

# *RTC Faculty Focus*

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Renton Technical College

### CollegeSpark/UDL Grant Has Successful First Year



In fall 2009 the CollegeSpark Foundation began funding a three year project focused on improving the retention rates of low income students. In this project, a number of classrooms with high incidence of low income students are selected and the instructors in those classrooms receive training in Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and strategic teaching.

Through the use UDL and the Learning Assessment for Students (LAS) tool that was created by RTC a few years ago, students who are identified as at-risk are given extra assistance by a Learning Specialist. This can include being assessed and diagnosed for learning disabilities.

By the end of the project, the goal is for the college to understand and institutionalize some of the best practices learned to help students be more successful and also to share this information with other community and technical colleges in Washington State.

Along with **Cathy Jenner**, the Project Coordinator and Learning Specialist, eight instructors and one counselor have been participating in this project so far. Since 2009, participants include: **Donna Maher**, **Sheila May Farley**, **Shannon Sharpe** and **Terri Calnan** from the Medical Administrative Programs, **Gerry Landes** and **Shannon Winchester** from the Medical Assistant Program and **Debbie Rundle** from Student Services. In 2010, **Barb Culler** and **Ardene Niemer** from Early Childhood Education joined the project.

According to Cathy, the project has been very successful so far - both retention and grades were raised by the end of the first year! Focus groups of students indicate a high degree of satisfaction with the project. Students feel that they are getting more information quicker about what they need to be successful and they love the learning strategies their teachers are using.

For more information on the CollegeSpark project or using UDL in your classroom, please contact **Cathy Jenner** via email [cjenner@rtc.edu](mailto:cjenner@rtc.edu) or phone ext. 5639. She is eager to work with you.

### Some UDL Websites

RTC's UDL Project Website <http://webs.rtc.edu/UDL>

National Center on Universal Design for Learning <http://www.udlcenter.org/>

CAST (Center for Applied Special Technology) <http://www.cast.org/>

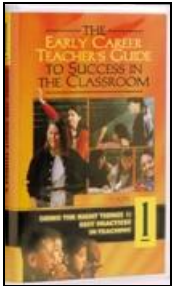
Univ. of Wash. Do-It (Disabilities, Opportunities, Internetworking & Technology) <http://www.washington.edu/doi/>

## RTC Library Has DVDs to Help Facilitate Student Learning

Call the RTC Library at ext. 2331 or visit <http://rtc.edu/library> for more info about these and other materials.

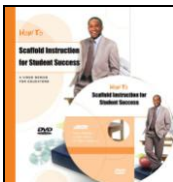


**21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills: Promoting Creativity and Innovation in the Classroom:** How corporate practices to promote creativity can be adapted to improve classroom learning. Call Number: **MEDIA 371.3 TWENTY 2009f**



The Early Career Teacher's Guide to Success in the Classroom: Doing the Right Things 1: **Best Practices in Teaching** has Best practices on many subjects, including adjusting lessons to fit each class and evaluating student learning. Call Number: **MEDIA 371.1 EARLY 2003c V.1**

The Early Career Teacher's Guide to Success in the Classroom: Doing the Right Things 1: **Mastering the Art of Teaching** includes tips for getting the most out of observing another instructors class, and using reflection to improve your teaching. Call Number: **MEDIA 371.1 EARLY 2003c V.2**



**How to Scaffold Instruction for Student Success** includes how to use scaffolds – techniques like using manipulatives, graphic organizers, or note-taking aids to improve student learning. Call Number: **MEDIA 371.3 HOW-TO 2002s** Also try **How to Spiral Questions to Provoke Student Thinking** contains Examples of moving students from basic understanding of a topic to being able to apply that knowledge. Call Number: **MEDIA 371.3 HOW-TOTY 2005s**

## Help Students Learn While Helping Others Eat



Thanks to RTC's Testing Center Coordinator, **Leslie Hand**, for reminding us about <http://www.freerice.com> where students and staff can learn grammar, vocabulary, math and other subjects while donating grains of rice for the hungry.

## Copyright vs. Copywrong!



Interested in finding out more about copyright? Sign up for the free, 5-hour, online **Copyright for Educators** class offered by the RTC Library's Media Librarian, **Laura Staley**. The sign-up deadline is 01/04/11 and the class will run from 01/10/11 – 02/11/11. Contact Laura at [lstaley@rtc.edu](mailto:lstaley@rtc.edu) or call her at ext. 5679 for more info or if you're interested in enrolling in the class.

## We Need Your Contributions and Suggestions

In the next few months, we plan to feature info about **active learning and cooperative or collaborative peer learning**. Contact newsletter editor, [Debbie Crumb](#), with your tips, websites and suggestions. To access past issues, go to the Library's website at <http://rtc.edu/library>, click on **Services and Information**, then **Library Publications**, then **Recent issues published by RTC Library**, and finally on the desired format (**PDF** or **Word**).



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