

# CTE Notebook

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## ***From the Director . . .***

*Dr. Mary Stephen, Director  
Reinert Center for Teaching Excellence*

One thing I have learned in my years of teaching is the importance of using the beginning of the first class in a course to “sell” the students on what they will learn in the course, to show my excitement for the topic and why I think it is important for them to learn this subject, and then to share with them what I expect of them, and in return, what they can expect from me as the teacher. This sets the tone for the course right from the start, and engages students more than reading rules and regulations from a syllabus engages them. This strategy makes sense when you realize that research indicates that students typically decide what kind of teacher you are and what kind of experience they will have being in your class in the first 15 minutes of that first class. Research also shows that instructors who make the most lasting impression on students are those who possess and generate enthusiasm for their subject and their students’ learning.

There are many strategies for beginning a course in a way that establishes an environment for learning that makes students excited about coming to class and learning about the course topics. This issue of the Notebook focuses on strategies that Saint Louis University faculty use to create a positive environment for learning in their classrooms. We know that there are many more strategies than we have described in this newsletter. We invite you to email us ([cte@slu.edu](mailto:cte@slu.edu)) additional strategies you may use and we will post them on our website.

You will notice some changes in the format of this issue of the newsletter. Several items that appeared previously in the newsletter, such as advisory board information and schedules for upcoming events can now be found on the Center’s website (<http://cte.slu.edu>). We have worked to

I nstructors and student readily understand the concept of a positive learning environment. At times, however, it can be difficult to move beyond the abstract, "I know it



are the leader that takes them on an



