

CCAP Module 10: Teaching and Learning in the Community College

1 - Welcome

Welcome to *Teaching and Learning in the Community College*, a professional training module from the U.S. Department of State's Community College Administrator Program.

2 - Objectives

In this module, you'll learn about

- The challenges of teaching and learning in the community college
- The Active Learning teaching technique
- And the expertise and commitment of community college faculty

Let's get started.

3 - The Challenges

The inter-related processes of teaching and learning at community colleges face a number of challenges.

It is often said that community colleges are expected to do more with less. They are usually funded at lower levels than institutions in other sectors of American higher education, when considered on a per-student, per-credit basis; nonetheless, they are expected to provide a wider range of services. At the same time, persistent calls for increased accountability require even more resources be devoted to activities which are separate from classroom practice.

The typical community college student population is highly varied. Students of diverse backgrounds-socio-economic status, ethnicity, age, academic preparation-come together in our classrooms, without distinction, and are met by teachers who must find ways to bridge those differences. Those with hands-on teaching experience will recognize what a challenge this can be.

Not surprisingly, community colleges meet these challenges by embracing them, and defining themselves on the basis of inclusion. It's not at all surprising to see colleges describe their functions as wide-ranging, and to seek to provide students with the full range of experience that comes with a college education. The following video, from Genesee Community College in New York, is a useful indicator of this direction. Note especially the video's recurrent focus on interaction between faculty and students, classroom experiences, and the full range of college life available there. It's also worth noting that many of the promotional videos you've viewed in these modules are largely the work of the college's students themselves-serving as on-screen talent and in their contributions to a variety of production activities-usually through their enrollment in such college programs as Digital Media.

[VIDEO CLIP - A Closer Look at Genesee Community College (GCC)]



BUREAU OF EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS

EMILY: Hi! Welcome to Genesee Community College - a great place to start your college career. If you're looking for the best tech programs, state-of-the-art nursing facilities, or just a great place to make friendships that will last a lifetime, you've come to the right place. Let me show you around. In small classes taught by caring and award-winning faculty students at GCC know that they're receiving the best education for their money. Our instructors give you the skills you need to transfer to a four-year college or to start work after you receive your degree. With over 65 degree in certificate programs GCC has plenty of majors to choose from, with degrees in computer technology to nursing to veterinary technology. Over 23,000 students have graduated from GCC. There are many ways to get involved with college life - sports, clubs, and other activities give students the freedom to socialize, to learn new skills and to just have fun.

Midway between Buffalo and Rochester, New York, the city of Batavia has a lot to offer. Want to see a ballgame? Go to Dwyer Stadium to see the Muck Dogs play. Looking for coffee shops and pizza? We've got it.

From starting on your way to a 4-year degree or going right into your career GCC can help you save for the future. Our affordable tuition rates can save you thousands of dollars while you earn a quality education close to home. If you think you can't afford an education you'll be pleased to know that 87% of full-time students receive financial aid, and over \$263,000 in scholarships have been awarded in recent years. If you'd like more information on how to pay for your college education talk to one of our financial aid advisors, we'd be glad to answer all of your questions. Applying for admission into GCC is free and easy. We have an application form online that you can fill out at home or, if you'd like, you can stop in to the admissions office and pick up a paper application. Our friendly admission staff is there to help if you have any questions. Admissions is on Facebook, so make sure you like us or check us out and see what's happening in our office and in our campus community. Attend an open house or spend the day with us for a Friday visit. Once you come to the campus we're certain that you'll agree that GCC was everything you expected and more. Are you still in high school and curious to know what it's like to take a college course before attending full time? Then you might be interested in our ACE programs, which will give you a head start on college.

GCC also offers Genesee Promise Plus scholarships for the summer semester, which covers the tuition of two courses for seniors from area high schools. Students have ranked GCC number one among New York State Community College's in the quality of computer support services, effective use of technology, and innovative use of technology and learning. Smart classrooms, state-of-the-art computer labs, innovative technology programs, what more could any high tech student ask for? Interested in online learning? GCC has distance learning instructors who create interesting and exciting course content for all types of student learning styles. At GCC we have a variety of athletic teams and dynamic clubs from soccer to lacrosse, our teams have won numerous awards and honors for their athletic skills. Some of our clubs include WGCC, the Earth Club, and the Outdoor Adventure club.

There's always something to do when you're done with your classes. Buffalo and Rochester are within driving distance, and Niagara Falls and Canada are just around the corner. With seven campus locations in four counties in western New York there's always a campus location nearby. GCC has campuses in Batavia, Albion, Arcade, Dansville, Lima, Medina and Warsaw. These classroom sizes are generally small with many convenient course options. Put simply, GCC is the right place to start. You'll have the necessary skills to thrive in a highly competitive workplace



BUREAU OF EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS

and you'll make friendships that will last a lifetime. GCC has it all. Come visit us and see.

VIDEO CREDIT: "A Closer Look at GCC" by Genesee Community College, Source:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L9TTP5C9p0E>

4 - Active Learning-The Student Experience

To help students reach their educational goals, community college faculty are increasingly turning to different techniques and strategies to enhance the classroom experience. "Active Learning" is an approach that is currently of great interest. It seeks to displace the traditional model of authority in the classroom, where content experts "deliver" knowledge to passive students. Instead, faculty create activities which lead students to "weave" knowledge from their active classroom experiences." The following video, from Northwest Iowa Community College, explains how this approach works.

[VIDEO CLIP - What is Active Learning? Northwest Iowa CC]

What is active learning? First, active learning involves teaching techniques that are something other than straight lecture. Second, active learning is not an entire project or assignment, but a much smaller task you give your students; however, a project or assignment can have several active learning pieces within it. Third, in order to consider something active learning students must be doing something including discovering, processing, and applying information, not just listening to a lecture or reading a PowerPoint. Active learning can take many different forms, and instructors often use different strategies in face-to-face and online classes due to their differing approaches to teaching and learning. For example, in a classroom the instructor might ask each student to turn to their neighbor and discuss a particular topic in an online course. The same exercise can be accomplished using a discussion thread, document sharing, or instant messaging. The idea is the same, but the approach is different. So what about these examples are considered active learning. In our face-to-face class example, simply having students turn to their neighbor and discuss a topic is active learning. In the online course, having two students discuss the same topic via discussion thread is active learning as well. Research shows that students learn more when they're engaged in active learning. It's important to remember that lecture does have its place in both face-to-face and online environments; however, during active learning students are involved in much more than just reading or listening and more emphasis is placed on higher order thinking skills such as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. Further research has shown that students retain seventy percent of what they say and write and they retain ninety percent of what they do. Compare this with the fact that students retain only ten percent of what they read and twenty percent of what they hear, and you'll start to understand why active learning is so important. Now that we have an understanding of what active learning is and why we should implement it, let's look at some specific examples to give you a clearer picture of what constitutes active learning and practice. Let's take the example of a small group discussion in a face-to-face setting. You might group students up and ask them to discuss a particular topic. While this alone is active learning, you can add to the exercise by asking each group to present their findings to the class in the form of a standard presentation, a radio or TV commercial, or a comedy skit. Now let's look at a small group discussion in an online course. You can group students into separate discussion threads and have them discuss a particular topic. Again, this alone can be considered active learning, but you can add to the exercise by having



students present their findings using various web 2.0 tools, such as recording a presentation with a PowerPoint or Prezi, submitting a Voicethread with audio and a series of images that relate to the topic, or present their topic in story format using Google Maps. As you can see the possibilities are virtually limitless, so be creative. Both our face-to-face and online active learning examples covered the higher-order thinking skills of analysis and synthesis, but what about evaluation? In this example, it would be quite easy to hold a peer review of each presentation. In a face-to-face class you can simply have students give their opinions on how appropriate each group's observations were and how well they presented the information. This should spur more conversation with the guidance of the instructor. In an online course peer reviews can be held using a simple discussion thread or a Voicethread. So what about these examples are considered active learning? In our face-to-face and online class examples the small group discussion is active learning as is the preparation for the presentation, the presentation itself, and the peer review of the presentation. Each step in the process is itself a distinct active learning strategy, since students retain more information during active learning. Simply stated active learning equals better learning.

VIDEO CREDIT: "What is Active Learning?" by Northwest Iowa Community College, Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UsDI6hDx5ul>

5 - Active Learning-The Faculty Commitment

In addition to energizing the student experience, Active Learning focuses community college faculty on their ongoing commitment to improve classroom teaching techniques. Across the country, community college faculty have taken up the challenge to provide a more vital and productive educational experience for their students. In the following video, some of that commitment is in evidence in the reflections of the faculty, who are engaged in a faculty development project at Maricopa Community Colleges in Arizona.

[VIDEO CLIP - Teaching Strategies to Supercharge Your College Classroom--Maricopa CC]

FEMALE SPEAKER: This faculty development program was created by Maricopa County Community Colleges in conjunction with Educational Impact, online content providers for educators. Faculty members at colleges and universities come from a variety of academic and professional backgrounds. These instructors are content experts, many with a number of years experienced in their professional fields, but may lack formal training in teaching. Building a learning community within the classroom through the use of active learning allows the students to become more engaged in the learning process as well as with their peers. Planning this type of learning process is more challenging, but a well-structured active learning approach allows students to become weaver's of knowledge as individuals and group members. This program when completed will be approximately five hours long featuring lesson planning, multiple teaching strategies, interviews with instructors who are passionate about teaching, and real classroom examples, plus numerous multimedia functions.

Welcome to the module on creating effective learning environments. Teachers have a gift of being able to wisely weave the knowledge of our learners. We're able to instill a passion that we have for teaching and help our students to grow. We're able to deliver content in a number of different ways helping our students learn actively.



BUREAU OF EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS

MALE SPEAKER: As college faculty, often times when we design our course or learning experiences we break it in segments of 60 minutes. While certain courses can go for two or three hours, often times the planning that we engage in will involve a 60 minute learning experience. We want to give you a template, a guide, a roadmap in regard to how you can organize a learning experience over a period of sixty minutes. We have for you a handout that outlines a six stage process of designing that 60 minute learning experience.

PROFESSOR TEACHING: As we approach 2 from the left what happens to value the function?

FEMALE SPEAKER: Teachers use a variety of classroom assessment techniques--some formal, others informal. To determine how much and how well their students are learning, to evaluate classroom learning informally faculty use these techniques to make quick adjustments to their teaching slow down or review material, respond to questions or misunderstandings, or move on.

MALE SPEAKER: Find out who the best teachers are at your college and ask them for help. Ask them to take a look at their course materials and what activities work best for them, that's a compliment for them. So design your course around outcomes, keep your students engaged, and wrap it around your passion and you'll love teaching at college.

VIDEO CREDIT: "Teaching Strategies to Supercharge Your College Classroom" by Educational Impact - Maricopa Community College, Source:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zV4cJYt6JCQ>

6 - A Community of Teachers and Learners

Community college faculty, staff and administrators are committed to the success of their students. They recognize the crucial social importance of the community college ideal-that these institutions provide a source of hope for the future for the students who attend them. In that commitment, they seek ways to surmount the pressures that naturally come to bear on their enterprise. Reflect back on the video you just viewed from Genesee Community College. As in similar videos from other colleges, the producers here take care to present images of the college that show attractive qualities: use of current technology, small class sizes, diversity of students, and a sense of universal welcome on the part of the entire staff.

Community colleges are dependent on the excellence of their faculty. It is crucial that community college faculty maintain their currency as scholars within their academic disciplines, and at the same time, always seek new ways to continue the development of their skills as instructors. Community college faculty do what they do because they love to teach. The following video, from Bucks County Community College in Pennsylvania, provides a series of reflections on the part of several of their faculty, regarding the importance and reward of what they do. These reflections are typical for community college teachers across the country-you will find few among them who speak of going to "work" in the morning. Like their students, they go "to school."

[VIDEO CLIP - Bucks County CC]

ERIN NICLAUS: A great teacher is someone who is kind and compassionate and caring. Who truly loves not just the subject, but the students, and loves being in the classroom environment. Loves being able to help people out, walk them through things.



BUREAU OF EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS

TANYA LETOURNEAU: To present the information well, as well as staying on top of the technological advances.

JOHN SHERIDAN: What I enjoy about teaching at Bucks County Community College is being inspired by the students, especially when they're going through the learning process and when the lightbulb goes on when they get to actually explore and make that discovery and where the learning is moved from just learning to becoming knowledge.

RANDI SCHAEFFER: I love when I can see them work out a problem and they get it right and the expression of satisfaction on their faces.

ROBERTA MAYER: Their eyes will light up because you've said something that seems like it's tangible, like it's real.

ALI CHAMBERS: Students begin to understand and connecting.

BRIAN HENSON: ...and finding out how they use different aspects of the course outside of the classroom is really fantastic.

JANET BAKER: What makes it satisfying is to see the students learn and grow with the programs and they get a job in their field and it's something that they love to do.

FEMALE PROFESSOR: There are many, many great teachers here at Bucks.

MALE PROFESSOR: My colleagues are all intellectually active,

FEMALE PROFESSOR: ...just amazingly remarkable, intelligent people, so it's a dream environment to work in.

MALE PROFESSOR: These are people that are experts in their field outside of Bucks County Community College.

FEMALE PROFESSOR: Who have published books, written plays, who have performed music

FEMALE PROFESSOR: ...and teach because they love being in a classroom.

FEMALE PROFESSOR: They can give students that other perspective.

FEMALE PROFESSOR: We try as a faculty also to give them a taste of what that experience is like and what that process is like.

MALE PROFESSOR: The students appreciate that and they realize that I'm out there doing it in the real world.

FEMALE PROFESSOR: And I think it elevates the discourse in the classroom.

DENISE MAY: It's an exciting process to be a part of, I think the students benefit and I think the faculty and staff benefit, it's a two way street.

DR. JAMES J. LINKSZ: And in fact students frequently come back to us and say "Gee, Bucks had the best teachers, the faculty members I had in the first two years here were really superb."

LEE ANN LIPPINCOTT: The student population is very lively, you can come to class tired and when you leave you have more energy than when you came.

MALE PROFESSOR: Every time they walk into a new classroom and when a new semester starts there's always a mix of age and gender.



BUREAU OF EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS

VARIOUS PROFESSORS: People come in from all different walks of life, ...it's a magical mix... The variety of students, from literally every kind of background you can imagine. All different life experiences, abilities, academically, socio-economically. Interacting with people like that directly gives you a reward that you can't find in other places. I truly love it, it's a wonderful place to work. It's a very open environment. This feels like a residential college when you walk the grounds of this of this campus it feels as if you are actually away at some private liberal arts university and as such I think that contributes to the quality of learning. It makes you feel comfortable. It makes you feel warm, it makes you feel accepted, and the people here are very warm, very nice. Everyday when I come here it's a joy, everyday is actually a good day to teach, it's one of those things that motivates you. It's a beautiful place to work, it's a beautiful place to teach and this is by far the best in terms of technology. We have computers, SmartBoards in every classroom, beautiful computer labs, and variety of different setups. Technology, administrative services, any kind of support that my students need is all here centralized in one building so that helps me as an educator to get them their needs. I've used the library myself, it has access to any kind information that we need is available to our students. It's a really exciting environment to work in and I loved it this is my dream job. I do really enjoy what I do. It's a pretty neat job to help people achieve their dreams. It's a passion for sure. And it is fun, I am never bored, I have never ever been bored. I do not say "I'm going to work", anyone who asks, I say "I'm going to school".

VIDEO CREDIT: "Professors on Teaching at Bucks County Community College" by Bucks County Community College, Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AugQCDIZHkA>

7 - Thank You

We hope this module helped you better understand teaching and learning in the community college, and that this series of modules have increased your knowledge of issues facing community colleges administrators in the United States and beyond.

8 - USDOS - CCAP

The Community College Administrator Program (CCAP) is a program of the U.S. Department of State, administered by Florida State University

For more information, visit eca.state.gov or lsi.fsu.edu/ccap



BUREAU OF EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS