



# INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES

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## NOTES FROM THE VICE PRESIDENT - Dr. Mary Kay Rudolph

Welcome, Colleagues, to Volume #3 of Instructional Notes for the 2007-08 academic year. It seems like this spring semester has flown by and I know you are all breathing a sigh of relief in anticipation of a much deserved spring break. I hope you come back rested, rejuvenated and eager to finish this challenging semester.

This volume includes articles from your Project Learn SLO Coordinators, Craig Foster and Wanda Burzycki. Wanda and Craig provide brief testimonials about their personal experience in English and College Skills Math, and the value of closing the assessment loop to their students, their colleagues and themselves. Chuck Robbins continues his always fascinating background information from the Economic Development Institute Forum, which is focusing this year on the environment and "clean/green" educational options and potential for SRJC and Sonoma County. Gary Allen updates us on our Accreditation Self-Study process, and Michelle Poggi provides timely information on the latest Staff Development news, including plans for the fall 2008 Professional Development Activity Day. We round out this edition of Instructional Notes with some helpful reminders for faculty from Freyja Pereira in Admissions and Records about grade rosters.

As always, please feel free to contact me with suggestions for articles or improvements to Instructional Notes. Our goal is to inform, assist and inspire. On behalf of the Academic Affairs team, thank you for all you do, every day, to make SRJC a premier teaching and learning institution!

*Mary Kay*

Mary Kay Rudolph, Vice President of Academic Affairs





**Spring Rosters are due May 29, 2008  
Grades Turned in Late  
Adversely Affect Students**

Late grades can cause major disruptions in the lives of students. If their records are incomplete, their eligibility for graduation, scholarships, transfer, financial aid or intercollegiate sports could be affected. Therefore, please submit your rosters to the Admissions & Records Offices as soon as possible once your classes have finished.

**All final grade rosters must arrive in Admissions & Records by 5pm on Thursday, May 29, 2008.** *Please note: The Santa Rosa Campus A&R Office will be open to accept rosters on Commencement Saturday, May 24, 8:30am-12:30pm.*

Please use a dark #2 pencil to fill in the Final Grade Report, and sign the Official Roster in ink. Final Grade Reports and Official Rosters must be turned in together. If you did not receive an Official Roster, contact Admissions & Records on the Santa Rosa Campus at 522-2788, or on the Petaluma Campus at 778-3911 before turning in grades so that we can order a replacement.

**PLEASE SUBMIT GRADES IN PERSON (recommended)** to the Santa Rosa or Petaluma Admissions & Records Offices. Grades may also be submitted through intercampus mail—please be sure to sign your rosters before submitting.

Additionally, if you are unable to submit grades by one of the two preferred options stated above, you may send your grades by U.S. mail; however, you will be responsible for providing an envelope and postage and ensuring that your grades arrive by the deadline. **Please make copies before mailing your grades.**

Thank you for your cooperation.





## Fall 2008 PDA Day – Call for Presenters

Spring Professional Development Activity (PDA) Day is barely history....and it's already time to begin thinking about how you may want to contribute and participate in the fall 2008 PDA Day. There was a fantastic variety of workshops to choose from for the spring 2008 PDA Day, largely due to the willingness of our SRJC colleagues who came forward to prepare and present workshops! Go to <http://www.santarosa.edu/src/PDA-current/pdasp-overview.html> to get some ideas and see the outstanding selection of workshops offered on our most recent PDA Day.

Staff Development needs presenters for the fall 2008 PDA Day to be held in August, and as faculty members you are experts in your disciplines. Why not share your expertise with your SRJC colleagues? In addition, you'll earn some extra flex credit for being a presenter on PDA Day!

Staff Development is looking for workshops that are interesting and applicable to all employees at SRJC. To submit your interest in being a workshop presenter, please complete the **Workshop Specifics Form** available on the SRC website at <http://www.santarosa.edu/src/form.html> . (Just click on *Call for Presenters*.)

Forms are due by **Monday, March 17, 2008**. Staff Development looks forward to working with you as part of an outstanding PDA Day to be offered this fall! Contact the Resource Center for Staff Development at 527-4852 if you have any questions or suggestions.

Don't forget to mark your calendars...**PDA Day is Friday, August 15, 2008!**

### Other Staff Development Dates and Deadlines

- The Resource Center for Staff Development will be sending out a hard-copy Flex Account Statement to each faculty member with a flex obligation for the spring semester. These statements will be mailed to each faculty member at their home mailing address prior to spring break.
- The next Flex Day is scheduled for **Monday, March 24**. This is during spring break and is merely a "placeholder" date on the Academic Calendar. There are no flex activities (and obviously no classes) scheduled for this day.
- The Flex Program has a spring deadline of **May 1**. Adjunct faculty must complete all flex activities and submit all Verification Forms by May 1. Regular faculty must

submit Verification Forms by May 1 for all activities completed by this date. Regular faculty may still complete flex activities after May 1 through June 30, but only if an "Intent to Complete a Pre-approved Activity" form is submitted by May 1. Don't forget that flex activities must be submitted and approved in advance.

- All Verification Forms, Notice of Absence Forms and Intent to Complete forms are due to be **received in the Resource Center for Staff Development on or before May 1**. Faculty who fail to fulfill their obligation will be docked pay and have their STRS retirement credit affected. Please plan ahead if an NOA will be submitted. Routing this form for signatures and through the Human Resources office takes a considerable length of time....send a photocopy of your NOA to the Resource Center **before** you send the original to HR. **Don't be on the Dock List...adhere to the May 1 deadline!**
- Don't forget to "Check Your Flex" on a regular basis at [www.santarosa.edu/flex](http://www.santarosa.edu/flex). Log in using your Outlook user name and password.
- We're looking for a Staff Developer! Nancy Persons will be stepping out of her staff development role into the role of Department Chair for the upcoming fall semester. We are hoping to find someone to fill this position with no break in the transition if at all possible. If you are interested in a 20% reassignment position in Staff Development for the Petaluma Campus, please submit a letter of interest to Academic Senate President, Greg Granderson, and Resource Center Coordinator, Michelle Poggi no later than **April 18, 2008**. You'll like working with us!

**Contact Michelle Poggi in the Resource Center for Staff Development at [mboohar-poggi@santarosa.edu](mailto:mboohar-poggi@santarosa.edu) if you have any questions.**





## Closing the Loop on a Learning Assessment Project

*Craig Foster*  
*English Instructor & SLO Coordinator*

Perhaps nothing is quite so frustrating for a college instructor than working on a project designed to improve one's teaching and students' experience in the classroom, only to see it lose steam before it's complete. In SLO circles, this is called a failure to "close the loop." The loop in this case begins with a "felt need" that a course or some part of a course is not working as well as it could. This in turn leads to a close examination of an outcome or outcomes, followed by some form of assessment, analysis of the results, and finally instructional change aligned to the results. A number of learning assessment projects over the last three years have ground to a halt with outcome assessment, leaving the "felt need" unaddressed.

In fall 2007 the English Department chose to examine the developmental reading/writing course English 302, in part because some instructors thought the course was less focused than the two courses following it, English 100 and 1A. A small team of faculty wrote a pre- and post-test with 25 questions, each one specifically tied to a course objective. Nineteen sections of the course administered the pre-test in August, using a Stephen King essay on why people crave horror films. Data were collected for each of the 25 questions. The instructors gave the post-test in December, this time on an essay by Annie Dillard. During spring 2008, the Department began comparing the results on the two tests. They discovered that, while a knowledge-based question such as, "What do we call King's reference to Leonard Nimoy and Hallmark Cards?" showed considerable improvement from August to December, questions related to the essays' main idea and those requiring inferential ability showed much less improvement. This is consistent with the department's understanding of knowledge versus skill, the first a matter of retrieval, the second a matter of understanding. Of course, developing a skill takes considerably longer than retrieving information, which is often quickly forgotten, but the course outcomes specify just this ability.

The question now for these instructors is how, in fall 2008, they can help students develop the cognitive skills they will need to read successfully in their college-level courses. To answer the question, the faculty will have to design new and more effective strategies, and thus they will be (temporarily) closing the loop from felt need to pedagogical change.





## Learning Styles and Basic Math Skills

*Wanda Burzycki*  
*College Skills Instructor and SLO Coordinator*

The College Skills department recently completed an extensive Learning Assessment Project (LAP) for CSKLS 371, General Arithmetic, the first course of the Math Pathway. Supervised by Matt Greaney, this project involved all fall 2006 and spring 2007 sections of CSKLS 371 and 372 (Pre-Algebra). The goals of the project were to:

1. Collect an accurate two-semester demographic snapshot of CSKLS 371 students
2. Assess CSKLS 371 student behavior, as well as entry and exit skill levels to find predictors of both success and failure
3. Assess CSKLS 371 SLOs:
  - Students will be able to read and identify math vocabulary and symbols
  - Students will be able to translate words literally into math expressions
4. Assess student preparedness at the pre-algebra level for students who passed CSKLS 371

The pre-and post-assessments involved surveys about the students themselves as well as skills assessments and questions on the final exam. The substantial amount of data revealed a number of trends and predictors, too much to be summarized here, but of note was the surprising revelation that a student's awareness of his/her learning style was a strong predictor of success. This information came from the surveys, which asked students to mark one of the following: (1) *I am a visual learner* (2) *I am a kinesthetic learner* (3) *I am an auditory learner* or (4) *I'm not sure*.

These summarized excerpts from Matt's final report reflect some considerations about learning styles that may be useful to instructors of all subjects:

On the second (post) self-assessment, three predictors of success were: (1) *I am a visual learner* (the single strongest predictor of success), (2) *I am a kinesthetic learner* (the second strongest predictor of success), and (3) *I am an auditory learner* (the ninth strongest predictor of success).

As a group of success predictors, these are powerful and compelling. How to interpret this data is more difficult. It would seem, however, that there is a real benefit in knowing one's learning style (at least by the 16<sup>th</sup> week), whatever that may be. ...A few inferences can be made. First, being a visual learner (the single greatest predictor of student success in this study) is beneficial to those students via the fact that the most common teaching and learning modality in the academic world is visual. College Skills is apparently no different....

The study uncovered the importance of a student knowing his/her own Learning Style and the fact that certain student practices do in fact statistically increase success rates for CSKLS 371 students. Based on the information collected and in an effort to serve our students more effectively, we recommend that every CSKLS 371 instructor provide a Learning Styles Assessment for all students and discuss with students how they can use this knowledge to benefit themselves. Since the department discussion on the LAP report, instructors have not only systematically conducted a learning styles inventory. While many CSKLS instructors teach using various modes, there is a more cohesive effort in the department towards helping students who are not predominantly visual learners to understand mathematical concepts. This includes focusing on study techniques for audio and kinesthetic learners, using more manipulatives in the classroom and lab, and ensuring that clear oral explanations accompany visuals.

Matt's report included many more observations and recommendations (copies are available through Matt at [mgreaney@santarosa.edu](mailto:mgreaney@santarosa.edu)). However, what is significant is the way this LAP proved that unexpected but important aspects of student learning were revealed through the process. The department will follow up with more informal assessments, and instructors are working together to address the results and improve student learning.



## **Accreditation Self-Study Update First Draft of Self Study Completed**

*Gary Allen, Self-Study Chair*

The many volunteers participating in the Accreditation Self-Study process deserve a round of applause and sincere congratulations for all the work they did in producing the first draft of our self study. This detailed document examines the current practices of SRJC in virtually all aspects of the college and provides recommendations for improvements. On March 14<sup>th</sup>, the Accreditation Steering Committee and the standards committees' co-chairs met to do an initial content review of the document.

By mid-April, the report will be available for review by the college community as a whole. It will be placed on the Accreditation website <https://www.santarosa.edu/accred/> as well as in hard copy in the Doyle and Mahoney libraries. An abstract will accompany the extensive document and will highlight the primary issues/ themes that are emerging in the self study. Additionally, opportunities for comment will be available at four public forums to be held on both the Petaluma and Santa Rosa campuses. Announcements of the dates, times, and locations will be publicized via email and the Insider.

The next step will be another revision completed over the summer. Final editing will be done in fall 2008, and the final version will be sent to the printer in late November or early December in anticipation of the accreditation team visit in early March, 2009. Many thanks again for the very hard work put in by the committee volunteers, and we look forward to receiving feedback from our SRJC colleagues.



## **Paying to Pollute And Finding a Job**

***SRJC Economic Development Institute  
Chuck Robbins  
Spring 2008***

On Friday, March 07, 2008, the Press Democrat newspaper carried an editorial that may be useful to those folks in the college enmeshed in environmental issues:

### ***Watts up?***

#### ***The problem with calculating energy and carbon consumption***

*You might say a light went off in Saul Griffith's head: The inventor wants to make it simple for people to calculate their energy consumption, so they understand what they must do to reduce their carbon footprints.*

*Griffith came to this conclusion after spending three weeks calculating in kilowatts the amount of energy he uses to "power" his life (25,000 watts a day) - - and he's the recipient of a MacArthur Fellowship. Clearly, average people don't have the time or resources to do their own calculations.*

*His solution (discussed at a conference hosted by Sebastopol publisher O'Reilly Media): Require companies to disclose how much energy goes into their products.*

*Griffith isn't the only one looking at labels as a way to help people reduce their carbon footprint. The CEO of the giant Tesco chain of supermarkets recently announced that the company would place carbon labels on 70,000 items.*

*But labeling can be misleading.*

*As journalist Michael Specter points out in a recent New Yorker article ("Big Foot"), labeling may make consumers feel virtuous about buying grass-fed, locally raised steak -- but if they grill the beef on a carbon-spewing open barbecue, they've wiped out much of the benefit.*

*Another problem is the complexity of calculating the labels. Manufacturers would need to determine the carbon emissions of (1) producing each ingredient (the flour, leavening and water in a loaf of bread, for example), (2) getting the ingredients to the factory, (3) mixing and baking the bread and (4) disposing of the plastic wrapper.*

*A third problem is that labeling can't take into account the miles used to transport goods to market because every market is in a different location. Specter notes that for anyone living east of Columbus, Ohio, it is a better choice (carbon-wise) to buy wine from France that has been shipped via fuel-efficient boats rather than wine from California, which is delivered across country by trucks.*

*Yes, labeling can be a wake-up call to consumers, and can be a useful tool in some circumstances. But ultimately, it may be more effective for people to eat simply (an apple is better, carbon-wise, than a McDonald's apple pie) and to push policymakers to create better public transportation systems, make it easier to walk and ride bikes and approve tougher emission standards for cars and factories.*

*© www.pressdemo.com*

In "Big Foot," his New Yorker article about carbon emissions, morality, and science, Michael Specter makes a case for utilizing market-based forces to control carbon emissions. A recent piece in Economist.com asserts that prohibitions against trade in wildlife may actually contribute to the demise of species and that controlled, market-driven trade may be more effective at protecting endangered species worldwide.

The economics of environmental issues contains lots of variables and surprises. The pieces in the New Yorker and Economist.com propose innovative solutions to some seemingly intractable environmental challenges.

Economist.com: [http://www.economist.com/displaystory.cfm?story\\_id=10807694](http://www.economist.com/displaystory.cfm?story_id=10807694)

NewYorker.com:

[http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2008/02/25/080225fa\\_fact\\_specter](http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2008/02/25/080225fa_fact_specter)

As most folks are aware, the environment is the object of intense interest these days, drawing the attention of venture capitalists, conservationists, charlatans, politicians, and

just plain folks. Since economic issues are inextricably linked with discussions about environmental topics, this mailing to you highlights a number of different economic reports that we hope might provide insights to support faculty and staff in their planning.

In recent years, many observers have bemoaned the high cost of living in Sonoma County, noting that expensive real estate in particular makes current county homeowners wealthier but also compounds the challenges facing people who would like to move into the area. A recent Press Democrat piece, "County homes rank 5<sup>th</sup>-least affordable," encapsulated the issue:

*Despite falling home prices, Sonoma County still ranks as the nation's fifth-least affordable metropolitan area to buy a house, according to a study released Thursday by a housing advocacy group....*

*Ten of the 20 least affordable communities are in California; only San Francisco, Los Angeles, Orange County and San Jose are less affordable than Santa Rosa....*

*The affordability gap widened dramatically during the housing boom, as home prices rose much faster than incomes. While home prices tripled in Sonoma County from 1996 to 2005, the average resident's income grew just 46 percent during the same period...."*

*The Press Democrat  
February 1, 2008*

Carol Lloyd, writing about real estate in the San Francisco Chronicle, featured a recent book by Richard Florida entitled "Who's Your City," a "hybrid of number-crunching meta-theory and self-help manual" that attempts to explain the economic geography of the future.

*"Florida argues (with ample hard evidence from myriad sources) that despite all the predictions about virtual offices and globalization rendering geography irrelevant, where you live still largely determines your destiny.... 'The world is becoming more global, but it's also becoming more local.' These mega-regions are not only siphoning off productivity and talent from other nearby regions but from around the world. What he calls global sorting makes the productive output between the superstar cities and the rest of the world more extreme than ever.*

*"These superstar cities include obvious choices such as Washington, New York and Boston as well as London, Tokyo, Seoul, and Shanghai. Not surprisingly, the Bay Area fares quite well as a mega-region, too.*

*"San Francisco made Florida's Top Five cities lists for all recent college grads, gay and lesbian midcareer professionals, all retirees, as well as empty nesters.... Santa Rosa (meaning the whole metropolitan area) ended up on best lists for gay retirees, singles and gay and lesbian singles, all empty nesters, and families with children."*

*San Francisco Chronicle*  
*March 9, 2008*  
Florida's website: [www.creativeclass.com](http://www.creativeclass.com)

Discussions about affordability tend eventually to raise questions regarding the types of jobs available in the Bay Area and the education required for those jobs. Commentators often cite the positive link between college education and salary to buttress arguments for earning a bachelor's degree.

The New York Times recently carried a piece entitled, "Higher Education Gap May Slow Economic Mobility." The author, Erk Eckholm, summarized a study made by the Brookings Institute and sponsored by the Pew Charitable Trusts. He began the article by noting that "...widening gaps in higher education between rich and poor, whites and minorities, could soon lead to a downturn in opportunities for the poorest families."

Other points in the piece:

- Someone born into a family in the lowest fifth of earners who graduates from college has a 19 percent chance of joining the highest fifth of earners in adulthood and a 62 percent chance of joining the middle class or better
- In recent years, 11 percent of children from the poorest families have earned college degrees, compared with 53 percent of children from the top fifth
- "The American dream of opportunity is alive, but frayed," said Isabel Sawhill, another author of the report. "It's still alive for immigrants but badly tattered for African-Americans. It's more alive for people in the middle class than for people at the very bottom."
- Stuart Butler, vice president for economic studies at the Heritage Foundation, said, "It does seem in America now that for people at the very bottom it's more difficult to move up than we might have thought or might have been true in the past." Conservative scholars are more apt to fault cultural norms and the breakdown of families while liberals put more emphasis on the changing structure of the economy and the need for government to provide safety nets and aid for poor families.
- "...studies show that many poor but bright children do not receive good advice about applying for college and scholarships, or do not receive help after starting college. If we did more to help them complete college, ...there's no question it would improve mobility."

The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching is also studying the relationship between college and workplace success. In the Foundation's online publication "Change" (January/February 2008), Paul Barton addresses some of the issues in his piece, "How Many College Graduates Does the U.S. Labor Force Really Need?"

*"Conventional wisdom has it that the demand for workers with college degrees is growing rapidly in the United States and will escalate. But the issue of what job qualifications will be important in the future and for whom is complex, with several threads of argument intertwined. First comes the very important*

*question of how an individual can best prepare educationally to do well in the future labor market. Coupled with that question is the need for citizens to have an equal opportunity to attend and complete college, such access being key to the nation's major problem of income inequality among racial and ethnic groups. Second is the question of how many college graduates the nation needs to produce, and with what skills, to ensure our national prosperity in an age of rapid technological change, globalization, and strong international competition."*

Barton's piece is fairly long; I've highlighted some of his points:

- "While jobs requiring advanced education might be expanding rapidly, they still accounted for too small a share of the workforce to affect the average level of education needed for all jobs."
- After analyzing data from the early years of this decade, Barton observed that, "the occupations with the fastest rate of growth had the highest literacy requirements, but the average requirements for all jobs were almost identical in the prose, document, and quantitative literacy required in 1986, 1996, and projections for 2006."
- "When professional jobs and long-tenure, high-paying jobs are included as a percentage of all jobs in some future period, the high-paying jobs requiring advanced education are overstated as a proportion of the total employment opportunities actually available."
- "While over 60 percent of people in existing jobs have 'some college' or a post-secondary credential, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Standards only about 3 in 10 jobs *require* a postsecondary certification of some sort."
- Quoting from a study by the National Center for Education Statistics and other studies, Barton noted that while a baccalaureate or associate degree was shown to contribute significantly to earnings ... the economic returns of some college credits ... were negligible—irrespective of the number of credits completed.
- "We must also recognize the fact that higher education makes a very important non-financial contribution to individual and societal enrichment. Its personal benefits, documented through the extensive research ... were perhaps best captured by the late Stephen K. Bailey when he said, 'I get an education so that later in life when I knock on me, somebody answers.' The societal benefits of a better-educated population are also significant and deep, from a healthier population to one that is better able to carry out its civic responsibilities."
- "But we should not just accept—and repeat—the now-conventional wisdom that there is an accelerating economic demand for workers with college degrees and that our standing in the global economy is threatened if we do not meet it."

And since we've mentioned jobs and the environment, the San Francisco Bay and Greater Silicon Valley Centers of Excellence have produced a Solar Industry Workforce Study. They note:

- Solar firms in the Bay Area employ between 6,900 and 8,000 workers. The majority of Bay Area solar firms are non-manufacturing (90 – 95%)
- Three out of four firms are increasing their hiring in the next 12 months

- Solar firms in the Bay Area are expecting to increase employment by up to 17% in the next year resulting in about 1,200 new jobs
- Three out of four employers indicate difficulty finding entry-level employees
- Four out of five employers indicate difficulty finding experienced employees
- Five solar occupations show significant growth over the next 12 months: PV (photovoltaic) installer; Solar Thermal Installer; Sales Representative; Solar Designer/Engineer; Installation Manager/Project Foreman. Employers indicate difficulty in hiring for all five occupations.

And finally, a reminder that **the SRJC Spring Forum is Friday, April 18, 2008 at Shone Farm:**

- Topic: **Environmental & Sustainable Technology**
- Focus on providing faculty an opportunity to think about and develop new courses and programs
- Five hours of faculty flex credit
- SWAG
- 20 exhibitors
- Courtesy rides in electric vehicles
- Tour of SRJC's sustainable gardens, plus a chance to win a gift basket of farm produce
- Choice of two entrees and two desserts
- Keynote speaker, panelists, information
- Opportunities to chat and work with SRJC faculty from many disciplines

For reservations (seating is limited) or information, please contact Chuck Robbins [crobbins@santarosa.edu](mailto:crobbins@santarosa.edu) or call 527-4498