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 15: Reflective Review and Planning

Context:
Professor Angelo is enjoying the last days before the new semester begins. As she opens her syllabus from the last time she taught her spring course to change the dates reflecting the new year, she begins to consider if there is anything she might want to add or revise about the course. She contemplates her fuzzy recollections of the class, and while there are a few articles that she plans to replace with more updated material, she determines that since nothing stands out about the course itself, she will not change too much about it, although she wishes she had taken some notes when the class was still fresh in her mind.

Experience:
Even the best courses can be improved after sustained reflection and intentional revision. While we often focus only on those classes in which there were several stumbling points throughout the term, we can also learn a great deal from the successes in learning we witness as well. Because each class has an unique makeup of students, and because the world outside and inside of the classroom changes from day to day, term to term, lessons that go well one term do not go as well in other terms; this can even change between different sections during the same term. This constant change is exactly why reflecting on the teaching and learning in our courses, and doing so as soon as grades are recorded, is so important.

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

Do you usually take time to reflect about the courses you have taught? Why or why not? If you have reflected on courses with the aim to improve them the next time, do you generally focus only on the classes and activities that went well or those that did not go as well? Which students do you consider when thinking about how to revise a course? Do you consider small issues or large ones? How do your learning objectives play into how you revise a course?

Action:
Plan some time for deep reflection on one of your courses. Deliberate on each of the parts of the course: the learning objectives, lectures, discussions, materials (including the syllabus as well as assigned texts), activities, projects, exams, websites, blogs, wikis, and course management sites. It may help to create a running list of each one of the components, to assist in remembering each one separately as well as how they function as interconnected parts. Consider how each of those specifically contributed to the learning of the course, and how they could be revised to deepen or broaden student learning. Begin by freely writing notes as ideas occur to you, before then moving into more focused thought on each component. Think about the different students in the class and
how they each reacted and learned differently to each part of the course. Are there ways you could change parts of the course to engage more of the learners in your class?

**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?

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Thank you for participating in this week’s reflection.

This is the last reflection podcast for Fall 2012. All reflections will be 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.