This is the Weekly Reflection podcast from Saint Louis University’s Center for Transformative Teaching and Learning. Each week, we focus on a topic that fits with our theme for the 2012-2013 academic year, Engaging All Learners. Each reflection loosely follows the five-part Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm (*context, experience, reflection, action, and evaluation*). The goal of this podcast is to provide an avenue into a space for thoughtful reflection on complex issues, rather than to provide answers to these issues.

**Week 1: Engaging All Learners**

**Context:**
Engaging All Learners is the CTTL’s theme for the academic year. Much of our programming, such as workshops, Conversations on Teaching, many of the Effective Teaching Seminars (ETSs), the Winter Institute, and this Weekly Reflection, will focus on aspects of our theme. We encourage participants in all of our programming, throughout this academic year especially, to consider what it means to engage all learners in their classes and other learning environments.

**Experience:**
“Engaging All Learners” is a complex and layered idea that works to stimulate thought both about the different learners we encounter and what it means to engage those learners in the learning process. In the most ideal circumstances, good teaching practices benefit a multitude of learners; when we work to create a learning experience that assists one set of learning circumstances, for example, that of international students, we often also address the circumstances of a variety of other learners. It is the act of being intentional and thoughtful about creating specific learning experiences, that ultimately engages all learners in some way.

The following is one example of a set of learning experiences that might have the potential to engage the learners in a class. When I record a lecture in Tegrity that frames content for one course topic, focusing students on how to think about the material they are reading in their text books, then using class time for students to work on case studies, or problem sets together, I am creating learning experiences that could potentially engage students in many different learning circumstances. I have given students access to my lecture, which goes through material in a way that breaks down complex ideas, and assists in connecting those ideas to the larger framework of the curriculum, in a format that they can stop, reverse, and listen to as many times as they need, in order to employ their thought processes with the course content. Then, as we move through case studies, problem sets, or the like during class, students put into practice what they have learned about the course content while thinking again, and in new ways about what they know. Questions arise that can be answered by working with others on the project, by asking me questions, and even through large errors and small triumphs that happen in class when the stakes are small and the learning experience is shaped intentionally.

**Reflection:**
(Take some time to consider the following questions. You may find it helpful to write or sketch your answers.)

What does it mean to you, to “engage” students in learning? How do you know when students are engaged in learning? What do see? What do you hear? If students show engagement in different ways, how do you know what is happening in the classroom or other learning environment? What
are the cues or assessments on which you rely the most? Are there others you would like to consider more fully?

**Action:**  
As you begin the semester, we challenge you to take this opportunity to be more intentional about creating learning experiences for students. Redesign or create at least one lecture, one project, or one class activity in a way that takes into account the variety of learners and learning circumstances that your students represent and the ways in which you and your students engage with and can be engaged by the content of your course.

**Evaluation:**  
(The following questions are meant to be used at a later time after you have completed the Action, but may be used as a way to shape the action as well.)

With what intentions did you redesign or create the learning experience? How did those intentions present in the learning experience? Did the experience change the ways you see teaching, learning or the course?

How do you know if the change made a difference in student learning? For which students did the change make the most difference? Are there negatives for any students associated with the change you made?

What will you do next?

Thank you for participating in this week’s reflection. The next reflection will be posted on Friday, September 7th. All reflections are archived for future use. For more information on this week’s topic, CTTL services, programs, or events please consult the website at http://slu.edu/ctl.