



Learning TC3 LENS

A Focus on
Exemplary Practices

1.1

April 15, 2004

What's right with this picture?

Sharon Karwowski's workshops reflect two different learning principles that can be applied in varied situations:

FIRST, she is allowing the students to **construct their own knowledge** by providing timely, specific and individual information. This allows a student to determine his or her own starting point and then map steps to the intended goal. If you are interested in reading more about constructivist theory a good place to start is with this brief introduction at: <http://www.artsined.com/teachingarts/Pedag/Dewey.html>

SECOND, the financial aid workshops **reduce anxiety**. When we become overly anxious the more evolved part of our brain shuts down and primitive survival strategies such as "fight or flight" take over. Reducing anxiety around administrative issues helps the student focus on his or her classes. Reducing anxiety in the classroom helps the student focus on learning. You can read more about anxiety and how it can interfere with learning at: <http://cainelearning.com/pwheel/expand/index.html#anchor11>

Got a great learning idea? Share it with the *Learning Lens* by contacting Barbara Kobritz at x4362 or Groupwise BEK.

Turning obstacles into opportunities

Students can get lost in the maze of financial aid forms and regulations. They need timely access to clear and practical information that helps them navigate this challenging process.

Sharon Karwowski, *Assistant Director of Financial Aid and Operations*, developed a workshop to tackle this challenge.

She covers understanding the financial aid process, managing finances, and additional TC3 tips. Sharon keeps the **tone informal and the information practical**.

One outstanding element is that Sharon offers these workshops **EVERY DAY** during the summer months. At that time students who are starting the financial aid process late are required to come to one of her workshops. Students coming here from some distance who want to get everything done in one day can be easily accommodated.

Whenever possible, Sharon brings information specific to each participant to the workshops. She can tell student A that he still needs his high school transcript sent, and student B that her award just cleared and will be \$xx.

As she said, "I want every student to leave feeling like he or she got something really useful out of the time spent." This personalized treatment helps students value all the information they receive.

Feedback received shows that students learn more than the content material of these workshops. They learn that the financial aid process is confusing, so if they are confused, they're not alone. They learn about getting the information they need to plan ahead. And they learn that Sharon is one person at TC3 they can contact with any questions they may have.



A recent initiative that Sharon has implemented is **FAFSA Fun Days**. (You may have smelled the cotton candy in mid-March.) During the two days of outreach, 350 students were reached with the message: start the financial aid process **NOW** for the Fall term. TC3 staff and representatives from lending institutions were available to answer questions.

Timely and accessible information is the key.