engage all students in learning,

Project LEA/RN™ is not simply a collection of activities, strategies, or workshops. Rather, it is a program that allows participants to share, learn, and grow together — a process for promoting change. Grounded in research, the LEA/RN™ model draws upon core elements of adult learning theory:

critical reflection, purposeful discussion with colleagues, accountability, and action. At the heart of Project LEA/RN™ is the immersion of participants in an environment designed to build strong, on-going learning communities among faculty and staff. Specific structures include:

- volunteer participation;
- bi-weekly large group (12 - 18 participants) meetings to learn about

learning and teaching, experience and practice strategies, discuss progress and results, and receive feedback and support;

- collaboration with a learning partner or in a base group;
- utilization of learner-centered approaches for participant learning;
- application of learning theory in lesson planning and implementation; and
- research-based elements of effective faculty development (theory, demonstration, practice, feed-

back, coaching, and involvement over time).

These structures acknowledge that learning takes time. All aspects of the project are oriented to a critical adult learning need: confrontation and examination of beliefs and assumptions. Changes in beliefs seldom happen instantaneously. Over time, practice, feedback,

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support, and assistance from colleagues enable individuals to create the changes that will most help their own students.

What are the learning outcomes for participants?

Although the underlying structures of the program remain constant for every LEA/RN™ group, the content focus may vary depending on the needs and desires of the group. For example, the focus for first-year participants includes interactive strategies designed both to involve students in their learning and to develop interpersonal skills; effective questioning techniques; determining student learning outcomes; lesson planning; and introduction to assessment. Current opportunities for veteran groups include in-depth work with assessment, basic and advanced cooperative learning, program accreditation, *Dimensions of Learning* (Marzano and Pickering), classroom-based research (Cross and Steadman), and scholarship of teaching.

Anticipated outcomes have been developed for each group. For example, selected participant outcomes for the first year include:

- confrontation of beliefs about teaching and learning;
- discussion about experiences to understand the impact in the classroom;
- exploration of education literature and discussion with colleagues;
- evaluation of practices to determine the appropriateness (or inappropriateness) in one's own classroom; and

- implementation of classroom change.

What can participants expect?

Those who choose to participate in project LEA/RN™ can expect:

- enhanced knowledge about learning and teaching theory;
- strategies to ensure cognitive processing by students;
- strategies to promote higher levels of thinking and reasoning from students;
- strategies to promote higher student achievement and increased retention;
- opportunities to take charge of one's own learning and contribute to learning for colleagues;
- opportunities to interact with colleagues about learning and teaching;
- opportunities to develop and practice teaching skills with feedback and on-site help in one's own classroom;
- support from a cross-disciplinary group of educators; and
- hard work, good times, fun, and FOOD!

Who can participate, what is the cost, and how does one find more information?

Any faculty, staff, or teaching assistant at ISU who influences student learning may participate in Project LEA/RN™. New groups can start any time that there are 15 to 18 interested people who can find the same two-hour block of time for large group sessions (either during the day or in the evening). Groups are cross-disciplinary unless a departmental group wants to work together. Faculty, staff, and graduate teaching assistants all work together

in the same group. At this time, the only cost for individuals is time and energy.

Project LEA/RN™ is funded primarily by the Colleges of Engineering and Education and the Center for Teaching Excellence with additional resources from the Colleges of Agriculture and Veterinary Medicine.

Those interested in learning more about Project LEA/RN™ should contact project staff at prolearn@iastate.edu.

Uncommon Connections

by Kathleen Kern, Undergrad Commons Project Leader, Library

The recent and rapid expansion of electronic library resources and the exponential growth of the Internet have profoundly affected the research process. The proliferation of electronic resources has posed new challenges for students, faculty, and librarians. Undergraduate students are at risk of being overwhelmed by the variety of electronic resources from the library and the Internet. Students are challenged both by where to start their research and how to evaluate the information that they find. Faculty and librarians are challenged to help students to navigate the world of information.

Iowa State University Library's Undergrad Commons (UC) is designed to help meet this chal-

lenge. The UC's primary goal is to strengthen the information-seeking and research skills of undergraduates as they conduct research in a complex information environment. By decreasing the anxieties related to the difficulties of library research, we hope to make students more engaged with their research projects.

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Through the Undergrad Commons, library faculty members partner with individual teaching faculty to assist them in meeting the priorities of improved undergraduate education and integration of information technologies. Working with the course instructor, the subject librarian and UC staff provide access to information resources specific to the course and to instruction in the location and evaluation of that information. A website is developed as a gateway to library and Internet resources which will be most pertinent to the students' research assignments. In addition to information resources, the course website may contain information such as the course syllabus and assignments. The Undergrad Commons pro-

vides an area for undergraduate students to utilize the most pertinent library resources for their assignment. This union of assignment with resources is an important element of the Undergrad Commons; students learn best when there is an immediate need. The research assignment provides the context to learn research skills early in the undergraduate experience that students can carry with them into upper level classes, graduate research, or life-long learning.

The UC targets high-enrollment undergraduate courses in the humanities, social sciences, and sciences. Current participants in the Undergrad Commons include Speech Communications 212 and Philosophy 201. These courses and others can be viewed in the UC website <http://www.lib.iastate.edu/commons>.

Please contact Kathleen Kern, UC Project Leader, at 294-6863 or kern@iastate.edu if you would like more information or are interested in involvement in the ISU Library's Undergrad Commons.

Welcome Aboard

In recent months, the CTE said congratulations and farewell to two staff members. Diane Blyler, a doctoral candidate in Human Development and Family Services, was our first grad assistant. She received her Ph.D. and is now working in Washington, DC. Karla Embleton was our Instructional Design Specialist who many of you knew because of her involvement with

WebCT. She is now the Director of Educational Technology for the College of Family and Consumer Sciences. We miss them both and wish them well.

Tom Lloyd is our new Instructional Development Specialist, a position which we share with the Instructional Technology Center. He is currently a doctoral student who expects to be a Ph.D. candidate by mid-January. Tom's background is in training and development, specializing in assisting others in developing their technology skills. He has served as an officer in the US Army for twenty years with responsibilities for training, supervision of training programs, and one-on-one skill development with senior military officers. He has also served as an emergency medical helicopter pilot and instructed hundreds of people in airplanes and helicopters.

Tom has recently re-designed our Web site, adding new graphics to the homepage and simplifying the layout. As we continually add new information to the site, it has become more and more complicated to navigate; the new design is an effort to make navigation easier. Please check out the CTE Web site, and give us your impressions.

In addition to maintaining the CTE Web site, Tom consults with faculty and staff about the use of technology in their courses, specializing in the design and development of distance educa-

tion courses and materials. Tom will also assist with a needs assessment survey for the CTE.

Angela Joyner, a Masters student in Higher Education, is our newest grad assistant. Her main professional goal is to work in higher education in a capacity in which she can coordinate student services with academic services. She works primarily with the CTE Library, graduate student professional development, and the Learning Communities Advisory Committee.

We are pleased with Angela's reorganization of our library to make the tracking of loaned books and other material more efficient. And we are excited by her work to coordinate information from various campus groups who are interested in providing better professional development opportunities for graduate students, particularly those who are interested in teaching. This is a long-term interest of the CTE so watch for further developments. We are grateful to the Graduate Minority Assistantship Program for supporting Angela's position.

Jolly Good Fellows Doing Great Things

Two CTE Teaching Faculty Fellows are selected each academic year to assist the CTE in fulfilling its mission to promote learning and the scholarship of teaching at Iowa State University. The CTE supports release time from their

departments so that the the fellows can concentrate on projects they have planned with the CTE Director. Periodically we'll update you on their progress.

Karen Donaldson, Assistant Professor of Curriculum and Instruction, was the lead presenter for a workshop at the National Association for Multicultural Education 9th Annual International Conference in San Diego on November 11. Her session was entitled "Antiracist Education and Curriculum Transformation for Equity and Justice in the New Millennium: United States and South African Challenges."

In May, 2000, Dr. Donaldson will be featured at the Region VII National Association for Multicultural Education Conference in Omaha. She will make a presentation about her forthcoming book, *Shattering the Denial: Protocols for the Classroom and Beyond*, and will have a book signing event. And, she will also conduct a workshop on teaching African American history in ESL settings. The article on the following page was contributed by Dr. Donaldson. It explains another important Iowa State project with which she is integrally involved.

Brad Skaar, Associate Professor of Animal Science, attended the 1999 Assessment Institute at Indiana University - Purdue University Indianapolis this month where he took part in in-depth learning opportunities with several of the most renowned

scholars and practitioners in the field of assessment.

Dr. Skaar is working on a case study of learning outcomes assessment and curriculum development in his department that can be used as a model by other departments as they seek to re-design their curricula to reflect assessment priorities. In addition, he is serving on the learning communities assessment sub-committee and, with Mary Huba, Professor of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies, is designing ways to communicate assessment techniques to faculty. He and Dr. Huba will also be leading the discussion at the April 2000 Faculty Forum relative to learner outcomes and outcomes assessment.

We are impressed by the accomplishments of our CTE Fellows and proud that we are helping to enable this important work.

You Can Be a Fellow Too

This is a good time to start thinking about what you would like to do as a Center for Teaching Excellence Faculty Fellow. The proposals will be due to your college deans by February 1, 2000.

CTE Fellows may participate in the development of a wide range of CTE initiatives in order to promote enhanced teaching and learning. All faculty will receive information about procedures for submitting a proposal in the near future. More information is available at our Web site: www.cte.iastate.edu.

A Hidden Treasure at Iowa State University

Dr. Karen Donaldson, Assistant Professor of Curriculum and Instruction and CTE Faculty Fellow

There is, for the most part, a secret treasure within the walls of the College of Education at Lagomarcino Hall. This treasure is a multicultural and international education curriculum studies team serving in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction. Members of this team include: Dr. Lenola-Allen Sommerville, Dr. Leslie Bloom, Dr. Karen B. Mclean Donaldson, Dr. Kim Koeppen, Dr. Theresa McCormick, Mr. James C. McShay (Ph.D. Candidate), Dr. Marcia Rosenbusch, and Dr. Carlie C. Tartakov.

This team works diligently to explore diverse theoretical positions regarding curriculum practices, theory development, and research. Members of this team participate in diversity education initiatives throughout the campus, state, nation, and abroad. Their voices have helped to strongly encourage policy development and the pluralistic awareness needed within any sound program of education.

Some of the members helped to construct “Creating Community: A Guide for Integrating Multiculturalism into the Iowa State University Curriculum.” This is a faculty resource guide published in 1997, and is one of the CTE Web

pages with the most “hits.” Furthermore, additional members complemented use of the guide through the 1997-98 university-wide seminars entitled “Curriculum & Policy Integration Methods for Enhancing Racial/Ethnic Understanding.” Both endeavors were funded by the ISU Miller Fellowship Award. Closer to homebase, the team has provided multicultural awareness and integration method workshops for each department within the College of Education.

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With regard to serving students, the team has advanced multicultural education scholarship related to teaching and learning for numerous students at Iowa State. They have concentrated this effort within our Teacher Preparation Program and within several areas of study including Curriculum Theory, Curriculum Development, Educational Inquiry, Multicultural Nonsexist Education, Curriculum and Gender Studies, Ethnicity and Learning, Antiracist Education Theory & Practice, and Elementary Curriculum Studies. Additionally, they reach far beyond the scope of education majors, e.g., the university-wide “Dialogues on Diversity” course, “International Perspectives on Women and Gender”

women’s studies course, “Honors Seminar” diversity courses, and so on.

The team continues to present their scholarship at national and international conferences, publish scholarly books, texts, chapters, and articles. They strongly support graduate students with concentrations in multicultural education through co-publications, presentations, and serving on their committees.

The “outreach” of the team is also noteworthy. For example, they have designed and implemented multicultural/international exchange programs for students, faculty, and in-service teachers. In addition, the team has instituted elementary and secondary in-service teacher training programs/research in foreign language education, science, math and technology collaboratives, ethnic studies, and antiracist education.

Much could be said about the individual contributions in diversity education for each team member of the Multicultural Education Faculty. The dedication and existence of this team as a whole, however, is what should be understood while in search of model teams that express excellence in teaching education that is multicultural. The team is currently submitting a proposal to become an Institute for Multicultural and International Education within the Department of Curriculum and Instruction, serving as a resource for Iowa State University at large.

Announcements

Meeting the Needs of Minority Faculty

On Wednesday, December 8, 3:30 to 5:00 p.m. in the Oak Room of the Memorial Union, Dr. Karen Donaldson, Curriculum and Instruction, will facilitate a workshop for faculty, staff, and administrators that addresses the needs of minority faculty.

Segments of the film, "Shattering the Silences: The Case for Minority Faculty" will be shown and discussed. The film is designed to help universities and colleges remedy many of the recruiting and retention problems that it addresses through the stories of African American, Latino, Native American, and Asian American faculty.

A promotional flier for the film points out that as we observe these faculty "teach, mentor, and conduct research, we realize in concrete terms how a diverse faculty enriches traditional scholarship and contributes to a more inclusive campus environment."

Dr. Donaldson is an Assistant Professor in the College of Education and a current CTE Faculty Fellow. She is also a nationally recognized scholar and author in the field of multicultural education and curriculum development. This promises to be a very lively and informative workshop and the CTE encourages you to mark your calendars and make time for this event.

Spring 2000 Faculty Forum Schedule

The CTE has scheduled the Faculty Forum topics for spring semester as follows.

February 21 Communication Across the Curriculum

This new initiative at Iowa State is a collaborative effort among the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Programs, the Faculty Senate, college curriculum committees, and the CTE. Join in this university-wide discussion of ways to enhance students' communication skills.

March 20 LAS Master Teachers

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences has identified five Master

Teachers who are being recognized by students, advisors, and fellow faculty for their dedication and enthusiasm for teaching. They have been meeting regularly with CTE and Instructional Technology staff to plan for ways in which they will share their experiences and insights with other Iowa State faculty. This Forum is an opportunity for them to share their approaches and lead our campus discussion on teaching large classes.

April 17 Learner Outcomes/ Outcomes Assessment

Mary Huba, Professor of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies, is a recognized authority on outcomes assessment processes at ISU. Brad Skaar, Associate Professor of Animal Science and CTE Faculty Fellow is developing a case study of curricular reform to incorporate learner outcomes assessment that can be used as a model by other departments. Together, they will share their expertise and lead our discussion of these timely topics.

Mark your calendars now for these spring Forums and watch for fliers with more details.

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