

The Focus

Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL)

February 2009

February Calendar

Check out the various professional development opportunities on the MCC Campus.

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Humanities instructor, Elizabeth Connelly-Blair summarizes Lilly Conference Brain Research Session

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Flint Interfaith Council

Rev. Dr. Deborah Kohler of Woodside Church writes about promoting the diversity of beliefs present in the Genesee County Community

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February in the Center for Teaching and Learning

gMail Training, Active Learning to Foster Classroom Culture, Classroom Civility, Podcasts, Librarians as Faculty Partners, Recitals, Poets, and Reading Circles — All This February in the CTL

The Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) hopes everyone has had a smooth start to the beginning of the Winter Semester. We would like to thank those faculty and staff who presented sessions during Welcome Back Week. Some of the best-attended sessions were those covering the new gmail email system. The rest of the CTL's January sessions got off to a start with Bettina Campbell's Mott Scholar Session on the Psycho-Social Causes of HIV/AIDS. The CTL also hosted its first e-Workshop, "Teaching the Millennial Student." Heather Sisto (Honors Coordinator) and Dawn Vanniman (Coordinator Student Life) followed with "Student Clubs and Beyond (CLEF)." January's Fantastic Faculty Feature was cosponsored by the Gardening Club, the Environmental Club, and the Friend's of the Mott Library and highlighted Tana Dean discussing her book *Your Money, Your Power: 10 Ideas for Mindful Spending to Create a Healthy, Green Planet*.

February's schedule includes more gmail training. Brian Ivory will present his workshop, "Active-Learning Strategies that Acclimate Students to Your Classroom Culture." Brian's workshop will be a good pre-Winter Conference event for Dr. Zopito Marini' (Brock College), who will be doing a day long workshop on "Classroom Civility. Later in the month Mara Fulmer and James Shurter will present "Podcasts: Taking on the Digital Fray." The CTL and the MCC Library will also host an online Seminar discussing the partnership between librarians and faculty. The CTL is still hoping to find a book on which to base its monthly reading circles. Why not come to the February meeting and help us pick an interesting read. Brian Harding, Sue Lechota and Terrance Stewart will present a recital-discussion on Negro Spirituals as part of Black History Month. Also in honor of Black History Month, the CTL in conjunction with the Humanities Division will feature Chicago Poet Qurayesh Lansana. In addition, the UM-Flint has invited MCC faculty to their 2009 "Social Justice Now" Symposium.



Zopito Marini, Phd., "Fostering Civility In Our Classrooms"

Dr. Marini is Full Professor of Child and Youth Studies at Brock University. Dr. Marini has received a Brock Chancellor's Chair for Teaching Excellence.

This workshop will help faculty identify possible causal factors of incivility. Participants will have opportunities to share their experiences, concerns, and needs. Through a number of structured activities, participants will have opportunities to discuss and develop their own intervention strategies to create a civil learning community.

Friday, February 20, 2009, 8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m., MCC Event Center

RSVP: chulindra.cooks@mcc.edu

By February 6, 2009

February

2009

Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL)

Have a Good Idea for a Professional Development Session?

The CTI is looking for faculty interested in presenting a session/workshop for other faculty. What a great way to build your professional portfolio. If you have an idea for a professional development activity, contact Bill Reich in the Center for Teaching and Learning (CM1120): 810.232.783/William.reich@mcc.edu



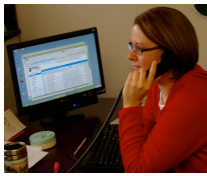
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4	5 New Faculty Development Seminar, 3:00-5:00 pm, RTC2106	6 UM-Flint "Social Justice Now" Symposium, 8:00 am – 5:00 pm Harding Mott University Center	7
8	9	10 Brown Bag Professional Development Session: Haig Kouyoumdjian, Ph.D. (Social Sciences), "Dealing with Student Anger," 1:00-2:00 pm, CTL (CM1120)	11	12	13	14
15	16 Mott Scholar Session: Sue Lechota, Brian Harding and Terrence Stewart, Discussion-Recital for Black History Month, 1:30-2:30 pm, Events Center	17	18 Teaching Professor Online Seminar, "Faculty and Librarians as Partners," 12:00-1:00 pm, MCC Library	19	20 CTL Winter Conference: Dr. Zopito Marini (Brock University), "Classroom Civility," 8:30 am-3:30 pm, MCC Events Center	21
22	23 Center for Teaching and Learning Reading Circle, 12:00-1:00 pm	24	25	26 Fantastic Faculty FeaturePoet Quaraysh Ali Lansana, (Director of the Gwendolyn Brooks Center for Black Literature and Creative Writing in Chicago, 2:00-5:00 pm, Applewood Cafe	27	28

"Never, never, never, never, give up."

Winston Churchill

Brain Game: The Science of Learning

Elizabeth Connelly-Blair, Humanities Division



At the 2008 Lily North Conference in Traverse City, Terry Doyle, Director of the Faculty Center for Teaching and

Learning at Ferris State University, presented an overview of human brain mechanics in the learning process. His lecture included teaching tips for promoting memory formation of classroom material and provided recommended student behaviors to encourage learning and recall.

(40,000,000,000,000,000) connections. When new information is stored in short-term memory, neurons fire and create electrical networks that represent the learned material. If the new information is used and applied frequently, the neuron connections strengthen and become part of long term memory. Biologically, learning new information changes the neuron patterns of the brain. If material is not used or applied quickly or frequently, the connections will weaken and eventually break apart.

Brain in Action: How Does it Work?

...information presented in context (as part of the whole story) is easier to remember than a fragmentary piece of information with no associated reason for memorization or importance.

Weighing in at approximately three pounds, the human brain uses 20 percent of the body's total energy – a number more proportionate to the amount of

work it does than to its weight. The brain houses around 100 billion neurons capable of making forty quadrillion

Thanks for the Memories: What Instructors can do to Lend the Brain a Hand

In order to help students optimally learn classroom material, Doyle suggests instructors present materials in context, as part of a complete pattern. The presenter gave the example of a phone number, demonstrating that it is easier to recall a group of numbers patterned as a phone number (810-987-6543) than a group of numbers arranged according to

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The Flint Interfaith Council Promotes Understanding of the Diversity of Beliefs Present in the Genesee County Community

Rev. Dr. Deborah Kohler

The Flint Interfaith Council has begun a program through the MCC Student Life department to provide information about the beliefs, doctrines and practices of the various faiths which are represented in the Flint community. We are available to work with professors and their classes to provide students opportunities to learn more about religion and religious culture. We think that all students, regardless of faith perspective, can benefit from our firsthand knowledge and experience of our unique religions as well as our years of working together in the Flint area community.



The Flint Interfaith Council includes people in leadership in the Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, Unitarian-Universalist, and Christian – traditional mainline Protestantism and the New Thought movement – faiths. We have worked together for over ten years presenting community programs and worship services. We find that our experiences together help us to understand the diversity of beliefs present in our community and strengthen our ability to articulate our own positions in ways that show respect for those who are different. We have a strong desire to pass this tradition of open dialog on to the students in the greater Flint community. For more information contact the Rev. Dr. Deborah Kohler, Woodside Church, by phone at 767-4911 or email deborahk@woodsidechurch.net.

“Failure is only the opportunity to begin again more intelligently.”
Henry Ford

no particular identifiable pattern (8109876543). He also asserted that information presented in context (as part of the whole story) is easier to remember than a fragmentary piece of information with no associated reason for memorization or importance. Doyle suggested that this is because the brain is a pattern-seeking device that relates whole concepts to one another and looks for similarities, differences, or the relationships between them. Biologically speaking, patterned, contextual information is easier to remember because stimulating any part of that neural connection can lead to recall of the whole pattern.

Doyle also suggested that instructors present material in a variety of ways. When each of the five senses is stimulated, a distinct neural pathway is created. A strictly auditory presentation will result in a single pathway, while students who can touch, see, hear, and emotionally experience the material will have multiple neural connections to facilitate recall.

What do I Have to do to Pass This Class? A Brain User's Guide for Your Students

According to Doyle, the best ways students can aid their own recall of classroom material are to elaborate on and practice the material.

According to Doyle, the best ways students can aid their own recall of classroom material are to elaborate on and practice the material. To elaborate on the material, students can use a number of multi-sensual patterning tactics: visualization of

the material, singing, writing, symbolizing, and using mnemonic devices are all forms of information elaboration.

The presenter also suggested students employ a five-step practice procedure for remembering new materials that includes accuracy, reflection, review, mapping, and recoding. First, make sure the information is accurate. The brain will recall faulty information as readily as accurate information. Be certain your information is complete and understood as thoroughly as possible before practicing it. Next, reflect on the material. Think about ways the new information fits with—or changes your perception of—the material you've already learned. Third, review the new material the day you are introduced to it and continue every day. Quiz yourself periodically to test memory and retention. Fourth, visually map the information on a piece of paper, drawing connecting arrows between inter-related concepts. This step is particularly beneficial for visual learners, giving them

an ocular reference point for incorporating new information, and can also be a stimulus for further elaboration on the material. Finally, Doyle suggests that students recode the material: put it into their own words. This last step tests the student's understanding of the material and reorders the information in a pattern that is most familiar to the individual's brain, making it easier to remember.

Terry Doyle's entire PowerPoint presentation, including references and suggested reading, is available in the Mott Community College Center for Teaching and Learning, 1120 Curtis

Upcoming Professional Development Opportunities

- **2009 Social Justice Now" Symposium, Pedro Noguera, Ph.D., Friday February 6, 2009, UM-Flint, 8:00 am — 5:00 pm,**

Preregister at <http://umflint.edu/eoi/sjn.htm>

- **CTL Winter Conference: Zopito Marini, Ph.D., "Fostering Civility In Our Classrooms," Friday, February 20, 2009, 8:30 a.m. — 3:30 p.m., MCC Event Center**

RSVP: chulindra.cooks@mcc.edu by February 6, 2009

- **13th Annual Institute: Service Learning and Civic Engagement, February 12-13, 2009, Crowne Plaza Hotel, Grand Rapids, Michigan**

<http://www.micampuscompact.org/institute.asp>

- **Teaching Professor Online Seminar, "Faculty and Librarians as Partners," February 18, 2009, 12:00-1:00 pm, MCC Library**

custserv@magnapubs.com

- **2009 Conference on Information Technology – League for Innovation October 11-14, 2009 Detroit, Michigan**

<http://www.league.org/2009cit/>

- **The University System of Ohio's Libraries, Learning & Technology Conference, March 1-3, 2009, Columbus Hilton at Easton Town Center, Columbus, Ohio**

<http://www.olin.org/conferences/LLT2009/>