

**CNI's New Learning Communities  
Program:  
What Have We Learned?**



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**Background**

CNI's New Learning Communities program supports projects that:

- encourage collaborative teaching and learning, in both the curriculum development and delivery
- integrate use and evaluation of information resources into the curriculum
- use the Internet to facilitate the teaching and learning process

When CNI had working groups as part of its structure, Susan Perry, then at Stanford and Philip Tompkins, then at Estrella Mountain Community College, were the co-leaders of the Working Group on Teaching and Learning. They decided to develop a project that would encourage early adopters of networking technology in support of teaching and learning and the use of information resources. The first iteration of that project was a conference in 1994 in which 10 teams who had developed new learning communities met for peer consultation and mutual growth.

The success of that meeting led to a larger effort, funded by the U.S. Department of Education. Another group of 10 teams participated in a second conference in 1995. The 20 teams who participated in these two conferences had all developed programs that incorporated team involvement, imaginative use of networking resources, centering on students as participants and active learners, and demonstration of new information literacy. These have been the hallmarks of the CNI program.

In addition, CNI organized a number of programs to encourage others to develop similar curricula on their campuses. These included two full-day workshops, one an Association of College and Research Libraries(ACRL) preconference and one a CNI workshop and a half-day ACRL preconference.

## **What We Have Learned**

### about COLLABORATION

- Multi-sector teams can work
- Collaborative development leads to collaborative learning
- Increases student involvement in learning

### about use of INTERNET

- Skills instruction is needed for faculty, staff, students
- Flexible, high-tech facilities are needed
- Off-campus access presents problems
- More students communicate with others than in traditional classrooms

### about INFORMATION LITERACY

- Increasing resources are available on the Internet
- Students need to be able to assess the quality of networked information resources
- Students can become producers of information

## **Key Enablers**

- Allowing each individual to contribute to the team
- Availability of good infrastructure - networks, off-campus access, wired classrooms and study areas
- Enthusiasm
- Assistance from a campus center on teaching and learning

## **Major Roadblocks**

- Infrastructure issues
- Time commitment
- Scalability
- Intellectual property issues

## **Project Support**

CNI's New Learning Communities project was co-sponsored by the Association of College and Research Libraries, the American Association for Higher

Education, and Educom. Support was received from the U.S. Department of Education.

### **Further Information**

A videotape of the 1994 conference and a workbook that can be used to plan a campus New Learning Communities workshop is available from CNI for \$25.

Abstracts of the projects of the 20 teams that participated in the first 2 workshops and reports from those workshops are available at:

<<http://www.cni.org/projects/nlc/>>