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 7: Using the Exam Review Session for Learning**

**Context:**
It is midterm exam time, and students in your class have requested an exam review. Like many instructors, you do not find typical review sessions particularly useful for students. You do not want to spend precious class time re-teaching material from three weeks ago, and it is difficult to find a time outside of class that is mutually agreeable for the students and for you. Of course, there is also the frustration of not seeing the students who would most benefit from the review session in attendance.

**Experience:**
Unlike the typical review session in which students arrive with questions for the instructor to answer, while the students take notes that are likely duplicates of the notes they already took during class, scholar Terrance Favero has designed a different kind of review session constructed as a learning experience. Favero suggests creating a review session that contains both open-ended strategies, where students identify the most important concepts and then teach each other about them (with some instructor guidance where necessary) and close-ended strategies, where students discuss analytical-, application-, and synthesis-type questions from previous exams focusing not on what the answer is, but rather on which key concepts are important to know in order to answer the questions. By creating a review session in which the students continue to create the knowledge and skill sets of the course, it is no longer a waste of class-time. Rather than the students passively listening to lessons they have already heard or read, they are actively engaging with the theories, ideas, and models about which they will be assessed in the exam.

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

Do students in your classes ask for review sessions? Do you conduct review sessions? Why or why not? How do you conduct them? Are there ways to create additional learning experiences in the review sessions you conduct? Would that be useful? Why or why not?

**Action:**
Take stock of both the lower lever and higher level thinking skills that are most important in one of your classes. Create one review session that focuses on the lower level skills using open-ended strategies in which students teach each other key concepts or terminology, as well as on the higher lever skills using close-ended strategies in which students discuss how to approach more complex issues such as processes, case studies, or theoretical narratives.
**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. It may be helpful to write or sketch your responses.)

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, October 19th. 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/cttl.