



Learning Lens

TC3

A Focus on Exemplary Practices

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What's right with this picture?

The new transfer workshops embody several principles known to improve student learning.

Scheduling multiple workshops throughout the semester, at a variety of times and days of the week, provides the learning opportunity in a timely manner. Timeliness is present both in terms of chronological availability and in terms of the student's developmental readiness for the learning - the information is provided when the student is ready to receive the information and has a context in which to place it.

The small-group structure of the workshops allows the facilitators to shape each workshop to the individual needs. Prior knowledge of the participants helps facilitate the critical connections for learning.

Structuring the sessions in small groups provides the opportunity for collaborative learning through exploration of the issues beyond one student's questions or concerns. Exposure to the breadth of questions asked by the group and the discussion within the group expands each student's learning. Research indicates that structuring opportunities for students to work together to achieve a learning goal improves students' thinking skills and promotes deeper understanding of the material. One study showing enhancement of critical-thinking skills through collaborative learning in a college classroom can be found at <http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/ejournals/JTE/jte-v7n1/gokhale.jte-v7n1.html>.

Got a great learning idea?
Share it with the *Learning Lens* by contacting Teresa Davis at x4349 or Groupwise TMD.

Transfer Workshops: Developing strategies for complex decision making and planning



Heather Stevens, Coordinator of Transfer Services and Meg Garvey, Counselor

More of our students are planning to transfer to four-year colleges and universities than ever before. The word is getting out that students need to plan for transfer well in advance of graduation. General

education requirements are becoming more complex, and articulation agreements are becoming more specialized and specific. Our students are considering a broader range of transfer institutions in greater numbers. Heather Stevens and Meg Garvey, transfer counselors in Counseling, Career and Transfer Services, have redesigned our transfer workshops to facilitate the development of strategies to surmount these complex hurdles toward continued education.

Transfer workshops have served a practical purpose. They enable professional staff to give introductory information to a group of students at once, rather than repeating the information in individual appointments. However, these group meetings are not just for the sake of

efficiency. Students also learn about the transfer process by listening to each other's questions and by seeing other students at different stages in the planning process. For instance, at a recent workshop, one student asked about the science requirements at Cornell. Another followed up with a question about differences between the various majors there. The dialogue helped focus students' awareness of the many dimensions involved in transferring. Students left the workshop no longer only considering, "Do I go to Cortland or Oswego?" They now were considering which of several bachelor's programs might meet their needs best, what career really will be most satisfying, how can they arrange course selections to cover requirements at four different transfer schools, how might they pursue the scholarships that would enable them to transfer to a private college, and so much more.

The breadth of options might feel overwhelming at first. A goal of the transfer workshops is to introduce students to the many resources available to support their thoughtful decision-making. When students tap into this pool of resources, they discover that having options is not a burden; it is an opportunity to use the research skills they have developed in classes for making real life decisions and for pursuing their goals.