Summer 2011 FCT Grant recipient report summary
Erika Iyengar (Biology)

My summer grant was intended to assist me in the development of a new First Year Seminar, in both developing the content and innovative new pedagogical teaching techniques. One of the major ideas I took to heart from my summer research was from the book *Active Learning* by Johnson, Johnson, and Smith (1991): “the challenge in college teaching is not covering the material for the students, it’s uncovering the material with the students.” In the course, I have a number of built-in structures that assist in creating positive interdependence. I have structured a clear group goal and a group-based reward and I use the jigsaw method to create shared resources. I have also incorporated the use of portfolios as a vehicle of reflection. The portfolio requires the students to re-read and incorporate my comments, practice their writing skills through rewrites, and refine and expand upon their thoughts. Further, the students can see their progress over the course of the semester through the portfolio. I will be presenting a talk entitled “Writing across the curriculum: explorations of nature” at the Society for Integrative and Comparative Biology national conference in January.