

Presidents' Civic Engagement Steward Award

Dana Gross

St. Olaf College



For several years Professor Dana Gross has been integrating academic civic engagement into all levels of the St. Olaf Psychology curriculum and participating in efforts to expand civic engagement on campus.

In Fall 2008, students in her upper-level seminar, Infant Development, in conjunction with Faribault Early Childhood and Family Education, created educational DVD's focused on language and literacy and on motor development and play.

In January 2011 Dana debuted a new service-learning course, Community Applications of Psychology, in which 16 students explored approaches that psychologists use to address social problems and community needs. Throughout the term, students applied psychological research, provided community service, reflected on their experiences and explored their own vocational interests.

Currently, Dana is incorporating civic engagement into Research Methods. For their major project in the course, students are conducting research projects either as part of the Food and Nutrition Collaborative Grant or in partnership with the Northfield YMCA.

In conjunction with St. Olaf's Center for Experiential Learning, Dana has been a participant in the Bringing Theory to Practice grant assessment project, and for the past three summers she has been involved with the Civic Engagement Institute as a participant or presenter. She has been an integral part of the academic civic engagement initiatives since the beginning and has helped to shape it as a program that can reach and teach a wide range of students.

