



Learning TC3 LENS

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A Focus on
Exemplary Practices

What's right with this picture?

Mentoring relationships can provide an optimal environment for learning.

The brain is innately social and collaborative. Learning is enhanced by discussing ideas and experiences out loud, comparing and contrasting our ideas with those of others, and producing collaborative work. An ongoing relationship also increases feelings of safety and therefore decreases potential feelings of threat that can interfere with the willingness to take risks that improve learning.

An important element of improving our craft is the practice of critical reflection — recognizing our core assumptions, the actions they inform, and how those assumptions and actions may enhance or interfere with learning. A mentoring relationship provides another lens on our own practice and helps us stand outside and engage in a wider perspective. A good discussion of the need for critical reflection can be found in “The Getting of Wisdom: What Critically Reflective Teaching is and Why It's Important” at www.nl.edu/academics/cas/ace/facultypapers/StephenBrookfield_Wisdom.cfm.

Got a great learning idea?
Share it with the *Learning Lens* by contacting Sharon Wavle at x4443 or Groupwise SMW.

Understanding TC3

It's the first day of classes, and I don't even know where the bathrooms are. I've finally come up with a course outline, and have no idea where to get copies made. The three classes I have today took me 10 hours to prepare, but what about tomorrow's class? I have 4 students begging to get into my already full 10:00 class, 3 students haven't yet shown up, and I don't know whether to let them in or not. I'd like to use the computer in my classroom, but what's the password to the system?

Sound familiar?? Think back to your first day at TC3, and you may come up with a similar litany of concerns and questions you had as you learned the ropes. Being an expert in your field rarely has anything to do with being an expert in the classroom, and the challenges are daunting to say the least.

The Faculty Mentoring Program, sponsored by the College Teaching Center, is a way for new faculty to partner with a “veteran” faculty member. The mentoring partners participate in discussion, research, and practical classroom experiences that address all aspects of teaching, including content



Sue Stafford (left) and
Mimi Ansbro (right).

preparation, presentation styles, student evaluation, faculty-student interaction, and other issues. And yes, more mundane issues such as how to copy an exam, contact a publisher, or get a great cup of coffee get covered as well.

Mimi Ansbro and Sue Stafford connected as a mentoring pair in the Fall 2003 semester. Sue and Mimi met almost weekly to talk about pedagogical matters, but Mimi stated that “in the end, it seemed that we spent as much time on ‘understanding TC3’ as we had on specific teaching issues, and I think that was a good thing.” Their “understanding TC3” topics included the history of the hospitality curriculum, navigating TC3's student registration process, and advising a student organization. Sue felt that the program gave her a “solid connection” to TC3. She noted that Mimi helped her find ways to channel her enthusiasm for the hospitality industry into a foundation for teaching. “I was able to accomplish many things . . . because Mimi worked with me and gave me her time, insight and encouragement.”