

BE EXCEPTIONAL

The uncompromising focus to improve learning and achievement for all students, brought to you by the faculty members serving on CNM's Cooperative for Teaching and Learning

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Featured in This Issue



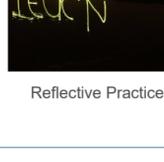
Magna Online Resources



Student Misconceptions About Learning?



Ask Ms. B. Havin Advice Column



Reflective Practice

About this Newsletter

Welcome to "Be Exceptional," the first edition of the CTL's newsletter devoted to faculty development at CNM. "Be Exceptional" is one of CNM's six *Core Values*. It is a phrase that captures the CTL's philosophy of continually striving to improve student learning, retention, and success rates through supporting best practices for teaching adults.

This newsletter will provide a regular opportunity for faculty to share ideas, pick up relevant and practical teaching tips, and feel less isolated in our daily pursuits.

We expect the newsletter to evolve, so if you have ideas, please tell your school CTL representative about them!

(If you have trouble reading the email format of this newsletter, a PDF version is attached.)

Have you explored the Magna Campus Resources? Find useful teaching tips and practical solutions to classroom challenges in a variety of formats.



- **20-Minute Mentor** is an online collection of short videos created by experienced faculty that offer solutions to common classroom challenges and excellent teaching ideas. There are dozens of 20-Minute Mentors. Here is one you may find interesting.

How Can I Leverage Force Multipliers in the Classroom?

This presentation will show you how to enhance your productivity and improve your efficiency by accessing a host of what could easily be described as virtual teaching assistants. You'll learn how to get help with all the things that matter to you: grading, teaching, interacting with students, and kindling students' interest in learning.

- **Magna Commons** is on-demand access to an archived library of the best Magna Online Seminars. All seminars, covering a wealth of teaching and learning topics, are presented by highly respected names in higher education. All archived webinars are accessible to CNM faculty, and *Live Magna Online Seminars* may be purchased by the CTL if there is enough interest in a topic, so be on the look-out for news about upcoming live webinars in your CNM email. Here is a sample archived webinar:

Simple Strategies to Create an Inclusive Classroom for Gender Variant Students

Gain important insights into the ways you can create a classroom environment and a pedagogical approach that are responsive to the needs of all students and that contribute to an environment of mutual esteem and respect.

- **The Teaching Professor Newsletter** is a lively, practical newsletter with a singular purpose: to provide practical strategies and techniques you can employ immediately, regardless of your discipline. Published 10 times a year, *The Teaching Professor* explores topics that instructors confront every day in the classroom. It raises the questions on everyone's minds, and it presents solutions that just about everyone can use. Thirty years of archived issues of *The Teaching Professor* are fully searchable by keyword.

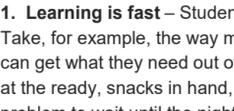
The October 2017 Issue of *The Teaching Professor* is attached to this email.

To access Magna Resources: login to CNMLearn and enter the Cooperative for Teaching and Learning site, located under the "Community" tab. Click on "Magna Campus." From that folder, you can access the Magna Campus resources. Select which of the three resources you wish to explore, and you can either browse or search by title or topic. In the Magna folder you will also find a Faculty Participation Log to document your professional development and a Resource Evaluation Form to provide feedback to the CTL about the usefulness of these resources.

Voices from your neighbors in their natural habitat, the classroom...

Each issue of the newsletter will feature a guest columnist from the CNM faculty. Do you have a great teaching tip? Is there an issue you've been pondering, and you'd like to share your thoughts? We are seeking submissions for this column. Send your short article or blog-style piece to ctl@cnm.edu with "Voices from the classroom" in the subject line.

In this issue, we will start with a blog post from Maryellen Weimer, author of *Learner Centered Teaching* and a prominent figure in faculty development.



Four Student Misconceptions About Learning

By Maryellen Weimer, PhD

"Efficient and effective learning starts with a proper mindset," Stephen Chew writes in his short, readable, and very useful chapter, "Helping Students to Get the Most Out of Studying." Chew continues, pointing out what most of us know firsthand, students harbor some fairly serious misconceptions that undermine their efforts to learn. He identifies four of them.

1. Learning is fast – Students think that learning can happen a lot faster than it does. Take, for example, the way many students handle assigned readings. They think they can get what they need out of a chapter with one quick read through (electronic devices at the ready, snacks in hand, and ears flooded with music). Or, they don't think it's a problem to wait until the night before the exam and do all the assigned readings at once. "Students must learn that there are no shortcuts to reading comprehension." (p. 216) Teachers need to design activities that regularly require students to interact with course text materials.

2. Knowledge is composed of isolated facts – Students who hold this misconception demonstrate it when they memorize definitions. Chew writes about the commonly used student practice of making flash cards with only one term or concept on each card. The approach may enable students to regurgitate the correct definition, but they "never develop a connected understanding or how to reason with and apply concepts." (p.216) The best way for teachers to correct this misconception is by using test questions that ask students to relate definitions, use definitions to construct arguments, or apply them to some situation.

3. Being good at a subject is a matter of inborn talent rather than hard work – All of us have had students who tell us with great assurance that they can't write, can't do math, are horrible at science, or have no artistic ability. Chew points out that if students hold these beliefs about their abilities, they don't try as hard in those areas and give up as soon as any difficulty is encountered. Then they have even more evidence about those absent abilities. Students need to bring to learning a "growth mindset," recognized by statements like this, "Yes, I'm pretty good at math, but that's because I've spent a lot of time doing it." Teacher feedback can play an important role in helping students develop these growth mindsets.

4. I'm really good at multi-tasking, especially during class or studying – We've been all over this one in the blog. "The evidence is clear: trying to perform multiple tasks at once is virtually never as effective as performing the tasks one at a time focusing completely on each one." (p. 217) Chew also writes here about "inattention blindness" which refers to the fact that when our attention is focused on one thing, we aren't seeing other things. "The problem of not knowing what we missed is that we believe we haven't missed anything." (p.217)

Pointing out these misconceptions helps but probably not as much as demonstrations. Students, especially those in the 18-24 age range, don't always believe what their teachers tell them. The evidence offered by a demonstration is more difficult to ignore.

Please be encouraged to read Chew's whole chapter (it's only eight pages). It's in an impressive new anthology which is reviewed in the February 2014 issue of *The Teaching Professor* newsletter. Briefly here, the book contains 24 chapters highlighting important research on the science of learning. The chapters are highly readable! They describe the research in accessible language and explore the implications of those findings. Very rarely do researchers (and most of these chapters are written by those involved with research) offer implementable suggestions. This book is full of them.

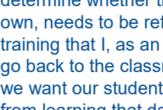
And here's the most impressive part about this book: you can **download it for free (see link below)**. It's being made available by the American Psychological Association's Society for the Teaching of Psychology. Yes, it's a discipline-based piece of scholarly work, but as the editors correctly claim it's a book written for anyone who teaches and cares about learning. Kudos to them for providing such a great resource!

Reference and link: Benassi, V. A., Overson, C. E., & Hakala, C. M. (Editors). (2014). *Applying science of learning in education: Infusing psychological science into the curriculum*. Available at the Teaching of Psychology website: <http://teachpsych.org/ebooks/asle2014/index.php>

Read more of Maryellen's writing at [The Teaching Professor Blog](#).

Ask Ms. B.

Have a classroom management issue? Pose your questions to Ms. B. Havin, our resident expert in protocol and decorum. Send your questions to ctl@cnm.edu with "Ask Ms. B." in the subject line.



Dear Ms. B.,
At the beginning of class the other day, I noticed a student who I suspected had been drinking before class, or at least heavily the night before. The smell of alcohol was noticeable and she seemed a bit incoherent. What is the best way to deal with this situation?

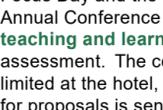
This is a tough one, since the way it's handled will determine whether or not the student will ever set foot in your class again.

The smell of alcohol can be distracting for other students, and so it is certainly within your right (and responsibility) as the instructor to address that directly with the student. Depending on what the class is currently doing, I would find a quick way to get the other students distracted, such as solving a discussion prompt or problem on the board and asking them to discuss it or write the problem in small groups at their tables. Then, I would ask the student to meet me out in the hall, where I would inform her of the problem and politely ask her to quietly go back in the class, collect her things, and leave for the day, emphasizing that she is welcome to come back to class when she is in a better state of mind. I would also offer an extra visit in my office to help her catch up on what she was going to miss that day. If the student caused a disruption in the class, the Dean of Students office should be informed, as that is a violation of the student code of conduct.

If the student appears incoherent, then this is a more serious problem. Security is in a better mental state than usual, then I would call for trained help (if a student) to assess the student, without applying any other judgement to the situation. Security can determine whether the student needs medical attention, is safe to get home on her own, needs to be referred to the Dean of Students, etc. Not only does Security have training that I, as an instructor, do not have, but allowing them to do this job frees me to go back to the classroom to teach. This scenario is unfortunate on many levels. Yes, we want our students in the classroom, and we don't want a bad choice to prevent them from learning that day. However, we also have an obligation to the other students and to the integrity of the college to create an ideal learning environment and to not tolerate inappropriate behavior on campus.

Do you have other possible solutions to this question? Send your ideas to ctl@cnm.edu.

Self-Directed Professional Development



Research into faculty development suggests that **reflective practice** and **self-directed professional development** improve teaching. Through this process, we reflect on what happens in the classroom; determine strengths, weaknesses, and possible classroom changes; explore resources and learn new practices; implement changes; and continue the reflective cycle. Through this process, faculty can increase positive outcomes for students: increased learning, greater success rates, and higher retention and graduation.

Each issue of this newsletter will focus on a difference aspect of Reflective Practice.

Faculty Focus Day

Feedback from August's Faculty Focus Day

CTL members often get asked about the differences between the August Faculty Focus Day and the January CNM Conference on Teaching and Learning. The Annual Conference on Teaching and Learning **focuses on best practices in teaching and learning**, including topics such as instructional methods and assessment. The conference uses a competitive proposal process, since space is limited at the hotel, and the focus is on teaching and learning. (The Conference call for proposals is sent out at the end of July and again in August.)

Faculty Focus Day (FFD), on the other hand, is designed to support **training on other topics that don't necessarily fit in the teaching and learning category**, such as mandatory Title IX training, Microsoft Office, and discipline-specific training. Many departments across CNM, such as Human Resources, Security, and the Office of Planning and Institutional Effectiveness, welcome FFD as a chance to communicate with faculty about important information, initiatives, and programs that they might otherwise not be familiar with. FFD is an opportunity for faculty to benefit from needed training without interfering with instructional days during the already-busy term.

The CTL doesn't send out a call for proposals for Faculty Focus Day. For Faculty Focus Day, the CTL solicits presentations from presenters based on faculty requests for specific training and needs identified by faculty, chairs, administration, and different departments across CNM.

Each year, based on the evaluation survey of the event, the CTL makes adjustments to improve the quality and the experience of Faculty Focus Day. Some previous changes based on feedback from attendees and presenters include reorganizing how lunch is served, not having session times overlap, and the session sign-in procedures. The CTL welcomes constructive suggestions and new ideas, as well as confirmation of what attendees like and want to maintain. Here is a sampling of the evaluation data from this past August's Faculty Focus Day:

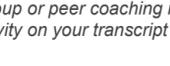
There were several sessions I was interested in taking, and I appreciate the variety.

Able to talk with colleagues and learn from each other. Large diverse number of sessions to go to. Sessions were the right length most of the time.

As this being my first F.F.D., some of the presenters were extremely fast-paced and skipped over some basic principles of some software and programs.

We do NOT need such a long lunch. 30-45 minutes is fine, then we can arrive later. Frustrating to have to rush to get there in the morning and then wait around for afternoon sessions to start.

You can access the full evaluation report at the Cooperative for Teaching and Learning CNMLearn Community site, under the "Faculty Focus Day" link in the left-hand menu. (Login to CNM Learn and click on the "Community" Tab to find the CTL site.)



Upcoming CTL Events

Westside Faculty Brown Bag Lunch

Monday Nov. 6, 12:00-2:00

MJG 201-A

JMMC Faculty Brown Bag Lunch

Wednesday Nov. 8, 12:00-2:00

G 201-G

Main Campus Faculty Brown Bag Lunch

Thursday Nov. 9, 12:00-2:00

MS 571

Can't make it to one of these events? You can discuss a classroom issue or teaching question in a confidential and non-evaluative setting with a CTL member or a trained CNM faculty Peer Coach. Send an email to ctl@cnm.edu to request a session.

Participation in a CTL faculty group or peer coaching interaction can be documented as a professional development activity on your transcript through CNM's Talent Management System.

Find the CTL on Facebook at "CNM Cooperative for Teaching and Learning" and on Twitter at CNM CTL.

