



## CISL Gazette - February 2003

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### Integrating Instructional Technology

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The League for Innovation in the Community College does a great job up-dating educators on the latest thinking about the critical issues facing community college faculty and administrators. A Leadership Abstract now available on the organization's web site ([www.league.org](http://www.league.org)) entitled "Integrating Instructional Technology Across the Campus" (January, 2003) is recommended reading for anyone interested in how faculty development services can be linked to student outcomes.

In the abstract the authors, Catherine Ayers and Bill Doherty, discuss a landmark research initiative in California that identifies a number of best practices institutions should model to develop "mature, effective faculty development programs."

- Training modules should be linked to actual practical situations and should focus on pedagogical innovation and student learning.
- Training should allow faculty to pursue pedagogical and content goals without being hindered by prohibitive technology learning curves.
- Training should be reinforced by follow-up to ensure that instructors are integrating what they learned into their teaching and curricula.
- Showcasing examples of successful integration of instructional technologies by other instructors should be part of a systematic approach.
- Faculty development should be just-in-time and on-demand using virtual reality, electronic communities, and self-paced strategies.
- Training offered through summer institutes should cover a range of content so that faculty can have choices for intensive training.
- Campuses should provide an enabling technological environment that emphasizes instructional technology integration throughout the curricula.

## The Lexus and the Olive Tree

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Thomas L. Friedman, Foreign Affairs Columnist for the New York Times, has written an absorbing book on the emergence of globalization, using the metaphor of his title to represent the forces of a propelling technology and the roots of resistance. The Lexus and the Olive Tree takes us into the globalization era of the post-Cold War where half the world shops in integrated markets and the other half walks barefooted behind the oxen and the plow.

The challenge Friedman warns, is to find a healthy balance between wanting to preserve and hide your own, tradition-bound way of life and doing what it takes to survive and prosper within the new system. Substitute a few words here and there and it doesn't take you long to make a connection. Much of what Friedman has to say about the struggles of a world in transition can be applied to the microcosm of our paradigm shift here at CCBC.

Some of us want the Lexus; some of us, the olive tree. And where we plant ourselves on that continuum determines how we think about the past and the future. The zealots on either end share more with each other than they do with those closest to them. Their fringe points of view are often most noteworthy for the resistance they engender.

At CCBC, perhaps the best way to find Friedman's healthy balance is to acknowledge that the successful evolution of LearningFirst depends upon building a stronger bridge between the tradition-bound past and the changing landscape of an emerging paradigm.

## CISL January 2003

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The disparity in the academic achievement of majority and African American students is a matter of paramount importance to CCBC pioneers who want to see the promise of LearningFirst fulfilled for everyone. Promising a practical approach to closing that gap, the January 2003 CISL Fair lived up to raised expectations.

Except for a bump on the road during the early going, the attendees traveled comfortably and successfully throughout the day to a variety of helpful stops. Especially insightful was Karyn Schulz's afternoon presentation on the college's new and sophisticated Early Warning System and the potential uses of the Graduated Learning Plan. Indeed it was a day of learning about effective strategies to ameliorate, and perhaps eliminate, an unacceptable condition of campus life.

After being asked to be the master of ceremonies at the Spring Orientation sessions for new students, I started to think about the theme of the program: Making Connections Count. Two things came immediately to mind. First, the orientation session had to begin the process of connecting the students to the college. And second, we had to figure out a way to connect them to some basic concepts too!

Thanks to the organizer, Dr. Lillian Archer, the college had a line-up of stellar faculty and staff to give the students strategies on how to connect to the college. And the college staff did a great job with that, especially Dr. Woodrow Powell who was the keynote presenter. He really charged the atmosphere in challenging the students to consider the fusion potential of several seemingly independent and diverse elements in the amalgam of what it takes to be successful in college.

As I listened, this orientation session had a different feel to it. Woody was hitting on basic concepts for success. The treatment he prescribed for academic success was also the antidote for the devitalized condition of students who are academically suspended from the college.

I had just spent the month of January listening to the stories of students appealing their suspension. Why they fail academically is no great mystery. Still, they have little insight into the behavior that is holding them back. Even after they learn, getting them to make the necessary changes in their life is another matter indeed.

Not surprisingly, they all seem to have a lot in common, but chief among them is their failure to understand some basic concepts. Here are a few they never quite get connected to:

- You need to attend class on a regular basis
- The syllabus is one of the most important college documents you’ll ever receive
- Faculty are approachable and have ears
- Study time needs to be scheduled into the week
- Full-time work and full-time enrollment don’t mix well
- Self-advisement is not a good idea
- Internet courses should not be taken without considerable forethought and investigation

Thanks to the efforts of Dr. Archer, Dr. Powell and others at the Spring Orientation for New Students to “make connections count,” several hundred students heard the message. Maybe we can add a companion message. To the real meaning of CCBC, why not an alter ego? CCBC: Creating a Culture of Being Connected.

All of our experience, much of our instinct, and everything the less successful students tell us suggest that academic failure is about the “failure to connect.” Whether it’s to institutions, to people or to concepts and ideas, failure to succeed is failure to connect. That’s pretty basic stuff.