

# CTL Bulletin

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A bi-weekly information sheet by the Center for Teaching and Learning

## Take a Look at Our Workshops on Writing and on Teaching Courses with Significant Numbers of Non-Native English Speakers!

Two topics of particular significance for faculty and instructors at NEIU are improving our students' writing skills and addressing the needs of our many and diverse non-native English speakers. The CTL offers workshops on issues related to these topics. These workshops are offered both as scheduled workshops open to all faculty and instructors and as customized workshops that can be developed for groups of six or more within or across departments.

### Spring 2006 Workshops

The CTL is offering two more topics related to teaching non-native speakers and writing for Spring 2006. You can find more information and the objectives for each workshop, as well as sign up for these and other scheduled workshops on the CTL website at <http://www.neiu.edu/~ctl/ws-desc.html>.

**Issues in Teaching Non-Native English Speakers** Tuesday, February 21 from 1:30 – 4:30pm.

Approximately 45% of incoming freshmen at NEIU indicate that English is not their native language. What does this statistic mean in your classroom? When thinking about teaching non-native speakers, instructors naturally think of language issues first. This workshop addresses language and other issues such as culture that may be affecting your students' experience in the classroom. The presenter provides information specific to reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills. Strategies and tips for dealing with these individual language issues are provided for discussion and analysis. Participants are asked to reflect on their own experiences with non-native speakers and to share with each other tips and strategies that they have found helpful for improving the learning experience for non-native speaking students. Some workshop participants in the past have provided the following feedback:

- "Surprisingly information packed. I came away with an information packet I can use, and areas to be more critical about when I teach."
- "It was informative, clear, and well organized."
- "Provided a good opportunity to discuss important issues concerning NEIU students and the role of faculty at NEIU."

**Responding to the Writing of Non-Native English Speakers**

Wednesday, March 8 from 1:30 – 4:30pm. Repeated Thursday, April 13 from 1:30 to 4:30pm.

Responding to student writing can be a difficult task. This task can be made even more challenging when working with the writing of non-native English speakers whose problems may appear very different from those of their native English speaking classmates. Participants will explore which aspects of writing to respond to, how, when, and why. In addition, participants will discuss the effectiveness of typical instructor

feedback. The presenter will provide authentic writing samples from NEIU students for analysis. Some workshop participants in the past have provided the following feedback:

- "Got some good ideas to implement that I think can really further [students'] growth and reduce their frustrations."
- "Clear, well organized and insightful! This was a wonderful workshop! I learned a great number of helpful tips."
- "Very impressive. Extremely well organized. Found hints to be useful."

## Workshops on Request

The CTL is happy to provide workshops on topics related to writing and non-native speakers upon request for groups of six or more faculty or instructors. The workshops can be customized to a particular department's needs and/or time constraints (anything from 20 minutes to 3 hours or more). The following workshops and the workshops described above can be developed for a particular audience and timeframe. See the CTL website at <http://www.neiu.edu/~ctl/ws-custom.html> for information about these and other topics offered by the CTL.

### Designing Writing Assignments ... That Won't Kill You

Most instructors struggle with the balance between covering course material and providing effective writing assignments that will allow students to express their command of the material and improve their writing skills. Instructors worry about being buried under an avalanche of assignments or spending hours working as a grammarian or copy editor. This workshop provides guidelines for designing a variety of writing assignments to meet different course goals that will not result in deforestation or sleep deprivation. Participants explore different assignments related to different pedagogical objectives. Some of the assignments presented may change participants' perceptions about what writing assignments can look like and how feedback can be provided. Participants are encouraged to share and evaluate the types of writing assignments they use in terms of how they meet pedagogical objectives, what students gain from them, and how many hours of preparation and response they require.

### Responding to Student Writing

How many times have you given a writing assignment to help your students interact with the course content and improve their writing skills only to find yourself stuck with a pile of papers, a red pen, precious little time, and a grammar headache? This workshop provides participants with tips and strategies for responding to student writing. In addition, the workshop provides tips on how to design assignments with an eye to plans for responding to and evaluating student writing. Participants are asked to reflect upon and discuss the types of feedback they provide and their systems for evaluating writing. Participants have the opportunity to apply guidelines to authentic writing samples from NEIU students and to discuss issues that arise when working with these samples.

## Writing Resources on the CTL Website

The CTL website also provides some online resources on topics related to student writing such as designing writing assignments, evaluating student writing, handling the paper load, designing peer review, and addressing plagiarism. Go to <http://www.neiu.edu/~ctl/teaching.html#writing> for online resources on these and other writing topics.

For further details on the information provided here, contact Kate Hahn at [mk-hahn@neiu.edu](mailto:mk-hahn@neiu.edu) or 442-4490, or call our office assistant, Diane Gritton, at 442-4467.