



The Center for Teaching and Learning at the Michael D. Eisner College of Education

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CTL on the Cutting Edge

Positive Psychology

Research Questions

How can we begin to envision the utility of positive psychology in the counseling field, teacher education and educational leadership? How can Positive Psychology assist students in their approach to previously obscure problems? CTL Fellow **Dr. Gregory Jackson**, in an effort to share the utility of using a “strengths perspective” in both work and educational/teaching settings, conceived and spearheads the **BECSUN (Building Engagement at California State University, Northridge) Project**.

The Project

BECSUN explores practical aspects of positive psychology by drawing from the work of such noted professionals as Dr. Barbara Fredrickson, Dr. Martin Seligman, and Dr. Donald Clifton. The late Dr. Clifton formerly of the Gallup Corporation and widely known as a leader in the field of positive psychology, demonstrates that the characteristics of people and their environments represent the best of the human experience.

In April 2007 Dr. William Larkin facilitated his “Promoting Excellence in the COE” workshop here to launch this project. Attendees were invited to join Dr. Jackson in initiating a “Strengths-Based Campus Initiative Group.” This inter-disciplinary group joins the over 400 colleges already applying Strength-based education. Through discussions and workshops this group plans to:

- Build Engagement on Campus
- Encourage a strengths-based culture
- Deepen our understanding of individual strengths
- Exchange ideas and information
- Share resources and applications

What’s Next?

These principles have already been incorporated into University 100, EPC Graduate courses, Center on Disabilities Professional Development and Student Advisement, and Career Center Workshops. Interested participants are offered access to Tom Rath’s Strengths Finder 2.0 which includes the “StrengthsFinder” Assessment and Strengths Inventory for first-hand Strengths discovery.